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THE  
CHURCHMAN

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NOVEMBER, 1890.

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ART. I.—GAMBLING.

GAMBLING is associated with two departments of our national life : our public sports and our domestic amusements. Under the first head are included horse-racing of all kinds, together with polo, coursing, golf, cricket, aquatics, and pedestrianism. Gambling has affected each of these, but in very different degrees. The turf still takes the lead. It is on the racecourse the largest number of gamblers are to be found, and for the largest amounts. It would be difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to find in any civilized country a horse-race from which gambling was separate, either by accident or by arrangement. Under the second head are included such amusements as chess, draughts, dice, billiards, bagatelle, cards, and so forth. But while gambling is generally associated, in varying degrees, with public sports and with private or social amusements, we should seriously misjudge the position if we supposed it to be limited to these. Observation and experience indicate that men lay stakes upon anything, and with a readiness which prevails wherever there are equal possibilities, or parity of risks, or a desire, which is entirely beyond the pale of right reason, to do what is known in betting circles as "backing your opinion." Men lay wagers upon the result of an election, municipal or Parliamentary ; upon two vessels leaving Liverpool, London, or Bremen for New York, and upon either as first to arrive at the other side ; upon the number of seconds a surgeon will take to perform a critical operation ; and upon many other events which are more easily imagined than enumerated. So that while gambling is connected, ostensibly and historically, with our sports and our pastimes, it is actually connected with much more. It has encroached upon the markets.

of commerce, and it is commending itself to the practice of mankind by claiming and by receiving recognition as amongst the manifold and the legitimate methods of business. In all these ways money is made by some and is lost by others; and such are the ramifications of the practice, and such the havoc which it is inflicting, that men, old and young, are asking the Church for counsel, for guidance, for help.

And the Church must have an answer, reasonable, wise, and true, to return. That answer ought not to consist in wholesale denunciation of public sports or of private amusements, or of necessary commercial enterprise. If cruelty could be excluded from the field, it would be very difficult to see the immorality of a race. The horses are believed to enjoy the struggle, and it must be a most exhilarating scene. And, similarly, the reader will find it a difficult thing to prove the wrongfulness of throwing decorated pasteboard upon green cloth, or of manipulating pieces of ivory upon a chess-board or over a billiard-table. The devil is no more under the bagatelle-board than he is behind the stable-door or upon the Exchange flags. Many an old man finds rest and amusement in his game of chess or of whist long after he can enjoy either the pleasures of travel, of reading, of painting, of sculpture, or of song. In themselves, these are innocent. If so, the question arises, At what point does this innocence become infected, or where does it disappear? My reply is, Where unlawful acquisition intrudes. And whether this be for the purpose of "lending an interest to the game," or of "backing your opinion," or of swelling the stakes, the appearance of the spirit of acquisition amongst the spirits of sport is the point at which innocence leaves the scene and her place is taken by covetousness, by recklessness, or by what is hardly less sinful—by that wilful waste which begets woeful want. In this belief, the whole subject of gambling and betting, whether it affect sports, pastimes, commerce, or miscellaneous affairs, becomes part of a larger and of a loftier subject. It raises the question, Has the Moral Governor of the Universe revealed His mind upon the modes in which money may be acquired? And if He has, what position does money acquired by gambling occupy with regard to these modes?

The first mode prescribed by God for the regulation of acquisition is the law of labour. It appears in the dawn of human history, in the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and subsequent epochs. It was enforced in apostolic times—yea, it was glorified by the holiest, by the highest ideal Labourer the world has ever seen. Jesus Christ conformed to the law of labour; and whether the remuneration be in money or in material no more affects this pervasive, ancient, and universal principle than does the difference between labour mental or manual. The great principle is that

God has enjoined labour as one condition of acquisition. But this is related to another principle, which I designate the law of exchange. The employer gives his mind and his money; the employed, his time, his strength, his life. This is exchange. Each accepts from the other what each regards as a just equivalent. The employer who takes labour without making an equivalent return is unjust and tyrannical. The labourer who receives wages without doing equivalent work is no less unjust, and is equally dishonest. Both violate the law of exchange, which is the strength and the expression of the law of labour, and which saves it from degrading cupidity upon the one hand, and from dishonest sloth upon the other.

