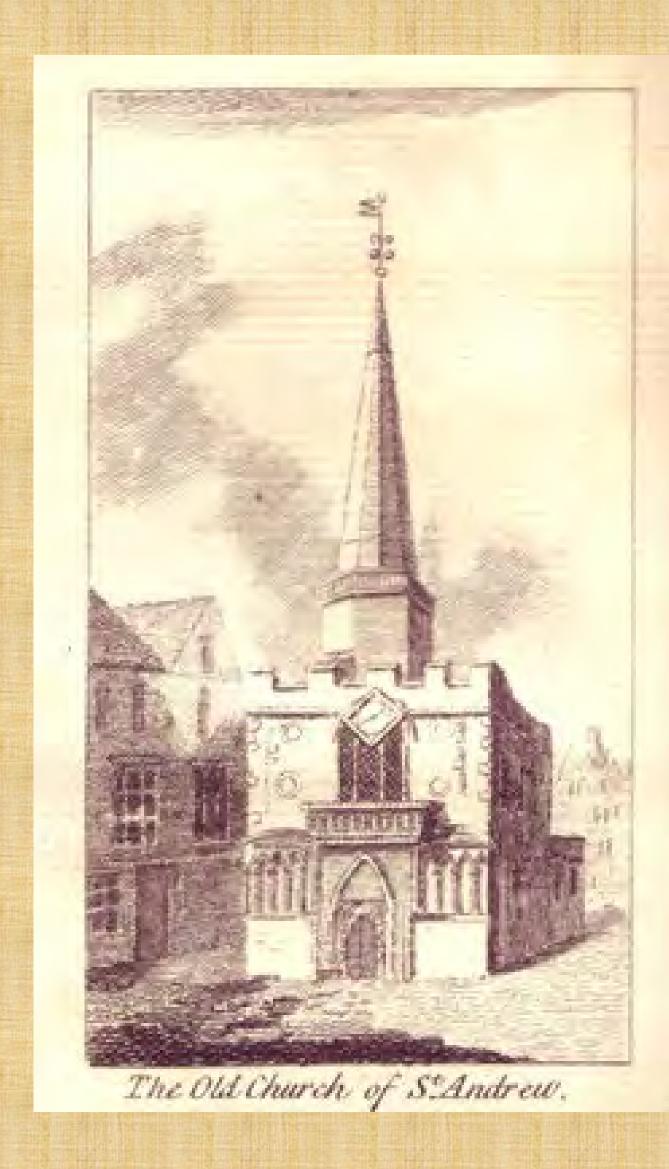
St Andrew's Church, Canterbury in the Reformation



many observations not to be found in any description hitherto published, the second edition, by William Gostling, M.A. 1777

A walk in and about the city of Canterbury with

The Henrician Reformation 1529-1547



Portrait of Henry VIII. © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

In the 1520s, Henry VIII's desire to continue the Tudor dynasty through a male heir led to his decision to divorce his wife of 20 years, Catherine of Aragon, and to marry a younger woman, Ann Boleyn. However, the Catholic Church in Rome refused to grant him his wish, so Henry took matters into his own hands: the English Church broke from Rome, and the King became the supreme Head of the Church of England through the Act of Supremacy in 1534.

In 1539 The Great Bible was published, the frontispiece of which shows Henry seated domineeringly on a throne above his subjects: every parish church was ordered to have a copy, and St Andrew's would have been no exception. However, while Henry VIII

