

THE SIN OF GAMBLING



In the following sermon on Dr. Talma's message against the indulgence in games of chance, pointing out the unhappy end that invariably comes to the gambler. The text is Acts 1:19, "Aceldama—that is to say, the field of blood."

The money that Judas gave for surrendering Christ was used to purchase a graveyard. As the money was blood money, the ground bought by it was called in the Syrian tongue Aceldama, meaning "the field of blood." Well, there is one word I want to write today over every race course where wagers are staked, and every poolroom, and every gambling saloon, and every table, public or private, where men and women bet for sums of money, large or small, and that is a word incarnated with the life of innumerable victims—Aceldama.

The gambling spirit, which is at all times a stupendous evil, ever and anon sweeps over the country like an epidemic, prostrating uncounted thousands. There has never been a worse attack than that from which all the villages, towns and cities are now suffering.

While among my hearers and readers are those who have passed on into the afternoon of life and the shadows are lengthening and the sky crimson with the glow of the setting sun, a large number of them are in early life, and the morning is coming down out of the clear sky upon them, and the bright air is redolent with spring blossoms, and the stream of life, gleaming and glancing, rushes on between flowery banks, making music as it goes. Some of you are engaged in mercantile concerns as clerks and bookkeepers and your whole life is to be passed in the exciting world of traffic. The sound of busy life stirs you as the drum stirs the fiery war horse. Others are in the mechanical arts to hammer and chisel your way through life and success awaits you. Some are preparing for professional life, and grand opportunities are before you—nay, some of you already have buckled on the armor. But, whatever your age and calling, the subject of gambling, about which I speak to-day is pertinent.

Some years ago when an association for the suppression of gambling was organized an agent of the association came to a prominent citizen and asked him to patronize the society. He said: "No; I can have no interest in such an organization. I am in no wise affected by the evil." At that very time his son, who was his partner in business, was one of the heaviest players in a famous gambling establishment. Another refused his patronage on the same ground not knowing that his first bookkeeper, though receiving a salary of only \$4,000, was losing from \$50 to \$100 a night. The president of a railroad company refused to patronize the institution, saying: "That society is good for the defense of merchants, but we railroad people are not injured by this evil—not knowing that at that very time two of his conductors were spending three nights of each week at faro tables in New York. Directly or indirectly, this evil strikes at the whole world.

Gambling is the risking of something more or less valuable in the hope of winning more than you hazard. The instruments of gaming may differ, but the principle is the same. The shuffling and dealing cards, however full of temptation, is not gambling, unless stakes are put up, while on the other hand gambling may be carried on without cards or dice or billiards or a tennis alley. The man who bets on horses, on elections, on battles, the man who deals in "fancy" stocks or conducts a business which hazards extra capital or goes into associations without foundation, but depends upon what men call "luck," is a gambler.

Whatever you expect to get from your neighbor without offering an equivalent in money or time or skill is either the product of theft or gambling. Lottery tickets and lottery policies come into the same category. Bazaars for the founding of hospitals, schools and churches, conducted on the raffish system, come under the same denomination. Do not, therefore, associate gambling necessarily with any instrument or game or time or place or think the principle depends upon whether you play for a glass of wine or 100 shares of railroad stock. Whether you patronize auction pools, French mutuels or book-making, whether you employ faro or billiards, rondo and keno, cards or bagatelle, the very idea of the thing is dishonest, for it professes to bestow upon you a good for which you give no equivalent.

This crime is no new-born spete, but a haggard transgression that comes staggering down under a mantle of curses through many centuries. All nations, barbarous and civilized, have been addicted to it.

But now the laws of the whole civilized world denounce the system. enactments have been passed, but only partially enforced, and at times not enforced at all. The men interested in gambling houses and in jockey clubs wield such influence by their numbers and affluence that the judge, the jury and the police officers must be bold indeed who would array themselves against these infamous establishments. The House of Commons of England actually adjourns on Derby day that members may attend the races, and in the best circles of society in this country to-day are many hundreds of professedly respectable men who are acknowledged gamblers.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars in this land are every day being won and lost through gambling. Says a traveler through the West: "I have traveled 1,000 miles at a time upon the

western waters and seen gambling at every waking moment from the commencement to the termination of the journey." The southwest of this country reeks with this sin. In some of those cities every third or fourth house in many of the streets is a gaming place, and it may be truthfully averred that each of our cities is cursed with this evil.