But, besides these two vital principles, God has revealed another mode by which acquisition is regulated. This is the law of love. "To give to him that needeth" is one of the incentives to labour, and the consciousness of Divine love to us, and of that love as an indwelling power and principle, will constrain us to succour a brother in need. Under this head I include all gifts made by man to man, whether they be personal, or domestic, or corporate; or, as regards their scope or their purpose, whether they be simply utilitarian, or philanthropic, or religious. This principle is not final. It reposes upon a higher—namely, the law of brotherhood, which occupies the same position in morals that is occupied by the law of labour in economics. The law of labour is safeguarded by the law of exchange. The law of brotherhood is operative by the law of love. Now, if these indicate to us, either in the way of reason or of revelation, the modes in which the Moral Governor of the world countenances acquisition, we have next to inquire which of these modes will include the money that is made by gambling. Under which law of labour or of exchange, of brotherhood or of love, can the gambler's profits be classified?

This question may be partially answered by the recital of a very simple fact. Some time since I had a conversation upon this subject with one of the most high-minded merchants I have known. I regard him as the soul of honour, of veracity, and of generosity. When enjoying his hospitality, he announced a gain in the form of a bet upon a well-known horse in a historic race. I protested against the "win," and denounced acquisition by hazard, and in that form, as unjust, as wrong, and as unblest. His argument, most plausibly and ably put, ran thus: "I bet upon that horse. I knew its pedigree, its training, its racing history. I have the fullest confidence in the jockey, between whom and the horse there is the very best understanding. My knowledge upon these points has a marketable value, and it is a working power in the form of amusement. The friend with whom I bet may have had knowledge equally extensive and

equally accurate; whether he had or not is no affair of mine. As a matter of fact, my wits were pitted against his wits. It is a simple conflict between two opposing estimates of an animal and of a man, under conditions which are enjoyed by both. The false estimate, based upon imperfect information, loses; the true estimate, based upon accurate information, wins. Call the race-course, if you will, my market; I have therein sold my knowledge to advantage, and there is a sense in which I stand in a similar position to that occupied by you, or by any successful man. It is a matter of knowledge against knowledge, of experience against experience, of wit against wit. If I could state the case more strongly, I should cheerfully do so."

The question now arises, What labour was bestowed by the winner in acquiring his knowledge? Admit, if you will, that his stake was really laid in accordance with intelligence, and that he expended some, perhaps considerable, labour upon its acquisition, you are still face to face with the fact that the winner has not given anything to the loser as an equivalent. The knowledge by the possession of which he claims to have won cannot be used in any other market, if even the winner habitually disclosed it. Indeed, it ceases to be of any value the moment the race is decided. Neither in its nature nor in its possession can it be regarded as an equivalent; nor is this claimed for it by either winner or loser. So that, allowing the knowledge of the winner to be within the scope of the law of labour, the "sale" of the knowledge violates the law of exchange. The loser gives his money, but receives no equivalent; the winner receives the money, but bestows no equivalent. This is, on each side, a violation of the law of exchange. It is unequal; it is unjust; it is immoral; it is wrong.

Nor can the transaction be placed in a happier position when appraised by the law of love, or by the law of brotherhood. Viewed, then, in connection with what appear to be the suggestions of reason, or the maxims of revelation, the acquisition of the gambler does not admit of moral classification.

