

**THE SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS IN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
UNBROKEN; OR, THE NAG'S
HEAD
FABLE REFUTED. A POSTSCRIPT**

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The Succession of Bishops in the Church of England Unbroken; Or, the Nag's Head Fable
Refuted. A Postscript by E. C. Harington

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E. C. HARRINGTON

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IN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND UNBROKEN;
OR,
THE NAG'S HEAD FABLE REFUTED.

WITH

A Postscript

ON THE ORDINATION SERVICES OF EDWARD THE SIXTH,
IN REPLY TO THE NINTH LETTER OF THE
REV. J. SPENCER NORTHCOTE.

BY

E. C. HARINGTON, M.A.

FREBENDARY OF EXETER AND INCUMBENT OF ST. DAVID;
AUTHOR OF "THE OBJECT, ETC. OF THE CONSECRATION OF CHURCHES,"
"TWO ORDINATION SERMONS," ETC.

LONDON:
FRANCIS AND JOHN RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE.

EXETER:
HANNAFORD.

1846.

PREFACE.

"The objection sometimes advanced, that the Succession was broken in the sixteenth century, is too weak to require refutation."—HARRINGTON'S Ordination Sermons.*

Unhappily the Author, when he wrote the above paragraph, was unacquainted with the extent of human credulity, and the influence of popular prejudice. He has been informed that the *Nag's Head Fable* is still believed by many, who therefore deny the fact of the *Apostolical Succession in the Church of England*. He learns, likewise, that those who question the *unbroken succession of English Bishops*, propagate their opinions with much assiduity. He has therefore been induced to reprint (with considerable additions) this little

* *Published at the request of the Lord Bishop of Exeter, in 1845.*

treatise, which has already appeared in the *British Magazine*, in order to elucidate the fact of Archbishop Parker's Consecration. The Author neither has nor claims any merit whatever, save that of enabling every class of readers to ascertain facts and to peruse arguments in a small compass, which are now dispersed throughout various works, not always accessible to those who may be anxious for information on subjects of such deep interest as the one in question. To any reader who may complain of brevity, or may require additional information, the Author would suggest a careful perusal of the works of *Bramhall*, (with the *Preface*, *Notes*, and *Appendix* of the edition in the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*.) of *Courayer*, *Mason*, and *Browne*: to them he is chiefly indebted for the subject-matter contained in the following pages.

ST. DAVID'S, EXETER.
September 7, 1846.

THE SUCCESSION OF BISHOPS
IN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND UNBROKEN;

OR,

The Nag's Head Fable refuted.

THE question as to the "*Validity of English Ordination*," is one of vital consequence to every member of the Anglican branch of the Church Catholic; it is, therefore, not a matter of wonder that any doubt which may be cast on the "*succession of English Bishops*," or the "*validity of ordination in the Church of England*," should create a deep interest in the mind of every member of that Church. It may, indeed, excite surprise, that, with such advocates as *Bramhall*,¹ *Mason*,² *Williams*,³ *Broune*,⁴ and *Courayer*,⁵ any doubt

¹ *The Consecration and Succession of Protestant Bishops justified; and that infamous Fable of the Ordination at the Nag's Head clearly confuted.*

² *Vindication of the Church of England, &c.*

³ *Succession of Protestant Bishops asserted.*

⁴ *The Story of the Ordination of the Nag's Head Tavern thoroughly examined.*

⁵ *A Defence of the Validity of the English Ordinations;—a Defence of the Dissertation on the validity, &c.*

should still remain unanswered to the candid inquirer; much more must it create astonishment that modern *Romanists*⁶ on the one hand, and *Dissenters*

⁶ The following testimonies of eminent *Romish* writers in favour of the *validity of English ordination* will be read with interest.

"In the beginning of the last century, *Cudseminius*, a learned Catholic, having taken a journey into England on purpose to examine the truth of the first ordinations made in the beginning of the Reformation, and having probably consulted the registers — before *Mason* thought of producing them,—acknowledged, in a book written against the Calvinists, that the *English* had preserved the succession of the Hierarchy in their Church.