Men wishing to gamble will find places just suited to their capacity not only in the underground oyster cellar or at the table back of the curtain, covered with greasy cards, or in the steamboat smoking cabin, where the bloated wretch with rings in his ears deals out his pack and winks in the unsuspecting traveler, providing free drinks all around, but in gilded parlors and amid gorgeous surroundings. This sin works ruin first by providing an unhealthy stimulant. Excitement is pleasurable. Under every sky and in every age men have sought it. We must at times have excitement. A thousand voices in our nature demand it. It is right. It is healthful. It is inspiring. It is a desire God given. But anything that first gratifies this appetite and huris it back in a terrific reaction is deplorable and wicked.

Any trade or occupation that is of use is ennobling. The street sweeper advances the interests of society by the cleanliness effected. The cat pays for the fragments it eats by clearing the house of vermin. The fly that takes the sweetness from the dregs of the cup compensates by purifying the air and keeping back the pestilence. But the gambler gives not anything for that which he takes. I recall that sentence. He does make a return, but it is a disgrace to the man that he fleeces, despair to his heart, ruin to his business, anguish to his wife, shame to his children and eternal wasting away to his soul. He pays in tears and blood and agony and darkness and woe.

What dull work is plowing to the farmer when in the village saloon in one night he makes and loses the value of a summer harvest! Who will want to sell tapes and measure nankeen and cut garments and weigh sugar when in a night's game he makes and loses and makes again and loses again the profits of a season?

John Borack was sent as a mercantile agent from Bremen to England and this country. After two years his employers mistrusted that all was not right. He was a defaulter for \$87,000. It was found that he had lost in Lombard street, London, \$29,000; in Fulton street, New York, \$10,000, and in New Orleans, \$3,000. He was imprisoned, but afterward escaped and went into the gambling profession. He died in a lunatic asylum. This crime is getting its lever under many a mercantile house in our cities, and before long down will come the great establishment, crushing reputation, home comfort and immortal souls. How it diverts and sinks capital may be inferred from some authentic statement before us. The ten gaming houses that once were authorized in Paris passed through the banks yearly \$25,000,000 francs.

Furthermore, this sin is the source of dishonesty. The game of hazard itself is often a cheat. How many tricks and deceptions in the dealing of the cards! The opponent's hand is oftentimes found out by fraud. Cards are marked so that they may be designated from the back. Expert gamblers have their accomplices, and one wick may decide a game. The dice have been found loaded with platina so that doublets come up every time. These dice are introduced by the gamblers unobserved by the honest men who have come into the play, and this accounts for the fact that 99 out of 100 who gamble, however wealthy when they begin, at the end are found to be poor, miserable, haggard wretches, that would not now be allowed to sit in the doorway of the house that they once owned.

A young man in London on coming of age received a fortune of \$120,000, and through gambling in three years was thrown on his mother for support. An only son went to New Orleans. He was rich, intellectual and elegant in manners. His parents gave him on his departure from home their last blessing. The sharpers got hold of him. They flattered him. They lured him to the gaming table and let him win almost every time for a good while and patted him on the back and said, "First rate player." But, fully in their grasp, they fleeced him, and his \$50,000 was lost. Last of all, he put up his watch, and lost that. Then he began to think of his home, and of his old father and mother, and wrote thus:

"My beloved parents, you will doubtless feel a momentary joy at the reception of this letter from the child of your bosom, on whom you have lavished all the favors of your declining years. But should a feeling of joy for a moment spring up in your hearts when you should have received this from me, cherish it not. I have fallen deep, never to rise. Those gray hairs that I should have honored and protected I shall bring down in sorrow to the grave. I will not curse my destroyer; but, oh, my God, avenge the wrongs and impositions practiced upon the unwary in a way that shall best please him! This, my dear parents, is the last letter you will ever receive from me. I humbly pray your forgiveness. It is my dying prayer. Long before you will have received this from me the cold grave will have closed upon me forever. Life to me is insupportable. I cannot—nay, I will not, suffer the shame of having ruined you. Forget and forgive is the dying prayer of your unfortunate son."

