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## **Dr. Algernon S. Crapsey: Religious Reformer**

By Carolyn Swanton

A wing of Genesee Hospital now occupies what was once the site of 678 Averill Avenue, the address of a convicted heretic and his family. The most unusual feature about this house might well be that it had been paid for and built through the generosity and hard work of many Rochesterians in appreciation for this heretic. There are many who still can remember the cloaked figure of Dr. Algernon S. Crapsey and can give testimony to his good deeds. Controversial even today, the Episcopalian minister's trial for heresy brought Rochester international fame.

It was one hundred years ago that Dr. Crapsey came to Rochester with his young family from New York City where he left a comfortable position on the staff of Trinity Parish, the largest and wealthiest parish of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to take over the rectorship of St. Andrew's Church located at the corner of Averill Avenue and Ashland Street. Under his able leadership, St. Andrew's grew from a small and insignificant church to an important asset to the city's religious community. Dr. Crapsey's concern for the well being of his parishioners and his dedicated service to a humanitarian ideal served as moral examples to all who knew him.

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Algernon Sidney Crapsey was born in Fairmont, Ohio in 1847. His father was a successful lawyer in nearby Cincinnati, but perhaps his most illustrious ancestor was his maternal grandfather, Senator Thomas Morris. After leaving his native Virginia because of his hatred for slavery, Morris settled in Ohio where he helped that territory become a state and was one of its United States Senators. Because of a fiery speech against slavery on the floor of the Senate in 1830 he was expelled from the Democratic Party and the Methodist Church. He devoted the rest of his life to the Abolition movement.

When Algernon was only eleven years of age, he left school to work briefly in a dry goods store. A year and a half later he returned to school only to leave again at the onset of the Civil War. Because of his youth, Algernon was first assigned to march at the head of his unit as a musician, but was soon forced to take up the musket. Exposure to the open fields and damp grounds in winter led to lung problems and a "hypertrophied" heart, which resulted in a medical discharge. He recovered, much to the surprise of the doctors.

After the War he worked as clerk in a salt mine, as a printer, and in the Dead Letter Office in Washington, D.C. His job there was to open undeliverable letters and decide if they needed further attention. He discovered that few of them did.

While in Washington his uncle Isaac convinced him that greater opportunities existed in New York City, so there he went. Just before he ran out of money, and while living in a vermin infested hotel, he landed a job as bookkeeper and cashier in a print shop. However, his most fateful activity after his arrival in the metropolis was attendance at Christ Episcopal Church on Fifth Avenue at 35th Street. Here he came under the influence of Rev. Ferdinand Cartwright Ewer. Dr. Ewer made a strong appeal to young Crapsey with a series of sermons on "The Failure of Protestantism." Speaking of this experience Crapsey wrote, "He [Dr. Ewer] lighted me

up on the winds of his eloquence and carried me back into the ages of faith." As a result Algernon Crapsey decided to enter the ministry to "exercise intellectual and spiritual influence over the minds and souls of people."<sup>\*</sup>

In 1867 Algernon Crapsey enrolled in St. Stephen's College at Annandale, New York. During his two years there he founded the fraternal organization of Kappa Gamma Chi. In later years his portrait hung over the mantle of the fireplace in the living room of the fraternity house.

Following another three years at the General Theological Seminary in New York City, Crapsey graduated with his divinity degree. He later reflected "I do not think there was ever an institution so inadequate to its purpose as this seminary when I was under its care." After ordination he was appointed a deacon in the service of St. Paul's Chapel of Trinity Parish. During this deaconship, he met and married Adelaide Trowbridge, the daughter of a Catskill, New York newspaper man. "In Trinity Parish [Crapsey] worked back-breaking hours among the poor of the district and virtually lived among tenement dwellers."<sup>1</sup> He denounced the extravagant wealth of the churches in poor and depressed areas.

