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ABSTRACT

A study of Frederick William Faber's hymns on the four last things in the context of his hymnody as presented in the collection of 1861

ANDREW E. PRATT - Submitted for the Degree of M.A. - 1997

This thesis is a study of Frederick William Faber's hymns on the four last things as they are presented in the collection of 1861.

The study provides an outline of Faber's biography and his spiritual pilgrimage. It takes note of the events leading up to his conversion to Roman Catholicism and deals briefly with the establishment of the London Oratory.

The collection of hymns is studied as a whole, so that the place of those hymns on the four last things can be better understood. Reference is made to Faber's cultural and theological context, and that in which he ministered, which are seen to have formed his approach to hymnody and defined the structure of his collection.

An assessment is made of the hymns in their historical context. An indication is given as to the degree to which Faber achieved the aims which he set for himself. Comment is made on the lasting value of his hymns on the four last things.

Faber's greatest skill is perceived to be in illustrating and giving expression to the range of human emotions consequent on bereavement. In this way he provides a vehicle which has been used to enable others to respond to their own experiences, which is still valuable today.

A STUDY OF FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER'S HYMNS ON THE FOUR
LAST THINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF HIS HYMNODY AS PRESENTED IN
THE COLLECTION OF 1861

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1997

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	
TITLE PAGE	
CONTENTS	
<u>A. INTRODUCTION</u>	1
PRELIMINARY NOTE	1
THE EARLY YEARS	2
FRIENDSHIPS	13
NATURE AND POETRY	20
RELIGION AND THE OXFORD MOVEMENT	23
THEOLOGY AND CONVERSION	35
FABER, NEWMAN AND THE ORATORIAN	42
<u>B. THE HYMNS</u>	46
GOD AND THE MOST HOLY TRINITY	51
THE SACRED HUMANITY OF JESUS	58
OUR BLESSED LADY, ST. JOSEPH, AND THE HOLY FAMILY	78
ANGELS AND SAINTS	93
THE SACRAMENTS, THE FAITH AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE	103
MISCELLANEOUS	113
THE LAST THINGS	114
1) Judgement	114
2) Death	132
Bereavement	145
3) Hell	181
4) Heaven	186
<u>C. CONCLUSION - AN ASSESSMENT OF FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER'S HYMNS AS THEY SEEK TO ADDRESS THE FOUR LAST THINGS</u>	199
1) Faber and His Contemporaries	199
2) Faber's Attainment of His Own Goals	203
3) The Lasting Value of Faber's Hymns on the Four Last Things	206
<u>SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	209
Primary Sources	209
Secondary Sources	209
<u>NOTES</u>	211

**A STUDY OF FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER'S HYMNS ON THE FOUR
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A. INTRODUCTION

PRELIMINARY NOTE

The material to be studied in this thesis is contained in Frederick W. Faber's collection of Hymns, dated 1861. It is the intention of the study to explore the hymns with particular reference to the 'Four Last Things' (*quatuor novissima*), Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell. It has been a matter of custom since More addressed *De Quatuor Novissima*, in his Works (1557) to group these under one head and so, subsequently, a title is extant from 1606 which speaks of the Foure-fould Meditation of the foure last things: viz...of the Houre of Death. Day of Judgement. Paines of Hell. Ayes of Heaven.

For such a study to be intelligible it is necessary to understand Faber's background, the culture in which he lived, and the influences to which he was subject. The thesis begins with a brief biographical sketch. It examines his childhood and schooling. His interest in poetry is noted. His time at Oxford, and the influence of Newman and other Tractarians are considered. An indication is given as to the manner in which Faber struggled to make sense of his faith.

Faber's taking Holy Orders in the Church of England, and his decision to follow the



calling of a priest rather than that of a poet is noted. The manner in which he followed John Henry Newman in converting to Roman Catholicism, and his subsequent rift with Newman, are briefly examined.

The Hymns are set in their historical context. The structure that Faber adopted for the collection is compared with that of other hymn books. Faber's book is examined in some detail, in order that the manner of his presentation of the hymns on the 'Four Last Things' may be better understood. The hymns themselves are then analysed, with a view to evaluating their place in their contemporary context, the degree to which Faber attained the goals which he set for himself in writing them and collecting them together, and whether the texts have any lasting value.

THE EARLY YEARS

In the words of Fr Raleigh Addington, Faber's was,

one of those solid, self-confident, respectable, rising middle-class families which after the Reform Bill of 1832 shared political, economic and social power with the aristocracy.(1)

Chapman adds that the family was rising, 'but not distinguished'(2). One of Faber's brothers, Thomas Henry Faber, was a solicitor, another, Charles Edward Faber, became a Major General, while Francis Atkinson Faber was a member of the clergy. Their grandfather was the incumbent of Calverley in West Yorkshire and it was in his vicarage that Frederick William Faber was born on the 28th June 1814. It is not clear in what

manner his father was employed at this time, or why he was born in his grandfather's house.(3)

Faber was baptised in the parish church some six weeks after his birth - an inauspicious delay for a future Tractarian. The church had been dedicated to St. Wilfrid, whom later Faber came to admire greatly. In December in the year of his birth the family moved to Bishop Auckland, where his father had been appointed secretary to Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham(4), and Justice of the Peace(5). Barrington was friend and patron to George Stanley Faber, Frederick's uncle, a theologian, pamphleteer and hymnwriter(6). Here, for a time, Frederick went to the Grammar School.

The family now consisted of Thomas Henry junior (aged 12), Francis Atkinson (known as Frank, aged 9), Charles Edward (aged 7) and Frederick William himself. Two children born between Charles and Frederick had died on the same day in 1813. Another child, following Frederick was also lost. The final child, Ellen, was born in 1816(7).

It was not unnatural that Faber became closely attached to his mother. He was, in the words of his brother Francis, 'the very darling of her heart' for 'he always seemed to her to be given in exchange for those that had been lost and to form in some sort the commencement of another family'(8). Frederick was separated in age from his siblings by the deaths described above and as a consequence he was alone in the nursery (aside from his sister), 'the child of his mother's prayers'(9).

He was taught first by her, as he himself remembers,

And to home-Sundays long since past
 How fondly memory clings;
 For then my mother told of Thee
 Such sweet, such wondrous things(10)

and was regarded as precocious and self-reliant.

It was not only within the house that Faber received stimulus, for he saw the world around him as a 'strangely romantic place'(11). He witnessed the colour and splendour of the processions of the Count Palatine, the last Prince Bishop, Van Mildert, an experience to which Walter Scott referred as combining a 'singular mixture of baronial pomp and the more chastened dignity of prelacy'(12). This was to leave a lasting impression on Faber and may have made him susceptible to the pomp and ceremonial which he was later to encounter in Roman Catholicism in Italy. His studies introduced him to wonders still further afield, for in books he saw the Great Wall of China, and the leaning tower of Pisa, which, he said, made 'an ineffaceable impression' on him(13).

Probably in 1824, at the age of nine or ten, Faber was sent to the house of the Revd. John Gibson at Kirkby Stephen, presumably as a pupil. From his childhood Faber had an observant eye and a love of nature. He was to look back on a school holiday in this vein:

Thoughtful even then because of the excess
 Of boyhood's rich abounding happiness;
 And sad whene'er St. Stephen's curfew bell
 Warned me to leave the spots I loved so well.

Each hazel copse, each greenly tangled bower,
 Is sacred to some well-remembered hour;
 Some quiet hour when nature did her part,
 And worked her spell upon my childish heart(14).

As this passage demonstrates, his writing owed much to the influence of the Romantic Movement, with its emphasis on the natural world, the sense of wonder, and the personal reflection on childhood feelings of happiness or sadness, and the fact of recollection.

This sensitivity to the world around him seemed to give him an intuitive awareness of God's presence which Chapman regards as mystical: 'There was no situation, no time or place in which God was not actively present'(15). Faber himself wrote,

God cannot have been to others as he has been to us; they cannot have had such boyhoods, such minute, secret buildings up of mind and soul; we have a feeling that about our own lives there has all along been a marked purpose, a divine speciality.(16)

Chapman goes to some lengths to establish a cause for this mysticism, this special confidence in God's providence. Such a confidence, he suggests, often finds its source in a sense of egotism. In Faber's case Chapman disregards this because, although Faber was undeniably egocentric, he can see no reason for psychological maladjustment. Faber was, in his view, 'the antithesis of neurotic'(17). Such an analysis is open to debate. What is certain is that Faber had every reason to feel psychologically insecure; for while, as Chapman acknowledges, he was 'surrounded by love', the allied assertions that he

received 'admiration and security' are open to question. At this age recognition by his father would have been the accolade he would have naturally sought. While it is dangerous to argue out of silence it must be noted that positive references to Faber's father are rare. It is even possible that at a psychological level Faber blamed his father for the constant moves which punctuated his childhood and which must, to a degree, have engendered a sense of insecurity. The subsequent loss of both father and mother would only have added to this experience. The cause of Faber's mysticism is, I believe, still obscure. What is certain is that from his earliest memory God was real to him and, as he struggled later to evolve a satisfactory articulation of his faith, it was more often his understanding of God that was subject to scrutiny than his acceptance of the reality of that God. Some years later, reflecting on the person of Jesus, he was to write:

And he hath breathed into my soul
 A special love of Thee,
 A love to lose my will in His,
 And by that loss be free.(18)

By the standards of nineteenth-century family life, Faber's upbringing was more than acceptable. Newsome, for instance, quotes extensively from Catharine Tait, who described in detail the life of her children(born between 1849 and 1854), a picture which may well be not far removed from that experienced by Faber. This shows clearly the way in which all time had to be used constructively. Religious reading and prayer were of great importance. Papa would read the Bible and then question the children on the content. Newsome observes that '...these were perfectly normal children living perfectly happy lives in circumstances that to-day would be considered unendurable'(19).

Faber's close-knit family circle, dominated for him by his relationship with his mother, was something in which he had grown up, in which he had received and given love and in which he had come to experience and value faith. The home provided a context for the imaginative re-construction of events as the text 'Christmas Night' demonstrates:

Thou art come, Thou art come, Child of Mary!

Yet we hardly believe Thou art come;-

It seems such a wonder to have Thee,

New Brother! with us in our home.(20)

In 1826 he was sent to Shrewsbury School. We can get a glimpse of what life might have been like for him there from J.B. Oldham's History of Shrewsbury School(1952) or G.W. Fisher's Annals of Shrewsbury School(1898). The headmaster at this time was Dr. Samuel Butler:

By the 1820s the school had a high reputation...for scholarly excellence in the limited fields in which they operated. Dr. Butler's pupils were adept at winning all the major classical prizes on offer at Oxbridge. Having said this there were unruly elements in the school who didn't attain the heady delights of the VIth(21).

The school's high reputation in the field of classics at this time is attested to by Newsome(22), but Lawson, presently Librarian at Shrewsbury School, finds evidence of a low moral tone attested to in a variety of sources and comments:

Whether it was this which led to the removal of Faber, I do not know...Dr.

Butler was one of the earliest HMs in any school to take a firm hand with the [schoolboy] sub-culture and it earned him unpopularity for a while. Despite this, in the lower echelons of the school where many of the boys did not aspire to heady classical delights, there were plenty of opportunities for extra-mural activity & uncivilised behaviour(23).

In 1827 he moved to Harrow School, arriving in the third term(24).

It is not altogether clear why this change came about. Lawson's thesis that it might have been related to the low moral tone of Shrewsbury is worthy of consideration, but it raises the question as to whether Harrow was likely to have been any better; probably not.

Chapman suggests that it may simply have been due to a vacancy arising at Harrow(25).

At Harrow life was harsh, but Faber experienced again what he had known in the Lake District, the common factor between the two places being the almost inordinate amount of freedom. With this freedom, at Harrow, went abuse - bullying, unpleasant initiation ceremonies and blanket tossing. Flogging was severe; yet, in Faber's day, pupils at Harrow were treated as adults with the opportunity to enjoy excursions to London, make fire-works, develop an interest in numismatics or botany, and dissociate themselves from sporting activity, though Harrovians did take competitive games, especially cricket, seriously in the early decades of the century. Most schools did not actively encourage such things until the 1860's and 70's. At Shrewsbury cricket was 'grudgingly permitted by Samuel Butler' while rowing and football were forbidden as dangerous or undignified(26). Rough games sometimes took place at night quite illicitly, with energetic pursuits through mud, hedges and ponds. On occasion a boy might be asked to

take a drink or dine with the headmaster. Discipline was lax, the curriculum entirely classical, dominated by Greek and Latin. If a boy could write elegant verses he could succeed.

Faber seems to have thrived on the regime at Harrow, though little is known about his schooling, aside from his own assessment of it in a letter to Lord John Manners, written in 1839. In it he states,

When I was at Harrow I felt always quite wild - wild with power of intellect: at least such I fancied it. I dreamt and raved and wrote and thought and spoke, and, so far as out of the way books went, read. I had volumes of poetry written then, and an immense quantity of melancholy Byronical journal. In short my characteristics at Harrow were wildness, impetuosity, imperiousness, pride and so forth; and so far as scholastic lore, ignorance(27).

Hawkyard, the Archivist at Harrow, has confirmed that during his stay Faber became a monitor, suggesting that, in spite of his own assessment of himself, he was respected by the staff(28). He had a natural linguistic flair, though he spent more time reading English literature than the classics. Because of this he did not do himself justice though he was considered 'without intellectual rival in the school'(29). He kept himself aloof, nurtured poetic ambitions, and through the lack of discipline became still more self-willed than he undoubtedly was on his arrival. He rode and swam very well and his capacity to lead probably protected him from the worst vagaries of bullying.

There was, at this time, a 'tendency to emotionalism and to passionate friendship'. 'Love'

was a word used with real sincerity between staff and boys. Henry Richards wrote: 'The master I loved far the most was Eve...'(30). In such an environment Faber clearly felt at ease. His character was sociable and he made many friends. Holidaying with Benjamin Brodie, the son of a well known surgeon, Chapman tells how Faber irritated the doctor by 'calculating how much time he would save in his life by signing his name, "Frederic", without the "K"'. He also speculates that Faber's lifelong interest in science may well have been influenced by Brodie, who became a distinguished chemist(31). He spent time in the Lake District with John Merivale, son of John Herman Merivale, a minor poet and friend of Byron. Though he was indifferent to all games, he passed another holiday in the Highlands with John Norton, a good cricketer who played twice against Eton at Lord's. In later life Faber was not slow to realise the interest that others had in sport, arranging matches for his parishioners on a Sunday as a means of attracting them, that he might 'win their souls'.

In the middle of his school career, in 1829, his mother died. During the preceding year her affection and anxiety in relation to her youngest child was clearly apparent(32). Chapman observes that he 'wrote very little about this calamity' but the silence is itself significant, and it is possible to gauge the effect of what had happened, in part, by reference to his later hymnody. He was deeply loved by his mother, and he returned that love almost to the point of idolatry. Her death coincided with a religious crisis in his life, or perhaps precipitated it.

His mother's death was bound either to destroy his faith or deepen it. He was led to question the veracity of his religion. Either Christianity was true or it was not. Dr. Charles Longley, who came as head of Harrow School in the year that Faber's mother

died, acted as a foil for the scepticism that had been fuelled by his reading of Byron, and, through his gentle kindness, Faber's faith in the goodness of God was restored(33).

Following this crisis he turned to John Cunningham, the Evangelical vicar of Harrow. At this time the school had no chapel, but rented pews in the parish church (a cause of some disagreement with local people, who nevertheless appreciated the consequent pew rents!)(34), and so it was natural that Cunningham should be regarded as unofficial chaplain to the school. He was an author of distinction and a poet, who had been curate to John Venn, around whose parish had formed the Clapham sect. The sect was well motivated, if self-righteous, working for the cessation of slavery (having achieved the abolition of the slave trade in 1807), the extension of missionary enterprise, the foundation of the British and Foreign Bible society, the extension of Sunday schools and the Society for the Bettering of Conditions and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor. At its centre was the example of William Wilberforce. Faber was to be strongly influenced by Cunningham's evangelicalism.

Cunningham's theology was Arminian, dividing people into those who were committed and those who were undecided, rather than adopting the Calvinist distinction between the elect and the damned. He described death as surprising the waverers and dismissing '...them to the region of everlasting and unspeakable misery'. '...Oh the horror of such a state!' He stressed that believers should be warned not rashly to lay claim to the promises of God. 'The future inhabitant of heaven is not merely the man lifted to heaven, and forcibly introduced into the house of many mansions; but a man purged of his corruptions and fitted for the world of glory before he enters it'. Cunningham believed that attitudes must be changed in this world. 'Here it is that you must...acquire the tastes,

the habits, the qualifications which are to fit you for the kingdom of God'. After death the soul would be brought face to face with God. This would either be a time of bliss or a time to be confronted with what Rowell characterises as the 'naked justice of God'. In his sermon 'The Invisible World' Cunningham utilises material which looks forward to both Newman's The Dream of Gerontius and the eschatology of Faber's later devotional writings.(35)

There are also parallels discernible between chapter seven of Faber's Growth in Holiness and Cunningham's sermon *The besetting Sin*, and Faber's Bethlehem and the sermon entitled *The Christian not a servant but a son*(36). Cunningham anticipated the Tractarians in stressing the need for sanctification and warning against presuming on God's grace(37). He strengthened Faber's faith, underlined it with a sense of moral earnestness, and sought to imbue a love of the Church of England and a tender love of Jesus. Along with this came a warning (ironic in view of Faber's later religious progress) that to travel on the continent is to lay oneself open to the dangers of Popery. This was a warning that Faber did not heed, but the attitude that informed it was to stay with him for some time, even emerging in All for Jesus(38).

In 1832 Faber matriculated at Oxford(39). In the winter of 1832 he sat for a scholarship at Balliol and, though unsuccessful, was offered rooms and came into residence in Spring 1833. In the meantime his father died(40) and the home in Bishop Auckland was broken up. Thomas Henry (now 31), his eldest brother, took his father's place. The death pressed on Frederick 'with the dead weight of desolation'(41).

During one long vacation he took the James Watt steam packet intending to make for

Stockton-on-Tees, which had now become home. The boat foundered and Faber's response shows his ability to see the funny side of things:

...over on her side fell the good gallant ship. Fear being an emotion unknown to me, a great fund of amusement presented itself. Half a dozen cabin doors flew open and females in déshabille with clasped hands and tearful eyes rushed frantic out: they in their ignorance thought that they were lost, and I in apathy had before me a representation of what a real wreck is, and thus had an opportunity for indulging my favourite propensity of observing human nature among mankind themselves(42).

This was but an interlude, for Stockton-on-Tees presented itself as tedious in the extreme. Life there was uninteresting and he longed to be back in Oxford.

FRIENDSHIPS

At the time of Faber's father's death Roundell Palmer described Frederick as:

extremely prepossessing, of good height, slender figure, fair complexion, bright blue eyes, well-formed features, almost feminine grace. The attraction of his looks and manners and our agreement in poetical tastes (particularly in appreciation of Coleridge and Wordsworth) soon made us friends, and our affection for each other became not only strong but passionate. There is a place for passion, even in friendship; it was so among the Greeks; and the love of

Jonathan for David was "wonderful, passing the love of women"(43).

This kind of passionate friendship, found first in school and continued at university, was not, in Newsome's view, unusual 'save in comparison with later standards of outward conduct'. Such homosexual relationships were consonant with those depicted in the classics, notably in Plato, especially in Phaedrus and The Symposium. Palmer continues:

Evening after evening in Frederick Faber's rooms, we spent together in reading and comparing our impressions of our favourite poets...His usual flow of spirits was great; and in conversation he was positive, sometimes paradoxical. There was in his mental nature an element of waywardness and inconstancy...It manifested itself sometimes in a rapid change of opinion, from one extreme to another; and at other times (though this never happened to myself) in his relations to particular persons. The key to this was doubtless in some law of sympathy, which, whenever it drew him towards those from whom he differed, repelled him from others with whom he had agreed(44).

Faber was not an exceptional undergraduate, though his enemies styled him 'flashy'. He began by making friends and simultaneously discovering that he was not as intellectually adept as he had thought himself to be. At this stage he became friendly with Jack [John Brande] Morris, a friendship which was to last throughout his life and to be preserved in their correspondence, which providentially, Morris kept. Morris was an eccentric but profoundly learned in Oriental languages(45). In his letters to Morris Faber can be seen exploring ideas and formulating his opinions.

John Manners was to write of Faber in this way:

The magic of his voice and the charm of his society and conversation were irresistible. I at least found them so and his influence over me was great...(46).

Manners and Morris were not the only friends that Faber made. His deepest relationship while at Oxford was with George Smythe, described as, 'the most brilliant talker...eloquent, imaginative, and paradoxical...', though, in appearance, 'unattractive, small, dingy', yet 'a most delightful fascinating companion'(47). Faber's relationship with Smythe was undoubtedly homosexual in nature but it appears to have been a homosexuality of a late adolescent kind. In a sonnet Faber was to profess to Smythe:

Fain would I warn thee, for too well I know
 Be what thou wilt thou must be dear to me;
 And lo! thou art in utter bondage now(48).

Smythe was to respond,

Dear Master - I do love thee with a love
 Which has with fond endeavour built a throne
 In my heart's holiest place...(49).

This interchange of verse was criticised by Frank Faber, Frederick's brother, as unhealthy. Chapman hazards that he might have had in mind one of these two passages:

We pulled each other's hair about,
 Peeped into each other's eyes,
 And spoke the first light silly words
 That to our lips did rise.

or

Ah, dearest! - wouldst thou know how much
 My aching heart in thee doth live?
 One look of thy blue eye - one touch
 Of thy dear hand last night could give
 Fresh hopes to shine amid my fears,
 And thoughts that shed themselves in tears.

Faber was unashamed:

Strong expressions towards male friends are matters of taste. I feel what they express to men: I never did to a born woman. Brodie [his Harrow friend] thinks a revival of chivalry in male friendships a characteristic of the rising generation, and a hopeful one(50).

His schooling had made such relationships seem acceptable and it was only later in the century, when 'manliness' was encouraged, that emotion became suppressed and such liaisons became more widely regarded as questionable(51). It is, perhaps, this experience of homosexual relationships which enabled Faber to write later in such a passionate

fashion of the love between Jesus and St. John:

Thy long fair hair hung down,
 His glance spoke love to thine,
 While love's meek freedom owned
 The human and divine.

His heart, with quickened love,
 Because His hour drew near,
 Now throbb'd against thy head,
 Now beat into thy ear.

He nursed thee in His lap,
 He loved thee to make free;
 What Mary was to Him,
 He made himself to thee.(52)

The adolescent nature of this phase is indicated by letters to Morris written in 1840. In one he speaks of the celibate life as a calling which he would prefer to follow, but with regard to marriage indicates that his proclivity towards it is such that he feels too great a distrust of himself to take a vow of chastity. In a letter written the following day he states, 'At present I have not put Holy Matrimony away from me...'(53). This correspondence was generated in response to rumours which were circulating in relation to a poem that he had composed entitled 'First Love', which ends with these words:

Thou art too young for me to tell
 My hidden love to thee;
 And, till fit season, it must burn
 In darkest privacy;
 For years must pass and fortunes change
 Till such [a] season be.
 Young as thou art, hadst thou but seen
 This withered heart before,
 And poured thy love, as o'er some plant
 Thou dost fresh water pour,
 And watch the fragrance and the hue
 Grow into it once more -

 Thou wouldst, mayhap, have felt within
 Thy first and sweetest strife
 And marvelled much at the new taste
 And power it gave to life;
 And so less like a dream had been
 My first dream of a wife.(54)

The poem was addressed to Dora Harrison, the daughter of Mr. Benson Harrison. In 1840, Faber was employed to tutor his son. Dora was twelve or thirteen(55).

Emotionally Faber was immature. His language is adult but he addresses the subject with the understanding and approach of an adolescent.

Rumours abounded that Faber was to be married. He wrote in a letter to J.B. Morris that Temple Hamilton Chase had, 'heard in two quarters that I am going to be married'. He refuted this saying that it would bring 'infinite amusement to my "monastic friends"'. He went on to state that he had no prospect of marriage, yet,

There is but one person in the world whom I should wish to marry - the person alluded to in my poem called First Love. But I have not the least reason for supposing that she knows anything of my affection for her, and there are few things in the world less likely than my marrying her.(56)

The letter continued with an elaboration of his esteem of celibacy, which he regarded, 'so highly'. Nevertheless he was unsure enough about his emotions ('I rather covet than enjoy the calm love of virginity'(57)) to feel moved to write, 'I hope to live a single life; but I shall not be surprised if I marry'. He justifies this with reference to his having been, '...deprived of home and all home thoughts...in early boyhood...[being] sick with pent-up domestic wishes'. He felt that he had had 'the vents of sweetest mortal feeling closed with cold earth from the grave'. This had left him 'with hot feelings glowing in [him] unexpended still'(58). The following day he wrote further reflecting that he had been 'a most spoiled child'. He also reflected upon his poetry, that it was: 'less Catholic than I am, being, as all poetry should be, language carefully stopped short of thoughts'(59).

This was a time for self-examination and reflection. The following month the correspondence continued as he recognised that, in Addington's words: 'his exuberant and forceful character aroused controversy and inevitably made enemies'(60); in Faber's own words: '...my temper would almost create them [enemies] in the Sahara Desert'. He

experienced a great harshness in the enmity emanating from Oxford. He hoped that as life went on he might get 'thicker skinned in these matters'(61).

NATURE AND POETRY

Those sympathies which depend upon the beauty and mystery of nature were always active within Faber.(62) This affiliation with nature was later to demonstrate itself in texts like that entitled, 'Music', in which he writes in the tradition of the mystics, sensing a oneness with all that was around him:

Now Past, Present, Future have mingled
 A new sort of Present to make;
 And my life is all disembodied,
 Without time, without space, without break.(63)

He continues in a later verse, using the most delicate and sensitive imagery:

There are sounds, like flakes of snow falling
 In their silent and eddying rings;
 We tremble, - they touch us so lightly,
 Like feathers from angels' wings.(64)

Nowhere does he demonstrate more clearly his dependence on the Romantic movement, using an example from nature to describe his spiritual or emotional state, in an interaction of the external with the internal.

An escape from the intensity of Oxford was provided during vacations. From 1837 to 1842 he spent time in the Lake District, becoming friendly with William Wordsworth. He explored the possibilities of pantheism as a way out of his dilemma, the idea that nature in itself could provide a manifestation of God and thus be a kind of sacrament(65). Certainly amidst the mountains he felt close to God. He was comfortable with the orientation of Romanticism towards nature, the insight that was given by Wordsworth into the deeper relation between nature and the human soul(66), and he used this as a commentary on his own experience, seeing a sunset as being presented to us with a moral purpose. He applied his intellect to the concept of analogy, reflecting on the Communion of Saints and the Eucharist and observing that, 'Only the dull heart requires mountains and great things to shock it into a consciousness'(67) of the conclusions that he had reached. The influence of Bishop Butler's writings can be discerned in this thinking. 'The sacramentalism of nature...is implied in the whole argument of The Analogy'(68) where, Butler argues, from observation of the natural world, there are relationships and sequences of cause and effect which have an application to our understanding of religion. This analogy is so strong that it can be used to demonstrate the genuineness of religious conclusions. The analogy between religion and nature is affirmed.(69)

In 1840 he published a collection of poems, The Cherwell Water Lily, and by 1841 three hundred copies had been sold. A few years later this had risen to six hundred. He made some money from his poetry (£30 in three years) and, in Addington's estimation, as a minor Romantic poet, filled the gap between the decline of Wordsworth, who had given him a signed copy of his poems(70) and the rise of Tennyson(71). Meanwhile, his

interest in religious questions was developing, especially through the influence of John Henry Newman. Faber's assessment of Newman at this time was very positive, pointing to the undoubted influence he had had through his 'gentleness of disposition'(72). This influence, along with his continued reflection and spiritual pilgrimage, led Faber in 1842 to recognise the need, as he saw it, to subdue the poet to the priest. He explored his thoughts on this matter in the poem entitled: 'Up a stream or down'. Faber, the poet asks:

Tell me, young Priest! will it be sweeter
 The downward flowing to unravel,
 Or must we Christians deem it meeter
 Up to the heads of streams to travel.

The priest answers:

The poet hath blithe answer made;
 My words must travel more in shade.
 Where less of earth's wild show is given
 There may perchance be more of heaven.
 Yet priests, like poets, have an eye
 For radiant earth and changeful sky,
 And mightier signs mayhap can trace
 In river-nook and green-wood place(73)

During Advent of that year he felt that, 'I have very sinfully permitted the man of letters

to overlay the priest'(74). It was at this time that he was struggling with the decision as to whether to accept the invitation to become Rector of Elton. He had received priest's orders from Bishop Bagot at Oxford on 26th. May 1839 yet he felt that the call of parish duty was a kind of 'divine interference with [his] wilfulness'. Wordsworth's reflection on Faber's acceptance was to say: 'I do not say you are wrong: but England loses a poet'(75).

RELIGION AND THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

The religious tradition of Oxford at this time was undergoing a transformation. The university was in turmoil. Four main groups could be discerned: the traditionally Oxford High Church party; the Evangelicals; the group that was to grow into the Broad Church party; and those whom Simeon, the Evangelical, described as, 'moderate men who love God moderately and their neighbours moderately and hate sin moderately and desire heaven and fear hell moderately', whose ideal was 'the sober piety of the Church of England'. The Tractarian movement cut across all four groups(76). Faber seemed to all but drown in the swell, raising his head at one moment to espouse liberalism:

'Transubstantiation has been bothering me: not that I lean to it but I have seen no refutation of it!' yet four days later writing, 'I am only a liberal Conservative. I am no Transubstantiationist - it is unwarranted by scripture'(77).

