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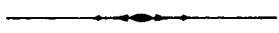
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THE MARIAN DOCTRINE AND DEVOTION OF FATHER FABER

by the

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Extract from a dissertation entitled THE MARIAN DOCTRINE AND DEVOTION OF FATHER FABER, submitted to the Faculty of Sacred Sciences of the University of Ottawa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology. This extract contains the TABLE OF CONTENTS, part of the INTRODUCTION, the first chapter FATHER FABER, and the seventh chapter DEVOTION TO MARY.



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St. John's, Newfoundland; December 15, 1945.

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Introduction

In the history of the Church in England, that period in the last century known as the Catholic Revival is of major importance. Under the ægis of Wiseman, Newman, Manning, and others of greater or lesser name, the Church, so long inarticulate, began to make itself heard again, and with the development of the Oxford Movement countless numbers of souls turned irresistibly towards Rome.

The more prominent figures of that period are well known, but there is one of peculiar importance because of the position he occupies in the history of Spirituality, and that is Frederick William Faber. The founder of the London Oratory, the writer of numerous hymns and devotional treatises, an active associate of the great Cardinal Newman, he is generally known by the simple appellation—**Father Faber**. Coming as he did at a time when the religious acumen of the people had been dulled by centuries of devotional sterility, he helped by his writings, to fill the void that the so-called Reformation had created in the spiritual lives of English Catholics.

A detailed study of the spirituality of this man, whom Leon Bloy describes as "le plus grand écrivain ascétique du siècle" ¹ would be of great interest to all Catholics, and the utility, or rather the necessity of an enquiry of this nature is apparent from the lamentable scarcity of such works. As a matter of fact, apart from a few short biographies, of which J. E. Bowden's ² is best known, and a meagre selection of periodical articles, mostly of last century vintage, surprisingly little has been written about this great convert, whose hymns are chanted in every English speaking Church and whose works are found in the library of every Catholic institution. If this thesis helps in any way to diminish the paucity of literature available on the subject of Father Faber and his works, that in itself is ample justification for it. However, there is a special opportunism about the work that we present, in as much as this year marks the

1. Leon Bloy, in a letter of Sept. 25, 1908, to the Maritain family, cited by Raissa Maritain in *Les grandes amitiés*, éditions de la Maison Française, New York, 1944, p. 284.

2. Bowden, J. E. *The Life and Letters of Frederick William Faber, D.D.*, Fifth Edition, London, Burns and Oates.

centennial anniversary of the conversion of Faber to the Catholic Faith.

The scope of our work is restricted to one particular aspect of Faber's spiritual system, namely his Mariology. The topic is apt too, for Marian doctrine and devotion was one of the most sorely disputed points of Faber's time, and it was precisely on this subject that his own writings were most severely criticized.

Unlike his erudite contemporaries, Newman, Ward and Oakley, whose works were mostly polemical and apologetical, Faber was primarily a devotional writer. His pen sought to inflame the soul rather than convince the intellect. As a rule Faber's writings do not follow the methodical plan of the theologian. The outline and sequence of his ideas is dictated rather by literary and poetic exigency than by the formal ratiocination of logic.

Although he did not write expressly as a theologian, Faber was possessed of a deep knowledge of fundamental principles. He insisted that sound devotion must be built on solid theology. Since devotion presupposes doctrine then, this exposition of Faber's Mariology divides itself conveniently into two general sections; first, his **Marian Doctrine**, and secondly, his **Marian Devotion**.

This thesis then consists of an introductory chapter in which Faber is located, as it were, in his historical setting, and two main sections. In the first part, in five chapters, the most stressed of Faber's doctrinal points of Mariology will be exposed and examined. These are: the **Divine Maternity**, the source of all Mary's greatness by which she co-operated with her Son in the central mystery of the Incarnation. The **Immaculate Conception**, the first of her predestined prerogatives. The **Holiness of Mary**, a prerequisite and a consequence of the Divine Motherhood. The **Co-Redemption of Mary**, by which she co-operated with her Son in the salvation of mankind. Finally, the **Mediation of Mary**, by which she continues her work of Co-Redemption and bestows on all men the fruits of her Divine Son's Passion.

The second part consists of four chapters and treats of Faber's Devotion to Mary. In the first chapter of this section, the soundness

of his devotion is shown by a study of the necessary link he makes between dogma and devotion, which is clearly exemplified in the basic principle of his whole Mariology, which is "the Inseparability of Jesus and Mary." Then in the three succeeding chapters his actual devotion to the Mother of God is considered. For the most part Faber stresses the earthly mysteries of Mary, thus in chapters eight and nine he advocates devotion to her **Dolors** and **Joys**. Finally, to complete this section there is a concluding chapter on a special feature of Marian devotion which is more peculiar to himself, and that is, **Mary and the Blessed Sacrament**.

The author avails of this opportunity to express his profound gratitude to the Rev. Dr. Jacques Gervais, O.M.I., under whose scholarly but kindly direction this thesis was written. Whatever measure of success has been achieved is due solely to his brilliant surveillance, unreserved assistance, and continual encouragement. He also acknowledges his indebtedness to the Very Rev. J. C. Laframboise, O.M.I., S.T.D., Ph.D., Rector of the University Seminary, for his paternal interest and invaluable advice, also to each and every member of the professorial staff under whom his theological studies were completed.

Chapter One

I. LIFE OF FABER

Frederick William Faber was born in June of the year 1814. He was of Huguenot descent, for his father's family was one of those that had fled to England on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by King Louis the Fourteenth. As a child he showed promise of unusual ability, so his discerning parents gave him an opportunity to develop his talents by sending him to Shrewsbury, Harrow, and finally to Oxford. At the university he met Newman, and at the same time was attracted and repelled by the nascent Oxford Movement, for joining it would necessitate the abandoning of his Evangelical tenets. Rejecting the brilliant literary career that seemed to beckon him, he decided to study for the Anglican ministry, and shortly after his reception of Orders took up residence in the little town of Elton in Huntingdonshire. The quiet reflection of this country parish soon brought out all that was Catholic in him, and in 1845 he was received into the Church by Bishop Waring, who was then Vicar-Apostolic.

At first he attempted to establish his own religious congregation with the little band of parishioners that had come into the Church with him, taking the name of Wilfridians or Brothers of the Will of God. Soon afterwards however, he and his companions were received into the Oratory which Newman had founded at Maryvale. In 1849 Faber, now a Catholic priest, was sent to London to begin his Apostolate there by opening the Oratory at King William Street. In 1850 he was elected its first superior, an office which he retained until his death in September 1863.

II. RELIGIOUS STATE OF ENGLAND AT FABER'S CONVERSION

Faber's conversion corresponded with what has been called the New Era in English Catholic history. The Church under the directing genius of the great Cardinal Wiseman was staging a vigorous revival.¹ By 1840 five men had been raised to the Episcopate, and

1. "In 1870 the total Catholic population in England and Wales was sixty thousand. In Manning's time it was just short of two million." O'Connor, *The Catholic Revival in England*, p. vii, Macmillan, New York, 1942.

due mainly to the erudition of the converts of the Oxford Movement, the voice of Catholic England so long silent was beginning to be heard again. The remarkable progress that was being made however was clouded by a delicate problem. The recent converts who had not borne the burden of penal laws, nor experienced the sting of social and political discrimination, threw themselves enthusiastically into the work of converting all England. The old hereditary Catholics, on the other hand, still in dread of persecution, and possessed of all the inhibitions bred by centuries of fear and secrecy, looked with suspicion and resentment upon this new development.

The revival was to succeed however, and with the Faith came the return of the old Catholic religious fervor, for the influx of foreign missionaries introduced a more fervent type of devotion to supplant the dry, formal, cold and restrained piety that had been practiced so long by English Catholics. This new type of devotion met with the disapproval of many on the grounds that it was contrary to English traditional taste², and also as likely to revive anti-Catholic feeling, and most prominent amongst the points disputed was devotion to the Mother of God.

