

do right among their fellow-men, and that they believe that Jesus was Christ a teacher sent from God to tell men to do this. I said this to large audience of Presbyterians in Saratoga last September. As soon as I had done a Presbyterian clergyman came to me on the platform and told me that I was right in this statement. Since that time I have had various attacks upon that sermon sent me from different Presbyterian journals. No one has yet ventured to say that the laymen, by and large, of the Presbyterian communion believe in the Westminster confession. The Unitarian Church of America is not dissatisfied with this position. We believe that in the long run the laity of America will insist that the pulpit shall express the doctrine which, on the whole, the laity have come to."

There may be a good deal of truth in this, though it will be conceded that, as a statement, it is rather a sweeping one. So far as my experience goes it is not exact. No doubt there has been a considerable broadening of view. But the people, in the so-called Evangelical churches, who are broadest cannot be properly defined as Unitarians. Neither need Unitarianism wish to extend its numbers in this particular way. The fact remains that it satisfies the aspirations and requirements of a small proportion of the people of this continent and of the old world. It has prompted noble lives. It has done its share towards the rounding out of the human conception of religion. There does not seem to be any need for it to pretend that it entirely satisfies popular ideas or that it is a popular church. If this were so its numbers would be larger. There are about twenty-five millions of communicants of Christian churches in the United States and Canada. Of these sixty-nine thousand are Unitarians.

Standing a little way back from the west side of Jarvis street, between Wilton avenue and Gerrard street, the First Unitarian Church is a somewhat tasteful edifice in the gothic style of architecture, being built of brick with trimmings and piers of cement or stone work, and having a large eastern window. A sign at the door says that strangers are welcome, and there is probably no church in the city where this is more emphatically the case. Entering the front door you find yourself in a cocoa-matted vestibule from which cocoa-matted stairs ascend right and left to the church, the auditorium being built over a capacious basement. Going up these stairs you are received by an attentive usher who conducts you to a comfortable seat in which you find the hymn-book used in the service (with music) and the prayer book. There is a widish central aisle, and there are also aisles on the north and south sides of the auditorium. Between these the open ended pews run on a curve, so that the attention of the congregation naturally and easily converges on the platform, which is a very tasteful piece of joinery construction in light oak, with two or three ecclesiastical looking chairs upon it, upholstered in red velvet, and a central reading desk. A vase of flowers or an ornamental plant finds a place on a small table. Though not large, the church is well adapted for its purpose, and gives one a sense of commodious comfort. Daylight streams through three pointed windows on each side, in addition to the large one at the east end of the building, so that the illumination is not of the "dim, religious" variety. At night the church is lighted by four gaseliers of polished brass. The floor is handsomely carpeted all over, and there are crimson cushions in all the pews. The walls and ceiling are tastefully decorated, and at the back of the reading desk a large gilt cross forms part of the mural ornamentation. There is a small gallery at the back of the church, which is not used. At the north-west corner of the church, near the platform, and placed diagonally, is a neat and effective organ of precisely the right size for the church; it is neither absurdly large nor penuriously small, and in front of it a choir pew. The organ is adequately played by Miss Henrietta Shipe, one of Toronto's most valued accompanists. The choir pew is occupied by a quartette of good average ability, led by Mr. J. L. O'Malley, who is well-known as an enthusiastic amateur, and whose massive bass voice makes a good support for the other vocalists. On Sunday evening last there were about a hundred people present, about half of whom were men. The present fashion of ladies large sleeves, however, is calculated to make a good congregational showing, and though the seating capacity of the auditorium was not really more than half occupied, the audience looked a fair one for the building.

The organist was playing a soft and pleasing voluntary when I entered this abode of advanced thought and higher criticism. It was not an unsuitable opportunity to con the "Statement of Principles" which, along with other Unitarian

literature, is placed on tables in the vestibule. For a church which has no creed, it must be conceded that this church gives one every opportunity of letting visitors know where it stands. The document is as follows:

#### STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

Affirming the exercise of perfect freedom of thought in religion as in other things to be a personal right and duty, this church does not require its members to assent to any creed, and excludes no one for any doctrinal difference. It welcomes to its fellowship all who seek to promote Truth, Righteousness and Love in themselves and others; it has no other test of acceptance. This Statement of Principles is put forth, not as binding upon any one, but as an explanation of some of the distinctive beliefs of Unitarianism to-day, which this Church represents. 1. *God, the Father of All*. "The Lord our God is One;" the Immanent Spirit and Life of the Universe; the Infinite and Eternal Power, Wisdom and Beneficence, over all things and through all things, guiding the operations of nature, the evolution of worlds, and the life of man, to ends of ultimate good. 2. *The Divinity of Man*. Man—not fallen, but ever ascending to higher stages of being; the most perfect expression of the Divine; by nature a Child of God. 3. *The Spiritual Leadership of Jesus Christ*. The Man of Nazareth; whose pre-eminent Divinity exemplified the possibilities of the Divine Humanity residing in all men; the most sublime Prophet of the Soul that the ages have produced; the wisest and loftiest of the Teachers who have guided mankind in their religious development. 4. *The Brotherhood of Man*. A fundamental principle of the religion of Jesus, implied in the Fatherhood of God. A Brotherhood not limited by creed, race or condition, outflowing in all brotherly activities tending to the amelioration and ennobling of human life; its consummation, the union of all humanity in the ties of peace and good fellowship. 5. *Religion Natural to Man*. The sense of relationship to God and duty—not imparted from without, but inherent in human nature; the impulse of the divinity within the soul; while independent of, yet including, all bibles, churches and faiths; its purest realization—perfect obedience to the will of God, or to love the best and live the best we know. 6. *Christianity—the Worship of God and the Service of Man*. The highest form of historic religion; a life rather than a creed; not an orthodoxy of beliefs, but a principle of personal conduct; in essence, Love to God and Love to Man; its truest expression, service to others. 7. *Prayer—to Uplift Man, not to Change God*. We conceive the universe as an evolution of beautiful, beneficent, unvarying order, governed by laws which are never reversed or suspended. Prayer changes no physical or spiritual law. It is rather an expression of that law by which the soul of man ever aspires towards the Highest, and the finite holds communion with the Infinite. Not always in words; for "he prayeth best who loveth best;" and labor for the noblest ideals is prayer in action. Thus may the whole life be made a prayer. 8. *Immortality for All*. Every soul, being a child of God, and a partaker of his nature, is by consequence immortal. Death is a beneficent provision of the Divine Parent for bringing all his children into a fuller and richer life. 9. *Evil Transient, Good Eternal*. Retribution, being natural, not arbitrary, is never to be evaded or transferred; being remedial, not vindictive, cannot in the nature of things be everlasting. The monstrous doctrine of an eternal hell we repudiate as a gross libel on the character of God. No evil can befall the good man in life or death. Goodness is an eternal law of God and will finally overcome all evil; and only as we accept and practice this law can we find peace in this world or in the world to come. 10. *Salvation by Character*. Salvation—not escape from the consequences of sin, which are inevitable, but freedom from sin; obtained not by the sacrifice of another for us, but by our self-sacrifice for the good of all; its outlook—the continuity of human development in all worlds, or the progress of mankind upward and onward forever. 11. *The Unity and Sacredness of all Truth*. All truth is from God, and means progress and blessedness. Science is a handmaiden and helper of True Religion; the facts of the one can never contradict the facts of the other; and the natural soil of truth is the free and open mind. Therefore, taking truth for authority, not authority for truth, we deem it our highest duty to follow the truth in love wherever it leads. 12. *Revelation Universal and Progressive*. Coming through no single channel or in any miraculous way, but naturally, through many channels; not of the remote past or of one people only, but of all times and nations. The province of revelation is the whole world of truth; every new truth belongs to it; and so far from its being ended, our belief is that humanity is to-day only in the dawn of still greater revelations yet to be. 13. *Inspiration—A Light for Every Man*. Not something locked up in writings or limited to any sect, age or race: but to-day and here, just as truly as in the infancy of the world and in Palestine, the Infinite Spirit of Love, Wisdom, Truth, and Beauty waits to come with its inspiration into every receptive mind. 14. *The Bible—Literature, not Dogma*. A product of religion, not its origin; while not to be accepted as infallible, some parts being contrary to the truths of science, the best reason and conscience of our time, and the teachings of Jesus, yet to be prized as the most important and precious of all the sacred scriptures that we inherit from the past of man's religious life. 15. *The Supreme Authority of Reason and Conscience*. Accepting that only as authoritative which is true, we hold reason and conscience to be man's endowment for the discerning of truth. No man can be expected or required to believe anything contrary to reason; but every person should listen to and obey the deepest suggestions within his own soul as the voice of God, ever striving to prove all things, and to hold fast to that which is good. 16. *The Free Church*. A voluntary association of earnest persons, not limited to any form of faith, uniting, in the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus Christ, for worship, for religious thought and inquiry, for moral self-improvement, and for human helpfulness; a feasible basis for the Unity of Christendom and the Fellowship of Religions.