Among his friends at the Seminary had been George Douglas, whose father William Bradley Douglas was a prominent Rochester banker. The elder Douglas had established a mission known as St. Clement's in southeast Rochester. It had been unsuccessful because of internal bickering, but Mr. Douglas was eager to try again. After his son introduced Crapsey to him, Mr. Douglas persuaded Dr. Crapsey to bring his wife and three small children to Rochester to serve as rector of the new church, which was called St. Andrew's.

On June 1, 1879 (Whitsunday) Dr. Crapsey began his rectorship in the first Episcopal church in the southeast section of the city, a largely Catholic neighborhood. In his auto-

<sup>\*</sup>Algernon Crapsey, *The Last of the Heretics* (New York, 1924). If not otherwise indicated, quotations are from the Crapsey autobiography.

biography he wrote, "The rectory had no bath nor sanitary provisions and was located on a side street where the passing of a wagon was an event."

To the parishioners St. Andrew's began as Mr. Douglas's church but through the leadership and industry of Dr. Crapsey and his wife, that image was soon changed. "Before the first year had passed, all thought of loneliness was lost in the stimulating stir of our work," Dr. Crapsey wrote, "My wife and I soon recognized that this loneliness had been salvation. If we had entered at once into the social life of the city, going here and there and everywhere, we should never have entered into the lives of our people and made ourselves their servants as we were compelled to do in order to escape from the loneliness of our own situation." Dr. Crapsey made St. Andrew's Church the first free church in the city, not charging for pews.

During his first summer at St. Andrew's, Dr. Crapsey held regular meetings with the neighborhood children. He taught them the functions of the root and the leaf and the power of the seed. He took them into the fields where they gathered various plants and studied their structure.

### **The Brotherhood**

To bring people into the fold, Dr. and Mrs. Crapsey developed ways to interest adults as well as the children. Women were easily assembled into church groups, but the men were too "footloose." To encourage their involvement Dr. Crapsey established the Mutual Benefit Society, later known as St. Andrew's Brotherhood. It was based on a similar group Crapsey had organized in New York at St. Paul's Chapel.

The first meeting of the Brotherhood in Rochester was celebrated by a "feast of watermelons." The members undertook a number of charitable concerns as well as the encouragement of religious education. Membership, which grew to about 300, was not limited to the congregation of St.

Andrew's or to any denomination, being based on a belief in human brotherhood rather than religious belief. All that was requested of the men was that they should have a "brotherly heart."

The Brotherhood was based on a mutual benefit principle. Every member was to pay ten cents a week to the treasury and in case of illness would receive five dollars a week. If a member died, his widow would receive \$450. If his wife died, the member was entitled to \$25.

The Brotherhood was founded to promote "peace, prosperity, health and wealth among men." It had ten officers and thirty directors. Some of the members included Herman LeRoy Fairchild, William C. Morey, Charles Wright Dodge, George M. Forbes, Isaac Adler, J. Warrant Castleman, Dr. George W. Goler, Edward G. Miner, and Leon Stern. They brought a number of distinguished speakers to Rochester including the Rev. Reginald J. Campbell of London, a noted liberal churchman. This organization existed into the middle of the twentieth century and was then officially disbanded.

In addition to these other activities Dr. Crapsey was persuaded by his wife to establish a formal training institute for kindergarten teachers, the first in Rochester. It was called the School of Practical Knowledge and Recreation, and to lead it, Dr. Crapsey obtained a capable instructor, Mrs. Katherine Whitehead. A building for this purpose was erected opposite St. Andrew's on Ashland Street. Within a year a dozen young women were trained. Later the city's Board of Education adopted kindergarten training as a part of its regular program.

The Crapseys were also instrumental in founding a night school with classes in domestic science and mechanical arts. Algernon Crapsey became a member of the Fortnightly Club, a prestigious literary group. He was one of the founders of the City Club, organized shortly after the turn of the century to provide a forum for community discussion.

His first published book was *Meditations on the Five Joyful Mysteries* (1888). This work was dedicated to the Mother Superior of the Sisters of St. Mary. The Roman Catholic order, located in Peekskill, New York, had on several occasions invited Dr. Crapsey to lead retreats there. These had been a great pleasure to him.

