

Service at Hull Unitarian Church on January 3rd 2010 (Epiphany)
Theme: New Beginnings, Old Beginnings
Adrian Worsfold

[Two outer candles of the five prong should be lit if used, or keep the three pronged candelabra unlit.]

Introductory Music [4 minutes to the hour] [CD Track 01: Follow the Light]

Introduction

The theme of today's service is Newness: New Beginnings, Old Beginnings in the context of Epiphany. This is the first service here not, perhaps, of a new decade, but it is the beginning of the 'tens and teens' of the twenty first century as we leave the 'noughties' behind.

Chalice Lighting

I use the words of the 'Chalice Lighting' by Márton Szabó, as used in the service last week on December 27th 2009 at Béla Bartók Unitarian Church.

I light this chalice to be the light of life in the coming year. To shine before us, to show us God's way we have to follow, so may not walk blindly, but to step into the future with self-confidence. **[Light the chalice]**

Some Opening Words from the Rev. Sándor Léta at last Sunday's service (**Léta et al, 2009**) at the Béla Bartók Unitarian Church, Hungary.

Take time to work - it is the price of success
Take time to think - it is the source of power
Take time to read - it is the fountain of wisdom
Take time to worship - it is the highway to reverence
Take time to be friendly - it is the road to happiness
Take time to laugh - it helps to lift life's load
Take time for God's Word - it comforts you and gives you faith, hope and love
and

It washes the dust of [the] earth from your eyes.
Take time for God - it is life's only truly lasting investment. Amen.

About Hymns

Even without an organist we are not as restricted as we may think in what hymns we can sing. There is a unique website ([McLennan, 2006](#)) offering a wide collection of very well played organ music that is public domain, and one can pay for music not in the public domain. Clyde McLennan's playing and website has facilitated a gift to the world of nearly two and a half million downloads since September 2006. If necessary, audio editing software can accurately remove or repeat a verse. Once converted into audio files, the music can be collected on to one CD for the particular service, in the correct order, especially as record-once CDs are only between 10 and 30 pence each and carry about an hour's worth of ordinary uncompressed material.

So the first hymn for the 'tens and teens' in this church then is what I personally regard as the Unitarian anthem. It is Faith of the Larger Liberty, Hymn 134 in Hymns for Living, sung to the tune Mit Freuden Zart 87.87.887 as in the book. There is a lead in and then, of course, here, the correct number of verses. [[CD Track 02: 134 Mit Freuden Zart](#)]

Faith of the larger liberty,
Source of the light expanding,
Law of the church that is to be,
Old bondage notwithstanding:
Faith of the free!
By thee we live -
By all thou givest and shalt give
Our loyalty commanding.

Heroes of faith in every age,
Far-seeing, self-denying,
Wrought an increasing heritage,

Monarch and priest defying.
Faith of the free!
In thy dear name
The costly heritage we claim:
Their living and their dying.

Faith for the people everywhere,
Whatever their oppression,
Of all who make the world more fair,
Living their faith's confession:
Faith of the free!
Whate'er our plight,
Thy law, thy liberty, thy light
Shall be our blest possession.

[Vincent Brown Silliman, 1894-1979]

We have a period of Reflection and Prayer.

At this gathering hour we reflect upon those things which we ought to have done and have not done, and those things which we did do and should not have done, and consider what these were and how to make amends.

[Silence]

We also pray about those things that we ought to have done and did do, and those things we did do and realise were good, and so reflect in a manner to give thanks to ourselves and others. [Silence]

We should think positively of ourselves, of those closest to us, of our friends, of those about whom we have little opinion, positively too about even our declared enemies, and indeed give good blessing to the widest number.

[Silence]

But for all the thought in the world, what then matters is what we do. How can we add to the depth of good in the lives of ourselves and others. How can we make new, positive, beginnings, for another person close and for many far away. [Silence]

So we are sorry, we are thankful, and we make amends. In saying Yes to our own lives we should help others say Yes to theirs. [Silence]

A Collect for Epiphany

The heavens began with a spark,
And they race ahead.
All life was born in the stars:
Life comes from light,
And light gives life.
In our life, as we follow our star,
Let our journey gather its story:
Full of gifts.
Receiving life's narrative with grace
May we find that our journey's end
Has that sense that all has been worthwhile
And worthy of the answer "Yes".

