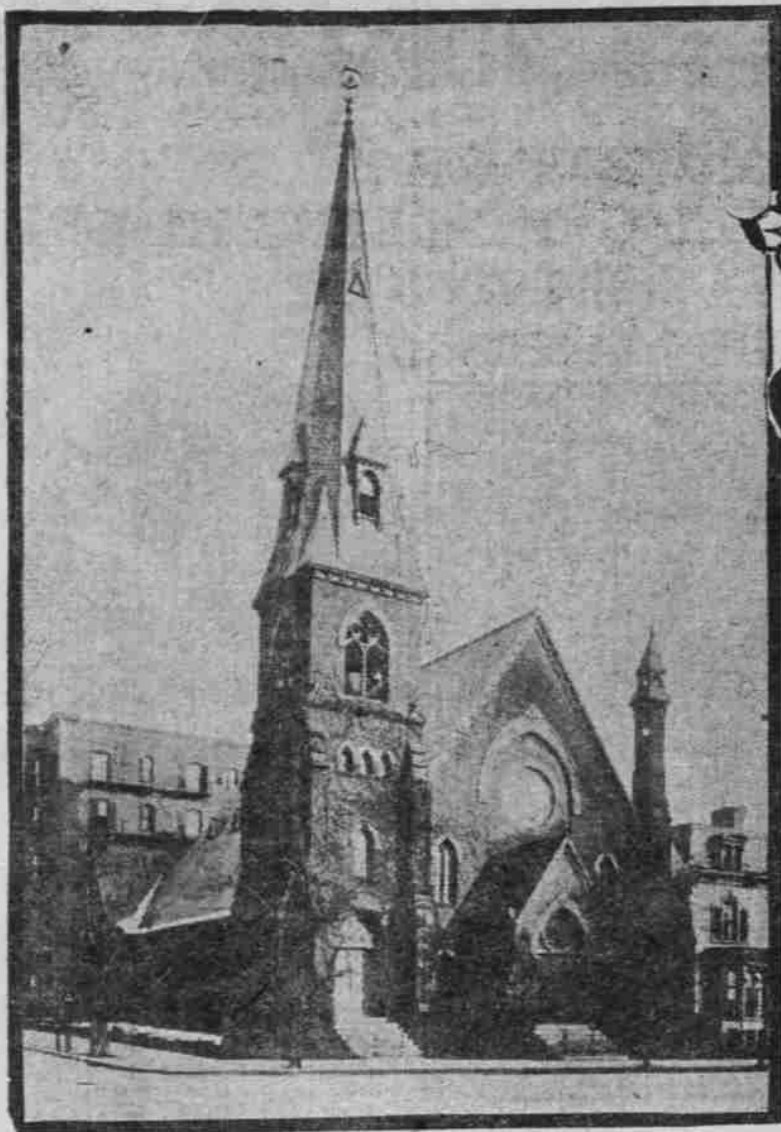


# WILLIAM H. TAFT'S PASTOR AND HIS CREED

## REV. ULYSSES G. B. PIERCE OF ALL SOULS' CHURCH WASHINGTON, TELLS OF THE SIMPLE FAITH OF THE PRESIDENT ELECT



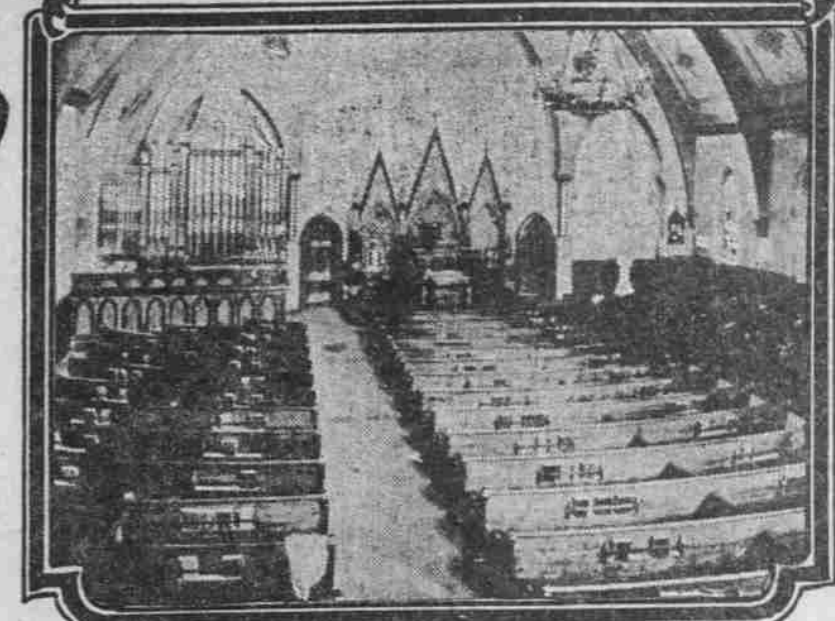
ALL SOULS' CHURCH, WASHINGTON



PAUL REVERE'S BELL, ALL SOULS' CHURCH



REV. ULYSSES G. B. PIERCE  
COPYRIGHT 1908, BY HARRIS & EWING



ALL SOULS' CHURCH AT COAST MARKET TAFT'S FAVORITE

BY JOHN ALPHEATH WATKINS.

OF Mr. Taft's personal creed I know nothing, but his deeply religious nature is to me a sufficient guarantee of his faith.

These words from Mr. Taft's pastor, the Rev. Ulysses G. B. Pierce, of All Souls' Church, Washington, may be used as a gauge to the man and his faith.

The minister sat at a flat-top desk, with a snowy white cat napping upon a chair at his right hand. He is a clean-cut, clean-shaven man with black hair turning to an iron gray, broad expansive brow, large brown eyes, which flashed inquisitively when a question was asked him, but which looked dreamily out of the window while he answered. His erect, spare figure bespoke the man of energy. Now and then he was called from the room and I would hear him whistling a merry air as he returned up the stairs.

Upon the desk lay open before me a prospectus of the seventh season of this happy man's lectures, and one title in particular attracted my attention, "The Gospel of Laughter." Beneath this title was printed in small type:

"To shorten the face is to lengthen the life."

Mr. Taft's Creed.

"The President in his reply to the man Martin, who wrote to the White House inquiring of Mr. Taft's creed, did not rebuke the reference to Mr. Taft as an 'infidel (Unitarian)' as it was put," said I.

"The President appreciated that such a designation should not be dignified by a rebuke. Its absurdity was upon its face. Did you ever hear of infidels building a church?"

"Scores of letters similar to Martin's snowed me under during the campaign. I have had little time for anything else than answering them since Mr. Taft was nominated. They came largely from ministers; and I took care to answer each with a statement from the constitution of our faith."

"In 1894 our national conference subscribed to this declaration of our principles:

"The churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

"The conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore it declares that nothing in this constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