The old father came to the postoffice, got the letter and fell to the floor. They thought he was dead at first, but they brushed back the white hair from his brow and fanned him. He had only fainted. "Aceldama, the field of blood!"

The church of God has not seemed willing to allow the world to have all the advantage of these games of chance. A church bazar opens, and toward the close it is found that some of the more valuable articles are unavailable. Forthwith the conductors of the enterprise conclude that they will raffle for some of the valuable articles, and under the pretense of anxiety to make their minister a present or please some popular member of the church fascinating persons are dispatched through the room, pencil in hand, to "solicit shares," or perhaps each draws for his own advantage, and scores of people go home with their trophies, thinking that it is all right, for Christian ladies did the embroidery and Christian men did the raffling, and the proceeds went toward a new communion set. But you may depend on it that as far as morality is concerned you might as well have won the crack of the billiard ball or the turn of the dice box. Do you wonder that churches built, lighted or upholstered by such processes as that come to great financial and spiritual decrepitude? The devil says, "I helped to build that house of worship, and I have as much right there as you have," and for once the devil is right. We do not read that they had a lottery for building the church at Corinth or at Antioch or for getting up an embroidered surplice for St. Paul. All this I style ecclesiastical gambling. More than one man who is destroyed can say that his first step on the wrong road was when he won something at a church fair.

The gambling spirit has not stopped for any indecency. There transpired in Maryland a lottery in which people drew for lots in a burying ground. The modern habit of betting about everything is productive of immense mischief. The most healthful and innocent amusements of yachting and baseball playing have been the occasion of putting up excited and extravagant wagers. That which to many has been advantageous to body and mind has been to others the means of financial and moral loss. The custom is pernicious in the extreme where scores of men in respectable life give themselves up to betting, now on this boat, now on that; now on this ball club, now on that. Betting that once was chiefly the accompaniment of the race course is fast becoming a national habit, and in some circles any opinion advanced on finance or politics is accented with the interrogation, "How much will you bet on that, sir?"

This custom may make no appeal to slow, lethargic temperaments, but there are in the country tens of thousands of quick, nervous, sanguine, excitable temperaments, ready to be acted upon, and their feet will soon take hold on death. For some months and perhaps for years they will linger in the more polite and elegant circle of gamblers, but after awhile their pathway will come to the fatal plunge.

Shall I sketch the history of the gambler? Lured by bad company, he finds his way into a place where honest men ought never to go. He sits down to his first game, but only for pastime and the desire of being thought sociable. The players deal out the cards. They unconsciously play into Satan's hands, who takes all the tricks and both the players' souls for trumps, he being a sharper at any game. A slight stake is put up, just to add interest to the play. Game after game is played. Larger stakes and still larger. They begin to move nervously on their chairs. Their brows lower and eyes flash, until now they who win and they who lose, tread alike with passion, sit with set jaws and compressed lips, and clinched teeth, and eyes like fireballs that seem starting from their sockets, to see the ball turn before it comes. If losing, pale with envy and tremulous with unnumbered casts back redhot upon the heart, or winning, with hysteric laugh—"Ha, ha! I have it!"

A few years have passed, and he is only the wreck of a man. Seating himself at the game ere he throws the first card, he stakes the last relic of his wealth—the marriage ring which sealed the solemn vows between them. The game is lost, and, staggering back in exhaustion he dreams. The bright pillars of the past mock his agony, and his dreams flend with eyes of fire and tongues of flame circle about him with joined hands, to dance and sing the orgies with hellish chorus, chanting "Hail brother!" kissing his clammy forehead, until their loathsome looks, flowing with serpents, crawl into his bosom and sink their sharp fangs and suck up his life blood and, coiling around his heart, pinch it with chill and shudders unutterable.