But here, it may be urged, gambling is not necessarily mercenary. It is not generally based upon knowledge, exact or inexact. It does not proceed upon such refined calculation. If it did, it would cease to be what it assuredly and frequently is, sport—pure and simple sport. It is one mode by which the value of an opinion is tried, is challenged, is "backed." It expresses that love of hazard, or that appeal to the spirit of contradiction, or that recognition of the ordeal of amusement, which is so ancient and so universal. And I admit there is much gambling which is free of the ugly greed which for the most part degrades the pastimes with which it is associated. But this admission does not make the amusement right. The winner

possesses what the loser regrets, and what he resisted his surrender of to the last. The loser and the winner alike had exciting amusement up to the supreme moment at which the game ceased, and the amusement was probably equal. But at a particular point all this amusement ceased to one, unless it be proved that the loss of money was amusing, or that its gain was indifferent. Exclude, if you will, the idea of greed as actuating anyone at a pool, or at whist, if you allow money to be won by one, or to be lost by another, for "sport," then I hold that the game is vitiated by immoral pleasure, for money, be it little or be it large, is a trust. Its expenditure must be in accordance with moral sanctions. Amusement has its place amongst these. Pleasure claims recognition also. But no pleasure is legitimate which depends for its existence or intensity upon the loss or the pain suffered by another, or which habitually disregards that expediency for which a high place in Christian ethics can be claimed. No amusement is admissible which, in its highest and inevitable issue, is regarded by one who takes part in it with aversion; which traverses the abiding and individual obligation of the law of love, by which, for the sake of the weak, or to discredit a practice which is fraught with disaster, a Christian is bound to remember that amusement may be legitimate, but, "for their sake," may not be expedient; or which opens the door, with fearful and even with fatal facility, to those passions which paralyze reason, which desolate affection, which waste substance, and which make havoc of honour, of character, of life. Christian expediency, which remembers the influence of example and the observation of children, of servants, and of others, and which, moreover, has an important place in Christian ethics, is in hopeless antagonism with the social hysteria which, in the language of the Dean of Rochester, exclaims: "To tell me that they who mean no harm, who neither inflict nor feel it; that some of the best men and women I ever knew were influenced by the greed of the gambler; that they ever gave one thought to the minute sums which they won and lost at their whist and quadrille when the game was over, is an insult to my affection, and an outrage on my common-sense." But what about "every appearance of evil"?

But, it may again be urged, money is staked to "add an interest to the game." Granted. But what is the nature of the interest which is added? and what do we gather from experience respecting its prevailing tendency? The nature of the interest is either that of the instinctive gambler, who seeks and who finds in hazard his highest pleasure, or it is that of the avaricious gambler who is possessed by the passion to acquire the substance of another. The former is reckless, is selfish, is

unruled by the principle which ought to control the administration of means. The latter is covetous, very generally unscrupulous, and seldom above resorting to tricks. In either case, the nature of the interest which is added to the game is discreditable and even immoral. Nor can this opinion be invalidated. It is rather strengthened by the general tendency of this "interest," as a very ordinary illustration will show. There are, say, half a dozen persons playing at cards, and an interest, in the form of money, is added to the game. Each player stakes an equal sum, and supposing each player possesses the same amount of property, and has the same personal, social and other liabilities, the hazard is the same to each, and the interest in the hazard. But one person wins. The whole condition of the game is altered. The loss to the five is very much greater than the gain to the one, and if we had an instrument by which we could measure both pleasure and pain, in their lowest form, we should, I believe, find that the figure which registered the loss, or the pain, was very much higher than that which registered the gain or the pleasure. But to this consideration we cannot, in the nature of the case, attach any value. We desire to observe and to accentuate the tendency of the play to which the interest of pleasure or of avarice has been added. That tendency is twofold. It arouses in the winner the desire to retain. It arouses in the loser the desire to recover, and in the conflict the spirit of sport is simply choked out by the spirit of covetousness. The winner, inflated by success, continues the game, and with probabilities of further acquisition. The loser, exasperated by failure and cheated by false hope, agrees to its continuance. Fortune may favour each side. Stakes may accumulate, now here, now there. But there is no mistaking the tendency of the game. That tendency is that larger and larger risks are run. Higher and higher and higher still is the excitement. Greater and greater is the strain and the tension. And the greater the tension, the greater the passion; and the stronger the passion the weaker the judgment—one result of which is that men who at the beginning of a game were resolute in the limitation of their stakes, gradually retreated from the position which they at first held, until at the end of the game the only limit placed to their stakes was all they possessed, and in some cases that limit was overreached. Add to this the enormous influence of the gambler's code of honour. The winner is a sneak and a miser if he cease to play after having once won. The loser is a coward if he cease to play after having once lost.

