

Women and Early Anglican Liturgical Calendars

J. Frank Henderson

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Introduction

The sixteenth century reform of English worship considered the liturgical calendar as well as daily prayer, the sacraments, and other rites. Changes in the liturgical calendar – in its text or in its use -- took place in several stages and over a period of years. Developments were

based on several different principles and rationales, which in some cases remain obscure.

Among other matters, the place of women in liturgical calendars underwent significant change. Whereas the medieval (Sarum) calendar included a number of women, the Anglican calendars that followed named few women or none at all. One exception is an experimental calendar of Thomas Cranmer in which women were of considerable significance.

Here I consider the place of women in the liturgical calendar as changes were made or proposed by Henry VIII, Thomas Cranmer and in several editions of the Book of Common Prayer. The study begins with changes mandated by Henry VIII during the years 1536-1543, as well as two experimental calendar calendars composed by Thomas Cranmer, and finally those of the 1549, 1552, 1559, 1560 and 1662 editions of the Book of Common Prayer, plus the separate New Calendar 1561.

Methodology

In describing these calendars, I will not name every feast or give their dates. Instead, their feasts will be categorized in the following manner.

- Feasts of Our Lord and of Mary
 - Our Lord (without Mary)
 - Our Lord (with Mary)
 - Mary (by herself)
- Feasts of Other Biblical Persons
 - Women
 - Men
- Feasts of Postbiblical Persons
 - Women
 - Men
- Other

In general I will list feasts in chronological order within the liturgical calendar, but without giving dates. Also, I will generally use modern English forms of the names of feasts.

The Medieval Liturgical Calendar

The starting place for this study is the medieval liturgical calendar in England, generally known as the Sarum calendar. There were in fact a number of calendars under this title; they included small variations for individual places and communities – though they were generally similar. Here I use the particular Sarum calendar included in F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*. London: Rivingtons 1921, vol 1, pp 78-125.

Looking at the calendar as a whole, one sees that liturgical feasts were celebrated frequently – on many days of the year, though not all were of equal importance. The number of days of each month on which there was a liturgical feast is as follows – and here I have omitted the celebration of octaves:

January, 9; February, 11; March, 9; April, 8; May, 20; June, 20; July, 24; August, 24; September, 18; October, 19; November, 21; December, 12.

The total is 188.

The several categories of liturgical feasts may now be considered.

Feasts of Our Lord (alone):

Transfiguration, Name of Jesus, Finding of the Holy Cross, Translation of the Holy Cross, Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Feasts of Our Lord (with Mary)

Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, Annunciation, Nativity (Christmas)

Feasts of Mary (by herself)

Visitation, Assumption, Nativity of Mary, Conception of Mary

Biblical Women [all in July]

Mary Magdalene, Anne*, Martha*

[*Anne was the name given in the middle ages to the mother of Mary, the mother of Jesus; though “biblical” her sources are also noncanonical. Martha was included in many medieval calendars, though not in the one studied here.]

Biblical Men

Conversion of Paul, Chair of Peter, Mathias, Mark Evangelist, Birth of John Baptist, Philip & James, Peter & Paul, Paul, Chains of Peter, Bartholomew, Beheading of John Baptist, Matthew Evangelist, Luke Evangelist, Michael Archangel, Simon & Jude, Andrew, Thomas, Stephen, John Evangelist, Holy Innocents

Postbiblical Women (by individual month)

January: Prisca, Agnes (two feast days), Bathildas

February: Brigit, Agatha, Scholastica, Translation of Frideswide, Juliane

March: Perpetua and Felicity

April: [none]

May: Potentiana, Petronilla

June: Etheltrude

July: Margaret, Praxides, Christine

August: Cuthberge

September: Edith, Tecla, Justina

October: Fides, Ehtedrede, Frideswide, Eleven Thousand Virgins

November: Winifrid, Cecily, Catherine

December: Lucy

Postbiblical Men [Because there are so many in this category, I do not name them individually but rather give the number of such feasts each month.]

January, 9; February, 2; March, 7; April, 6; May, 8; June, 15;
July, 15; August, 16; September, 13; October, 12; November, 15; December,

4.

Other: All Saints, All Souls, Lammas

Women are found in several categories: Mary (with Christ, by herself), biblical women, and postbiblical women.

Initiatives Taken by Henry VIII

Then was dyverce hallidays put down, and then began the abbes to go down.