Marian devotion is fundamental in the Catholic religious system, and notwithstanding the alleged "pre-Ephesine silence," it enjoys the privilege of being one of the Churches oldest cults. The Divine Maternity was defined in the early fifth century, and in the eighth century scholarly monks profited by the occasion of the Iconoclastic movement to explain again the theology of devotion to the Virgin Mary. After the eighth century this particular devotion spread with amazing rapidity, and the west was not far behind the east in ardently embracing it. So great was devotion to Mary in England once upon a time, that according to the testimony of Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1399, that country was commonly called

2. "The Anglican has sometimes a quasi-patriotic dislike of what is known as Italianism in devotion, and especially that which finds its consolation in effusive prayers and 'miraculous Madonnas'. As a matter of fact the sobriety which he conceives to be English, is very often nothing more than a certain stiffness which comes from being Protestant, and which is in truth very un-English, for it may be doubted if any prayers of St. Alphonsus or hymn of Father Faber is at all so tender or effusive as truly English compositions, such as the "Wooring of Jesus" or the "Prayer of St. Anselm" and many others which formed for centuries the popular devotions of the English people before the Reformation." Msgr. Moyes, **Aspects of Anglicanism**, p. 193, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1906.

the "Dowry of Mary." It is interesting to note too, that England may claim to be the first country to pay tribute to Our Lady in the vernacular, namely in the poem of Cynewulf, the Anglo-Saxon poet of the eighth century.³

That England completely changed its attitude towards Mary is beyond dispute, for at the time of the Revival there was a lamentable lack of devotion to her in that country.⁴ The cause of this rejection of the Mother of God was the Protestant Reformation. The wave of Iconoclasm that deluged Germany, the Low Countries and England in the sixteenth century, was far more destructive than that of the eighth century, for it did not relent with an attack on images alone. In looting and destroying the fine gold and silver statues of Our Lady, Henry the Eighth was motivated primarily by greed and anti-clericalism, but with the formal heresy under Edward and Elizabeth, Our Lady's place in the hearts of the English people was doomed. Protestants not only impugned all devotion to the Mother of God, but did not even spare the person of Mary herself. Everything about her was insulted, her intelligence, her virtues, and even her morals. These vicious attacks, often featuring the vulgarities of Luther and the obscenities of Theodore Beza, gradually turned devotion into ridicule and chilled the hearts of the English people towards Mary.

Even those who remained faithful to the Old Religion suffered the derogatory influence of this baneful attitude. The devotion that burned within them was forced into hiding, and confinement always has a stifling affect. Thus Cardinal Wiseman on coming from Rome to England summed up his impression by saying that English Catholics "had just emerged from the catacombs" and that "their shackles had been removed, but not the numbness and cramp which they had produced."⁵

One of the prominent features of the Catholic Revival in England was an increase of devotion to Mary, and, indicative of the importance that was attached to the return of this devotion was the fact

3. Lattey, *Our Blessed Lady*, p.241, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, London.

4. Cf. Faber's preface to de Montfort's *True Devotion to the B.V.M.*, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, London.

5. Wilfrid Ward, *Life and Times of Card. Wiseman*, vol. 1, p.216. London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1900.

that Cardinal Wiseman made it one of his chief objectives in the re-conversion of that country.⁶ Like countless other converts, Faber too, felt the sweet persuasive influence of Mary, and long before he had made his submission to Rome he was aware of a certain curious attachment to her, which developed into a strong devotion as he approached more closely to the Catholic Faith.

III. FABER'S DEVOTION TO MARY

A. Before Conversion

While travelling in Catholic Europe some years before he entered the Church, Faber was greatly impressed by the display of devotion to the Mother of God that he witnessed everywhere. In his writings, especially his "Sights and Thoughts in Foreign Churches and among Foreign Peoples"⁷, he narrates his impressions and at the same time gives indications of his own sympathetic attitude towards Mary, which betrays a definite though incipient devotion to her. For example he tells how he and his companions were in Genoa for the feast of the Annunciation, and how they participated in the devotional celebration of the people. To be in sympathy with the Genoese around us he says "we decorated our room with a bunch of crimson tulips, apparently the favourite flower, that we might not be without something to remind us of her—

"Who so above
All Mothers shone
The Mother of
The Blessed One."

In the same place he comments on the subject of the Honour of the Mother of God, and commending the devotion of the people of Genoa, he meditates on the growth of cult to the Blessed Virgin since the Council of Ephesus. He regrets that heresy has cut off the freedom of expression that the Fathers enjoyed in writing about Mary,

⁶. Dublin Review, *Faber's Work in the Church*, t.66, Jan.-April, 1870, (Vol. XIV, New Series).

⁷. London, J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1842

the freedom he says, that permitted the "exaggerations of St. Bernard."

The more he travelled in Catholic countries and among Catholic peoples the greater was his admiration of their faith, and his surprise at the orthodoxy and depth of their devotion to Mary. The sight of thousands of pilgrims and the sound of multitudes singing the "Ave Maria" seemed to bring into the open the latent devotion that is evidenced by his beautiful allusions to her in his poems, such as "The Styrian Lake," "Sir Launcelot," "Jesus the Way," and many others. "These poetic effusions" says one writer "were not merely the outpourings of an over-wrought imagination, but the manifestations of sentiment grounded on strong convictions." ⁸ All this was about four years before he came into the Church, and his growing devotion to Mary is indicated by the fact that he seemed to delight in entering the celebration of her feasts in the Journal of his travels. About this time we find frequent references to her in his letters also, thus in 1843, two years before his conversion, complaining of the worries that beset him, he writes to a friend "I hope Our Lady's intercession may not cease for any of us, because we do not seek it, since we desist for obedience sake." ⁹

The obedience to which he refers had been imposed upon him by Newman, who, at that time, was his spiritual director. In 1844 he held a good deal of correspondence with the Cardinal-to-be on the question of invocation of our Lady and the Saints. In August of that year he again asked Newman to remove the prohibition, "I have written you" he says in one of his letters, "to ask you to remove your prohibition against invoking our Blessed Lady, the Angels and Saints." ¹⁰ His request of November was more insistent though he was still content to obey: "I want you to revoke your prohibition laid on me last October year, of invoking our Blessed Lady, the Saints and Angels. Really I do not know whether I ask this in a lower and less spiritual mood than usual, or whether the mere pain I feel in not speaking to the Mother of God drives me to it; but I do feel somehow weakened for the want of it, and I fancy I should get

8. Friedel, *The Mariology of Card. Newman*, New York, Benziger, 1928.

9. Bowden, *The Life of Faber*, p.167, London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne.

10. Bowden, p.187.

strength if I did it . . . However, obedience will do me more good than invocation, so if you still think I had better refrain, then of course I will do so still." ¹¹

At this time Newman was no less perplexed about the matter himself, thus he writes "I am far too much perplexed myself in various ways, to feel it pleasant to give advice at all—much more to suffer what I say to be taken as a decision on the point." ¹² He felt however that Faber should refrain from invoking Mary and the Saints out of loyalty to the church of which he was a minister. Like Newman, Faber too considered it treachery to reject too easily the jurisdiction under which Providence had placed him, so, for the time being, he had to smother the outbursts of filial love and devotion to the Woman who seemed to haunt his soul. He felt the need of devotion to Mary, but he could not indulge in it yet. Once converted however, his devotion, so long held in check by the barriers of prejudice and doubt, knew no bounds, and with all the zeal of his ardent nature he could throw himself into the task of gaining souls for Christ and servants for Mary.

Faber's conversion was not the result of a sudden light, as can be seen it covered a period of several years. Its principal causes, after the grace of God, were: his personal reflections, his conscientious studies, the impulse of the Oxford Movement, and above all, his visit to Rome in 1843. But who can doubt that his devotion to the Mother of God, already apparent in his writings, played a more important part still in the conversion of this future singer of Mary's praises?

B. **Origin** of Faber's Catholic Marian Devotion.

On entering the Church, one of Faber's first cares was to put himself in harmony with her true spirit, not as it existed in his own country where the memory of recent persecution and centuries of forced hiding still impeded the freedom of its operation, but as it existed in its flourishing state, in Catholic countries, unhampered by schism and heresy. He endeavoured to study it especially at its

11. *Ibid.*, p.188.

12. *Correspondence of J. H. Newman with John Keble and Others*, p.358. Edited by the Birmingham Oratory, 1917.

fountain-head, in the Eternal City, under the very shadow of the Vatican. Imbibing copiously from the devotional richness of the traditionally Catholic countries and their great spiritual writers, he sought to reproduce it by word and example in his own country, and by it to promote the development of the Faith which was making such rapid headway in English hearts. He subsequently introduced into his Oratory a number of continental and Roman innovations—statues, votive candles, hymn singing and sermons at daily evening services—which were contrary to the ideas of prudence entertained by the Old Catholics.