But I cannot forget that gambling is now said to be associated with, and even recognised as legitimate in commerce. A few years ago one particular department of business was considered

to be especially infected by this moral disease. How often have we heard men say, "The Cotton Market is a gigantic gamble;" "the trade now done in 'futures' is as immoral as are the transactions of the racecourse"; and since then the Stock Exchange has been similarly described. Now, we should greatly err if the mode of acquisition which is here regarded as "gambling" were supposed to be confined to either cotton or stocks. The truth is that speculations of a most hazardous character, and which are generally regarded as "gambling in futures," are carried on, not only in cotton which is ungrown, but in wheat, in rice, in maize, in coffee, in tea, in sugar, in pigs, in middles, in sides, and even in iron. Each of these has its "spot" trade. Each of these has its "futures." The spot trade may be as fictitious as the futures, and it must be so, if, as in the case of Glasgow warrants, more material be dealt in than exists on the spot. The future trade must be, in the nature of the case, absolutely fictitious. The sides and the middles of pigs are contracted for, to be delivered at a certain time, when the pigs themselves have been barely littered. The coffee, or the tea, or the sugar, or the maize, or the wheat, or the rice, or the cotton may not be grown or even growing. These futures are entirely fictitious, and to trade in them is to trade fictitiously, but not necessarily unlawfully. There is, no doubt, a sense—a limited sense—in which trade, carried on fictitiously, is legitimate, and that legitimacy belongs to futures, and in that sense. A butcher contracts to supply a hotel, or a ship, or a workhouse, or a barracks with beef or with lamb all the year round at a stated price. The lamb, at least, is a future. Let us, at all events, hope so. It is not less a future than cotton, or grain, or coffee, ungrown, or than any other similar commodity. No one would dream of considering the butcher a gambler, and yet he trades in futures. So does the shoemaker who has large contracts for the supply of boots and shoes which are made from the hides of animals, kid and the like, and which are, in a sense, future, and are not "spots." In this sense trade in futures is necessary, and is legitimate. Money passes between the parties concerned. All is above-board—all is in accordance with the laws of labour and of exchange. But if the butcher above referred to, instead of contracting to supply lamb undertook to supply wheat, or cotton, or iron, or sugar, or palm oil, at intervals which represented his expectation of "something always turning up," I should regard him as a gambler, because he was operating out of his legitimate business. He was a fictitious trader, even though he paid money for his purchase, while the general merchant was not a gambler, even though he paid none and traded in futures.

To sustain this position we must remember that the intro-

duction of telegraphy has changed the entire system of commerce. It has made men, in all parts of the world, acquainted with the state of every market, with the price of every commodity, with the condition, promising or otherwise, of every sort of crop. Steam navigation and the marvellous developments of our mercantile marine have rendered the transshipment of universal produce as regular and as "up to time" as though it was brought to our warehouses in delivery vans. The inevitable result of all this is the multiplication of transactions, the minimization of profits upon the one hand and of risks upon the other, and the stretching forward of business into the future. Before the advent of cables and of telegraphs, merchants entered into comparatively few transactions. They made large gains; they ran great risks. Now, two and a half per cent. is a large profit; then, ten per cent. was a small one. The volume of business is larger to-day than ever it was. The turnover is greater, but the gains are less, and so is the risk. Trade in futures is related to each of these factors. It arises out of the altered conditions of business. It is necessary, and, when safeguarded against adventurers and commercial quacks on the one hand, and against fictitious commodities on the other, it is legitimate.