[Anonymous Chronicler of London, In Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell, eds., *Reliquiae Antiquae*. London 1843; Reprint 1966, vol 2, p 33

In the early stages of the English reformation, and well before the first printing of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, King Henry VIII (died January 1547) took several initiatives that diminished the status of feast days of saints, both female and male. (Here I use saints' day, feast day, and festivals interchangeably.) The overall effect of Henry's decrees on these matters was the following:

To diminish the status of saints' days (1536)

To erase the memory of Thomas Becket (1538, 1539)

To further alter the status of saints' days (1541)

To emend liturgical books then in use (1542/43)

I will examine the texts of the four decrees in question and consider their implications for the liturgical feasts of female saints. These texts are given in full in the Appendix. They are also considered in the standard histories of the Anglican liturgy, for example:

F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*, 2 vol. London: Rivingtons 1921

W. K. Lowther Clarke and Charles Harris, *Liturgy and Worship: A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion*. London:SPCK 1932, 1981

Francis Procter, *A History of the Book of Common Prayer*. London: Macmillan 1872

Charles Wheatly, *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer....* London: Bohn 1828

Francis Procter and Walter Howard Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*. London: Macmillan 1910

Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England....* 5 vol. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press 1970

G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy*. London: Macmillan / St Martin Press 1969

Part of this story is also told, from a broader, societal perspective, in the following:

David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989

See also:

John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities*. New edition. London: Chatto & Windus 1900

1536: To Diminish the Status of Saints' Days

“A copy of the act made for the abrogation of certain holydays...” [1536] in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, 1737*; reprint 1964, vol 3, pp 823-824.

In order to understand the meaning and impact of Henry VIII's 1536 (and 1541) decrees, it is necessary to appreciate that some saints' days and festivals were considered to be more important than others. In addition, while all feast days were celebrated liturgically in church, the more important saints' days also included extra-liturgical observances and actions that touched people's daily lives and the civil and social arenas as well.

Thus certain “holydays” were also holidays in the modern sense of the word; ordinary work was not done on those days. In addition, fasting from food (and sometimes abstinence from meat) was practiced on certain feast days or on the day before (the vigil or eve/even). Furthermore, certain songs, dances, foods, and other types of behavior were customary on certain feast days. See Cressy's *Bonfires and Bells* and Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, above.

Thus Henry VIII's 1536 decree diminished or downgraded the importance of certain important festivals by changing their civic status from that of holidays to that of ordinary work days. The liturgy of those days was not eliminated, though it was simplified; see below. However, how people spent their days did change appreciably. Of course, they could still celebrate liturgically in church – if their work schedule gave them time to do so.

This decree has six parts. It stated:

1. That feasts of patron saints of individual churches were no longer to be considered holidays.
2. That important saints' days that fell within the harvest season were no longer to be considered holidays. The decree defined the harvest season as extending from 1 July through 28

September.

3. That important saints' days that fell within the sitting or "term" of the major law courts were no longer to be considered holidays. These terms, according to the decree itself, were as follows:

Easter term begyneth always the 18. day after Easter, reckoning Easter day for one, and endeth the Monday next after th'Ascenyon day.

Trinity term beginneth always the Wednesday next after 11 or 12 day of July.

Michelmas terme beginneth the 9 or 10 days of October, and endeth the 28 or 29 days of November.

Hilary terme begynneth the 23 or 24 days of January, and endeth the 12 or 12 day of February.

4. That the feasts of dedication of individual churches were no longer to be celebrated throughout the year and on any day of the week, as previously, but only on the first Sunday of October. Thus they were still celebrated as holidays, because Sunday was always a holiday. However, no weekdays could be holidays because of this feast – which often had been the occasion for a local fair.

5. The liturgies of these former holydays / holidays are to be celebrated more simply than before, without solemnity and without the customary bell-ringing.

6. Permitted holydays / holidays are named in several parts of the decree; here I bring these together. These include the feasts of the apostles, of our blessed Lady, and of saint George. In addition, there are the holidays "when the kings judges do not sitt in judgment," namely:

In Easter terme upon th'Ascension daye,

in Trinity terme upon the nativity of Saynt Jon Baptist

in Michelmas terme upon Alhollen day,

in Hillary terme upon Candelmas day

[and] any Sunday.

Finally, the feast of the nativity of our Lord, of Easter, of the nativity of Saint John the Baptist, and of saint Michael have a special status as quarterly "offering days".

The several rationales for these changes were set forth at some length in the decree. They may be summarized under four headings.

1. People who were not at work caused trouble; holidays were thus threats to public order.

2. Holidays during the middle and late summer interfered with the harvesting of crops; they were therefore threats to the economy and to the availability of food for the population at large.

3. Holidays during the "term" when courts sat interfered with the administration of

justice.

4. Holidays that were celebrated on different days in different places (such as feasts of the dedication of local churches and of patron saints of churches) were too independent of the king and did not sufficiently express national identity. Uniformity was a high value for Henry VIII.

Note that none of these rationales is really theological in nature, but rather social, economic, and administrative. No saint is actually removed from the liturgical calendar, and no changes are made to liturgical texts – though all is to be done with simplicity. The use of the word “superstition” and “superstitious” in the decree are general terms for anything that Henry disapproves of; they have no defined content.

