

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY

DR. G. C. CRESSEY SPEAKS OF ITS BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE.

Record of Emancipation From Superstition, Bigotry and Religious and Political Bondage.

At the Unitarian Church yesterday morning, Rev. George Crossley Cressey, D. D., preached on the topic, "What Liberal Christianity Has Done for the Church and the World."

To speak exhaustively of what liberal Christianity has done for the world would be to give a record of emancipation from superstition, bigotry, religious and political bondage. It has revealed the true personality of Jesus, the real breadth of his teachings and the catholicity of his spirit; it has winnowed truth from error in the dogmas of the past, demonstrated the harmony of essential Christianity with all genuinely scientific truth, and rescued the claims of the church from the limits of absurdity.

"I was asked a few years ago to read a sermon of a popular preacher of the so-called orthodox church, whose preaching was certainly a fountain of great good in that community, the request being made on the ground that the discourse contained new and original truth concerning Christianity. I succeeded with precisely the result I had anticipated; the excellent thought was that of Unitarianism 50 years ago concerning inspiration.

"My aim this morning, however, must be very limited, viz., to mention a few of the very direct benefits which liberal Christianity under whatever name it may be found, especially as a system of thought, has brought to the world.

"It has given to America our best literature, all of our great poets, Longfellow, Bryant, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson and Whittier (Unitarian Quaker); and the true poet is the poet, the greatest of all prophets. Whether we say that liberal thought inspires the poet or that poetic genius leads to liberal thought is immaterial; the two go hand in hand, not only with us but in general everywhere.

"In another aspect of the subject, how full of meaning it is that the people of the South are to this day instinctively hostile to the very name Unitarian. This hostility is the traditional recognition of the fact that the pure Christian abolitionists of 50 years ago were almost entirely of the liberal faith. While others labored largely for extension of creed and church (and in itself laudable), they labored for the Nation and for humanity.

"But granted, some one says, that liberal religion has been active in philanthropy, social, political and civic reform, in humanitarian enterprises of every kind, has it not been the result of the 'faith once delivered to the saints'? It is useful here to speak with plainness, of plainness, however, which does not in the least detract from our appreciation of the 'faith once delivered to the saints'; that wherever thought and devoted to whatever denominational aegeis they may be found. Liberal Christianity has been the impetuous force that has set the feet of the church on the path of progress, not of religion of the pure Christianity of Jesus. It has helped to rescue this pure Christianity from the mire of tradition and the impenetrable thicket of human tenets and to restore the simple ethics of Man.

"The chief indictment against us ought to be our doctrine of human nature, or rejection of the doctrine of total depravity, for this is the logical cornerstone of so-called orthodox, aristocratic, aristocratic doctrine is not held in extraordinary reverence today even by its professed believers, and the primal accusation is that we hold Jesus to be a 'mere man.' This is the subtlest of attacks. But there is something philosophically or religiously as a 'mere' man. If there were, philosophy would have lost its foundation, and religion its chief support. That man potentially is, what he might be in the future, what he might be in the present, is the inspiration of poet, prophet and preacher; it is the keynote of the history of civilization, the melody of human progress. To emphasize the pure humanity of Jesus, together with the natural divinity of man, is to restore that element to religion which not only reconciles it with itself, but also with the various revelations of truth which are breaking today from every realm of God's universe. The profound interest manifested in our era arises directly from thought of him not as a supernatural being, but as a representative of humanity, as one like unto ourselves in all that is human.

"So also liberal Christianity has redeemed the Bible. And remember, I do not refer simply to Unitarianism or even the liberal denominations as such; I include many religions, especially in the evangelical churches, especially in the Congregational, Trinitarian body, who are with us in spirit, and who, although often differing from us somewhat in letter of belief, would gladly extend denominational fellowship. Liberal Christianity, I affirm, has redeemed the Bible and allowed it for the first time since the Reformation to speak for itself. How much interest, think you, would we have in the book today, were all confined literally and actually to the alternative of accepting it as infallible and inerrant in all its parts or totally rejecting it? What would be the verdict of the intellectual world? Nothing has so tended to maintain the influence and numbers of the church as the tacit recognition that truth is its own authority, that one may and must accept only that which commends itself by reason and experience, producing naturally a certain elasticity of mental requirement in admission of members.