Take warning! You are no stronger than tens of thousands who have by this practice been overthrown. No young man in our cities can escape being tempted. Beware of the first beguiling! This road is a down grade, and every instant increases the momentum. Launch not upon this treacherous sea. Splint hulks strew the beach. Tempesting storms howl up and down, tossing unwary craft into the Hell Gate. I speak of what I have seen with my own eyes. To a gambler's deathbed there comes no hope. He will probably die alone. His former associates come not nigh his dwelling. When the hour comes, his miserable soul will go out of a miserable life into a miserable eternity. As his poor remains pass the house where he was ruined old companions may look out for a moment and say, "There goes the old carcass—dead at last," but they will not get up from the table. Let him down into his grave. Plant no tree to cast its shade there, for the long, deep, eternal gloom that settles there is shadow enough. Plant no forgetmenots or eggplants around the spot, for flowers were not made to grow on such a blasted heath. Visit it not in the sunshine, for that would be mockery, but in the dismal night, when no stars were out and the spirit of darkness come down, horsed on the wind, then visit the grave of the gambler.

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Men's Suits In neat Spring styles, Browns, Greys, Etc., \$3.67.	Youths' Suits. All wool, fancy and plain Cheviots, \$4.98.	Children's Suits Small size suits that sold \$1.25 to \$1.50, 80c.
Men's All Wool Suits In fancy checks and stripes, blue and black; are worth \$7. \$4.98.	Boys' Suits. Elegant grey mixed suits for school etc., the \$1.50 kind, 98c.	Men's and Boys' Caps A big lot was offered us at a bargain we bought them; they are the 25c. kind; we mark them, 17c.

WRITE FOR SAMPLES.

The Record of 30 Years

The Marriages for the Last Thirty Years Compiled to Revive Pleasant Recollections and to Preserve the Same.

- 1872.
- Jan. 2, by Rev. J. H. Mark, Israel Sanders and Alice Shaeffer, both of Chapman twp.
- Jan. 7, by Rev. Erlenmeyer, Menoah Stauffer and Lydia Sechrist, both of Union twp.
- Jan. 7, by same, Jacob Dock and Amelia Diemer, both of Middlecreek twp.
- Jan. 7, by Rev. D. W. Miller, Edward D. Moyer of Washington township to Hannah Reichenbach, of Perry twp.
- Jan. 23, at the residence of Wm. O. Butler, Esq., in Danville, by Rev. John Mostyn, George M. Wakefield of Lewistown to Jennie C. Gregory of Selingsgrove.
- Jan. 30, by Rev. Erlenmeyer, Frederick Walter to Susan Hughes, both of Penn twp.
- Feb. 4, Peter Super of Snyder Co. and Elizabeth Snyder of Northumberland Co.
- Feb. 4, by Rev. A. Graul, Robert Shambach and Harriet Swineford, both of this borough.
- Feb. 6, Jonas Fetter and Barbara E. Kratzer, both of Snyder Co.
- Feb. 8, by Rev. Snyder, John Shure of Perry Co. and Mary Halenbach of Perry twp., Snyder Co.
- Feb. 11, W. H. Duck and M. E. Yoxheimer, both of Selingsgrove.
- Feb. 13, by same, Newton S. Bachman and Amelia C. Bolender, both of this borough.
- Feb. 13, at the residence of Matthias Schnee in Freeburg, by Rev. Erlenmeyer, Horace Adcox of Uniontown and Susan Wasser of Lewisburg.
- Feb. 14, at the Lutheran parsonage, by Rev. M. L. Shindel, T. J. Smith, Esq., and Lizzie B. Shindel, both of this place.
- Feb. 15, at Wilkes-Barre, by Rev. F. Hodge, W. W. Smith and Clivia H. Good, both of Stocton, Snyder Co.
- Feb. 18, by Rev. A. Graul, Alexander Erb of Franklin twp. and Clara Schwenk of this borough.
- At the same time and place, John D. Knarr of Union co. and Catherine Schwenk of this borough.
- Feb. 18, by Rev. Brensinger, Frank Burns of Selingsgrove and Martha Shadel of Winfield.
- Feb. 18, John A. Cochran and Maggie Hummel, both of Monroe twp.
- Feb. 18, at the residence of the bride's parents, by Rev. M. L. Shindel, Geo. W. Gates of Grand Rapids, Mich., to Lizzie McFall of Selingsgrove.
- Feb. 18, by Rev. Snyder, Daniel Stronek and Anna Ramer, both of Washington twp.
- Feb. 20, by Rev. J. P. Shindel, Zachariah Deabler of Snyder Co. and Lizzie Katherman of Union Co.
- Feb. 22, by Rev. J. P. Shindel, Daniel Deabler and Matilda Bishop, both of Snyder Co.
- Feb. 22, Jacob Heintzelman and Belle Hummel, both of Smith Grove.
- Feb. 25, Aaron S. Stahl of Freeburg and Saloma Martin of Wash-