The sense in which it is so, and in which it ought not to be designated gambling, will appear from a single transaction, which may be regarded as typical. A merchant buys calico from a cotton-spinner, to be delivered to him, say, next February. He cannot deliver it sooner, because the spinner has previous orders to complete. The cotton to make that calico is not yet picked. The crop is even uncertain; it may be spoilt by frosts or other intervening causes, and the commodity may be ten per cent. dearer in February than it is to-day. But the spinner has undertaken to deliver the calico, and he wants the cotton wherewith to produce it. This it is the business of a broker to supply, and he knows all that can well be known about the matter. He observes that to-day the "spot" cotton is scarce and dear. The old crop is nearly exhausted; the new crop is coming on. When it comes, every cotton-merchant will be a seller, and with many sellers prices fall. The spinner wants cotton for his calico in February. The broker or the merchant undertakes to deliver it then at a price, and thus the spinner is able to do business and to complete the order. The merchant has his agents in America, with whom he is in daily communication. They know the cotton-farmer, whose crops are growing. He is as anxious to dispose of his crop as others are to buy, and he goes through the same mental process as either spinner or broker. He sells to the agents cotton for shipment in January. It arrives in February, all risk being covered by insurance. This transaction is altogether in futures. It is the legitimate business of merchant,

spinner, broker, and grower. It is one outcome of their early knowledge that some part of the world will need the goods, and I believe it to be as necessary as I believe it to be honourable. Moreover, it is quite conceivable that trade in futures might be undertaken from motives which are in the highest degree prudential. A manufacturer in Moscow or elsewhere enters into a contract to sell a merchant a monthly supply of so much yarn during a period extending to six, or even to eight months. The telegraph has made him aware of the fluctuations of the market. It is now excited; it is again depressed; it is later on hardened; it is later still hurried. The manufacturer is unwilling to run the risk represented by these fluctuations in cotton, and over such an extended period. He endeavours to secure himself by authorizing his agents to buy futures for each month named in his contract. This is, in my humble judgment, not only legitimate and prudent, but necessary. Again, a planter in Alabama finds that there is a demand for cotton at a fairly remunerative price. This he would gladly accept; but his cotton is not ready—the gathering of the crop will run over several months. He knows by experience that violent fluctuations occur in the period which is covered by the gathering. He can only save himself from these by selling futures. This, too, is prudent, is legitimate, and is a species of self-preservation rendered necessary by the altered conditions of commerce. The point at which these transactions becomes a “gamble” is where others than those whose business it is “turn up,” or where transactions take place in fictitious goods by those who live by their wits and means, and who neither invest nor trade, but who are either “making haste to be rich,” or are the creatures of impulse, of passion, of speculation, of “plunging.” For the purposes of such, the commodity may never exist except upon paper. No money passes between the broker and the buyer. The latter desires the former to buy him, say, a thousand bales of cotton or a thousand tons of sugar. The former announces to the latter the fact of the purchase. But there is no exchange on either side. The cash, except to a small amount as a margin, is not paid; the goods are not, cannot be delivered. That transaction may be repeated a dozen times. No one taking part in it has more than the interest belonging to a time-bargain in the business. The buyer buys or sells for the difference in value at a given time. That difference he either receives as profit, or he returns as loss. If he receives as a seller, he sold what he never possessed; if he returns as a buyer, he has bought what he never paid for. In no case is there labour, or equivalent, or exchange; the proceeding is fictitious throughout. It may, of course, be contended that commerce has the right to regulate the spheres, practical or imaginary, in which business may be conducted; and if the