This apparently rash behaviour on Faber's part immediately gave rise to a storm of opposition, and his novel *dévotions* became the subject of a heated controversy. It was argued that they were foreign and unsuited to the mentality of the people. For Faber though, as Cardinal Manning afterwards pointed out, "there were no 'foreigners' in the Church. He taught that what was true in Italy or Spain was equally true in England or America. If certain Italian devotions, which had been practiced under the eye of a long succession of holy Pontiffs and had assisted a multitude of souls to attain a closer union with God, were distasteful to the English, so much the worse, in his judgment, for the English. It was precisely to extend and popularize such salutary devotions, which Faber was afterwards to recommend with such irresistible persausiveness, that Cardinal Wiseman, as we know from his own assurance, welcomed the arrival in his province of foreign ecclesiastics, every addition to whose number, whether they came from France, Italy, Belgium or Spain, was one of his dearest consolations." ¹³ As for non-Catholic objections to "Italian" devotions, Msgr. Moyes' remark ¹⁴ is noteworthy.

C. Sources of Faber's Marian Devotion.

Faber drew his inspiration from the great European schools of spirituality. He studied the French masters with particular interest, and while he was profoundly impressed by the doctrine of St. Francis of Sales, yet he was more especially influenced by the spirituality

13. Dublin Review, t.66, p.95 et seq. (New Series Vol. XIV).

14. Cf. *supra*, footnote 2.

of Cardinal Berulle and his disciples Olier and Grignon de Montfort. Being an ardent son of St. Philip Neri he was naturally influenced by his saintly father, and in all his writings he was most faithful to the optimistic spirit of that "loving saint par excellence." Thus his system was also affected by the Italian school, and with St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi and St. Catherine of Genoa, he stresses the beauty of divine love, and finds delight in the consoling and attractive aspects of Christian life. He was familiar with the writings of St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, but with regard to the Spanish school he seems to have been more affected by the singular mystical writings of the Venerable Mary of Agreda, for in his works he frequently quotes from her revelations.

With regard to his Mariology however, a closer examination of Faber's writings indicates the fact that he drew his inspiration principally from the doctrine of Cardinal de Bérulle. Like the founder of the French Oratory Faber never separates the Son from the Mother in his piety and writings. The two are firmly linked together and everything he says about the Blessed Virgin invariably revolves about the Incarnation. "Ne séparez pas en vos devotions ce que Dieu a conjoint si saintement, si divinement et si hautement dans l'ordre de la grace"¹⁵, writes the great French Cardinal and Faber merely echoes this same principle when he so consistently stresses the inseparability of Jesus and Mary, thus he says¹⁶, "the two lives of the Mother and the Son cannot be disentangled without an unseemly rent in the sacred vesture of theology." In fine they both teach that in dogma and devotion Mary is the true "Via ad Jesum."

Again, like Bérulle, Faber analyses the idea of the Divine Maternity and deduces from it all its consequences; her eternal predestination, the residence of Jesus in Mary, of Mary in Jesus, and her glorious and dolorous privileges. "When Mary's soul and body sprang from nothingness at the word of God, the Divine Persons encompassed their chosen creature in that selfsame instant, and the grace of the Immaculate Conception was their welcome and their touch. The Daughter, the Mother and the Spouse, received one and the same pledge from all in that single grace, or well-head of graces, as was

15. Migne, Oeuvres Complètes de Bérulle, Paris, 1856, Col. 1285.

16. Bethlehem, p.374.

befitting the grandeur of her predestination, and her relationship with the Three Divine Persons, and the dignity she was to uphold in the system of creation." ¹⁷ Bérulle expresses the same idea: "Au temps ordonnée par la sapience divine, elle entre au monde par miracle comme un oeuvre de grace et non de nature, comme un fruit d'oraison et non de péché, comme un sujet spécial de la puissance de Dieu, et non de la puissance de l'homme. Elle recoit de Dieu plus de graces, plus de faveurs, plus de privileges que tous les saints ensemble." ¹⁸

God suitably prepares Mary for her ineffable destiny says Bérulle, "Il l'attire, il l'élève, il la ravit, il lui donne des pensées, des mouvements des dispositions propres a l'oeuvre qui se doit accomplir." ¹⁹ This thought Faber repeats saying: "It was no less than God who was adorning her, making her the image of the August Trinity. It was that she might be the Mother of the Word and His created home that Omnipotence was thus adorning her." ²⁰

Like the French school then, Faber stresses in his Mariology the intimate connection between Jesus and Mary, and consequently their inseparability in doctrine and devotion. As the Sacred Humanity was the center of Cardinal Bérulle's spirituality, so too it was for Faber the basis of his Mariological system, for all Mary's greatness revolved around the fact of her maternal association with the Incarnate God. Thus his treatise on "Bethlehem" or the Sacred Infancy, is, according to Pourrat ²¹, "the most Bérullian of his works." Like the great French Cardinal he considers first, the eternal Birth of the Word in the Bosom of God the Father, then His temporal Birth in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and finally with regard to the Blessed Sacrament, he contemplates His Eucharistic Birth in the hands of the Priest.

Faber's system then is very similar to that of the French school with its invariable custom of never separating the Mother from her Divine Son. This inseparability coupled with Mary's incomparable

17. Bethlehem, p.58.

18. Migne, Col. 433; Vie de Jésus, pp. 51-52, Edition du Cert, Juvisay, Seine at Oise.

19. Migne, Col. 437; Vie de Jésus, p.65.

20. Bethlehem, p.59.

21. Pourrat, La Spiritualité Chrétienne, Vol. IV, p.567, Gabala, Paris, 1927.

dignity as Mother of God rendered legitimate the servitude that Bérulle practiced to her, and which his disciple de Montfort so ardently advocated in his *Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, and it is the same devotional servitude to Jesus and Mary that permeates the writings of Father Faber.

Again, in his mariological writings he gives prominent place to the private revelations of St. Bridget²², and St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi.²³ Of course he always accepts them for what they are primarily intended, namely for the private spiritual welfare of the person or persons concerned, but nevertheless he utilizes them to confirm and enhance the beauty of his devotional considerations.²⁴ He also cites freely from the novel mystical writings of Mary of Ag-

22. St. Bridget of Sweden, 1302-1373. Even at an early age she was favoured by God with visions and revelations. She married a prince and after he retired to a Carthusian monastery, she provided for her children and spent the rest of her days in Rome and Palestine. In 1391 she was canonized by Boniface IX. Her principal feast is the eighth of October. For a good biography cf. Partridge, F. J. *Life of Saint Bridget of Sweden*, London, Burns and Oates, 1888.

23. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi was born in Florence in 1566, and died in 1607. She became a Carmelite at an early age, and physical and moral suffering enabled her to attain an extraordinary degree of sanctity. She was canonized by Alexander VII, in 1699. Her principal feast is the twenty-seventh of May. Her "Oeuvres Spirituelles" were collected and published by P. Salvi, Venice, 1739. Cf. Farrington A.E., *Life of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi*, Dublin 1891.

24. These private revelations do not form part of the Catholic Faith, which derives solely from Scripture and Tradition entrusted to the Church for preservation and interpretation. Thus there is no obligation on the faithful to believe them 'de fide', for even when the Church approves them she does not make them the object of Catholic faith. However, as Benedict XIV says in *De Serv. Dei Beatif.*, l. 11, c.32, n.11, "Although an assent of Catholic faith may not and cannot be given to revelations thus approved, still an assent of human faith, made according to the rules of prudence, is due them; for, according to these rules, such revelations are probable and worthy of pious credence." (Quoted in the second edition of Tanqueray's "*Spiritual Life*," cf. footnote p.701, Desclee and Co., Tournai, Belgium). The Church then simply permits them to be published for the instruction and edification of the faithful, and it was for this purpose that Faber utilized them. He states his position with regard to them on p.475 of his treatise on the Blessed Sacrament; speaking of such revelations about the Eucharist he says: "My object in this treatise has been to follow theology rather than these revelations, and, where I have referred to them at all, I have left them in their own uncertainty." Then he reveals his real purpose in relating them: "No one can appreciate more highly than I do the devotional beauty and spiritual value of much that these revelations have been commissioned to tell us."

reda ²⁵ which caused such lively discussion in the middle of the seventeenth century. ²⁶ Faber's study of the masters was not limited to those of modern times, and although it is true that he was influenced more by modern writers than by the direct sources of the Middle Ages, still he was familiar with the classical Marian writers of that period also. That St. Bernard ²⁷ exercised some influence over him is clear from the fact that Faber desires us to have great filial confidence in Mary our Mother, and to inspire us with this confidence, he expounds, like the Abbot of Clairvaux, the beautiful doctrine of the Mediation of Mary and her consequent role in the dispensation of divine grace. She is the mediatrix between Jesus and us, between the Saviour and the Church. Through her He came to us, through her then we should go to Him. Like St. Bernard who in turn was inspired by St. Augustine, Faber extolls the Virginity and more especially the Humility of Mary, which he so often says "drew" the Word down from heaven. Besides St. Bernard, Faber often quotes from another Middle Age saint, the great Benedictine mystic St. Gertrude. ²⁸ In his devotion to Mary he makes frequent use of her Revelations, but more especially does he use that saint as a beautiful example of the liberty of spirit inherent in true piety. He was impressed by another great saint of the same period Catherine

25. Venerable Mary of Agreda was born at Agreda in Spain in 1602. She became a Franciscan Nun and enjoyed great renown for her sanctity. Her cause for canonization was introduced in 1673, but was not successful. Her most celebrated work is a history of the Blessed Virgin Mary, founded on her revelations, entitled: *La mística ciudad de Dios*. It was written from 1655 to 1660 and published at Madrid in 1670 after its author's death. She left other ascetical and mystical writings which were never published. Cf. *Dict. de théol. cath.*, art. Agreda (Marie d').