"That is our creed, unanimously adopted, and I went in in response to each inquiry concerning Mr. Taft's belief. That is the only creed we have ever had,

and the question of Jesus' divinity or of the inspiration of the Bible never has come up, and is not likely to do so.

"Didn't your churches have a creed commencing: 'We believe in the fatherhood of God, etc.'?"

"No. That is our church motto. It was written by one of our ministers, and becoming popular, is inscribed in many of our churches. It does not commence 'We believe in,' but consists merely of this statement of the five points of Unitarianism: 'The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the leadership of Jesus, salvation of character, the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.'"

What Unitarians Believe.

"We hold that all who do the will of God belong to the family of Christ and any church dedicated to God can enter in doctrinal beliefs. The Bible is largely an oriental classic, and we do not interpret it as we would a problem in algebra. We are concerned in getting inspiration from Jesus' life and example, in learning how to carry our cross with the strength and fidelity with which He carried His. We believe in the trustworthiness and essential goodness of human nature, and deny divine predestination to the total depravity and necessary ruin of any human soul. We hold that if any man is true to the best that is in him he is certain to arrive at what to him is truth. If such a man makes mistakes, as we all do, he will correct them. We hold to the dignity of human nature—that to be a man is our greatest prerogative and that a man counts too much and is worth too much to have his life ever thrown away. The greatest thing that God has done is to make a man. In so far as the Bible is a record of what man has imagined, hoped for, known, the Bible becomes a part of the never-ending revelation of God. Art is what man imagines, and therefore art is a revelation of God. Literature is what man hopes for, and therefore literature is a revelation of God. Science is what man knows, and therefore science is a revelation of God. So revelation began when man came to self-consciousness, and it will continue so long as there is in man that which aspires to what is Godlike."

"What sort of teachings from your pulpits might result in a heresy trial?"