associations which represent the various departments of commerce agreed to deal in futures grown in the moon, such an agreement would, of course, bind all the members of the associations. But awkwardnesses would surely arise whenever the intervention of law became necessary; and, setting these aside, there can hardly be a second opinion about the deplorable results which wait upon business when conducted in this way. No man can deny that, when transactions take place without the interchange of money, the temptation to the avaricious to speculate beyond their means is enormous. Nor is it less true that this temptation is strongest where men are least able to endure the capricious adversity of the market. Nor can it be either doubted or denied that such modes of business press with great severity upon men who buy in order to sell, who pay somehow for what they possess, who know where they are, and who desire to remember the presence in the world of other people beside themselves. Such men will not "make haste to be rich." They will not pierce themselves through with many sorrows. They will regard the laws of God, viewed by reason or by revelation, as commanding them to "do the thing that is right, for that will bring them peace at the last." They will shun mimic markets, in which men learn the vulgarities and the vices which teach them how to supplant and how to undermine one another. They will frown down the sordid spirit, so base, so unscrupulous, so unpitying, which makes acquisition in any way short of the reach of penal consequences the inspiration of commerce. They will not accept gambling even in the form of business. Such men well know the consequences which wait upon the prevalence of the gambling spirit in our English agora. There are, I am told, crowds of men who would metamorphose commerce—which I for one regard as the offspring of God—into one great gaming-table. They would, with the wand of the enchantress, transform our merchants into gamblers, and our exchanges into enormous casinos. Speculation would be its vital breath; hazard would be the principle of its barter. A society which is conspicuous for generosity would then be cursed by a series of hopes and fears, alternating and fluctuating with every wild rumour, with every electric announcement, with every furtive intrigue. Homes, which in quieter days and in steadier conditions were as the heart in which great benevolence was conceived, will then be erected upon a series of chances, built up by freaks, by risks, by paper contracts, and by time-bargains. Their restless occupants will scarcely know at night by what right they retire to rest, or by day what is their ability to meet the tenancy of to-morrow. This unrest, this apprehension, this life on chances, will sap the strength of the strongest men in a nation which is still the strongest in the world. It is the

issue, the inevitable issue, of this gambling spirit, which has invaded our agora, our ordinary affairs, our social pastimes, and our public sports. It is a craze. It is amongst the most demoralizing epidemics of the century. It is, one may thankfully add, restrained by the fortnightly settling-day, as well as by the regulations of the Stock Exchange, one of which is that no speculative account be allowed for clerks or for persons in a subordinate position, and another of which is that no member of the Stock Exchange is allowed to advertise, or even to circularize the public. The perfidious herd who inundate the clergy and moneyed spinsters with sheaves of paper about "pools" and "options" and "corners" are not members of the Stock Exchange. Thus some restrictions are rigidly imposed. The grand restriction, however, is in Divine principle. It is wrong to make haste to be rich. It is atheistic to exclude God from observing the means by which money is either acquired, or increased, or administered. It is no less so to operate in money outside the laws which He has revealed, or in defiance of these laws. In this, as in most things, we may learn a little from the literature of the intellectual East or of the imperious West. Greece and Rome read out a lesson to the money markets of the age. The Roman Mint was hard by—it adjoined the Roman Temple. When metals became impressed, and when coinage marked the civilization as well as the political life of Greece, the emblems of religion were stamped upon the metal. The one and the other suggest that the principles of religion should pervade the courts of commerce; that money should be sanctified by moral life; that merchant and broker and trader and artisan and labourer should each regard the Eternal Presence as with him in his work, enabling him to toil in accordance with those laws by obedience to which humanity will find labour and sustenance and sympathy and progress, but from the operation of which I firmly believe the acquisition of the gambler to be excluded.

WILLIAM LEFROY, D.D.

THE DEANERY, NORWICH,  
October 14, 1890.

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ART. II.—THE THREE ABIDING GRACES, AS EXHIBITED IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

No. 1.—CHRISTIAN FAITH (IN PSALM XXXI.).

THERE are abundant reasons for concluding that the one hundred and fifty Psalms were, at some period in Jewish history, finally arranged in an elaborate system of seven sections,