"The principle of reason and conscience as final authority finds singular confirmation, indeed, in modern treatment of the Bible. Men accept what they feel to be true or wish to accept, explaining away or ignoring other parts.

"The higher criticism, a most important achievement of liberal Christianity, has determined largely by the use of the Old and New Testaments may be regarded as authentic; but authenticity does not prove the truth of the content. This must be decided in matters of history and material knowledge by the use of critical methods; in matters of a moral and spiritual nature, by the verdict of the enlightened reason and conscience of humanity.

"All recognizing that the laboring classes of today are alienated from the church as an institution. Is it because they are essentially irreligious, or do not think for themselves? Quite the reverse. They do not believe the traditional creed of Christianity, perceiving in addition that churches often do not preach their own written beliefs, a state of things which does not serve to enhance the ethical status of the pulpit. On the other hand, hundreds and thousands of persons are supporting churches, in spite of their creeds, simply because they believe them to stand in general for religion and morality.

A FAMOUS HORSESHOE

MOMENT OF STAR POINTER'S RECORD MILE IN PORTLAND.

Portland Business Man Now Has His Heir to the Turf—That Record-Breaking Mile.

The right shoe of Star Pointer was given to C. J. McCarthy, son of J. L. McCarthy, who for many years was starter on the grand circuit, but now in business in Portland. Young McCarthy was but 15 years old when the famous pacer made his mark at Readville, Mass., Aug. 25, 1897. And it was at this age that he forecasted the future of Star Pointer. The father had devoted his life to fast harness horses, both as breeder, owner and starter, and it was natural that his son, Charles, should know all about pedigree and fractional time, which goes to make a horseman. Young McCarthy had watched the Pointer develop, he believed, in the Hal plant when he broke down at Fort Wayne, Ind. When the great pacer again began

TURNER ON ALDRICH BILL

Denounced it as Gross Favoritism to National Banks.

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, March 6.—Senator Turner, of Washington, was one of the Senators who spoke in opposition to the Aldrich bond bill when that measure was pending before the Senate in the closing days of the session. His speech was not long, but to the point. In part he said:

"I regard this bill as absolutely indefensible on any proper principle of government, and as extending the grossest favoritism to a class in this country who have already been too highly favored by the laws of the United States and as being extremely indiscreet and inconsequent in the result which it will bring upon this country. It is the most vicious measure which has been introduced in

POPULISM IN NEW GULF.

He went on to say that the bill came as a supposed extension of the law permitting the Government to make deposits of its internal revenue in the National banks of the country as governmental depositories.

ASSAULTED A CHINAMAN

Then Thomas Dillon Wanted to Go Home to His Mother.

"Don't look me up, captain. My mother is sick at home and I cannot stay away all night," pleaded Thomas Dillon, last night when he was arrested upon a charge of beating a Chinaman.

WOULD OPEN ON SUNDAY

Thinks Fair Should Not Be Closed on First Day of Week.

PORTLAND, March 6.—(To the Editor.)—In regard to opening or closing the Fair on the first day of the week, it must be remembered that there are a great number of people who are not religiously inclined, and who would not attend religious service if the Fair were not open.