By the long vacation of 1834 he had returned to the Evangelical foundations laid by Cunningham, seeking to read through the New Testament four times, pressing on his friends publications of an Evangelical tone and leaning heavily on the prayer book.

Literature became dull compared with religion, though he had some doubts about the genuineness of Evangelical conversion. Morris was to take him to task for being tainted with Calvinism. Faber's response was to make a case for the Calvinistic interpretation of certain passages while also admitting to an alternative conclusion. Ultimately he disavowed, 'all Arminianism and all Calvinism', upholding 'in the fullest and the most latitudinarian manner the tenets of universal toleration, and the supremacy of private judgement'(78). Yet Calvinism had a strong enough hold on him for Bowden to assume that he had been brought up a Calvinist(79).

After much consideration, Faber felt that Newmanism was false; he sensed that the Church of England was in some peril. It must be remembered that at this time Newman was still ten years away from his acceptance of Roman Catholicism, though he had returned from Italy and was pressing his case for the reform of the Church of England with renewed vigour. Faber's reaction was against the basis of Newman's thought, as the following extract from a letter written in 1835 to Roundell Palmer indicates:

...I have been thinking a great deal on the merits and tendency of Newmanism: and I have become more than ever convinced of its falsehood. There is in the human mind a strong tendency to mysticism; and when you add to this natural propension the accidents of depth of thought, peculiar line of study, and somewhat monastic seclusion, I do not wonder that Newman's mind has become deeply tinged by that mystical allegorising spirit of Origen and the school of Alexandria.

This, Faber believed, led Newman to hold the belief, '...that there are inner doctrines,

which it is as well not to reveal to the vulgar'. 'Mysteries', Faber continues in Newman's own words, 'which are his peculiar treasure - "thoughts which it is scarcely right to enlarge upon in a mixed congregation"'(80). This 'Doctrine of Reserve' was most forcefully expounded by Isaac Williams. It proposed that there were limits as to who might properly be party to such holy mysteries. In this Faber came to differ quite markedly from Newman, believing that the whole of faith should be offered to the people in such a manner as to make everything accessible. Reaching this conclusion was not easy for Faber and, to a degree, he found it disturbing(81).

The Tractarianism that Newman espoused, which Faber was yet to adopt, was to lead in 1841 to the publication of Tract 90, Remarks on Certain Passages in the Thirty Nine Articles which sought to show that much of their language was not against Rome(82). In spite of his reaction against Newman, Faber was beginning to share some of the concerns of the Tractarians.

By November 1835 his opinions were beginning to undergo a subtle change. He writes of reading Herbert, ranking him among the first of our land. 'To read him and appreciate him', writes Faber, 'you must be a thinking-mind, a quiet-thinking mind, a religious-quiet-thinking-mind, a dutiful-Church of-England-religious-quiet-thinking-mind...Herbert has imparted to me more real, more felt humility and meekness than ever I had before: and I trust is successfully effecting the restoration of my mind's equilibrium(83).

Only a week after hearing a sermon given by Pusey on Septuagesima Sunday 1836 he felt he could no longer consider himself an Evangelical. Again he was open to persuasion.

He wrote, with not a tinge of poignancy, after the death of Bishop Van Mildert (Bishop of Durham from 1826 to 1836):

Hath not a sacred lamp gone out today
 With ominous extinction? Can ye fill,
 Wild men! the hallowed vases that ye spill,
 And light our darkened shrines with purer ray?
 O where shall trust and love have fitting scope?
 Our children will cry out for the very dearth
 Of grandeur, fortified upon the earth
 As refuges for faith and holy hope.

The cloud of music hushed still loads the air;
 The herald breaks the wand while he proclaims
 The sainted Palatine's [most?] puissant names:
 Yon kingless throne is now forever bare!
 This is a gesture, whereby we may solve
 The temper of the age; upon this day,
 And in St. Cuthbert's shrine, the times display
 The secret hinge on which they now revolve.(84)

The words herald the end of an age. Faber reacts to the transition emotionally rather than simply acknowledging it intellectually. What has passed is of such significance that henceforth it will be difficult, if not impossible, to find a context in which there will be

scope for the expression and demonstration of divine trust and love. The mood is one in which time is stationary and the moment is held for eternity as 'music hushed still loads the air'. Though the lines are in many ways restrained, it is possible to sense the powerful effect that history and pageantry had on Faber and the loss that he experienced at its passing. All those things that he had regarded as secure seemed to be tumbling about him. Even those things that enabled him to cope with loss were passing away. Such pomp and ceremony were a vehicle for the imagination, the manifestation of holy things in a human context.

This passing had a profound theological significance for in it the conservative Faber saw the hand of the devil. We begin to witness the depth of commitment he had to tradition and history, a commitment which was to find expression in the forms of liturgy and ritual that he was later to promulgate. In this he followed closely the ethos of the Romantic movement. The thought is crystallised in a letter written to J.B. Morris: '...a spirit of Antichrist moving now in the front ranks, now in the background of society, as suited best its Master's purpose' is allied to a spirit of wickedness which he identified with the spirit of the age:

...the arch-fiend... manages to insinuate a religious modification of the spirit of the age into some portion of the church. So that portion is unconsciously doing the work of the devil.

Faber identified the contemporary spirit as being mercantile. He resisted people who argued that an ordinary room would provide as good an environment for worship as a place of splendour, those:

who decry forms, who think magnificence is misplaced in churches, and imagine church-room within four walls of brick to be as good as in a temple fit, so merciful is He, for the House of the Most High. You will see now what I mean. Utility is the great implement of the evil one just now, and it has been insinuated into the Church(85).

Faber believed that he was watching the sunset of an age of splendour. He also wrote at a time when that change was beginning to be manifest in his own life and faith.

He reflected on the mistaken views which people have of God:

...Men begin by omitting truth in their contemplation of God's character: they look exclusively to the divine attribute of love.

They thus divest God of jealousy and cease to be zealous themselves(86).

Intermingled with these theological reflections is an exploration of the application of such principles to ordinary people. Faber reflects, in a manner which today would seem patronising but which reflects the attitude of the élite of society to the poor in his day, and demonstrates insight and compassion, as he writes:

...I am inclined to think we underrate the poor, e.g., should a sense of solitariness, oftentimes the companion of extreme poverty, weigh down some poor disease-stricken mourner, would not a plain, affectionate urging of our

sacramental union with the herd give rise to an intimate reverential feeling of our blessed and unspeakable privilege of Brotherhood with the Son of God, because He is also the Son of Man? I am inclined to think that it would but of course I have no experience...(87).

The words foreshadow Faber's espousal of Liguorian moral theology and contrast with Newman's view, noted above, that there are some things that should be kept as 'mysteries', not to be revealed to the vulgar, the doctrine of 'reserve'. The separation between Newman and Faber began early and lasted long, but their relationship was not all division and they both demonstrated respect for each other on occasion. Such movement as there was can be traced, however, to Faber's pilgrimage in the direction of Ultramontane Catholicism rather than to any change on Newman's part. In 1837 Faber had been reading Newman's Prophetical Office of the Church. He wrote to Morris:

I think you will be delighted with Newman's Lecture. It supplied me with what I had long wanted - clear and positive statements of Anglican principles. It has been too long the fashion for the doctors and teachers of Anglicanism to evolve their principles in the way of negation of Roman principles.(88)

He received Deacon's orders on the 6th August in the same year and began to preach with success in Ambleside. He mentions in a letter to Morris that he had Cantabs and Oxonians in his congregation, with very few poor people. One of the former was Lord John Manners, who was an influential member of the Young England party. At a time of political upheaval and uncertainty, this party fuelled a romantic reaction to the political anti-romanticism of 1820, taking its leadership from Disraeli and recognising obligations

to society, finding its basis in a union of Church, Monarch and people(89). Faber's influence on the Young England Party was of a moral and literary nature. Faber and others sought through it a re-awakening of a lethargic England(90).

The motives of the party might be summed up in these words of John Manners: 'Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,/But leave us still our old nobility'(91). The relationship between this conservative outlook and the Tractarian reverence for the historic Church made Faber and Manners natural allies and good friends.

By 1838 Faber began to be disillusioned with the situation in Oxford, stating (with reference to Pope's Essay on Man):

Good men are less there than in any other place. Men think about nothing but men - talk about nothing but men - meddle with nothing but men - as if Pope's miserable jargon were the standing canon of the University(92).

Faber demonstrated his Evangelicalism in this statement but he was also a Tractarian in principle. He also found it hard to cope with those who disagreed with him. A separation had to come. He was isolated and unhappy. In Chapman's words, 'He disconcerted Tractarians, puzzled Evangelicals and disgusted High Churchmen. Liberals and sceptics thought of him as a joke'(93).

In the summer of 1839 he visited the continent with R.W. Church. Here he gained practical experience of the Roman Catholic Church, obtaining a breviary and observing hours of prayer either in church or, following the practice of priests, wherever they found

themselves. The experience of church attendance was not entirely positive, for Faber observed 'careless irreverence...noise, the going out and in, the spitting of the priests on the altar steps'. There was a lack of quietness and Faber found it all too much:

I was quite sick and weary, home Church sick; and I cannot describe to you the wonderful pleasure of retiring to my own bedroom to say Evening Prayer out of the Prayer Book. I could almost have cried...' (94).

Faber could contend with swings of mood or intellectual argument, but what he was experiencing was a tangle of the two. Continental Catholicism was itself in the process of evolution. As Gibson has said: 'Whereas eighteenth-century piety had been characterised... by austerity and intellectual rigour, French Catholics in the nineteenth-century developed a taste for flamboyant ceremony appealing to the heart rather than the head.'(95) Faber rebelled intellectually against the irreverence (as he perceived it) of what he saw, yet he was drawn to this manifestation of popular religion which subsumed all, a religion that he was later going to describe in Genoa, where at a festival shops closed, bells rang, 'All sounds of labour were hushed...and every street was filled with...stacks of flowers.(96) Simultaneously he recognised a sense of being excommunicated from the church, but this could only be regarded as an experience of any validity if the Anglican church was not part of the Catholic church. 'Consciously or unconsciously he was testing Catholicism'(97) as he sought to theorise and argue within his mind and through his correspondence. All was confusion. Catholicism might have been adopted more swiftly, but there were barriers of history and culture to be overcome which he could not put aside in an instant. Only after Newman had made the move did it seem tenable in spite of all the intellectual and theological discussion that had been taking

place.

In a letter he examines the history of the Church in England, discerning two strands in its constitution, that of its official establishment and its deeper spiritual reality. The latter was represented for him by men like Lancelot Andrewes, William Laud, George Herbert, Jeremy Taylor, Thomas Ken, William Law and Bishop Butler. There was an attempt here to discern a true Catholicism within the Anglican Church which was not dependent on its establishment but rather on its spiritual inheritance, but he also explored that sense of separation from the rest of Western Christendom that was made manifest in the excommunication of Anglicans travelling in Europe(98). The following year, 1841, he was to tour Europe and discover at first hand what this sense of excommunication felt like.

After his return to England he was invited to become Rector of Elton. After some consideration he read himself in on the 2nd April 1843. Immediately he set out for Italy taking Matthew Harrison, his pupil, with him in order to supplement his stipend(99). He continued to follow the pattern of his fellow Tractarians seeking to test the validity of the Church of England's claim to be part of the Catholic Church. He sought and obtained letters of introduction from Bishop Wiseman, later Cardinal and first Archbishop of Westminster, to take with him as he set off for Rome. At Savona he found the epitaph that Chiabrera had written for his own tomb. The words, which in translation read:

Friend, in life I sought comfort

On Mount Parnassus;

Do thou, better advised, seek it

On CALVARY!(100)

greatly affected him and he resolved thereafter 'to devote all his literary and poetic powers to God'(101).

In Rome he had many conversations with the Roman clergy and passed his time reading theology and only visiting those sights which he regarded as having religious significance. He concluded that '...it is quite impossible for any Christian to be disappointed in Rome' yet he went on to say that '...I find my attachment to the Church of England growing in Rome'. In conversation with the Rector of the English College he made out his case:

It is not right to press me in this way; before you urge me to leave my [so-called] Church you must first prove she is no Church or is unchurched, otherwise you urge me to what is, in your own moral theology, a sin, viz, a disobedient act of self-will and self-judgement against an authority whose lawfulness you have not disproved. This is not right; you are urging my conscience to a sin.(102)

The response of the Rector was to intimate that if this was Faber's position he [the Rector] would never give [him] advice to leave it, nor welcome his conversion.(103)

This tolerant position can be attributed to the influence of St. Alphonsus of Liguori, whose teaching began to transform the role of the confessor. A person making confession, rather than being convicted of sin, should be encouraged to live

faithfully.(104) Faber summarised his feelings in this way: 'Thus at present I feel much benefited by my visit to Rome, and my allegiance to England quite unshaken'(105). The

words do not convey the sense of uncertainty which continued to trouble him and which caused him to continue to pursue that truth that had so far eluded him. Some six days later he was writing to Frank, his brother, of his belief that the Church of England was not, in essence, Protestant. Protestant influence was, in his view, one of the reasons for people seeking to leave and join the Roman Catholic Church and so he struggled to show the conformity of the Church of England to Catholic tradition in law if not in practice. The issue was not resolved in his mind, and so he continued:

Whether our Church be a Church, be something more than, something over and above, a form of protestantism, will be seen by the issue of this struggle: if she is not, God help us: we must go to Rome: if she is, which I BELIEVE, then are we Catholics, then do we enjoy the priesthood and sacraments of Christ's...one Church, without having to bend and break our consciences to what modern Rome has reared upon the ancient superstructure(106).

Through all of this searching he carried with him the conviction that if he was in any way misled then 'God would reveal this unto us also'(107). With great conviction he stated:

My whole life, God willing, shall be one crusade against the detestable and diabolical heresy of Protestantism...Protestantism is the devil's masterpiece...I will do my best in my little way, because I doubt the salvation of Protestants, and my office is to save souls(108).

In the same letter he speaks of being captivated by the magnificence and spectacle of the celebration of the Ascension by the Pope in St. John Lateran(109), a view which would

almost certainly have stirred memories of his childhood impressions of the pomp and ceremony that he witnessed while his father was secretary to the Bishop of Durham. In a letter of July in the same year(1843) the theme continues as he describes his feelings on attending the Pontifical Mass at St. Peter's. He was clearly impressed by the ceremony of the occasion but also by the Pope's manner in prostrating himself prior to receiving the communion, then standing before the bread while praying and beating his breast. Faber refers to him as looking like a saint(110).

During this time he became 'very, very, very Roman'; determined to run his Anglican Parish 'in the spirit of St. Philip[Neri] and St. Alphonsus[Liguori]'. This he went on to do with remarkable results.

THEOLOGY AND CONVERSION

In 1844, writing from the midst of the self-questioning that surrounded his conversion to Catholicism, he wrote: 'I am afraid to speak evil of myself, lest it should look humble, which I am not yet; still I may say that I am leper enough to stay where I am till I myself am far other than I am'.(111) His self-awareness is further demonstrated by his reflections in the text 'Harsh Judgements':

I often see in my own thoughts,
 When they lie nearest Thee,
 That the worst men I ever knew
 Were better men than me.(v.4)

Time was when I believed that wrong

In others to detect,

Was part of genius, and a gift

To cherish, not reject.

Now better taught by Thee, O Lord!

This truth dawns on my mind, -

The best effect of heavenly light

Is earth's false eyes to blind.(vv.8&9)(112)

Near the end of his life, at the time of receiving extreme unction, he sought pardon, 'especially of every member of the Community: I have been proud, uncharitable, unobservant, and I ask pardon of all'(113). In 1835 he referred to 'a sense of my own utter helplessness'(114).

He regarded an understanding of God's wrath and a fear of judgement as both healthy and helpful, reflecting the Calvinist influence of his family(115), the mood of early nineteenth-century Christianity and the Evangelical stance of John Cunningham(116). There is some disagreement as to how much the Calvinism of his uncle, the Rev. G.S. Faber, was an influence on his theological perspective. Addington states that his abiding influence 'led...Faber's first biographer, to believe that he had been brought up a Calvinist', but he himself puts more emphasis on an Evangelical background which Faber shared with Newman and many of the other Tractarians(117). Bowden cites Faber's Huguenot ancestry and the fact that the family had taken refuge in England when Louis

XIV revoked the edict of Nantes and goes on to state that

When he came into residence in Oxford, his religious ideas had already assumed a very definite shape, for the spiritual training of his parents had indoctrinated him with the Calvinistic views which were traditional in his family, and these had been further strengthened by what had passed at Harrow(118).

Bowden goes on to quote 'The God of My Childhood'(119) in support of his thesis, yet there is little hint of predestination or the other rigours of Calvinism in this text: the view that all things happen according to the manner that God has determined, a feature underlined by Calvin's own commentary on the words of Psalm 137, that even the psalmist, 'does not speak under the impulse of personal feeling and only employs the words which God himself has authorised, that there is no free will and that eternity and the proportion of souls to be saved, commonly reckoned at one in twenty, is preordained.

Faber's hymn on predestination tells a different story, beginning with the line, 'Father and God! my endless doom/Is hidden in Thy Hand', doom here referring to fate, and going on to state that:

A little strife of flesh and soul,

A single word from Thee,

And in a moment I possess

A fixed eternity:-

Fixed, fixed, irrevocably fixed!(120).

We can argue as to whether this is simply an expression of evangelical judgement, but the title suggests that Faber is leaning towards a fatalistic view of the eternal future and his own admission that the Olney Hymns acted 'like a spell upon him for years' seems to confirm some Calvinistic influence. This is underscored by some correspondence with a friend written in 1835.

Firstly there is a repudiation of Bishop Butler's view of Atonement. Butler argued that '...our posthumous life...may not be entirely beginning anew, but going on'(121), '...our present life [being] a state of probation for a future one'(122). In this life and continuing in the life to come God exercises moral government which is expressed in reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked(123). This moral discipline is intended for our improvement(124). The acceptance of the thesis that punishment is meant for our improvement and that such punishment before and after death is contiguous mitigates against the concept of an irrevocably fixed eternity. Calvinism propounded a belief in double predestination. Butler, without seeking to explain the mechanism, accepted that 'Christ offered himself a propitiatory sacrifice, and made atonement for the sins of the world'(125). His argument is based on John 3, 16. 'He [that is Christ] interposed in such a manner as was necessary and effectual to prevent that execution of justice upon sinners, which God had appointed should otherwise have been exacted upon them'(126). In this He made repentance efficacious. Butler regarded such repentance as all that was necessary to participate in redemption(127). Faber stresses that he and Butler are poles apart in understanding. Having justified his position from scripture, he challenges his friend (Roundell Palmer, whom Faber described as 'a bigot of a Butlerian) as a [fellow]

Evangelical, Calvinist and Christian to reconcile this scriptural account with Butler's Analogy.(128) Secondly Faber's language becomes reminiscent of Cowper's despair at its most dire:

My spirit is crushed. Oh! if it be Thy will, my God, that I should fall away for ever, oh let me cry with my last breath - "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"(129).

It is clear that Calvinism had some influence on F. W. Faber.

Bowden concludes this sequence of letters with one which vividly illustrates Faber's capacity for self-examination:

Have you never felt in some hour of lonely thought, when stern self-examination has for a while put by the curtain and disclosed to you the depravity of your nature in its undisguised deformity - in such an hour have you never felt an aching void at your heart, a heavy dejection of spirits and a painful irritability which you knew not how to allay?...have you never felt [at such a time] some well-known, oft-repeated text come home to your mind with a strange unwonted power, flashing on you a new and glorious lustre, and speaking to your troubled soul in accents of gladness and peace?(130)

Later he relates how, not long before his death, Faber said these words as part of a sermon: 'The devil's worst and most fatal preparation for the coming of Anti-Christ is the weakening of men's belief in eternal punishment'(131).

This, is not the whole story, however, for his stance was then overlaid and modified by the discussion and debate that gave rise to the Oxford Movement. While in Rome in 1843 Faber shared his struggle in correspondence with the Revd. J.B. Morris. He begins by stating that whatever the end of his doubts, he had certainly suffered. He went on to say this:

If we are not now in the One Church, but in a concubine, [so long as it be a doubt], we may hope, in the endurance of that last mercy, Purgatory, to be knitted into the true body; but if it grows beyond a doubt - what then? You will say, suffer, suffer, suffer. If it be so, I must go on, and God will reveal this also to me. If I try to pray, if I kneel without words in acknowledgement of God's Presence, if I try to love Christ, if I meditate on the Passion, all is in the mist and in the dark...It comes to this: to stay is misery at present, and I dare not go away.(132)

Faber was confronted with the necessity to re-think many cherished beliefs. When ultimately he entered the Church of Rome he was to experience a sense of liberation at the discovery of a treasury of tradition which had hitherto been closed to him and an assurance of salvation as a consequence of the incorporation of the individual into the 'true' church which his former Evangelicalism could never provide. Late in 1844 he wrote:

I cannot outgrow the fear of being "damned", as out of the Church: and so I too much overlook the risk of the same awful event through my own sinfulness and

ineffective penance. I pine to feel sure...(133)

This sense of being 'damned' is not Calvinist in origin as it rests not on predestination but decision.

On October 9th 1845 John Henry Newman became a Catholic. Not long after, on the night of November 12th, F.W. Faber went to give communion to a sick parishioner. He became convinced that this was not a 'real communion' and that he was not a 'real priest'. This was regarded by Bowden as the turning point for Faber and on the 16th November at the evening service he told the people of Elton that,

the doctrines he had taught them, though true, were not those of the Church of England; that as far as the Church of England had a voice, she had disavowed them, and that consequently he could not remain in her communion, but must go where truth was to be found(134).

In this he followed where Newman and others had led. On the 19th November he wrote to the Revd. J.B. Morris,

though I am homeless and unsettled, and as to worldly prospects considerably bewildered, yet there is such a repose of conscience as more than compensates.

On December the 5th 1845, sixteen days after being received into the Catholic communion, he continued the correspondence in this vein: 'Every day adds to my happiness, and the sense of Catholic communion dilates within me like a new life'(135).

FABER, NEWMAN AND THE ORATORIAN

Faber was now convinced of the true nature of the Catholic Church and the doubts that had beset him as a priest in the Church of England no longer held sway. Along with many other new converts he moved to Birmingham, refusing to be admitted immediately to priest's orders. It was here that he first met William Antony Hutchison. An infant community was formed which Faber led. This community, though full of the enthusiasm of new conversion, lacked direction and finance. Faber visited Florence with the intention of gaining support. On his return 'The Wilfridians' became properly established, intending to be of service to the people, under the direction of the bishop. Faber, who had been in amicable correspondence with Newman, offered to hand over the community to him, but he was politely but firmly refused.

Life in the community was anything but smooth and, as if to add insult to injury, Faber received news that Newman had become an Oratorian in Rome. Faber acknowledged Newman's supremacy and, at the same time, felt threatened by this news. He realised that it might become appropriate to cede everything to Newman's authority. On his return Newman wrote to Faber indicating the differences between the Oratorians and Wilfridians but also recognising the sense of a union. Ultimately, though not without difficulty, this came about.

The difference between Faber's and Newman's nature was such that working together was never going to be easy. Correspondence was often open to misunderstanding. Faber's liking for Italian devotions did not gain universal acceptance. There was

disagreement over some of his contributions to the Lives of the Saints and their publication was temporarily stopped. Nevertheless the Wilfridians became integrated with the Oratorians and the point came when the premises in which they were living became too small. Decisions were required which Newman, both by inexperience and temperament, found difficult. Faber was more likely to act precipitously. The community moved from its site at Maryvale to St. Wilfrid's, but soon Newman took a house back in Birmingham and four Fathers moved back with him. Separation seemed inevitable but Faber did not, initially, regard this as practical. Newman's indecision, his waiting on God, compounded the difficulty. Correspondence on the issue of the establishment of a London house was attenuated. Newman read more into simple propositions than was warranted. Faber held back, deferring to him. Eventually the decision was made and a list for the two houses agreed. In 1849 Faber went, with Hutchison, to London.

Faber began the process of finding accommodation and establishing a congregation. He took to writing hymns by way of a pastime, acknowledging to Newman that he had one hundred and fifty pages of them. In correspondence with Newman he acknowledged the need for leadership and indicated that the community needed direction. Newman suggested that he (Faber) should regard himself as Rector of the London community. The work was hard and the men began to suffer for it. There were quarrels and disagreements between the Fathers. Added to this was the novelty of the new community, which was denounced to the bishop as being Methodistical. There was much opposition from within the Catholic community as well as anti-Catholic feeling in the country at large.

Faber's ascendancy among the Fathers in London was not unquestioned. Hutchison saw

things going wrong. Faber was ill and sought resignation. The rift with Newman widened. He (Newman) had proposed to use St Wilfrid's as a school and this had met with opposition. Correspondence relating to it gave Newman a vehicle to raise other matters which Faber regarded as having been long settled. The issue of the independence of the London Oratory from Birmingham was high on the agenda. Faber wrote to Newman indicating the dependence of London on Birmingham, yet tactlessly pointing out that in people's minds 'The Oratory' was identified with 'The *London Oratory*'. A solution was required, but Newman's plan to rotate the Fathers between the two places received scant support from London and, subsequently, Newman wrote in terms of the London Oratory breaking off the intimate relationship that had hitherto existed. Newman wrote to Faber that 'separation is the only cure for our difficulties'(136). There was disagreement over the relative costs of running the two houses, Newman claiming to run the Birmingham house more cheaply. Faber replied that he could not think how he did it. Newman took this as an accusation that he starved his members.

Ultimately separation came and on 11th October 1850 Faber was elected Superior of the London Oratory. Gradually the Oratory came to be identified with new life in the church. The rule of Faber continued, but not without its problems, for it was, on occasion, described as unendurable. Newman was aware of this state of affairs though the communication of Fr Dalgairns, a confidant who had move with Faber to London against his own will. On returning from a trip abroad Faber received a strongly worded letter from Newman. He moved to Hither Green to gain some relaxation and to plan a retreat house for the London Oratorians at Sydenham. This became a place for recuperation away from the Oratory.

In 1852 negotiations began with the intention of moving the Oratory from its original location in King William Street to Brompton. By February 1854 it was possible to camp in the Brompton house. The task of establishing the Oratory was complete. The work that remained was that of consolidation. Simultaneously the rift between Faber and Newman had widened and it could not be easily bridged. Matters came to a head over the move of a novice called Plater from Birmingham to London. The correspondence and conversations relating to this move, which Newman wished to resist, and for which he blamed Faber, were to give opportunity for the airing of many other grievances. Dalgairns was moved back to Birmingham. The dispute went to the heart of the purpose of the Oratorians and their role in relation to the wider church, particularly in respect to the Fathers hearing the confessions of nuns. Rome became involved. The quarrel was still continuing in 1856. The dispute reached its zenith with the conviction within the London house that Newman intended setting up another Oratory in London. A resolution was found by means of an Apostolic Brief in Rome in 1856. The total separation of the houses was confirmed(137). In spite of all this, and Newman's inability to easily forgive a breach of trust, which he believed to have taken place between them, he always acknowledged Faber's virtues. Faber continued at the Oratory until his death in 1863.

B. THE HYMNS

By 1849 Faber had recognised the need for a collection of hymns for use both in public worship and private devotion in his new church. He specifically mentions the influence of St. Teresa representing 'the common sense, the discreet enthusiasm, of devotion and the interior life, which distinguishes Catholic asceticism and mysticism' together with the educational and evangelising activity of St. Ignatius. It was of St Philip Neri that he could say, in a verse that ends with a bathetic line:

Saint Philip! I have never known
 A saint as I know thee;
 For none have made their wills and ways
 So plain for men to see!
 I live with thee; and in my toil
 All day thou hast thy part,
 And then I come at night to learn
 Thy picture off by heart. (138)

Faber believed that there were insufficient hymns available in the vernacular and regarded translations as inadequate in expressing 'Saxon thoughts and feelings' in a manner accessible to the poor (139). Out of his experience at the Oratory in London he began to write in a manner which would reflect both the immediacy of pastoral contact with a congregation, together with the various influences that had come to bear on his life, ranging from the teaching of his mother, through the formative years in Oxford, to the impression of European Catholicism. He regarded this first collection as provisional

and a more definitive edition was produced in 1861, entitled Hymns, and comprising the following sections:

- 1) God and the Most Holy Trinity
- 2) The Sacred Humanity of Jesus
- 3) Our Blessed Lady, St. Joseph, and the Holy Family
- 4) Angels and Saints
- 5) The Sacraments, the Faith, and the Spiritual Life
- 6) Miscellaneous
- 7) The Last Things

The order which Faber chose was both conscious and deliberate. This can be clearly seen if we compare it with other collections of hymns of this period and before. Faber's contemporary, John Keble, had published, in 1827, a collection of poetry entitled The Christian Year. The object of this book would be met if:

any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings
into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer
Book. (140)

Reginald Heber's collection of hymns, also published in 1827, after his premature death in the previous year, followed a similar pattern to that of Keble, and was entitled Hymns written and adapted to the weekly Church Service of the Year.

