

SAYS SUICIDE IS DUE TO ATHEISM

DR. TALMAGE DEPLORES EPIDEMIC OF SELF-KILLING

Well Known Minister Discusses Morbid Tendency of Present Age and Offers Remedy

Atheism, false standards of happiness, envy and covetousness and the possession of a cowardly heart were given by the Rev. Dr. Frank DeWitt Talmage in a sermon last night as the four great causes for the suicidal epidemic sweeping over the country.

The sermon "On the Crime of Self-Destruction" was given as one of the series of sermons, "Twenty Ways for Twenty Sins," and with atheism was placed the responsibility for being the cause of more suicides than any other sin.

"The increasing suicidal epidemic of the present generation should be halted in its onward march of destruction. I lift my voice today in warning against this evil. It cannot be stayed by upbraiding a mangled corpse or by calling the dead man a coward. I would prayerfully and earnestly try to indicate some of the causes which produce it. Then in guarding you against the incipient evils I might perhaps by the grace of God keep some from ever tottering and swaying on the verge of the precipice or tumbling into a suicide's grave. The gunpowder magazine can be exploded by a spark. We would deal this morning with primal causes rather than with resultant conflagrations.

"First, I charge atheism with the chief responsibility for the crime. Self-murder is the hideous, black visaged executioner of the merciless monster we call atheism, agnosticism, infidelity. It is the old slimy serpent coiled up under the overshadowing branches of the gnarled and worm-eaten tree of unbelief, at the foot of which sits the grinning, beak-eyed hag, misery, crooning a dirge for a lullaby. It is the death rattle of a human being whose parched lips have been set to the rian of the chalice filled with the scorching, poisonous concoction of blasphemy and falsehood, compounded by a Voltaire, a Rousseau, a Thomas Paine or a Robert G. Ingersoll. It is the whetstone, wet with human blood, upon which the moral sensibilities can be blunted and at the same time the suicide's knife sharpened, for it teaches immortal man that there is no hereafter and that he is responsible for his life's actions to no divine maker and king.

Never Honed on Bible

"No suicidal razor was ever honed upon the leaves of the opened Bible. Though the morning newspapers almost every day are blackened with the awful obituary tragedies of men and women who have deliberately taken their lives by the bloody hand of self-murder, you cannot find among those who perished in the full possession of reason a single consecrated Christian church member. You cannot find one person among them all who realized that he was a beloved child of God and that he expected to go to meet a loving heavenly father, unless that person killed himself during a fit of temporary insanity, as did Hugh Miller, the great Scotch scientist, who blew out his brains during mental derangement, or the eminent New York clergyman, who in delirium leaped from a window.

"The whole tendency of the gospel of Jesus Christ is opposed to this suicidal epidemic; the whole tendency of unbelief is to promote and increase it. To the atheist life is a single span, one abutment of which is the cradle and the other the grave, at which he meets annihilation. To such a man there is no better principle of life than to eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow he dies. He would make life a comedy for all and death a great finale.

"The earnest Christian disciple says 'Life is not a joke; death is not a finale.' Life is an opportunity for doing good and for struggling against evil. Because the good as well as the evil live on forever and ever we ought to put ourselves in the hands of the Almighty, who arranges our lot for us, and say, as Job did, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.'

"The unbeliever in the gospel says: 'If there is a hell it is to be found this side and not the other side of the grave. When things go wrong the best way to escape suffering is to snap the silver cord of human life and silence the beating heart.' The Christian disciple says: 'Sanctified troubles are a spiritual means by the grace of God for raising an immortal soul on and up.'

"False standards of happiness can be catalogued among the frequent, prolific causes of the suicidal sin. They are the deceiving mirages which tempt the weary life's traveler to lose himself in the midst of a Sahara of sand. They are the deceitful stars, twinkling their benedictions over altars of silver and of gold and of fame, which suddenly go out and leave the devotees worshipping in total darkness. They are the musical voices of the sirens singing their sweetest songs when luring their victims on to fatal shipwreck.

Disappointments Cause

"In the false standards of happiness can be found the origin of the disappointments which so often end in suicide. Men do not first seek wealth or fame to possess those treasures, as a miser might hoard up his gold. They desire the merchant prince's palace and the king's throne because they foolishly think that happiness is a coy maiden, who loves to robe herself in silks and

to have her throat and fingers aglitter with precious jewels, and therefore they can the more readily find her in the rich man's mansion than in the poor man's hut.

