

**SHALL ROME
RECONQUER
ENGLAND?**

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Shall Rome reconquer England? by R. F. Horton & Joseph Hocking

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BY

R. F. HORTON, D.D.

AND

JOSEPH HOCKING

LONDON

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES
F. B. MEYER, MEMORIAL HALL, E.C.

1765
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FOREWORD

AS will be seen from the title-page, this little book is the work of two authors. The contributions of each are indicated on the page of contents. Usually, especially when dealing with a controversial subject, a dual authorship presents great difficulties. In the present case, however, those difficulties have not existed, as there was practically no difference of opinion in relation to the main issues under discussion, until the last chapter was reached. The author of that chapter there deals with the duty of Protestants, and specially mentions what he thinks should be our attitude towards the King's Declaration and the inspection of monastic institutions. His opinions concerning these questions are not altogether shared by his fellow-worker, who would rather urge the following :—

First, that a strong Protestant declara-

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tion on the part of the Sovereign is essential, and that while no offensive terms should be used, it is necessary, by legal enactments, to secure the Protestant succession to the throne. If the present safeguards, such as the King's Declaration, the Bill of Rights, and the Act of Settlement, were removed, or so weakened that a Roman Catholic could occupy the British throne, it would not only mean that we might have a Sovereign who would pay allegiance to a foreign power, a power that has ever been an enemy to the liberties of the people, but would probably mean that our nation would be plunged into all the horrors of a civil war. However, we have been lately assured that the Protestant succession is safely guarded, and so we profoundly hope that while there has been much apprehension on account of the action which the Government has taken in relation to the King's Declaration, it will never be possible for a Papist, whether he be one in secret like Charles II., or one openly avowed like James II., will ever again sit on the British throne.

With regard to the question of the inspection of monastic institutions, while both

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writers believe in the necessity for such inspection, their reasons for urging it are different. The author of the chapter under discussion urges that monastic institutions should be inspected for their own sakes. His co-worker would urge inspection not only for their own sakes, but for the sake of the community at large. At the present moment there are, according to the best information obtainable, more monastic institutions in England than existed in the time of Henry VIII.; moreover, every convent and monastery is practically a sealed house. One European nation after another has expelled them as homes of treason and as dangerous to the well-being of the state. M. Yves Guyot says concerning them: "The religious congregations are a STATE WITHIN A STATE. But they are not merely that. They possess a terrible solvent force, and, like the strong vinegar that bursts granite rocks, are capable of undermining the most solid edifice raised by the most united people."

But more than this: these institutions should be open to Government inspection for the sake of the inmates. In this connection it may not be amiss to quote the following:

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" Convents are sealed houses. In them are thousands of our fellow-creatures. Most of them enter in youth when their natures are most susceptible to influence. They are strictly guarded. Obedience is one of the great laws of life. A ghastly curse rests on those who dare to escape. They are taught to destroy all human affection. Do they wish to come into the world again? We do not know, cannot know, except on some rare occasion one happens to escape. They are under the dominion of a confessor whom to disobey is regarded as sin. . . . I make no charge of cruelty, immorality, or crime. But I assert that anything can be done, children can be born, and women can die, there can be cruelty, crime, outrage, and yet no one has the right to know anything about it.

" And yet is it not a fact that besides these, practically every public institution of every sort—asylum, prison, reformatory—is open to public inspection? Why is it that Rome should so rule our land that convents, monasteries, and the industrial institutions associated with that Church should be exempt? The public has a right to know

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that all is well within these prison houses, especially in view of their history ancient and modern." †

Apart from these two questions, however, the authors hold practically the same opinion on the main issues with which this book deals. Both have for many years been interested in the subjects under discussion, and have in one form and another placed their views before the public. As a consequence they have received no small amount of abuse from the Romanist press, while names of the most opprobrious nature have been hurled at them. Of these they have taken no notice, neither have they in any fashion condescended to use the methods of controversialists whose aim has apparently been, not to arrive at truth, but to tarnish the names of those who have not agreed with them.

But they feel it wise and necessary to reissue, in a more compact form, the facts and arguments which lead them to offer an unflinching resistance to the attempt which

† From a paper on the "Alarming Developments of Romanism," read at the National Free Church Council, Swansea, March 10, 1909.