The Olney Hymns, published by John Newton and William Cowper in 1779, had had the

intention of providing 'for the promotion of faith and the comfort of sincere Christians'.(141) Its structure is entirely different from that adopted by Keble and Heber.

There are three main

sections:

- 1) 'On Select Texts of Scripture', containing eighty texts relating to the Old Testament and a further sixty-one to the New Testament.
- 2) 'On Occasional Subjects', comprising texts on the Seasons, Ordinances, Providences and Creation.
- 3) 'On the Progress and Changes of the Spiritual Life', with the subjects of sin, conflict, comfort, cautions, praise, being addressed. The section ends with seven short hymns to be used before the sermon, eight brief texts to follow and five variants of the *Gloria Patri*.(142)

In the following year John Wesley published A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists. This was to be 'a little body of experimental and practical divinity' and mirrored most closely in its intentions the third section of the Olney Hymns. The book began by exhorting sinners to return to God, by describing the 'Pleasantness of Religion' and the 'Goodness of God' and then focusing on the Four Last Things. This first part concluded with a prayer for a blessing. The second part described 'Formal Religion' and Inward Religion' while the third part sought to deal with those who seek repentance or who have lost their faith and are seeking to regain it. The fourth part described the activities in which believers might be occupied, for example: Rejoicing, Fighting, Praying, Working, Suffering, Interceding for the World. The concluding part provided hymns for corporate use in the Society Meeting. Additional hymns are provided 'On Divine Worship', 'On the Lord's Supper', 'On the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ'

and on miscellaneous subjects(143).

Faber did not follow the sequence of the Christian year in the ordering of his work but used a thematic structure. He is much nearer to Wesley and the Olney Hymns than he is to Keble or Heber in having adopted this layout. He acknowledges these influences in the preface to his collection(144) though he notes, somewhat disparagingly that, their spell lay in 'Less than moderate literary excellence, a very tame versification, indeed often the simple recurrence of a rhyme'(145). As the reader progresses through Faber's collection he is taken from a recognition of the character of God, through an understanding of the place of Jesus, Mary, the Saints and the Sacraments. He is led to the point where he is prepared to face God. The believer must first be aware of the nature of God before anything else can proceed. His intent is very similar to that of Wesley, though he placed hymns related to the Four Last Things at the conclusion rather than at the beginning of the collection. They are to be seen representing the end of a life, heaven being its goal.

The metres used by Faber are very varied and some so unusual as to prompt the question as to whether they would ever be sung. His hymn entitled 'The Sacred Heart' has eight verses each of thirteen lines in the complicated metre 13.14.14.14.15.13.14.15.9.7.7.8.6. In his defence the preface to the Hymns emphasises that this is a hymn book 'for reading' but it goes on to say that,

the metres should be of the simplest and least intricate sort, so as not to stand in the way of understanding or enjoyment of the poor; and this has always been found to be the case with anything like elaborate metre, however simple the diction and touching the thoughts might be(146).

He refers in the preface to the work of St. Philip[Neri] who,

devised a changeful variety of spiritual exercises and recreations, which gathered round him the art and literature, as well as the piety of Rome, and was eminently qualified to meet the increased appetite for the Word of God, for services in the vernacular, for hymn-singing and prayer-meetings...It was natural then that an English son of St. Philip, should feel the want of a collection of English Catholic Hymns fitted for singing [yet] as the length and character of many of the hymns will show, [this] was not the only object of the volume.

'...the cultural expression of a really popular religion will be truly of the people', states Gilley(147). Communicating with Lady Arundel after writing a hymn for the opening of a Ragged School Faber wrote:

'I have written them an old doggerel hymn, syllable by syllable...and the half clothed urchins sang it with right good will, I am told. O dear! I hope God will bless all these things' (148).

These were to be hymns of the people, to accompany them through all the trials and joys of life.

GOD AND THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

The style of Catholicism that Faber had adopted and sought to import can best be characterised as Ultramontane. Faber was impressed by the extravagant ceremonies that surrounded feast days in Europe and so in the section entitled 'God and the Most Holy Trinity' the language which is used to offer praise to God is both vivid and colourful:

Full of glory, full of wonders,

Majesty Divine!

'Mid Thine everlasting thunders

How Thy lightnings shine!

Shoreless Ocean! who shall sound Thee?

Thine own eternity is round Thee,

Majesty Divine!

Timeless, spaceless, single, lonely,

Yet sublimely Three,

Thou art grandly, always, only

God in Unity!

Lone in grandeur, lone in glory,

Who shall tell Thy wondrous story,

Awful Trinity?(149)

Faber skilfully weaves these themes of awe and wonder, using language which is visual and imaginative, seeking to provide a picture of the glory of God. There is a recognition

of God's independence from creation for this is the God of a 'self-kindled flame' who 'Without worshipping of creatures' is 'God always the same'. God need neither give nor take in order to exist for his is an 'uncreated morning'. This is a recurring theme in this section of the book. Faber reflects that for him both life and love are diurnal, changing, in contrast with God's eternity. Finally the hymn concludes:

Splendours upon splendours beaming
 Change and intertwine;
 Glories over glories streaming
 All translucent shine!
 Blessings, praises, adorations
 Greet Thee from the trembling nations!
 Majesty Divine!(150)

In the face of such a vision of God the appropriate response is one of humility and awareness of our own sinful nature. At death God would be confronted. The significance of this meeting could not be understated. All doctrine and devotion was to serve the end of sanctification and it was appropriate to have an abiding sorrow for sin(151). For this reason, even as Faber contemplated the wonder and glory of God, there was an ever-present reminder of the human need for God's mercy and so, in the text entitled 'God' he begins:

Have mercy on us, God Most High!
 Who lift our hearts to Thee;
 Have mercy on us worms of earth,

Most holy Trinity!

Most ancient of all mysteries!

Before Thy throne we lie;

Have mercy now, most merciful,

Most holy Trinity!(152)

In the third verse Faber reflects as he does elsewhere ('Majesty Divine') on the lone nature of God, on God's independence. The hymn speaks of God's eternal existence and the beauty of creation. The text is not limited to the world but reflects also on the beauty of Angels and the brightness of Saints. The height of created beauty is depicted in the person of Mary, but this only prompts the question, in the light of her glory, 'What must her maker be?' The place of Mary in nineteenth-century European devotion became that of intercessor(153) and Faber uses material and spatial imagery to convey this concept, for it is 'On Mary's throne we climb to get/A far-off sight of Thee'.

As the author glimpses a sight of God the theme comes full circle:

O listen, then, Most Pitiful!

To Thy poor creature's heart;

It blesses Thee that Thou art God,

That Thou art what Thou art!

Most ancient of all mysteries!

Still at Thy throne we lie;

Have mercy now, most merciful,

Most holy Trinity!(154)

God is seen as full of pity, and in contrast to a God whose very godliness is a blessing; humanity can but lie at the foot of his throne. The gulf between God and humanity is heavily underlined. This theme is explored further in the next hymn in the collection, 'The Eternity of God', which begins with an examination of the human predicament. The author bemoans the everlasting change to which his life is subject. Everything moves quickly except, it seems, in grief. Youth slips out of our grasp for we are weak and '...cannot hold what we possess'. God, in contrast, '...hadst no youth' for 'An Unbeginning End Thou art'. God is

Without an end or bound

Thy life lies all outspread in light

Our lives feel Thy life all around,

Making our weakness strong, our darkness bright;

On reflection human time is seen as a '...share of Thine eternity' and, for that reason, 'It makes us strong to think of Thine eternity'. Such an eternity is offered to us as a hoped for leisure who live our lives too fast and, ultimately, '...in the bosom of eternity/Thou dost not weary of Thyself, nor we of Thee!(155). The metre is unusual (6.8.8.10.10.12 - Hymns and Tunes Indexed lists nothing in this metre) demonstrating Faber's ability to develop forms to suit his mood and subject matter.

In this way Faber seeks to give some indication of the nature of eternity, which is for

him, not just time going on and on but, in contrast with human experience, a quality of peace and fulfilment that we have yet to savour. This vision, however, is not inaccessible for we participate in infinity:

We share in what is infinite: 'tis ours,
 For we and it alike are Thine;
 What I enjoy, Great God! by right of Thee
 Is more than doubly mine.

Thus doth Thy hospitable greatness lie
 Outside us like a boundless sea;
 We cannot lose ourselves where all is home,
 Nor drift away from Thee.(156)

Faber envisages that 'Thus doth Thy grandeur make us grand ourselves' and so there is comfort as we reflect on the contrast between 'our littleness and the greatness of God'(157). God is majestic, wonderful, beautiful, wise, powerful, moving us to penitence:

Yet I may love Thee too, O Lord!
 Almighty as Thou art,
 For thou hast stooped to ask of me
 The love of my poor heart.(158)

Here Faber demonstrates the evangelical imperative which permeates his writing.

Though God is boundless, he seeks the individual. In a culture in which the portrayal of God, and even of Jesus, was frequently one of sternness and anger(159), Faber responds to those who might echo the words of a former student of the Jesuit college at Saint-Acheul who wrote in 1820: '...sometimes I don't dare pray to God; one fears one's father, when one knows he has good reason to be angry; but my mother, I'm never afraid to have recourse to her'(160), by stressing

No earthly father loves like Thee,
 No mother half so mild
 Bears and forbears, as Thou hast done,
 With me Thy sinful child(161).

For Faber God's '...justice is the gladdest thing/Creation can behold'(162) and so he can anticipate death with a confidence which reflects that of Christ commending his spirit to God on the cross:

Then on Thy grandeur I will lay me down;
 Already life is heaven for me:
 No cradled child more softly lies than I,-
 Come soon, Eternity!(163)

Faber's attitude toward death is very positive:

Father of Jesus, love's Reward!
 What rapture will it be,

Prostrate before Thy Throne to lie,

And gaze and gaze on Thee!(164)

One consequence of this is that at times Faber's expression of his dependence on God becomes almost fatalistic, as he asserts that:

Ill that He blesses is our good,

And unblest good is ill;

And all is right that seems most wrong,

If it be His sweet Will(165)

It seems that there is nothing that can deflect him from his course.

The Christian believer must have cognisance of the divinity and humanity of Jesus.

Having sought to portray God the Father, Faber proceeds to affirm that 'Jesus is

God!(166) and to explore the consequences of this assertion. The gospel according to

St. John begins with the statement that the Word(later to be identified with Jesus)

participated in creation with God. Faber echoes this scripture describing the stars, 'The

wheeling storm', 'The pleasant, wholesome air' and stating that these, 'His creations

were'. This God was found '...in Bethlehem's crib' and 'On Calvary's cross'(167).

The love of God is thus not constrained or held beyond our grasp. Through the

incarnation it is made present and our experience of its growth is not limited for '...love

of Jesus...Time cannot hold thy wondrous growth,/No, nor eternity'(168).

THE SACRED HUMANITY OF JESUS

As Faber begins to explore the theme of 'The Sacred Humanity of Jesus', we are presented with a picture of the whole life of Jesus in his paraphrase of the *Paradisus Animae*. There is a call to the devout recollection of 'The Dolours Christ did once endure'(169) that the sorrows he experienced and the grace which He offers through 'such transcending love...may prove,/No ineffectual gift'(170). Each section concludes with the Latin words - *Deus meus et omnia*, emphasising that the Jesus who is addressed throughout the text is both God and all to the author. The text is dated 1843(171), a time before Faber's conversion, but it is very Roman in tone and temper, and this is a clear indication as to the way that the wind was blowing.

Another indication is in the depiction of Jesus's birth as 'painless', in accordance with contemporary Catholic spirituality, which described events of faith in the language of the miraculous. However, the text does not only seek to proclaim the mystery of the Incarnation, but also provides opportunities for a response, for each verse has two parts. In the first three lines Jesus is acclaimed and his person or actions described, but the second half of the verse becomes a reflection on this description with an opportunity for commitment:

Jesus! Thou didst the fishers call,
 Who straightway at Thy voice left all,
 To teach the world of Thee;
 May I with ready will obey
 Thine inward call, and keep the way

Of Thy simplicity (172).

Faith was not simply something to be recalled or observed; it issued in action. It was at this time that Faber had decided to modify the way in which he ran his parish and to apply some of the methods he had gleaned in his study of St. Philip. In the same way, later, the Oratory, under Faber, became, not just a place of spiritual devotion but, with the establishment of ragged schools, a concern for the poor and a place of social outreach, a centre for active, practical Christianity. The hymnody prefigured both the spirituality and the activity.

The structure of the section which follows is determined by that of the church year, beginning with the hymn: 'Christmas Night'. This text carries with it still more evidence of the influence of continental Catholicism. It consists of verses of four lines with an eight-line chorus which is Ultramontane in nature. The language is simple and Jesus is greeted with the words, 'All hail, Eternal Child!/Dear Mary's little flower'. This allusion might be attributed to the influence of the Romantic movement on Faber's poetry, but it is more likely to have reflected a piety which had less to do with severe duty than with emotional experience, a piety which found its expression in processions, pilgrimages, candles, flowers, and draperies which had emanated from Italy(173).

French 'Catholics who could not immediately shake off their eighteenth-century vision of a God who inspired fear clearly found in Mary a sympathetic and loving figure, and that is the chief reason for her popularity in the nineteenth-century', states Gibson(174); and so we find Faber again reflecting European Catholicism in his emphasis on Mary, for the text continues:

God hardly born an hour,
 Sweet Babe of Bethlehem!
 Hail Mary's little one...(175)

Verse four refers to Jesus as '...dear Joy of Thy Mother'(176) This emphasis on Mary runs as a strand through much of Faber's hymnody.

The humanity of Jesus and the fact of the incarnation are stressed in a skilful juxtaposition in the sixth verse:

Thou wilt stay with us, Master and Maker!
 Thou wilt stay with us now evermore:
 We will play with Thee, beautiful Brother!
 On Eternity's jubilant shore(177).

The alliteration of 'Master and Maker' links in our minds the human Lordship of Christ with divine creativity, while the use of the word 'Brother' and the idea of 'play' earths the text in human childhood. Faber is not content to leave us there, however, for he then presses home the point that this is not just a matter of history but also of eschatology, for that play is something in which we will participate, 'On Eternity's...shore'.

We are led to consider further the nature of this child in the text entitled 'The Infant Jesus'(178). Already in the infant there is a fore-shadowing of what is to come for he is pictured murmuring in his sleep, not only of love, but also of sorrow. The dominant

place of Mary is recognised for

When Mary bidst Thee sleep Thou sleepest,

Thou wakest when she calls;

Thou art content upon her lap,

Or in the rugged stalls.

Lest we should forget the nature of this child, who appears so acquiescent, who, looking into the face of Joseph is 'So helpless and so meek'(179), verse six serves to remind us that

Yes! Thou art what Thou seemst to be,

A thing of smiles and tears;

Yet Thou art God, and heaven and earth

Adore Thee with their fears.

The following verses continue the theme:

Yes! Dearest Babe! those tiny hands,

That play with Mary's hair,

The weight of all the mighty world

This very moment bear.

While Thou art clasping Mary's neck

In timid tight embrace,

The boldest Seraphs veil themselves
 Before Thine infant Face.

When Mary hath appeased Thy thirst,
 And hushed Thy feeble cry,
 The hearts of men lie open still
 Before Thy slumbering eye.

The immensity of what he has been writing suddenly seems to confront the author, for in the next verse he asks: 'Art Thou, weak Babe! my very God?' The realisation has a consequence. If this is God then 'I must love Thee...and yearn to spread Thy love/Among forgetful men'(180). Having faced up to this fact Faber muses on the future of this child who will find that life leads to a cross which will be accepted as '...Thine own sweet will', where 'Thou wilt do more than save our souls,/For thou wilt die for love'(181).

Faber's account of the Magi(182), which follows, treats the wise men as saints who are subservient to Mary, for they kiss Jesus' feet only with her leave; and, by the shining of the star, they are led to her as much as to him. The text underlines the urgency of their quest and the distance they have travelled. These men are greeted by 'Wise colleges and doctors' and eventually find their way to Herod whom they disturb '...with the news of faith'. All this they do without the benefit of the Bible, the Pope or the 'Holy Roman Church...with its voice of truth, its arm of power, its sacraments divine'(183).

In the light of their experience these men are regarded as efficacious intercessors:

Let us ask these martyrs, then, these monarchs of the East,
 Who are sitting now in heaven at their Saviour's endless feast,
 To get us faith from Jesus, and hereafter faith's bright home,
 And day and night to thank Him for the glorious faith of Rome(184).

Faber shows himself to be thoroughly comfortable with the pre-eminence of Rome in matters of faith and, thus, Ultramontane with regard to authority. The theme of the influence of ecclesiastical authority continues in the next text entitled 'The Purification'(185). Such is the power vested in religious structures that Jesus himself is subject to them and the ritual purification is necessary for him to 'be emancipate'. The power to bring about this liberation rests with Mary who may 'pay His price':

Yes, thou wilt set Him free;
 He will be wholly ours,
 To lighten every soul
 In earth's benighted bowers,
 Undoing Adam's curse,
 And turning thorns to flowers.

We see demonstrated the initiative which is regarded as being given to Mary for he 'At His own Mother's hands/Should stoop to need redeeming'. Mary now becomes an object of worship and the one whom we regard as intercessor on our behalf:

Then to that Mother now
 All rightful worship be!

For thou hast ransomed Him
 Who first did ransom thee;
 Oh, with thy Mother's tongue,
 Pray Him to ransom me!

Without regard to the life and ministry of Jesus Faber moves to the season of Lent. It is not that the person of Jesus is unimportant to him, but rather that the importance rests in those parts of Jesus's life which impinge directly on the drama of salvation. The Passion and its preparation, with its focus on the critical point of death, is all absorbing. Lent is regarded from the point of view of the penitent, for this is a 'feast of penance'(186) when we seek God's compassion.

Faber now addresses the agony in Gethsemane and then provides four hymns on the Passion. Jesus's agony has a component which is personal, for it is 'My sins[that] have bowed Thee to the ground'(187) for 'The weight of the eternal wrath/Drives over Thee with pressure dread' and 'Thy spirit weighs the sins of men;/Thy science fathoms all their guilt'(188). Faber views Jesus as being subject to God's wrath in our stead for 'Sin and the Father's Anger! they/Have made Thy lower nature faint'(189) and by this Passion merit is gained which may be attributed to the faithful. These same faithful, depicted in the first person, should be moved by the realisation of what God, in Christ, has done: 'I sin,- and heaven and earth go round...I walk the earth with lightsome step...Shall it always be thus, O Lord?'. Faber continues: 'Oh by the pains of Thy pure love/Grant me the gift of holy fear...

And make me feel it was my sin,

As though no other sins there were,
 That was to Him who bears the world
 A load that He could scarcely bear!(190)

It is appropriate to move from this text to the next and to respond to Faber's call: 'Oh come and mourn with me awhile!'(191) as we picture, with him, the crucifixion. We are reminded of the whole of the scene; the soldiers, the nails, Jesus' thirst, the helplessness of his mother, the seven words spoken from the cross, Christ's lack of guilt and his death. Each stanza but the last ends with words which underline the universal nature of the sacrifice that Jesus offered, for 'Jesus *our* Love is crucified!' (my italics). While retaining this echo of inclusivity the ninth verse becomes individual:

Oh break, oh break, hard heart of mine!
 Thy weak self-love and guilty pride
 His Pilate and His Judas were;
 Jesus, our Love, is crucified(192).

Finally we are presented with a summary of the tension which this text has sought to portray, the conflict between God's love and human sin:

O love of God! O Sin of man!
 In this dread act your strength is tried;
 And victory remains with love;
 For He, our Love, is crucified!(193)

The next single verse shows the adoption by Faber of processional rituals which he had witnessed on the continent. These were times when statues were taken through the streets and an entire town would celebrate the occasion, though often in ways that brought consternation to the priests. For many people religious processions were village outings or picnics, while festivals were occasions for feasting and fornication(194). The stanza, entitled 'From Pain to Pain'(195), was sung at the Oratory at the Way of the Cross and it is followed by a paraphrase of an Italian hymn, further underlining Faber's ultramontane affinity. The text extols the blessing of the Saviour's blood, blood which he had taken from Mary's veins 'And shed it all for me'(196). The author offers a eucharistic allusion in asserting that the streams of this blood 'our inward thirst appease' and this is linked with the stress on the power of Christ's blood to cleanse from sin(197). Faber notes that 'To all the faithful who say or sing...[this] Hymn, Pius VII, grants an indulgence of 100 days: applicable also to the souls in purgatory'(198). Such is the efficacy of this blood that it overcomes all sin as 'Blood is the price of heaven'(199) seeks to show. It concludes:

O sweet! O Precious Blood!

What love, what love it breeds

Ransom, Reward and Food,

He bleeds,

My Saviour bleeds!

Bleeds!(200)

If the blood of Jesus does indeed provide Ransom, Reward and Food then it warrants a response, and an opportunity for this is provided by the next text:

We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!

Just because we need Thee so:

None need Thee more than we do;

Nor are half so vile or low.

O bountiful salvation!

O life eternal won!

O plentiful redemption!

O Blood of Mary's Son!(201)

The words combine the evangelical emphasis on redemption and salvation, won by the death of Jesus, with the Catholic reminder that this was Mary's Son whose blood has been shed. Redemption and salvation are necessary steps on the spiritual journey. The word, 'sweet', almost certainly adopted from George Herbert, is very characteristic of F.W. Faber.

Within Herbert's poems we find the word 'sweet' used frequently (e.g., 'Vertue' four times; 'The 23rd. Psalme' once; 'The Odour' six times, together with 'sweetly' once, 'sweeter' once and 'sweetning' once; and in many other places). The use of a word alone is not enough to suggest a link, but the manner in which the word is used, and its context, also indicate Faber's reliance on Herbert. Demonstrating how God looks on our sin, not so much with judgement but with compassionate understanding, Herbert used these words:

When at first thy sweet and gracious eye

Vouchsaf'd ev'n in the midst of youth and night

To look upon me, who before did lie

Weltring in sinne...(202)

The next stanza of Faber's text ('We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!') begins: 'We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!/None will have us, Lord! but Thee'(203). It further explores the theme of human unworthiness contrasted with God's acceptance.

Faber's hymn continues to emphasise the polarities of sin and God's acceptance. 'Our sins are worse than ever', but we come to the 'Dear Shepherd of the outcast' who 'wilt forgive us,/Nor yet upbraid us, nor complain'. We come to Jesus because 'It is love that makes us come' and we are '...certain of our welcome...For Thy hand never breaketh,/Not the frailest bruised reed'(204). The choice of scriptural allusion and the whole structure of the hymn illustrate the influence of Liguorian theology. Saint Alphonsus of Liguori stressed that 'fear doesn't last'(205), and emphasised the need for the confessor to be a father to his penitents, neither leading them to despair nor acting as an inquisitor. He claimed that, at the end of his life, he had never refused absolution to anyone(206). Faber writes: 'We come to Thee, sweet Saviour!/And Thou wilt not ask us why'(207).

Alphonsus' influence spread through France from the 1820s, so that in 1829 Abbé Gerbert was able to indicate the pre-eminence of hope over fear in contemporary Catholic pastoral theology:

Hope, cross in hand, walks before us on the path of life...The spiritual world,

shining with the emblems of eternal union, is but the radiance of Christ living among men to satisfy their hunger for truth and love(208).

Lacordaire later took a similar stance: '...alongside God's justice I think one should always speak of his goodness' & 'a single sentiment of love is worth more than 10,000 sentiments of fear'(209). These were the sort of Ultramontane influences to which Faber would have been subject as he travelled in Europe in the 1830s, the effects of which we can observe in his hymnody. This contrasted greatly with pictures of God's active wrath. Coleridge saw punishment as being 'essentially vindictive...expressive of the abhorrence of sin for its own exceeding sinfulness'(210). Cunningham, who as we have noted influenced Faber during his time at Harrow, warned against presuming on God's mercy(211). Maurice was to observe that secession to Rome was, in part, brought about by people seeking a more merciful understanding of God's dealings with people which seemed to be offered by the doctrine of purgatory(212). Faber certainly espoused this doctrine and also that of Limbus which will be addressed elsewhere in this thesis.

Continuing through the church year Faber wrote texts on the Resurrection and Ascension. Resurrection is indicative of victory as '...Sin! thou art outdone by love!/O Death! thou art discomfited':

All hail! dear Conqueror! all hail!

Oh what a victory is Thine!

How beautiful Thy strength appears,

Thy crimson Wounds, how bright they shine!

(cf., Isaac Watts: 'Thy works of grace, how bright they shine' from 'Sweet is the work, my God, my King'). Even in death God never left Jesus:

The everlasting Godhead lay
 Shrouded within those Limbs Divine,
 Nor left untenanted one hour
 That sacred Human Heart of Thine.

Ransomed souls, observing Jesus, characteristically '...thought/Of Mary while they looked on Thee'. The vision awakens an individual response and the text returns to where it began:

Oh I am burning so with love,
 I fear lest I should make too free;
 Let me be silent and adore
 Thy glorified Humanity.

Ah! now Thou sendest me sweet tears;
 Fluttered with love, my spirits fail,-
 What shall I say? Thou knowest my heart;
 All hail! dear Conqueror! all hail!(213)

The text stands firmly in the mystical tradition of Richard Rolle whose language, via Herbert, Faber inherited. This is clearly illustrated in his utilisation of Rolle's metaphor of the 'Fire of Love. Faber returns to this image in 'Jesus, my God my all':

I love Thee so, I know not how
 My transports to controul;
 Thy love is like a burning fire
 Within my very soul(214).

He continues:

Burn, burn, O Love! within my heart,
 Burn fiercely night and day,
 Till all the dross of earthly loves
 Is burned, and burned away.(215)

In the next text Faber depicts a post-Resurrection appearance of Jesus to his mother, and Mary is the subject of the opening stanza of his hymn entitled 'The Ascension', in spite of there being no mention in Scripture of the presence of Mary at the Ascension:

Why is thy face so lit with smiles,
 Mother of Jesus! why?
 And wherefore is thy beaming look
 So fixed upon the sky?

The author muses on an answer to the question he has posed, describing the vision of Ascension and commenting that 'The road that vision took is now/Sunshine and vacancy'. While Mary has a mother's love for her son, her 'love is rightful love,/From all selfseeking

free'. This love becomes the model for our love as 'God's glory upon earth/Finds in our loss its gain' for 'True love is worship'(216). Mary continues to be the standard against which our commitment is tested.

The influence of Marian devotion continues as Faber considers the day of Pentecost. The coming of the Spirit is initiated not simply by Jesus' prayer for the comforter but is seen as being dependent on Jesus' response to Mary's prayer:

The Mother prays her mighty prayer

In accents meek and faint,

And highest heaven is quick to own

The beautiful constraint.

The Eternal Son takes up the prayer

Upon His royal throne;

The Son His human Mother hears

The Sire His equal Son.(217)

Faber contrasts the power of prayer with the humility of Mary who offers the prayer. It is 'mighty', while she uses 'accents meek and faint'.

Similarly in 'The Descent of the Holy Ghost' the first eight stanzas speak of Mary and even when there is reference to the Upper Room and Pentecost the room is envisaged as 'Where Mary sat and prayed'.

Verses 17 to 21 speak of the ministry of the Spirit who '...came into the Church/With His unfailing power'. The Church and the Saints are present evidence of '...God's Eternal Love' and the Spirit is greeted as 'Most tender Spirit! Mighty God!' whose presence must be sweet for in the loss of Jesus '...we have Thee!'(218) Faber had clearly adopted the Catholic practice of devotion to Mary and the Saints, a point which can be confirmed by examination of the sections of the book entitled 'Our Lady, St Joseph and the Holy Family' and 'Angels and Saints'.

In France worship of the Real Presence and more frequent communion were increasingly apparent in the first half of the nineteenth century. Worship of the Host in Corpus Christi celebrations had taken place even during the Revolution. Monthly exposure and benediction of the Holy Sacrament was an old tradition. This was further developed. Alphonsus Liguori's Visits to the Holy Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin for Every Day was published in 1845 and became very popular. Various new forms of adoration of the host were introduced in Rome, *Adoration nocturne* for men in 1839 and for women in 1848. *Adoration perpetuelle* was recommended by Pope Pius IX in 1851. In this each parish in a diocese took turns.

This change was not lost on Faber who regarded the new-found emphasis on the Sacrament congenial. The opening hymn of the section of Faber's Hymns entitled 'The Sacraments, the Faith, and the Spiritual Life' is 'imitated from St. Alphonso'(219). His hymn entitled, 'Corpus Christi'(220) speaks of a 'wondrous gift... Sweet Sacrament':

Jesus! my Lord, my God, my All!

How can I love Thee as I ought?

And how revere this wondrous gift,

So far surpassing hope or thought?

Sweet Sacrament! we Thee adore!

Oh make us love Thee more and more!

The presence of Jesus in the Sacrament is underlined in the next verse which also, characteristically, refers to Mary as an exemplar of devotion:

Had I but Mary's sinless heart

To love Thee with, my dearest King!

Oh with what bursts of fervent praise

Thy goodness, Jesus, would I sing!

Sweet Sacrament...

The Sacrament is seen as the manifestation of God, in humility placing Himself into the hands of a human being:

...see within a creature's hand

The vast Creator deigns to be,

Reposing infant-like, as though

On Joseph's arm, or Mary's knee.

In such a way the author feels that he can receive God: 'For all Thou hast and art are mine!' Such a realisation is cause for praise and so the angels are bid to worship, the bells to ring, the censers to wave, the earth to grow flowers:

He comes! He comes! the Lord of Hosts,
 Borne on His throne triumphantly!
 We see Thee, and we know Thee, Lord;
 And yearn to shed our blood for Thee...