1538 and 1539: To Erase the Memory of Thomas Becket

“Process against Thomas Becket, and order for demolishing his shrine at Canterbury.” [1538] in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1737, reprint 1964, vol 3, pp 835-6,

“Certain injunctions set forth by the authority of the king against English books, sects, and sacramentaries; also the putting down the day of Thomas Becket.” [1539] in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1737, reprint 1964, vol 3, pp 847-848 [here 848].

In the twelfth century St Thomas Becket had defended the church against the king. His memory thus constituted a threat to Henry VIII’s claim to be supreme head of the church in England. Henry took three steps to erase Thomas Becket from popular memory and devotion. The first was to physically destroy the Becket shrine at Canterbury and thereby remove this focus of pilgrimage and devotion; this was done in 1538. Next, Henry re-wrote the story of Becket and his death so that he no longer, in the king’s estimation, deserved to be called a saint; this was done in 1539. Finally, in the same year, Henry forbade the celebration of this feast and removed it from the calendar.

The rationale here is mainly political rather than theological.

1541: To Further Alter the Status of Saints’ Days

“A decree for observing the feasts of S. Luke, S. Mark, and S. Mary Magdalene,” [1541] in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1737; reprint 1968, vol 3, pp 859-860.

In 1541 Henry VIII issued a complex and multifaceted decree that had the effect of

further altering the status of saints' days. Five aspects may be distinguished. In two cases he reversed provisions of the decree of 1536; in the other cases saints' days were further diminished or downgraded. He decreed as follows:

1. That the feasts of St Luke (October 18) and St Mark (March 25), which fall during "term," were to be restored to the status of holidays.
2. That the feast of St Mary Magdalene (July 22), which falls during harvest time, was to be restored to the status of holiday.
3. That the feasts of the Invention [Finding] of the Holy Cross (May 3) and of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14) would no longer have the status of holidays but be regular working days.
4. That certain feasts would no longer be fast days (e.g., St Mark) or preceded by a fast day (St Lawrence).
5. That certain popular observances, actions and devotions that were particularly significant for youth on the festivals of St Catherine (November 25), St Nicholas (December 6), St Clement (November 23) and Holy Innocents (December 28), were no longer permitted.

With respect to the first two items, reversing the 1536 decree, the new decree states that the kings highness considering, that the same saints been often and many tymes mentioned in playne and manifest Scripture, willeth and commandeth, that the said three feasts from henceforth shall be celebrated and kepte holye days, as in tymes past.

One has the impression that people protested these provisions of the 1536 decree and disobeyed them. Henry is giving in to popular pressure.

The stated rationales for items 3 and 4, above, are in part that some people do this and others do that, or that because of the variable date of Easter, feasts sometimes fall within term and sometimes do not. The decree therefore imposes uniform practices.

The following rationale is given for reigning in the exuberance and devotion of youth:

And whereas heretofore dyverse and many superstitious and chilysshe observations have been usid, and yet to this day are observed and kept in many and sondry parties of this realm, as upon sainte Nicolas, sainte Catheryne, sainte Clement, the holye Innocentes, and such like; children be strangelye decked and apparelid to counterfaite priestes, bysshoppes, and women; and so ledde with songes and daunces from house to house, bleassing the people, and gatherynge of monye; and boyes doo singe masse, and preache in the pulpitt, with suche other unfittinge and inconvenyent usages, rather to the

derision than to any true glory of God, or honour of his saints; the kyng's majestie therefore mynding nothing so moche, as to avaunce the true glorye of God without vayne superstition...[forbids all this].

Again, the term superstition is applied to whatever Henry disapproves of.

With respect to the abolition of fasting / abstinence, it may be noted that in 1542 Henry issued a decree permitting – even urging - the eating of meat during Lent. The motive here is stated to be economic: fish was expensive that year.

“A proclamation concerning eating white meats...” [1542], in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, vol 3, p 867.

1542/42: To Emend Liturgical Books Then in Use

“Concovatio praelatorum et cleri provinciae Cant. [1542/43], in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1737, reprint 1963, vol 3, p 863

(This decree was not actually issued by the king, but by the bishops and clergy; it certainly would have had the king's approval.)

Liturgical change in England was carried a step further in 1542/43 by a decree of Convocation. Among a number of diverse provisions, it decreed that all liturgical books then in use were to be examined and emended; content considered inappropriate was to be “corrected, reformed and castigated . . . abolished and put out” of these books. The only point relevant to the liturgical calendar and saints' days was that the names and memories of all saints, which be not mentioned in the Scripture, or authentical doctors were to be removed from the liturgical books. It is easy to identify postbiblical saints, but what is meant by “mentioned . . . by authentical doctors” is not at all clear. I presume that such doctors include the “fathers of the church” together with major theologians and church authorities. This provision might therefore lead to the dropping of St Christopher – and even St George – but in fact not many such saints were included in the liturgical calendar.

