THE ESSEX HALL LECTURE 1987

WHERE TO BELONG RELIGIOUSLY:

Martineau, Maurice and the Unitarian Dilemma

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Errata

Page 4 2nd paragraph 3rd sentence should read:

"Both families belonged to the same small and rather exclusive household of faith: Martineau's father was a prominent member of Octagon Chapel, Norwich; Maurice's father ministered successively to Unitarian congregations at Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Frenchay near Bristol."

Page 11 insert penultimate sentence in 2nd paragraph, after "lose anxiety":

"For a child to retain such an object into its fourth or fifth year may be regarded as normal; what is abnormal is for the object to be retained so long that it ceases to be 'transitional' and becomes a permanent source of comfort in times of anxiety."

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Martineau, Maurice and the Unitarian Dilemma

Jeremy Goring

No-one would have expected that within weeks of his death James Martineau, that eminent Unitarian divine, would have been elevated into membership of a trinity. In an obituary notice published in the spring of 1900 P.T. Forsyth described him as

> one of the trinity of spiritual powers who, as theologians, have had a subtle and commanding influence on the thoughts of the nineteenth century, men marked not only by power but also by distinction of mind and style.(1)

The other two persons of this 'trinity' were J.H. Newman and F.D. Maurice who, like Martineau, were famous in their day as preachers, writers and religious controversialists; all three, moreover, were at one time or another afflicted with doubts about where they belonged religiously. Two of them left the household of faith in which they had been raised. Newman, not content with what Canterbury had to offer, eventually found a resting-place in Rome. Maurice, dissatisfied with his inherited Unitarianism, joined the Church of England. Alone of the three, Martineau remained within the communion into which he had been born.

Of the three only one, Newman, is so well known as to need no introduction. As to the other two, it depends upon the audience. An Anglican audience is likely to know something of Maurice, who has attracted a good deal of interest in recent years, but nothing of Martineau, about whom little has been written since the beginning of the century. With a Unitarian audience it will probably be the other way round: 'Martineau? Yes, of course. But the other man — F.D.

Who?' What I wish to do in this lecture is to bring Martineau and Maurice together, to compare their life and work, and to try to discover why, setting out from virtually the same starting-point, they trod such apparently different paths. Because I shall be looking at them comparatively and from a particular perspective there will be much about each that will have to remain unsaid. As to Maurice, I shall say nothing about some of the things for which he is best remembered — his Christian Socialism, his founding of the Working Men's College or his dismissal from King's College, London for 'unsettling the minds' of his students with his allegedly heretical opinions. And with Martineau, I shall say nothing about his political views, his philosophical treatises or his long involvement with Germany. What I shall be exploring is the common ground — the areas where their interests and activities overlapped.

Both were born in 1805, the same year as Francis Newman, the Cardinal's younger brother, who subsequently became a Unitarian and a close friend of Martineau's. They were raised in the same part of England — East Anglia — and within a common social milieu, that of the educated middle class. Both families belonged to the same small and rather exclusive household of faith: Martineau's father ministered successively to Unitarian congregations at Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Frenchay near Bristol. It is therefore quite possible, even likely, that the two men met in boyhood either in Norwich, where the Maurices had relatives, or Yarmouth, where Maurice's mother's family lived and where the Martineaus often spent their holidays. They may also have met later on in Bristol: Martineau was at Lant Carpenter's school there at a time when Maurice was living only an hour's walk away at Frenchay. It is even possible that on some Sundays the young Maurice would have walked into Bristol to attend the service at Lewin's Mead, where Lant Carpenter's preaching was attracting large congregations from far and near. What is certain is that the two met quite often in later life when they were living within a few hundred yards of each other in Bloomsbury: on at least one occasion Martineau invited Maurice round to an evening gathering at his house.(2) They were clearly well acquainted at this time but I am not sure if Estlin Carpenter was justified in calling them 'friends'. They certainly had a number of mutual friends, including Tennyson, Dean Stanley and R.H. Hutton: Hutton, who was editor of the *Spectator*, was on intimate terms with both men and seems to have acted as a go-between. What the two great men thought of each other is an interesting question. What Maurice thought of Martineau it is hard to say because he never seems to have made any reference to him in his writings;(3) but we learn from a letter from Martineau to Hutton that Maurice had made some adverse criticisms of one of his articles and that Martineau in his turn was very critical of the criticism, charging Maurice with ascribing to him views that he did not hold.(4) What Martineau thought of Maurice we know very well for he, unlike Maurice, was a great reviewer of other people's work: in several articles in the *National Review* he paid tribute to his powers as a theologian.