And so

Our hearts leap up; our trembling song
 Grows fainter still; we can no more;
 Silence! and let us weep - and die
 Of very love, while we adore.
 Great Sacrament of love divine!
 All, all we have or are be Thine!

In this most Catholic of contexts Faber echoes the humility of John Mason: 'Ten thousand times ten thousand sound/Thy praise; but who am I?'(221) and, in a manner reminiscent of Isaac Watts, surprises us, for at the point at which we anticipate the greatest praise, we are met with silence: 'And praise sits silent on our tongues'.(222) Faber's approach to this point is skilful. 'Our hearts leap up' presupposes activity, but our song is trembling, grows fainter. There is a tension here as the words seem to have lost their sense. 'We can no more' is incomplete. 'Can no more what?' we are pressed to ask; and then the single word, 'Silence', follows. In a few lines we are moved from triumph to humility.

Faber has written a hymn which encompasses the wonder and adoration that it is appropriate to accord to the Sacrament, and has put in simple language the profound truth which the doctrine of transubstantiation seeks to express: God is accessible to humanity.

Another manifestation of Catholic devotion, the feast set on the Friday after the second Sunday after Pentecost, that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was another source of inspiration for Faber. The feast had its origin in the vision of Marguerite-Marie Alacoque dating from the seventeenth century. (223)

The text entitled 'The Sacred Heart'(224) consists of eight stanzas, each of eight lines, followed by a chorus of five lines. It is, to say the least, an unusual text in terms of its form and metre. The content is similar to that of texts from the section entitled 'God and the Most Holy Trinity'. Faber writes of God as 'Unchanging and Unchangeable'. The 'Vision of the Godhead' is '...like a city lighted up all gloriously within'. The chorus pictures the host of heaven ranged around the Godhead offering praise:

Myriad, myriad angels raise
 Happy hymns of wondering praise,
 Ever through eternal days,
 Before the Holy Trinity,
 One Undivided Three!

The Godhead is a source of eternal being, 'Still begetting, unbegotten...'. This is the seat of perfection, a vision in which 'nothing deepens, nothing brightens'. Created life, by

comparison, '...is nothing but a radiant shadow fleeing':

There reigns the Eternal Father, in His lone prerogatives,
 And, in the Father's Mind, the Son, all self-existing lives,
 With Him, their mutual Jubilee, that deepest depth of love,
 Lifegiving Life of two-fold source, the many gifted Dove!

There is mercy here which is equal to might, for this Trinity brought about creation and nursed it. In the midst of this vision of wonder, which Faber has sought to describe, a change is seen. What is it, what creature? 'A novelty in God?' asks the author:

The beauty of the Father's power is o'er it brightly shed,
 The sweetness of the Spirit's Love is unction on its head;
 In wisdom of the Son it plays its wondrous part,
 While it lives the loving life of a real Human Heart!

This is:

A Heart that hath a Mother, and a treasure of red blood,
 A Heart that man can pray to, and feed upon for food!
 In the brightness of the Godhead is its marvellous abode,
 A change in the Unchanging, creation touching God!

The text is addressed to the heavenly Host:

Ye spirits blest, in endless rest, who on that vision gaze,
 Salute the Sacred Heart with all your worshipful amaze,
 And adore, while extatic skill the Three in One ye scan,
 The Mercy that hath planted there that blessed Heart of Man!

This heart seems to have been ever-present, seen before by angels, but now manifest and '...beating hot with love of me!' If there was any need to provide conviction of the extent of Faber's commitment to Catholicism of the Ultramontane style this text provides it.

OUR BLESSED LADY, ST. JOSEPH, AND THE HOLY FAMILY

The religious culture that developed at the Oratory in London under Faber was vigorous and sometimes crude. Hutchison, working with Faber, had a 'real sense of ease with the poor' who were attracted to a '...bespangled and bedizened church...' (225) 'Old Catholics' and converts alike, who had a thirst for the Ultramontane, found this environment conducive to the expression of their particular spirituality. (226)

It is not surprising to discover in this context that an irreverent account of the Feast of the Assumption describes an exaggerated ritual:

The procession will go ten times round the room at least, all the hymns the Father[F. W. Faber] ever wrote to our Lady will be sung twice over...the Rev. Preacher will stamp & shout till he is hoarse, promising all who hear him Eternal Salvation & No Purgatory! if they will only join with him in giving Three Cheers

for the Madonna.(227)

We have an indication of what might have been sung in the section of Faber's Hymns that we are currently examining. 'To our blessed Lady'(228) begins:

Mother of Mercy! day by day
 My love of thee grows more and more;
 Thy gifts are strewn upon my way,
 Like sands upon the great sea-shore.

Mary brings light into the darkness of the believer and Faber writes polemically:

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?

The next verse underlines Mary's role as intercessor for 'Jesus will give if thou wilt plead'. The text ends with the author identifying himself with 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', for Jesus

Bequeath'd thee from the cross to me;
 And oh! how can I love thy Son,
 Sweet Mother! if I love not thee?

Faber provided this defence of the devotion to Mary in 1848. In it he not only offers a present justification of his position but also reflects on those who have attacked this devotion in the past. Faber now turns his attention to the Immaculate Conception. This Doctrine was defined infallibly by Pope Pius IX on December 8th 1854. The collection contains five texts on this theme.

In 'The Immaculate Conception'(229) Mary is the focus of the Church, '...all eyes are on thee'. Mary's is 'The one spotless womb wherein Jesus was laid'. Jesus left heaven to find 'heaven in thee', for

Earth gave Him one lodging; 'twas deep in thy breast,
 And God found a home where the sinner finds rest;
 His home and His hiding-place, both were in thee;
 He was won by thy shining, sweet Star of the Sea!

The Doctrine is expounded by the text which also reminds the singer of the place of Mary pleading for the sinner. These same sinners find comfort in the knowledge that God has found 'one creature unfallen on earth' through whom to become incarnate. The author reflects that age after age '...the saints new inventions of homage[to Mary] have found' and now her new title will be 'Conceived without sin'. The text ends with an

affirmation of the need for Mary:

Deep night hath come down on us, Mother, deep night,
 And we need more than ever the guide of thy light;
 For the darker the night is, the brighter should be
 Thy beautiful shining, sweet Star of the Sea.

'*Sine labe originali concepta*'(230) is a hymn for the feast 'of Mary's chiefest praise' in which she is 'Queen', 'Immaculate', 'Virgin' and 'Chief miracle of God's compassion,/Choice mirror of His burning holiness'. This Mary is to be welcomed with city bells and open temple gates, with 'banners flying' and 'cannon pealing'. She is the '...blessed Queen of our redemption' coming with '...love to cheer a guilty race'.

The next text, 'Immaculate! Immaculate!'(231) continues to offer praise to Mary in echo to the praise of Jesus and the angels. Each eight stanza line ends with the refrain:

I think of thee, and what thou art,
 Thy majesty, thy state;
 And I keep singing in my heart, -
 Immaculate! Immaculate!

Faber is not at his best here. The rhyme is forced and the words weak, as are those of the eighth verse which, reflecting on the Immaculate Conception, say that 'It is this thought today that lifts/My happy heart to heaven'. The alliteration results in a cliché. In the eleventh verse Mary is seen to shine 'like a royal star', echoing the refrain of 'The

Immaculate Conception'. The final verse, however, uses the repetition of the word 'prosper' to good effect:

God prosper thee, my Mother dear!
 God prosper thee, my Queen!
 God prosper His own glory here,
 As it hath ever been!

Following this hymn Faber includes 'The Nativity of Our Lady'(232). The first verse fuses Ultramontane piety and romantic influences:

Summer suns forever shining,
 Flowers and fruits forever twining,
 Silvery waters ever flowing,
 Songlike breezes ever blowing,
 Shady groves for ever ringing
 With a low melodious singing:
 Infant Mary! Joy of earth!
 We with all this world of mirth,
 Lighthearted and joy-laden,
 Greet the morning of thy birth,
 Little Maiden!

The whole text is one of praise in which is described the worship of individuals or groups. God broods over Mary and a stirring is evident, 'As if some new-born

emotion/Rippled His unchanging ocean'. The Trinity is pictured 'blazoning' Mary with 'matchless merit':

Wondrous graces on thee raining,
 And Their dread complacence deigning
 To rest in thee as in no other,
 Daughter, Bride, and Sinless Mother.

The avoidance of alliteration in this last line heightens the effect of the word 'sinless' and underlines the doctrine that Faber is seeking to teach. Joachim and Anna steal looks of 'furtive wonder', indicating the sense of awe and humility felt in the presence of Mary. The eighth stanza pictures Anna looking at Mary sleeping and, breathlessly, listening to the sound of her first weeping. The influence of Ultramontane Marian devotion is clear the lines which follow:

While her rapturous teardrops glistened,
 How she almost died of pleasure,
 Feeding, fondling thee her treasure.

These verses are interpolated with stanzas extolling the perfection, the brightness and the splendour of the infant Mary: 'Thou thyself a world of brightness,/Flower of more than angel's whiteness'. Mary's splendour is 'as of pearliest morning' and, in consequence, 'All the gladness of the golden/Hosts [are] to thee alone beholden'. Her birth is of such magnitude that it is greeted as '...salvation's happy morning', words which, before his conversion to Catholicism, Faber would more probably have applied to Easter, or

perhaps, Christmas morning.

The next text, 'Our Lady's Presentation', depicts Mary being brought to 'Sion's sacred hill' to be presented at the temple.(233) The language and theology follows that which we have come to expect with references to Mary as 'The fairest of earth's fair flowers', and 'O wondrous babe'. The worship of angels is regarded as nothing compared with that 'Of thy one heart alone'. Mary remains an example for the faithful to emulate and Faber, characteristically, writes:

O Maiden most immaculate!
 Make me to choose thy better part,
 And give my Lord, with love as great,
 An undivided heart.

But he allows that in this world our hearts might 'grudge aught to Thee'. Even if that is so Faber affirms that:

In that bright land beyond the grave,
 We'll worship Thee with souls set free,
 And give as Mary gave.

Faber, in all of this, continues to look beyond our earthly life.

'Our Lady's Expectation'(234) follows logically in addressing Mary's anticipation of the birth of Jesus:

Like the dawning of the morning,
 On the mountain's golden heights,
 Like the breaking of the moonbeams
 On the gloom of cloudy nights,
 Like a secret told by angels,
 Getting known upon the earth,
 Is the Mother's Expectation
 Of Messias' speedy birth!

The text relates Mary's exultation at 'the angel's salutation' and indicates that this was '...that midnight/When thou wert anointed Queen'. This was a time for the receipt of gifts and graces as Mary was '...lifted in thy spirit/By the uncreated Word'. The time was recognised as one of 'sweet celestial strife', indicating the importance of what was happening, and the tension implicit in the paradox of incarnation. Faber continues this emphasis by saying: 'And the growing of thy Burden/Was the lightening of thy life'. The reason for strife and tension, for paradox and contradiction, is summed up in the closing lines of verse four:

While the glory of the Father
 Hath been in thee as a home
 And the sceptre of creation
 Hath been wielded in thy womb.

This was experienced by Mary as heaven coming before its time: 'Oh the feeling of thy

Burden/It was touch and taste and sight...':

Like a treasure unexhausted,

Like a vision unconfess'd,

Like a rapture unforgotten,

It lay ever at thy breast.

This was a time of longing and waiting until Mary was eventually satisfied:

O His Human Face and Features!

They were passing sweet to see:

Thou beholdest them this moment;

Mother, show them now to me.

This section continues with a further fifteen hymns which take Mary as their subject.

Mary is the 'Gate that opens...God's inmost sanctuary'('The Happy Gate of

Heaven').(235) She '...sits with Jesus nigh', so that Faber is able to say, 'Mary, our

Mother, reigns on high'.(236) 'Saints and angels lie far in the distance, remote/From the

golden excess of thine unmated bliss'. Mary holds 'vast jurisdiction', a 'profusion of dread

and unlimited power'('The Grandeurs of Mary').(237) She is the 'Flower of heaven'(238),

the 'Sweet Mother Maid'.(239) Mary's reign extends to purgatory where she prays for

souls ('The Queen of Purgatory').(240)

The intercessory role of Mary, as we have already noted, was much emphasised in

nineteenth-century Europe. 'God', 'The Purification' and 'To Our Blessed Lady' are texts

which demonstrate Faber's acceptance of this idea and it is further developed in 'Consolatrix Afflictorum'(241):

Like the scents of countless blossoms
 That are trembling in the air,
 Like the breaths of gums that perfume
 Sandy deserts bleak and bare,
 Are our Lady's ceaseless answers
 To affliction's lowly prayer.

First and foremost Mary is depicted as hearing the cries of those who are afflicted. She responds personally with consolation as though she is rather more than an intercessor:

...as if some fragments
 Of the golden calms of heaven,
 By the mercy of our Father,
 Into Mary's hands were given.

Her response is abundant for her answers are '...endless, they are countless'. Such grace is not regarded as random but offered '...to none but mourners/To the hearts that sorrow wrings' and '...they make our Dead look brighter/In the waking hours of night'. Faber shows his sensitivity in the face of grief and his awareness of its symptoms, something that will be attended to in greater depth later in this thesis.

Faber now addresses Mary as 'Queen of Purgatory',(242) and then includes hymns for

minor feasts of Mary and 'A Daily Hymn to Mary'(243), this latter having been written for the children of St. Philip's home. Here Mary is addressed as 'dearest Mother', 'purest creature', 'Queen and Mother', 'Spouse and servant/Of the Holy Ghost' and 'Holy Queen of angels'. Again Faber presents Mary as the exemplar of love:

Jesus! hear thy children
 From Thy throne above;
 Give us love of Mary,
 As Thou wouldst have us love.(244)

Faber concludes this part of his hymnal with a text for 'The Orphan's Consecration to Mary'.(245) The text begins by suggesting that Mary should be a surrogate mother to the orphan:

Mother Mary! at thine altar
 We thy little daughters kneel;
 With a faith that cannot falter,
 To thy goodness we appeal.
 We are seeking for a mother
 O'er the earth so waste and wide,
 And from off His Cross our Brother
 Points to Mary by His side.

The use of the word 'waste' in this context suggests that the earth is desolate when a child is motherless. Confronted by such a world and longing for the comfort of a mother

the children are bid to sing with boldness:

So we take thee for our Mother,
 And we claim our right to be,
 By the gift of our dear Brother,
 Babes and daughters unto thee.

This is a natural development of the New Testament claim that those who are in Christ become children of God, brothers and sisters of Christ. Logic makes Mary a mother to the orphan taken from this perspective. The orphan, having claimed her heritage, gives herself to Mary:

Mother Mary! to thy keeping
 Soul and body we confide,
 Toiling, resting, waking, sleeping,
 To be ever at thy side;
 Cares that vex us, joys that please us,
 Life and death we trust to thee;
 Thou must make them all for Jesus,
 And for all eternity.

Faber maintains the pre-eminence of Mary, a concept with which he was clearly very comfortable. While we can relate this doctrine to religious practice in Europe, Faber's capacity to accept it and to promulgate it with such vigour probably rests in his childhood experience with, and close relationship to, his mother, and her death at a

relatively early age.

As Faber turns towards Joseph and Holy Family Mary remains clearly in focus. The text entitled: 'St. Joseph'(246) begins: 'Hail! holy Joseph, hail!/Husband of Mary, hail!' and ends:

Hail! holy Joseph, hail!
 Teach us our flesh to tame,
 And, Mary, keep the hearts
 That love thy husband's name.

Mother of Jesus! bless,
 And bless, ye saints on high,
 All meek and simple souls
 That to Saint Joseph cry.

Joseph is seen as 'chaste as the lily flower', emphasising that his relationship to Jesus is not biologically paternal, and underlining the virginity of Mary. Jesus is Joseph's 'Foster-Son'. Joseph is, nevertheless, revered as 'Comrade of angels' and 'God's choice'. 'The Patronage of St. Joseph'(247) and 'St. Joseph Our Father'(248) retain this emphasis, the former referring to Joseph as 'Sweet Spouse of our Lady!' in the concluding line of each verse and using Mary's name in five out of eight verses. The latter paints Joseph as 'Mary's earthly guide', and in verse four states:

Thou to Mary's virgin love,
 Wert the image of the Dove,
 Who was her Spouse on high;
 Bring us gifts from Him, dear Saint!...

Biblically Mary is represented as being impregnated by the Holy Spirit, often pictured as a dove. This text is addressed to Joseph. Literally it implies that Joseph is responsible for Mary's impregnation but in the assumed form of a dove. It seems that Faber is struggling to make sense of Joseph's role. He continues portraying Joseph as a 'shadow thrown,/From the Father's summit lone'. Ultimately Joseph is seen dying peacefully in Nazareth and finding consolation resting 'On the bosom of thy Son'. The text concludes with the plea: 'Dearest of Saints! be near us when we die'.

Two hymns close this section. They both take as their subject the Holy Family. The first is called 'The Holy Family'.(249) It is a text which offers praise 'to Jesus, Joseph, Mary' drawn from 'young and old...gay or grieving'. The hymn traces the family's progress in Nazareth, via the exile to Egypt and back again to Nazareth. The exile saved him 'from untimely woe:/From men that would too soon have slain Him'. Their home in Nazareth becomes '...the House, from which salvation/Flows o'er your homes as from a hidden spring!'. The final verse calls us back to praise:

Now praise, Oh praise the sinless Mother,
 Praise to that Household's gentle Master be;
 And, with the Child whom we call Brother,
 Weep, weep for joy of that dear Family!

Come, Christians, come, sweet anthems weaving,
 Come, young and old, come gay or grieving,
 Praise, praise with me,
 Adoring and believing,
 God's Family, God's Holy Family!

The Holy Family is presented as the model for the ideal family, with the father as master of his household, the mother 'sinless and the child 'marvellous'.

'The Banner of the Holy Family'(250) is a marching song, militaristic in language, written in a very unusual structure. The verses are of four lines while the refrain comprises fifteen. It is a call to arms:

Hark! the sound of the fight hath gone forth,
 And we must not tarry at home;
 For our Lord from the South and the North
 Hath commanded His soldiers to come.

The banner is unfurled and is seen to bear 'three fair blazoned hearts', those of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Those who raise this banner are addressed as 'Sons of the Holy Family'. The text demonstrates Faber's ability to draw together images from different traditions to make a whole. The portrayal of the Holy Family is indisputably Catholic while the final verse is reminiscent of many evangelical Protestant hymns:

Let us sing the new song of the Lamb;

Let us sing round our Banner so brave;
 Let us sing of the beautiful Blood,
 That was shed to redeem and to save!

ANGELS AND SAINTS

This section comprises a single text on the origin of angels, three texts on Archangels, and one entitled 'The Guardian Angel'(251), the remainder relating to the saints.

'The Creation of the Angels'(252) follows a similar pattern to that of texts relating to the God-head that have already been addressed . God is portrayed as 'unbeginning' and self sufficient, a God who broods on 'His own attributes/With dread untold delight'. 'For His own glory 'twas enough/That He was what He was'. Faber's skilful use of language and his choice of apposite imagery are brought into play as he imagines angels being created:

He stirred - and yet we know not how
 Nor wherefore He should move;
 In our poor human words, it was
 An overflow of love.

It was the first outspoken word
 That broke that peace sublime,
 An outflow of eternal love
 Into the lap of time.

He stirred; and beauty all at once
 Forth from His being broke;
 Spirit and strength, and living life,
 Created things awoke.

Order and multitude and light
 In beauteous showers outstreamed;
 And realms of newly-fashioned space
 With radiant angels beamed.

'An overflow of love', 'the lap of time', the idea of beauty breaking from God's being and the picture of newly fashioned space are vivid visual tools to encapsulate a vision of God's glory. All this leads to the culmination:

But, see! new marvels gather there!
 The wisdom of the Son
 With heaven's completest wonder ends
 The work so well begun.

If we think that this is the coda, though, we are mistaken for:

The Throne is set: the blessed Three
 Crowning Their work are seen -
 The Mother of the First-Born Son,

The first-born creatures' Queen!

Not surprisingly Mary is depicted as Queen of Heaven reigning over the angelic hosts.

The texts which follow address St. Michael, a chief prince of the heavenly host mentioned in the Book of Daniel, St. Gabriel who heralded the birth of Jesus and St. Raphael, the third Archangel.

Faber's pastoral ministry meant that he rarely strayed for long from practical concerns related to those to whom he ministered. The fifth text in this section is subtitled 'For the School Children'. 'The Guardian Angel'(253) is described as being '...ever at my side' in spite of the author's description of himself as 'A guilty wretch'. The voice and touch of the angel are too light to be discernible but the nearness of the angel is experienced as 'Something...within my heart' sensed when at prayer. There is an assurance that the angel prays with the supplicant and never sleeps. After absolution the child feels that the angel goes with him as he leaves the 'good priest's feet'. This sense of nearness is most provident at death so that 'thou in life's last hour wilt bring/A fresh supply of grace'. In this light the child is bid to sing:

Then love me, love me, Angel dear!

And I will love thee more;

And help me when my soul is cast

Upon the eternal shore.

He asks that the guardian angel should not weary but, rather 'love me still,/For Mary's

sake, thy Queen'. For this the angel will be rewarded with one of Mary's smiles which
'each day convert/The hardest hearts on earth'.

Faber now turns from angels to saints. There is a logical progression moving from God through the Holy Family and the angelic host to humanity. By far the greatest number of these hymns refer to Saint Philip Neri who, through his style of ministry, had a great influence on Faber.

Firstly Faber writes of 'St. Peter and St. Paul.'(254) They are the 'Fathers of mighty Rome', a Rome '...made holy now/By these two martyrs' glorious blood'. The words are a translation from the Breviary: '*Decora lux aeternitatis auream*'. The next text is entitled 'St. John the Evangelist'(255). He is addressed as:

Saint of the Sacred Heart
Sweet teacher of the Word,
Partner of Mary's woes,
And favourite of thy Lord!

It is this Saint with whom Faber wishes to identify as he states:

The gifts He gave to thee
He gave thee to impart,
And I, too, claim with thee
His Mother and His Heart.

Faber reminds us of the tears and the ointment with which she anointed Jesus and designates her 'Queen of Penance! Queen of Fervour!'

Faber sought approval for money to be given from the Oratory Poor Box to the Good Shepherd to help prostitutes(259).

While St. Mary Magdalene was traditionally the representative saint of prostitutes, the nuns of the Good Shepherd, through their activity and service, might well have provided the model for Faber's hymn entitled 'St. Martha'(260):

O dear Saint Martha! busy Saint!

By love's keen fervour ever pressed!

Oh get us fervour not to faint

Until we reach our heavenly rest.

We too, like thee, since we have known

How sweet our blessed Lord could be,

Mourn o'er the years too quickly flown,

And fain would hurry on like thee.

The text rushes on and those using it find themselves asking for grace to sustain such a busy pace of life. As Christ looked on Martha with love so '...our Saviour's eyes/With tenderness beam on us now' and we pray:

O Martha! make our hearts like thine, -

Always on fire, always in haste,
 And yet like peaceful stars to shine
 Untroubled o'er life's weary waste.

O dearest Jesus! in our need
 Give to us Martha's burning heart;
 They, who on earth have Martha's speed,
 In heaven shall meet with Martha's part.

Faber helped found a brotherhood, 'The Oratorians'. It is not surprising, therefore, that St. Benedict should feature in Faber's collection. Here he is praised as 'Father of many children'.(261)

Scattered through the collection we find hymns for children or about children. There was a ragged school attached to the Oratory and this might well have given Faber the stimulus to write in this way. He notes that the body of one of the Holy Innocents was preserved at Norwood and for the children there he wrote a text entitled 'St. Innocence'(262). Similarly he wrote a hymn for the children of St. Wilfrid's at Manchester about St. Wilfrid.(263) Faber had written a life of St. Wilfrid and adopted the Saint as patron of the Brothers of the Will of God (or Wilfridians). He also assumed the name Brother Wilfrid. As befits a hymn to an English saint the text speaks of 'Winning the truant hearts/Of England to the Pope' and of being made 'Humble and gay and pure' for England's sake. Again Faber seeks for hearts to be pressed into service of Mary, for the children to become '...missioners/Of Mary and of Rome!'

With the large number of Irish Immigrants in Faber's congregation it was natural that he should have included a hymn for St. Patrick's Day.(264)

We have already noted the influence of St. Philip Neri on Frederick Faber. Ten hymns in this section relate to St. Philip. Faber sets down the intentions for his ministry in the fourteenth verse of the text entitled 'St. Philip Neri'(265):

In Philip's name, in Philip's way,
 To God and Mary true,
 In this our own dear native land
 Good work we fain would do.

These words are characteristic of the attitude of Philip Neri who is recorded as having said: '*Nulla dies sine linea*. Do not let a day pass without doing some good during it'(266). The awareness of God was to be seen in the minute particular, 'By touch and tone, by voice and eye,/By many a little wile', of those who sought to serve him.

Faber pictures 'St. Philip in England'(267) being disturbed by the coldness of heart of those whom he met, a reflection perhaps on Faber's experience of the reality of the commitment of the Irish Catholic immigrants with whom he worked and the English working classes to whom he sought to minister. Ultimately, in a bathetic verse, Philip is imagined wishing to be English: 'Long may he bide by his new fireside,/For a right merry saint is he!' This last line is, perhaps, an acknowledgement of Philip's love of practical jokes.(268) St. Philip is depicted as the evangelist who wins people's hearts(269): his picture is regarded as a prayer(270), 'His words like gentlest dews distil/His face is calm

One of God's mightiest saints is he;
 Mark well his acts, none light can be;
 All are on God intent;
 'Twas Philip's craft; and we may dare
 Our father with his Lord compare
 In wile and blandishment.

The smile, the jest, the sportive blow
 Served but to hide the depths below
 Of supernatural power;
 And never strove he to controul
 The hidden beauty of his soul
 More than in that last hour.(277)

Faber saw Philip as being 'One half in heaven, one half on earth'(278), the description of an ideal priest. He was God's 'chosen among men'(279). Faber hails Rome as 'St. Philip's Home'.(280)

This section of Faber's Hymns closes with the 'Evening Hymn at the Oratory'(281) which asks: 'Mary and Philip near us be!' followed by a text entitled 'St. Vincent of Paul'. This is a fitting coda as it focuses on a saint who gave himself selflessly, being entirely consumed by his love of God and his neighbour(282), a person whose days were overwhelmed by love:

Thou seem'st to have a thousand hands,

And in each hand a heart;
 And all the hearts a precious balm
 Like dew from God impart. (283)

Faber was at the forefront in this country of the Ultramontane revival. Its warmer, more colourful and romantic devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, the Virgin and the Saints, recalled many Irishmen to the practice of their religion(284). He was also a sensitive pastor, aware that material care was as necessary to the poor as the preaching of the message of salvation.

THE SACRAMENTS, THE FAITH AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

As was noted earlier, the attitude to Holy Communion on the continent changed during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century. Prior to this the respect for the sacrament had grown into a phobia. This could be attributed to Jansenism which stressed that the level of grace necessary to receive communion was rarely achieved. Communion had become a reward for supreme efforts of virtue. Most took communion only at Easter and some not even then. Confession and communion were used as weapons of moral discipline.

The nineteenth-century saw a gradual evolution in this attitude. Religious orders were particularly keen on frequent communion. Jesuits and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate played a pioneer role from the 1820s onwards. Gerbert(1829) sought to establish the dogma of the Eucharist. The Bishop of Le Mans in his 1830 Easter letter pointed out

that it was precisely because of human imperfection that there was a need to frequent those sources of perfection that were available. Fénelon's Letter on Frequent Communion sold 100,000 copies on re-publication in 1855. Pierre-Julien Eymard(1811-68) was the greatest champion of eucharistic devotion and frequent communion, seeing it as a necessary source of everyday spiritual sustenance. He broke away from the purely devotional and expiatory emphases of eucharistic piety.(285)

For Faber communion was characteristically, 'sweet', the 'Feast of bliss', and he envisaged heaven as being 'Quite like a First Communion Day'.(286) In at least two texts he used the imagery of flowers in relation to communion. Firstly, the flowers are happy for they are placed near the reserved sacrament, and Faber asks: '...what would I give/In your sweet place all day to live'.(287) Secondly, Jesus is pictured coming to the hearts of people in communion 'to seek sweet flowers' as men do in their gardens.(288)

Communion is not to be shunned but something that it is right to seek, for here we gain 'Grace to persevere'(289), 'A gift that truly maketh/Heaven's eternal bliss'.(290) Like the prayers of Mary and the saints, communion is seen as a means to an end and not just a reward for virtue. Communion is a given opportunity to draw near to God.

Faber now considers the Faith and the Spiritual Life. He begins with children in a text which describes them bringing 'Flowers for the Altar'(291). Different flowers are described: they are a tithe which will be acceptable to Mary, and children are mentioned by name. The hymn tells a story which, as it unfolds, takes us to St. Wilfrid's, where the flowers will be given to the priest to 'deck our Lady's shrine'. Within the church we are reminded that here prayers will be said 'By the picture Lucy loves'. Faber allows himself a

Romantic, sentimental reflection as he muses:

Quick! the cock upon the spire
 Shines with his gleamy tail;
 He's the last who sees the sun
 In all this happy vale.

The vision is evocative of the countryside and, for children who know it, a memorable image.