Implications for Women in the Liturgical Calendar

Some of these decrees had nothing to do with women named in the liturgical calendar, for example, those having to do with Thomas Becket, or that requiring the name of the pope to be removed from liturgical books. I do not know if any festival of a female saint was a day of fasting or preceded by a fast day.

So far as festivals of specific female saints are concerned, it is obvious that these decrees affected the feast of Mary Magdalene (a work day in 1536, a holiday in 1541) and St Catherine (no public festivities for youth in 1541). The 1541 decree also recognizes that the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross is “commonly called sainte Eleyne’s [Helen’s] day”; once a holiday, it is now to be a work day.

The greatest impact on women saints, however, was the 1543 decree to erase or cross out the names of all nonbiblical saints. The list of such names in the Sarum calendar has been given above; it includes a number of names of female saints. On the other hand, this might not have much effect at all, if “mentioned . . . by authentic doctors” is interpreted broadly.

To remove all these names, incidentally, was quite a bit of work. One wonders how it was done and the extent to which it was actually accomplished. The books involved would have included the missal, breviary (and related primers, psalters and books of hours), manual or ritual, pontifical, and musical books such as gradual and antiphonal. The names in question were not only in the liturgical calendar at the beginning of these books, but also all through the sanctoral and commons sections. In addition, they were found in the canon of the mass, the litany of the saints used at baptism and anointing of the sick, etc.

Downgrading the status of some festivals from holidays to ordinary work days certainly did affect female saints as well as male saints. Obviously, the patron saints of some churches were women. In addition, the names of the patron saints of churches, as well as those of chapels and altars, entered into the celebration of church dedication; some of these were also women. Relics placed in the altar and noted in the dedication anniversary liturgy might also be those of female saints.

To assess the effect of abolishing holidays during harvest time one needs to know which female saints’ days in July, August and September previously had the status of holidays. A decree of Archbishop Thomas Arundal in 1400 lists Mary Magdalene and Anne as holidays. Examination of the Sarum calendar for these months also shows that these were the only two female saints’ days given the rank of double or greater or being described as feasts of nine lessons.

“Haec sunt festa ab omnibus operibus tenenda per constitutionem Thomae Arundel Cantuariensis archiepiscopi,” in David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1791; reprint 1964, vol 3, p 252.

To assess the effect of abolishing holidays during term, the same considerations need to be applied to the four periods involved. In the Arundal decree of 1400 there were four female saints whose festivals were holidays. That of St Winnifred fell in Eastert term, that of Mary Magdalene and Anne fell in Trinity term, and that of St Katherine fell in Michaelmas term. By the time of the Sarum calendar studied here, the feast of St Winnifred was celebrated on November 6 (during Michaelmas term), and it did not have a high rank; it may or may not have been a

holiday.

The festival of St Katherine also did not have a high rank.

Discussion

The decrees of Henry VIII considered here seem not to reflect any theological problems with respect to saints and their days. He does accuse people of “superstition”, but this seems simply to be a “put down” and lacks any specific content. Thus the “Articles about religion set out by the convocation, and published by the king’s authority” of 1536 (Wilkins vol 2, pp 817-823; sections on “Of honouring of saints” and “Of praying to saints” (p 821), for example, show no serious problems in this regard. Even the decree of 1543 ordering that saints that were not named in the bible or recognized by “authentic doctors” seems mainly concerned that the saints being named in church be historical figures and not apocryphal.

The frequent complaints that people cause trouble if they are not at work may reflect some fear of the people on Henry’s part. This may also be the case with respect to the festivities of youth on certain saints’ days.

It is hard to know if holidays really caused problems with the agricultural harvest and supply of food. And what about all those employed in cities and other non-agricultural work? Holidays, after all, may result in loss of income for employers and employees as well – what were the real economic issues here? Or was this the introduction of a “protestant work ethic”? Did this benefit employers and employees equally, or did it favor one or the other group? Likewise, it is hard to know if holidays really seriously interfered with the working of the courts.

To give some evidence in support of Henry’s views, however, it may be reported that “in 1438 the Synod of Brixen complained of the number of feasts which fell within the summer months, when folk were preoccupied with the harvest.”

R. W. Scribner, “Ritual and Popular Religion in Catholic Germany at the Time of the Reformation,” in his *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*. London: Hambledon Press 1987, pp 47-77

My overall impression is that the 1536 decree in particular has to do mainly with Henry’s claim to be supreme head of the church in England and the exercise of this power. It is a way of saying, “I’m in charge of the liturgical calendar” as well as, for example, the bidding prayers. “The church is mine and I will order it as I please.” It is also a way of making the church more national and less parochial or diocesan. In other words, this may have been mainly a question of control and royal power.