That Martineau also admired his powers as a preacher is clear from a letter written in 1857, soon after he came to London from Liverpool:

> I heard Maurice for the first time last Sunday and was astonished at the power of his preaching. I always imagined that the Sermon was the least part of the interest in the services of Lincoln's Inn Chapel and was somewhat faint in manner and difficult to seize. But we heard a broad, distinct and vigorous sermon, direct in its doctrine and solemn in its applications . . . But for a slight remnant of Church monotony there would be nothing to remark in his manner but its earnest simplicity.(5)

He was impresed too by his prayers and not surprised to hear another London clergyman say that 'the only man I have ever known who really *prayed the Prayers* was F.D. Maurice.(6) When Maurice died prematurely in 1872 no-one was more deeply moved than Martineau and on the following Sunday he gave a memorial address in Little Portland Street Chapel:

> No prophet for fifteen hundred years, not even Tauler himself, has borne such witness to the divine root and ground of our humanity, as Frederick Denison Maurice . . . For largeness of thought which set him in sympathy with the various wisdom of the past; for keeness of spiritual insight which seemed to make him confessor to the ultimate secrets of humanity; for a love of God which in effect was identical to the sweetest and the brightest charity; for power to turn religion from a mechanical form or a solemn tradition into a reality and joy; no leader of our time, scarcely any past teacher of righteousness, can be compared with the servant of God who has just been taken from us, and whose mantle has not yet dropped upon the earth.(7)

When he attended Maurice's funeral at Highgate Cemetery he was overcome with emotion, as an eye-witness – a Congregationalist – observed:

> We saw him weeping like a child over the open grave . . . Brother was weeping for brother. They had been cradled in the same faith, and their early associations must have been in some respects identical. Their public paths had been dissimilar, but they were never far off in sentiment and life.(8)

More than a quarter of a century later Martineau's body was laid to rest in that same cemetery.

One thing that had always united them in life was a critical attitude to the faith in which they had been cradled. Both were men of ecumenical outlook who criticised the Unitarians for their militant sectarianism. Martineau looked back nostalgically to the days of Baxter and to the catholicity of the old English Presbyterianism that had been so rudely disrupted by the advent of Priestley, Belsham and other recruits from orthodoxy who had deliberately set out to create a distinctively Unitarian denomination. Like Maurice he did not think that the acceptance or rejection of a particular doctrine was a suitable basis upon which people could unite religiously. While 'Unitarian' might be an appropriate name for an individual's theological position it was much too narrow and restrictive for a church. Towards the end of his life he said that 'it is no new thing for me to say that I know nothing here in England of any "Unitarian Church"; and that, if there were such a thing, I could not belong to it.'(9) He would have agreed wholeheartedly with Maurice's strictures upon sectarianism:

> A society merely united in opinion had, it seemed to me, no real cohesion; it must exalt that which a man or a multitude troweth above the truth, or must suppose them to be identical. It will be very positive, yet it will have no permanent resting-place. It will be always changing, never growing.(10)

Both men were quite out of sympathy with the ideology of Unitarianism as it had developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The prevailing philosophy was the determinism of Hartley and Priestley, which seemed to leave no room for free will or for the operation of the divine spirit within the human soul; and like Coleridge, who was exercising such a profound influence upon their generation, both Martineau and Maurice soon made a complete break with this philosophy. As for the prevailing theology, this seemed far too cold and impersonal. God had become little more than an abstraction – the name for a Supreme Being far removed from the everyday world, who presided over a Universe that worked like a great machine and who only intervened in its affairs from time to time to arrange for the performance of the odd miracle. Maurice voiced his dissatisfaction in two early letters to his father. He wished to know God, 'not in a vague, loose sense, but actually know Him as a friend'. He wanted to be able to 'converse with the holy and invisible God as a real living person'.

> I cannot put up with a dream in place of God. He is a Spirit, but He is reality; He is Truth, a True Being in the highest sense. As such I must behold Him or not at all.(11)

Martineau expressed his discontent in a less intimate, more intellectual way, but there was no doubt about the strength of his feelings, which sometimes scandalised his hearers. At the famous 'Aggregate Meeting' of the British & Foreign Unitarian Association held in Essex Street Chapel in 1838 he raised a 'storm of disapprobation' when he reproached his fellow Unitarians for their scepticism and irreverence and their 'critical, cold and untrusting temper' which was so 'unfavourable to high enterprise and deep affections'.(12)

If the two men had such similar feelings about Unitarianism why were their responses so different? Why did one leave and the other stay? At first I thought that Maurice reacted more strongly against Unitarianism because he had been exposed to a more militant, more dogmatic brand of it. Martineau after all came from an old Presbyterian family who preserved some of the catholicity of the old Dissent. At Octagon Chapel the prevailing outlook was still that of John Taylor who, at the chapel's opening in 1756 had insisted that 'we are Christians and only Christians . . . We disown all connection, except that of love and goodwill, with any sect or party whatever'.(13) Such catholicity was also characteristic of Lant Carpenter's school and of Manchester College, where he spent some of his most important formative years. By contrast it appeared that the Maurices belonged to the militant wing of the movement. Michael Maurice, like Priestley, had been bred an orthodox Independent(14), had become infected with heresy at Hoxton Academy, and had later ministered at Hackney where his senior colleague was Priestley himself until he emigrated to America in 1794; he had in fact helped him pack his books and scientific instruments on the night before he sailed. It seemed likely, therefore, that the elder Maurice would have been close to Priestley philosophically and theologically and would have shared both his materialism and his sectarian zeal.