Next Faber refers to the 'Faith of Our Fathers'(292), those who 'In spite of dungeon, fire and sword' were 'true to thee till death'. This hymn is presented in two versions, one specifically for Ireland. At the 1851 census 4.6% of the population of London were Irish born(293) and Faber clearly recognised the importance of this. Many of the immigrants were non-practising Catholics(294) and presented priests with the challenge of assimilating them into the church. Faber was never exclusive in terms of his understanding of the need to propagate the gospel and it is characteristic that any sense of nationalism he might express should be seen in the context of a wider faith.

The following texts are of a reflective, individual nature. Here we view Faber working out his own faith. 'The Thought of God'(295) speaks in awe of the vastness of God who, though intimate to the believer, is 'beyond imagined space'. This sense of awe brings an appropriate fear of God which Faber addresses in the next text, 'The Fear of God'(296).

Following very much the pattern of William Cowper, Faber now admits to a dryness of

Right is not always where it seems to be, and so:

Blest too is he who can divine
 Where real right doth lie,
 And dares to take the side that seems
 Wrong to man's blindfold eye.

The faithful are urged:

Then learn to scorn the praise of men,
 And learn to lose with God;
 For Jesus won the world through shame,
 And beckons thee His road.

In the end a truth will be discerned:

For right is right, since God is God;
 And right the day must win;
 To doubt would be disloyalty,
 To falter would be sin.(302)

Faber had a great personal desire for communion with God. Such a desire he clearly regards as a virtue. When he begins to describe how he would worship he uses unashamedly Romantic imagery. He seeks:

For the mountain-top feeling of generous souls,
 For the health, for the air, of the hearts deep and broad,
 Where grace not in rills but in cataracts rolls!(303)

Desire will open up the way to God:

'Tis a fire that will burn what thou canst not pass over;
 'Tis a lightning that breaks away all bars to love;
 'Tis a sunbeam the secrets of God to discover;
 'Tis the wing David prayed for, the wing of the dove.

Faber suggests that good people: 'fell short through the want of desire'. We should pine for God, wish for him, so that our thirsty, famished lives should be quenched and filled. What is more, this is what God wants from his people. He 'loves to be longed for, He longs to be sought'. Faber now skilfully makes God the subject rather than the object of the penultimate line: 'He died for desire of us, marvellous thought!' Naturally, then, '...He yearns for us now to be with Him above'.

The movement of the collection is becoming apparent. Faber has reflected on the nature of God and has then addressed Jesus' earthly ministry. He describes those related most closely to Jesus on earth, the Holy Family. The people who have the greatest awareness of and are closest to God, who are deemed to be Christ-like, are the saints. He turns to them as examples and intercessors. In the present we meet God in communion through the sacraments. At this point Faber offered by personal testimony the sense of longing he

had for God and also the dryness that he sometimes experienced. The reality of this testimony, bearing with it as it does both positive and negative aspects of the spiritual life, is something with which others could be expected to identify. The faith that Faber describes, while being personal, is not exclusive. In the 'School Hymn'(304) he begins to explore the consequences of this fact. Children are called upon to remember a God who remembers them and who, for love of children, once became a child.

This God is 'The True Shepherd'.(305) In the text of that title the author uses the parable of the lost sheep as applied to the individual who finds himself 'wandering and weary'. Though Faber has spoken elsewhere of his desire for God, it is God who comes to him. God is not immediately accepted: 'At first I would not hearken,/And put off till the morrow'. The true shepherd is not diverted by this: 'I saw His kind eyes glisten,/So anxious to relieve me', and so 'He took me on His shoulder,/And tenderly He kissed me'. Each stanza closes with the lines:

O silly souls! come near Me;

My sheep should never fear Me;

I am the Shepherd true.

Faber's use of the adjective 'silly' in this text had the sense of innocent, simple and helpless rather than foolish, and so the author maintains the stress on a Saviour who takes the initiative and is concerned for those who are weak.

This theme continues in the next text, 'Come to Jesus'(306), which is a strongly evangelistic text and brings Faber to the point where he begins to consider Mission. Two

texts, one for the Irish and one for the English, entitled 'Invitation to the Mission'(307) follow. Each of these hymns seeks to underline God's unconditional love for individuals. The next hymn looks at salvation from a slightly different perspective. 'The Wages of Sin'(308) points out the ways in which people might fall short of the tenets of their faith. 'We gave away Jesus and God' might be addressed to any Christian, but to also have given away '...Mary and grace,/Prayer and Confession and Mass' distinguishes the text as being for lapsed Catholics. The theme is similar to those hymns of John Wesley's collection designated for 'Backsliders'. As a consequence of all this 'We are worn out and weary with sin' and a question is raised:

...can we now

Break off the bad bargain we made?

And is there a way to get back

The rash price we already have paid?

The question is answered: 'Oh yes!' for:

Jesus is just what He was,

On the Cross, as we left Him before,

All gentleness, mercy and love,

Nay, His love and His mercy look more.

It is affirmed that Jesus will forgive and 'A Good Confession'(309) is the text that, appropriately, follows. Such a confession leads to freedom:

The chains that have bound me are flung to the wind,
 By the mercy of God the poor slave is set free;
 And the strong grace of heaven breathes fresh o'er the mind,
 Like the bright winds of summer that gladden the sea.

To this the believer must make a response of contrition. There is a recognition of the enormity of sin and the wonder of grace. 'The Act of Contrition'(310) ends with these words:

And I swear to Thee - yes, dearest Jesus! Oh let me,
 In the strength of Thy grace, swear an oath unto Thee,
 No sin! never more! if Thou wilt not forget me,
 But in Thy sweet mercy have mercy on me.

Faber understands that people are individuals and as he explores the theme of conversion(311) he notes that the process is experienced in different ways by different people. None the less, in all there can be a change and this change, by grace, can come to the most unlikely ones. Conversion is not the end of faith but the beginning and Faber considers next 'The Work of Grace'(312). This is a gradual work, '...stealing, sweetly stealing', by which individuals are transformed by God. It enables them to lead better lives, to be able forgive (313), to be freed from the temptation to make 'Harsh Judgements'(314) of others. 'Self-Love'(315) recognises that the biggest barrier to total reliance on God is selfishness. Once this is overcome the Christian can live for God alone:

Take all the light away from earth,
 Take all that men can love from me;
 Let all I lean upon give way,
 That I may lean on nought but Thee.(316)

We can detect here the influence of St. John of the Cross who believed that for love of God to be total all else must be taken away. This leads the Christian to God's ultimate purpose, 'The End of Man'(317):

For Thou hast made this wondrous soul
 All for Thyself alone;
 Ah! send Thy sweet transforming grace
 To make it more Thine own.

While this is the end of pilgrimage, Faber is realistic enough to know that the upward path is not always smooth and that there will be times of uncertainty. At these points 'The Remembrance of Mercy '(318), the recollection of God's past acts of grace, is important. There will also be times of tribulation which Faber likens to the 'Fight for Sion'.(319) Sometimes there will be distractions(320) or dryness in prayer,(321) the Christian may be in 'Low Spirits'(322) but God will bring 'Light in Darkness'(323). As the struggle goes on there is an awareness that God offers 'Divine Favours'(324), glimpses of the possibility of salvation, a sense of hope.

Progress towards God continues and Faber furnishes the pilgrim with a hymn to sing as he goes: 'The Christian's Song on His March to Heaven'.(325) Prayer will sometimes be

THE LAST THINGS

Saint Philip Neri is recorded as having said, 'Beginners in religion ought to exercise themselves principally in meditation on the Four Last Things'(332). It is to this end that Frederick Faber has been moving. It is to this end that the study of God, the love of Jesus, familiarity with the Holy Family, participation in the Sacraments, and all the elements of the Spiritual life are directed. This section is the culmination of all that has gone before.

The order in which the topics will be addressed is dependent on the presupposition that the theological and cultural context of the author colours his perception of heaven and hell and hence his attitude to death, and that this context hinges largely on the understanding of the nature of judgement. Judgement and the manner in which Faber deals with it is therefore crucial to all that follows. Bereavement, as the response to death, will be dealt with in the section dealing with death.

1) Judgement

'...do not fear the judgement, you will find it very gentle, very kindly, very safe' (333).

These words from 1850 sum up Faber's view of the judgement.

'God judges by a light,/Which baffles mortal sight'(334), claims Faber in the last stanza of 'The Old Labourer'. In this text he explores the judgement of humanity on the labourer. They see his own tired body that 'had so long been old' and conclude that death "Twas

best for him../'Twas such a weary sight to see him live'(v. 7). In consequence they ask the question, 'What doth God get from him?/His mind is very dim'(v.3).

Life for this man had been something to endure rather than enjoy but there was peace in his dying. Faber reflects, probably on his own experience of the destitute Irish immigrants with whom he would have been familiar, that '...the poor are seldom understood'(v.5). The labourer held a secret, 'for his one thought was God'(v.11) and though his life was 'A kind of passive strife'(v.12), at his death 'he heard the angels singing'.

Faber's attitude is sympathetic. He recognises the aspiration and struggle of the labourer but also senses pride in poverty itself for in 'holy poverty' the poor 'were one with Christ and with his saints before them'(335). He demonstrates great powers of observation and expression in the powerful use of an oxymoron to indicate the labourer's inner spiritual struggle, and affirms his own understanding that God's judgement is 'broader than the measures of Man's mind'(336), grounded as it is in love and mercy. It is not that judgement is unimportant to him, but the capacity of God to transform sinful humanity must never be underestimated. This is particularly true when he is reflecting on the way God might be anticipated to deal with others. He is somewhat harsher on himself.

Faber's precocity and solitariness as a child has already been mentioned. This gave rise to a confidence which sometimes made him appear arrogant and he was able to write this paraphrase of the *Paradisus Animae* in 1843:

Jesus! true Man, who cried aloud,

Toward the ninth hour, My God, My God,

O why am I forsaken?

Lord! may I never fall from Thee,

Nor e'en in life's extremity

My humble trust be shaken (v.7)(337).

To the reader this could be interpreted in a negative fashion as evidence of arrogance.

Faber appears to be asking for confidence in the face of desolation that was even denied to Jesus. In later life he had enemies enough who were willing to point the finger of scorn at him and describe him as 'an ambitious villain and a hellish ruler'(338). Yet we have overlooked the word 'humble' in the text, and this humility appears to have been genuine.

Catholicism began with the evangelical offer of grace, but confirmed that offer when the individual responded and was accepted, as it were, by adoption into the Church. This gave rise to confidence, but also raised the question as to what would be the fate of those who were not adopted, either because they died before the time of Christ or without being baptised into the Church.

The former were believed, in Catholic tradition, to exist in limbo

the temporary place or state of the souls of the just who, although purified from sin, were excluded from the beatific vision until Christ's triumphant Ascension into heaven...and the permanent place or state of those unbaptised children and

others who, dying without grievous personal guilt, are excluded from the beatific vision on account of original sin alone(339).

Secondly, there was the question as to what might happen to those who, 'departing this life in God's grace, are not entirely free from venial sins, [who] have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgression'(340) Two alternatives presented themselves: either the person was consigned to hell or there had to be an opportunity for the work of God's sanctification to continue beyond the grave. For those who did not love God at all the former was the fate but it was characteristic of nineteenth-century theology to lean towards the latter possibility and the concept of purgatory enabled a movement away from predominantly Calvinist eschatology(341).

Both Evangelicalism and Tractarianism believed justification to be the primary object of religion(342). The eschatology of the early Tractarians is best understood as an extension to future life of that emphasis placed on the doctrine of the church, viz., that of the necessity of justification. There was a stress on the doctrine of the communion of saints and a gradual acceptance of the existence of some kind of purgatory(343).

Purgatory developed fully when there was a need to cope with backsliders and nominal Christians while scripture appeared to assume that the church consisted of saints(344).

F.D. Maurice believed that secession to Rome was, in part, brought about by people seeking a more merciful understanding of God's dealings with them which seemed to be offered by the doctrine of purgatory. Maurice himself rejected this doctrine as being redolent of payment for release, prayers for the dead, and fancies about where spirits

might be dwelling. ...'man must not attempt to set limits to what God may do, but must acknowledge that Christ has already broken down the barriers of space and time'(345).

In contrast, and in company with other members of the Oxford Movement, E.B. Pusey came 'to a belief in an intermediate state of cleansing, in some cases through pain'.

Newman's Essay on Development sees purgatory as derived from the understanding of a purificatory fire through which all shall pass and the legalist(penal) Latin tradition(346).

It was natural for Faber to follow this trend. If, for the Evangelical, life was a preparation for the life to come, purgatory would enable an extension of this process and it was unthinkable for anyone to die without the hope of salvation even being offered to them. Liguorian theology enabled this development. So he writes of 'souls in limbus'(347), those in an intermediate state between heaven and earth, who had waited 'Thousands of years'(348). The theme is addressed extensively in one hymn, 'The Descent of Jesus to Limbus'(349). In this he contemplates the weariness of waiting which is broken by the arrival of St. Joseph who took, 'Sweet tidings', relating that the '...Saviour's work had then begun'. There is an assumption here that Joseph died at the beginning of Jesus' ministry for at this time, of the years of his life, 'But three alone were left to run'(v.4). Eve is pictured trembling with hope, yet contentedly following Joseph like a shadow while, 'She lived on thoughts of Mary's child'(v5). The scene is set for the drama which is about to unfold as, 'Flushed with pure resplendent light'(v.7), 'The soul of Jesus Crucified'(v.8) breaks in on the '...hushed crowd of souls'(v.6). The intention of God is realised as the faithful dead move on,

So after four long thousand years,

Faith reached her end, and Hope her aim,

And from them, as they passed away,
 Love lit her everlasting flame!(v.9)

Faber's use of the gifts of the Spirit in this stanza, echoing I Corinthians 13: 13, associates the image of God as love with the culmination of His purpose in the salvation of the faithful, a purpose which has found its first fruits in faith, hope and love on earth.

Faber's other reference to Limbus comes in a meditation on the birth of Mary, 'The Nativity of Our Lady'(350). Here the birth of Mary is regarded as like the rising of the sun for souls in limbus, 'Splendour as of pearliest morning/O'er the souls in limbus dawning'. There is an anticipation of salvation as 'Nearer heavens [are] unveiled before them'. Strangely, but typically, Faber finds this expectation 'Sweeter than the looked for heaven'!(v.6). Devotion to Mary was for him, as has been noted, the most influential element of the Catholic spirituality that he adopted, and we may trace this influence back to the manner in which he related to his mother and his response to her death.

In 'The God of My Childhood' Faber reflects that he had lived two lives, which though distinct, intertwined, 'One was my mother's - it is gone -/The other, Lord! was Thine'(351). His view of God is informed by 'mother love', as we see in an earlier verse from the same text:

They bade me call Thee Father, Lord!
 Sweet was the freedom deemed,
 And yet more like a mother's ways

Thy quiet mercies seemed.(352)

This was not an isolated moment of reflection for in his hymn entitled 'The Eternal Father' he says, 'For Thy grandeur is all tenderness,/All motherlike and meek'(353), while in 'My God! how wonderful thou art', like Cowper before him ('Can a woman's tender care/Cease toward the child she bare', (354)) he compares God's patience with that of a mother.

We find in Faber's hymnody feminine attributes ascribed to God and an increasing dominance of the influence of the cult of Mary which, because of his early close maternal relationship, was extremely attractive to him. This near obsession enabled him to portray with great realism and detail a resurrection meeting between Jesus and his mother:

She could not doubt; 'twas truly He

Who had been with her from the first,-

The very Eyes, the Mouth, the Hair,

The very Babe whom she had nursed,-

Her burden o'er the desert sand,

The helpmate in her toils, - 'twas He,

He by whose deathbed she had stood

Long hours beneath the bleeding Tree(355).

Mary substitutes for Faber's mother and becomes such a central icon for his religious expression that she is envisaged as a channel for the soteriological action of Jesus:

Ah! those tears Our Lady shed,
 Enough to drown a world of sin;
 Tears our Saviour's sorrows fed
 Peace and pardon well may win(356).

Her tears, which were fed by Jesus' sorrow, are deemed to have the capacity to win peace and pardon.

As we consider the theme of purgatory we find the presence of Mary undiminished as she becomes 'The Queen of Purgatory', pictured as praying for those who have died for whom 'glory is delayed'(357). The intercessory role of Mary is applied by the living on behalf of the dead. Purgatory is, for Faber, that process through which we might be 'knitted into the true body'(358). It is a continuation of the process of sanctification begun on earth. Here '...Holy Souls...burn/...amid the cleansing flames'.(359) An aspect of the Roman Catholic conception of purgatory is the understanding that those who are living can be devoted to God on behalf of the dead and so alleviate some of the [necessary] suffering experienced by those who, though saved, continue to participate through God's action in a process which will fit them for heaven. Faber pleads to Mary:

Pray then, as thou hast ever prayed;
 Angels and Souls all look to thee;
 God waits thy prayers, for He hath made
 Those prayers His law of charity.(360)

Here Faber is close to Newman who saw purgatory as 'a school-time of contemplation' which he compared with the 'discipline of active service' in this world. This allowed the souls of the righteous a time of preparation before the Second Coming. This contrasted with a contemporary view of purgatory as a time of fiery purgation which Newman saw as a 'frightful notion' even though it might be deserved(361). In this he follows Hartley in viewing the action of purgatory as morally dynamic, as causing change and not just offering satisfaction to God(362).

For Faber it is natural and acceptable to expend time pleading with Mary that she might 'hasten...to their aid', and realise that, '...each hour appears/An age while glory is delayed'(v.5. In the last verse the whole company of heaven is addressed:

Pray then, as thou hast ever prayed;
 Angels and Souls, all look to thee;
 God waits thy prayers, for He hath made
 Those prayers His law of charity(v.9)(363)

Newman is reported as having been critical of Faber's importation of such colourful influences from the continent. While admitting to never having read Faber's writings on the subject he relates that responsible people thought them 'crude and young, perhaps extravagant'. Newman did regard the Virgin as the great intercessor, and thus supreme as regards purgatory, but anything else was a mere matter of devotion(364).

Faber's near universalism embraces a view of salvation which hopes to encompass all in God's mercy. In this he is close to Tennyson who is remembered as the poet of 'the larger

hope' - the expectation that the whole human race, perhaps through suffering, would be at length purified and saved(365).

In the light of all this it is worth contrasting Faber's hymn on 'The Will of God', in which he writes, 'I know not what it is to doubt'(366) with Cowper's hymns which are so often conditional, if not on God, on the individual believer's contrition and acceptability, a point underlined by Anne Brontë in a poem addressed to Cowper:

The language of my inmost heart
 I traced in every line
 My sins, my sorrows, hopes and fears
 Were there - and only mine...

[And] should thy darkest fears be true,
 If heaven be so severe,
 That such a soul as thine is lost,-
 Oh! how shall I appear?(367)

Faber's confidence is summed up in two quotations from his notes (one of which began this section), 'God knew and loved us from all eternity' and,

O my brethren, my brethren! you who love Jesus with a true love, however poor a love, listen to my words. Do not fear to die, you will find it very easy and very sweet, - do not fear the judgement, you will find it very gentle, very kindly, very safe. (368)

In the light of all of this he was bound to ask, 'Souls of men! why will ye scatter/Like a crowd of frightened sheep?(369), for there is no need to flee from a '...shepherd/Half so gentle, half so sweet'(v.2). We note Faber characteristically following Herbert in the use of the word 'sweet'.

Here we find Faber seeking to give expression both to the inestimable love of God, but also to the fickleness of human nature. Faber seeks to extend the compass of our thought as he states, '...His love looks mighty,/But is mightier than it seems', for God's love, 'Goes far out beyond our dreams'(v3)(370). It is, in Faber's words 'more than liberty'(v.4). If liberty is freedom, then God's capacity to love us gives the ultimate release. Such a release is from the bondage wrought by our actions. We fail; but such failure, at an earthly level, cannot be judged in a more kindly way than it is by God(v.5).

The evangelistic tone of the hymn is underlined by its universal application. We are reminded of Wesley's 'Come, sinners, to the gospel feast', in which, 'You need not one be left behind,/For God has bidden all mankind'(371). Faber specifies, 'welcome for the sinner' and the promise of, 'more graces for the good'(372). Such redemption comes about as a consequence of the healing power of the blood of Christ, a metaphor which originates literally in the vision of the cross, but carries with it a sacramental allusion(v.6).

The grace that is purveyed appears to be limitless for there is '...enough for thousands/Of new worlds as great as this'.

In 'The Creator and the Creature' Faber had discussed the problem of the number of the saved. He concluded that most Catholics would be saved. The keystone of his argument was his understanding of severity of the pains of purgatory and this suggested to him that a large number would be saved:

God is infinitely merciful to every soul...no-one has ever been, or ever can be, lost by surprise or trapped in his ignorance; and, as to those who may be lost, I confidently believe that our Heavenly Father threw His arms around each created spirit, and looked it full in the face with the bright eyes of love, in the deliberate darkness of its mortal life, and that of its own deliberate will it would not have him'.(373)

E.B. Pusey, similarly, hoped for 'the extension of mercy to thousands, whose case, to our limited view, would be desperate', though later his attitude narrowed and sterner views are apparent in his sermon on the Day of Judgement(1839). The gloom deepened, as seen in his sermon on hell(1856) and his response to Essays and Reviews(1861). This was perhaps a response to the deaths of his wife and daughter and a growing concern about the laxity of Christians, which was a characteristic response of those who saw the reality of hell as a moral imperative being weakened by the doctrine of purgatory(374).

For Newman people were either acceptable to God or unacceptable. There was no middle way. Yet he believed that God viewed humanity 'with all the circumstantial solicitude and awful care of one who would fain make, if He could, the fruit of His Passion more numerous than it is'. Manning in his Anglican sermons followed a similar line(375).

Faber impresses as he seeks to enlarge our understanding. Beginning with the text of John 14:2 he at once grounds the idea in the context of 'home', much favoured by Victorian England, but simultaneously exalts it to being a vision of heaven, an 'upper home of bliss'(v.7). In this home are not just many mansions but, 'room for fresh creations'(v.7). This phrase is powerful as a consequence of its ambiguity, suggesting, on the one hand, space for creation to repeat itself on a cosmic scale, and, on the other, the re-creation of new life for the individual. In either case the impression is of the supreme abundance of grace. Indeed, there is 'plentiful redemption'(v.10).

As if to answer the question, 'How can this be?' Faber continues with the observation that, '...the love of God is broader/Than the measures of man's mind' - we are reminded of Faber's injunction to view the labourer with eyes other than the world's(376) - 'And the Heart of the Eternal/Is most wonderfully kind'(v.8).

If there is any misunderstanding of this it is at the human level where we narrow His love and zealously apply strictures in a manner which is foreign to Faber's understanding of God. In this he is again close to the early writings of Pusey who, in 1827, had objected that too much stress was laid on the 'terrors of the Lord'.

Faber underlines that, as a consequence of this super-abundant grace, '...we owe to Jesus', not just our souls, our lives, our all, but, '...something more than all'(v.11). The emphasis is reminiscent of previous verses (3 and 7).

Verse 12 is notable for the uneven scansion of the second line: 'And oh come not

doubting thus'. This requires both the second and third syllable to be stressed; an example of the lax, and apparently hasty, manner in which Faber addressed hymnody as compared with poetry(377). In terms of content the theme continues but it is handled with less elegance: '...huge tenderness', again emphasises the inadequacies of language to express the reality he is seeking to address, but the words themselves are clumsy. The last verse again demonstrates the influence of Herbert noted in connection with verse 2, for, '...our lives would be all sunshine/In the sweetness of the Lord'. The use of the word 'sunshine' has often been criticised and in recent collections the line has been changed to: '...our lives would be illumined...'

For Faber this text is seminal in giving expression to his understanding of judgement, for his experience and expectation, together with his interpretation of scripture leads him to the belief that God's judgement is always tempered with mercy, that, 'Love is the great Hinge upon which universal Nature turns'(378). It is right, therefore, for souls to pine and seek to come nearer to Jesus. It is reasonable to approach without doubt if we have a 'faith that trusts more bravely'(v.12)(379) in God's tenderness towards us. The juxtaposition of the words 'faith' and 'trust' rightly remind us that *pistis* is better translated 'trust' than 'faith' or 'belief'.

As a consequence of the love that God shows towards us, there is a fear which is not so much a fear of God, but rather a fear of missing that love. Faber gives expression to this perception in a hymn entitled 'The Fear of God'(380). Here he writes, 'The dread to miss such love as Thine/Makes fear but love's excess'(v.5). Thus the Christian is seen to respond to God's love with love and the height of that love is found in the anticipation of the possible loss of that love.

Clearly this fear is not of judgement. Faber plays with words in a mildly philosophical way for, '...fear is love, and love is fear,/And in and out they move'(v.8). 'If love is thine attraction, Lord!/Fear is Thy very touch'(v.12), for God's nearness, 'makes love/The perfectness of fear'(v.13). The key to this conundrum comes in the last three verses when it becomes clear that fear derives from the opposition of human sin to God's goodness. It is this that might separate us from God's love. Cognisant that 'perfect love casts out fear'(1 John 4), Faber concludes that, 'eternal love will be/But the extasy of fear'(v.16) There is a clear tension here between the concept of love and judgement, between harshness and mercy.

Faber is struggling to establish a cohesion between the Calvinist Evangelical strands of his theology and the new found assurance of Roman Catholic faith, in which he is assured of the efficacy of God's love towards him simply as a consequence of baptism into the church. The former is given vivid expression in the opening verse of the next hymn in the collection,

Father and God! my endless doom
 Is hidden in Thy hand,
 And I shall not know what it is
 Till at Thy bar I stand(v.1)(381).

Here is the language of judgement and the uncertainty of the accused. The metaphor of a courtroom is used to good effect. Underlying the text is the sense, indicated by the title, of predestination, that God is aware of our eternal end: it is 'hidden in Thy hand'(v.1). The judgement has already been made for 'Thou knowest what Thou hast decreed'(v.2), and it is 'irrevocably fixed'(v.5). 'Doom' does not, as has already been stated, have a

negative connotation, it simply implies 'fate'. There is no indication here of saints pleading or the grace of purgatory. Faber echoes words we have already addressed in 'The Fear of God'(382) as he cries out, 'My fears adore Thee, O my God'(v.7).

It is quite natural, though also quite unusual for Faber, to use the image of love warming the heart,

My heart is chilled with awe
 Yet love from out that very chill
 Fresh life and heat can draw(v.7).

Fire has often been used as a metaphor for love, chiefly by Richard Rolle, the fourteenth-century mystic(383), with whom Faber would almost certainly have been familiar, but also by Charles Wesley.

Faber underlines his utter dependence on God who 'owest me no duties'(v.8) for 'The fallen creature has no rights'(v.10). All that the author can do is trust, 'For thou art God alone'(v.12) and this is 'my one joy'(v.17). The theme is reminiscent of Cowper, who saw everything as being conditional on God and for whom nothing was certain:

Like her, with hopes and fears we come,
 To touch thee, if we may;
 Oh! send us not despairing home!
 Send none unhealed away! (384)

Yet he was not unwilling to confront God with his own experience and to press for an answer to prayer: 'Where is the blessedness I knew/When first I saw the Lord?(385).

Faber shares this courage as we see from the following lines: 'Thou lovest Thy sole-born! And had I not cause/The treasure Thou gavest to me, Father! to prize?'(386) The theme of Isaac must have been commonly used in the days of a high incidence of infant mortality. Charles Wesley had used similar language when his child was dying with small-pox: 'For pity's sake the victim spare/And give me back my son'. The words are individual and extremely personal, yet for the person who sees his/her child dying, 'their best piece of poetry'(387), the questions are eternal and the lament universal.

For Faber, unlike Cowper, there is usually no 'frowning providence' to hide the smile of God for 'Thou, Lord! wilt be a ready home/Always at hand for me' (388), but here there is the recognition that the sinner warrants, through guilt, far more than 'Thine anger hath in store'(v.13). The judgmental nature of God is accentuated by verse 14,

O fearful thought! one act of sin
 Within itself contains
 The power of endless hate of God,
 And everlasting pains(389).

Faber feels himself close to such sin and does not know whether God has decreed 'restraining grace' to prevent such an accident. All he can do is trust. Everything is bound up in God. There is a fatalistic ring to these words, yet woven through the text is the characteristic theme that we have come to expect, for, 'while Thy glory owns no claims,/Thy love makes promises'(v.10), and 'My soul is safer in Thy hands,/Father! than in my own'(v.12). God's 'power is merciful...Not bound by justice', but only because, 'Thyself hath willed it so'(v.9). Ultimately all that matters is that the fate of the author

might bring glory to God, whatever that fate might be:

That Thou art God is my one joy;
 What ere Thy Will may be,
 Thy glory will be magnified
 In Thy last doom of me.(v.17)

It is his perception of God's nature that informs Faber's understanding of judgement and, as has been shown, this is dominated far more by the influence of his mother, who frequently seems to be a model for the personification of the deity, than that of his father. Hence we find described a God who is 'sweet', 'kindly'; having 'huge tenderness' and 'larger mercy' than the God of many of his contemporaries or his Calvinistic antecedents. Yet he struggles constantly with the dogma of his youth, which remains in tension with his growing understanding of the universal love of God, given expression in the works of St. Alphonsus Liguori.

His God 'is other than we think...and reached/Only by childlike love'(v.8)(390). God's ways have a 'prudence of (their) own'(v.10).