26. Cf. Pourrat, *Christian Spirituality*, vol. III, pp.227-229. London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1927.

27. St. Bernard, 1091-1153. He was a renowned writer and preacher. He became the first abbot of the great monastery of Clairvaux, and later founded about sixty other monasteries. Pope Alexander III canonized him in 1174. Cf. Eales, Dr. S.J., *Life and works of Saint Bernard*, 4 vols. London, Burns and Oates, 1889. For his Mariology consult Clemencet, C., *La Mariologie de Saint Bernard*, Brignais, 1909. also, Dom Noguez, *La Mariologie de Saint Bernard*, these couronnée par l'Institut Catholique de Paris, 1934.

28. St. Gertrude was one of the greatest mystics of the thirteenth century. She was a great theologian and spiritual writer, and her Revelations as a food for piety are exceeded only by those of Saint Theresa herself. Cf. *Dictionnaire universel des Sciences Ecclésiastiques*, vol. I, col. 899. For her Revelations cf. *Revelations de Sainte Gertrude*, 2 vols., Maison Mame, Tours, 1932.

of Sienna ²⁹, who had special devotion to the Humanity of Jesus, and consequently to His Mother Mary.

D. **Appreciation** of Faber's Marian Devotion.

In Faber's Marian devotional system then, there is found a rich and abundant spiritual doctrine suggested by the various Schools and drawn from the very finest individual sources. Less exclusively English, less rigid and more eclectic than Newman's, Faber's doctrine features more of his own personality, and his originality of treatment and expression was not obscured by the profundity of his doctrine or the greatness of the sources from which he drew his inspiration.

Faber has been accused of an exaggerated devotion to Mary, but if here and there in his writings are found what appear to be extravagances, it should be remembered what Cardinal Newman replied to a Protestant critic of Father Faber, "He was a poet!" Another interesting comment on the value of Faber's devotion was made by Wilfrid Meynell, who said: "Of all devotional writers of the nineteenth century and in England, Faber is the most vital; and if he is the most heavenly he is also the most human. Even the critic who lays a detecting finger on a page of false sentiment presently feels the throb of living sympathy beneath the letters." ³⁰ Treating of the same point, Bowden, in his biography of Faber says: "In his works it will be found that under the familiar and ardent language of the preacher there lies an extreme accuracy of theological statement; so that the passages which are seemingly written with the carelessness of exuberant eloquence will bear the closest examination as simple statements of doctrine." ³¹

In the second part of this dissertation Faber's Marian devotion will be examined more thoroughly and it will be shown that based on firm theological principles, it is fundamentally sound. His method,

29. St. Catherine of Sienna, 1347-1380, was a Dominican Sister who devoted her life to the cause of peace in the Church. She eventually succeeded in bringing about the return of Gregory IX from Avignon to Rome. She was canonized by Pius II in 1461, and her feast day is observed on April the thirteenth. For a good biography cf. Josephine Butler's, **Catherine of Sienna**, London, Dyer Bros., 1885.

30. Wilfrid Meynell, **The Spirit of Father Faber**, Benziger, N.Y., 1914. (Cf. Preface)

31. Bowden, p.423.

his approach, and peculiarity of expression, which is not acceptable to many, should not however be confused with the objective value of the devotion that he advocates. With regard to the objection that it did not suit the mentality of the English people, it must be admitted that regardless of Faber's theory, this possibly is the most serious drawback to his type of popular devotion.

There is undoubtedly something to be said for both sides of the question. Faber urged in his devotion something that was objectively good, but which didn't necessarily suit this given set of circumstances. Certainly a remedy was needed, and Faber's devotion was in itself an excellent remedy, but who is to say that it was the correct remedy to be applied in this case? On the other hand Faber was an intelligent man, he knew the calibre of the English mentality, he understood its likes and dislikes, why then did he urge this type of devotion? Possibly he thought that the average English mentality had been distorted by the Protestant age through which it had passed, and deliberately disseminated this devotion in an attempt to reform it and restore it to its original state. Possibly he knew it was unsuited to Englishmen, but simply wanted to remould their mentality.

It is claimed by some that the objection is without foundation; still it must be remembered that the times were exceptional, and in view of the circumstances those who were known as "old Catholics" in contrast with the converts, had an understandable fear and revulsion of the new, external, effusive type of devotion that he was advocating. Again the traits of a people as such, their mentality, their psychology, their inherent likes and dislikes, their traditional way of expressing themselves, all these things must be respected in a matter like this, which is after all, entirely subjective. The underlying principles of devotion must be the same in all cases, but it must be expected that the accidentals will vary according to place and circumstance. Regarding Faber's type of devotion then, admitting that it is perfectly orthodox and good in itself, and although it may attract many according to temperament, still it will be admitted that possibly it does not suit the mentality of the English in general.

The orthodoxy of Faber's devotion to the Mother of God from a theological point of view is unquestionable, although his psychology

is debatable. Regarding his devotion to Mary though, it is interesting to note that he dedicated only one book exclusively to that subject, although he treats of her en passant in almost every page of his writings, for he cannot speak of the Son, it seems, without speaking of the Mother. That book was "The Foot of the Cross," and in a review of it appearing in the January 1867 edition of the *Civiltà Cattolica*, the literary magazine of the most distinguished Jesuit writers, Faber is termed "the eloquent writer of ascetical works, which unite the most mystical devotion to the most profound theological learning. In fact" the article continues, "we consider this one of the best books ever published on the Dolours of Mary There will be found in it the most notable features of the life of Mary, and very beautiful reflections on the Passion of our Divine Redeemer; besides great clearness of doctrine, much valuable teaching concerning the Christian life, and investigations of great subtlety of the subject-matter of the book itself." Disregarding individual taste then in the matter of devotion, it must be admitted that the writings of Faber are theologically sound and objectively of great spiritual value.

IV. THE WRITINGS OF FABER

A. In general.

Having absorbed the traditional doctrine of the Church as taught by the great Schools of theology and spirituality, Faber, recognising the claims of his own country upon his labours, sought to impart to it the fruits of his study and observation: This he did primarily by his writings but also by introducing devotions and practices consecrated by usage in Rome. It has been rightly said that Faber has no claim to be considered a spokesman for English Catholics. He was a leader rather than a spokesman, for his mission was to educate not to represent the Catholics of England. This claim to leadership resides in three outstanding facts.

First, he published a series of Lives of the Saints ³², which, in-

32. One of the most important of the older biographical series was the Oratorian Series. Their original title was—Lives of the Saints and Servants of God. They were edited by the Fathers of the London Oratory, with the approbation of Cardinal Wiseman, under the general editorship of Father Faber. All the Lives were translations from foreign languages, and were published in Derby between 1847 and 1874, numbering about forty-seven volumes. For a partial list of the Lives cf. Brown, *International Index of Catholic Biographies*, p.279, London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1935.

cientally, met with such violent opposition in the beginning that it had to be discontinued, but it was soon afterwards resumed, and eventually achieved its purpose which was to familiarize the English people with the highest examples of Christian perfection, and to edify them with the stories of the Servants of God. Secondly, he contributed largely to the circulation in England and English-speaking countries of foreign spiritual works, such as those of Boudon, Surin, Rigoleuc and Courbon.³³ He translated and edited the "Spiritual Doctrine" of Louis Lallement, and "The Octave of the Blessed Sacrament" of Nouet, also the treatise on "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin" by Blessed Grignon de Montfort.