On further investigation, however, this interpretation turned out to be grossly over-simplified. For one thing the ethos of Octagon Chapel, by the time Martineau became aware of it, was no longer as catholic as it had been: the minister was Thomas Madge, a convert from orthodoxy whose Unitarianism, although not militant, was distinctive enough to cause some of his congregation to secede. But what really destroyed my thesis was the discovery that Michael Maurice, in spite of his Priestleyan associations, was no doctrinaire Unitarian. 'My father's Unitarianism' his son wrote later in life, 'was not of a fiercely dogmatic kind'(15) and it is clear that his memory was not deceiving him. In a pamphlet of 1824 the elder Maurice expressed the wish that a better spirit 'may be promoted by reflecting in how many, and in how important doctrines, Christians of *all denominations* are agreed' and quoted with approval from the work of a Roman Catholic writer.(16) So ecumenical in fact was he in his outlook that Edmund Kell, who wrote his obituary in the *Christian Reformer*, took him to task for it. He strongly criticised him for fraternising with orthodox ministers, for 'not speaking out his opinions' and for 'not influencing the religious opinions of his family' – the disastrous consequence being that they had all abandoned Unitarianism. Kell particularly regretted the defection of Frederick Denison, who 'might have been far more extensively useful had he . . . exerted his intellectual abilities for the benefit of mankind, uncramped by those Creeds and Articles of his Church which sit so clumsily upon him.'(17) In fact, of course, it was precisely because he had wished to be 'more extensively useful' that the young Maurice had made the move from a sect to the Church.

Although, in trying to discover why Maurice left the Unitarians and Martineau did not, it would be unwise to make too much of the differences in their religious backgrounds, these should not be ignored altogether. Unlike Maurice, Martineau was always very conscious of belonging to a great and honoured tradition that could not be lightly discarded. Proud though he was of his Huguenot ancestry he was even prouder of his descent, through his grandmother Sarah Meadows, from a minister who had been ejected from the Church of England in 1662. One only has to read the addresses he gave in 1862 on the bicentenary of the Great Ejection or in 1886 on the centenary of Manchester College to realise his sense of belonging to 'a kind of apostolic succession' stretching back to the beginnings of nonconformity.(18) Contrariwise Maurice, although his father claimed descent from an ejected minister, had no such sense of belonging. As a boy he had read a good deal about the Puritans and in later life continued to speak with sympathy about their sufferings and achievements: he admired their 'strong assurance of a divine calling and of God as a personal ruler', but he detested what he called their 'exclusiveness'.(19) That may have been because he was thinking about his own Independent forbears and did not know just how *inclusive* Baxter and the English Presbyterians had been in their churchmanship. His disparaging reference to 'Baxter and the (so-called) moderate Presbyterians'(20) would have appalled those like Martineau who were better informed about the history of Dissent and for whom 'Baxterian catholicity' remained a hallowed memory and a cherished ideal. It was because he felt that he belonged to a great movement of the spirit that long antedated the eruptions of Priestley and Belsham that Martineau was able to remain within the household of faith into which he had been born.

It is interesting to speculate whether Maurice would have felt such a need to abandon Unitarianism if his experience of the movement had been wider and deeper – and if he had remained in it until later in the century when, as he himself was to acknowledge, its spiritual condition was improving. Already by the time he came to write *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838) he was evidently aware of the beneficent influence of Channing, who was doubtless the American Unitarian there described as 'a person of very different temper' from the Priestleyans. In the American writer he found a 'fine vein of humanity and spirituality' that was reminiscent of the Quakers, but there was still something lacking:

> There was nothing in him from which a soul, struggling with life and death, could derive the least help. He was evidently meant for sunshine and gala days.(21)

But in his view things were continuing to improve and by the late 1850s he could rejoice that many Unitarians were

> rising through their old confession of a Father and their new apprehension of a Spirit working in them . . . to that real and profound belief in the 'Divine Unity', which they were groping after through what Coleridge called their 'Worship of Unity'.(22)

Had he lived on into the golden age, when their devotional life was becoming enriched by Martineau's prayers and the hymns of the Longfellows, Johnson and Hosmer, he might almost have wondered whether he had been right to leave them in the first place.

