



Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship

Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre
16-18 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli
(near Milsons Point Station)

Tel: **0466 940 461**

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Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

7 December Laurence Gormley " Recollections of Christmases Past"

PARTY!

("Morning tea" will be enough for lunch if past precedent is followed. Drinks not included:-))

14 December, Rev. Geoff Usher "A Festive Service"

(Includes a baby naming ceremony.)

Come along & make this "first" for your Fellowship a significant event. Say "Goo-goo" over our normally generous morning tea & coffee.

Break until 1st February, 2015.

Membership fees due 1st January (but 1st Feb will do).

The Sick Rose

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

William Blake

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## Misanthropy

You, who say the world is going to the dogs  
I do not care for your misanthropy  
You, who say some or most of us are worth-  
less, useless, stupid  
I do not care for how you see the world

Your misanthropy is like entropy  
Its cold, hurtful darkness  
No substitute for humanism  
No way to see the future

You, who say the world has never been so  
bad  
Have you ever really looked at the past?  
You, who long for the good old days  
Were you ever black, female, poor, disturbed,  
human?

Your misanthropy is like bitterness  
Contempt for the world we have  
Contempt for we who are in it  
Whether ignorant, evil or just different

You, who call down the wrath of God  
I do not believe you have the truth  
You, who would extend love and worth to but a  
few  
I think you are the ones who have misunder-  
stood

Your misanthropy is not what we need  
To make a better future for this troubled world  
Let all the children of this world, whoever we  
may be  
Attain, all together, the closest thing to peace.

*Martin Horlacher*

*Thank you, Martin. A poem worth reading a second time. Peace is what we hope for, especially at Christmas time, and yet there is much misanthropy (sometimes violent) around the world, which features in our media. It is like a grub leaving its mark on the rose.*



Photo: John Tendys

*Let us remember what is beautiful & kindly in human life. JT*



Photos Wikipedia

*So, on to Christmas!*

*Rev. Geoff Usher is doing a reading of "A Christmas Carol" at Sutherland Library, Tues 9 December at 6.30pm. Otherwise you can catch his reading at Pitt St. Uniting Church, 12 December at 12 noon. Free, but there will be collections for charity.*

*Maybe meet your friends there?*

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Only twelve days left to.....sing!

On the twelfth day of Christmas,
My true love sent to me,
Twelve possums playing,
Eleven lizards leaping,
Ten wombats washing,
Nine crocs a-snoozing?
Eight dingos dancing,
Seven emus laying,
Six sharks a-surfing,
Five kangaroos,
Four lyrebirds,
Three wet galahs,
Two snakes on skis,

And a kookaburra in a gum tree!

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## **Recent Christmas Recollections.**

*Carolyn Donnelly*

As the festive season approaches, these past years' experiences resonate.

– After weeks of dangerous, hot, dry and windy weather, bushfires had menaced our area, but now the worst was over and the 'mopping up' had begun. Encountering and befriending many 'firies' from far and wide while working with the Rural Fire Catering Brigade, I particularly remember a quiet, unassuming fire worker from another district outside the Sydney area. He drove a huge water tanker on which the name 'Gunga Din' was proudly painted. His service was essential, so he slept in that truck, being available 24/7. But now all was freshened up, tiredness forgotten, cheery smiles, eager to return to his town in time to play in the local brass band for the Christmas carols event that evening.

– Awaiting a client's medical results, I had time to browse through the brightly decorated, noisy shopping complex. Ahead was an elderly Japanese tourist couple staring

fascinated at Santa in his set up in the Mall. I stepped up and offered to take their photo with the red suited furry gent, but was curtly told by the "elves", "Go away, no photos allowed, Santa is on a break". Thinking "what about the season of 'peace and goodwill?' ", I became determined and led them to the Santa's cave in David Jones, and we received a friendly reception thankfully, with smiles and bowing all around amidst the flashing of cameras. Sayonara Santa!

– A client's medical appointment finished, I helped her tackle the crowd of shoppers at the busy Westfield complex, very apprehensive about her anxious ongoing dementia, confused and bewildered state of mind. Suddenly she made a bee-line to Santa at Myers, and with childlike trust and delight, and beaming smiles, they chatted away like old friends allowing me precious time to quickly attend to her Christmas errands. The friendly, whiskered, gracious gent in the red suit replied, as we thanked him on our departure, "Everyone is always welcome to come and talk to Santa". In fact the two reminisced about their old hometown, Adelaide.

### **Seasons greetings!**



Photos anon.



# James Martineau

James Martineau (April 21, 1805-January 11, 1900) was a Unitarian minister and educator, and a widely influential theologian and philosopher. As lecturer and Principal at Manchester New College, he was for many years responsible for training ministerial students.