"The human being who commits suicide merely because the golden breast-plate of wealth has plumed her wings and disappeared from sight or because the iconoclast of trouble has shattered the idol of fame is doing a fool's business. Happiness, true happiness, the happiness for which we all long and for which some of us are seeking, is not dependent upon outside surroundings, but upon the condition of the heart.

"If wealth does not in itself produce happiness neither does worldly fame or honor. Men strive for place and power as if with them they were sure of happiness. They plot and conspire and murder that they may mount the steps of a throne, and when they succeed they find that they have gained nothing but anxiety and worry. And yet for financial wealth and worldly honor thousands of men will surrender their all. They will follow these will-o'-the-wisps though the shining lights may lead them over miasmatic swamps and quaking bogs and into the fatal quicksand. They will seek and struggle and continue to struggle to possess these supposed priceless treasures because they believe that in them the great heart of happiness, rich-blooded and life-giving, can be found. Then when they have been defeated in the struggles of life they sometimes drive the destroying dagger into their own arteries, as a tantalized serpent buries his poisonous fangs in his own flesh.

"Envy and covetousness also lead to suicide. The unwillingness to love our neighbors as ourselves is one of the indirect causes of this dreadful sin. Two ways of looking at this old world: The one is through the green glasses of envy; the result, unhappiness. The other way is through the sanctified crystals of a tender, a holy love; the result, gospel joy. The one way is to bitterly bemoan, because some people are supposed to be better off than we. The other way is to try to find out how many people are worse off than we are and then, with a Christian desire, try to help them as we would like to be helped if we were in their place.

"No power on earth can make a human being more contented than that which comes from being brought into sympathetic touch with other people's trials, for all people have them.

"A coward's heart is a direct cause for the suicidal sin. 'Oh, no,' says some one, 'that cannot be. A suicide may be this or that or the other thing, but he is not a coward. No man is a coward who dares to commit self-murder. No man is a coward who will calmly look death in the face and defy the grinning skeleton of the tomb.'

"Ah, my friend, you are wrong. The direct cause of the suicidal sin is invariably the result of a coward's heart. It is the act of a man who runs away from trouble, instead of courageously grappling with it. The bravest of deeds is to die, if necessary, to save others. But it would not be heroic for men to die merely because they are too cowardly to fight. Neither is it heroic or brave for any man to commit suicide merely because he is too craven hearted to meet the responsibilities of life as they arise. The noblest word in some respects in all the English language is 'duty.' That word will sometimes compel its followers to plunge into and endure the bayonet thrusts of a thorny hedge, as it will sometimes give the pleasanter command of following that stern word through an embowered pathway.

"The bravest act in all the world for some men is to publicly confess Christ. Oh, my friends, will you not realize that one of the chief reasons of the cowardly tendency to suicide is the unwillingness to publicly confess and work and live for Christ? As all roads were once supposed to lead to Rome, every act and deed and thought of your life should lead you to the foot of the cross. Then, oh then, if you are true to Christ you will never be false to yourself. Then, oh then, your life, instead of having a suicidal tendency, will be an eternal life of triumphant joy."

HOW TO TREAT THE OLD FOLKS

Dr. Dowling Pleads for Reverence of the Aged

In preaching at Christ Protestant Episcopal church yesterday morning on "How to Treat the Old Folks," the seventh sermon in the series concerning "Marriage and After Marriage," Rev. Dr. George Thomas Dowling said:

"In the first place, forget that they are old folks. There is a difference between your generation and theirs. There must be. Make that difference just as little as possible. Have you heard a good story down town? Save it for them. And the more bubbling over with rollicking humor it is the better. Is there a book you are reading, or even a daily paper which contains some choice bit? Save it for them. And let them know you saved it for them. They are no longer on the stage among the actors. But an old player always loves to sit where he can watch the play. Then ring up the curtain for them just as often as you can. Whatever interests you, bring it home to them. Let them feel that you are their chum. That was a noble tribute which the mother of Henry Ward Beecher rendered to him in her old age, when she said, 'I always love to have Henry come and see me. He brings so much sunshine, and he makes me feel young again.' Forget that they are the old folks.