Such speculations, however, are not very fruitful. The fact is that Maurice did abandon Unitarianism when still in his early twenties, while Martineau held fast till the end. I have not yet really begun to explain why. To do so requires a thorough exploration of that 'border territory between psychology and theology' in which both men were keenly interested;(23) and this necessitates saying something about the emotional climates of their respective childhood homes. The Maurice family situation was extraordinary. The father, like the Unitarian God, was wise and benevolent but a bit remote. Although he had sole charge of his son's education and hoped he would follow him into the ministry it seems that he rarely, if ever, discussed religion with him. Spiritually and emotionally the boy was always much closer to his mother. He attributed her 'peculiar tenderness' towards him to the circumstances of his birth, which occurred just nine months after the death of another boy; he recognised that he had 'come in a certain degree to supply his place' – a most unenviable assignment. He had a great admiration for his mother who, he said, 'had a far clearer intellect than my father, a much more lively imagination . . . and an intense individual sympathy'(24) and, to add to her advantages, she was bigger and better looking than her husband and came from a higher social stratum. Will anyone be surprised to learn that she was the dominant influence in the family? In due course her relations with her husband became so bad that they eventually seem to have communicated with one another only by letters, which were left lying around the house for the other to read, or possibly through one of the children acting as intermediary. Apart from Frederick, the only son, there were no less than seven daughters, three older and four younger than he, all of whom appear to have adored him. The odd one out in this bizarre household was clearly Michael Maurice, who became increasingly estranged from his wife and children. One by one the girls gave up attending his Sunday services: and Mrs Maurice followed suit in 1821, explaining to her husband in a long letter why she had adopted the doctrines of Calvinism.

That Maurice's childhood experience caused lasting emotional damage is indicated by a behaviour pattern that aroused much contemporary comment. When he was an undergraduate at Cambridge his friends observed that it was his custom to pace up and down his room clutching a black pillow. Twenty years later the habit persisted: so attached was he to his pillow that his wife called it his 'black wife'.(25) Those familiar with the work of the psychotherapist Donald Winnicott will recognise the syndrome. Winnicott was the first to draw attention to the deeper significance of something that every parent knows – that after weaning a child will often become very attached to some soft cuddly object, perhaps a bundle of wool or a piece of cloth. 'The parents', he says, 'get to know its value and carry it round when travelling; the mother lets it get dirty and even smelly, knowing that by washing it she introduces a break in continuity in the infant's experience, a break that may destroy the meaning and value of the object to the infant.' Winnicott called this object, which is symbolical of the mother's breast, the child's 'transitional object': it has value as a 'soother' or sedative, for fondling it will cause the child to lose anxiety. In the cases studied by Winnicott such behaviour was symptomatic of profound emotional disturbance and of an unusually powerful attachment to mother.(26)

Martineau, as far as we know, exhibited no such behaviour patterns. He was greatly attached to his mother and she to him, and this doubtless gave him – as it did to Maurice, Wesley, St. Augustine, Freud and other great men – that sense of being a very special person, with a very special mission in life. (Martineau, however, never seems to have had such a profound sense of mission as Maurice, whose frequently expressed conviction that he had been 'sent into the world' to perform some mightly work(27) points to a close, if unconscious, identification with Christ.) Martineau's attachment to his mother and hers to him was certainly not so strong. He was the youngest, but not the only, son. He had three older brothers and four sisters, at least one of whom adored him, but his situation could not be described (as Maurice's has been) as 'a bad case of over-protection by too many females'.(28) Moreover, his relationship with his father was much less complicated. Thomas Martineau was a modest man, a manufacturer of bombazines, who seems to have had no strong ambitions for his offspring and a good working relationship with his wife, with whom he communicated by direct speech. True, she was rather more powerful than he was, but it is clear that she made no attempt to sabotage his paternal authority or cut him off emotionally and spiritually from his children. But whatever the atmosphere at home the young Martineau could often get away from it: from the age of ten he was a day boy at Norwich Grammar School and from 14 a boarder at Bristol. He was thus much more fortunate than Maurice, who had his father for teacher, his mother as confidante and a crowd of sisters as his constant companions: rarely could he have escaped from the ethos of home, which must at times have been quite claustrophobic.

How far do these early environmental differences help to explain their later differences in religious outlook? That the divisions in his family deeply affected Maurice's religious development has long been recognised: forty years ago Florence Higham suggested that the memory of them caused him to be haunted by a 'passion for unity'.(29) I wish now to develop this point a little further by suggesting that his unhappy early experiences help to explain his later attitude towards the doctrine of the Trinity, with which he had what can only be described as a deep emotional involvement. Of Trinity Sunday he once said:

> It is to me the most sacred day of the year, the one which seems to me the most significant of universal blessings, and also which blends . . . with my own individual experience and inward history. The idea of the unity of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit, as the basis of all unity amongst men . . . has been haunting me for a longer time than I can easily look back to.(30)