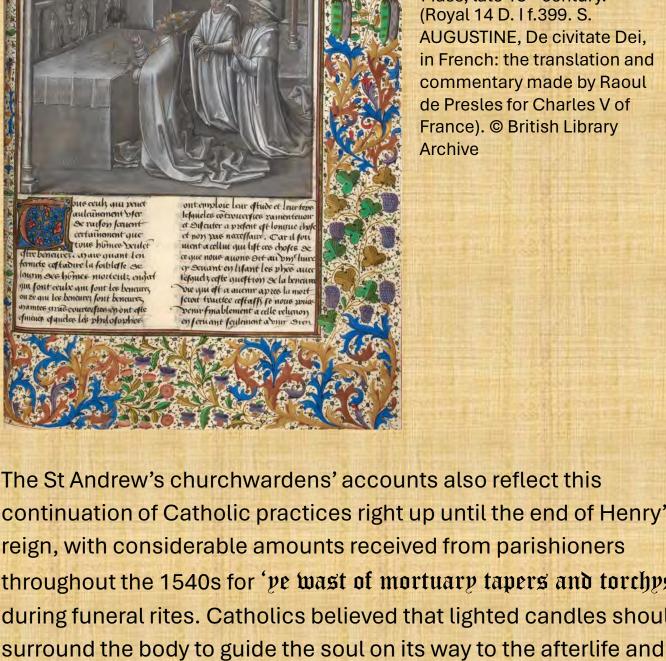
is remembered as the great instigator of the English Reformation, it would be difficult to describe him as a committed Protestant. There were few doctrinal changes of any significance during his reign; the passing of the Act of Six Articles on the 10th June 1539 reaffirmed some key tenets of Catholic belief, including transubstantiation, the necessity of the clergy to be chaste, and the continuation of private Masses. There is local evidence of the latter in the will of St Andrew's parishioner Margaret Fokes (1542):



Andrew for my soul, my husband's soul for one year after my decease. I will that there shall be done for the health of my soul... masses.'

'I will that an honest priest shall sing in the church of St

A Pope celebrating



also to ward off demons.

Mother of Mercy.'

Archive

Mass, late 15th century. (Royal 14 D. I f.399. S.

AUGUSTINE, De civitate Dei, in French: the translation and commentary made by Raoul de Presles for Charles V of France). © British Library

The St Andrew's churchwardens' accounts also reflect this continuation of Catholic practices right up until the end of Henry's reign, with considerable amounts received from parishioners throughout the 1540s for 'ye wast of mortuary tapers and torchys' during funeral rites. Catholics believed that lighted candles should

Even by 1546, the will of a Canterbury woman Joan Warlowe contains very strong Catholic beliefs such as the invocation of the saints and in particular the Virgin Mary:

'Lord God forsake me not for my sins the which be many and great but merciful God wash them away by the merits of thy blessed passion and so beseaching the help and intercession of all saints and especially the help of our blessedful Lady

The Advance of Protestantism under Edward VI 1547-1553



Lawe. © British Library Archive

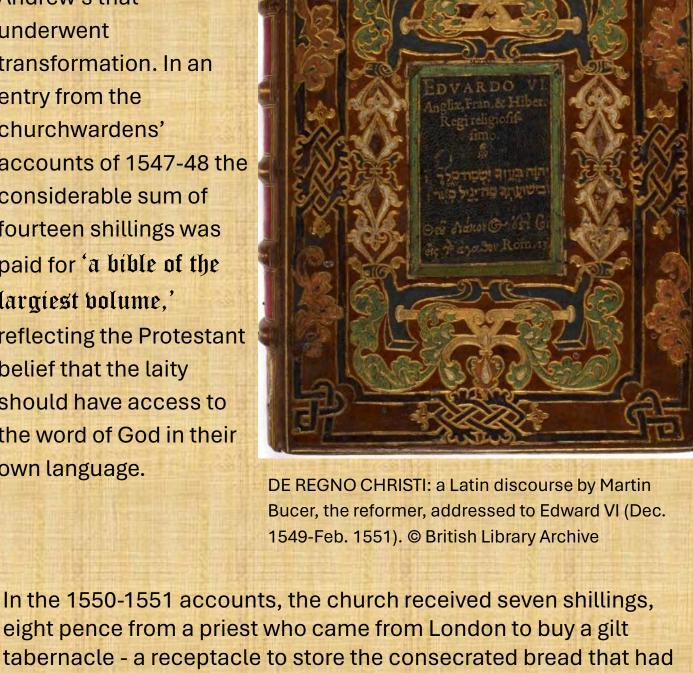
After the continuation of Catholic liturgical practices that marked the later reign of Henry VIII, his son, Edward VI, set about reforming the Church of England in a much more markedly Protestant way upon his succession in 1547. Indeed, in a royal injunction of the same year, he commanded that the clergy 'take away, utterly extinct and destroy all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trindles or rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition.'