"No Unitarian minister can be tried for heresy for the simple reason that there is no tribunal before which he could be tried. We believe in the right, duty and responsibility of free speech, but that, as in civil law, if one of our ministers abuses this freedom of speech he is responsible to his congregation. Each of our churches is absolutely independent, choosing and dismissing its own ministers as it pays its own bills. Our

conferences are simply advisory bodies, discussing outside missions and other cooperative works."

Church Propaganda to Beat Taft.

"Did you encounter any organized attempt to defeat Mr. Taft because of his religious views?"

"Yes. Ministers of various organizations united to defeat him and at various ministers' assemblies the question of his defeat was brought up, while resolutions to that effect were passed. That movement was most strenuous in the Middle West and one of the most active centers was Kansas. Various church papers warned their readers to

vote against him. Here is a sample of such yellow church journalism dedicated to Christ. It is entitled 'The Emptiness of Unitarianism,' refers to his 'nondescript flock,' complains that in our creed 'there is nothing of sin and of atonement for sin,' or of 'spiritual death,' and ridicules me because our congregation pays the salary of a trained nurse who visits the poor, black and white, in one section of our city and teaches them how to care for their sick. But it is a tribute to the age in which we live that all of this propaganda ended in fiasco."

"How did you come to enter the ministry?"

"I was set apart for the ministry, when a small tot, by my grandfather, the Rev. Waterman Pierce, of Barneyville, Mass., who was one of the founders of the 'Free Baptists.' The Baptists proper then followed Calvin's teaching of predestination and they held only close communion, allowing only members of their church to partake of communion therein. My grandfather took the ground that communion was not his table, but the Lord's, as he expressed it, and he invited all who would to take it. And it may be an instance of heredity that I, when giving communion, always invite 'members of this church, of sister churches and of no church.' My grand-

father also formulated a predestination theory of his own, holding that we were 'predestined to good and never to evil'—that we were 'doomed to be happy,' as I often heard him express it. He was a follower of Arminius instead of Calvin. Calvin maintained that man cannot act freely for himself, but was strictly under the sovereignty of the divine will. Arminius, a Dutch theologian born in 1560, held that religion should always be obedient to the rational spirit, that nature should be the test in regard to all which affects human conduct and that the critical spirit ought to be applied to dogma and the Bible. I mention this in connection with my grandfather because after the reformation Arminianism was the first notable step toward Unitarianism.

"I used to sit in the pulpit alongside my grandfather when a small child. He put me there that he might keep his eye on me. Although born in Providence and making my home there with my father, who was a merchant I spent much time up in Barneyville. Often I was awakened by my grandfather's laying his hands on me and praying, while I was in bed. He lived to the age of nearly 90 and preached for 45 years in that one church, where I also preached my first sermon. And as I grew older he saw to it that I studied theology at the Free Baptist College, Hillsdale, Mich.

Country Editor While at College.

"To help pay my expenses at Hillsdale I was for some time associate editor of the Leader, a progressive country weekly. I had charge of the sports and general news, had to drum up subscriptions at the county fairs and write editorials. I was also in county politics. Thus I was engaged from 19 to 24.

"I also wrote syndicate articles for the daily papers under the pseudonym 'Frank Arnold.' There was no typewriter in Hillsdale, in those days, and I wrote out a dozen copies of each syndicate article in long hand. These articles I later used as lectures, and one describing a tramp which I made through Kentucky and the Mammoth Cave, is still a part of my regular lecture course. I used it only last week."

"It has been said that you went to Harvard, and that after reading Huxley and Darwin there you altered your religious views to conform to the teachings of science."

Knew He Could Never Preach It.

"That is not exactly true. When I left Hillsdale with my sheepskin I knew pretty well that I could never again preach from a Baptist pulpit. Newspaper work is broadening and Hillsdale was a live little town. We had an excellent lecture course there and, after reporting all of the lectures for the Leader, I used to interview the lecturers, who included such men as Beecher, Talmage, Russell Conwell, Dr. P. S. Henson and George Kneass. All sorts of geniuses met at the Leader office and thrashed out the problems of life and the topics of the times. It was here at Hillsdale and not at Harvard that I read Huxley and Darwin, as well as Spencer. One of my classmates there also read them and we discussed them together. He is now a Unitarian minister in Chicago. After returning East I took a post-graduate course at Harvard Divinity School, which you know is undenominational. And finishing there I decided to go West.

"The danger was of inertia, I knew; and I made up my mind that I would not settle east of the Mississippi. So I got married and went to Decatur, Ill., up in the Norwegian region, a fearfully cold place. Here I took my first Unitarian Church, with its congregation composed of people of all shades of belief.