I suggest that what had haunted him all his days, what in his early manhood had caused his long bouts of depression and produced feelings of guilt and a persistent self-punishing asceticism (cold baths morning and evening even in the depth of winter, prolonged periods of fasting and whole nights on his knees in prayer) was the memory of his family's divisions and the terrible conviction that he was somehow responsible for them. In his guilt-ridden state, feeling his heart to be divided by 'a thousand evil passions' and thoroughly 'tainted with evil and corruption',(31) Unitarianism – with its God who seemed so remote from the arena of human suffering and sin – was not of much help to him. He needed a faith that could unite God to Man, Father to Son: 'the Father dwelling with the Son in one Spirit is that absolute and eternal love which is the ground of all things'.(32) The dwelling together in harmony of the co-equal persons in the holy family of the Trinity was symbolic of the unity that he had longed to see among the very unequal persons of his own family. In this connexion the editor of Maurice's papers made a very revealing comment about how the young man saw his family situation:

> Amid all the differences *the family* itself, and especially Mrs Maurice's relation to it, binding it all together, (appeared to be) the one thoroughly healthful and rightful element . . . More and more he came to look upon the order of God as founded on relationships.(33)

It seems to me that it was precisely because Maurice recognised (albeit unconsciously) that his mother had not been able to bind the whole family together, but had even perhaps been responsible for separating son from father, that he had been 'driven to the belief of a Spirit in whom the Father and Son are one'.(34) By binding unto himself, like St. Patrick, the strong name of the Trinity he sought to solve what David Doel, in his 1980 Essex Hall Lecture, called 'the central, most basic human problem' – 'how to become free of "Mother" and united with "Father" '.(35) It needed one of the strongest names in the Church's vocabulary to counter the spell of the internalised mother, lift the burden of Oedipal guilt, and so enable him to experience the glorious liberty of those who could say: 'I and my Father are one'. With such a need it was inevitable that Maurice felt that he could not continue to belong to a religious body whose very raison d'être seemed to be the denial of the doctrine that meant so much to him, and should have turned instead to the Church of England which, in the early nineteenth century, conscious of some recent doctrinal lapses, was seeking to re-affirm its trinitarianism in the strongest possible terms – through its liturgy, its hymnody and the dedications of its newly built churches.

For Martineau on the other hand, lacking Maurice's urgent need to bind up the divisions within his psyche, the Trinity held no such attractions. Indeed it was the Church of England's trinitarian orthodoxy that would always prevent him joining it. The doctrine of the Trinity, no matter how he tried to re-interpret it, remained an insuperable intellectual obstacle. He believed that the only logical alternatives to Unitarianism were either Tritheism or – what he said Maurice 'fell into' – Ditheism.[36] (Presumably he called him a 'Ditheist' because he emphasised the importance of the first two persons of the Trinity and neglected the third; indeed several scholars have pointed to the absence from Maurice's writings of a clearly developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit.) Nevertheless Martineau was strongly attracted to 'the school of Mr Maurice':

> They are *believing men* – afraid of no reality, despairing of no good, and resolute to test their faith by putting it straightway into life. They set to work to realise the kingdom of God in Soho Square and other nameable localities; and in their step towards this end there is as free, confiding, joyful movement, as if with their eyes they expected to see the great salvation. There is more of the future, we suspect, contained in their gospel than in any talking theology whose cry is heard in our streets.[37]

Where he took issue with the 'Mauricians' was over their dismissive attitude towards 'questions of critical and scientific theology' — especially the higher criticism of the Bible, which for Martineau was one of the most important developments of the age. In a review of *Tracts for Priests and People*, which Maurice and some of his friends brought out in 1861, he put his finger on what he saw as the hub of the problem:

> The truth is, this school has never succeeded in settling accounts between the Eternal Divine facts spiritually revealed by the ever-living Witness and the historical phenomena of the past which, however connected with religion, are cognizable only through human testimony. In the joy of having found the former even Mr. Maurice forgets the different tenure of the latter.[38]

'Even Mr Maurice': surely, thought Martineau, he at any rate ought to have known better. There is a note of sadness here. There was so much that the two men could share: Maurice's insistence that Christ was in every man came so close to Martineau's own view of the universality of the Incarnation, which in this same article he set out for the first time. But the Maurician reaction against rationalism had gone too far for them ever to see eye to eye. Francis Newman and other Unitarians who thought that Martineau was 'closely approximating to Maurice, both as to the Divinity of Christ and as to the Atonement', did not really have anything to fear: 'The story of my leanings to Trinitarianism and the Atonement', he said, 'is a fiction of theological gossips.'[39]