As a leading intellectual of 19th century England, he was an admired friend of poets and philosophers who testified to their debt to thought and work. He wrestled with questions concerning the Bible, sources of authority, the meaning of Christ, the validity of non-Christian religions and the roles of reason and conscience. He helped to shape both Unitarian and general religious thought.

His ancestor Gaston Martineau, a Huguenot refugee, had settled in Norwich after the revocation of the Edit of Nantes in 1685. Born in Norwich, James was the seventh of eight children of Thomas and Elizabeth (Rankin) Martineau. His father was a manufacturer of camlet and bombazine. The family worked for many years after 1823, when a financial crisis destroyed his business, to pay off his debts. They never sought the protection of bankruptcy. Martineau later explained, "Whoever avails himself of mere legal release as a moral exemption, is a candidate for infamy in the eyes of all uncorrupted men."

**A friend spoke of James as "an irritable child." As a youth he was thin, timid and nervous. James said his childhood was not happy, due to the "well-meant yet persecuting sport" of his older brothers and rough treatment at Norwich Grammar School. His closest companion was his slightly older sister Harriet, later a celebrated writer.**

The Martineaus were members of the Octagon Chapel in Norwich, an English Presbyterian church. (They were Rational Dissenters, but could not legally call themselves Unitarians before 1813). According to family tradition, one Sunday James was found seated on a little stool before a great Bible resting on a chair. He claimed to have read from the beginning through Isaiah since morning chapel. **When his mother chided him for exaggeration, he said he had done it by "skipping the nonsense."**

Having attended the boarding school of Lant Carpenter in Bristol, 1819-21, James was apprenticed to Samuel Fox of Derby to become a civil engineer. The death in 1821 of a beloved minister, Henry Turner (son of William Turner), "worked his conversion," as he later wrote, "and sent him into the ministry." Thomas Martineau, disappointed, warned his son that he was courting poverty but supported his decision.

In 1822 Martineau entered Manchester College, York. Charles Wellbeloved, John Kenrick, and William Turner were his instructors. Principal Wellbeloved was an especially strong influence. As a student Martineau worked hard and won high honours. In 1825 he delivered his oration, "The Necessity of Cultivating the Imagination as a Regulator of the Devotional Feelings."

Having left York in 1827, Martineau was for a year head instructor at Carpenter's school in Bristol. Then he was called as co-pastor at Eustace Street Chapel in Dublin, Ireland where he was ordained by the Dublin Presbytery, Synod of Munster, with laying on of hands. Two months later he married Helen Higginson, daughter of the Unitarian minister, Edward Higginson, in whose Derby household he had earlier boarded. The Martineaus had eight children, two of whom died young. Their son Russell Martineau (1831-1898) was lecturer and then Professor of Hebrew at Manchester College, 1857-74.

When Martineau succeeded as full pastor in 1831, he was entitled to the regium donum, a benefit of the crown awarded to Irish dissenting ministers. **He refused it on the grounds that it was state support of the churches,**

**and that tax money paid by Roman Catholics unfairly supported Protestant churches. His refusal brought on his resignation.** A few months later he began a long ministry at Paradise Street Chapel (later Hope Street Church) in Liverpool, 1832-57.

Martineau's first book, Rationale of Religious Enquiry, 1836, placed the authority of reason above that of Scripture. The book marked him among older British Unitarians as a dangerous radical, much as the Divinity School Address of 1838 did Ralph Waldo Emerson in New England. In 1839 Martineau and two colleagues, John Hamilton Thom and Henry Giles, engaged in "the Liverpool Controversy," an extended public disputation with Anglican clergy over Trinitarian and Unitarian interpretations of scripture. Martineau's scholarly and eloquent arguments attracted popular attention and much enhanced his reputation. William Ellery Channing wrote to Harriet Martineau that her brother's Liverpool Controversy lectures "seem to me among the noblest efforts of our times. They have quickened and instructed me. Indeed, his lectures and Mr. Thom's give me new hope for the cause of truth in England."

In 1840 Martineau was made Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy and Political Economy at Manchester New College, then moved back to Manchester. When the college moved to London, he commuted from Liverpool, 1853-57, to lecture. In 1857 he resigned his Liverpool pulpit and moved to London to devote himself entirely to his educational duties.

In 1848-49, a year of vacation and study in Germany, Martineau was exposed to German idealism. **Impressed by David Friedrich Strauss's Life of Jesus, 1835, and calling this a time of "new intellectual birth," he gave up his previous belief in determinism and became a Transcendentalist. He acknowledged his debt to American Unitarians Channing, Emerson and Theodore Parker.**

Martineau wrote for the London Review, 1835-51, and the Theological Review. He edited the Prospective Review, 1845-54, and its successor, National Review, 1855-64. In 1851 he

published "Mesmeric Atheism" in Prospective Review. In it he reviewed satirically the philosophy of positivism spelled out in Henry George Atkinson's Letters on the Law of Man's Nature and Development, edited by Harriet Martineau. **The article led to a permanent break with his sister.**

In 1866 the Chair of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic at University College, London, became vacant. Martineau applied for it. Although considered highly qualified, he was rejected on the ground that as a clergyman he would be biased. Prof. Augustus de Morgan, a mathematician, resigned his own chair at the University in protest. The Council of the College was severely criticized by many on the faculty and others who saw the move as a betrayal of trust.

