

Monday December 30, 1946

Rev. Truman O. Douglass Summoned

Prominent Congregational
Minister Stricken at
Wheel of His Car

Word of the sudden death of Rev. T. O. (Orville) Douglass has been received by Mrs. W. G. Ray in a letter from Edna Sylvester Osborne of Los Angeles. Mrs. Ray, Mrs. Osborne and Mr. Douglass were classmates in Grinnell college in the class of 1894. The letter was mailed in Los Angeles at 1:30 p.m. Dec. 23, and it is presumed that Rev. Mr. Douglass probably died that morning.

Rev. Mr. Douglass had long been a sufferer from tuberculosis, which caused his retirement from his last pastorate in Tempe, Ariz. For the past few years the family home has been in Claremont, Calif. Mr. Douglass had driven to Monrovia to see the doctor at the sanitarium there for a periodical checkup. He was alone and his body was found in his car on the road between Monrovia and Claremont. He was on his way home when stricken.

A Congregational Family.

Truman was the second son of Rev. and Mrs. T. O. Douglass, well remembered in Grinnell as pillars of early Iowa Congregationalism. He spent his youth and early manhood in Grinnell and is remembered as a brilliant student both in high school and college. He elected to enter the Christian ministry and was a successful pastor for many years until the condition of his health forced his retirement. Among his Iowa pastorates were Congregational churches in North Des Moines and Davenport.

On his return to college he took up his studies with renewed vigor, and in 1865 graduated as the valedictorian of his class.

The same year he entered the Chicago Theological Seminary, completing the three year course, and serving the church at Amboy, Illinois, during his middle year. Upon graduation in May 1868, he accepted the call to the church at Osage, Iowa, where he spent fourteen fruitful years. On June 25th of this year he was married to Miss Maria Greene of Platteville, Wisconsin. Six children were born to this happy union: Rev. Paul H. Douglass, Upper Montclair, New Jersey; Rev. Truman O. Douglass, Jr., Tempe, Arizona; M. Hale Douglass, Eugene, Oregon; Mrs. Faith Douglass Hodson, Claremont, California; Mrs. Grace Douglass Orr, Lincoln, Nebraska; Winfred Douglass, deceased. There was also an adopted daughter, Mrs. Agnes Pinkerton, Mission South Dakota. In the rearing and training of this family the responsibility fell largely upon the mother, who with sublime courage and devotion bore her full share of this sacred task.

On October 28, 1868, he was ordained to the Christian ministry. In his own words the Osage ministry was "a hard, happy and measurably successful pastorate." A new church was built, and foundations were laid for the prosperity of the organization which have been abundantly realized in later years.

But the great work of Dr. Douglass' life began in 1882 when he became Superintendent of Home Missions in Iowa. For twenty-five years he held this post of honor, "loving and being loved, serving and being served, blessing and being blessed." This quarter of a century was a period of growth and missionary expansion, the

story of which has been so admirably told in his annual reports to the state meetings of the Congregational churches. The responsibility of leadership was increasingly exacting, yet he bore all the hardships incident to the service, and "the care of all the churches," with the faith and courage of the Apostle Paul. The home mission churches were always his deep concern, and these he carried in his great heart with constant solicitude. The achievements of these twenty-five years he himself has summarized in the following words:

"One hundred and thirty-seven churches organized; one hundred and eighteen fostered into self-support; two hundred and twenty-two houses of worship completed and dedicated; seventy-eight thousand, nine hundred and fifty-eight added to the membership of the churches, forty-eight thousand eight hundred and thirty of these on confession of faith; the membership increased from fifteen thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven to thirty-six thousand four hundred and eighty-three; and one million, one hundred and seventy-six thousand, two hundred and twenty-five dollars raised for missions."

Following Dr. Douglass' retirement from the Superintendency in 1907, he took a sort of post graduate course in Home Missions. Under the direction of the National Home Missionary Society he set out on a tour of inspection of the Western and New England States. Later he visited the Theological Seminary; assisted in home mission campaigns, and Grinnell College endowment campaign. He was chosen Iowa delegate to the International Council at Edinborough in 1908,

and in that connection he and Mrs. Douglass enjoyed the privilege of a well earned vacation in visiting places of interest in England and Scotland and on the continent. He was frequently a delegate to the National Council; a valued trustee and counselor to Grinnell College, Tabor College conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Two significant and highly valued contributions came from Dr. Douglass' pen. His book, "The Pilgrims of Iowa" is a work of genuine merit, portraying in a vivid manner the story of our home missionary achievements in Iowa. In addition to this, he busied himself for many months, and with exhausting labors and great patience, in preparing biographical sketches of men who had served in the Congregational ministry in Iowa up to the year 1900. There are nine type written volumes of these sketches, in the Grinnell College Library which will be of increasing value as reference volumes in years to come.

For a number of years Dr. and Mrs. Douglass have been living in Claremont, California. A stroke of apoplexy in the fall of 1923 was the beginning of the end. The passing months have witnessed a gradual and steady decline. The end came peacefully on the morning of September 11, 1925, at the age of 83 years, 4 months and 8 days. Having "served his generation by the will of God he fell on sleep." It can be truthfully said of Dr. Douglass that "the law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips."