Experiments of Thomas Cranmer

In the process of considering how the liturgies of daily prayer might be reformed,

Thomas Cranmer drew up two experimental liturgical calendars; one included only a few women, the other included many more. Neither of these was ever implemented. The language used here is somewhat confusing. The calendar printed first is chronologically later than the one printed second. I shall use the chronological terms, “earlier” and “later”. The dates of these projects are somewhat uncertain as well, but probably ca 1545 and ca 1547.

Thomas Cranmer’s experimental calendars have been published as follows:

J. Wickham Legg, ed. *Cranmer’s Liturgical Projects*. Henry Bradshaw Society 50. London 1915, pp 3-14 and 154-165.

Earlier Calendar: Fewer Women

The earlier calendar reduced the total number of feasts and gave roughly equal emphasis to biblical and postbiblical saints. There were two feasts of Mary the mother of Jesus by herself, the feasts of Mary Magdalene and Anne, and feasts of apostles and evangelists. But there were also feasts of four postbiblical women and twenty-three postbiblical men. The key elements of this calendar are as follows.

Our Lord (with Mary)
Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, Annunciation, Nativity
Mary (by herself)
Assumption, Birth of Mary
Biblical Women
Mary Magdalene, Anne
Biblical Men et al.
n = 18
Postbiblical Women
Tecla, Cecilia, Catherine, Barbara
Postbiblical Men
n = 23

Later Calendar: Additional Women

The later calendar was a mixture of conventional feast days and a substantial number of days naming biblical women and men who had not previously been included in liturgical calendars.

This calendar represents a novel and creative attempt to think about the calendar from a biblical perspective, based largely (but not entirely) on the biblical passages chosen to be read at morning prayer and evening prayer. Thus the readings were chosen first, according to a new system, and feast days followed. The key elements of this calendar are as follows.

1. Authors of biblical books were named in the calendar on the day when the readings of each book begins. Thus

March 24 - Jeremiah
April 8 - Joshua
May 3 -Boaz
May 5 - Samuel
June 21 - Baruch
June 30 - Ezekiel
August 2 - Ezra
August 27 - Tobit
September 2 - Judith
September 10 - Daniel
September 11 - Esther
September 19 - Job
October 4 - Hosea
October 21 - Amos
October 31 - Jonah
November 4 - Micah
November 14 - Habakkuk
November 17 - Sophronius (Zephaniah)
November 22 - Zachariah

Comment: Note an inconsistency here: Judith and Esther are acknowledged as authors of those biblical books, but Boaz is named when the book of Ruth begins instead of the woman of that name.

2. Personages of the Hebrew Scriptures are named in the calendar when they are referred to in the daily readings.

January 2 - Abel (Genesis 3)
January 3 - Noah (Genesis 5/6)
January 7 - Abraham (Genesis 13/14)
January 9 - Sarah (Genesis 17/18)
January 14 - Isaac (Genesis 26/27)
January 15 - Jacob (Genesis 28/29)
January 19 - Joseph (Genesis 26/27)
March 14 - Phineas (Numbers 24/25)
April 22 - Debbora (Judges 4/5)
April 24 - Gideon (Judges 7/8)
April 28 - Samson (Judges 14/15)
May 4 - Hannah wife of Helcana (1 Samuel 1)
May 5 - Samuel (1 Samuel 1/2)
May 13 - David the king (1 Samuel 17)
May 26 - Nathan (2 Samuel 11)
June 13 - Elijah (1 Kings 17/18)

June 18 - Elisha (2 Kings 3/4)
June 26 - Ezechias (2 Kings 19/20)
June 27 - Josias (2 Kings 21/22)
September 30 - Susanna (Daniel 13)

Comment: This section this section is commendable in including Sarah, Debborra, Hannah, and Susanna. Additional matriarchs could of course have been named in mid-January, but were not.

3. Personages of the Christian Scriptures are named in the calendar when they are referred to in the daily readings.

February 10 - The Poor Widow (Mark 12)
February 15 - Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1)
February 17 - Symeon (Luke 4/5)
March 11 - The Good Thief (Luke 23)
April 19 - Lydia (Acts 17)
May 8 - The Centurion (Matthew 7)
May 16 - The Canaanite woman (Mark 14)
June 4 - The woman with a Hemorrhage (Mark 5)
June 15 - Anna the prophetess (Luke 1)
July 13 - Nathanael (John 3)
July 16 - The Samaritan woman (John 4)
August 8 - Gamaliel (Acts 5)
August 12 - Apollo and Aquila (Acts 18)

Comment: This is a creative listing for persons that includes more women than found in other calendars. The naming of Apollo and Aquila for August 12 is strange, however. Apollo is the student, and he is instructed by Priscilla and her husband Aquila. Priscilla is named first in the biblical story but omitted from the calendar.