God's justice is a bed, where we
 Our anxious hearts may lay,
 And, weary with ourselves, may sleep
 Our discontent away(v.18)

Faber seems to be reflecting on the words of Augustine, as he [Faber] describes a God

who

...loves to be longed for, He longs to be sought,

For He sought us Himself with such longing and love:

He died for desire of us, marvellous thought!

And He yearns for us now to be with Him above(v.15)(391).

2) Death

Faber's understanding of the merciful nature of God meant that judgement was not to be feared. Death, as a consequence, could be seen in a positive light, 'Bright death, that is the welcome dawn/Of our eternal day'(392). At a spiritual level it was a way to a closer communion with God. At a human level it became a means of being re-united with loved ones. This latter was dependent on a strong belief in resurrection, the nature of which Faber explores in 'The Apparition of Jesus to Our Blessed Lady', to which we have already referred(393). In this text he seeks to describe Jesus' meeting with Mary after his death. Again we find that Faber's close relationship with his own mother enabled him to present this theme in an astonishingly vivid manner.

Faber demonstrates his clear understanding of the way in which parents recognise children and the manner in which, confronted by death (or resurrection), memories of shared experience flood through the mind. Hood in 'The Deathbed', while relating an event of the recent past rather than a memory, uses a similar device, noting the watching of breathing, 'her breathing soft and low'. Here again the source of the observation is one

of relationship as Hood watches his sister die(394). The senses are stirred and the memory enlivened by an experience with which the reader might identify.

It must be noted that, while Faber is skilful in his use of language, he also follows convention, for the Victorian deathbed comforter was usually depicted as a woman(395).

It was therefore all the more easy to epitomise the ideal comforter as the Virgin Mary, and so in 'Wishes About Death' he writes:

But, most of all, Thy Mother, Lord!

I long to have with me,

With all her nameless offices

Around my bed to be.(396)

In 'The Pilgrims of the Night' the metaphor of night represents life in this world over against that of the world to come, a not unusual usage, but Faber is skilful in his application of it. Not only do the words themselves serve to convey a contrast between this world, represented by the first four lines of each verse, and the world to come, but there is a conscious change of rhythm and metre. The metre of the first section is 11.10.11.10., and is pedestrian in nature, while that of the remaining lines is 5.4.5.6., the words and rhythm being more staccato and triumphant:

Hark! hark! my soul! angelic songs are swelling

O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore;

How sweet the truth those blessed strains are telling

Of that new life when sin shall be no more!

Angels of Jesus,
 Angels of light,
 Singing to welcome
 The pilgrims of the night!

This emphasis is increased by the use of images like 'benighted men' who miss their mark, 'laden souls', 'weary souls' and 'drooping hearts'; yet each stanza ends with the transforming affirmation that 'The pilgrims of the night' will be welcomed by the singing of angels. These angels are not anonymous but defined as 'Angels of Jesus' (this angel is equated with 'Gabriel' in Faber's hymn of that title (v.6)(397), and 'Angels of light'. If the word 'angel' is taken literally then the greeting is to be carried by messengers of Jesus and so the message has authority. The motif of 'light' represents God Himself and so the pilgrims are being welcomed into the very presence of God.

Faber, echoing 'The Memory of the Dead' (398) in which he speaks of 'distant heaven like home' (v.4, l.3), to which we are attracted by those whom we love, (v.5, l.1,2), here relates that 'angelic songs' are telling of a new life (v.1). Their voices are heard in a very worldly context, 'O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore' (v.1, l.2). Nature and after-life are linked in a characteristically Romantic manner. The sea was a frequently used metaphor depicting life and death but there is also a Biblical reference for the life to which they are calling is one where 'sin shall be no more!' Revelation 21 speaks of 'a new heaven and a new earth' where death (the wages of sin) is no more and where 'the sea was no more'.

Life itself is sometimes darker than night. 'Life's shadows fall around us' (v.2, l.1) could

be a reference to the death of people but given what follows a more literal interpretation presents itself: 'we miss our mark', is a clear and simple description of sin. In this sin it seems that God is hidden and that grace is far off. We are ill-prepared for death which 'finds out his victims in the dark (v.2, l.4; cf., Faber's fear expressed in 'Wishes About Death'(399), that he might '...die in the eclipse'). In spite of this darkness, this weariness, we are drawn onwards by the promise of the gospel which is presented as music to our ears. Amidst this joyous sound is the voice of Jesus ringing out 'like bells at evening pealing'. The sense is very much one of a home-coming, strengthening the link between this hymn and 'The Memory of the Dead'(400). This theme is taken to its fulfilment in verse 5: 'All Journeys end in welcomes to the weary,/And heaven, the heart's true home, will come at last'.

Jesus is then depicted as 'Kind Shepherd' (v.4, l.4) with the obvious allusion to John 10, 11: 'I am the good shepherd'. The change of word from 'good' to 'kind' is very characteristic of Faber (cf., 'Was there ever kindest shepherd' - from 'Souls of men! why will ye scatter') and emphasises his understanding of a God who is merciful, 'who is most wonderfully kind' (v.8). It is to this shepherd that people turn their weary steps and it is with him that they find rest 'though life be long and dreary' (v.5, l.1). This last line is particularly characteristic of an age that saw life in just this way. In some ways it was so but there is not a little irony here, for it seemed the more so when compared with the vision of heaven that was held out to the believer.

There is, then, a reason to have hope and cheer, even when life is most troubled. The songs of hope that we hear are directed toward us. Faith is pictured as 'moonbeams (that) softly glisten', an image which is in debt to the influence of Romanticism and is, at

the same time, characteristic of Faber and, contrary to Chapman's analysis, very visual(401). The heart is seen to droop but it will be cheered by 'brave songs'. In another place Faber speaks of 'brave quiet' overcoming fear ('The Eternal Years' v.7 l.1). Bravery is seen to be associated with trust in God and is engendered by meditation on angelic song. In each case the focus is clearly on God. God has the power to cast out fear, to make us brave (1 John 4, 18, 'perfect love casts out fear').

The hymn concludes with the recollection that we are still here on earth, that we continue to toil and 'soothe ourselves with weeping' (again the stress on the dreariness of life in this world - a very Victorian characteristic). Held before us, nevertheless, is the hope that 'life's long night shall break in endless love' (v.7, l.4). The thought comes full circle as the assertion is again implied that this life is as night compared with the daylight of the life to come.

It is stated by Chapman(402) that Faber spent little time over his hymns, treating them with less regard than his poetry. One consequence was that these works were of lesser literary merit; another was that, on occasion, they were unsingable (though in Faber's defence it must be said that many of his 'hymns' were not intended to be sung but read). In this instance we have words which, given the right tune, would be eminently singable and well worth singing, the proof being found in the inclusion of these words as no.399 in The English Hymnal and no.651 in The Methodist Hymn Book of 1933.

Contemplating death Faber was not averse to personal reflection in relation to his faith and experience, as 'Wishes about Death' illustrates. His closeness to his mother is indicated by words from 'The God of My Childhood':

They bade me call Thee Father, Lord!
 Sweet was the freedom deemed,
 And yet more like a mother's ways
 Thy quiet mercies seemed. (403)

Still more striking are the words of verse 11 of the same hymn:

I lived two lives, which seemed distinct,
 Yet which did intertwine:
 One was my mother's - it is gone -
 The other, Lord! was Thine.

In these verses there is a sense of God being envisaged as like his mother, that it is through her that he became aware of the nature of mercy and love that he attributed to God. It is, then, less surprising that he chooses words like 'sweet' and 'kindest' to describe God, for they are words with a feminine connotation.

The losses experienced in his childhood gave Faber a natural preoccupation with death and a reflective, if not introspective, nature. It is not surprising, then, that he begins to reflect on the nature of his own prospective death. These reflections come to fruition in 'Wishes about Death'.

The first stanza opens with a characteristic paradox. Faber reflects that he wishes to leave all in God's hands yet, in a very human way, he wants to hold on to his self-

determination, 'And yet I wish that thou shouldst will/Things that I wish should be'(v. 1, l.3,4). The contradiction of wills is pursued in the second stanza which concludes with the statement of fact, but also of faith, '...I have a death to die,/And not a death to choose'(v.2, l. 3,4). The word 'muse', 'When on my death I muse'(v.2, l.2) serves to underline the reflective nature of this work but it is also usefully ambiguous. To muse can mean to reflect but it also carries with it the sense of poetic inspiration, the first predominating here.

Faith is underlined next as Faber asserts that God's choice for him would surely be better than that which he could expect for himself. In this he echoes the thought of his own words in 'After a Death', where, speaking of grief, he says, 'Yet all are less than our deserts'(404). The three verses follow closely the archetype of Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, 'Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done'(Luke 22, 42), in all but one respect; Faber clings to the hope that his will and God's might concur while Christ immediately abandons himself to the will of God. This provides the foundation for what is to follow:

But Thou wilt not disdain to hear
 What those few wishes are,
 Which I abandon to Thy love,
 And to Thy wiser care.

(v.4)

Faber now begins to describe the sort of death for which he would hope. It is not to be 'triumphant' for those who are most confident ('elate') are those most likely to deceive

themselves. In this he is speaking of spiritual self-deception, the spiritual arrogance of which he has been aware and has sought to overcome throughout his life. Responding to a friend who accused him of arrogance, he admitted the charge but went on to say,

If by the help of God's grace I can so far change my disposition as to disprove it to myself and to those friends whose opinions I value and respect, I shall be most completely satisfied, and I shall make daily endeavours to effect so important and a happy a transmutation.(405)

In this he is close to Newman, 'In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often'(406). To this end he craves all graces 'calmly absorbed in one'(v.6, l.2). The word 'calmly' is typical of Faber, as there is nothing melodramatic in his plea. He simply wishes for a right sense of contrition, 'A perfect sorrow for my sins,/And duties left undone'. This is reminiscent of the General Confession in accounting for sins both of commission and omission.

Next there is the desire to receive 'church-blest things', the sacraments (communion, last rites etc.), the presence of a priest and burial in consecrated ground. In this he follows the custom of his day described by Whately (407):

...if he has been attended by a minister, and has received the Lord's Supper a little before his departure...this person's death is thought to combine all the circumstances which are usually reckoned the most desirable, important and satisfactory.

Additionally, Faber, as a Catholic, seeks the consolation of Mary(v.8). At a more human level he wishes that his reason, his mind, might be clear to the end that he might be in control of his actions until his soul is passed to God. There is a suggestion here of the fear that, if his faculties are lost, he might not meet the decisive moment of death with the composure and attitude he would wish(v.9).

He expresses the wish to die in silence for fear that 'brave words' might be a sign of pride to 'cloud' the sight of God. This is beautifully visual imagery which he continues to use in the final lines of this stanza, '...and I,/Should die in the eclipse'(v.10 l.3,4). The metaphor is used to suggest that death might take place in the absence of God. In the light of this it is interesting to note that W. Hall-Patch states that almost his last words were, 'If ever I am able to obtain it for you, I will pray that all of you may have easy deaths'(408). We might wish to question the authenticity of these words, coming as they do from a popular account written some years after his death, yet they are consonant with what we know of him. If we accept them, then Faber died in his community and the words were addressed to those around him. They are, as he would have wished, characteristically humble, addressed to the good of others. The death he wished for them was the death he sought for himself. Bowden reports(409) that when told that his death was near 'he only repeated fervently his favourite exclamation, "God be praised!"'

The question as to the manner of death remains open. Times and places do not matter, '...when, and where, and by what pain, - /All this is one to me'(v.11, l.1,2), for what is crucial is that his death should honour God. He is not far from the thoughts of his hymn 'The God of My Childhood' (quoted earlier) where he says:

With gentle swiftness lead me on,
 Dear God! to see thy face;
 And meanwhile in my narrow heart
 Oh make Thyself more space! (v.18)

He goes on to speak of long life dismaying him because of the sense of his own weakness. There is an implied fear of sudden death for which no preparation could be made. Prayers are a preparation for death(410) and the priest has a central role. Central to this preparation is the Viaticum providing food for the journey through death into eternal life. Preferably this would take place in the context of the Mass and is regarded as the 'completion and crown of the Christian life on this earth, signifying that the Christian follows the Lord to eternal glory and the banquet of the heavenly kingdom'(411). The Sacrament of Penance might well precede the Viaticum(412), as would the renewal of the baptismal profession of faith(413). Extreme Unction and the recommendation of the departing soul would follow the Viaticum to assist the dying person in the final struggle before entering eternity(414). Even in this light preparedness for death was raised to obsessional heights by the Victorians. It was affirmed that 'A priest is never more thoroughly a priest than in the chamber of death'(415).

Faber concludes realising that all he wishes ought to be 'un-wished' so that his trust might be fully in God, that God's will should be done; yet 'One wish is hard to be un-wished'(v.13, l.1), for it is the wish for a truly contrite spirit,

That I at last might die
 Of grief for having wronged with sin

Thy spotless Majesty. (v.13, l.2 - 4)

This is a most powerful ending and seems to find its source in that struggle in which Faber engaged in seeking to do God's will particularly in relation to the exercise of his own Christian discipleship. Determining whether he should move from the Church of England to the Roman Catholic Church was a cause of detailed self-examination evidenced by his letters(416). After he had made the decision, such was the strength of his conviction that the change was right, that it was natural for him to regard all that had gone before as that which would have 'wronged with sin/Thy spotless majesty' for now he regarded the Church of England as 'that unaltered, unsacrificed prison house of heresy and schism'(417).

The majesty that had thus been defiled was a majesty that is 'Vast, adorable and winning'('Majesty Divine'(418))(v.3, l.3), 'Glorifying self, yet blameless/With a sanctity all shameless' (ibid. v.5, l.5,6). Here Faber sees his end:

I with life and love diurnal
 See myself in Thee,
 All embalmed in love eternal,
 Floating in Thy sea:
 'Mid Thine uncreated whiteness
 I behold Thy glory's brightness
 Feed itself on me. (ibid. v.7)

The rhyme of this hymn is unusual. It is open to question as to whether Faber's use of the

term 'diurnal' alludes to Roman prayer or whether this is a more literal contrast of 'diurnal' with 'eternal', of change with changelessness. The latter interpretation makes the second line unexpected, while the former would cause it to be a natural progression, for elsewhere he refers to keeping the 'Diurnal Hours of the Roman Breviary'(419).

In 'The Paths of Death' Faber explores the way in which people are perceived to die and in doing so he underlines many of the assumptions of the time about death and the future life.

Faber depicts death as a journey (as in 'Pilgrims of the Night'), and this is reiterated at the beginning of each verse with the words, 'How pleasant are thy paths, O Death'. Along these paths we 'softly and silently haste', (v.3, l.4; words very characteristic of Faber).

The word 'thither' early in the verse accentuates the sense of hasty movement, and, haste, we might for we are going to a 'new life' (v.3) where 'sorrows cease' (v.3, l.2). The lines: 'E'en grown-up men secure/ Better manhood, by a brave leap' (v.7, l.3) add energy to the picture but they are delicately linked through the words which follow to another image related to death, which we will address later, that of sleep: 'by a brave leap/Through the chill mist of thin sleep'. The language is visual and sensual, foregrounding the nature of this transition by the unusual juxtaposition of images. There is no hint here of death being a grim visitor (420). Death has a friendly face and is to be welcomed for it will take us to those we have loved (cf., 'The Memory of the Dead'), 'Back to our own dear dead' (v.2, l.2). Death leads us home (v.2, l.4). The visual image of a sunset (which generates both the illusion of movement and that of increasing darkness and night) serves to signal the transition from this world to the next for the sunset itself is 'heaven-bound' (v.1, l.4). This theme is returned to in the last verse where the west is seen as the sign of hope

(v.12, l.5).

This leads to another emphasis of this piece, that of heaven having a spatial reality.

Austin Holyoake was yet to write his pamphlet Heaven & Hell: Where Situated?(421)

which sought to pour scorn on this concept and though others were more circumspect,

making clear that such an opinion was provisional in nature, at this time such a view of

the reality of heaven was quite common. In 1859 John Angell James argued that 'some

place there is...where the King of Glory dwells, and gathers round His throne His chosen

and redeemed people'. That having been said, in the 1850s and 1860s there was an

acknowledged difficulty in the concept and the Catholic Dictionary made no claim as to

the spatial characteristics of heaven (422).

This did not deter Faber for death led to 'our Father's home' (v.11, l.2), to a 'land of

peace' (v.3, l.5) where the 'pardoned...are bright' (v.10 l.3). The reference in v.11

parallels closely John Angell James' words quoted above.

Faber's analogy of the bed for the grave followed common usage. Tennyson was able to

write: 'When in the down I sink my head,/Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my

breath'(423). Tombs are those places, Faber wrote, where 'thou mak'st our bed'(v.2, l.6)

and:

E'en children after play

Lie down, without the least alarm,

And sleep, in thy maternal arm,

Their little life away. (v.6, l.2 - 5)

Death is seen as the way to a much better life, in which there is no more disease(v.9) or sin(v.10) Here is pardon and innocence(v.10). This verse alludes to Revelation 7: 13: 'Who are these, clad in white robes...?' while v.11 reminds us of John 14, though the 'Father's house' becomes a 'home'.

Faber's view of death as depicted in this hymn fits well with what we know of the circumstances surrounding his own death. During his last illness he wrote the words of 'Starry Skies' which elicited the question from Lady Minna Howard as to how he could pen 'such beautiful verses' when he was suffering so much. His response was to ask 'whether she did not know that the swans always sang sweetest when they were going to die?'(424).

Bereavement

In the hymns of Faber on the 'Last Things' the first one, 'The Memory of the Dead'(425) focuses on bereavement. This hymn provides a context in which all the works which follow may be placed. Its affirmation of faith (together with that of 'The Eternal Years'), rather than denying doubt or grief, allows for its fuller expression. Faber viewed eternity as something to be valued, though he warned that mercy must be sought from Jesus so that our experience of it might be good, for in eternity everything is irrevocable(426). Because of this our approach to death is important, for death is the decisive act of God for all(427).

Faber begins by setting the tone that the whole piece will follow, that death is positive,

so it is pleasant to reflect on those who have died. This is not a simplistic assertion, and the strand which holds this piece together, that of the transformation of the way in which we view those that have died, is the evidence that Faber brings to emphasise the point.

The first line contains the word 'sweet', a word which, as we have noted, occurs many times in Faber's verse. The sibilance of the opening line serves to soften the impression of that which follows, preparing us for the gently murmured third line. The term 'Aves', meaning Ave Marias, are prayers to Mary, presumably for the dead person. In letter LXX of 1846 he speaks of saying 'the seven Paters, Aves and Glorias...and lastly some of my Church Office'(428). These prayers are gradually fading, being uttered less often, perhaps less fervently; not because they are any less meant, but there is a sense of growing peace indicated by the phrase 'To silence tender-hearted'. The construction here is awkward, the words following an unconventional order for the sake of stress and rhyme. The metre is rhythmic, the feminine endings unusual in hymnody. The author further accentuates the fact that grief is changing its form, for the tears now have no pain associated with them: they are no longer distraught but come freely and gently - 'tranquilly distilling'. The transformation of feeling is completed with the sense that the dead seem to live again as love fills the mourner's heart - an allusion to Paul's assertion that there is nothing in all creation, not even death, that can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8).

In the second stanza Faber indicates his belief that the way in which we view those who have died is transformed, not by time or a subjective mechanism, but by God's action. We perceive them differently because 'They are touched with rays/From light that is above them'.(God is 'th'eternal coeternal beam', asserts Milton (429) and others,

following Revelation 22: 5: 'the Lord God will be their light' and the Gospel according to John 1: 7 - 9; 3: 19 - 21; 8:12; the latter given popular representation by Holman Hunt's painting 'The Light of the World') They actually look different as 'Another sweetness shines/ around their well-known features'. The confirmation that this is God's action comes in the last two lines which pick up the sacramental image of signing by God. God denotes his own people by marking them - 'they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads'- Revelation 22: 4, the converse of those who had received the mark of the beast on their foreheads who subsequently did not participate in the resurrection - Revelation 20: 4. In baptism and confirmation this is alluded to by the use of the sign of the cross. It is also seen when a person crosses himself. To become one of God's own people has involved cost. God's people have been held to ransom and, conventionally, bought at the cost of the death of Christ on the cross. The word 'dearly' is usefully ambiguous, for surely God's own are dear to him but, more importantly, they have also been purchased at a price.

The paradox of the third stanza and its elucidation serves to ground the transformation in this world. Faber foregrounds the first line, 'Yes, they are more our own', thus highlighting the stanza. This is a pivotal point, a point of transition which will provide purpose and direction for the rest of the poem. The dead are depicted as treasures held by God and this fact is the reason that the bereaved need not mourn and, indeed, should mourn less as each person dies, for 'now they are God's only'(v.3, l.2). The paradox continues in lines 3 & 4, 'each one that has gone/Has left our heart less lonely'.

'He' in line 5 seems to suggest the one who is bereaved, while 'Him' in line 6 refers to Christ:

Yes, they are more our own,
 Since now they are God's only;
 And each one that has gone
 Has left our heart less lonely.
 He mourns not seasons fled,
 Who now in Him possesses
 Treasures of many dead
 In their dear Lord's caresses.

In the next stanza Faber begins to clarify his meaning as he states that the dead are like guardian angels to the living. Heaven, though it appears distant, becomes more homely, for those whom we know and love are there. It begins 'to woo us'(1.4), to be more 'attractive'. The latter word is interesting: it has about it the sense of drawing us or pulling us. There is no indication that heaven's prospect might have been tinged with judgement or fear. Earthly love is now found in 'holier places' and begins to work on our behalf(1.8). The word 'love' is understood as a personification of those we have loved, of those that loved us.

The theme is continued and made more explicit as the poem develops, confirming the intimations of the previous stanza(v.5, l.1 & 2). They are given back to us (1.4) as we aspire to heaven, but even now they are (as guardian angels alluded to in verse 4) making life smoother for us on earth. It is unlikely that Faber thinks here of life being smooth or easy in a worldly way; rather the access to heaven is facilitated as chains that would have bound us (a metaphor which might represent anything or anyone separating us from

God) are cut. Such severance is made to seem easy. It does not push the interpretation too far at this point to suggest that much that binds us to earthly life is founded in personal relationships. As people die there is less to hold us back and we are, indeed, encouraged to be re-united to those who have gone before (cf., 'Come, let us join our friends above', by Charles Wesley, of which the original fourth verse is particularly pertinent(430):

Our old companions in distress

We haste again to see,

And eager long for our release,

And full felicity).

The transformation depicted in the first stanza is shown to have a strong grounding in experience as well as in faith.

We have let go of those who have died grudgingly (v.6). We have clung to them. Faber now pleads for forgiveness for doubt - presumably with regard to the fate of those who have died. He seeks grace to hold on to memories and a trust in God which makes us pine for 'home'. The image is very much of this earth but Faber brings in a new dimension by adding the word 'above'(l.7). The poem concludes with a plea for unquestioning faith. He asks for the capacity to 'trust to God more blindly', implying that such trust has no need for the reassurance provided by human sensory perception. It is sufficient unto itself.

Faber joins heaven and earth together in an interwoven network of relationships which

gives firm expression to the doctrine of the communion of saints, but the overall movement of the piece reflects that movement which he saw in life itself. People live ultimately and inevitably to die and the more who die the greater the pull on those who remain to join them. The metre 6.7.6.7.D is that of a ballad. In itself it is homely, reminiscent of the family singing round the piano, and serves to give the hymn its warmth and sense of comfortable familiarity. It is aptly suited to the purpose of the words.

The next text in the collection, 'The Eternal Years', serves to elucidate further the ground on which Faber stands. If 'The Memory of the Dead' seeks to make a firm statement of faith in relation to the dead, then 'The Eternal Years' turns its focus to those who grieve, who 'have a cross to bear'. In doing this Faber shows clearly his orthodox position in relation to suffering, a position which biblically finds its clearest expression in 1 Peter 1: 6 - 7: '...now for a little while you may have to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ'. This testing is seen as a means of sanctification and, though 'judgement nears'(v. 12, 1.2), the poem is characteristically filled with compassion and hope for those who grieve. Faber seeks to give a rationale for all they are feeling.

Newman's assessment of the text is revealing though unduly modest:

"Some people...have liked my 'Lead, kindly light', and it is the voice of one in darkness asking for help from our Lord. But this (The Eternal Years) is quite different. This is one with full light, rejoicing in suffering with our Lord, so that mine compares unfavourably with it. This is what those who like, 'Lead, kindly

light' have got to come to - they have to learn it!' (431)

The poem has sixteen stanzas, each comprising four lines. Only the second and fourth lines are rhymed and, while the metre of the first stanza is 8.6.8.7:

How shalt thou bear the Cross that now

So dread a weight appears?

Keep quietly to God, and think

Upon the Eternal Years.

that of the second is 8.6.8.6:

Austerity is little help,

Although it somewhat cheers;

Thine oil of gladness is the thought

Of the Eternal years.

Faber keeps within these two metres but alters them to suit the words he wishes to use. In spite of this Chapman(432) states that, "There is no little skill in "The Eternal Years", a statement which he seeks to justify by analysis. He remarks that Faber's poetic 'blindness', his sparse use of visual imagery, is compensated for in aural and tactile awareness which works well in sacred poetry. He quotes only the first stanza and makes no reference to the twelfth or thirteenth which are distinctly visual, referring as they do to 'pretty flowers' and 'rainbows' and making these references in concrete and literal ways:

Pass not from flower to pretty flower;
 Time flies, and judgement nears;
 Go! make thy honey from the thought
 Of the Eternal Years.

Death will have rainbows round it, seen
 Through calm contrition's tears,
 If tranquil hope but trims her lamp
 At the Eternal Years.

Chapman's assessment is open to question although this text does move, for the most part, in more abstract or spiritual spheres.

One clear indication of Faber's skill is the manner in which he utilises as a recurring motif the phrase 'the Eternal Years'. It is important for the understanding of Faber's thought to recognise what is meant by this phrase. One interpretation of Stanza 5 sees the phrase personified, for the reader's 'good' becomes the object of the thought of 'the Eternal Years'. If this view is correct, then Faber is using the words to indicate God and in doing so he creates a particular image of the deity which would have been at once comforting and yet familiar. Wheeler(433) points out that Hebrews 13: 8 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever', was both familiar and popular as a text to the Victorians. The idea of God as the 'Eternal' reflects this text and throughout the poem Faber elaborates on the consequences of God's eternity for the reader.

The opening lines acknowledge the reality that the reader has a cross to bear. The nature of this cross is unspecified, yet it has a 'dread weight', language which is in keeping with death or bereavement. Whatever the circumstances, the recipient of these verses is counselled to 'Keep quietly to God, and think/Upon the Eternal Years'(v.1, l.3,4). This seems best interpreted as a plea to trust God, echoing the thought of Psalm 46: 10; 'Be still, and know that I am God'. The word 'quietly' is most characteristic of Faber's use of language.

The next three verses look at the sorts of strategies that people might use to help in such circumstances; self- denial ('austerity'), a religious routine ('set hours and written rule' - almost certainly Faber is alluding here to religious rule, the rule of a community such as that of which he was a part for many years. It is likely, therefore, that this particular piece was written after 1845, the year in which the 'The Brothers of the Will of God' were formed(434)), and resorting to the rites and sacraments of the Church. Each is at once shown to be beneficial yet wanting. 'Austerity' may cheer but 'thine oil of gladness is the thought/Of the Eternal Years'(v.2, l.3,4). The use of the word 'gladness' alongside the idea of 'oil' is particularly pertinent as oils and ointments are used in the Bible...as symbols representing joy and gladness. To think on God is to be anointed and, if the allusion to the third verse of the opening chapter of the Song of Songs is pressed, that anointing is not only by God but with God Himself.

Faber again demonstrates his skill in the next verse in which 'set hours and written rule'(v.3 l.1) are placed parallel to the word 'count'(v3, l.4). As the times of the Daily Office, 'Long prayer'(v.3, l.2), might be counted off through the day so the reader is encouraged to 'count the Eternal Years'(v3, l4), which, it is asserted, will provide 'better

calm'.

In the fourth verse a similar play is made between the thought of the first two lines and that of the last two, but in this case there is a stronger aural link than one of subject-matter. 'Rites are as balm unto the eyes', yet the reader is to 'brood/Upon the Eternal Years'. If anything there is a contrast in meaning here as thought (to 'brood') is seen as being more efficacious than that 'balm' which is purely sensual.

Faber concludes this section by suggesting that there are many things which, in the right time and place, are helpful; but over and above all of these is the knowledge that the 'present good' of the reader is 'in the thought/Of the Eternal Years'. This could be read as indicating that the reader is the subject of God's thoughts, but there is an interesting ambiguity, for it could equally be taken that in thinking of God there is good to be gained.