Members of The American Legion and Spanish War Veterans occupied a special section of seats in the chapel. The color bearers for the Legion were John Carter and Carl Hutchison and the color guards were James Sarver and George Moore. There were brief services at Hazelwood cemetery in charge of Rev. W. W. Bolt, D. D. in behalf of the Legion. Rev. Royal J. Montgomery offered prayer and Frank Miles of Des Moines, editor of the Iowa Legionaire and a close friend of Dr. Evans, spoke a few earnest words. A firing squad under command of Joseph Schwab and composed of B. F. Tarleton, Derrill Muckler, Eldon Olds, John Reed, Benjamin Stewart, D. H. Mulcahy, C. P. Nelster and Herbert Decatur, fired the last volleys over a soldier's grave and Russell George played "Taps," the soldier's farewell.

Before the services at the chapel there were brief services at the home, conducted by Rev. Nelson W. Wehrhan.

GRINNELL, IOWA, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1925.

Loving Tributes Are Offered At The Memorial Service For Dr. T. O. Douglass

Loving words and true words of the strong, forward reaching life of an upright, Christian man were spoken at the memorial service held in the Congregational church this morning in honor of Rev. T. O. Douglass, who passed away Friday, Sept. 11, at his home in Claremont, Calif.

The speakers were Rev. P. A. Johnson, President J. H. T. Main and Dr. E. A. Steiner of Grinnell, Rev. G. C. Williams of Newton and Rev. C. E. Cushman of Iowa Falls, all of whom brought a rich tribute of remembrance and appreciation to the man whose life has meant so much to Iowa Congregationalism. It was an occasion rarely marked by friendship and love. Abstracts of all these addresses appear below.

A quartet, composed of Mrs. E. B. T. Spencer and Miss Stella Bartlett and Messrs. Fred Morrison and A. C. Lyon, with Mrs. J. P. Ryan at the organ sang some of the old hymns that Dr. Douglass loved: "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past," "My Days Are Gliding Swiftly By" and "Still, Still With Thee."

Members of the family present were Mrs. T. O. Douglass of Claremont



MR. AND MRS. T. O. DOUGLASS IN THEIR HOME AT CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

the Osage Congregational church desire to add to this memorial service our tribute of appreciation to the life of our former beloved pastor, Dr. Truman O. Douglass, who for 14 years served this church with such intense loyalty and devotion as to make him beloved of all. His name will live forever in the memory of this church. This was his first and only pastorate. To this church he came with his young bride, and it was here that his children were born. Ties of love and affection that were formed during those early years between pastor and people grew stronger as the years went by, and the ministry of Dr. Douglass will ever be remembered as one of the most beautiful periods of our church's history.

"His great unselfishness, his untiring work, his larger vision and his capable leadership became the inspiration of men, and before his ministry came to an end he had laid the foundation for the strong church which stands today as a living tribute to his life. Today God's worker has been

called home, but his work goes on. His spirit still lives and in this church the presence of his influence will ever be felt. While his death robs us of a beloved pastor and friend, his loving ministry has not been forgotten and the results of his labors will ever be cherished as a sacred memory by his many friends of this church and community. Beloved pastor and friend, supreme Christian, we bid thee a fond and loving farewell.

"To the widow and children, we, the members and friends of the Osage church give our sincere love and sympathy. Our hearts go out to you in this sad hour, and while you sorrow for your husband and father, we sorrow for our best friend. We commend you unto the love of the Father and may He keep you always in the prayer of your Osage friends.

"Members of the Osage Cong. Church,

"J. Nevin Lyerly, Pastor."

Abstracts of the addresses of the several speakers at the service follow:

REV. P. A. JOHNSON.

I have been asked to speak of Dr. Douglass' work as Secretary of the Iowa Congregational Home Missionary Society. Manifestly it is impossible to do this in any adequate fashion in the brief time here allowed. All that I shall attempt is to point out some of the outstanding features of the quarter of a century of devoted labors which Dr. Douglass gave to the Iowa Fellowship.

Dr. Douglass came to his task when he was forty years of age. His coming into this office marked a new era in Iowa Congregationalism. Like a knight of the new chivalry, and with all the strength and enthusiasm of consecrated manhood, he threw himself into the work with holy abandon. These abundant labors can never be measured by statistical summaries. The records tell us that he had a hand in organizing 137 churches; that 222 church buildings were completed and dedicated during this period, and very few of these, if

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Rev. P. A. Johnson read tributes received by mail from many old time friends including Roger Leavitt of Cedar Falls, Rev. H. W. Tuttle, formerly of Grinnell, Rev. Jas. P. Burling of Decorah, Rev. W. G. Ramsey of Ottumwa, Rev. Jas. E. Brereton of Emmetsburg, and Rev. Ernest E. Day, of Whittier, Calif.

Rev. J. N. Lyerly, formerly of Gilman and now pastor of the Congregational church of Osage and Fred Crego Smith were present to represent that church in which Dr. Douglass spent his first and only Iowa pastorate before he was called into the state work. Rev. Mr. Lyerly read the following appreciation which had been adopted by the Osage church:

A Tribute From Osage.

"We, the members and friends of