For Epiphany I have a Reading of Isaiah chapter 60

60 1 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

2 For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

3 Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

4 Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Another hymn now - something again about vision - and it is Be Thou My Vision, the Hymn 151 in Hymns for Living, sung to the tune SLANE 10 10. 10 10. Dactylic. [CD Track 03: 151 Slane]

Be thou my vision, O God of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom and thou my true word,
I ever with thee and thou with me, God;
Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower,
Raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor world's empty praise,
Thou my inheritance, thou and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Sovereign of heaven, my victory won;
May I reach heaven's joys O bright heaven's Sun.
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

[Selected by Eleanor Henrietta Hull from a Gaelic source]

Instead of a Reading

Instead of a second reading, let's hear instead Louis Armstrong tell us about what a wonderful world we inhabit for all our new and ongoing beginnings (Thiele, Weiss, 2008). [CD Track 04: WaWW]

Intercessions

We pray for the needs of faith, the world, the living and the dead.

We pray that faiths have the freedom to operate and provide positive effect into societies in which they compete and co-operate.

We pray for our own Unitarian Churches, and especially today for Jemaat Allah Global Indonesia, a newer Unitarian grouping with origins amongst a

group of excommunicated Seventh Day Adventists. We also offer prayers for Béla Bartók Unitarian Church, Budapest, Hungary, as it embarks on its English language services on the final Sunday of every month. We are thankful for its material made available for wider use, as here in Hull today.

We pray for the world: particularly for peace in the Middle East and in Afghanistan. We pray for better governance in Zimbabwe and against the threat of repression looking over gay and lesbian people in Uganda. We hope for economic stability and the avoidance of a second dip recession. We are concerned that unemployment may well rise ever higher, and that so many make up the hidden unemployed who seek out useful activity where funds permit.

We further pray for those who are ill or in need, and you may like to consider anyone in need that you know in a moment of silence. [Silence]

We pray for those who have died and who mourn, again considering their names and the images we may keep of them in a moment of silence. [Silence]

We desire that these intercessions are acceptable for all our sakes.

In our thanks for the Hungarian Unitarian witness, we can use the prayer given in Budapest a week ago by Knut Heidelberg (*Léta et al, 2009*), inspired by Albert Schweitzer:

Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our world,
especially for those who are suffering;

for those that are overworked, underfed and cruelly treated;
for all living beings;

for any that are killed or lost or deserted or frightened or hungry.

We entreat for them all Your mercy and pity,
and for those who deal with them we ask a heart of compassion
and gentle hands and kindly words.

Make us, ourselves, to be true friends to everyone,
and so to share the blessings of the merciful.

We conclude our said prayers with a blessing as adapted from that used by Rev. Sándor Léta last week (Léta et al, 2009).

May God bless our lives:

God be near: a signpost for one and all.

God be within: to comfort and console during sadness.

God be wrapped around: to embrace each one of us and protect one and all.

God be in front: to show the good and right ways for one and all.

God be behind: to protect each one of us from the actions of evil.

God be underneath: to catch anyone who falls.

God be above: to bless our holy actions.

May the transcendent and immanent God be so positioned that our lives are blessed today, tomorrow and throughout time. Amen.

The Prayer of Saint Patrick is very similar to that, and here it is from John Rutter. [CD Track 05: Saint Patrick]

If we are to have new beginnings in the tens and the teens then we need Peace. So let us sing the Song of Peace to Finlandia, Hymn 226 in Hymns for Living. [CD Track 06: 226 Finlandia]

Past, Present and Future Beginnings

Surrounded by and coming from lights, we can go back and back to imagine when there was no light.

Go back and back through the cosmos and then back, and we can't. Before the universe was, there was no before. There was only at the very first an absolute beginning, a moment of extraordinary light and power. Before each of us lived there absolutely was not. There was only at the very first an absolute beginning, a pure moment of conception. So the first light is for the very first light. [Light the first unlit candle]

And then there were all sorts of cosmic beginnings, as the uneven universe created new forms and new entities. Each one of us alive has new beginnings among the beginnings, and moments of epiphany, leading to new directions.

