

# **NON-CATHOLIC DENOMINATIONS**

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Non-Catholic denominations by Robert Hugh Benson

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**ROBERT HUGH BENSON**

**NON-CATHOLIC  
DENOMINATIONS**



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# NON-CATHOLIC DENOMINATIONS

BY THE  
REV. ROBERT HUGH BENSON, M.A.

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## EDITORS' PREFACE.

THIS series of Handbooks is designed to meet a need, which, the Editors believe, has been widely felt, and which results in great measure from the predominant importance attached to Dogmatic and Moral Theology in the studies preliminary to the Priesthood. That the first place must of necessity be given to these subjects will not be disputed. But there remains a large outlying field of professional knowledge which is always in danger of being crowded out in the years before ordination, and the practical utility of which may not be fully realised until some experience of the ministry has been gained. It will be the aim of the present series to offer the sort of help which is dictated by such experience, and its developments will be largely guided by the suggestions, past and future, of the Clergy themselves. To provide Textbooks for Dogmatic Treatises is not contemplated—at any rate not at the outset. On the other hand, the pastoral work of the missionary priest will be kept constantly in view, and the series will also deal with those historical and liturgical aspects of Catholic



belief and practice which are every day being brought more into prominence.

That the needs of English-speaking countries are, in these respects, exceptional, must be manifest to all. In point of treatment it seems desirable that the volumes should be popular rather than scholastic, but the Editors hope that by the selection of writers, fully competent in their special subjects, the information given may always be accurate and abreast of modern research.

The kind approval of this scheme by His Grace the Archbishop of Westminster, in whose Diocese these manuals are edited, has suggested that the series should be introduced to the public under the general title of *THE WESTMINSTER LIBRARY*. It is hoped, however, that contributors may also be found among the distinguished Clergy of Ireland and America, and that the Westminster Library will be representative of Catholic scholarship in all English-speaking countries.

## INTRODUCTORY.

UNTIL comparatively recent days the Church in England had to struggle for her very existence. Three hundred years had passed away during which every force that the world could wield was brought against her, from the rack and the gallows down to civil disabilities and social ostracism. It was with difficulty that her children could be educated in their faith or their fathers practise it. She went, as has been said, down into the catacombs again, content if she could but preserve the deposit committed to her trust, to bring it up once more into the light of day so soon as this tyranny should be overpast. That time has at last arrived, and the security of her position once more has been marked by such events as the recent Eucharistic Congress held publicly in London.

Innumerable results have, however, emerged from this period of twilight. She has come out again, it is true, the same as ever, yet her retirement in the dark has had its inevitable effects—effects indeed that, like scars received in battle,

are to her honour rather than her disrepute from the cause for which she has suffered them—yet effects that on the human side to some degree hinder her usefulness. There has grown up, for example, a certain almost indefinable barrier between her children and those of the world, misunderstandings and ignorances on either side that ought not to be: her children are accused of being "un-English" or "Italian," and to some extent acquiesce even gladly in the charge; her ceremonial for instance has scarcely a full national continuity with that which she used four hundred years ago; a thousand instincts, manners of speech and behaviour, phraseology and the like separate her from the children of those who were her children: she has been forced into the company of those who were once partly foreign to her, and lost touch with traditions which, though utterly unessential, might have been found useful for her re-introduction to the country which was once her own.

And more than this:—

In penal days the supreme duty of Catholics was that which has been mentioned—to keep the faith. It was for this that their fathers bled and suffered. It is not to be wondered at therefore that here and there Catholics should be found who still are apt, almost unconsciously, to regard this as their whole duty before God and man,