

The year is 1984; I was 25 years old.

This is taken directly from the diary.

Later entries correct people identification errors

SUNDAY 23RD DECEMBER

UNITARIAN CAROL SERVICE, TRADITIONAL WITH A

UNITARIAN SERVICE,

HINT OF RADICALNESS

As I said I couldn't get up & didn't get up for the swine service so now I'm thinking of going for the midnight communion. It really depends on how boring the Bridger is - I would like to go to Swine one over this period - I can imagine leaving at 10-50 for Swine for arrival at 11-30. Today, after the service, the unitarians went carol singing - I was asked by the Quaker bloke (it's his wife who is a Quaker) if I was going singing but I declined. In fact I got home to hear almost all of Karen Armstrong talking about whether one needs creeds or religion at all. I find

this stuff on mysticism very interesting & I was reminded of sitting at Rannoch Moor unable to work out the scale of the place & watching the lightning, it all compared with the horror of Fort William. Yet this bloke still talked of God in the terms, he doesn't know why God contacts people in different ways -- and it all seems to go down the plug hole.

Anyway, no problems at the Unitarians where I was disappointed a bit at the lack of interpretation. Quakers brought along 'The Golden Treasury of the Bible.' I thought it was a golden treasury to start with & I wondered what kind of a translation that would be, if it's like David Martin & his defence of the KJV despite (or because of?) its inaccuracies.

There were readings of the "Shepherds story" & a Sunday school kid did the fourth shepherd boy, the "3 Kings story" and the "wise men story". The first Quaker reading was a definition of Quakerism. We are Christian itself and are with all those who seek God however they do it. The bloke himself later told me next to me that the Quakers have as many as "this place" used to have 40-50 and that was 50 years ago. I don't know if he means membership or what. Still he criticised us for being ideological last week, but the Quaker rep certainly was. The two he was speaking to only came along because of their kids at the Sunday School. I was introduced as a new person here. This bloke gave the best reading, that some of us like to see Christmas as a symbol for the reverence of life, and no reading out beyond the Bible affirmed in any way the literalness of the Christmas story, always called a story. Indeed the kiddies own Carol off a separate sheet had Mary & Joseph as mother and father. We also had a (the?) Unitarian Carol which was also right in trad terms. The interspersed readings & carols made for a full mixture, and David who came in just late, as he has before - had to get extra reading. There was an opportunity for talk-back but I didn't question it, it was obvious that the whole affair was just happiness. Ernest Penn looked it, in a suit rather than his Unitarian college? robes, and kids made a noise all the time. M.T., who did a reading, quipped "not much hope left" to me when the candle in a glass representing hope went out. The children held

a candle in a glass each representing things like hope & courage etc. Brian Penn seems to be a bit hooked on the significance of light & it is obviously the Unitarian thing (at least in Hull it is). David also said that hope was extinguished just so that it would be noticed, and in fact he was very strong on all many turning up for his kids' naming & welcoming ceremony and said it to me too. It must be important for him & he also wanted me to see the letter in the Inquirer which he sent. I've got hold of a slightly older one which has some religious stuff in it this time, which I fancy responding to. His argument is that he is not a free Christian or anything else especially as he sees Christ as the object of worship. He wants Unitarianism to break away & be God centred belief without barriers. I think he is wrong about Jesus & the liberal mainstream, its that Jesus the man represents his father & so becomes God on earth and for this Jesus is raised & the resurrection is all that follow in him. Now you can do it via other faiths but there must be a discriminating attitude to them all, and grounds of that discrimination should be discussion & theological method with the ground assumptions being goodness, spirituality, and honesty. I would like to reply to that article because I think it needs it.