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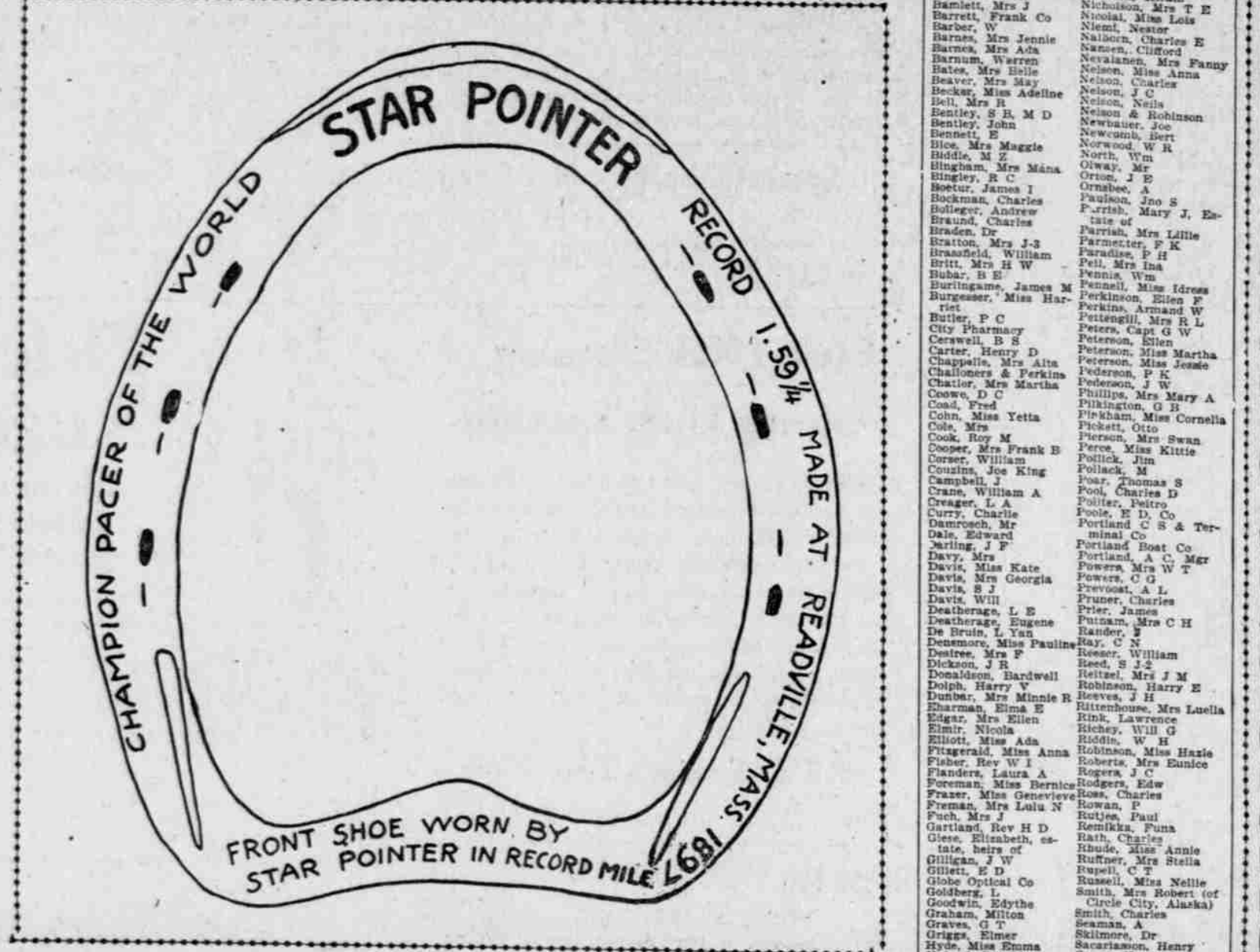
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punishment of all who shall not have accepted the scheme of salvation as formulated in the creed? "Liberal Christianity, in its conscious and unconscious forms, is today the salvation of the church, even while its pulpits with expedient periodicity often fulminate against the encroachments of rational thought. By its learning, its reverence, its appeal to the highest faculties of the soul, it has conserved the prosperity of visible religion; its influence has modified ancient dogmas and compelled reforms and its requirements to retreat into comparative obscurity; above all, practical and liberal preaching, heard often in the churches whose professed creeds are the very opposite tenor, forms the saving element in their material as well as spiritual prosperity.

EXCHANGED PULPITS.

Salem Divine Preaches in First Congregational Church. Rev. W. C. Kantner, D. D., of Salem, preached in the First Congregational Church yesterday, both morning and evening.

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