So the second light is for a new light, after another light. [Light the second unlit candle]

If our universe races apart, forever accelerating, as it does now, it will have a final beginning, and then in utter dark it will be lifeless. Yet what of all the lights that did shine, being its cosmic memory? And though each of us too will have a final beginning, we know that we have our entry in the Book of Life, and that our memory is laid down for others to continue with their ongoing beginnings. And to that light we can now only make another light. [Light the third unlit candle]

The Prayer at a Funeral

On November 27 2009 my mother died, and, given all the complicated ties that need unravelling as regards her estate, my life will certainly change this coming year, and nothing will be the same again. When my mother was with me I bought her some Andrea Bocelli music on CDs, because, although he sings so much questionable crossover music, he does have a very accurate and fine voice. At the funeral the central musical piece was chosen by my sister, from his album *Sogno*, and this was 'The Prayer' that features Celine Dion, and I'd like to suggest that each we think of someone of special significance, as this live version plays. [CD Track 07: The Prayer]

For our next hymn I turn to the new book *Sing Your Faith* (2009). One hymn has an unstated reference to Friedrich Nietzsche. He had asked: 'Would you, having experienced all that you have, live that life again and again, as in eternal recurrence, and so have the ability to say "Yes to Life?"' For this hymn I could not find the prescribed music, but 77.77.77 is Dix and so we can sing its Hymn 83 in Sing Your Faith to a familiar tune. The lead in will make the music obvious. [CD Track 08: SYF 083 Dix]

Just as long as I have breath,
I must answer, "Yes," to life,

though with pain I made my way,
still with hope I meet each day.
If they ask what I did well,
tell them I said, "Yes," to life.

Just as long as vision lasts,
I must answer, "Yes," to truth,
in my dream and in my dark,
always that elusive spark,
If they ask what I did well,
tell them I said, "Yes," to truth.

Just as long as my heart beats,
I must answer, "Yes," to love,
disappointment pierced me through,
still I kept on loving you.
If they ask what I did well,
tell them I said, "Yes," to love.

[Alicia S. Carpenter]

Sermon

Since the beginning of 1979 my Book of Life has been written down for every day, and so it is that I can look back to find new beginnings among the old, and any moments of epiphany. And I thought, what of a new beginning for me in coming here? Perhaps my tale tells us a little about first impressions.

Back in 1984 I was undergoing something of a religious revolution. I was confirmed in the Church of England and moved from the University chaplaincy to a rural church. I had already visited a theological college in Birmingham with thoughts of Anglican ministry to find that I had something in common with the theology of a number of staff but rarely with the students. I was also finding out embarrassing things about the Baha'is. I actively went to hear evening sermons from a liberal-minded Methodist minister. And it was in 1984 that I first came to a service at this church.

Central to events was a regular contact with a Baha'i woman. I didn't know at the time that Baha'i practices and her dependency on the group would have prevented a relationship with her. She was in fact married off very rapidly to a Baha'i, as reported in the Hull Daily Mail on July 17 1985.

The Baha'is had used this building for a regional meeting and I came along with some embarrassing material to put to them. Seeing a notice on the wall about Jesus regarded as a man and not a God, I decided to come along to this church.

I first attended on November 25th, 1984. Ernest Penn and I spoke and he knew of this woman I mentioned, being in a Baha'i and Quaker meeting, and in United Nations Association meetings, and in yoga meetings, all in this church building. He'd indeed said to her that she was always around, and Ernest was interested that I knew this woman elsewhere.

My first impression was of the symbol in front that seemed to be a cross with the top lopped off and replaced by a flame. The unfamiliar hymns did not seem to say very much, but their content was in line with the sermon; the sermon was obviously the high point of the service and was supported by secular readings. It was all to do with darkness to light - spiritualised perhaps but also having a social focus too. I was already familiar with basic Christian terminology, and its lack of use here seemed very odd. But there was a stronger positive side to the experience too, because it all felt like the effect of a 1662 service but with modern words: and such a bizarre reflection is positive because Anglicans who like a good meaningless 1662 service full of dogmatic clutter could have a meaningful one with the Unitarians!

What I was getting at, I think, was Ernest's ability to construct a service that generated a spiritual atmosphere, and I'd picked up on that.

Also removed was the sense of being in a service and having to demythologise what I did not believe. That tension was not present, as it was in every Christian service I was attending.

I noted that Ernest Penn had mentioned God about four times and Jesus only one or two, and that the Lord's Prayer was sung, which struck me in my relative ignorance as a Unitarian form of Anglo-Catholicism. It seemed to me that the Lord's Prayer must be an important mark of Unitarian identity.