"Next I went to Pomona, Cal., where I had three churches six miles apart in a triangle. Each Sunday I had a drive of 18 miles, preaching first at 11 A. M., then at 3 P. M., and finally at 8 P. M., returning home at 11 P. M. Work among my people took me over the same route week days, and I had plenty to do those years. Summers I camped in Arizona, in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, and made a study of that paradox, with its wealth of nature and prehistoric ruins. I had my camera with me—have always been a camera fiend. I described this region in more syndicate articles and later in lectures.

Elected "Bishop" of the Cowboys.

"The cowboys at the canyon elected me 'bishop,' and after they were through with the dance hall Sundays they cleared it early that I might preach to them there. In the beginning one of them came up and told me the boys had dele-

gated him to ask me not to preach about just one thing. I looked at him inquiringly.

"What all of the other parsons that have been among us have harped on year in and year out and what always puts a cowboy down in the dumps?"

"And what is it?" I asked.

"The story of the prodigal son."

"Well, I avoided the prodigal son, preached them a creed they had never heard before, and each showed his interest by dropping a 'chunk' in the collection every Sunday. Every one of these dollars I spent upon the nucleus of a library for their camp. They wouldn't take a cent from me for my food nor a cent from them for my preaching. I dedicated the first hotel there—a big log house, which they called the 'Log Inn.' The only music we could get for those ceremonies was one guitar. I dedicated the hotel, to the infinite spirit of beauty and of power, who is immeasurably above all of his works; to the enlargement of vision of all who shall visit here; to the refreshment and inspiration of all who, weary with the world's dullness and tired of life's monotony, shall seek a shelter here." While I was at Pomona my father died, and I came East, taking a church at Ithaca, that I might be near my mother. I came from Ithaca here eight years ago.

"We have had a church here since 1821, and the old pulp, cast by the Revolutionary hero, Paul Revere, in 1822, now tells in the new church. The old church, later the Police Court, was indeed a test of the Unitarian faith in the early times. It was neither popular nor of fine appointments, yet Presidents, Legislators and jurists were among its congregations from the first."

Other Unitarian Presidents.

"Which of our Presidents were Unitarians?"

"John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams and Millard Fillmore were all avowedly of our faith. John Adams' home minister in Massachusetts, the Rev. Lemuel Briant, of Quincy, became a Unitarian about 1790, and John Adams attended the church here after entering the White House. Jefferson wrote in 1821: 'I trust those is not a young man now in the United States who will not die a Unitarian.' John Quincy Adams also attended the church here, as did Millard Fillmore. Abraham Lincoln, though not an avowed Unitarian, once defined his religious belief in these words, which describe perfectly the scope of the Unitarian faith of today:

"When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul."

