

**THE SPIRIT OF FATHER  
FABER, APOSTLE OF  
LONDON**

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The spirit of Father Faber, Apostle of London by Frederick William Faber & Wilfrid Meynell

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**FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER & WILFRID MEYNELL**

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LONDON**





F. W. Faber

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# THE SPIRIT OF FATHER FABER APOSTLE OF LONDON

WITH A PREFACE BY  
WILFRID MEYNELL

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NEW YORK  
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 1914

SG



**H**OW one comes to love this great huge London, when God has thrown us into it as our vineyard! The monster—it looks so unmanageable, and it is positively so awfully wicked, so hopelessly magnificent, so heretically wise and proud after its own fashion. Yet after a fashion it is good also. Such a multitudinous remnant who have never bowed the knee to Baal, such numbers seeking their way to the light, such hearts Grace touched, so much secret holiness, such supernatural lives, such loyalty, mercy, sacrifice, sweetness, greatness. St. Vincent Ferrer preached in its streets, and Fr. Colombiere in its mews. Do not keep down what is good in it. Help people to be saints. Not all who ask for help really wish it, when it comes to be painful. But some do. Raise ten souls to detachment from creatures, and to close union with God, and what will happen to this monster city? Who can tell? Monster as it is, it is not altogether unamiable. It means well often, even when it is cruel. Well-meaning persons are unavoidably cruel. Yet it is often as helpless and as deserving of compassion as it is of wrath and malediction. Poor Babylon! would she might have a blessing from her unknown God, and that Grace might find its way even into her Areopagus!—F. W. FABER.





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## FREDERICK WILFRID FABER

FATHER Faber (who, on his death-bed asked for *Dombey*), is himself, in some sort, a spiritual Dickens. Of all devotional writers, of the nineteenth century and in England, Faber is the most vital; and, if he is the most heavenly, he is also the most human. Even the critic who lays a detecting finger on a page of false sentiment presently feels the throb of a living sympathy beneath the letters. Indeed, lacking such sympathy, Dickens and Faber could not have achieved their truth to type—to such various types. Fecundity of fancy and of expression they had in common; and each, in his writing wore out, not his pen only, but the fibres of his feeling heart.

“The child of his mother’s prayers” was born in the June of 1814, at the Yorkshire vicarage of Calverley, and went duly to Shrewsbury, to Harrow, and to Oxford. His link—not always a very fast one—with Newman began in those eager days. At first he was drawn to the Oxford Movement, yet also repelled by it; but after his ordination the reflections of a quiet country rectory developed all that was Catholic in him. He was received into the Roman Church in the November of 1845. When Newman

## PREFACE

established the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Birmingham, Faber became the head of the London Community, founding in King William Street, and then in Brompton, the Oratory which yet enshrines his spirit. Son of St. Philip, Apostle of Rome, he there, by voice and pen, became, what he must remain, the APOSTLE OF LONDON.

Of the many books he wrote, the present volume preserves the essence. In so vast a bulk of writing as was his may be found much that is superfluous, many repetitions, some contradictions. But there is one animating spirit throughout, and that is Love. Love is all his motive power. There is nothing mechanical about his piety. It is all feeling. Men are his fellows. He invites where others drive, encourages where it is easier to scold. He says "Come" rather than "Go"; and it is just because he himself is generous that he will always receive his due. He lived to ease souls; and, in dying, promised those about him that he would pray for them that they might have "easy deaths." That is a Grace which indeed his writings, by their influence on character, have secured for myriads who never saw his face; and it is a Grace which, he in Heaven helping, this volume shall perpetuate and extend.

W. M.

London, 1914.