Faber's third and greatest service to English Catholics, and consequently his principal claim to leadership, was the publication of his own spiritual works. Between 1853 and 1860 he wrote and published eight closely printed volumes. They are in order of appearance, "All for Jesus," "Growth in Holiness," "The Blessed Sacrament," "The Creator and Creature," "The Foot of the Cross," "Spiritual Conferences," "The Precious Blood" and "Bethlehem." He also wrote a volume of poetry, a large collection of hymns, a little book for children called "Ethel's Book" or "Tales of Angels," and various other minor works. After his death his sermon notes and other book outlines were published in two volumes by his friend and biographer Father Bowden, under the title "Notes on Doctrinal and Spiritual Subjects."

B. The **Object** of Faber's works

Unlike the polemic works of his learned contemporaries, Faber's writings were almost completely devotional. As he succinctly put it: "My business is devotion, not controversy; I have not to prove but simply to state."³⁴ In the preface of his first book, he states his object very clearly. "As a son of St. Philip I have especially to

33. These men were great preachers, writers and spiritual educators who flourished on the continent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some of them like Rigoleuc were great theologians, and all of them were masters of the spiritual life. Although they enjoyed renown in France and the Catholic countries of Europe they were practically unknown in England until Faber's time. By translating and introducing them into his own country, Faber did his countrymen a great service by making available works whose spiritual and devotional richness is undeniable.

34. Blessed Sacrament, p.270.

do with the world, and with people living in the world and trying to be good there, and to sanctify themselves there in ordinary vocations. It is to such I speak; and I am putting before them, not high things, but things which are at once attractive as devotions, and also tend to raise their fervour, to quicken their love, and to increase their sensible sweetness in practical religion and its duties. I want to make piety bright and happy to those who need such helps, as I do myself. I have not ventured to aim higher."

His devotion was intended for the masses and to reach their hearts he strove to make it gentle and appealing. It was his intention to put theology in popular form, thus in his preface to "The Blessed Sacrament" he says his purpose is "to popularize certain portions of the science of theology, in the same way as handbooks and manuals have popularized astronomy, geology and the physical sciences." Again he wanted his matter to be simple, as he explains for example in the prefatory letter to "The Precious Blood." "I have tried to tell you all I know about the Precious Blood . . . and I have tried to tell it to you, as easily and as simply as I could." Finally, as he says in the preface to "Growth in Holiness" he wished to adapt his works to the mind of the people. "I have done no more than try to harmonize the ancient and modern spirituality of the Church . . . and to put it before English Catholics in an English shape, translated into native thought and feeling as well as language."

C. The **Influence** of Faber's works.

That the writings of Faber exercised a tremendous influence on the Catholics of England in particular, and of all the other countries that his works reached, is beyond dispute, for many and eloquent are the testimonies of great writers to this fact. Father Raoul Plus, S.J. says of him: "Ce qui fera la gloire incontestée de Faber sera d'aider, et pour longtemps encore, nombres de consciences chrétiennes à mieux le plan de Dieux sur elles et à chercher la sanctification." ³⁵ Tribute was also paid him by no less eminent an authority than Cardinal Manning, who wrote thus: "We know of no man who has done more to make the men of his day love God

³⁵ P. Raoul Plus, in the Etudes, April 1931, *Un Grand Anglais*, p.157.

and aspire to a higher path of the interior life; and we know of no man who so nearly represents to us the mind and the preaching of St. Bernard and Saint Bernadine of Siena, in the tenderness and beauty with which he has surrounded the name of Jesus and Mary." ³⁶

Msgr. Mermillod in the preface of the French translation of Bowden's biography of Faber, compares him to St. Francis of Sales, not so much for the quality of talent, attractiveness of style, or similarity of occupation and influence, but rather for the place that each occupied respectively in the history of spirituality. What St. Francis was to the close of the Renaissance period, Faber was to the eve of the Modern era. The parallel between Faber's attempts to make the perfect life accessible to people of the world in his time, which was also a period of transformation, is very similar to the efforts of the great Salesian to achieve the same results. Separated by several centuries Faber's "All for Jesus" is nevertheless almost the counterpart of St. Francis' "Introduction to the Devout Life," and Faber's description of his own work as a harmony of the ancient and modern spirituality of the Church for people in the world, adequately describes the work of St. Francis of Sales also.

In the foreword of the American edition of Faber's "Creator and Creature" he is again compared with St. Francis, this time however for the influence that he exercised through his writings. "Since the days of St. Francis of Sales few writers have made more Christian hearts bow in loving adoration before our tabernacles than the author of "All for Jesus" and "The Blessed Sacrament." Faber's founding of the London Oratory and his fruitful apostolate there, alone would have constituted an enduring monument to his greatness, yet, as one writer said of him: "Within the narrow compass of eighteen years of Catholic life, he found time, amid the distraction of urgent cares, to compose the hymns and spiritual works, which more than all else, have made his name familiar to the whole Church as a great servant of God." ³⁷

The popularity of Faber's works was phenomenal, and it was not restricted to his own country either, for in a very short while they had spread far and wide. A large edition of his first book sold in

36. Dublin Review, January, 1864.

37. Wilfrid Woollen, **Father Faber**, p.26, a Catholic Truth Society publication.

less than a month, and less than a year after its appearance four other editions had been printed. In European countries his works met a similar reception, as a matter of fact they received a more enthusiastic welcome and were more widely read on the continent than in England itself. Translations in French, German, Polish, Italian and Spanish soon appeared and met with very favorable criticism, this was especially true of France.

Possibly the words of the venerable Abbot of Solesmes, Dom Gueranger, indicate the secret of the popularity and influence of Faber's works. "Father Faber united in himself many of those qualifications which make the true spiritual writer . . . holiness of life, knowledge of divine things, and experience of the operations of grace both in himself and in others. A sound theology enabled him to speak worthily of its mysteries, a faith scrupulously orthodox guided his mind in safety through the rocks with which his path was strewn, a profound and well-reasoned study of ascetical and mystical works of every school directed his course rightly in a world which is far above the world of nature, an intimate acquaintance with the Lives of the Saints revealed to him the secrets of grace, and a complete humility accompanied him during his whole career as a spiritual writer." ³⁸

D. Faber's Hymns

Regarding the influence and popularity of Faber's works, something remains to be said about his Hymns, for it is probably through them that he is most widely known. In Catholic churches, wherever English is spoken, their use is almost universal, and many of them are found in Protestant collections also. Amongst others "Hymns Ancient and Modern" contains several, and the "Hymnal Noted" no less than twenty-four; among non-Catholics the favourites seem to be "O Come and Mourn with me Awhile," "The Precious Blood," "I was Wandering and Weary," "Sweet Saviour! Bless us ere we go," and "O Paradise! O Paradise!"

Being well versed in the knowledge of human nature, Faber fully realized the power of song. He had witnessed the effects of

³⁸. Le Monde, January 25, 1864 (quoted by Bowden, p.412).

Wesley's hymns on the people of Wales and Cornwall, thus when he had started his Oratory in London with its various devotions and daily evening services he felt the need of a collection of Catholic English hymns fitted for singing. As he was a poet of no small ability he set himself to the task of supplying this need, and the beautiful expression of a warm personal devotion is, to a great extent, responsible for the popularity of the hymns that he composed.

Faber's Hymns had a very practical purpose, for the first complete collection, appearing in 1861, was published, as he says himself, "chiefly as a book of spiritual reading."³⁹ He was not presumptuous in his intention either, for treating of God, the Saints and the various mysteries, they skillfully show the intimate union between heaven and earth and provide food for reflection on all phases of the spiritual life. Thus they are admirably adapted to spiritual reading.

There are many inspiring lines in the various hymns of Faber, but it is when speaking of the Queen of Saints that he is at his best. His strongest and most sublime flights are in praise of the Blessed Virgin, so much so that non-Catholics using his hymns saw fit to mutilate and distort some of them in order to purge the sweet name of Mary.⁴⁰

Faber's hymns are excellent examples of his practical attempts to popularize theology, for in them we have the most profound doctrine cloaked in the simple appealing words of the born poet. Time has proven the success of his venture, for singing is the best way of learning, and today wherever English speaking voices are raised in pious song, Faber's hymns are sure to be found, echoing and re-echoing in the words of the humble Oratorian, the praises of God and His Blessed Mother.

39. Cf. author's preface to London edition of 1861.

40. Cf. Brother Azarias' preface to the Third American Edition of Faber's Hymns p. xiii, Murphy & Co., Baltimore. Cf. also "Altered Hymns", by R. T. Henry, in Amer. Eccl. Review, LXIII, pp.312-316.