Succeeding Edward Tagart as pastor at Little Portland Street Chapel in London, 1859-72, Martineau preached to a distinguished congregation including Charles Dickens, Charles Lyell and Frances Power Cobbe. J. Estlin Carpenter wrote that when Martineau retired from the Chapel "many felt that something of the music of existence ceased for them when his voice was no more heard." Cobbe said she walked beside him and expressed her sorrow that she would no longer hear his preaching. She wrote, "His head drooped; and he replied with infinite sadness in a low voice: 'It has been my life.'"

In the 1830s and '40s British Unitarians faced a crisis. Orthodox dissenters made legal claims to their trusts and property. Martineau helped to invent "the open trust myth," according to which "English Presbyterians" had put their meeting houses and funds in trust for the worship of Almighty God alone, without requirements of creed and confessions of faith. The myth conveniently ignored the requirement of subscription to the Church of England's 39 articles of faith, except in matters of worship, and in the 1689 Toleration Act, which specifically excluded anti-trinitarians. **The liberals claimed that, otherwise orthodox as may have been their Presbyterian ancestors, they were enlightened enough not to inhibit their descendants doctrinal development.** After initial legal disasters and loss of funds, the myth



began to be believed. By the Dissenters Chapels Act of 1844, British Unitarians were secured in their trusts and property.

Martineau did little to promote his influence in church circles. He turned down high positions, including presidency of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Yet he maintained a busy schedule of preaching at Unitarian churches and often participated in ministers' inductions (called installations in America).

**Although he strongly professed his Unitarian faith on many occasions and upheld Unitarian teachings—the humanity of Jesus, the unity of God, the role of critical method in Biblical interpretation—**

**Martineau thought it an error to name a religion after a doctrine, even a doctrine of God. He said the name Unitarian indicated merely another dogma, "a different doxy" from orthodoxy. He urged churches not to use the name "Unitarian," and suggested "Free Christian Church" as a broader term. A number of British Unitarian churches adopted the name. As a result British Unitarians to this day gather themselves as the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.**

Siding with those who wished to emphasize their catholicity, not specifically Unitarian doctrine, Martineau in 1868 helped to form the Free Christian Union which he hoped would unite in worship mutually tolerant people: Dissenters, Anglicans and others of varied personal beliefs. He did not possess, however, the organizational skills to forward his dream. The Free Christian Union did not attract a substantial following and dissolved in 1870.

**Stopford Brooke was a prominent Anglican and chaplain to Queen Victoria when he became Unitarian. Dean Stanley begged him to remain within the established Church, saying,**

**"We need you, and men like you, to help us broaden the Church of England till it can hold all sincere Christians." Brooke asked, "Do you think, Dean, that in your time or in mine it will be broad enough to make Martineau Archbishop of Canterbury?" Stanley said, "I am afraid not." Brooke answered, "Then it will not be broad enough for me."**

James Martineau believed in the importance of the church. Its primary role is worship; otherwise, it becomes a club, or something like any other special purpose organization. The fellowship of the church is a community in historical continuity with earlier generations going back to Christ. The church is a society for realizing harmony with the divine. **Unitarians stressed free inquiry. Martineau insisted the church must be more than an association for free inquiry.** A common bond, a consensus of purpose to worship, must unite worshipers, or individualism will promote mere anarchy. The church is "the Society of those who seek harmony with God."

**Martineau considered worship an end, not a means. He held that religion must be concerned primarily with individual regeneration. He opposed any utilitarian view that worship must have usefulness beyond opening the soul to divine inspiration. He did not preach doctrine, Unitarian or otherwise. His eloquent pastoral sermons aimed to bring people into closer relation with God, to lift up the path to righteous living and a developed spiritual life. They often dealt with personal problems such as grief and loneliness. In sermons he never discussed economics, politics or social reform, though he did so frequently in lectures and articles. He thought social justice, which he advocated strongly, should follow from theology, not replace it. Because his sermons did not discuss current issues, they retain their freshness today.**

**Martineau spent much of his life training ministers.** He taught that the minister's task, the highest form of service to humanity, is to declare the truth and to remind people of their divine promise. He considered the minister's primary function to be leading public worship. The minister may fill many other roles—teaching, education or social action—but those should not be part of worship. He was critical of pressure put on ministers to measure success by the number on the roll or in attendance. He said those criteria make ministers too prone to trade the stern demands of the gospel for popular topics. He taught that when ministers are expected to

give many public addresses, encourage public causes or act like socialites, the ministry is ill-defined and thus weakened.