Dr. Crapsey did not confine his activities to his own parish, but set good examples of missionary work all across America. Among his special interests were the black Episcopal churches which were largely segregated, even in the North. He often lectured at St. Philips, on Mulberry Street in Rochester. He once traveled to Washington, D.C. to speak to St. Luke's, an all-black congregation. He told the parishioners to demand their right to vote, saying, "If you tamely surrender your rights, then you also betray mine." This remark brought his first explicit rebuke from ecclesiastical authorities, in this case the bishop of Washington, D.C. Crapsey's missionary work took him to St. George's Chapel in Bermuda, in the company of his wife and John Rochester. On the return voyage they encountered a violent storm which blew them 200 miles off course and injured Mr. Rochester, when he was thrown across the room. Mrs. Crapsey declined from traveling overseas again with her husband.

Dr. Crapsey freely shared the credit for the successes of his ministry with his wife, who not only raised their nine children, but also worked hard to meet the needs of the parishioners. Mrs. Adelaide Crapsey had a beautiful singing voice and for many years played the organ at St. Andrews. She was a courageous woman having sculled along the Hudson River among other feats. Grandson Arthur Crapsey recalled her as being from the "matriarch school" and as being of great importance in her husband's career, especially in organization.

In 1889 Dr. Crapsey suffered a serious illness which prompted the parishioners of St. Andrew's to finance a vacation trip to Europe for their beloved pastor. On this journey

Dr. Crapsey saw not just the tourist sights, but observed the life of the people also. In Italy he made it a point to attend Mass daily with the people in all the towns that he visited. He found that he admired the Roman Catholic Mass very much. It was during this journey that he made the following observation:

There was never a sadder man than I when the clerical scales fell from my eyes and I saw the world just as it is, a world of war, pestilence and famine, just as it was before Jesus died; just as it will be until men cease to worship Jesus as a God and begin to care for one another as He cared for the sinful, the sick and the sorrowing while He was yet alive.<sup>2</sup>

During this time Dr. and Mrs. Crapsey's own lives were not devoid of sorrow. They lost their daughter Ruth through a fever when she was just eleven. Three years later another daughter, Emily, died of acute appendicitis.

### **Citizens Political Reform Association**

During the 1890s many professional and business leaders throughout the land, spurred by widespread human suffering which accompanied the depression of 1893, joined hands in a concerted effort for civic improvement. Efforts in Rochester were described by Walter Rauschenbusch in a tract entitled "What's the Matter with Rochester?" The Citizens Political Reform Association was created by Joseph T. Alling and Alderman James Johnston with Dr. Algernon Crapsey as its president.

In March 1896, Dr. Crapsey was again brought into the public eye when he was asked to give his approval of the new woman's section of the *Post-Express*. The editor of this section was Mrs. Louisa Fitch and she was eager to obtain his commendation. However, when he heard that young girls were to be hired as paper "dispensers" on the city's trolleys and trains, he felt obliged to comment. He felt that it would be a mistake to place the young girls in such situations as they might become the subject of ridicule and harsh comments from hecklers, and sport in being seen jumping aboard the trains. He went to Mrs. Fitch's office and told her personally

that he did not approve of this aspect of the new venture. He stated his concern as a father of daughters.

Mrs. Fitch made her feelings public by means of a letter addressed to Dr. Crapsey through the newspapers. Immediately the whole city entered into a controversy over the issue. Letters, pro and con, poured in to the editor. One from a bicyclist suggested that the whole matter would be resolved if the girls were allowed to wear bloomers.

Dr. Crapsey had the support of Louis C. Washburn, Rochester archdeacon of the Episcopal diocese, for his position. Rev. Henry H. Stebbins, of Central Presbyterian Church, supported the woman's point of view, maintaining that it was perfectly acceptable for the young girls to promote their own edition and that there was nothing amiss in their standing on street corners. Dr. Crapsey obtained assurances from the ladies of the paper, all of whom he said were "women of refinement and culture" that the young girls would always be suitably chaperoned, and Mr. John N. Beckley, president of the Rochester Railway Company, offered to place his private car at the disposal of Rev. Crapsey and the girls.