Chapter Seven

I. DEVOTION TO MARY

The realization of Mary's maternal association with her Divine Son, her all-important role in the drama of the Incarnation and the Redemption, and above all, her ability to help man by her powerful intercession, should logically result in a very definite devotion to her. Before considering Faber's devotion to Mary though, it is necessary to determine first of all what devotion really is, because unfortunately, through abuse and misunderstanding the word 'devotion' has come to mean a great variety of things.

A. Definition of Devotion

In his own time Faber decried this confusion of meaning, and sought to dispell it by explaining the traditional signification of the term 'devotion'. To arrive at its exact meaning he recalls the definitions of two of the masters of the spiritual life, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis of Sales. The Angelic Doctor, he says, calls it "the will to do promptly whatever belongs to the service of God."¹ He hastens to add however, that it is not to be confused with fervour, which is a very common mistake. St. Francis defines it as "a kind of charity by which we not only do good, but do it carefully, frequently and promptly."²

Speculatively speaking then, it is a direct act of the will, which falls under the virtue of religion, implying indirectly an act of the understanding which excites the will. Its cause is extrinsic, God Himself, acting through intrinsic grace. In his work entitled 'Growth in Holiness' Faber has a fairly comprehensive chapter on the true idea of devotion, but for our purpose a mere summary will suffice. Combining the two definitions then, he words his own. "Perhaps I may then be permitted to call devotion spiritual agility, which seems

1. *Op. cit.*, 2a 2ae, Q.LXXXII, art. 1, corp.

2. Introduction a la Vie Dévote, p.3, Paris, Roger et Chernoviz, 1901.

to express what St. Thomas and St. Francis mean." ³ From all three definitions then it is clear that devotion is something solid and down-to-earth. It is well when it is also sweet, fervid, heroic, graceful and tender, qualities for which it is often mistaken, but they do not by any means express its nature. Says Faber paradoxically: "It is desirable we should have a more theological and less devotional idea of devotion than we commonly have." ⁴

B. "Special Devotions"

The concept of devotion becomes less obscure when concrete acts are considered. As has been said, devotion is a devoting of ourselves to God, a loving promptitude of the will in all that concerns His worship and service: in a word it is spiritual agility. Devotion however is founded on the principles of faith. It is a practical thing arising from a belief in spiritual beings and an unseen world. Christianity is a worship of Divine Persons, disclosing themselves to us in certain mysteries, which are for the most part mysteries of sorrow and suffering. Thus the Infancy and Passion of our Lord, the Blessed Eucharist, the Dolours of our Lady, etc. are things which are especially calculated to win and soften. This was the character our Lord intended to give His religion, and He made every mystery, circumstance and feature of the Incarnation become in its degree, the object of a special devotion.

It may happen sometimes that certain special devotions become exaggerated. This makes it all the more needful that devotion in general should be strictly observant of the analogy of faith, for, to be orthodox a devotion has to be theological. Thus says Faber: "Devotion can never neglect doctrine without paying dearly for it. There is nothing Satan can clog our wheels with more effectually than an untheological devotion." ⁵

Different devotions are of course connected with different virtues, and have special gifts for the attainment of these virtues most conformable to their own spirit. Again, the Holy Ghost often leads different souls either by natural or supernatural attraction to special de-

3. Growth in Holiness, p.364.

4. Ibid., 365.

5. Ibid., 48.

votions. Thus we have different devotions and different saints to advocate them, for example, to our Lords Infancy, to His Passion, His Cross, His Wounds, His Precious Blood, His Sacred Heart, His Mother, His Apostles and the various orders of His saints. All these special devotions are therefore a single, harmonious, and adequate worship of the Most Holy Trinity, united in the crowning worship of the Incarnate God Himself.

Special devotions are then, simply offshoots or developments of the central worship of the Sacred Humanity of the Eternal Word. "They are essentially doctrinal devotions" says Faber, "and therefore we should always jealously ascertain that they have had the approbation of the Church." ⁶ It is admitted that devotions grow and history bears witness to the fact, but though all devotion is grounded on dogma, it does not follow that dogma grows. "It is true of course that each additional definition soon becomes the basis of special devotions" explains Faber, "because definition makes the truth plainer and surer to the eye of love, and devotions have a marked partiality for articles of faith." ⁷ Devotions usually indicate the trend of theology, and the Immaculate Conception is an example of how the devotion of the people anticipated the dogma. The rise of devotion to St. Joseph, on the other hand, is singular in the history of devotions, because it does not seem to have followed this general rule. There is then an essential connection between theology and devotion, thus Faber says: "Theology will make our devotion more devout; and devotion will make our theology more true." ⁸ Again he says with regard to the development of devotion: "Thus time goes on commuting dogma into devotion and devotion into dogma by a double process continually. There is no safety in devotion if it be separated from dogma, though it sometimes go before and sometimes follow after." ⁹

In the Christian religious system therefore, devotions grow and develop but always under the constant vigilance of Holy Mother Church. For instance when the feast of the Eternal Father was asked for in France, Benedict XIV gave lengthy reasons forbidding

6. *Ibid.*, 371.

7. *Ibid.*, 372.

8. *Precious Blood*, p.267.

9. *Blessed Sacrament*, p.344.

its institution. The devotion of the Slavery of Mary was also condemned as unsafe in doctrine. The devotion to our Lady in the Blessed Sacrament, though seemingly countenanced by St. Ignatius met with a similar fate. The difficulties experienced by Julianna of Retienne regarding the Blessed Sacrament, by Saint Margaret Mary in the case of the Sacred Heart, and by Saint Bernardine of Sienna with his new devotion to the Name of Jesus, show how zealously and sagaciously the Church restricts, supervises and tests new devotions, or modifications of old ones.

II. DEVOTION TO MARY

Having considered Faber's teaching on devotion and its application in what we call 'special devotions,' it remains now to examine his devotion to Mary in particular. Father Faber was an enthusiastic advocate of greater devotion to the Mother of God, so much so that to some it might appear that he was indiscreet in urging too hastily upon the people a devotion that had been almost completely dormant for centuries. He laments the lack of this love and devotion in his own country even amongst Catholics saying: "There would be more love for Mary, if there were more faith in Mary. But we are in an heretical country; and it is hard to live among icebergs and not be cold." ¹⁰

Faber deplored the fact that in his time people in general were too anxious to know how much devotion they should have to Mary, and where their love ought to stop. They think it a pious exaggeration he complains, when told that so far as degree is concerned there is no possibility of excess, and that there is no limit at which their love ought to stop. Again he attributes the lack of earnestness in the service of God by his fellow country-men to this want of devotion to Mary. He says: "Here in England Mary is not half enough preached. Devotion to her is low, and thin, and poor. It is frightened out of its wits by sneers of heresy. It is always invoking human respect and carnal prudence, wishing to make Mary so little of a Mary, that Protestants may feel at ease about her Hence it is that Jesus is not loved, that heretics are not converted, that the

10. All for Jesus, p.19.

Church is not exalted, that souls which might be saints wither and dwindle, that the sacraments are not rightly frequented, or souls enthusiastically evangelized. Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background. Thousands of souls perish because Mary is withheld from them." ¹¹

This over-cautious attitude of the 'old Catholics' to which Faber referred was, to a great extent, the result of natural intimidation caused by long persecution. The Catholic religion banned by law for so long, had been practiced secretly for centuries, and now that it was out in the open again it was reluctant to draw attention to itself. This attitude was particularly true of devotion to Mary, for all things Marian had felt the full fury of the Protestant Reformation. Possibly Faber wanted to shock Catholics out of this devotional lethargy, anyway, the fact is he strongly advocated public devotion to Mary.

A. Objections to Marian Devotion

One can readily imagine the consternation of non-Catholics at such apparently exaggerated language and the storm of criticism and opposition that followed. What was to become of Jesus, of God, if Mary was to become the center of the Catholic religious system? Thus the primary difficulty for Dr. Pusey, as it had been for Newman before his conversion, and we might add for Protestants in general, was the delusion that Mary was usurping the honour due to God. Protestant theology which centers around the Atonement, and which, as one writer said "puts its center of balance outside the Incarnation was logically bound to ignore the Mother of the Incarnate." ¹² This objection that cult to Mary detracts from the honour due to God, is the fundamental objection against the Mother of God, for in it are implicitly contained all the other common objections, like the alleged "worship" and "adoration" of Mary by Catholics, the "divinization" of a mere creature, and all the other absurd claims made by prejudice and ignorance. In preaching Mary, Faber really touched the sore spot, for devotion to her and especially the question of invoca-

11. Preface to his translation of de Montfort's "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary." London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne.