A preacher's preacher, Martineau was much appreciated by many broad church Anglicans who read his sermons. But his enormous public reputation did not translate into large congregations. His sermons were often easier to read than to hear. Today's readers may enjoy his sermon collections, Endeavours after the Christian Life, 1843 and 1847; Hours of Thought on Sacred Things, 1876 and 1879; and National Duties and Other Sermons and Addresses, 1903.

In 1860 a group of London Unitarian ministers published Common Prayer for Christian Worship. Some of its material is of Martineau's composition. In a revised edition he omitted all instances of "through Jesus Christ our Lord." He widened the repertoire of psalms and hymns used in British Unitarian churches. He edited three hymn books, A Collection of Hymns for Christian Worship, 1831; Hymns for the Christian Church and Home, 1840; Hymns of Praise and Prayer, 1873, the latter two widely used in British Unitarian churches. In them he introduced hymn texts from "spiritual" and "pietist" traditions, including some by Samuel Longfellow, Samuel Johnson and other Harvard school hymnodists.

Martineau wrote extensively on authority in religion. Seeking harmony between reason and faith, he began conventionally, accepting the authority of the Bible. He turned to reason and in the end settled on conscience as the ultimate authority, according to Martineau, the voice of God within. Translating Kant's idealist philosophy into theology, he argued that human nature is close to God's nature and is part of the Absolute Mind. He believed that human nature, at its best, reflects God.

Martineau worshiped a personal God. He did not mean by the term that he thought God a person, but that each person has a personal relationship with God. The personal God is reflected in human nature. **He wrote, "Shall I be deterred by the reproach of 'anthropomorphism'? If I am to see a rul-**

**ing Power in the world, is it folly to prefer a man-like to a brute-like power?"** He could not believe in God as a force of nature or as unconcerned. He said, "God is an all-embracing Love, an inexhaustible holiness, an eternal pity, an immeasurable freedom of affection."

Ethics, according to Martineau, is more than a social contract among like-minded people. Human obligations are not matters of opinion, or arbitrary. He held moral law to be an expression of God's will, inherent in the structure of the universe. Like physical law, moral law is discovered, not invented. Intuition discovers moral law, by examining the lessons of history and by giving heed to inspired people. Religion without moral law would lack the requirement of duty. He held doing good not sufficient; there must be some vision of the good to be accomplished. As we strive for the right, undertake works of charity and, most importantly, develop our spiritual nature, we see God. On the other hand, "to one who dishonours himself by sloth and excess, God becomes invisible and incredible."

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***The above is part of a biography of James Martineau by Frank Schulman as published by the Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography, an on-line resource of the Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society.
<http://uudb.org/articles/jamesmartineau.html>***

The rest of this article, with references, will be published in the next Esprit.

Well, Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist Churches have changed in many ways from the strictures laid down by James Martineau! However, he was a strong influence in his time and is still admired today, remembered not just in Unitarian circles but in Christianity more widely, particularly in Ireland.

In a later Esprit, we will learn more of Harriet Martineau, the feminist, theologically radical and complex sister of James. JT.

If you eat, drink & quarrel too much at Christmas, perhaps you'll crack

a funny bone

About homeopaths. Do they mind if you pay them by dipping a corner of your wallet into some water & giving them the water?

About psychiatrists. If you arrive early for an appointment - you are anxious; on time - obsessive; late - manipulative. Take your pick.

About surgeons: "Better save that. We'll need it for the autopsy."

"What do you mean he wasn't in for a sex change?"

"Wait a minute, if this is his spleen, then what's that?"

The GP's tale:

A 92 year old man went to the doctor to get a check up. A few days later the doctor saw the man walking down the street with a gorgeous woman on his arm.

At his follow up visit the doctor said, "I see you're really doing well, aren't you?"

The man replied, "Just doing what you said, doc: 'Get a red hot mumma and be cheerful.' "

The doctor said, "What I said was: 'You've got a heart murmur. Be careful!'"

The man said, "Well, you never did send me to that ear doc like you said you was gonna. Good-oh, I say!"

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### **Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship?**

**Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter.** Full membership \$50 concession \$20 . If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring **0466 940 461** or consult our website [www.sydneynunitarians.org](http://www.sydneynunitarians.org) . Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher or Ginna Hastings for an application form at the Sunday service.

**If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.**

It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: [jtendys@bigpond.com](mailto:jtendys@bigpond.com) or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

**Do you have a topic of a spiritual / ethical nature that you would like to share with the congregation?** As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit" and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service*

**Fellowship contact 0466 940 461**