On the Sunday before the woman's edition was published a large audience attended services at St. Andrew's. Before his usual sermon, Dr. Crapsey explained that it had not been his intention to make the event such a big issue. He had only voiced his misgivings on the use of young girls in street sales, and that he was now completely satisfied that their safety was being fully considered. The paper went on sale as planned and was a complete success. There was no doubt that the controversy, unwittingly generated by Dr. Crapsey, had stimulated great interest.

Shortly after this incident, Dr. Crapsey initiated a movement to establish the Rochester area as a separate diocese of the Episcopal Church. He directed his plea to the Right Reverend William David Walker, Bishop of Western New York, explaining the need of Rochester for more direct



spiritual guidance and opposing Walker's re-election until a decision was made.

His plea was published in a book, *A Voice in the Wilderness*. Dr. Crapsey pointed out that Buffalo and Rochester were quite different cities with obviously diverse interests. At the time Rochester was considered to be the largest inland city in the world, and Dr. Crapsey believed, "It was sheer folly to treat Rochester as if it were a mere outlying town of Buffalo." He submitted a series of resolutions pleading for support to help organize a separate diocese to help bring the vital spirit of religious development to Rochester. The church council rejected his resolutions primarily on financial grounds. The establishment of the Diocese of Rochester was not realized until 1931.

### **Heresy and Trial**

It was during this time that Dr. Crapsey began an earnest study on the life of Christ. He researched the works of undisputed authorities on the early Christian Church. It was with considerable astonishment that he discovered that the whole concept of Jesus's miraculous birth was completely omitted by the early Christians. In addition to reading everything he could find on the subject he began to discuss the matter with living authorities.

Rev. Crapsey went through a period of discouragement, not only from a sense of personal failure, but also from a disillusionment in the Christian Church as a whole. He gave voice to this depression in a sermon at the Third Presbyterian Church of Rochester in 1895.

To preach in that church was a breach of the Episcopal church's doctrine, and it marked a turning point in his ministerial career. He would no longer be regarded as a "high churchman" within the Episcopal hierarchy. Dr. Crapsey had believed that because the Third Presbyterian Church and its parishioners were in the confines of his parish, it was proper for him to be there. Bishop Walker had, however, specifically

forbidden him to preach in a Presbyterian church. His conflict with his superiors thus arose at first, not from what he said, but from his disobedience in preaching where he did. Dr. Crapsey was never silent on matters which he believed to be for the well being of humanity. He once said, "No power in this world is so great as the power of human speech."<sup>3</sup>

Legends grew around the pastor of St. Andrew's. One story that greatly delighted the press, who publicized it with some exaggeration from coast to coast, had it that Dr. Crapsey gave the very coat off his back to a total stranger. The kind minister was walking down one of the streets in Rochester on a cold wintry day and came across a man shivering in the street. Dr. Crapsey took off his coat, wrapped it around the man and found him a place to stay. He left his coat with the man, and went home. When he returned home that day he was frozen through himself and spent the next few weeks in bed with typhoid pneumonia.

Dr. Crapsey considered it to be part of his duty to visit asylums and prisons. He also made his church something of a sanctuary; on more than one occasion an individual took refuge in the church while he worked out a settlement with his pursuers. He said, "I am convinced that we could almost abolish our present penal system if we would have our courts administer charity instead of justice."<sup>4</sup>

The entire week of June 1, 1904 was dedicated by the members of St. Andrew's to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Dr. Crapsey's arrival. The sermon was given by a guest, Rev. Elwood Worcester, then rector of Emmanuel Church in Boston. Dr. Worcester had been a member of St. Andrew's and was influenced by Dr. Crapsey to enter the ministry. The congregation presented their minister with a scroll, a loving cup containing gold and silver coins, and one parishioner even gave the minister a check amounting to \$100 for each year he had served the parish.