I believe that Martineau and Maurice went their separate ways because, pyschologically speaking, they represented very different types. Although in Jungian terms they were both introverts (and both deeply intuitive) Martineau would probably be regarded as a thinking-type and Maurice as a feeling-type. When, at a dinner party in the late 1860s, Gladstone was discussing the merits of the various preachers he had heard he is reported to have described Martineau as 'the greatest of living thinkers' – [40] which may have been a polite way of saying that he thought his sermons rather too cerebral. Some of his other hearers also found them so and sometimes wished he would put more feeling into them. But, as he himself confessed; 'The things closest to my heart I have a natural shrinking from setting forth.'[41] As a thinking-type, feeling would have been his 'inferior function': whenever his feelings did well up from the depths of his unconscious they did so in great 'islands' (as they did at Maurice's funeral), but often he could appear rather cold and detached. When in the pulpit it was his ethereal detachment which was so striking. As one experienced sermon-taster put it, writing in 1874:

> You do not catch the half-concealed humour, and fitness for dexterous discussion if occasion arose, which were apparent to careful observers of the never-to-be-forgotten face of Mr Maurice, but you have a pensive calmness and a patient hopefulness which always connect every loving thought of Mr Martineau with the life that is beyond this.[42]

Maurice was evidently a much warmer person than Martineau: his feelings informed his every utterance and gesture. R.H. Hutton said of him:

> His countenance expressed nervous, high-strung tension, as though all the various play of feelings in ordinary human nature converged in him towards a single focus – the declaration of the divine purpose . . . There was a quiver in his voice, a tremulousness in the strong deep lines of his face.[43]

If he was a feeling-type his 'inferior function' would have been thinking.

Certainly Martineau considered him 'negligent of logical architecture'(44) and his comments on his writing could be scathing. Of the *Theological Essays* (1853) he said:

> I hardly think a man has any business to write till he has brought his thoughts into distincter shapes and better defined relations than I find in Maurice. He seems to me to have a mere presentiment of thinking, a tentative process in that direction that never fairly succeeds in getting home.(45)

Three years later, 'having found his latitude', he found Maurice rather easier to understand and even commended him for his 'consistency and completeness of thought' and his 'precision in the use of language'. But he said that he was sometimes so 'caught up' by his thoughts that his argument went to pieces.(46) His interesting suggestion that Maurice's thought seemed to 'possess him' (rather than the other way round) anticipates the views of a leading Jungian typologist:

> Feeling-types tend to become fanatic and emotional in thought, but the thought itself, so overwhelmingly important, cannot be thought further, cannot be carefully worked out. It remains doctrinaire. Rather than having ideas, ideas seem to have them.(47)

Maurice and Martineau, good Platonists both, attached great importance to ideas, especially the idea of unity. But there was this difference: Martineau had ideas; Maurice was possessed – or, to use his own word, 'haunted' – by them. In Unitarian circles it was customary for people to have ideas, and the more the merrier, but it was most unusual in those sombre gatherings, where enthusiasm was frowned upon and common sense was supposed to prevail, for people to be *possessed by* ideas. It is understandable, therefore, why Maurice – with his passionate temperament – did not feel fully at home in such circles and needed to go elsewhere. But was the Church of England, that staid and respectable institution, really the right place for him?

Where to belong religiously was for Maurice a dilemma that was never satisfactorily resolved. Although he died an Anglican in priest's orders with the name of the Triune God – literally – on his lips, he could never shake off the influences of his youth. His obstinacy, his independence of mind, his insistence upon the divine origin of the human conscience and his respect for the insights of the other great religions of the world sound more Unitarian than Anglican. In essentials he remained very much his father's son, as the following passage indicates:

> Whatever others do, let us show our belief that Jesus came to seek and to save; to unite Jew and Gentile under one head and bishop of souls; to testify to us that, as God raised him from the dead, Him hath the father exalted as head over all things to his church; and that, in matters of religion, we are to acknowledge no other head than Christ. It is thus we are to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and righteousness of life.(48)

This statement, with its practical application of the gospel, its emphasis on unity and its reference to Christ as 'Head' rather than 'Lord', could be described as characteristically Maurician. It could and it can, but it is the father speaking, not the son. And in the same pamphlet of 1824 Michael Maurice gave prominence to the very text, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged', which his son was always to hold 'in greater reverence than any other in the whole Bible'. (49) What other early influences remained strongly with him throughout his life it is difficult to say, but it is possible that his onslaught upon the substitutionary theory of the Atonement (rightly considered to be one of his most important contributions to Anglican theology) may have been inspired by one of the numerous sermons in which Lant Carpenter condemned a theory that he regarded as one of the worst features of Calvinism. It may well be also that the young Maurice learned much from friends among the Friends. In Frenchay, that remarkable 'Quaker-Unitarian village', (50) he doubtless knew many of the 'old Quakers' who bore witness to 'the light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world': was it they who first made him realise that 'Christ is in every man'?(51)