"And then, in the second place, remember that they are the old folks. Remember it that you may be tender of them. They are not as young as they once were. They cannot stand what they once could. Then remember that, that you may ever be thoughtful and patient and kind. The shoulders are bent now. What made them bent? Carrying your troubles all through the years. The fingers are distorted now. What made them so? Working for you. Yes, they are the old folks now, but it was not always so. That aged

mother was young once. And what did she do with her youth? She gave it to you. When you had the croup it was her hand that bound up the throat and bathed the aching head.

"When you came sobbing with some childish sorrow to her, she was never too busy or too tired to take you in her arms and comfort you. Never a touch of tenderness like hers. It is not strange that the hand trembles and the memory is beginning to fail a bit, for she has given her strength and her life for you. Though we live a hundred years we never forget that touch. During the civil war a young soldier lay dangerously wounded, and in his delirium he kept calling for his mother. And so they telegraphed for her from a distant city. But when she came they said: 'You can't go in. He's too ill. He couldn't stand the shock.' And so she stood at the door watching and waiting and weeping. But when she heard him groan she begged to be permitted to enter. 'I won't speak to him,' she said, 'let me only sit beside him.' But as she sat there with his face against the wall, the mother's instinct was too strong, and reaching out her hand she laid it gently on his forehead. And then he said, 'Nurse, that's just like my mother's touch.' No other hand like hers.

"But they are the old folks now. There is frost gathering in the locks and there are wrinkles on the kindly brow, and the step is not so long as it once was.

"Ah, make their last days bright and beautiful. Never let them think they are the old folks.

"And then finally, while you remember that they are the old folks, and you forget that they are the old folks, help them to forget it. Shield them from want and the cares and anxieties of life.

"Where can I find such words of contempt and scorn as shall fittingly characterize those who, 'disobedient to parents without natural affection' will refuse to share their very crust if need be, yes, and their last crust with the father or the mother who cared for them in their unconscious infancy? If there be such in this congregation this morning, though you be seated here in this temple of God amid people of respectability, though you be clad in garments of refinement and perhaps pride yourself on your standing in society, if you are a man, I tell you there are men in state's prison who are as far superior to you as the stars of heaven are superior to the dark lantern of the thief; and if you are a woman, I tell you that there are women in these streets selling their bodies for hunger, and for the hunger of those they love, who are saints compared with you. 'The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the younger eagles shall eat it.'"

TREAT ALL AS BROTHERS

Rev. B. Fay Mills Attacks Class Prejudice

Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills, permanent minister of the Los Angeles Fellowship, preached twice yesterday in Masonic hall, to congregations that filled the large auditorium and were very enthusiastic. The Fellowship orchestra, under the leadership of A. Walper, greatly delighted the people, and Miss Beas Welch rendered a vocal solo in the morning, and Ernest Reginald Leeman in the evening. Mr. Mills will speak at the mid-week meeting of the Fellowship in Harriman hall, 337 1/2 South Hill street, on "Universal Brotherhood" on Wednesday evening at 8 p. m. sharp.

Mr. Mills chose for his topic yesterday morning "The Infidel's Prayer." He said that he regarded as the worst infidel the man who stands and prays as the Pharisee of old, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men." Mr. Mills went on to say: "He is an infidel because he is a practical disbeliever in the power that is making the universe. We see in men what we are, and if we see deformity and brutality in others, it is because we are deformed or brutal ourselves. The woman who really loves her brutal husband and sees the noble man in him is the only one who really sees him. Love is not blind; it is the only time when one really sees.

"We find that men are alike in their origin, largely in the kinds of experiences, in their destiny, and they have the same sort of bodies and brains and consciences. The distinctions between them are artificial, and are made only by man. 'The late Mayor Jones of Toledo spoke a true word in his thrilling song which tells us that 'No title is higher than man.'

"Men have believed that something would be gained by distinctions between superior and inferior classes. It never was a gain to the so-called superior class except in some possible advantage of food, clothing or shelter. Being in the superior class has never made a man in any wise a finer, purer, juster man, and it very often has made him arrogant, luxurious and bestial. Those called inferior never thought it was an advantage. The meaneast may become noble; every enemy may become a friend, and some of the greatest jewels are found in the mire.

"The way to avoid this class distinction, personally, is to treat every man individually as though he were a brother.

"I would go farther than the Socialists do. Private property will have to go, but the class consciousness and class struggle continue to the fundamental principle of the social consciousness and the social conscience. I propose to let my voice be raised unceasingly for the organization of economics all for one and one for all; but I also propose to say that less than nothing is accomplished by any appeal to the needs, the sectarian spirit, the prejudices, the passions and the selfishness of any class. The poor may grasp, but never grasp what they want. 'Let the amelioration in our laws of property proceed from the concessions of the rich, not from the grasping of the poor,' is not all that I would say. Let it proceed from the right spirit in both.