The anniversary was noted by the press, and the following editorial comment appeared in the evening *Times-Union*:



**Dr. Algernon Crapsey, c.1890**



Interior of St. Andre



ew's Church, c.1900



**"The Last of the Heretics"**  
Late in life

There is one simple thing to be said on the anniversary of Dr. Crapsey's coming to Rochester. He has been a power for good in the community for 25 years. He has preached strongly, he has sympathized strongly, and he has wrought strongly; and he has influenced the private and public life of the city without going beyond his sphere as a clergyman.

At the conclusion of these festivities, Dr. Crapsey and his good friend, John Warrant Castleman, a prominent Rochester attorney, joined in a walking tour of England. Starting from Liverpool they walked through the medieval town of Chester, over the highest mountain in Britain, Snowdon, and all the way to London.

Shortly after his return from this trip Dr. Crapsey addressed the Canadian Society of Christian Unity on "The Disappointment of Jesus Christ." This address was published as a tract and was commended by several religious groups and prominent clergymen including Rev. Huntington of Grace Church and Rev. Percy Stickney Grant of the Church of the Ascension in New York City. Seth Low, a former reform mayor of New York City, developed a strong friendship with the pastor proclaiming to be his disciple. However, remarks made in this address further separated Dr. Crapsey from the High Church faction in the Episcopal Church.

Rev. Algernon Crapsey thought of himself as a simple parish priest, primarily concerned with the welfare of his parishioners. His mind, however, was not content with the dogma of the church, and he felt compelled to state truths, as he saw them, in an effort to convince his clerical brothers.

Although morning services at St. Andrew's were attended to the capacity of the church, the same was not true of Sunday evening. To encourage greater evening attendance, Dr. Crapsey scheduled a series of lectures for them. On February 18, 1905 he delivered the last of this series, which had been very successful. This final sermon, titled "Religion and Politics," proved to be the last straw for his superiors and led them to initiate the sensational trial for heresy. In this lecture Dr. Crapsey said:

Jesus did not succeed because He was born of a virgin or because He was reported to have risen bodily from the dead. These legends concerning Him are the result, not the cause of the marvelous success of the man. These stories were told of Him only because the simple folk could in no other way adequately express their conception of the greatness of Jesus. Only a virgin-born Jesus could be as great as Jesus. The creeds of Christendom are of value, not as historical statements, for the primitive and medieval Christian had no historical sense.<sup>5</sup>

It was customary for a number of those who attended the Sunday evening services to stop in the rectory afterwards for refreshments and discussion of the lecture. On the evening of the talk on "Religion and Politics" the group included lawyers J. Warrant Castleman, Howard Mosher, and Judge Sutherland of the New York Supreme Court. Judge Sutherland remarked, "We have just been listening to a very wonderful discourse. If any trouble comes to Dr. Crapsey because of it, we must all stand behind him." This was the first indication to Dr. Crapsey that he might be in trouble because of his frank expression of personal conviction.

Later Dr. Crapsey recalled having written the entire lecture on the day it was given. He worked continuously, "never taking the pen away from the paper except to dip it in the inkwell."

By the next week not only had the Rochester papers printed the sermon in full, but it was reproduced in major newspapers all over the United States. Dr. Crapsey had become a national figure. Bishop Walker verbally reprimanded Rev. Crapsey from the pulpit and demanded a formal retraction. Dr. Crapsey declined to retreat and in September published an article titled, "Honor Among Clergymen." In this article he criticized Bishop Walker's *Pastoral Letter of 1904* which had urged those who no longer held to the fundamental verities of the church to "be silent or withdraw."

Bishop Walker, determined to take a firm stand, commanded and requested Dr. Crapsey to appear before an eccle-



siastical court to be convened at St. James Church, Batavia, on March 3, 1906. Since this was entirely a church matter, he was not, of course, compelled by law to attend, but failure to do so would have destroyed his position within the Protestant Episcopal Church. The presentment charge was that Dr. Crapsey "did openly, advisedly, publicly and privately utter, avow, declare, and teach doctrines contrary to those held and received by the church."