What was odd was that for once I didn't want to answer back after a sermon, and yet Ernest asked if anyone wanted to answer back! I thought if this happened at the Anglican church at Swine I'd never stop asking questions, but here no one did.

I thought that for a city the size of Hull 15 in attendance was a right lousy turnout. I realised that this is a cost of liberalism, as a receiving and not an evangelising faith stance.

There was an American in the congregation and I wondered if that was significant, given that I'd been reading about the American denomination. One was married to a Quaker and another was identified as a Roman Catholic. I guessed that there were just four youngish people in their thirties and one woman in her twenties (by the way, I was 25 years old then - this was of course 25 years ago). I over-estimated the minister's age and yet thought that he seemed incredibly fit.

So it was hello to everyone at the coffee afterwards! I was told about Unitarians in Transylvania and I could only think of Count Dracula, and this was complicated by someone mentioning King John.

I was saying how earlier in the week I'd met some clerical folk talking about the novel as a way into theology, and yet they still used the same religious language as Catholics and fundamentalists. I said this was a hypocritical use of liberal theology and it must have been David Arthur who said I was in a long line of escaping Anglicans.

After this first Sunday I doubted that I would find anything at the Unitarians, but by the Friday I wrote, "I can see myself as a Unitarian minister, indeed that may well be what I'm looking for. I don't know how they operate or what they do."

The Unitarians, it seemed, would give support to my disbelief in resurrection and my meditation understanding of prayer. However, the lack of liturgical sacraments was a problem, as I used these for a reflection on the material nature of the world. On the incarnation I felt more Christian than Unitarian. I wanted to say that Jesus was fully human and fully religious, that is definitive if not exclusive, in that he embodies what others have to offer. The debate about this seemed to have long gone from Unitarianism.

The second Sunday was the last one of three sermons from Ernest about darkness into light. He lit a flaming chalice symbol and there were two references from Matthew's gospel and a long reading from a Unitarian source. I wondered what he meant by divine spark and even the Holy Spirit, also invoked in a hymn. Ernest also spoke of community glow. I might have since transcribed this sermon.

He seemed to produce one answer to my religious pessimism. Shining the light within isn't just an idle optimism and this seemed possible to me, whereas the Christian view did not answer my pessimism because of my disbeliefs.

I thought again that the attendance was pathetic with 12 people present plus the minister, but five of the faces were different from the previous week.

Sunday fell on January 6th in 1985, bang on for Epiphany and my third service here. Ten people were in the congregation that day, and David Arthur had a letter in *The Inquirer* that eating vegetables doesn't make you a vegetarian and he doubted that anyone in Unitarianism calling themselves Christian accepted the World Council of Churches definition, that Christ is God and Saviour. This was also when I heard that a Unitarian minister had given up his ministry after his wife converted to the Baha'is. And I did meet her, incidentally, a Mrs Hellaby.

This time the service struck me negatively. It seemed unanchored with secular readings, all about the New Year and the sun shining. I felt like returning to Anglicanism. Ernest couldn't understand my suggestion that Unitarianism had a "fundamentalism of reason", which was an Anglican reflection about the balance between scripture, tradition and reason. Ernest usefully described to me the theological span of the denomination.

The fourth service I attended on the 13th January struck me as both vague and good, in that what Ernest said about Albert Schweitzer could be put far worse in a mainstream church. I liked its breadth. Ernest was also thinking of coming to a suggested Baha'i, Unitarian and Anglican interfaith meeting I was

considering organising, based at Swine. He couldn't see what the ex-minister now got from the Baha'is, especially as I described it as being far more literalist than he had realised. Ernest had his own ideas about setting up a local branch of the World Congress of Faiths.

It seemed to me on Sunday 20th for my fifth service that I was closest to the Unitarian position. I had an edited letter in the Inquirer, my very first. Here we had a discussion service, with the lectern on the side wall and seats placed in semi-circular fashion - one I much preferred incidentally. A shortened devotion was in fact still 40 minutes long, all about the unchurched. In the discussion I suggested Unitarianism acquire a more rational and multi-faith approach. Other people were also critical, identifying Victorian elements in the worship language being used. The devotion that then followed seemed to focus on criticising creeds. Next week we heard that there had been some opposition to the seating and style of that Sunday's worship.

