

OPEN GRIP CARS.

Dr. Mitchell Protests Against the Use of Them in Cold Weather.

Yesterday morning Dr. Mitchell preached to an audience that filled all the available space in the large Grand Avenue church, and many were unable to gain admission. He took as the topic for his morning, prelude, "The Open Grip Car, an Indifference to Human Suffering." Among other things, Dr. Mitchell said:

"One of the many evidences that the world is growing better is the humane treatment of dumb animals. In recent years there has been an increasing attention given to the kind treatment of brutes. Every community now has its humane society, and every state has laws with severest penalties attached regulating the treatment of animals. Every humane spirit rejoiced when the cable and electric cars emancipated the horse and mule from the dreadful drudgery of street car service. It was always a pain to the sensitive patron to ride in a car drawn by a poor team of horses over the roughest and hardest of roads and constantly under the lash of the cruel driver.

"We all hailed the emancipation of the horse. Some time ago, in a Southern city, an old colored man was standing on a street corner admiring a passing electric car. Northern capital and enterprise had recently constructed the line. The old man said to a friend, as the car went by: 'Those Northern folks are great folks. Dey come down here thirty years ago and freed de colored folks, and now dey come down here and freed de mule.'

"We are all glad that the mule is freed, but who that has a heart in him does not feel more sorry for the gripmen of the cable cars in winter time than for the old street car mule with broken knees and sprained joints? I do not wish to say harsh or unkind things concerning our street car systems. Every citizen is proud of the magnificent system of cable cars we have in this city. Strangers from other cities remark that we have the finest system of rapid transit of any city in the country.

"The great growth and popularity of our wonderful city are due to these marvelous lines of street cars. I do not wish to pose as a carping public critic and say unkind things in regard to the management of these roads, which are managed by gentlemen who must know more than I do about such things, but as a patron of these roads, and representing a large number of other patrons, I feel it my duty to speak out against what appears to me to be an unnecessary inhumanity to these gripmen. Arctic exploration would be a tropical pastime compared to running one of those grip cars in this climate in winter. To be sure, if men do not like to suffer from the cold, they can quit and others stand ready to take their places. I have always thought that none but very honest men, with very dependent families, could be induced to work at such a job in winter time. We read in the public prints that these corporations say that it is impracticable to inclose the grip car. They say that the men cannot properly watch the track through glass windows; that in intensely cold weather frost gathers on the windows and renders them opaque. All that sounds very reasonable, but the fact remains that in Pittsburg, Pa., where the climate is as cold as this in winter, where they have more smoke and more fog, where their streets are narrower and more crooked and universally more steep, the grip cars are all inclosed by glass windows, and they have certainly as few accidents as we have in Kansas City.

"At the beginning of last winter, the motemen on the electric cars in that city had only a roof over their heads and the front of the car in their rear. That condition was far better than that of our gripmen, who stand where the wind sweeps all about them; but the citizens of Pittsburg and Allegheny made such an outcry against such inhumanity to the motemen that the companies inclosed entirely the two ends of the cars, and the men were sheltered on all sides, looking to the front and sides through glass doors. What is done in Pittsburg can be done here if the companies are willing to undergo the expense. I, for one, enter my protest against this indifference to human suffering, and I believe this vast audience crowding this large auditorium this morning is in hearty sympathy with what I have said."

When Dr. Mitchell closed, the audience gave expression to the approval of what he had said by an unusual act in church on a Sabbath morning—they clapped their hands.