If you would say that nothing has been gained except by demanding your rights, then I would say that that has been the whole trouble with the organization of society and is today. Duties and not rights are the important things. There is something deeper than class consciousness and the class struggle, and that is the consciousness of the solidarity of the race. Mankind are one, and what is worth while will proceed from this spirit and from this alone."

SHOULD KEEP ON SUNNY SIDE

Chaplain Kidder Says Brightness is Necessary

"Keeping on the Sunny Side" was the topic taken yesterday afternoon by the Chaplain A. W. Kidder of the Strangers' Friend society at the meeting in Burbank hall. He said in part:

"Citizens of this bright Southland may congratulate themselves that they inhabit the sunny side of the map. 'If what is called the fortune of men could fall on the sunny side for all, how the careworn faces of men and women that through our streets would brighten up and the shout of mirth would drown the creaking of the money-making machines. The mill of commerce makes sunshine for some and clouds for others. It is a regular rain-maker for many whose ill success has covered their faces with tears and beclouded half their lives.

"How to keep on the sunny side is the great question of today. The first essential is to have faith in God. The man who loses faith in the heavenly Father is a wreck even if he is still floating on the sea of life. The ship that has lost her rudder can never reach her destination unless the rudder is replaced or a friend supplies one.

"Faith in God is the rudder of the soul and the man may steer on to the sunny side who has faith in God. 'The next almost equally important possession is to have faith in man. This is often as difficult to retain as the other, but the man who loses faith in man can't keep on the sunny side, he is sure to get under a cloud. When a man loses faith in his brother, he deprecates himself.

"The Strangers' Friend society proclaims faith in God and faith in man and earnestly seeks to live in the sunshine and drive the shadows away from the discouraged ones who come within its reach."

URGES NEED OF REVIVAL

Rev. William Horace Day Says Evangelism is Necessary

At the First Congregational church yesterday morning the pastor, Rev. William Horace Day, preached on "Seasons of Refreshing Times," when men were especially ready to be evangelized. He said in part: "We live in an age of change. Old mental machinery has given place to new. The very terms of thought have changed. The failure to secure results in evangelistic work has led men to say the age of great revivals is past. The question of many earnest souls is this, Is evangelism an essential element in religious growth? Should not the slower method of education give sufficient growth?"

"We have learned the importance of such methods if the gospel is to have more than a fleeting interest in human hearts. They must not only feel, they must think. To gain completeness of character and permanence the spiritual nature must be persistently educated. Spiritual education is not all. It has not completely succeeded in bringing men into unity with God through Christ. Mere appeal to the intellect leaves men with the sense of the unreality of God. Emerson characterizing it, 'Said my languid gentleman at Oxford, There is nothing new or true and no matter.'

"The educational process is not enough. It cannot be neglected, but it is not enough. Mr. Moody said the evangelistic method was essential because the church was founded in a revival, every new denomination and the consequent quickening of spiritual life has grown out of evangelistic seasons; that today four-fifths of the membership of the churches, among them the most devoted and stable, are the fruits of evangelism. We 'prove our answer,' by examining other fields of human life. The highest success in industrial life has been reached only by the employment of this method, a revival in business interest. I attended such evangelism in the interest of a life insurance company some time ago. We have just had a revival in politics which cost Los Angeles over \$20,000. These city and national elections have done for our patriotism what the best education in school and press could not do if unaided. The great simultaneous mission is on modern lines. It appeals to the whole city and will succeed if we obey the text, 'Repent ye, therefore, and turn again that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.'"

PAVES WAY FOR REVIVAL

Rev. C. A. Smither Preaches on "Jesus' First Disciples"

In harmony with the evangelistic spirit now dominant among Los Angeles churches Rev. C. A. Smither preached yesterday morning at the First Christian church upon "Jesus' First Disciples." He said in part: "In evangelistic work, as elsewhere, we may sit with great profit at the feet of the Master. As in other things, so in winning disciples he was the world's ideal. As planned by Christ his church's perpetuity in the world was dependent upon his disciples. Limited as he was in his physical life, the propagation of his gospel in the world rested upon his followers. They must therefore be won to himself and qualified for the great task soon to be committed to their hands. In calling them to so great a work, that of co-operation with himself in the world's redemption, he bestowed signal honor upon his disciples and upon all subsequent co-workers in his kingdom.