And on the 27th, my sixth service, we were told that the traditionalist defends all the old forms and ignores the contemporary; the modernist uses traditional forms giving modern meaning and satisfies no one, whereas the liberal includes the relevant of today and yesterday - and the Unitarians are liberal. This struck me as self-justification, and anyway the modernist makes many people happy.

There were 11 in the congregation.

It was this Sunday also that I was finding my difference with the Unitarian view. I was arguing that to take parts out of the creeds would be to demand belief for what was left in. They are fourth century documents, I was saying, and best to leave the clutter in. Arguments that had made denominations in

the past had since faded away, and I asked Ernest if a separate denomination was needed just on this one argument about a creed, and he said, "Yes it is." I said there needs to be another reformation regarding Unitarianism, to make it more distinctive by being interfaith and clear, and he said the denomination does try to reform.

So that was six services, and the next week on 3rd February 1985 I was back at Swine Anglicans with a visiting Methodist minister. The service seemed more aesthetically satisfying than the Unitarian ones, despite it being freezing cold. Though I liked his message of bias to the poor, I still didn't go forward for communion. I chatted to him in the vicarage afterwards. He regarded me as having had a conversion of the mind but not of the heart. I went to Swine in the following week too, despite the driving snow, with a maximum of 12 present. Here we were told by the priest that the then Bishop of London, Graham Leonard, in wanting to tighten up what Anglicans should believe doctrinally, was over-emphasising religious law and could be regarded as heretical. Incidentally, this was the day that my niece's grandfather in Clowne died, who was an ex-miner, her first grandparent to die. Now, all her grandparents are dead, the last being my mother.

The Wednesday of that week involved me showing some Baha'is actual research into their religion, and how their own censorship edits what they get to read.

So on February 17th 1985 I decided to attend the Unitarians just once more to say goodbye. Sixteen were present that day. The sermon was about avoiding internal strife, not through a lowest common denominator, but by employing Unitarian virtues. There was much strife in politics, industry and religion and Unitarianism was an alternative to such strife, whereas it seemed

to me that setting up and keeping an alternative church was to provide another source of conflict itself. The sermon suggested that every twenty years liberalism popped up in the Church of England, to just go away again, and Ernest wondered if this Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, would lead a liberal pilgrimage. Asking for comments after his sermon, I suggested, "speaking as an Anglican", there was no chance of such a liberal pilgrimage as David Jenkins was too Anglican, that he is in fact rather traditional and only differs on points actually settled in his favour theologically fifty to 100 years ago. I said also that the creeds should be seen as set of questions that unite as much as divide, and that David Jenkins is too focused on Christ to undergo any liberal wanderings. Ernest insisted that such views as mine were suppressed in Anglicanism, and I said that they are subversive. David Arthur also thought that, in taking up his mitre, David Jenkins was hardly likely to lead any such pilgrimage, a point which Ernest conceded.

It was afterwards that I told folks I was staying within the Anglican fold, despite only agreeing with the credal bit that says that Jesus was killed by Pontius Pilate. I said that the Unitarian emphasis on freedom of religion had an important point when Churches were compulsory in society, but not now, and that I was myself still Christocentric. That The Inquirer had a photograph on its front cover of a nineteenth century mission van seemed to me to suggest where Unitarianism still was.

David Arthur said that I should consider writing to Francis Simons, an ex-Anglican now Unitarian minister, but it seemed to me that Unitarian ministry was a complete non-option. More specifically I reflected that Unitarianism lacked a relevant central claim, around which there could be some breadth of interpretation offered to the world. It's as if Unitarianism had thrown the

identification baby out with the bathwater of clutter. But even then I thought I might attend again at Park Street perhaps some five weeks later.

By the way, the next Sunday at Swine included a new female visitor, one I subsequently went out with a few times and corresponded with. I also went out with her sister, including having a walk to Hornsea in which she attempted to shove me into a ditch at the side of the old railway track, on the basis that I was a nauseous religious nutcase.

However, one thing stuck me very much: the positive response of the Unitarians to my negative decision. That alone meant I would not lose touch. On 20 May and June 17 1985 we had Unitarian, Baha'i and Christian interfaith meetings at Swine. Also I did write to Rev. Francis Simons on July 5, received a superb reply on July 11, first declared my preference for Unitarianism at Swine on July 12 and ceased communion from July 21. I met Francis when he came "half way" to Lincoln on 23 July. So there was a old beginning and then a new beginning, and there have been more since. What's amazing is what connects my earliest beginnings and now.