4. Other biblical persons are listed in the calendar on traditional dates; that is, even when they are not referred to in the daily readings.

January 25 - Conversion of Paul
January 26 - Ananias [this is an innovation, as this person, who welcomed Paul to the Christian community in Damascus, is never included in medieval calendars]
April 1 - Joseph of Aramathea
July 22 - Mary Magdalene
July 26 - Anne [mother of Mary of Nazareth]
July 29 - Martha

Comment: Though Mary Magdalene and Anne are traditional in English calendars, Martha is not always listed.

5. Some postbiblical women often included in medieval liturgical calendars are listed in Cranmer's calendar, mostly on traditional dates.

January 21 - Agnes
February 9 - Appolonia
February 12 - Eulalia
February 15 - Julita
March 7 - Perpetua and Felicity
July 20 - Margaret
September 23 - Tecla
November 22 - Cecilia
November 25 - Catherine
December 13 - Lucy

Comment: Note that several of these women saints are not those included in the Sarum calendar described above: Appollonia, Eulalia, Julita, though they are listed in other medieval calendars. In addition, even some women with English or British connections are not found in Cranmer's list, for example Brigit, Etheltrude, Cuthberge, Edith, Fides, Ethedrede, Frideswide, Winifrid.

6. Cranmer also includes many postbiblical men who were often included in medieval liturgical calendars; these are not listed here by name.

Discussion

Cranmer's experimental calendars had little or no influence on subsequent events. Horton Davies says that "the experiments were entirely concerned with the simplification of the Daily Office, and almost certainly never went beyond Cranmer's study or their ideas beyond the minds of his confidants and fellow-liturgists."

Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England*, vol 1, pp 171-172

Later Anglican commentators have not had kind things to say about these efforts. So far as the earlier calendar is concerned, Procter and Frere concluded that the addition of so many scriptural saints "are due... to a zeal for Scripture which has run to excess." In general, "the draft kalendars then abound in faults and follies which were set aside on second thoughts. They are, however, of interest as showing a real stage in ... development." So far as their relation to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer is concerned, they have this to say: "When the first Prayer Book appeared, a revulsion of feeling had evidently taken place. The [Prayer Book] kalendar was far nearer to the earlier than to the later draft, and in it the policy of exclusiveness had been pushed a great deal further."

Procter and Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*, pp 335-337

Wickham Legg pointed out that "it is no easy matter to detect the principles on which the lesser saints have been chosen or excluded," and again, "if it be a hard matter to make out what has been the determining principle in guiding Cranmer's choice of saints in the [earlier calendar], it is wellnigh impossible to arrive at any definite decision as to the thoughts which led him to chose the saints in the [later calendar]."

J. Wickham Legg, ed., *Cranmer's Liturgical Projects*, pp xliii-xliv.

The spirit of the time seemed to call for a decrease in the number of saints, not an increase – even if the increase was highly scriptural. The additions of biblical saints in the later calendar seems more appealing in the twenty-first century than they it did in the sixteenth. Nevertheless, these experiments show something of Cranmer's imaginative capacity and show that deliberate experimentation had a place in the development of the early Anglican liturgy.

Primers of Henry VIII and Edward VI

Another early Anglican liturgical calendar is found in the Primer published by Henry VIII beginning in 1545 and continued by Edward VI up to 1553. Primers, both manuscript and printed, in English, Latin or both, had of course been produced in England for a long time before Henry VIII; they are similar to books of hours. They actually constituted a family of books with varied content. The new primer of 1545 was to express Henry VIII's desire for a single uniform text, in English, and expressing reformed values and theology.

The new English primer went through many editions or printings. Here I have studied mainly three editions, from 1545, 1546 and 1548. These are available in the ProQuest database, Early English Books Online and are designated by their Short Title Catalogue (second edition) numbers, STC 16034, STC 16046 and STC 16049, respectively. In addition, I have examined the 1553 Primer of Edward VI which is available in a modern printed edition:

“The Primer: or Book of Private Prayer, Needful to be Used of All Christians Authorised and Set Forth by Order of King Edward VI 1553,” in Joseph Ketley, ed., *The Two Liturgies A. D. 1549 and A.D. 1552* and other Documents set Forth by Authority in the Reign of King Edward VI. Cambridge: University Press 1844; Reprint 1968. [Here pp 365-368.

The calendars of the first three editions of Henry VIII's primer do in fact show considerable – though not absolute – uniformity. The 1553 calendar, however, is appreciably different. I shall outline the content in the usual way and try to show the differences between the earlier and later editions with respect to calendar entries.

