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"DO THYSELF NO HARM."

REV. DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

Suicide in Olden Time Was Considered Honorable and a Sign of Courage—Modern Apologists for This Crime—Genuine Science and Revelation in Accord.

BROOKLYN, Oct. 14.—At the Tabernacle this morning, the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D.D., took for his text Acts xvi, 28 and 29: "He drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm." The sermon was as follows:

Here is a would-be suicide arrested in his deadly attempt. He was a sheriff, and according to the Roman law, a bailiff himself must suffer the punishment due an escaped prisoner; and if the prisoner breaking jail was sentenced to be imprisoned for three or four years, then the sheriff must be imprisoned for three or four years; and if the prisoner breaking jail was to have suffered capital punishment, then the sheriff must suffer capital punishment. The sheriff had received special charge to keep a sharp lookout for Paul and Silas. The government had not had confidence in bolts and bars to keep safe these two clergymen, about whom there seemed to be something strange and supernatural.

Sure enough, by miraculous power, they are free, and the sheriff, waking out of a sound sleep and supposing these matters have run away, and knowing that they were to die for preaching Christ, and realizing that he must therefore die, rather than go under the executioner's axe on the morrow and suffer public disgrace, resolves to precipitate his own escape. But before the sharp, keen, glittering dagger of the sheriff could strike his heart, one of the unloosed prisoners arrests the blade by the command: "Do thyself no harm."

In olden times and where Christianity had not interfered with it, suicide was considered honorable and a sign of courage. Demosthenes pointed himself when told that Alexander's ambassador had demanded the surrender of the Athenian orators. Isocrates killed himself rather than surrender to Philip of Macedonia. Cato, rather than submit to Julius Caesar, took his own life, and after three times his wounds had been dressed, tore them open and perished. Mithridates killed himself rather than submit to Pompey the conqueror. Hannibal destroyed his life by poison from his ring, considering life unbearable. Lysurgus a suicide, Brutus a suicide. After the disaster of Moscow, Napoleon always carried with him a preparation of opium, and one night his servant heard the ex-comptroller put something into a glass and drink it, and soon after the groans aroused all the attendants, and it was only through utmost medical skill he was resuscitated from the stupor of the opiate.

Times have changed, and yet the American conscience needs to be toned upon the subject of suicide. Have you seen a paper in the last month that did not announce the passage out of life by one's own hand? Defaulter, alarmed at the idea of exposure, quit life precipitately. Men losing large fortunes go out of the world because they cannot endure earthly existence. Frustrated affection, domestic infidelity, dyspeptic impatience, anger, remorse, envy, jealousy, destitution, misanthropy are considered sufficient causes for absconding from this life by Paris green, by laudanum, by belladonna, by Othello's dagger, by halter, by leap from the abutment of a bridge, by firearms. More cases of felo-de-se in the last two years than any two years of the world's existence, and more in the last month than in any twelve months. The evil is more and more spreading.

A pupil not long ago expressed some doubt as to whether there was really anything wrong about quitting this life when it becomes disagreeable, and there are found in respectable circles people apologetic for the crime which Paul in the text arrested. I shall show you before I get through that suicide is the worst of all crimes, and I shall hit a warning unmistakable. But in the early part of this sermon I wish to admit that some of the best Christians that ever lived have committed self destruction, but always in dementia, and not responsible. I have no more doubt about their eternal felicity than I have of the Christian who dies in his bed in the delirium of typhoid fever. While the shock of the earthquake is very great, I charge all those who have had Christian friends under cerebral aberration step off the boundaries of this life, to have no doubt about their happiness. The dear Lord took them right out of their dazed and frenzied state into perfect safety. How Christ felt toward the insane, you may know from the kind way he treated the demoniac of Gadara and the child lunatic, and the potency with which he hushed tempests either of sea or brain.

Scotland, the land profile of intellectual giants, had none grander than Hugh Miller, great for science and great for faith. He came of the best Highland blood, and was a descendant of Donald Roy, a man eminent for piety and the rare gift of second sight. His attainments, climbing up as he did from the quarry and the wall of the stonemason, drew forth the astonished admiration of Buckland and Murchison, the scientists, and Dr. Chalmers, the theologian, and held universities spellbound while he told them the story of what he had seen of God in the old red sandstone.