After some deliberation over proceedings, the court allowed one week for the defense to prepare for the trial. Judge North ruled that Dr. Crapsey's *Religion and Politics* was not acceptable as evidence. The prosecutor, John Lord O'Brian from Buffalo, was assisted by Hon. John H. Stiness, former Chief Justice of Rhode Island, and the Rev. Francis J. Hall, then professor of dogmatic theology in the Western Theological Seminary. Their chief witness was the former curate of St. Andrew's Church, Rev. Frederick James Alexander.

During the trial the court learned that Rev. Alexander had requested a raise in pay shortly after the publication of *Religion and Politics* and that he had already applied for Dr. Crapsey's position if he were deposed or resigned. He was, therefore, in the words of the defense attorney, not a proper witness as he was "seriously attempting to undermine the character of Dr. Crapsey."

Among those who were willing to take a stand in defense of Rev. Crapsey were Rev. Langdon C. Stewardson, president of Hobart College; Rev. Dr. Elwood Worcester, rector of Emmanuel Church, Boston; Rev. John W. Suter, of Winchester, Massachusetts; and Rev. Wilfred L. Hoopes of Rhode Island. Seth Low, in an article for *Churchman* titled "The Far-reaching Importance of the Crapsey Trial," while disassociating himself from some of Crapsey's opinions, devoutly hoped that he would be held to be entirely within his rights as a minister. He went on to say, "The presentation of the Rev. Crapsey for heresy is an event of more than indi-

vidual importance. Here is a man of godly life, of Christian-like character, of multitude services to men, brought to trial for opinion's sake, because, it is contended that his interpretation of the creed, not being literal, is inadmissible on the part of a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church." He also stated that no man has done more to invigorate the conscience of Rochester.

Witnesses from St. Andrew's included Charles Challice and Charles Barnes. The daily train from Rochester brought many others among whom were Rev. Amos Skeeel of the Church of the Epiphany, Rev. F. S. Lippitt of Ascension Church (who had been curate at St. Andrew's before Rev. Alexander), Rev. George C. Richmond, and many laymen including J. Warrant Castleman and Claude Bragdon, the architect. Boston sent two large delegations. Sympathizers met at the Powers Hotel in Rochester to discuss the proceedings.

Because of the crowds that gathered at the small church hall in Batavia where the trial was being held, the judge was compelled to move the case to the Batavia Court House.

Dr. Crapsey's attorneys were Hon. James Breck Perkins, a member of Congress from Rochester, and Edward M. Sheppard of Brooklyn. The attorneys requested an adjournment of three weeks in order to prepare a stronger case, "not only in the interest of Dr. Crapsey, but more important, for the church." This motion was denied because the prosecuting attorney, O'Brian, convinced the judge that it was more important to have the matter resolved quickly.

In his concluding summation, one of the prosecutors, placing one hand on the head of the accused, said, "All that we have heard of this defendant is most lovely and Christ-like, but that makes his crime all the greater."

In his closing speech, Perkins presented an argument for every declaration which the church had found offensive and stated that it certainly was not heresy to say, "God is Love," which was the main thesis of Dr. Crapsey's writings and lec-

tures. He also pointed out that it was unjust to deny a man with the standards of Dr. Crapsey the right to preach, while permitting the continuation of a man like Rev. Alexander.

In concluding his own testimony, Dr. Crapsey gave the following statement. "I am not charged with the violation of any of the great moral duties which every man owes his fellow man. The accusation is, that in the exercise of my office as a preacher of truth and of righteousness, I have spoken words which it is unlawful for me to utter."<sup>6</sup>

On May 9, 1906 the jury returned their verdict. They found Dr. Crapsey guilty of heresy and breach of ordination vows by a four to one vote. They contended that it was the duty of a pastor to teach the creed of the church without question or change in the slightest degree. An appeal was denied and Dr. Crapsey was given until the end of the year to finish his duties at which time the rectorship of St. Andrew's was to be turned over to the able hands of Rev. James Bishop Thomas. Dr. Crapsey's only comment on the verdict was, "A few more pages of interesting church history have been written." He wrote the Bishop his letter of renunciation.

