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In the spring and summer months of 1855, as Victorians grappled with the administrative incompetence and logistical failures which the Crimean War exposed, another debate was reaching fever pitch: that over Sabbath non-observance. The controversy centred around disputes regarding the Sunday opening of Crystal Palace, and attempts by Sir Joshua Walmsley, MP for Leicester, to push through parliament the Sunday openings of the British Museum and National Gallery to promote the "moral and intellectual improvement of the Working Classes". The Hyde Park riots—which Karl Marx famously saw as the onset of the "English Revolution"—involving hundreds of thousands who protested against the Sunday trading Bill and Licensing Act, intensified quarrels between seemingly sclerotic Sabbatarians and their critics. In her journal, Queen Victoria excoriated those "sanctimonious hypocrites" who "should legislate for *themselves* & leave the poor people alone, who work all week round & who require innocent recreation on a Sunday!" (Princess Beatrice's copies, 7 July 1855).

The queen's anti-Sabbatarianism, coupled with her impatience with evangelical clamours for the proclamation of fast days, is only a small part of her complex religious sensibilities which Michael Ledger-Lomas examines in his illuminating religious biography of the monarch, published as part of OUP's "Spiritual Lives" series. In nine thematic chapters organised in loosely chorological form, Ledger-Lomas sketches a compelling "portrait of Victoria's piety" (p. 4), interweaving material from the queen's digitized journal, manuscripts in British and German archives, books, pamphlets, sermons, and other sources. Ledger-Lomas's keen eye for material culture and space also offers fresh perspectives on those things—such as Albert's body and personal belongings—and places—such as Frogmore and Crathie Kirk—which Victoria sacralized and invested with deep spiritual meanings. The

biography's methodological and conceptual underpinnings are equally noteworthy: its analysis is situated in a European and imperial context, while demonstrating the importance of emotions in the history of religion. At the same time, Ledger-Lomas leaves enough room for the discussion of policy debates and decisions in court and parliament, including Victoria's disagreement with Lord Palmerston's patronage nominations of low-churchmen; her relief after the clearing of two authors of the controversial broad-church volume, *Essays and Reviews* (1860), from charges of heresy; and the anti-Ritualist Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 which she readily supported. Offering a holistic examination of Victoria's piety, Ledger-Lomas delivers a corrective to extant biographies whose authors—particularly when they have had a sectarian axe to grind—portrayed her religious life as one-dimensional rather than multifaceted and pluralist. The result is a highly original, cogently argued, beautifully written, and absorbing book which succeeds in almost every way.

Chapter 1 is devoted to religious expectations at Victoria's accession in 1837. Christian ministers expected the new "sacral monarch" to epitomize the nation's religiosity. Yet, various religious groups—Protestant dissenters, Roman Catholics, and Jews—also became hopeful that Victoria would safeguard their interests. Ledger-Lomas picks up the pace in the following chapter which reappraises Victoria's "place in Anglo-German religious exchange" (p. 43), and demonstrates how her marriage to Albert redefined her Protestant worldview. A particularly interesting dimension is Victoria's cultivation, through materiality and grief, of spiritual bonds with Coburg: her German Protestant "second home". Victoria and Albert domesticated religion, thereby conceptualizing the home rather than the church as the ideal hub of Christian devotedness and faith, as explained in Chapter 3. A testament to Ledger-Lomas's command of the sources, the chapter also uncovers the eclecticism of Victoria's religious views: her sacramentalism, influenced by the high-church Samuel Wilberforce; her broad-church 'Christian nuptialism' advocating a more direct relationship between God and

worshipper, and thus removing the need for the sort of "priestly mediation" stipulated by Tractarianism and Roman Catholicism (p. 86); her religiously liberal interest in science; and her scepticism towards evangelical beliefs in special providence. Chapter 4, "A Darkened Earth", is the book's most eloquently written chapter, skilfully conveying to the reader the intensely affective elements of the queen's piety, as well as the pathos of her widowed quest for spiritual reconciliation. Finding solace in the words of favoured clerics, Victoria later became obsessed with her late husband's material remains and their embodied spirituality. This led her to a process of sacralizing objects and emotions, garnering popular sympathy and Christian solidarity, and erecting memorials which were, in Gladstone's view, "sermon[s] made visible" (p. 124).

Victoria disliked crude low-church anti-Catholicism, high-church Ritualism, and the anti-liberalism shared by both, as Ledger-Lomas shows in the following chapter. Under her patronage, she doggedly sought to promote liberal Protestantism. Inevitably, her avowed commitment to "broad church nationalism" (p. 140) drew the ire of anti-Erastian Tractarians, increasingly perturbed as they were by the possibility of a liberal Protestant monarchy undercutting the Church's authority. Victoria was emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually attached to Scottish Presbyterianism, as Ledger-Lomas amply demonstrates in chapter 6, with Crathie Kirk becoming "a synecdoche of the monarchy's sensitivity to Scotland's religion" (p. 183). Yet, despite her interest in, and sympathy to, Roman Catholicism, Victoria failed to establish a meaningful relationship with Ireland. Though the lack of images of various things and places which chapter 7 explores might be due to editorial fiat, this omission does not take away from its persuasive analysis of Victoria's preoccupation with death and funerals, and the emotional power which her grief had over her subjects. Jubilee celebrations also bound together her metropolitan and imperial subjects through worship, while forging shared imperial visions which transcended denominational and even religious boundaries.

Examining in the final chapter memorial-service sermons by churchmen, dissenters, and Jews, Ledger-Lomas sheds light on the global dimensions of emotion unleashed by Victoria's death and funeral, and on the "synchronic grieving" of a mourning empire integrated in a "telegraphic religion of sympathy" (p. 272), as he ingeniously calls it. Victoria's death was indeed her 'final contribution to Victorian religion' (p. 265).

University reading lists of survey papers and more specialised modules on nineteenth-century British history ought to be updated to include Ledger-Lomas's important and thought-provoking book. Religious scholars and theologians, as well as students and scholars working on Victorian religious thought and culture, the history of emotions, gender and religion, and the history of modern European monarchies, will also find in this book much that is of interest.

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