changes in the law: in 1547 two shillings, four pence was paid to Wyllam Burgrowe 'for whyt lyminge of the church' (painting the walls of the church white) and in the following year two pence was paid to 'a pore man for carryng owt of ye imagys out of the thyrche.' The accounts for 1550-1551 show further changes taking place, with six shillings paid to a certain Jonson for painting the cloth in front of the rood loft, and eighteen pence to a glazer for the 'glasying of a lytyl wyndoe in the chyrch.' In both cases, it is likely that the images were removed. During this period, it was not just the

The churchwardens' accounts for St Andrew's reflect these

Andrew's that underwent transformation. In an entry from the churchwardens' accounts of 1547-48 the considerable sum of fourteen shillings was paid for 'a bible of the largiest volume,' reflecting the Protestant belief that the laity should have access to the word of God in their own language. been used during Catholic mass.

appearance of St



STHE booke of the common prayer and admic nistracion of the Sacramentes, and other rites and ceremonies of the Churche: after the ble of the Churche of England. ANCIDITTO NEI INCIDICINA

Edonardi Whitchurche,

e Cum prinilegio al imprimendum folum. ANNO, DO, 1549, Menfe

The Book of Common Prayer, 1549, largely written by

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and containing a number of Reformed liturgical practices. © British Library Archive

At the same time, there were church payments for a new service book, a song book, and bread and wine for communion. All of this evidence points to a clear liturgical shift away from Catholic practices such as Mass towards Protestant celebrations such as Holy Communion.

The Counter Reformation of Mary I 1553-1558



Queen Mary I by Hans Eworth, 1554. © National Portrait Gallery, London

The radical Protestant reforms of Edward VI were not to last. Upon her succession to the throne in 1553, Mary I sought to re-establish Catholicism in England and in October 1553 a bill was passed that repealed the previous king's religious injunctions and restored the situation to the final year of Henry VIII's reign. Catholic practices were once again placed at the heart of Church of England liturgy - altars were restored, images and pictures were once again set up, and Mass began to be held in parish churches across England.

Bible to 'Bassocke the booke binder' for six shillings, and the communion book was sold for twelve pence.

The churchwardens' accounts for St Andrew's reflect this

reversion to Catholicism. In 1554-55, the church sold its

replaced by a Catholic focus on imagery: in the same year's records a carpenter was paid twenty four shillings and four pence to carve a rood and Lent cross and twenty shillings was paid to 'Jansone for pantinge the rude [rood] and the cloth of Marie and John for the Lente Crosse'

Thus, the Protestant

emphasis on studying the



from the Anglo-Saxon word for cross, and it would have been placed above a screen separating the nave and

In the accounts for the following year, this same Jansone is then paid ten shillings 'for payntynge of Seynte Andrews.'

Throughout the records for Mary's reign, there is also frequent mention once again of money spent on wax for

candles and lamp oil to light up the various images and

paintings that would have reappeared in the church.

(the carved figures of Christ on the cross flanked by Mary on

right and St John on his left was known as the rood, deriving

chancel in every medieval parish church in England until

their destruction under Henry VIII).



This Doom painting from St Peter's Church, Wenhaston, Suffolk, is an outstanding example of early 16th century Catholic imagery and depicts The Last Judgement with Christ seated on the rainbow at the top of the painting.

(Wikimedia Commons)

Similar imagery would have reappeared in St Andrew's during Mary's reign.