On the 4th of December 1906, Dr. Crapsey gave his last sermon in the church he had served for 28 years. The sanctuary was crowded to capacity on this sad and tender time for all who had grown to love and respect their spiritual leader.

The Crapseys, of course, were required to leave the rectory which had been their home for over a quarter of a century. Bishop Walker, himself, presented what was the equivalent of an eviction notice to Mrs. Crapsey. In the absence of her husband, she refused to accept it. The message was, however, duly transmitted, and they began the task of moving to temporary quarters.

During 1907 another tragedy struck the Crapseys. Their eldest son, Philip, died of malaria which he had contracted while serving their country in the Spanish-American War.

There were, however, some bright spots. The Brotherhood detached themselves from St. Andrew's to become an independent group with Dr. Crapsey as their spiritual leader, and one of his wealthy admirers paid for a new home.

William Rossiter Seward, a Rochester banker (1834-1929), financed a new home for the lifetime use of the Crapsey family. This house was designed by a son, Algernon, in association with the Rochester architects Claude Bragdon and James Arnold. It was located at 678 Averill Avenue and was completed January 1908. The building has subsequently been demolished to make room for a new wing of Genesee Hospital. During its construction many of Dr. Crapsey's admirers donated their labor as repayment for the affection they felt for him. When the house was completed a poem containing over 100 names of those who contributed towards its construction was devised.

Dr. Crapsey was quite overwhelmed by this gesture. He said, "There is no reason in the world why Mr. Seward should have delivered me and my family from under the power of the curse of the Bishop. When he first came to my rescue, he was not a member of my church and not even a personal friend." Seward was active in some charitable organizations. He was treasurer of the Immediate Relief Fund of the Society for the Organization of Charity. As a matter of fact he continued to help the Crapsey family for many years, often sending money to the children who worked their way through college.

In 1907 Dr. Crapsey was sent as a delegate to the International Peace Conference at the Hague. On this trip he was accompanied by his daughter, Adelaide. Before their return they took a walking tour of Wales.

On his return from Europe, Dr. Crapsey continued his active life. He served for a time as a state parole officer and was often invited to deliver memorial services at funerals. Claude Bragdon in his autobiography, *More Lives Than One*,

quoted his friend at the funeral of Bragdon's wife, Charlotte. Dr. Crapsey said, "Sudden death is only a seeming; no life ends here until it has reached its appointed term."

On January 21, 1908 Dr. Crapsey debated a Mr. Mangasarian at a public meeting in Chicago on the question, "Did Jesus Really Live?" He argued for the affirmative, while Mr. Mangasarian contended that the answer was "No." Furthermore, Dr. Crapsey spoke for the divinity of Jesus, but opposed his deification.

It was not until 1914 that Dr. Crapsey again aroused public commentary with the publication of his new book, *The Rise of the Working Class*. This book probed weaknesses of the economic order and alienated many wealthy members of the Brotherhood.

Dr. Crapsey gave a number of lecture series but was greatly hampered because of a lack in financial support and difficulties in booking halls in which to speak. He did, however, have a faithful following among the city's youth. Carl F. Schmidt, who became Rochester's leading authority on cobblestone houses, remembers attending these lectures "with great enthusiasm."<sup>7</sup>

On October 4, 1914 another Crapsey daughter died. Adelaide finally succumbed to tuberculosis which had plagued her since 1908. Her suffering had drained the entire family during the last days of their customary joy, and her agony and pain was acutely felt by all who knew her. She had difficulty breathing and sleeping. With no hope for recovery, her death came as a welcome relief to all who loved her.