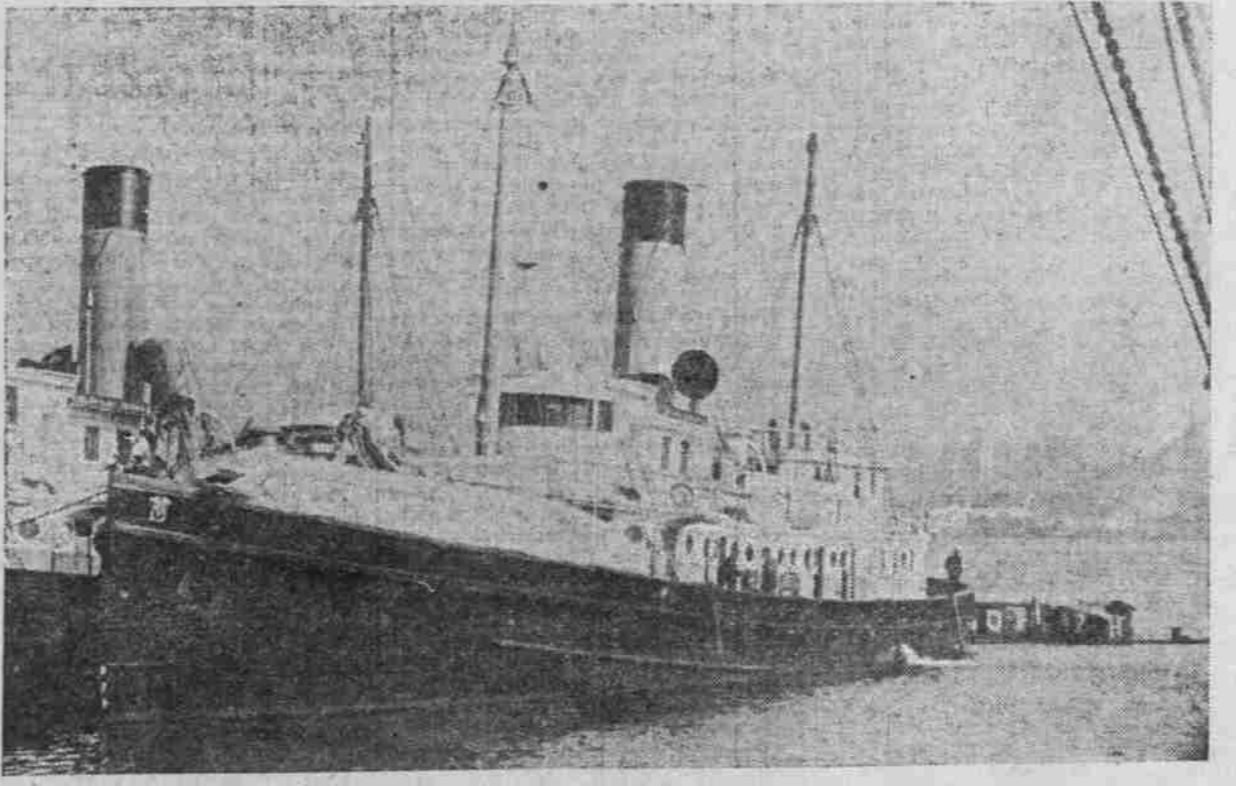
"We have had in our denomination also one Vice-President, several Cabinet officers, including Mr. Taft's father; three Justices of the United States Supreme Court, and besides these more than a score of Governors and nearly a score of Chief Justices of State Supreme Courts. Among notable Unitarians in the United States Senate have been Webster, Archer, Anthony, Howe, J. P. Hale, Allison, Edward Everett Merrill, W. E. Chandler, Hoar and Sumner. Rev. Edward Everett Hale, chaplain of the United States Senate, is a Unitarian minister. Other Unitarians have been the poets Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell and Holmes, and such writers as Emerson, Thoreau, Dickens, Hawthorne, Bayard Taylor and Bret Harte; Peter Priestley, discoverer of oxygen; Joseph Cooper, Azarria, Sir Isaac Newton and Maxwell were also of our faith, as have been such women as Dorothy Dix, Elizabeth Peabody, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Susan B. Anthony, Mary A. Livermore, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Margaret Fuller, Helen Hunt Jackson, Julia Ward Howe and Florence Nightingale. The 'Battle Hymn of the Republic,' our most popular National air, and 'Nearer, My God, to Thee,' were both written by Unitarians. These names are given in no spirit of boasting, but simply as the assurance that it is not criminal offense to be a Unitarian."

"How came it that you were named after Grant?"

"My father was a warm partisan of Grant's, and I, having been born in '65, was 'up in arms' when the General was at the zenith of his glory. My name was originally Ulysses Baker, during the first Grant campaign my father declared that he would add 'Grant' to my name were the General elected. I have downstairs now a large photograph of Grant which he presented to my father in honor of that event."

Washington, D. C., Nov. 23.

### UNITED STATES ARMY SENDS FLOTILLA OF MINE-PLANTERS TO PACIFIC COAST



NEW YORK, Dec. 5.—Special.—In a Jersey shipyard four officers of the United States Army are fitting out a flotilla of mine-planters for the Pacific. Incidentally, in preparing these little ships for a 16,000-mile cruise, they are demonstrating anew the resourcefulness of the West Pointer, who appears to take to the quarterdeck with as much ease as though he had been a sailorman all his life. After these ships are ready to stand their long cruise, they will go down the coast to Newport News, pile on all the coal they can carry, and then make for the Pacific, where for the next three years they will be busy teaching the Coast Artillery out there how to fill a harbor channel with gun cotton, and how to build submarine wire fences that will trip the heaviest battleship afloat. The Army has only four of these mine-planters, and when they follow the battleships, the torpedo-boat destroyers and the Navy's giant floating drydock to the Far East, the Atlantic seaboard will be without any boats to locate and anchor the mines that protect our harbors, that is, until next Summer, when four new vessels of this class will be launched and put into commission.