That man did more than any being that ever lived to show that the God of the hills is the God of the rocks, and he kept his flaming torch on the rocks of Granary until he brought geology and theology accordant in divine worship. His two books, entitled "Footprints of the Creator" and the "Testimony of the Rocks" proclaimed the banners of an everlasting marriage between genuine science and revelation. On this latter book he toiled day and night through love of nature and love of God, until he could not sleep, and his brain gave way, and he was found dead with a revolver by his side, the cruel instrument having had two bullets—one for him and the other for the gunsmith who at the surgeon's request was examining it and fell dead. Have you any doubt of the sanctification of Hugh Miller, after his hot brain had ceased throbbing that winter night in his study at Perth? Among the mightiest of earth, among the mightiest of heaven.

No one doubted the piety of William Cowper, the author of those three great hymns, "Oh, for a closer walk with God," "What various hindrances we meet," "There is a fountain filled with blood." William Cowper, who shares with Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley the chief honors of Christian hymnology. In hypochondria he resolved to take his own life and rode to the river Thames, but found a man seated on some rocks at the very point from which he expected to spring, and he took to his horse and that night threw himself upon his own knife, but the blade broke, and then he knifed himself to the cutting, but the rope parted. No wonder that when God mercifully delivered him from

that awful dementia he set down and wrote that other hymn just as memorable:

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

While we make this merciful and righteous allowance in regard to those who were plunged into mental incoherence, I declare that that man who in the use of his reason, by his own act, snaps the bond between his body and his soul goes straight into perdition. Shall I prove it? Revelations xxi, 8, "Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Revelations xxi, 15, "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers." You do not believe the New Testament? Then, perhaps, you believe the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill." Do you say all these passages refer to the taking of the life of others? Then I ask you if you are not as responsible for your own life as for the life of others? God gave you a special trust in your life. He made you the custodian of your life as he made you the custodian of no other life. He gave you as weapons with which to defend it two arms to strike back assailants, two eyes to watch for invasion, and a natural love of life which ought ever to be on the alert. Assassination of others is a mild crime compared with the assassination of yourself, because in the latter case it is treachery to an especial trust, it is the surrender of a castle you were especially appointed to keep, it is treason to a natural law and it is treason to God added to ordinary murder.

To show how God in the Bible looked upon this crime, I point you to the regius picture gallery in some parts of the Bible, the pictures of the people who have committed this unnatural crime. Here is the headless trunk of Saul on the walls of Babylon. Here is the man who chased little David—ten feet in stature chasing four. Here is the man who consulted a clairvoyant, Witch of Endor. Here is a man who, whipped in battle, instead of surrendering his sword with dignity, as many a man has done, asks his servant to slay him; and when the servant declines, then the giant plants the hilt of the sword in the earth, the sharp point sticking upward, and he throws his body on it and expires, the coward, the suicide. Here is Althobbel, the Machiavelli of olden times, betraying his best friend. Here in order that he may become prime minister of Absalom, and joining that fellow in his attempt at parricide. Not getting what he wanted by change of politics, he takes a short-cut out of a disgraced life into the suicide's eternity. There he is, the ingrate!

Here is Abimelech, peccatorially a suicide. He is with an army, bombarding a tower, when a woman in the tower casts a grindstone from its place and drops it upon his head, and with what life he has left in his cracked skull he commands his armor bearer: "Draw thy sword and slay me, lest men say a woman slew me." There is his post mortem photograph in the look of Samson. But the hero of this group is Judas Iscariot. Dr. Donne says he was a martyr, and we have in our day apologists for him. And what wonder, in this day when we have a book revealing Aaron Burr as a pattern of virtue, and in this day when we uncover a statue to George Sand as the benefactress of literature, and in this day when there are betrayals of Christ on the part of some of his pretended apostles—a betrayal so black it makes the infamy of Judas Iscariot whet? Yet this man by his own hand hung up for the execration of all the ages, Judas Iscariot.