During the years of confinement at the sanatorium on Saranac Lake, Adelaide developed an original strain of moving poetry. She invented the cinquain, a poem of five unequal sentence lengths. Her parents were much impressed by it, but were unable to find a publisher. When Claude Bragdon visited the Crapseys, after Adelaide's death, he too was impressed and agreed that the poems deserved to be published. He saw that this was done through his own Manas

Press. A small collection of poems she had selected were published in a single column, simply entitled, *Verse*. Bragdon designed the cover himself using one of his personally contrived motifs and the author's favorite color of gray.

The volume quickly became an inspiration to many aspiring poets. Carl Sandburg was so touched by her sad and melancholy poems that he dedicated one of his own, from "The Cornhuskers," to her. Her father also dedicated a later publication "The Ways of Gods" to her, saying, "To Adelaide Crapsey, scholar and poet, who, being dead, yet speaketh."

To help support the family, Mrs. Crapsey engaged in sewing for the neighborhood. She soon became well known for her ability, especially in smocking young girls dresses. This skill developed among a group originally known as St. Hilda's Guild which had been formed to make clothes for needy children. After it became Mrs. Crapsey's vocation, it became fashionable in some circles for young girls to wear her designs. The demand became so great that Mrs. Crapsey was obliged to employ other women of the area and the group was known as the Guild of the Lily.

Until the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 Dr. Crapsey was firmly opposed to the entry of the United States into World War I. The great loss of lives from this German act (including three from Rochester) caused Crapsey to concede that American entry was inevitable. After our entry Dr. Crapsey was busier than usual and organized several relief programs. He organized the vacant lot gardening movement locally. He secured the free use of numerous vacant lots each summer and assigned them to scores of needy individuals.

On the occasion of the 97th anniversary of the birth of Lewis Henry Morgan, the American anthropologist, November 29, 1915, Dr. Crapsey delivered an address in his honor to the Rochester Historical Society and the Rochester Academy of Sciences at Catherine Strong Hall of the University of Rochester. In his tribute, Dr. Crapsey said, "The study

of the development of social institutions is now a well-defined department, and in this department there is no one who has done more accurate and original work; no man more worthy of mention as a pioneer than Lewis Henry Morgan."<sup>8</sup>

In his address, Dr. Crapsey explained the remarkable changes in thought that had developed in his lifetime. Our conception of the universe was enlarged, he said, and the principle of human evolution developed by Charles Darwin had displaced the theory of a miraculous creation. He urged the adoption of a lecture series in honor of Morgan, "instead of a meaningless plaque or monument." He offered to be one of 250 to donate \$100 each for the foundation of a lecture fund, and he donated the manuscript of his lecture on Morgan to the Rochester Historical Society, "in grateful memory by his admiring disciple."

Dr. Crapsey continued his acts of charity and public service until his death on New Year's Eve, 1927. In addition to the simple monument marking his grave in the family plot in Mt. Hope Cemetery, he left many other monuments to his life of service, including his final book, *The Last of the Heretics*. Perhaps the most lasting of his contributions was his role in making Rochester a center for the church liberalism which came to be known as the "Social Gospel." Undoubtedly the Social Gospel contributed to the New Democracy of President Wilson and the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Crapsey said, "From first to last I have been a Humanist."

St. Andrew's has remained a progressive and active church concerned with the needs of its parishioners and works within the city to help enrich its religious life.

### Notes

1. Henry W. Clune, **The Rochester I Know** (New York, 1972), p. 199.
2. Susan Sutton Smith, **The Complete Poems and Collected Letters of Adelaide Crapsey** (Albany, 1977), p. 5.
3. Interview with Arthur Crapsey, Jr., 1979.
4. Algernon S. Crapsey, **The Last of the Heretics** (New York, 1924), p. 140.
5. Algernon S. Crapsey, **Religion and Politics** (New York, 1905), p. 83.
6. Unidentified clipping, George Chandler Bragdon Scrapbook, Local History Division, Rochester Public Library.
7. Interview with Carl F. Schmidt, 1979.
8. Algernon S. Crapsey, "Lewis Henry Morgan, Scientist, Philosopher, Humanist," Rochester Historical Society **Publication Fund Series**, 2 (1923), pp. 1-27.