"We find the same confession in many other Catholic writers later than he. *Peter Walsh*, a *Franciscan*, called, amongst us, *Valesius*, or *de Valois*, expresses himself upon that head in the strongest terms, in an advertisement prefixed to his '*History of the Irish Remonstrance*,' printed in 1664. 'In that place,' says that father, 'where I seem (p. 438) somewhat too severe on '*Matthew Parker*, the first Protestant Archbishop of Canterbury 'under Queen Elizabeth, you must not persuade yourself *I do at all reflect upon his ordination*,* as if indeed that had been not 'only uncanonical or unlawful, but really void and null, or (as the 'schoolmen speak) invalid. Were I to deliver my opinion of this 'matter, or were it to my purpose to speak thereof, I would certainly hold myself obliged in conscience, (for any thing I know yet,) to 'concur with them who *doubt not the ordination of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in the Protestant Church of England, to be* (at least) '*valid*. And yet I have read all whatever hath been to the contrary objected by the *Roman Catholic* writers, whether against 'the matter or form, or want of power in the first consecrators, 'by reason of their schism and heresy, or of their being deposed

* "*Ordination* is used generally to signify what we peculiarly call *Consecration*, as well as the conferring Priest's or Deacon's orders."—Dr. Elrington on the *Validity of English Ordination*.

on the other, should still be bold enough to ridicule the claim, on the part of the Clergy of the Church of England, to *Apostolical succession*. Who would

‘formerly from their sees, &c. But I have withal observed nothing of truth alleged by the objectors, which might in the least persuade any man who is acquainted with the known divinity or doctrine of our present schools, (besides what *Richardus Armachanus* long since writ,) and with the annals of our *Roman* Church; unless, peradventure, he would turn so frantic at the same as to question even the validity of our own ordination also in the said *Roman* Church, on pretence, forsooth, either of the form of the Sacrament altered at the pleasure of men, or succession of Bishops interrupted by so many schisms,’ &c.

“The same author being informed that some Catholics were displeas’d, because in a letter wrote to the Bishop of *Lincoln* in defence of the Church of *Rome*, he had called that prelate ‘Right Reverend:’ ‘For the same end of preventing,’ says he, ‘the offence or admiration of any *Roman Catholics* where they shall meet the titles of Right, or Most Illustrious, and Most Reverend, given by me to the Lord Bishop of *Lincoln*, I desire them to consider my reasons: — 1st. I had, about twelve years since, (in the Preface to my *History of the Irish Remonstrance*,) publicly in print acknowledged my own opinion to be, that the *Ordination of the Protestant Church of England is valid*; meaning it undoubtedly to be so, according both to the public doctrines of the *Roman Catholic* schools themselves, and the ancient rituals of all the Catholic Churches, Latin and Greek; nay, and to those rituals of all the Oriental heterodox churches too, as *Morinus*, the learned Oratorian, has recorded them.’

“Father *Davenport*, (called *Santa Clara*,) another writer of the same Order, in his opinion upon the 38th Article of the Church of England, passes the same judgment upon those ordinations as his brother *Peter Wales*; at least, according to the testimony of

have anticipated that the exploded fable of the *Nag's Head consecration*, as nullifying the Episcopal functions of *Archbishop Parker*, would have been

Dr. Prideaux, for I have not seen the book quoted by him. But the reputation of *Dr. Prideaux* is so well established, that he may be credited upon so public a fact.

"Tis upon the same authority that I shall further allege another fact, better known, and mentioned by Father *Le Quien* himself in his work. Mr. *Goffe*, who had been of the *Church of England*, turning Catholic, was admitted into the *Oratory*; and there was a talk of making him a Priest. He had already been ordained in *England*, which occasioned a difficulty. The matter was proposed to many doctors of the *Sorbon*, who, after having examined it, declared in favour of the ordination.* But, that affair appearing too important to be left to the decision of a few divines, *Rome* was consulted, which, according to her practice, enjoined the ordination, upon account that the doubt still remained for want of clearly stating the fact.† This is related by *Dr. Prideaux*, who says, that he had it from a celebrated Catholic, namely, *Obadiah Walker*,‡ who told him so, and to whom that fact was very well known, because he was at Paris when that affair was transacted. It was therefore at that time the prevailing opinion of the doctors of the *Sorbon*, that the ordinations of the English were valid; and why should it be thought extraordinary that I should think as those learned men did, and maintain an opinion grounded upon evident facts and solid reasons?

"But what I am going to say comes nearer our times, and

* *Prideaux's* words are, "gave in their opinion that our orders were good."

† *Prideaux* adds, "yet the *Sorbonists* still stuck to their opinion that he was a good Priest by his first ordination."—See a note in the new edition of *Bramhall's Works*, vol. iii. page 114.

‡ *Walker* was master of University College in Oxford, and apostatized to Popery in the reign of James II.