Because of the strength of these early Nonconformist influences it is to be doubted if Maurice ever felt quite at home in the Church of England. He worked very hard at trying to become an Anglican, even to the point of taking the Thirty-Nine Articles seriously – which few of those born and bred in the Church would ever have thought of doing. But as Olive Brose, author of one of the most perceptive recent studies of Maurice, observed:

> By temperament and at the deepest level of his faith, Maurice was not an Anglican. He did not conceive truth as necessarily lying somewhere between extremes, nor did he extol the glories of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Anglican piety and learning, as was the fashion among the Tractarians of his day. Indeed part of his lifelong difficulty as an Anglican was due to the picture he drew of Anglicanism, a picture which at key points did not resemble the Anglican self-image.(52)

When he was in his fifties Maurice confessed that 'in the fullest and best sense of the word I can be nothing else than a Unitarian,' since the pursuit of unity was 'the end which God has set before me from my cradle upwards'.(53) By this time he was prepared, even eager, to acknowledge how much he owed to Unitarianism:

> I am the son of a Unitarian minister. I have been ashamed of that origin, sometimes from mere, vulgar, brutal flunkeyism, sometimes from religious or ecclesiastical feelings. These I now perceive to have been only one degree less discreditable that the others; they almost cause me more shame . . . For I now deliberately regard it as one of the greatest mercies of my life that I had this birth and the education which belonged to it.(54)

Throughout his life he continued to take a close interest in Unitarian affairs. 'Anything relating to Unitarians,' he wrote in 1852, 'touches me very nearly.'(55) Much of what he wrote was written with them in mind – either overtly, as with his *Theological Essays*, which was 'especially addressed to Unitarians', or covertly, as with *The Kingdom of Christ* which, although subtitled 'Hints to a Quaker', was full of hints to his former co-religionists. His aim, he insisted, was not to convert them. 'Do not, I beseech you', he once wrote to a Unitarian minister, 'suppose that my object is to lead you to Trinitarianism.' He did not wish to deliver men from Unitarianism but from Atheism, which he considered to be just as prevalent among Trinitarians as Unitarians.

> I know numbers of Unitarians who are turning to God, the living God, from the Atheism which is in them as it is in you and me, although they may not have parted with the names and traditions of their childhood. I would not have them part with anything which they really learnt in their childhood. I would have them cling more intensely than ever to their conviction that there is one God and that He is a Father. I would have them resolve that they will never let that go, and count the Trinitarian an enemy and a child of the devil who would deprive them of it.(56)

He wished to keep in close touch with Unitarians and other Dissenters because he had the humility to recognise that he had much to learn from a dialogue with them. He believed that every sect was bearing witness to some important truth – a view which made him unpopular with other Anglicans. But he was undeterred. No matter how much hostility he aroused nothing would be permitted to prevent him from speaking what he perceived to be the truth.

That last sentence , of course, applied equally to Martineau who, like Maurice, was so often at odds with his own colleagues. Although he remained within the Unitarian fold he sometimes felt that he really belonged elsewhere. Once he said that it would be 'an easier task to make other churches liberal and free than to make our own devout and high-souled'. But mostly he felt that, 'so long as our personal freedom of speech and conscience is not interfered with and our congregations are faithful', it would be better to stay put.(57) Others, however, sensing his dissatisfaction with Unitarianism, sometimes tried to suggest that he should give it up.

Jane Carlyle, who thought him 'singularly *in earnest* for a Unitarian', once told him bluntly that 'he had better cut Unitarianism and come over to us' but 'he sighed and shook his head and said something about being bound to remain in the sphere appointed to him till he was fairly drawn out of it by his conscience'.(58) Another perceptive woman Anglican who felt he ought to leave the Unitarians was Catherine Winkworth, who thought his religious philosophy 'utterly unlike anything I have ever seen in other Unitarians' and considered that he was 'wholly out of his place among them'. She believed him to be 'far nearer in faith and experience to the Church. He seems to have so deep a longing for Church-communion, too, that I fancy he always feels rather exiled in his present position.'(59) But although he admitted to have a 'venerating affection' for the Church of England and regretted his 'involuntary exile' from her communion,(60) he in fact had few illusions about the Church's professed comprehensiveness. Ever since 1662, he insisted, the Church had forfeited all right to be regarded as 'anything more than one ascendant sect among several'.(31) Martineau, a true heir of the Ejected, believed that until the Church became broad enough to re-admit the Dissenters or else humble enough to join a new federal union of Christian churches its claim to be *the* English branch of the Church Universal was spurious.