"He strove to win men to himself. He had no organization with which he could affiliate. He was the magnet of his system. He was its way and its life. He is yet the center and powerful factor in the Christian system. In so far as men depart from this fundamental truth and substitute creeds or church organizations for fealty to the personal Christ so far do they lack in power with God and man. To all earnest inquirers his challenge was to 'come and see,' to make a most searching investigation of his claims, his character, his life and purposes. Personal contact with Jesus usually means surrender to his authority and obedience to his will. When men in true search for the truth study the Master's life their hearts soon find true satisfaction.

"His call was to all men, irrespective of rank or condition. Man is of infinite worth apart from his earthly possessions or environment. All classes of men gathered about him to glean his words of wisdom. The humbler classes of mankind accepted most quickly and fully his claim to divine soulship and gave adherence to his supreme authority. On such lives h most quickly impressed his own character and teaching, and lifted them into fellowship with himself and set them to the great task of winning the world to God.

"Jesus was distinctly a personal worker. He won his disciples by personal contact. He discovered the individual and dealt with him in person. His own hands fashioned the man quarried from nature and fitted him for a place in the eternal temple. He set his disciples to personal work in winning men to God. One goes and seeks his brother and thus turns fleshly relations into channels along which flow the tides of spiritual power and vitality. Another reaches and influences a neighbor and turns him to the lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. To succeed as soul winners for Christ each person must be a personal worker, must work in the circle and under the conditions of life where he lives. Men are not brought to God in regiments, but singly. Men are not won to Christ by strangers, but by friends whose hearts are on fire with divine love. If all Christians could utilize the few simple principles illustrated in the winning of Christ's first few disciples this city would soon be captured by and for Christ."

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ON MENTAL RELATIONS

Rev. J. S. Thomson at Dobinson Auditorium

Rev. J. S. Thomson, pastor of the Independent Church of Christ, in Dobinson auditorium, preached a sermon on "Mental Relatives."

We see mental relatives in soldiers, teachers, lawyers, financiers, botanists. Blood relations are often mental relatives. In some families the men are ministers, in others poets and in others farmers. Again, members of one family find their real relatives in other families. David and Jonathan were dear friends, but David's brothers did not like him. All the members of some families attend different churches. Differences sometimes makes lasting friendships. Dr. Johnson and his biographer were very different, but yet they were true friends. Socrates and Plato were good friends notwithstanding their differences of nature and character. Roosevelt and Hay fit into one another, because they are quite different. The home to be complete needs persons of different temperaments, tastes and aims. Jesus refused to let the man whom he had healed stay with him and his disciples. He sent him home to declare God's mercy and grace, and the man had great success. The disciples and this man could not have agreed. Paul disagreed with Peter and Barnabas, but Timothy was his "own son." Moody and Sankey worked well together with their different talents; and Davy and Faraday helped each other, the one being a complement of the other. Christ was deserted when his doctrine appeared too hard for his hearers. He said they were not of his sheep, and that they who were of the truth would bear his voice. He also said that "whoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven the same is my brother and sister and mother." The servants of God are Christ's relatives. Those whom the Father gave to him could not be plucked out of his hand because they had become his everlasting relatives. Every day we are making friends or enemies. We are investing our lives in the lives of others some way. We cannot help it; for no man liveth to himself nor dieth to himself. God gives us people whom it is our duty to put into God's hand consciously. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition."

THE SIGHT TO SEE

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Grand Canyon Excursion.....

January 23d

On Monday, January 23, a special excursion to the Grand Canyon of Arizona will be run. Tickets will be good on the California Limited or any of our three daily overland trains. Using the Limited you land at the Canyon next afternoon at 4. The new hotel, "El Tovar," is just opened and the round trip excursion rate has been put at the attractive figure of \$25.00. Ask at 200 S. Spring street or any Santa Fe agent in Southern California.

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FOR SAN FRANCISCO Calling at Ventura, Santa Barbara, Fort Harford (San Luis Obispo), Cayucos, San Simeon, Monterey and Santa Cruz. LEAVE SAN PEDRO. COOS BAY, 6:30 p. m., Jan. 5, 14, 23. SANTA CRUZ (freight only), 6:30 p. m., Jan. 2, 10, 18.

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