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The Church in the Reign of Elizabeth I 1558-1603



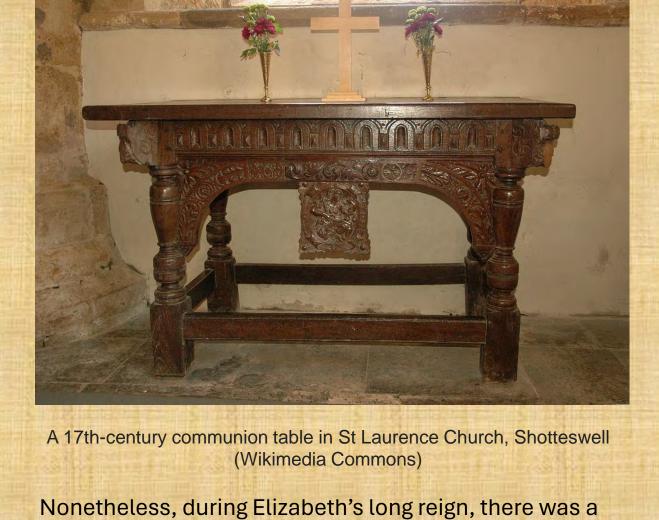
effigies of all our English kings from the conquest vntill this present.

© British Library Archive

Elizabeth I moved quickly to re-establish Protestantism

Elizabeth I in Baziliologia: a booke of kings: beeing the true and lively

as the official religion of England upon taking the throne in 1558, although her reforms were less radical than those of Edward VI. The historian David Starkey has described them as creating a Church that was 'Protestant in doctrine, Catholic in appearance.' While attending Mass was forbidden, and altars were replaced with communion tables, other Catholic traditions such as placing a crucifix and candles on the table were permitted, as was the wearing of traditional vestments.



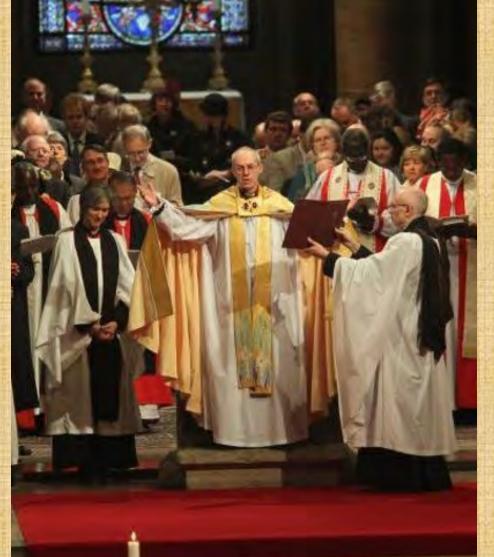
medieval Catholicism of England's past and the 'middle-way' Anglicanism favoured by the Queen. The

sense of a permanent chasm opening up between the

St Andrew's churchwardens' accounts for the first two years of her reign include payment to goodman Lawncelot for taking down the rood, the sepulchre, the high altar, and the little altars that would have served as shrines to saints or as chantry houses for private masses. The same Lawncelot was also paid for defacing images around the church, and goodman Jhonson received two pence for 'putting out ye payntyng on ye walls.' In the accounts for 1560-62, four shillings, eight pence was paid for 'ye comynyon table' (a communion table), and in the following year a 'communion cuppe gylte' (a gilt communion cup) weighing twenty-two ounces was purchased, pointing to a strengthening of Anglican liturgical practices at a parish level. More permanent architectural changes occurred in 1565, which saw the 'taking up of the stepes in the thauonsell [chancel]', and again in 1571 when four shillings, four pence was paid 'for pulling downe of

Therefore, it was in Elizabeth's reign that St Andrew's church finally broke free of its medieval, Catholic past - and in its place came the Anglican vision of the Protestant faith that remains to this day in England and worldwide.

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