

RABBI IS OPPOSED TO INTERMARRIAGE

Rev. Dr. Mendel Silber Tells His Duluth Congregation That He Sees In It Race Suicide and a Desertion From the Battle Jews Have Been Placed Here to Fight.

"Intermarriage" was the subject of an interesting address delivered by Dr. Mendel Silber at Temple Emanuel last night.

The intermarriage question, the rabbi said, has of late, owing to the Pastor-Stoke incident, received undue attention both from the pulpit and the pew, and he should not have made this the subject of a lecture, were it not for the earnest request of his congregation to give his opinion on the subject. He said in part:

"No matter how much theologians, scientists and philosophers may differ as to the origin and destiny of man, one thing they are all agreed on, and that is the duty of self-preservation and what is true of the individual is also true of the race.

"Self-murder is universally regarded as a dastardly crime because it is desertion from the momentous battle we are placed here to fight, but many fail to see the logic of this truth when applied to the race. And it is here exactly that many of those who recently entered into the intermarriage controversy have failed to see the point. They argued the question only from a utilitarian or religious standpoint.

"Though it be true that in most cases mixed marriages turn out unhappily, many instances may be shown in which they proved the reverse. Are we, then, to approve of some and disapprove of others? Where is the line to be drawn, and how are we to foretell which will be happy and which unhappy?

"Though it may also be true that marriages between Jew and non-Jew, as between Catholic and Protestant, are a detriment to their respective religions and are on this ground to be rejected by the church, yet in the long run things would be equalized, for there would be as many converts as apostates.

"But there is a stronger and more potent reason for rejecting intermarriage. The Jewish people is not only a religious community but also a racial unit. And it is from this standpoint mainly that we may not tolerate mixed marriages. From a religious standpoint it would be more tolerable. Let us take as an instance a Jewish girl marrying a non-Jew. The ceremony takes place in a church and the young lady by accepting what is called the sacrament of marriage becomes a Christian.

"The synagogue would require considerable more sacrifice on the part of the man, but it would accomplish a similar result if it would make of him a Jew.

"From a religious standpoint then, this would be all right. But from a racial standpoint both of these conditions are mere theories. He cannot really become a Jew, she cannot really

REV. MENDEL SILBER.



Duluth Rabbi Who Takes Decided Stand on Inter-Marriage Question.

cease to be a Jewess. This is why mixed marriages consummate more than the usual failure, and if they result in more than the usual average of divorces, atonism is as much to blame as individual idiosyncrasy.

"Mixed marriage is undoubtedly a form of individual assimilation and as such objectionable. We are in the long run as dependent on our numerical strength as any other nation. We have survived because our birth rate has always been so well ahead of our death rate, and we all exist through our inter-dependence on each other. We Jews are honestly justified in looking askance on mixed marriage.

"We do not say that the non-Jews are not good enough for us. Some are individually our superior; some are individually our inferior, but the question of social or any other form of equality has nothing to do with the issue. The genius of race seeks life and maintenance. We ourselves wish to live and be preserved. We love our ideas and our understanding of them for that matter, and not some one else's interpretation. For that we need our own bodies, our own blood, our own cast of cranium, and since ideas are eternal we wish our successors to be of our own stock so that they may be actuated by the same sentiments."

Following the comparison between the race and the individual, Dr. Silber said in conclusion:

"Lest I be branded as narrow-minded and clannish because of my opposition to intermarriage, I wish to say that I am also opposed to marriage of blood-relations. Can any one be so stupid as to suppose that I oppose affinity of blood-relations because I oppose their intermarriage? I am as liberal as those who advocate mixed marriage, but I oppose because I see in it racial suicide, a deserter from the momentous battle our race has been placed here to fight."