12. Lattey, op. cit., p.249.

tion of her, was one of the main difficulties of Anglicans, and indeed according to Pusey¹³, it was the chief hindrance to reunion with Rome.

Another objection with regard to Marian devotion was that which advocated a cautious and 'diplomatic' reserve about her doctrine and devotion, for fear of repelling non-Catholics and scandalizing prospective converts. These objectors subtly suggested that a partial exhibition of Mary's doctrine should be given in order to avoid offence. Charity they argued, demanded this, for otherwise inquirers would be discouraged; again they urged it because of what the Apostle said of "milk for babes" (1 ad Corinth. 111, 2); because of the common laws of persuasion; because of the difficulty of making it understood; because moral preaching meets popular objection; and finally because otherwise it would mean perpetual controversy.¹⁴

B. Faber's reply to Objections

Because of peculiar circumstances therefore, Faber was forced to meet these objections with suitable replies. In answer to the general objection that devotion to Mary detracts from the honour due to God, he had recourse to the fundamental principle of his Mariology, and for that matter of the whole Christian Faith, and that is: the inseparability of Jesus and Mary. The two must go together for they were predestined together. Mary's place in the Christian religious system therefore is essentially basic. She intimately cooperated with its central mystery of the Incarnation by being the Mother of the Word made Flesh. Again she was intimately associated with her Divine Son in the Redemption of the world, for by cooperating with Him in His redemptive Passion, she co-redeemed all mankind. Because she is so closely connected with Jesus in the life and dogma of the Church therefore, she cannot be separated from Him its devotion.

13. Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, Vol. IV, p.98, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1898.

14. Faber enumerates these objections in Notes II, p.101 et seq.

1. Inseparability of Jesus and Mary

It may be said that the general object of Faber's mariology is the explanation and defence of this union of Jesus and Mary in doctrine and devotion. He never tires of saying emphatically: "There is no adequate love of the Son which disjoins Him from His Mother." ¹⁵ He claims even further, that: "No one thinks unworthily of Mary except because he thinks unworthily of God." ¹⁶ He argues that true devotion to Mary is the condition and criterion of true love of Jesus. Thus it seems that one of the main objectives of his Mariological writings is the breaking down of this prejudice that would separate Mary from her Son. On this particular point he quotes from St. Alphonsus Ligouri, and associates himself with the sentiments of that great champion of Mary's honour. "The innovators proclaim that devotion to the Holy Virgin is injurious to God; they combat her power and the efficacy of her intercession; it is our part to show how wonderful and advantageous a thing it is to lean on this Divine Mother, and how much God is pleased and honoured by our doing so." ¹⁷

Faber then not only denies and disproves the fantastic claim that devotion to Mary detracts from the honour due to God, but more positively, he teaches that devotion to her is the quickest and surest way to Him. "Union with Jesus is the shortest definition of holiness" he says. "Now Mary is our model of this. The special grace of all devotion to Mary" therefore, he concludes "is union with Jesus." ¹⁸ He persistently states this all-important idea that devotion to the Mother is but the natural outburst of genuine love of the Son. Love of Mary and devotion to her is a tremendous grace therefore, because it indicates an ardent love of her Son; it honours Him because it honours His Mother; and it is most advantageous to us because it makes Him love us more.

The greater our love of Mary then, the greater will be our love of her Divine Son, for, "she is so mixed up with the glory of God that

15. Foot of the Cross, p.1.

16. Ibid., p.388.

17. Life of Saint Alphonsus Ligouri, Oratorian Series II, p.155. (Cf. chapt. I, footnote 32).

18. Foot of the Cross, p.412.

every act of homage to her is a plain act of love of God. She is herself so completely the choice interest of Jesus, that He has none on earth to compare with the defence and propagation of her honour!"¹⁹ For the sake of her Son therefore, he repeats, we must learn to increase in love of Mary, for "love of Mary is but another form, and a divinely appointed one, of love of Jesus, and therefore if love of Him must grow, so also must love of her."²⁰ Stressing his fundamental doctrine of the inseparability of Jesus and Mary he brands as impious the teachings of those who say that prayer to Mary must not be mingled with prayer to Jesus. Were a person to believe this, writes Faber, "he would show that he had no true idea of this devotion and that he was already on the brink of a very dangerous error."²¹ Again he writes: "Love of Mary is an intrinsic part of love of Jesus, and to imagine that the interests of the two can be opposed is to show that we do not understand Jesus or the devotion due to Him."²²

In practice then, Father Faber demonstrates that the very people who warn others to moderate their devotion and not honour Mary too much, are not securing the rightful honour of Jesus, as they think, but in reality are making the horrible confession that they themselves do actually take something from Jesus to give Mary.

In refutation of the same objection he cites the attitude of the saints towards Mary, and argues from it, that if love of God is the essence of sanctity, then what was peculiar to the saints themselves must invariably lead to God. And this peculiarity of the saints was a great and fervent devotion to the Mother of God, for he says: "the saints are moulded on love of her."²³ To prove the minor premise of his syllogism he cites numerous saints and doctors of the Church the salient point of whose holiness was an intense and outstanding love of the Mother of God; for example, Athanasius, Bernard, Dominic, Francis, Charles, Alphonsus, and especially Pius V. There is no need for apprehension therefore, he concludes, for the example of the saints is a safe and sure guide. Nor is there any need to keep

19. All for Jesus, p.147.

20. Ibidem.

21. Ibid., pp.147-148.

22. Ibid., p.148.

23. All for Jesus, p.18.

this devotion in the background because of Protestantism, he admonishes, for God has been pleased to inspire the post-Reformation saints most strongly with it.

2. No compromise in Marian Devotion

Faber also vigorously denounces what he calls "partial devotion" to Mary, which is fundamentally but another attempt to keep Jesus and His Mother separate. This is a vicious and subtle objection, for as he says: "It is based on that untheological mistake, which some deceive themselves into thinking a theological nicety and a contraversial felicity, namely, a sort of jealous, ignorant accuracy in keeping Jesus and Mary apart, and not letting one intrude on the sphere of the other, as if to speak as slightly as they dare of the Mother of God would make truth more attractive in the eyes of a misbelieving world, to which the incredible abasement of Jesus in His Sacrament is already a far greater stumbling block than the incredible exaltation of His Mother."²⁴

It will be noticed that in his Marian writings Faber consistently uses the much critized word "worship" to indicate our devotional attitude towards Mary. He explains his action thus: "I do not refrain from using this word as the English translation of *cultus*; weary experience shows that objectors obstinately repeat their objections, whatever we do to abate them, and they rather triumph over the show of weakness, than appreciate the charity of such condescensions."²⁵

Charity, rather than demand a partial exhibition of Mary's doctrine as these objectors hold, actually forbids it. It requires the exposition of the whole truth, lest souls be entrapped by half-truths, which is odious. Nor do the words of St. Paul mentioned above apply in this case either, he says, for they referred to the Evangelical Counsels and the gradual instruction of neophytes. The parallel does not hold in our times, for with the printed word and open churches primitive reserve and the "secreta arcana" are no longer necessary. Honesty is the most persuasive thing he claims, and

24. Foot of the Cross, p.408.

25. All for Jesus, p.371.

the excellence of Catholic dogma is such that it will achieve more by simple statement than by continual controversy.