Life's Work Finished

Freeburg Courier.

STAHL.
Daniel Stahl departed this life his home near Verdilla on Tuesday from the ravages of extreme age having lived beyond 80 years. He was a life long resident of Union township, and an exemplary citizen. He reared a large family of boys and three girls—his wife two boys preceded him in death. The funeral took place from his residence on Thursday.

SHOTSBERGER.

Annie Laura, daughter of E. Shotsberger, died on Sunday morning, aged 33 years, 10 months and 5 days. She had been in delicate health for many years, but had been fast but four days with pneumonia. She bore her suffering patiently never complaining. When she ceased was but twelve years old and was practically as a mother her younger brothers and sisters for which she was highly commended by her friends and neighbors. She will be greatly missed in family circle. A father, three ters and five brothers survive to mourn their loss. She was a constant member of the Lutheran church. Rev. G. D. Druckenmiller presiding over the funeral. The funeral services were held at the residence of her father, a large assemblage of sympathizing friends. The obsequies were conducted by Howard Arbogast. Pall bearers: Wm. Roush, Michael Moyer, M. Kantz, W. H. Goodling, John Miller and John Roush. Interment Evergreen cemetery.

Moving Notice.

All persons having business with this office please remember that we have moved our quarters from the Ocker's building to the new building on the Bank lot near the jail where we shall be pleased to greet our many friends and patrons.

Auditor's Notice.

In the Estate of John E. Lichtenwaller, late of Snyder County, Pennsylvania, deceased, Hiram Siegfried of Selingsgrove, spent Sunday in town. Jennie Keller accompanied her sister, Mrs. Charles Laudenslager, to Millinburg. Mr. and Mrs. Dunn, from Ohio, have moved in with the family of S. E. Klinepeter. The Primary and Grammar Schools closed on Friday, The Intermediate today. The children are glad to have a vacation again. Mr. and Mrs. Sheary of Centreville, accompanied Mrs. Wm. Sechrist to her new at this place.

DIED.

In Jackson twp., Catherine, wife of Willis Erdley, aged 56 years 5 mo.

Annie Shotsberger daughter of Eliza Shotsberger and wife Amelia, was born in Freeburg, May 26, 1864, died March 27, 1898, at Freeburg, aged 33 years 10 mo. and 1 day.

Solomon K. Dreisbach, a well known resident of New Berlin, died at his home on Sunday, March 20, aged 73 years.

At Freeburg, March 29th, Flo Walter, daughter of John Walter and his wife Ann, was born in Freeburg Dec. 16th and died March 25. Aged 8 years 3 mo. and 9 days.

MIDDLEBURGH MARKET

Corrected weekly by our merchant.

Butter.....
Eggs.....
Onions.....
Lard.....
Tallow.....
Chickens per lb.....
Turkeys.....
Side.....
Shoulder.....
Ham.....
Wheat.....
Rye.....
Potatoes.....
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Bran per 100 lbs.....
Middlings.....
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