Where to belong religiously has often posed a dilemma for born-and-bred Unitarians. If they should happen to feel that the Unitarian approach is too intellectual or too shallow, or the denominational attitude too inward-looking, they may think of doing what Maurice and hundreds of others have done – of leaving the fold and moving to another where the grass seems greener and the air more invigorating. But if they do, the chances are that they will soon feel homesick for the old familiar faces and institutions, and for the freedom, tolerance and sweet reasonableness that they had earlier taken so much for granted. Then they may come to realise that the only solution to the dilemma is to become free from the fantasy that somewhere there exists a church that is perfect in every particular. That *all* churches are in some respects deficient was something that Martineau and Maurice both came to recognise. They may be regarded as the true founders of the modern ecumenical movement: both had a strong sense of belonging to the Church Universal, transcending the divisions of sect and party. Like them I believe in the Church Universal and, no matter how discontented I may at times be with the bit of it I was born into, that is where I belong.

1. Cited in J. Drummond and C.B. Upton, *The Life and Letters of James Martineau* (1902), ii. 353.
2. *Ibid.* ii. 343-4.
3. He may have been 'Z', a Unitarian and a 'devout person', referred to in a letter to R.H. Hutton dated 5 Oct. 1863; F. Maurice, *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice* (2nd. edn. 1884), ii. 459-60. Why Maurice's son would not give the name of the person is not clear. The original letter is not extant.
4. Drummond and Upton, ii. 343.
5. *Ibid.* i. 452.
6. *Ibid.* ii. 109.
7. J.E. Carpenter, *James Martineau* (1905), 438.

8. *Christian World Magazine*, Feb. 1874, quoted in the *Inquirer*, 7 Feb, 1874.
9. Drummond and Upton, ii. 130.
10. Maurice, *Life*, ii. 375-6.
11. *Ibid.* i. 132-5.
12. Carpenter, 220.
13. Drummond and Upton, i. 12.
14. G.F. Nuttall, *Christianity and Violence*, F.D. Maurice Lectures 1970, (Royston 1972), 16.
15. Maurice, *Life*. i. 13.
16. M. Maurice, *An Account of the Life and Religious Opinions of John Bawn of Frenchay* (Bristol 1824), 41.
17. Christian Reformer, n.s. xi (1865), 414-16.
18. See my article, 'The Dissenting Tradition', *Faith and Freedom*, xxxix (1986) 130-1.
19. Maurice, *Life*. ii. 133, 276.
20. *Ibid.* ii. 361.
21. F.D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ* 2nd edn (1842), 8-9.
22. Maurice, *Life*. ii. 351.
23. Martineau said that this 'border territory' had been seized by Coleridge; J. Martineau, *Essays, Reviews and Addresses* (1890-1), i. 252. Maurice, another admirer of Coleridge, commended 'that study – the least pursued and the most valuable – the study of our own natures'; Maurice, *Life*, i. 8.
24. Maurice, *Life*, i. 14.
25. *Ibid*, ii. 286-7.
26. D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Penguin Education, Harmondsworth, 1980), 1-9.
27. Maurice, *Life*, i, 240; ii. 124-5, 161.
28. O.J. Brose, *Frederick Denison Maurice: Rebellious Conformist* (Ohio University Press, 1971), 13n.
29. F. Higham. Frederick Denison Maurice (1947), 17.
30. Maurice, *Life*, i. 413.

31. *Ibid,* i. 95.
32. *Ibid,* ii. 148.
33. *Ibid,* i. 127.
34. Maurice, *Life,* ii. 461.
35. D.C. Doel, *I and My Father are One: The Struggle for Freedom from 'Mother'* (Essex Hall Lecture, 1980), 3.
36. Carpenter, 405.
37. Martineau, *Essays,* i. 265.
38. *Ibid.* ii. 434-5.
39. Carpenter, 394-5.
40. *Ibid.* 413.
41. *Ibid.* 478.
42. *Inquirer,* 7 Feb. 1874.
43. R.H. Hutton, *Essays on some of the Modern Guides* (1888), 317.
44. *Inquirer,* 13 Apr. 1872.
45. Drummond and Upton, i. 258.
46. Martineau, *Essays,* i. 258-9; cf. H.G. Wood, *Frederick Denison Maurice* (Cambridge, 1950), 8.
47. M.L. von Franz and J. Hillman, *Jung's Typology* (Irving, Texas, 1979), 103.
48. Maurice, *Account,* 33.
49. *Ibid.* 10; Maurice, *Life,* i. 95.
50. Maurice, *Life,* i. 38.
51. *Ibid.* 1. 237; cf. Nuttall, *loc. cit.*
52. Brose, 84.
53. Maurice, *Life,* ii.388; cf. D. Young, 'F.D. Maurice and the Unitarians', *Churchman,* xcviii (1984), 332-30. I am grateful to Alan Ruston for drawing my attention to this interesting article just as this Lecture was going to press.
54. Maurice, *Life,* 1. 13 (letter dated 1866).
55. *Ibid.* ii. 143.
56. *Ibid.* ii. 447.

57. Drummond and Upton, i. 336.
58. Carpenter, 260-1.
59. *Ibid,* 396n.
60. Drummond and Upton, ii. 213.
61. *Ibid.* ii. 126.

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