Our Lord (alone)

[1545] Transfiguration, Name of Jesus

[1553] above plus Invention of the Cross, Exaltation of the Cross

Our Lord (with Mary)

Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, Annunciation, Christmas

Mary (by herself)

Visitation, Assumption;, Nativity of Mary, Conception of Mary

[1545 only] Joseph

Biblical Women

[1545] Mary Magdalene, Anne, Mary Salome

[1553] Mary Magdalene, Anne

Biblical Men et al.,

[ca 18 apostles, evangelists and others]

Postbiblical Women

[1545] Agatha, Margaret, Cecilia, Katherine, Lucy

[1553] above plus Agnes, Batildis, Bridget, Juliane, Perpetua, Scholastica, Petronilla, Praxedis, Christine, Cuthberga, Edith, Tecla, Fides, Etheldreda, Frideswide, Eleven Thousand Virgins, Winefrid,

Postbiblical Men (Here I give numbers of feast days per month only, without names.)

	1545	1553
January	4	10
February	3	2
March	2	7
April	6	6
May	4	7
June	5	14
July	2	12
August	3	14
September	3	10
October	2	13
November	5	13
December	1	3

Other

All Saints, All Souls

Discussion

The contents of these calendars are different from those of other early Anglican calendars, and is closer to the medieval liturgical calendar than either Cranmer's earlier experimental calendar and the calendars of the 1549 and 1552 editions of the Book of Common Prayer.

Calendar entries vary slightly, even among the three earlier editions studied here. Thus both Joseph and Katherine were included in the 1545 version but not in the 1546 and 1548 editions; there were also some small differences with respect to male saints.

Why there should be such an increase in saints' days in the 1553 primer is a mystery. Its calendar is certainly governed by different principles than, for example, the 1552 Book of Common Prayer.

The calendar of the 1553 primer would seem to be unique in the entire history of

liturgical calendars in naming a “negative” feast or “anti-saint” saints’ day. This is “Becket Traitor” on July 8 (the feast of the translation of St Thomas was formerly celebrated on July 7). It may be that popular devotion survived the measures Henry VIII took against saint Thomas Becket in 1538-1539 and that popular memory of Becket was still considered a threat to Edward VI.

The feasts of our Lord, of Mary, and of biblical men are similar to those of other calendars studied. The category of biblical women is noteworthy in including Mary Salome in three cases. The category of nonbiblical women likewise is different from that suggested by Cranmer in his experimental calendars.

Clearly, women are more visible in the calendars of several editions of the primers of Henry VIII and Edward VI than in other early Anglican calendars.

Book of Common Prayer: Red Letter Days

Here I consider the liturgical feasts of the 1549 Prayer Book. (Prior to 1552 all entries may be considered red letter feasts). I also consider the red letter entries of the 1552, 1559 and 1661 editions of the Prayer Book plus the New Calendar 1561; these are almost identical with those named in the 1549 edition.

There are numerous printed editions of the Book of Common Prayer. For the 1549, 1559 and 1662 editions I have generally used the parallel column version of Brightman:

F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*. 2 vol. London: Rivingtons 1921.

For the 1559 and 1560 editions of the Book of Common Prayer and for the New Calendar 1561 I have used the following:

William Keatinge Clay, ed., *Liturgical Services: Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. Parker Society Cambridge: University Press 1847.

Our Lord and Mary

Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, Annunciation, Nativity of Jesus

Biblical Women

Mary Magdalene (1549 edition only)

Biblical Men

n = 16 (some minor variants)

Other

Archangel Michael, Holy Innocents, All Saints

Lowther Clarke and Harris (*Liturgy and Worship*, pp 215 ff) give a good summary of the (relatively minor) variant readings of the different editions of the Prayer Book. They also note that:

The 1662 Prayer Book had three additional red letter commemorations, on January 30, May 29 and November 5: King Charles Martyr, Charles II's birth and restoration, and Papist Conspiracy. In 1859 . . . an Act of Parliament was passed repealing the religious observance of these days.

The implications for women are extensive and obvious: all female saints except Mary Magdalene were deleted from the calendar in 1549, and the feast of Mary Magdalene was omitted in 1552 and afterwards. In fact the liturgical calendar of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer may be considered a logical successor to Thomas Cranmer's earlier experimental calendar. The process of omission and abbreviation begun there was continued in the Prayer Book. Cranmer's later experimental calendar appears to have had no influence on the Prayer Book calendar.

It may be deduced that three factors were of particular importance in the preparation of the calendar of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. One was that any entry – any event or person named – had to be scriptural. A second (and related to the first) was that Sunday was primary, hence that celebrations on other days must not compete with or diminish the observance of Sunday. The third was that saints, even the apostles, were viewed differently than previously had been the case. They were not as significant; it was important to avoid superstition with respect to their feasts; they must not appear to diminish the role of Christ or the goodness of God.