The author is quite aware that in times of grief there is likely to be a sense of guilt. The words of verse six are carefully observed. Self-reproach is natural and it can even appear to be a sign of 'meekness', but it is implied that this is a self-delusion. It is more 'humbling.../To face the Eternal Years'(v.6, l.3,4). Any such sense of conscience should be put away. The reader should face up to reality. That comes not from self-knowledge but from God's knowledge of us. The '...thought/Of the Eternal Years'(v.6, l.3,4) will teach us 'to be real'(v.6, l.3). In this reality we will face tears and suffering. These are to be accepted 'like a child'(v.8, l.1). What should be sought is a 'brave quiet' (cf., 'And I would pass in silence, Lord/No brave words on my lips' from 'Wishes About Death'(435)). This oxymoron serves to stress the strength of God which undergirds us in

suffering and forges a link with verse one, which has already urged the reader to 'Keep quietly to God'(v1, l.3), and verse three which speaks of 'better calm'. What now seems contradictory is that this calm, this quiet, is found in the light of the cross. This is quite in keeping with traditional Christian expression but it is to Faber's credit that at the centre of this poem the mention of the cross brings a focus to his argument which is heightened by the language he chooses to use. Characteristically for him we find 'Kiss the sweet cross'(cf.,(436)), a cross which 'Though little it appears' is '...quite enough for thee'(vv. 8 & 9). The littleness puts the cross that the individual bears in the context of divine suffering for '...there is hid in it the weight/Of the eternal Years'(v.9, l.3,4), for this cross which we bear is the cross of the crucified God. Nevertheless, this cross is as much as can be borne.

The bitterness of the cross is now compared to 'medicine'. Almost certainly the juxtaposition of 'bitterness' and 'medicine' will have conjured up in people's minds the reality of the taste of medicines that they had received, such as bitter aloes (used as a purgative). As the medicine makes them better, 'An ailing spirit cheers'(v.10, l.2), so the cross has a curative effect. This effect is not so much physical though, as spiritual, for the cross 'can sanctify a soul'(v.11, l.1). Butler had used the analogy of medicine in explaining the way in which Christ was interposed between peoples' actions and their anticipated outcome in eternity, making salvation possible(437). This idea was later adopted by Keble, who thought of poetry as medicine for the sick soul. Christians, saints and prophets, were such because they 'mused/Upon the Eternal Years'. It was not out of their own strength that their sanctity derived but from God; the inference being that such is available to all.

The remaining verses underline the need for consistency and commitment. There must be a single aim in view: the person who seeks to be sanctified must 'Run the straight race through God's good grace' (as J.S.B. Monsell put it). Faber's language is more sentimental, owing not a little to his love of nature and of the countryside

Pass not from flower to pretty flower;
 Time flies, and judgement nears;
 Go! make thy honey from the thought
 Of the Eternal Years.

This is Biblical metaphor mixed with natural observation and traditional emblems going back to at least the seventeenth century. Though it is true that a bee passes from flower to flower in order to gather nectar to make honey, that honey is also used as one of the signs of God's promises, as an allusion to heaven. The people of Israel were offered a 'land flowing with milk and honey' and this was later seen as a useful metaphor for the Kingdom of God. The bee works hurriedly, 'time flies', the judgement hastens on. The words generate a flurry of movement, of excitement and anticipation even to the point of the word 'Go!'(v.12, 13) which serves to impel the reader to action.

The next verse is no less remarkable for the way in which Faber links visual and Biblical images, and Chapman's assertion mentioned above(438), that Faber is aural and tactile in his use of poetic devices is strongly challenged. It seems clear that when he avoids the visual he does so out of choice and not through lack of the skill to use it effectively. In this stanza the visual/Biblical image of the rainbow is linked with the word 'tears', which in a purely literal way reminds the reader that rainbows are caused by the passage of light

through water droplets; but the 'tears' are 'contrition's tears' and this alerts the Biblically versed reader to God's forgiveness and the rainbow as his covenant sign of commitment to His people. Such tears might be expected to be furtive but they are described as 'calm' (echoing the quiet of v.1, the calm of v.3 and the quiet of v.7). They can be such because of Faber's understanding of the nature of God, a God who has the good of His people at heart. This brings a 'tranquil hope'(v.13, l.3). This hope is personified and compared with the virgins waiting for the Bridegroom (Matthew 25), for this hope 'trims her lamp'. Thus the theme of judgement is also carried on through this verse.

The first two lines of the following stanza continue the flow of the previous verse emphasising the benefits of consistency for the bereaved person: 'Keep unconstrain'dly in this thought/Thy loves, hopes, smiles, and tears'. The next two lines are obscure. 'Such prison-house thine heart will make/Free of the Eternal Years'(v.14, l.3,4). The term 'prison-house' almost certainly derives from Wordsworth's 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood'.

Verse fifteen:

A single practice long sustained
 A soul to God endears:
 This must be thine - to weigh the thought
 Of the Eternal Years.

picks up the second line of verse eleven:

Late saints and ancient seers
 Were what they were, because they mused
 Upon the Eternal Years.

for it is assumed that the 'saints and ancient seers were single minded in their practice and were thus endeared to God. The reader is urged to follow the same pattern; '...to weigh the thought/Of the Eternal Years' suggests the idea of taking firm account of God, of scrutinising His words and His ways that we might know them.

The concluding verse brings us back to the cross with which we began. It is to be revered for it is a source of virtue. To bear the cross brings the Christian nearer to God.

It is interesting that Faber, while acknowledging the magnitude of the cross that some people bear (in saying in v.1 that it appears a dread weight), neither seeks to belittle their grief nor to side-step the responsibility to carry that cross, for he is deeply convinced that such a burden can have a sanctifying function. He sees God's will in such pain, yet his approach is not as crude, nor as lacking in compassion as that of the philosophers and theologians of the previous century. The language chosen, words like 'quietly' and 'calm', is intended to make the reader content.

'After a Death' is by implication concerned with grief experienced by the author after the death of a friend(or relative?) who had for some time suffered from a terminal illness, for the grief 'was delayed so long'(v.1, l.1) and 'I have looked so long/Upon the coming grief'(v.2, 1 & 2). The basic theology outlined in 'The Memory of the Dead' and 'The Eternal Years' is lighted on within the first verse. Death has a purpose and so does pain.

W. Hall-Patch remarks that 'he [Faber] used to say that pain was a precious gift of God'(439). The observation is in line with the words of Newman quoted above and this would have been no idle comment, for Faber knew illness himself, particularly in the latter years of his life. (cf., 'Tis when we suffer'(440):

'Tis when we suffer gentlest thoughts

 Within the bosom spring:

 Ah! who shall say that pain is not

 A most unselfish thing.)

Thus Faber writes, 'Blest be thy name for present pain,/And for the weary past' (v.1, l.3 & 4).

The text demonstrates an understanding of the common experience of the bereaved at feeling relief after such a death(v.2, l.4) but it is also cognisant of the associated guilt in response to such a feeling, for the relief is seen to be inappropriate. Faber underlines this with a question, 'did I love the dead/As well as he loved me'. A second question explores this feeling further, 'Or have I sought myself alone/Rather than him or Thee?'

The questions remain unanswered. What is important is the recognition of the experience which has raised them and the ability to confront them even though they are self-critical and may not be solved. This is tacitly acknowledged as Faber returns to the theme which provides the first half of the piece with its cohesion, that of the exploration of the experience of this particular type of grief.

Returning to the time before the death, he muses that the uncertainty of waiting is harder to bear than grief itself. The reason is founded in the uncertainty which breeds fear(v.4).

'The Death-Bed' by Hood(441) addresses the theme in a very similar way:

Our very hopes belied our fears,
 Our fears our hope belied -
 We thought her dying when she slept,
 And sleeping when she died.

What is being described in these passages as 'fear' is perhaps better characterised as 'anxiety' as its object is not clearly defined(442). In verse 5 Faber begins to narrow the description of what he feels. The unknown future is seen as an enemy, 'an overwhelming host', which is drawing nearer and nearer.

This feeling is depicted as building successively day by day, and the experience is characterised as one of bitterness which was too great to bear. He returns to the thoughts of verse 4 expressing them differently, more sharply, more succinctly, 'hope's uncertainty was worse/Than positive despair'. The retardation of the natural progression towards death had two consequences. Firstly, grief became more difficult to confront, 'I grew more unprepared for grief'. Secondly, it became harder to comprehend the fact that death would actually come at all, 'The blow seemed more impossible/The more it was delayed' (v.7). The thought is elaborated in the next verse which asserts that this long-drawn-out waiting makes a loss more difficult to bear than one which comes unexpectedly, an (assertion that Milton(443) or Tennyson(444) might well have refuted). Faber's use of the word 'sudden' foregrounds the idea he is trying to express. We are

tempted to ask how grief for which we have waited for so long can be 'sudden', but the fact of the matter is that the waiting generates a false sense of security. Hence griefs that 'travel slow' are perceived as being more sudden than those which are relatively unexpected. In the experience of the author they create deeper woe. In the same way that he had returned to the subject of verse 4 in verse 6, so verse 11 underlines verse 8:

A swift and unexpected blow,
 If hard to bear is brief,
 But oh! it is less sudden far
 Than quiet creeping grief.

This assertion underlines the personal and subjective nature of the poem. Faber is almost certainly speaking out of his own experience (recollecting, perhaps, the 'brother' to whom he refers in 'Tis when we suffer'(445):

So it came natural to me
 To have thee for my brother:
 And more and more each passing day
 We grow into each other).

Is this the same person he remembers in the poem 'Green Bank', dated September 12th, 1838, 'Brother, brother! thou art gone, and I will not mourn thy going'?(446) It is also worth comparing this with the expressions of affection of Tennyson for Hallam in In Memoriam, 'The path by which we twain did go,/Which led by tracts that pleased us

well'(447), '...our fair companionship'(448) or 'a hand that can be clasped no more -
'(449).

The personal ring is emphasised by the categorical manner in which he asserts the supremacy of his grief over that of others. If his experience had been that of an unexpected death he might well have argued as strongly from that standpoint. It is the sense in which he avoids the alternative that implies a singular experience. Indeed, what Faber does not acknowledge is that the 'swift and unexpected blow' can have consequences which persist far beyond the duration of the event. Tennyson(450) makes it clear that consolation in his loss is just as difficult to obtain, 'One writes, that 'Other friends remain,/'That 'Loss is common to the race' but such expressions of comfort make loss not 'less bitter, rather more'.

Verse 9 is interpolated into this argument speaking of the way in which sorrow appears to be magnified as we confront it. Having said this the next verse argues that dwelling on grief is even worse. The word 'sudden' is used here in a more conventional manner than in verse 8 but serves to provide a cohesion between the verses which encourages us to compare them. Sudden grief travels slow, is long in sight and more damaging than grief of 'a sudden death at night'. Verse 11 continues to develop the theme, returning to the original use of 'sudden', 'it is less sudden far/Than a quiet creeping grief'.

After this the poem takes a slightly different course. Having explored the nature of this particular grief he turns to grief in a more general sense. The grief that he has described is just one of the griefs that we might have to experience, yet, the 'least griefs are more than we can bear'. Each new grief seems greater than those we have confronted before

and the nature of grief is such that it is personal and each individual's grief seems worse than that of another, 'Our own griefs always greater griefs/Than those our fathers bore'(v. 12). Faber then seeks to evaluate which is worse, this grief or that: 'Which are the worst to bear?'(v. 13, 14).

This reflection has its purpose which begins to become apparent in verse 14. Faber's theology leads him to believe that we should receive punishment for our sins. If grief is part of that punishment then it never equates to that which we deserve(v. 14). Lines 2 - 4 of this verse are somewhat obscure:

Yet all are less than our deserts;
 Within our grace they lie;
 The sorrows we exaggerate
 We cannot sanctify.

'Grace' is usually seen as a positive attribute - the free gift of God to a recipient. Here it seems reasonable to suppose that Faber is still using the word in this way but it would be hard to regard the gift of grief as positive, unless it is regarded as part of the trial that tests and proves our faith. 'Our grace' suggests that this is either something that we can deserve or expect. Presumably the latter is supposed, with the rider that we might well receive more of this bad sort of gift if God dealt with us justly, for what we are given is 'within' the range that we should expect; we might even be surprised at God's mercy in not giving us more (verse 16 underlines this supposition, 'How merciful Thine anger is').

The next two lines do not, on the surface, make sense. Does the author mean that we can

sanctify some sorrows? Surely not, though, as we have shown above, some sorrows may be regarded as means of grace. The sanctification of anything rests with God and Faber moves towards this in the incarnational language of the next verse. The word 'exaggerate' suggests that Faber is saying, in effect, that we do not make sorrow any more fruitful by wallowing in it.

Verse 15 makes the most powerful statement of faith in the whole work, 'Dear Lord! in all our loneliest pains/Thou hast the largest share'. God in Christ shoulders all our burdens. Those griefs which we feel we could not bear we do not bear, for they are God's.

In spite of this mercy the author senses an increasing desolation as the years pass and friends are no longer with him. Tennyson mourned 'To see the vacant chair, and think,/"How good! how kind! and he is gone"'(451). Faber notes that 'There are fresh gaps around the hearth/Old places left unfilled'. Verses 17,18 & 19 present an image of loneliness which pictures the world as a 'dear Home', a 'round of household peace' where, 'The sweetness of known faces is/A couch where weary souls repose'(452). It is observed that such a world is fast decaying. This very much reflects the spirit of the age in idealising the family and making it a vehicle for visualising heaven. In another place Faber speaks of 'An absence felt in every room,/In each familiar haunt'(453).

The death bed itself was a focus for the family, 'charged with emotion and sexuality...' (454). Philippe Aries has traced the development of this focus, noting that erotic connotations with death became apparent from the end of the fifteenth-century. Prior to that time the personification of death portrayed in dances scarcely touched the

one who was to die, offering, as it were, a warning. In the sixteenth-century 'death' was represented as raping the victim. The relation of thanatos to eros underwent a gradual development from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Death agony and orgasmic trance came to be juxtaposed as both seemed to offer a violent rupture from the natural, rational world. In the nineteenth century solemnity in relation to death gave way to a spontaneous expression of emotion inspired by what was perceived as passionate, unique sorrow. The social constraint that had previously held sway, making death a focus for the individual, disappeared, the family no longer being bystanders. This was the era of hysterical mourning, a time when it became increasingly difficult for the death of a loved one to be accepted by those who survived(455).

The bed of death was often the bed in which the dying person had conceived children and in which she herself might have been conceived. These past events are focused 'by a family who (through observation of the death) are now active participants in the drama'(456). Those voices and faces are now missing, leaving a sense of grief such that, 'what is left (is) more sad to see/Than the sight of what has gone'.

It seems that the poem is going to end on a despondent note. Faber appears to have lost sight of his affirmation that the dead are being welcomed into the presence of God, a fact which, surely, should be a cause for celebration. He is overwhelmed by his own grief; yet all he has spoken, including the pain, grief and desolation, are to be of use to God, to be sanctified. It is admitted that there is a 'rupture with the past', in that those with whom we have shared life are no longer with us, but that only serves to prepare us. Death will decrease our loneliness, and so we anticipate it rather than dread it. All these losses mean that, in effect, 'we die before our deaths'. Because of this we 'die well at last' in every

sense of the word. Right up to this last line the theme of the positive nature of death is affirmed. The final words possess a subtle ambiguity for 'at last' could be taken to mean 'in our own time' or, with the stress on 'last' they could be seen to be triumphant.

The introspective nature of this text, mingled with astute observation, is reminiscent of In Memoriam. This influence, if that is what it was, becomes even more apparent in two further texts, 'Deep Grief' and 'The House of Mourning!'. The parallel is closest in the second stanza of the first of Faber's texts:

They spoke of sorrow's laws and ways,
 They said what time would do;
 Wise sounding words! yet they have been
 Most bitterly untrue(457).

which so clearly echoes Tennyson:

One writes, that 'Other friends remain',
 That 'Loss is common to the race' -
 And common is the common place,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain(458).

Not only is the subject matter the same, reflecting on the insincere sympathy of 'friends', who really do not empathise with the grief that the author is experiencing, but the pattern of the text follows the same manner of construction. The words of the comforters are reported in the first two lines of the stanza and commented on in the last two lines.

It is interesting that in the late twentieth century analysis of the 'grief process' has served to systematise and underline features which Faber and others had observed in another age(459). The people that Faber observed in the 'House of Mourning'(460) are stunned. It is as though life for them has been frozen for, '...no cloud that came passed on,/No yesterdays went by'. They '...felt (their) way about the house/Like men that had been blinded' for they '...were inwardly unmanned and numbed'. In this state it is impossible to admit to the truth of what has happened, '...we never named what most we feared', yet there is no overt denial of the death that has brought forth the sense of mourning. They cling to straws and begin to hope that the truth is not true, hanging on to the thought that 'God was good', yet fearing to put it into words. It is interesting that Faber here uses the past tense. It is not entirely clear whether he intends it to be past to the participants in the event he is describing, or that he has inadvertently used this tense inappropriately, for he is quoting what was a present apprehension. The usage serves to heighten the sense of muddle and confusion, the 'entangled woe', 'a woe of such simplicity/As almost troubled reason', on which he elaborates in the eighth stanza:

Each told to each what each well knew,
 Each told it o'er and o'er:
 Questions we asked which we ourselves
 Had answered just before.

The observation is acute, for in grief people do repeat information and experiences in a manner that seems irrelevant to a dispassionate onlooker.

Denial begins to be expressed in a personal reflection, 'The very stern reality/Made us almost think we dreamed'. Depression is acknowledged in a mixture of tedium and fear. 'The days could somehow drag themselves,/Like wounded worms along', while,

...somehow all things turned to fears;

And foolish things became

Fountains of unrefreshing tears

Which burned the eyes like flame.

As time passes the experience of grief changes but does not necessarily grow less:

The mind was less afraid of self,

When sorrow's thoughts grew rank:

The sights and sounds of recent grief

Were better than this blank(461).

Indeed, 'those earlier days of tears/Were sunshine to today'. Gone is the numbness and lack of feeling and it has given way to a 'dull blind ache', which is felt more 'When it has sunk past feeling'. The person who has died seems ever present. This is not some other-worldly haunting, but the very real experience of feeling the loss of someone whose very presence has been something to which we have become accustomed, and we cannot countenance life without them. 'Thou art the custom of the day,/The haunting of the night'. Such grief is not transient: it '...is not a past event', but '...a life, a state'. Here the symptoms of loss and consequent depression are delineated with fearful clarity for they make 'age more desolate'.

Out of this observation, this experience, Faber has three reflections to make with regard to the manner in which comfort can be afforded to those who are bereaved. Firstly, 'Deep grief is better left alone'. By this he does not mean that people should be abandoned to their grief but it is a rejoinder to those who utter empty, even if well-meaning, platitudes. 'Deep grief cannot be reached', and the most sensitive approach is that of silence:

Voices to it are swords;
A silent look will soothe it more
Than the tenderness of words.

Faber can say this for his experience of 'Wise-sounding words', is that, '...they have been/Most bitterly untrue'. It is a cliché that 'time is a healer' and his comforters had spoken, '...of sorrow's laws and ways,/They said what time would do', and he had found the 'wisdom' wanting.

Almost in contradiction to this in 'The House of Mourning' Faber recognises a transformation that comes with time that is, indeed, healing. It was a, '...work of years' but it was done in days(462). The change that he observes is a change in the perspective with which the dead are viewed. It is the transformation depicted at length in 'The Memory of the Dead'(463) in which Faber sees, '...dear souls with seemliest haste/Array themselves in light'(464). This is a vision of the dead in heaven and it speaks positively of their condition, bringing reassurance to the bereaved. The altered perception is not something that we can easily bring about ourselves, for the author asserts:

For monthlike days, for yearlike nights,

I saw all this about me:

It should have been my work; but God

Had to do the work without me.

There is an acknowledgement from one called to be a pastor that the task of bringing comfort to the bereaved is one that is beyond him, but his observation leads him to believe that God works on in spite of this. The text gives the lie to any impression we may have gained with regard to Faber's self-confidence, for he knew his limits and was willing to admit to them:

I only saw how I had missed

A thousand times from blindness,

How all that I had done appeared

Scarce better than unkindness,

How that to comfort those that mourn

Is a thing for saints to try;

Yet haply God might have done less,

Had a saint been there, not I.

Faber recognises, 'That the hardest of our works for God/Is to comfort those who mourn'. His failure to comfort the bereaved had a favourable outcome, for it opened up an opportunity for God to do more. Elsewhere (*'Consolatrix Afflictorum'*) Faber suggests that 'thoughts of Jesus' and 'presences of God' are sent as Mary's '...ceaseless

answers/'To affliction's lowly prayer' and it is such as these that 'With a soft and winning might/...make our Dead look brighter'(465).

If it is God, with or without mediation, who assists the pastor in offering solace or, in the light of the text above, if the pastor is a tool of God, then who comforts the comforter?

Faber answers the question for us in the closing stanzas of 'Deep Grief':

But am I comfortless? Oh no!
 Jesus this pathway trod;
 And deeper in my soul than grief
 Art Thou, my dearest God!(466)

In this personal experience Faber discerns a purpose, for

Good is that darkening of our lives,
 Which God alone can brighten:
 But better still that hopeless load,
 Which none but God can lighten.

These words would be insensitive indeed set in isolation; but at the conclusion of such a text, which has plumbed the depths of the author's personal experience of grief, they serve as a peroration of faith which seems unassailable.

For Faber grief has a positive side in that it enables the bereaved to hold on to the deceased a little longer,

I seemed to have him while I grieved;
 At least grief was no void;
 In some strange way the vehement woe
 My sinking spirits buoyed(467).

Loss that follows grief is different and, at times, it appears, inconsolable for, '...loss is grief's most joyless side,/Grief's least religious state'. It reaches the point where to all intents and purposes the sufferer appears to be himself again: 'I move about, and do my work,/That old routine of yore', but this is only because the deceased is even more missed. There is in the words a poignancy, as though the routine is endless and something to which the author is subject rather than that in which he participates and has control. Everything seems the same but is experienced as being very different:

The present is so like the past,
 Yet so terribly unlike,
 That all life's touches do not touch
 But cut and bruise and strike.

Faber questions why the pain is so great, and hazards that he might, 'too much,/On creatures' love have leaned'. There is an echo here of the attitude of Charlotte Elliott. She spoke of cherishing 'too fondly the flower', the flower being a metaphor for the deceased whom God took back, 'not in wrath, but in love'(468). Elliott arrived at the conclusion that we should trust in God rather than humanity and so she pleads to a friend:

...Tell me that thou from bitter grief hast won
 A disentangled heart no longer prone
 To make terrestrial things thy staff and stay(469).

Faber does not take that step. His character is sociable; if not family he wants the members of a community around him. Commitment brings pain when those we love are lost, however, and he likens this loss to being weaned, a pain which is part of learning and growth. Though the loss is all-consuming, Faber reflects that from a religious point of view what he is experiencing could be very negative, for

Sorrow indulged must always make
 The grace within us less;
 Man's sorrow at its best must be
 A form of selfishness(470).

Such self pity is, 'A waste of heart whose deepest depths/It is Thy right to fill'. In allowing himself to be absorbed by the loss, Faber senses that he is cutting himself off from God. Instead of thinking 'Upon the Eternal Years'(471) he is taken up with the memory of the deceased, and on this realisation 'loss' is transformed. It is no longer loss of human companionship that concerns him but 'All life' which is loss, '...for it delays/The vision of Thy face'(472).

In 'Grief and Loss' he begins in a style reminiscent of the psalmist: 'Lord! art thou weary of my cry,/My unrepressed complaint?(473). The greater the complaint that the author makes to God, the more faint he feels. He is filled with discontent so that his '...thoughts

are fevered with...grief' and his 'heart is going wild'. He cannot determine whether the source of his distress is inward or outward, for '...the loss intrudes from every side'(474).

Images of the sea, the reality of which was familiar to him, abound, as sorrow is a 'stormy...flow' that '...sweeps/The landmarks quite away'. In spite of this Faber recognises that grief changes in the way in which we experience it and his grief now oppresses him less than the sense of loss that has become apparent. There is an acute awareness of the absence of the person for whom he grieves.

The text returns briefly to its opening theme:

My God! how petulant I am,
 How hard to please in grief,
 Forever making fresh complaint
 Of what should be relief!(475).

This allows for a change in the direction of the piece, for Faber is now able to affirm that God can not only bear with our complaint but encourages us to speak:

But, Lord! Thou lovest we should speak,
 Nor silent bear our pain:
 The look of Thy forbearing love
 Allures us to complain(476).

Faber returns to a description of the experience of loss as an unreligious part of grief, a

dull pain, a ceaseless weight. Every metaphor is pressed into use to describe

...a grief,
 So echoing every sound of life,
 That there is no relief(477).

Until now, it seems, he had coped, but now he has entered a void, a 'blind vacancy', 'a calm despair' which brings with it 'Such a mute and passive pain'. He justifies himself to the observer by saying, '...if I seem to sorrow less,/It is to miss him more'(478) for:

When I have missed him most all day,
 I have him in my dreams;
 And then how worse than the first loss
 The dismal waking seems(479).

The next verse repeats the description so as to reinforce it for the reader: 'The extremity that comes at night/Has a worse extreme at morn'. Experiences now are different, and simple sensations cause acute pain. In loss he feels hopeless. Like Elliott he questions whether, '...I too much/On creature's love have leaned'. He begins to recognise in all of this a form of self-deceit, a sense of selfishness. For all his grief, his pain, is generated out of a feeling of self-pity, of 'self-worship'. There is a growing awareness that his heart should not and, in a manner of speaking, cannot be empty if it is 'full of Thee', and so he concludes:

Faith does not know of empty hearts;

They should be full of Thee,
 And to be full of Thee alone
 Is their eternity.

All life is loss; for it delays
 The vision of Thy Face:
 Yet nothing, Lord! is lost to him
 Who hath not lost Thy grace(480).

In 'A Child's Death' Faber demonstrates both pastoral sensitivity and poetic skill. Milton and Tennyson in their different ways have reflected on their own experience of bereavement in their poetry. Charles Wesley wrote in an intensely personal way about the death of his child, while Charlotte Elliott reflected on the death of children from both the child's and the mother's perspective. Where Faber excels is in his capacity, through pastoral insight and imagination, to express another's feelings. When Wesley attempts this in his hymns for women in labour he sounds as though he is preaching. Elliott, likewise, lacks the imagination to give any sense of reality to a mother's grief. Faber is different. In the text under consideration the words feel authentic, the description realistic:

My children! My children! they clustered all round me,
 Like a rampart which sorrow could never break through;
 Each change in their beautiful lives only bound me
 In a spell of delight which no care could undo.(481)

The picture is one of a father besotted with his children. The words are individual with the repetitive use of the personal and possessive pronouns. The following reflection on the nature of the one who has died only heightens the image:

But the eldest! O Father! how glorious he was,
 With the soul looking out through his fountain like eyes:
 Thou lovest Thy Sole-born! And had I not cause
 The treasure Thou gavest me, Father! to prize.

The text begins to move into the spirit of lament and protest characteristic of the psalmist but it is still full of subtle observation and tenderness as we imagine this blue-eyed, perhaps sensitive, child. The sense of outrage continues through the succeeding verses, mingled with description, as we hear that the child was, 'My tallest! My fairest! Oh let me complain;/For all life is unroofed, and the tempests beat through'(482). The romantic imagery mirrors vividly that of the unbreachable rampart from verse 2 and this form of reflection, comparing the loss of bereavement with the destructiveness of nature, is woven through the whole piece. The responsibility for the death is laid at God's door for, 'All was bright, but Thou camest, so dreadful and brief,/Like a thunderbolt falling in gardens of flowers'(483), it is as though a 'lily-bed lies beaten down by the rain'(484).

The author begins to rationalise what has happened, to debate with God:

I murmur not Father! My will is with Thee;
 I knew at the first that my darling was Thine:
 Hadst Thou taken him earlier, O Father! - but see!

Thou had left him so long that I dreamed he was mine.(485)

Faber begins to touch on the sort of theme that is reminiscent of Elliott, that of human attachment and love being a source of pain at death, but he treats it more compassionately, not discouraging such attachment, but grieving the more for the loss:

Thou hast taken the fairest: he was fairest to me

Thou hast taken the fairest: 'tis always Thy way;

Thou has taken the dearest: was he dearest to Thee?

Thou art welcome, thrice welcome: - yet woe is the day!(486)

The text reflects the very common, and not very healthy idea, that God took the specially loveable children because he wanted them for himself, and wanted them young and innocent. The initiative of God is fervently underlined as each line begins, 'Thou'. The words are not ones of acquiescence but rather of accusation. Even the phrase, "tis always Thy way' is less one of resignation in the context. It is a complaint against God's seeming capacity to inflict the greatest pain when He inflicts pain at all, continuing the theme of the opening two lines of the text: 'Thou touchest us lightly, O God! in our grief;/But how rough is Thy touch in our prosperous hours!'(487). It is as though God is looking out to have the greatest effect possible as He takes this child. We are reminded again, by the repetitive nature of the text in verse 6, just how fair and dear was this child so that the question, 'was he dearest to Thee' becomes rhetorical suggesting that he could not possibly be; the closing line of the verse being almost thrown in God's face.

Up to this point we may have been convinced of the commitment of the author to his text

and his identification with the subject matter. Yet, if we reflect, we remember that Faber is not married, is a Catholic priest and has no children. Is he, perhaps, constructing the text around the relationship that he has with the members of his order and imagining them as his children? The next stanza gives the lie to this interpretation:

Thou hast honoured my child by the speed of Thy choice,
 Thou hast crowned him with glory, o'erwhelmed him with mirth:
 He sings up in heaven with his sweet sounding voice,
 While I, a saint's mother, am weeping on earth(488).

Suddenly it becomes apparent that the whole text is based on imaginative identification with a mother who has lost her child. This mother is portrayed as struggling to unite the tenets of faith with the reality of experience and as she does so mirrors the experience of so many who are bereaved. She questions, she is angry, she gives expression to her feelings, while at the same time the doctrine that she is struggling to believe surfaces and re-surfaces through her pain.