In recent months I have been presenting material for a local Anglican In Depth Group that included studying Anglican controversies beginning at the nineteenth century. Reading about these, I could see the shadow of Unitarian Free Christians all over them. Anglicans were suspicious of foreign learning, but the school of Martineau and company were eager scholars going abroad to learn German biblical criticism first hand, and combining this insight with an open English romanticism. The Oxford Anglicans who wrote *Essays and Reviews* in 1860 were the only really fiercely liberal scholars that Anglicanism has produced. It did not last, and only the compromise of the liberalised Catholicism of Charles Gore at the end of the nineteenth century has had any

sustained life since then. All the liberal theological outbursts of Anglicans and some others since have been failures. All David Jenkins showed by the 1980s was how backwards Anglicanism had become. Even Don Cupitt's sole attempt to produce an open postmodern mainstream Christianity failed: and he has since declared that his critics were right all along.

The argument I expressed in 1984 and I still hear so often from Anglicans is that it is better to have a central faith claim, focused around the cult of an individual, with its vast tradition and resource, even if it is all only a story, than it is to express a thin religious language using the predominant narratives that we live by today.

In Anglicanism I can watch people genuflecting as part of their personal spirituality and yet they will happily say thanks for the narrative theology that says that being a Christian is to be identified with standards of role performance, acting out Christian spirituality and life.

This just involves a falsehood. Now we all love some theatrics, and there is indeed a rumour of angels, and we ought to find religious enchantment where we can in an otherwise gloomy world, but such should be combined with a clarity of communication. For example, ask a dedicated postmodern Christian if the resurrection happened. What matters, they say, is to live the resurrection life. But to do so, the same narratives are trotted out year after year and this creates a confusion about history. The same happens at Christmas. The same happens through the liturgical year.

Critical historical and textual methods impose severe limits on what can be justly claimed and not claimed about belief. What happens to revelation when Christianity becomes the equivalent of a play performed in a theatre?

Recently we had a television programme on BBC Four written and presented by Diarmaid MacCulloch called *A History of Christianity*. The book of the series is fantastic, and its pages I have seen on eastern European Unitarianism are refreshingly good. He says that into the 1600s, starting from Transylvania in the south and stretching to Lithuania in the north, were built the first pluralist and tolerant societies that were precursors for the Western world. MacCulloch's father was an Anglican priest, and the author himself identifies most closely with Anglicanism, but declares that as an historian, in understanding all the historical issues and a good many theological ones, he can only be “a friend of Christianity”.

So even when building a sense of enchantment, there has to be a clarity of communication. Yes, religion is like art, and we should be creative and broad, and add colour and light, but we also need to be clear.

I would want to say, simply, is that the liberals of the nineteenth century were not some passing phase. They were foundation builders, using the emerging intellectual disciplines, and drawing on the Enlightenment, and we are right to build upon them. Ernest here was right. He was a servant of this denomination and promoted what this denomination was all about, but even seen from a different angle he was right.

I can see the potential for a liberal, open, postmodern theology that builds enchantment but that does not confuse history and story. We all as people have old beginnings and we need new beginnings. So do churches. Unitarianism is evolving, and there are good signs amongst the gloom; it may just get these new theological beginnings based on older beginnings in the nineteenth century.

Collection and Notices

The final hymn Sung to the tune Belmont is A Noble Life which I offer as a counter statement from my own tendencies as described. It is Hymn 179 in Hymns for Living, A Noble Life. [CD Track 09: 179 Belmont]

A noble life, a simple faith,
An open heart and hand -
These are the lovely litanies
Which all may understand;

These are the firm-knit bonds of grace,
though hidden to the view,
Which bind in sacred fellowship
All folk the whole world through.

[From A. S. Isaacs]

Blessing and Dispersal

To end we have a short piece, 'The Lord Bless You and Keep You', as composed by John Rutter in his *Gloria* album, and then, without further announcement, we can disperse during an extract of some music from Rick Wakeman. He composed 'Piece for Granny' for his dying grandmother and it was intended for her ears only. After her death it appeared on his album called *The Private Collection* and we shall hear the last three minutes. Thank you. [CD Tracks 10, 11 together: Lord Bless Keep, Granny cut]

Resources

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