All the good men and women of the Bible left to God the decision of their earthly term, and they could have said with Job, who had a right to commit suicide if any man ever had—what with his destroyed property, and his body all aflame with insufferable excruciations, and everything gone from his home except the chief curse of it, a pestiferous wife, and four garrulous people pelting him with uncomfortable talk while he sits on a heap of ashes scratching his heels with a piece of broken pottery, yet crying out in triumph: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come."

Notwithstanding the Bible is against this evil and the aversion which it creates by the hideous and ghastly spectacle of those who have hurled themselves out of life, and notwithstanding Christianity is against it, and the arguments and the useful lives and the illustrious deaths of its disciples, it is a fact alarmingly patent that suicide is on the increase.

What is the cause? I charge upon infidelity and agnosticism this whole thing. If there be no hereafter, or if that hereafter be blissful without reference to how we live and how we die, why not move back the folding doors between this world and the next? And when our existence here becomes troublesome, why not pass right over into Elysium clear through the door of death? But the world is not agnostic, and consider it for you go to your homes: there has never been a case of suicide where the operator was not either demented, and therefore irresponsible, or an imbecile. I challenge all the ages, and I challenge the whole universe. There never has been a case of self destruction while in full appreciation of the immortality of the soul, and the fact that immortality would be glorious or wretched according as he accepted Jesus Christ or rejected him.

You say it is a business trouble, or you say it is electrical currents, or it is this, or it is that, or it is the other thing. Why not go clear through the door, and acknowledge that in every case it is the delusion of reason, the teaching of infidelity which practically says: "If you don't like this life get out of it, and you will find either in annihilation, where there are no notes to pay, no persecutions to suffer, no govt to torment, or you will find where there will be everything glorious and nothing to pay for it." Infidelity always has been apologetic for self immolation. After Tom Paine's "Age of Reason" was published and widely read there was a marked increase of self slaughter.

A man in London heard Mr. Owen deliver his infidel lecture on socialism and went home, set down and wrote these words: "Jesus Christ is one of the weakest characters in history, and the Bible is the greatest possible deception," and then shot himself. David Hume wrote these words: "It would be no crime for me to divert the Nile or the Danube from its natural bed. Where, then, can be the crime in my diverting a few drops of blood from their ordinary channel?" And having written the essay he loaned it to a friend, the friend read it, wrote a letter of thanks and admiration, and shot himself. Appendix to the same book.

Rousseau, Voltaire, Gibbon, Montaigne, under certain circumstances, were apologetic for self immolation. Infidelity puts upon her to people's rushing out from this world into the next. They teach us it does not make any difference how you live here or go out of this world, you will find either in an obvious nowhere or a glorious somewhere. And infidelity holds the upper end of the rope for the suicide and aims the pistol with which a man throws his brains out, and mixes the artery-chamber for the sea swallow. If infidelity could carry the day and persuade the majority of the people in

this country that it does not make any difference how you go out of the world, you will land safely, the Hudson and the East rivers would be so full of corpses the ferry boats would be impeded in their progress, and the crack of a suicide's pistol would be no more alarming than the rumble of a street car.

I have sometimes heard it discussed whether the great dramatist was a Christian or not. I do not know, but I know that he considered appreciation of a future existence the mightiest hindrance to self destruction.

For who could bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurs
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death—
The undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveler returns—puzzles the will?

Would God the coroners would be brave in rendering the right verdict, and when in a case of irresponsibility they say: "While this man was demented he took his life," in the other case say: "Having read infidel books and attended infidel lectures, which obliterated from this man's mind all appreciation of anything like future retribution, he committed self slaughter!"

Oh, infidelity, stand up and take thy sentence! In the presence of God, and angels, and men, stand up, thou monster, thy lip blasted with blasphemy, thy cheek scarred with lust, thy breath foul with the corruption of the ages! Stand up, Satyr, filthy goat, buzzard of the nation, leper of the centuries! Stand up, thou monster infidelity! Part man, part panther, part reptile, part dragon, stand up and take thy sentence! Thy hands red with the blood in which thou hast washed, thy feet crimson with the human gore through which thou hast waded, stand up and take thy sentence! Down with thee to the pit and sup on the sods and groans of families thou hast blasted, and roll on the bed of knives which thou hast sharpened for others, and let thy music be the everlasting misereere of those whom thou hast damned! I brand the forehead of infidelity with all the crimes of self immolation for the last century on the part of those who had their reason.