Her child is honoured, he has been crowned with glory, says her faith. 'He sings up in heaven' as one of the communion of saints, but his mother weeps. She longs to hear the music of his voice, to have him back but: '...not for worlds would I have him re-given,/Yet I long to have back what I would not re-take'.

She seeks a rational explanation:

I grudge him, and grudge him not! Father! Thou knowest

The foolish confusions of innocent sorrow;
 It is thus in Thy husbandry, Saviour! Thou sowest
 The grief of today for the grace of tomorrow.(489)

She reflects on the example of others. They have rejoiced, she thinks, then why is he so sad? There is an understanding of the guilt that often surrounds death:

Thou art blooming in heaven, my Blossom, my Pride!
 And thy beauty makes Jesus and Mary more glad:
 Saints' mothers have sung when their eldest-born died,
 Oh why, my own saint! is thy mother so sad?(490)

The imagery of flowers returns. The word 'Blossom' sounds colloquial, while 'Pride' is suitably ambiguous. The son is certainly his mother's pride but in the area of London where Faber was ministering a particular flower was known as 'London Pride'. In using these words Faber makes the hymn accessible to ordinary people. The reference to 'my own saint' is not, as I have argued already, a sign of arrogant presumption but simply a usage which assumes all God's people to be saints, holy people, the fellowship of believers.

Grief moves on from anger via this sadness to resignation, 'Go, go with thy God, with thy Saviour, my child!/Thou art His...' (491). The movement is not easy, for the writer reflects that this oneness with God is not the unique preserve of those who have died (v11, for 'I am His; and thy sisters are His'). The anger bubbles up again from beneath the surface: 'But today thy fond mother with sorrow is wild,-/To think that her son is an

angel in bliss!'. The final stanza seeks forgiveness for the human emotion and possessiveness of the mother while asking that the child's death might at least have one positive outcome:

Oh forgive me, dear Saviour! on heaven's bright shore
Should I still in my child find a separate joy:
While I lie in the light of Thy face evermore,
May I think heaven brighter because of my boy?(492)

Faber has demonstrated his capacity, not only to write about grief authentically and creatively, but to identify effectively with another so that this work might act as a channel for the expression of their inner emotions and a framework for the exploration of their grief.

3) Hell

Hell is only rarely alluded to in Faber's hymnody. What references there are offer little literal representation of hell. More often hell is seen as the experience in this world of the person whose soul is fettered by the bondage of sin, and so Faber is able to write, 'For years I have borne about hell in my breast'(493). The hell of 'Satan's controul' is none the less real for that and,

It seemed as if nothing less likely could be
Than that light should break in on a dungeon so deep;

To create a new world were less hard than to free

The slave from his bondage, the soul from its sleep.

Hell is something which generates fear, but that can be guarded against by God's grace.

Faber utilises the metaphor of a sunrise to illustrate the effect of such grace. If that grace is regarded as the light of dawn, '...the softly struggling ray', 'Fairer than the pearly morning', begins to lighten the darkness:

...the light is growing brighter,

Fear of hell, and hate of sin;

Another flash! the heart is lighter;

Love of God hath entered in.

Ultimately,

...the favourite passion...

And the lights of world and fashion

In the new light fade apace(494).

When Faber takes a more literal view his language is vivid. Hell is pictured as 'eternal fires'(495) which await the individual(496). Such is the consequence of judgement against the sinner who is borne to, '...unspeakable woes in his wide burning sea'. This is a place 'Where the worms and the wails and the lashes cease never', where ruined souls

sicken of fire(497).

Faber never seeks to generate fear in order to move people towards God:

'Tis not enough to save our souls,
 To shun the eternal fires;
 The thought of God will rouse the heart
 To more sublime desires(498).

His emphasis remains on the winning love of God rather than on the anticipation of hell-fire, and so this latter is not a subject to absorb him even when he is contemplating death and judgement.

Reference was made earlier to Faber's natural progression, from Evangelical Calvinist beginnings, to the recognition of a God of universal grace with the problems that posed for issues of justice. The doctrines of purgatory and limbo enabled him to retain his theological integrity.

The only hymn directly related to purgatory is 'The Queen of Purgatory'(499). Here purgatory is viewed as the environment in which '...Holy Souls burn...amid the cleansing flames'. These people are not condemned for, '...they have fought a gallant fight;/In death's cold arms they persevered'. It is acknowledged that 'The arbour of their rest is near' but, for the moment,

In pains beyond all earthly pains,

Favourites of Jesus! there they lie,
 Letting the fire wear out their stains...

The sense of their state of grace is underlined as they are described as 'Spouses of Christ...for He/Was wedded to them by His blood', and he yearns for them(500), experiencing again the pangs of Calvary. They are children of Mary's tears and the text urges, 'Then hasten, Mother! to their aid'.

The fire in which these souls find themselves is one which fills them, paradoxically, with both pain and love as in this state, '...self-crucified desires/Utter sweet murmurs, and lie still'. Interceding to Mary the author pleads

...let thy Son no more
 His lingering Spouses thus expect;
 God's children to their God restore,
 And to the Spirit His elect.

In the next verse it is not clear whether the subject changes, so that Faber addresses the people of the church, or whether he continues to speak to Mary:

Pray then, as thou hast ever prayed;
 Angels and Souls, all look to thee;
 God waits thy prayers, for he hath made
 Those prayers His law of charity(501).

If the former is the case then Faber is impressing on the reader the necessity to pray for those who have died as an efficacious act of charity. The use of the lower case for 'thy' does not, however, prevent Mary from being the subject of this plea.

Similarly a single text addresses limbus, 'The Descent of Jesus to Limbus'(502):

Thousands of years had come and gone,
 And slow the ages seemed to move
 To those expectant souls that filled
 That prison-house of patient love.

As in 'The Eternal Years'(503) Faber uses the traditional image of the prison-house, also utilised by Wordsworth, but here the intention is less obscure. God's love holds those who wait for the freedom to be brought by Christ on the cross. Their watch has been characteristically weary, but it is described as a 'contented weariness'. Faber uses a metaphor drawn from the sea, that of the gradual filling of a harbour as the tide comes in. The image stresses the inexorable nature of the process into which they are bound. They can only wait in the growing 'calm of that dread place'.

Joseph is pictured as cheering the people with the news that Jesus' work of salvation had begun. Eve is imagined following Joseph like a shadow. She had waited longest and, '...lived on thoughts of Mary's child,/Trembled with hope, and was content'(504).

Everything is hushed as the 'glorious Form' of Jesus, "Tis God! 'Tis Man!",
 '...finds/Through central earth its ready way'. As Eve caught the vision,

She flew from Joseph's haunted side,
 And worshipped, first of all that crowd
 The Soul of Jesus crucified.(505)

Faber implies the date of the Fall as he sings in peroration:

So after four long thousand years,
 Faith reached her end, and Hope her aim,
 And from them, as they passed away,
 Love lit her everlasting flame.

In these texts Faber demonstrates his own need, but also the belief that he wishes to convey, that the grace of God is an inescapable reality even for someone who existed before Christ, or died without their sin being resolved by the institution of the church.

4) Heaven

'How fares it with the happy dead?' asks Tennyson, not without irony, as he reflects on the death of Hallam and pleads that his doubt might be assuaged,

O turn thee round, resolve the doubt
 My guardian angel will speak out
 In that high place, and tell thee all(506).

perception of heaven, Faber sees life's emotions, 'loves, hopes, smiles, and tears' shielding us from the reality of 'the Eternal Years' in such a way that they become a 'prison-house'. Not only is the language lifted directly from Wordsworth but the use to which it is put is the same. All that differs is the stronger Christian image of 'the Eternal Years'. This having been said it is worth noting that the term 'prison-house' was used by Faber in another, and altogether different, context. In a letter to J.B. Morris in 1845 he wrote: "...we utterly loathe that unaltered, unsacrificed prison-house of heresy and schism out of which we have been delivered'(510). Here he is speaking after his conversion to Catholicism, a conversion which he saw as being part of his salvation and which opened his eyes to see what the Church of England had been to him. Within Catholicism he found a new freedom and so the imagery is entirely appropriate. This raises the question as to whether underlying the theme of 'The Eternal Years' there is a sub-text related to his own conversion, in which case the 'loves, hopes, smiles, and tears' are not only those ties related to the human condition (as Wordsworth would agree) but also the emotional adjuncts of flawed religion which give us a false sense of security.

This text ('The Eternal Years') also provides another view of heaven as Faber contemplates the human passage through death. Here we are moving to a place of hope and so as rain falling in sunlight will form a rainbow, that archetypal symbol of hope so:

Death will have rainbows round it, seen

Through calm contrition's tears,

If tranquil hope but trims her lamp

At the Eternal Years.

Heaven is to be anticipated with calm reverential hope. It will provide a sense of liberation, 'Free! free! the joyous light of heaven/Comes with full and fair release'(511) and will be received as a gift of grace. To enter heaven is to have access to a community of peace and love for heaven is, 'the heart's true home'(512), and, '...nothing less can satisfy/The love that longs for God(513). This is the point of union with, 'Jesus, Mary, love and peace'(514) where God himself will welcome us:

...God hath been there long before,
 Eternally hath waited on that shore
 For us who were to come
 To our eternal home.(515)

It is the place '...where sorrows cease', for

To a new life, to an old past,
 Softly and silently we haste,
 Into a land of peace.(516)

Life can direct us to this end, and in some sense the experience of heaven can be anticipated on earth in our relationship with Jesus, for the nature of such communion is of 'Light in darkness, Joy in grief,/...Heaven begun on earth!'(517) That having been said, such direction is neither certain or predetermined:

Life has its joinings and its breaks,
 But each transition swiftly takes

Us nearer to or further from

The threshold of our heavenly home.(518)

This is an opinion, however, which Faber seems to contradict elsewhere, expressing the view that 'Time...grows into eternity', inexorably and irresistibly, 'Like noiseless trees, when men are sleeping', implying that humanity is also drawn in that same direction, for

I greatly long to see

The special place my dearest Lord

Is destining for me.(519)

The word 'destining' is inelegant but the lines are confident, borne out of Faber's Catholicism, and devoid of that doubt engendered by Calvinism. He has moved nearer to Butler. Now he can assert that 'Hope...holds to God' and is, 'Sweetest when most it seems forsaken'(520). Heaven is to be approached through a life of joyous song in which it is realised, 'Blest is the Death that good men die...Trusting to God its destiny'(521). To this end we toil, 'Till life's long night shall break in endless love'(522).

In this pilgrimage we may sometimes be held back by a false sense of security found in those things of this life that are familiar, and through this familiarity bring comfort. Even, '...past sorrow is sort of home/An exile's home...'(523), but

It narrows life, and walls it in,

And shuts the door on many a sin;

'Tis almost like a calm fireside,

Where humble hearts are fain to bide.(524)

In spite of this, as years pass, 'The world seems less and less a home', 'Homesick we are for thee,/Calm Land beyond the sea'(525). 'What was sweet has now grown bitter,/What was bitter passing sweet'(526), and Faber senses that, 'My soul appears, as I get old,/More prompt in act, in prayer less cold...I wish more simply, Lord! to be,/Ailing or well, always with Thee!' Heaven is looked on as that place where the pain of earthly love may be transmuted to bliss(527) for our present home seems dark, 'By the dull beach and sullen foam', and so, '...wearily, how drearily we roam(528). This sense of dislocation is given expression in another text ('Paradise') in which Faber writes:

'Tis weary to be here;

I long to be where Jesus is,

To feel, to see Him near.(529)

Weariness in this life was a characteristic expression of the age.

As I have indicated elsewhere, death in Victorian England was frequently viewed as sleep, the grave as a bed. It is not surprising then for Faber to continue the use of the metaphor:

Thou scarce wilt hope the Rock to gain,

Yet there wilt sleep thy last sleep on the plain;

And only wake

In heaven's daybreak,

Rest in the shadow of the rock(530).

It is interesting to note the use of spatial image of sleep, 'on the plain', implying that human destiny is above.

The imagery of the sea is a common feature of hymnody reflecting on death: 'Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day'('Abide with me'). Faber is quite at ease utilising this medium of Romantic poetry. This is not surprising, given the extent of his travels recounted in his writings. For him heaven is easily equated with 'The Land beyond the sea', and this present world as '...the dull beach'. Heaven is that '...soft blue shore,/O'er the dark strait whose billows foam and roar'. This land is 'Sometimes distinct and near' and the gulf between us and it '...narrows to a threadlike mere'. Sometimes, '...slanting sunbeams lie, and seem to wait/For us to pass to thee'. This is a place of anticipated 'endless rest' to which we, 'Have borne, now singly, now in fleets, the biers/Of those we love', where rest is sweet:

Upon thy shores eternally possess;
 For Jesus reigns o'er thee,
 Calm Land beyond the sea!(531)

Here we will not be alone. But though aware that we might ask, Faber opens stanza 7 of 'The Shore of Eternity' with a question:

Alone? The God we know is on that shore,
 The God of whose attractions we know more

Than those who may appear
 Nearest and dearest here:
 Oh is He not the life-long friend we know
 More privately than any friend below?(532)

This friend is the one '...we shall trust...more in that new life' (533). This will be a point of reunion for,

We shall meet more we know
 Than we can meet below,
 And find our rest like some returning dove,
 And be at home at once with our Eternal Love!(534)

This was an age in which the family was viewed idealistically. Tennyson painted the picture of the home that would never welcome back the one who had found love within its walls, 'For now her father's chimney glows/In expectation of a guest' and Christmas cannot be properly kept for 'household peace' is vexed(535). Home was seen as the precursor to heaven, heaven the culmination of all that was striven for in the ideal home. J.M. Neale's words portray 'Heaven' as the 'blessed home or country in which loved ones meet': 'Sweet and blessed country,/The home of God's elect' while H.W. Baker writes 'There is a blessed home'(536). In this light Wheeler points out that Victorian hymns treat heaven as 'a transcendent spiritual dimension rather than a projection of earthly desires'. It is a location where 'family reunions and the "recognition of friends" are achieved after death...a site in which lovers are reunited as couples'(537). More cynically, or perhaps perceptively, Matthew Arnold reflected that heaven was, to this age,

a kind of perfect middle-class home, with labour ended, the
table spread, goodness all around, the lost ones restored,
hymnody incessant'(538).

Home and heaven become related for the 'home' must have an eternal dimension which
cannot be dissembled by death.

Here we suffer grief and pain,
Here we meet to part again,
In heaven we part no more.
Oh! that will be joyful,
Joyful, joyful, joyful!
Oh! that will be joyful,
When we meet to part no more(539).

Faber is equally comfortable with the concept of heaven as 'paradise' and uses this as a
title for one text. Heaven is here viewed as a place of exultation:

Who would not seek the happy land,
Where they that love are blest;
Where loyal hearts, and true,
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight.(540)

Death is but a delay to the '...welcome dawn/Of our eternal day'(541), where we will find that, '...love is never cold'(542).

In a text which owes much to the book of Revelation, Faber specifically addresses the subject of heaven. It is a towered city, richly jewelled, filled with flowers, suffused with the fragrance of incense and gleaming with light(543). Faber asks to whom the city belongs: 'To what mighty king doth this city belong?' He pictures the inhabitants and defines their occupation:

See! forth from the gates, like a bridal array,
 Come the princes of heaven, how bravely they shine!
 'Tis to welcome the stranger, to show me the way,
 And to tell me that all I see round me is mine.

This is assurance indeed, particularly when we consider that here, 'The mighty Apostles are seated in state,/With Joseph and John' (who were appointed by Jesus to wait on Mary). The text is tempered by the intervening verse which indicates that Faber is not nearly as presumptuous as he appears:

There are millions of saints, in their ranks and degrees,
 And each with a beauty and crown of his own;
 And there, far outnumbering the sands of the seas,
 The nine rings of Angels encircle the throne.(544)

The vision is one of the communion of saints rather than a supremely exclusive gathering and, given Faber's comment that 'There is grace enough for thousands/Of new worlds as great as this'(545), this is what might be expected. In this light the 'ordinary' Christian might share Faber's vision and expectation, though any sense of pride is countered by the image of Angels reminding the reader that the heavenly realm far surpasses that of earth in every sense.

As might be expected, from a contemporary European Catholic perspective, and more particularly from Faber's own standpoint

...still deeper in, Mary's splendour is seen,
 Her beautiful self and her choice starry crown;
 And all heaven grows bright in the smile of its Queen,
 For the glory of Jesus illumines her throne.

The vision is mystical in its power to persuade, for

...if the exiles of earth could but win
 One sight of the beauty of Jesus above,
 From that hour they would cease to be able to sin.

A consequence of this would be the transformation of earth into heaven, 'for heaven is love'. This is an inversion of Charles Wesley's words, '...and own that love is heaven'('O for a thousand tongues'). While Wesley might have paused at this point, Faber continues

in a text which interweaves themes from Revelation and passages from the prophets and the gospels which speak of the Kingdom. Here is a vision of peace, though paradoxically, and in an image which owes more to illustrations of hell than of heaven, he refers to 'its worshipful seeming, its marvellous fires'. This can only be a Pentecostal allusion. Here sorrow ends:

No sickness is here, no bleak bitter cold,

No hunger, debt, prison, or weariful toil;

No robbers to rifle our treasures of gold,

No rust to corrupt, and no canker to spoil. (546)

This verse is extraordinary in its economy of language and in the number of images from different sources that are juxtaposed. The repetitive use of the word 'no', no less than six times in four lines, emphasises the contrast between worldly expectation and heavenly anticipation. Reference to lack of sickness and hunger reflect Isaiah 61 as quoted by Jesus in Luke 4 and his description of the judgement in Matthew 25. Good news to the poor is conveyed in a contemporary and realistic manner in the assurance that there will be no more debt. This is skilfully allied with prison, which was often the consequence of debt. Faber knew that, no matter how other-worldly the vision he was portraying, he would only be taken seriously if the vision was rooted and grounded in a realistic perception of the present experience of his congregation. They knew wearisome toil. The sense of weariness, we have already observed, was characteristic of the age. The treasures of gold are metaphorical, for we are advised to lay up treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot corrupt, and here such treasures are also safe from theft. The remaining points of interest are the lingering signs of the influence of the Romantic

movement as Faber uses literal descriptions from nature to enhance his vision of the incorruptible peace where there is 'no bleak bitter cold' and 'no canker to spoil'.

This Romantic influence is carried into the next verse which is personal and introspective:

My God! and it was but a short hour ago
 That I lay on a bed of unbearable pains;
 All was cheerless around me, all weeping and woe.(547)

Faber writes out of his own experience of suffering but then holds faith up as a mirror to experience as he reflects: 'Now the wailing is changed to angelical strains'. Service of God did not blot out worldly happiness, for such service was the source of enjoyment:

I had hardly to give; 'twas enough to receive,
 Only not to impede the sweet grace from above;
 And, this first hour in heaven, I can hardly believe
 In so great a reward for so little love.(548)

The hymn is reminiscent of the evangelical hymnody of Charles Wesley ('And can it be that I should gain/An interest in the Saviour's blood')) and John Newton ('Amazing grace') in the astonishment of the author at the comprehensive and undeserved grace in which he feels he is bathed.

C) CONCLUSION - AN ASSESSMENT OF FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER'S HYMNS AS THEY SEEK TO ADDRESS THE FOUR LAST THINGS

In this conclusion I will seek to assess how F.W. Faber's work compares with his contemporaries in addressing this subject, the degree to which Faber attains the goal he has set himself in the preface to his Hymns, and the extent to which his texts exhibit any enduring quality.

1) Faber and His Contemporaries

In The Christian Year John Keble set out to enable his readers to mould their thoughts 'into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer Book. This intention is clearly different from that of Faber who, in modelling his collection in part on A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists and the Olney Hymns, sought to provide for his people, 'a hymn-book for reading, which should contain the mysteries of the faith in easy verse...with the same unadorned simplicity as the "O for a closer walk with God" of the Olney Hymns'. He states that he finds the hymns of Wesley, Newton and Cowper, together with those of 'the more refined and engaging works of Oxford writers...wanting to us in our labours among the hymn-loving English'(549). In this wish to provide hymns for ordinary people he sought to emulate St. Philip Neri(550).

In doing this his words are generally not as vivid as some of Caswall's in dealing with visions of hell, but there are parallels with Keble in his use of Romantic images. Keble, in

his hymn for the burial of the dead, like Faber, uses the metaphor of the sun, though his is a 'wan autumnal sun'. In the face of death it is not necessary for the widow's heart to break or 'The childless mother sink', though he is cognisant of 'friends that press officious round'. For Keble comfort comes mystically, for

Even such an awful soothing calm

We sometimes see alight

On Christian mourners, while they wait

In silence by some church-yard gate,

Their summons to the holy rite.

This calm comes verbally in the affirmation "'The Resurrection and the Life/Am I: believe and die no more'" which, it is implied, will both be spoken in the church and heard by the dead from God. Keble, like Faber, indicates that death is a time of newness, for they 'Meet for their new immortal birth' and in Paradise grows the store of those we love (cf., 'The Memory of the Dead'). Again, in a style typical of the period, Keble views heaven as 'endless home'(551).

It is clear that in Faber we detect parallels with Keble, who was a contemporary (The Christian Year was first published in 1827), but he is more clearly influenced by Herbert. Like Herbert he seeks to speak pastorally to the human condition. What other authors have observed he has experienced and, with great facility, has given this experience expression in his verse, so that others might read and find both a sense of compassion but also comfort grounded in a sure faith.

Linguistically it is certain that Faber was greatly influenced by William Wordsworth.

These words from The Excursion (Book V) might well be a statement of his belief:

Life, I repeat, is energy of love
 Divine or human; exercised in pain,
 In strife, and tribulation; and ordained,
 If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
 Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy.(552)

They differ in lacking the strictly rhythmic quality of much of Faber's verse, which makes the latter singable, though also more archaic to contemporary ears.

'Hymns on the Last Things' surpasses any other Victorian collection dedicated to this theme. Set alongside a selection such as Charlotte Elliott's Hours of Sorrow Cheered and Comforted(1836) Faber's texts demonstrate a clear superiority. Both authors can be sentimental, but Faber has a greater sensitivity to the pain of grief, and a wider understanding of its consequences as loss affects different people.

In many of Faber's texts dealing with bereavement there are similarities with Tennyson's In Memoriam, though there is no direct evidence of dependence. Tennyson 'spoke for a whole generation... [anticipating] a general decline in belief in the traditional hell of gulfs and forgotten fields' and by recognising the 'spectral doubt' that touches even the strongest faith':

For tho' my nature rarely yields

To that vague fear implied in death;
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
 The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
 An inner trouble I behold,
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold
 That I shall be thy mate no more...(553)

Tennyson related the 'gulfs' and 'forgotten fields' to 'the eternal miseries of the inferno.' For him 'the cardinal point of Christianity is life after death'. Though Hallam would have been able to make the world better had he survived, his character, made in God's image ('half-divine'), gave hope for the development of humankind in a future life which could culminate in the salvation of the whole world. This was the basis of a broader Christianity grounded in love and finding expression more clearly in the incarnation as epitomised by the gospel according to John, rather than in the resurrection which is neglected, comparatively, as a theme by Tennyson.(554)

For Faber, reflection on hell was a powerful incentive to virtue. In doctrinal notes he portrayed hell with lurid imagery in keeping with the influence of Liguori. Nevertheless Faber taught that a man should have ten thoughts of heaven for every thought of hell(565), and he adopted with even greater tenacity the Ultramontane emphasis on a loving God. This permeates his hymnody, as does the influence of the growth of devotion to Mary which he witnessed on the continent.

2) Faber's Attainment of His Own Goals

In the preface of All for Jesus Faber states:

As a son of St. Philip I have especially to do with the world and with people living in the world, and trying to be good there, and to sanctify themselves 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.(556)

In his hymnody Faber's philosophy was much the same. It was his intention to provide a vehicle for ordinary people to use for the expression of their faith, a hymn-book for reading'. The book was to match the 1857 edition of his poems and was intended, '...chiefly as a book of spiritual reading'(557).

An entire section is devoted to 'The Last Things', hymns

which deal with devotion to the dead, with sorrow, and the consolation of the sorrowful...naturally classed with those on death, the future state, eternity, and the joys of heaven(558).

Faber stressed the significance of death more than any other Tractarian convert. Death was 'the interpretation of [a person's] life '(559). He provides a focus of hope rather than

one of judgement, yet he does this without avoiding the difficult issue of how to present the subject of bereavement to those for whom it was a common experience. During the cholera epidemic of 1854, parish priests were anointing seventy to eighty people per day in London(560). Death was a present reality towards which people felt themselves inexorably drawn.

Faber had the capacity to make firm statements of faith while, at the same time, being able to explore the process of grief with its associated disbelief, anger, bargaining, depression and ultimately resignation. He followed the conventions of his day in relation to his portrayal of the 'Last Things', though the concept of judgement is invariably tempered by emphasising the place of mercy alongside justice. Hell is rarely addressed as a subject, though when it is discussed the language he uses is characteristically vivid. He also explores the doctrines of purgatory and limbo. Limbo addresses the fate of those who have died before the redemptive work of Christ. Faber's view of purgatory is in keeping with that of the Treatise on Purgatory of St. Catherine of Genoa. She believed that in purgatory human souls recognise in a moment of vision their relationship with God for what it is. Her view of purgatory was 'intrinsic and ameliorative' rather than 'extrinsic and vindictive'(561)

Heaven is seen as the home from which we are exiled, and which increasingly beckons us as more of our contemporaries die. Death is the means of obtaining heaven, something not to be feared, for God greets us and Jesus has passed this way before us.

By beginning with people's experience, and grounding his writing firmly in the cultural expressions and images of his day, Faber made his work thoroughly accessible to those

for whom it was produced. It would have been easy to move from a secular poem reflecting on the nature of death, such as Wordsworth's 'We are seven'(562), with its insistence that the family cannot be broken even by death, to Faber's reflection on the dead that, '...they are more our own,/Since now they are God's only'('The Memory of the Dead'). Equally the theological analogy of death with sleep is maintained as:

...grown-up men secure
 Better manhood, by a brave leap
 Through the chill mist of thy thin sleep -
 Manhood that will endure.

while 'The old, the very old,/Smile when their slumberous eye grows dim'('The Paths of Death').

It is difficult to judge the usefulness of individual texts at a distance, as the only real judgement of their perceived worth is given by their preservation, by those other than the author, in later collections. Much of what Faber wrote did survive but the test is not an entirely sufficient one for the simple reason that the texts have been judged invariably as hymns for singing, while that had never been their entire purpose. We have no evidence as to how many people jealously kept copies of these words for their personal use, or passed them to friends in letters of condolence at times of bereavement. Such evidence would better enable us to assess whether Faber really achieved his goal.

3) The Lasting Value of Faber's Hymns on the Four Last Things

Chapman's question as to whether Faber's hymns are 'entirely mediocre' has to be answered in the negative(563), though it is true that much of his verse would have benefited from editorial attention. His rhymes are sometimes trite or forced as in: 'O happy Pyx! O happy Pyx!/Where Jesus doth His dwelling fix'!(564). His texts are also frequently excessively sentimental:

As men to their gardens
 Go to seek sweet flowers,
 In our hearts dear Jesus
 Seeks them at all hours(565)

Perhaps this is little more than an imitation of contemporary continental hymnody, but even when echoing this he could write so much better as we witness in 'The Life of Our Lord':

Father! Creator! Lord Most High!
 Sweet Jesus! Fount of Clemency!
 Blest Spirit! who dost sanctify!
 God ruling over all!
 The Dolours Christ did once endure,
 Oh grant that I, with spirit pure,
 Devoutly may recall.(566)

which is, itself, a paraphrase of the *Paradisus Animae*. Gilley, observing the obvious crudity of the religious culture in which Faber operated, has commented:

The enlightened may consider this folk religion, not of the highest quality; it is not for the historian to judge whether folk faith is better than none at all.(567)

Where Faber excelled is in what might be styled 'pastoral hymnody', that which seeks to frame the spiritual and emotional experience of bereavement. His own experience enabled him to know the feeling that derived from grief and he had, himself, struggled with faith in the loss of his parents, particularly his mother. This experience is not unique, but Faber had the facility to translate these experiences into verses in such a manner that another person reading them would easily identify with them and make the words his/her own. His language was criticised by John Ellerton as being too sensuous(568), but it is just this sensuality which gives many of his texts their force. Newman was described as, cold, 'like marble' - 'cruel, hard-hearted',(569), on his own admission lacking in gratitude to his father to whom he, 'was cold, stiff, reserved'(570). Faber was, if anything, the opposite.

Additionally, Faber had a fertile imagination that enabled him, through empathy with another, to write a text which would mirror their experience even though it was not his own. This is nowhere more apparent than in 'A Child's Death' in which the subject of the text is a mother who has lost her dearest child.

Faber passes on to us three chief resources of value. Firstly, the structure of his collection as a whole reminds us that the purpose of life and faith lies beyond this life,

beyond the individual, and that there is a reality to eternity. Secondly, he has provided a collection of hymnody which unselfconsciously analysed the grief process long before it was given such a name. Thirdly, in doing this he has provided texts which enable people to give expression to their feelings in private devotion or public worship. This latter feature recognises what Beck and Brueggemann were to state many years later, that the church must, of necessity, reclaim the ability to lament and that such lamentation, which has its foundation in the Psalms, must find new channels through which to flow within the liturgy of each succeeding generation.

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