As far as repelling converts is concerned, Faber admits that the question of devotion to Mary is generally felt as a difficulty either before or after conversion, and that in the beginning it is rather an act of faith than a devotion. He asserts that it is merely a matter of growth, "so much so that on looking back a few years, a convert will probably confess that Mary has been to him a new and marvellous teacher of God, His attributes, and the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. This is simply a fact of experience, an induction of many cases," he concludes, "and it should have its weight with those who are not yet in a position to make such a retrospect."²⁶

3. Marian Devotion helps appreciate the Incarnation

An obvious consequence of the doctrine of the inseparability of Jesus and Mary, which Faber teaches, is the fact that for a true appreciation of the mystery of the Incarnation a profound devotion to Mary is necessary. History bears out the truth of his assertion that "they who have no Blessed Sacrament, and have dethroned Mary, have lost the meaning of the Incarnation."²⁷ He illustrates the folly of separating the Son from the Mother; because Protestants have no Madonna, he says, "they think of Him as the one who lived eighteen hundred years ago, rather than as a living Man today."²⁸ Defending Faber against Pusey's attacks (cf. *infra*), Newman strikes the same chord, "if we look through Europe, we shall find, on the whole, that just those nations and countries have lost their faith in the Divinity of Christ, who have given up devotion to His Mother." And referring to a much criticized statement of Faber's, he continues, "in the Catholic Church Mary has shown herself not the rival, but the minister of her Son; she has protected Him as in His infancy so in the whole history of the Religion. There is then a plain historical truth in Dr. Faber's words, which you quote to condemn, 'Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background.'²⁹

26. Notes II, p.48.

27. Foot of the Cross, 143.

28. Notes II, 113.

29. *Difficulties of Anglicans*, Vol. 11, p.92, London, Longmans, Green and Co.,

4. Marian Devotion necessary for Spiritual Growth

Faber also claims that devotion to Mary is an absolute necessity for the spiritual life, for a lack of it, he says, presents an insurmountable obstacle to growth in spirituality. He writes: "Without this devotion an interior life is impossible, for an interior life is one wholly conformed to the Will of God, and our Blessed Lady is especially His Will. She is the solidarity of devotion."³⁰ So intimately connected with the spiritual is devotion to Mary, that he terms lack of it a type of "spiritual idleness." It is a necessary precaution against spiritual disaster, for speaking of the various elements that destroy the interior life, Faber says: "yet with all these miseries and mistakes we are not ship-wrecked? No! that could hardly be to those who love Mary."³¹ Indeed, he concludes: "the experience of all who grow in holiness, is that they grow also in tenderest devotion and deepest reverence for our Blessed Mother."

C. Faber's Marian Devotion exemplified by the Rosary

With regard to Faber's devotion to Mary it is interesting to note his view on the Rosary, which he calls, incidentally, "the queen of indulgenced devotions."³² In accordance with his principle of the essential union of Jesus and Mary, he attributes the devotional excellence of the Rosary to the fact that it provides a peculiarly Catholic turn of mind, by keeping Jesus and Mary perpetually before us. "It is a devotional compendium of theology" he continues, "its form is a complete abridgement of the Gospel, consisting of fifteen mysteries in decades, expressing the three great phases of Redemption, joy, sorrow, and glory."³³ By uniting the mysteries of Mary to those of Jesus in one devotion, he explains, it demonstrates her place with Him, and for that very reason, he argues, "it shows the true notion of devotion to Mary."³⁴ The secret charm of the Rosary, according to him, is that it unifies while it divides. It divides the life of our Lord into the Joys, Sorrows and Glories of His Mother:

30. Growth in Holiness, p.49.

31. Ibid., p.190.

32. Spiritual Conferences, p.119.

33. Growth in Holiness, p.371.

34. Ibidem.

35. Ibidem.

and yet it is the one Jesus as Mary saw Him, her love, worship, and association with Him, which the complete Rosary brings before us.

Faber's practical illustration of the nature of devotion to Mary by referring to the mysteries of the Rosary only confirms the theological soundness of his Marian devotion in general. Special devotions, as was shown above, are for the most part based on some aspect of the Incarnation or Passion of our Lord or on some mystery of faith, and devotion to Mary is no exception to this rule. His devotion to the Mother of God then, is not a mere devotion of feeling or sentimentality. It is something fundamentally solid, and consonant with the theological and realistic way of the Church. As he himself says: "If there is one department of practical religion from which we could desire that a sentence of perpetual banishment were passed upon mere sentiment and feeling, it would be the department of Mary."³⁶

III. THE KEY-WORD OF FABER'S MARIAN DEVOTION

If there is a single word which expresses the general tone of Faber's Marian writings, it is the word "love." Love is the soul and spirit of his devotion to the Mother of God, it is the key-word of his devotional Mariology. He does not prescribe detailed and specific practices of devotion, he does not outline any particular religious acts, cult, or ritual; he stresses rather the speculative or theoretical aspect of devotion, and its motivating principle, which is love. There are two outstanding features about Faber's devotion of love. First, in his own loving devotion to Mary there was a personal motive of reparation; and secondly, the love that overflowed his heart into his words, explains some of the peculiarities of his literary style and expression.

A. Faber's personal motive of reparation

That there was a personal motive of reparation in Faber's devotion to Mary is clearly shown in some of his private letters. For example, he writes to one of the little group that had come into the Church with him, in glowing terms of the excellence and necessity of devotion to the Mother of God, and he makes many pathetic referen-

³⁶. Foot of the Cross, p.18.

ces to his coldness and indifference to her as an Anglican; and we see, in contrast, the ardent love of her that now animates his soul. He laments the general attitude of his countrymen towards the Blessed Virgin, and he invites his spiritual children to make reparation with him for their past coldness and also for that of all non-Catholics. "Let us then, when we become monks, make it one of our chief ends to make up in our poor way for the ignorant rudeness of the Protestants."³⁷ He continues in the same strain, urging the need of reparation to the One whom they had neglected so long. "This love and devotion is one of the chief marks of difference between Catholics and Protestants, and so ought to be more precious to us who have been brought out of the darkness of Protestantism, and have to try to make up for the coldness and forgetfulness of our past lives towards the most Holy Virgin."³⁸ That he made reparation himself is demonstrated by the fact that he later became one of the most outstanding Marian writers of his time.

B. Faber's "language of love"

Father Faber has often been accused of exaggeration in his devotion, especially his devotion to Mary, and possibly not without some justification. However, to appreciate fully the writings of a man like him, it is necessary to enter into the spirit in which he wrote. Interspersed in his writings are what may be called apologies for exaggerated language in devotion, and he speaks as if he perfectly understood and sympathized with the difficulty of keeping the language of love within the bounds of moderation. "What is to be said of the language of preachers, exaggerations in the devotional books, and the like?" he asks, and in reply he attempts to explain and reconcile, rather than condemn. "They speak or write to Catholics. How likely men are to misapprehend language which comes from a state of mind with which they are out of sympathy. Besides, contradiction provokes real exaggeration. Also, men speak beyond their growth, just as they venture to pray beyond their growth."³⁹

With regard to the criticism of devotion in general, it must be

37. Bowden, *op. cit.*, p.240.

38. *Ibidem.*

39. Notes II, p.32.

remembered that there is a language of love which is unknown to, or ignored by, most critics. This language is not the product of hard, cold logic; but to those who love, especially to those who love the same thing, it is logical, intelligible, and even sublime. Language such as this, says Cardinal Newman, if taken out of its context and served up cold to the public eye, presents the same melancholy spectacle as a love letter in a police court.⁴⁰ It would seem then that Faber is guilty of this language of love, which to those who do not understand the sentiments that filled the heart of the writer, appears to be exaggerated. The use of the term "guilty" in this particular instance is highly questionable, for possibly in the expression of the love that filled his ardent soul, Faber too, spoke "beyond his growth."

"It is grand" he said on one occasion, "to be able to say daring things to our dearest Lord." Thus he had no fear of exaggerated expressions of love, for he claimed that all things are reverent and acceptable if said out of love. This language of love for the Blessed Virgin however, was not understood by non-Catholics, for as a rule they were not in sympathy with her to whom it was addressed. Thus, in his own time, and even in recent times, Faber was severely censured. Perhaps one of the most widely known attacks on him was by the famous Dr. Pusey in his so-called "Eirenicon," which drew such a brilliant reply from the pen of the great Newman. In his "Letter to Pusey" which is a masterful tract of Mariology, Newman explains, amongst other things, the psychology of devotion to Mary, and regarding Faber, although he seems at times to animadvert on some of his statements, nevertheless he defends him and renders very delicate tribute to his Marian devotion. He says: "When then, my dear Pusey, you read anything extravagant in praise of our Lady, is it not charitable to ask, even while you condemn it in itself, did the author write nothing else? Had he written on the Blessed Sacrament? Had he given up "all for Jesus?" I recollect.

⁴⁰. Op. cit., p.80.

some lines, the happiest, I think, which that author wrote, which bring out strikingly the reciprocity which I am dwelling on, of the respective devotions of Mother and Son :

"But scornful men have coldly said
Thy love was leading me from God.
And yet in this I did but tread
The very path my Saviour trod.

They know but little of thy worth
Who speak these heartless words to me;
For what did Jesus love on earth
One half so tenderly as thee ?

Get me the grace to love thee more;
Jesus will give if thou wilt plead;
And, Mother ! when life's cares are o'er,
Oh I shall love thee then indeed.

Jesus, when His three hours were run,
Bequeath'd thee from the cross to me;
And Oh ! how can I love thy Son,
Sweet Mother; if I love not thee ?" ⁴¹

41. Newman, op. cit., p.96.