A friend, if ever your life through its abrasions and its molestations should seem to be unbearable, and you are tempted to quit it by your own hand, do not consider yourself as worse than others. Christ himself was tempted to cast himself from the roof of the temple; but as he resisted, so resist ye. Christ came to medicine all our wounds. In your trouble I prescribe life instead of death. People who have had it worse than you will ever have it have gone on in the way. Remember that God keeps the chronology of your life with as much precision as he keeps the chronology of nations, your death as well as your credit.

Why was it that at midnight, just at midnight, the destroying angel struck the How that let the heralds flow from bondage? The four hundred and thirty years were up at twelve o'clock that night. The four hundred and thirty years were not up at eleven, and one o'clock would have been tardy and too late. The four hundred and thirty years were up at twelve o'clock, and the destroying angel struck the blow, and Israel was free. And God knows just the hour when it is time to lead you up from earthly bondage. By his grace take not the worst of things, but the best of them. If you must take the pills, do not chew them. Your everlasting rewards will accord with your earthly persecutions, just as Caius gave to Agrippa a chain of gold as heavy as has been a chain of iron. For the asking—and I do not know to whom I speak in this august assemblage, but the word may be especially appropriate—for your asking you may have the same grace that was given to the Italian martyr Agrippa, who, down in the darkest of dungeons, dated his letter from the "delectable orchard of the Lezantine prison."

And remember that this brief life of ours is surrounded by a rim, a very thin but very important rim, and close up that rim is a great eternity, and your next letter keep out of it until God breaks that rim and separates this from that. To get rid of the sorrows of earth, do not rush into greater sorrows. To get rid of a swarm of summer insects, leap not into a jungle of Beelzebub tigers.

There is a sorrowless world, and it is so radiant that the noonday sun is only the lowest doorstep, and the aurora that lights up our northern heavens, confounding astronomers as to what it can be, is the waving of the banners of the procession home from church militant to church triumphant, and you and I have ten thousand reasons for wanting to go there, but we will never get there either by self immolation or impetuosity. All our sins slain by the Christ who came to do that thing, we want to go in at just the time divinely arranged, and from a church divinely spread, and then the clang of the sepulchral gates behind us will be overpowered by the glang of the opening of the solid pearl before us. O God, whatever others may choose, give me a Christian's life, a Christian's death, a Christian's burial, a Christian's immortality!

Exhumation Craze at Vienna.
The other day the remains of a number of citizens of Vienna shot during the revolution of March, 1848, were exhumed from the Schmelzer cemetery to be reinterred in the new cemetery at Simmering. It is believed that forty-six persons were interred in the exhumed pit, but the number cannot be ascertained accurately. The corpses were originally laid in iron coffins, and when a first exhumation took place, in 1874, with a view of providing the obscure champions of popular liberties with decent graves, it was found that all the coffins had rotted away and many of the skeletons were broken up.

A cemented pit, with two chambers, was prepared at the Schmelzer cemetery, and in these the remains were deposited with all the remnants of clothing found upon them. When the pit was opened all the bones were seen mixed in a heap. Workmen brought them up in sleeves, and ghastly it was to see skulls, fingers, teeth and bunches of hair mingled with muddy shoes and fragments of brown cloth. Fifteen entire skulls were recovered, one containing the brain in a complete state of desiccation. Several of the skulls showed bullet holes, and one of the skulls was a woman's. It is thought that four women killed during the street fighting were buried with the men. The most remarkable skull which stood in the Schmelzer ground was removed a few days ago to the central cemetery to be placed over the new grave—Vienna Cor. London Times.

New Style of Hairdressing.
Says a close observer of details: "A style of hairdressing greatly in vogue among the most fashionable women in Newport and Saratoga this summer was a flat cut of small curls wound in a loose fashion about the neck of the head. Mrs. Prescott Lawrence especially attracts this style, and it is exceedingly becoming to her luxuriantly shaped hair."—New York Herald.

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