Book of Common Prayer: Black Letter Days

A novelty of the liturgical calendar of the 1552 Book of Common Prayer was the distinction between entries that were liturgical and those that were civic and non-liturgical. The former were called red letter days and printed in that color; the latter were called black letter days and printed in black. This was a minor feature of the 1552 and 1559 Prayer Books but became more important and prominent in the 1560 Latin version and in the New Calendar 1561. Here I present a composite of the 1560 and 1561 versions.

Our Lord

Transfiguration (1560, 1561), Name of Jesus (1560, 1561), Invention of the Cross (1561),
Exaltation of the Cross (1561)

Mary

Visitation (1560, 1561), Nativity of Mary (1560, 1561), Conception of Mary (1560,
1561), Presentation of Mary (1560)

Biblical Women

Mary Magdalene (1560, 1561), Anne (1560, 1561), Mary Salome (1560), Elizabeth
“matro” (1560)

Biblical Men

Conversion of Paul, John Evangelist, Beheading of John Baptist (all 1561)

Other

Lammas

Postbiblical Women

Here I list the 1560 and 1561 calendar entries separately.

1560 Liber Precum Publicarum

Italics indicates names retained in subsequent calendars.

January	Genovefae, <i>Priscae</i> , <i>Agnētis</i> , Emerentianae, Agnetis, Batildis
February	Brigidae, <i>Agathae</i> , Appoloniae, Scholastica, Eulaliae, Julianae Mildredae
March	<i>Perpetue</i> , Dorotheae,
April	Theodoraē, Mariae Aegyptiacae, Euphēmie, Passio septem virgi., Euphēmiaē, Sotheris,
May	Helenae, Julianae, Petronille
June	Walburgae, Etheldredae,
July	Zoe, Justinae, <i>Margaretae</i> , Praxedis, Christinae,
August	Clarae,
September	Edithae, Teclae, Justinae,
October	<i>Fidis</i> , Pelagiae, <i>Etheldredae</i> , Fredeswidae, Austrobertae, Undemim mil. virgi., Mariae Salome,
November	Wenefredae, <i>Ceciliae</i> , <i>Katherrinae</i> ,
December	Barbarae, Eualiae, Othile, Venesiae, Victoriae, Sanctarum virg. 40, Lucie

The New Calendar 1561

January	Prisca, Agnes
February	Agatha
March	Perpetua
April	
May	
June	
July	Margaret
August	
September	
October	Fayth, Ethelrede,
November	Cycelia, Catherine
December	Lucy

Discussion

Obviously, from 1560, women had a prominent place among the black letter days.

The discussion that led to the introduction of a few black letter days in 1552 and 1559, and many in 1560-1561, has not come down to us. This category of calendar entries implies the importance of saints' days in civil society, while maintaining their absence from liturgical celebration. Lowther Clarke and Harris explain this as follows:

The Red-Letter Days were intended for liturgical observance. Since the Black-Letter entries were first made in 1552 it is reasonable to suppose that the traditional explanation is correct. This is given by Wheatly (1710). He says that the dates were restored from motives of secular convenience. The Courts of Justice used them for reckoning; trades would have been displeased had they lost their tutelary saint; for example, Cripsin, patron of Shoemakers. The patronal festival of a church had a wake or fair associated with it, and for convenience' sake the date was given; history books referred to periods as Lammastide or Martinmas, and it was well that such references should not become unintelligible. It is objected that O Sapientia on December 16 is of purely liturgical interest and is sufficient to refute Wheatly. But it is unlikely that anyone in the seventeenth century wished to retain this entry for its liturgical value. The bishops' answer to the Puritans in 1661 shows their motives. The names were left not to be kept as holydays, but for secular purposes and for the presentation of their memories. So little interest was taken in Christian antiquity that even exceptionally well-informed writers some fifty years later, such as Wheatly and Nicholls, remembered only the secular motive.

W. K. Lowther Clarke and Charles Harris, *Liturgy and Worship*. London: SPCK 1932, p 215

According to David Cressy,

If ... courts kept alive some saints' days that had vanished from the liturgical calendar, it was no wonder that many of these days continued to attract local enthusiasm. Popular almanacs, which were notoriously conservative publications, kept the unofficial saints' days in view alongside the sanctioned red-letter festival days because they were useful markers of time. Later editions of the calendar in the Elizabethan prayer book printed them in discreet black letters.

David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1989, pp 11-12

Cressy also discusses at length the civic and social dimensions of the red letter days and indeed the entire calendar in Elizabethan England.

The old saints days were fondly preserved in the popular memory, governing traditional farming practices and days of markets and fairs. As Keith Thomas observes, 'it was the

value of such festivals for marking the days for praying rent, or carrying out other secular activities, which explained why the Elizabethan church calendar remained so liberally spattered with black-letter saints' days, even though they were not otherwise celebrated as holidays.'

Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p 15

Black letter days did not affect the Prayer Book's exclusion of women from the liturgical calendar, however.

Conclusions

The development of the Anglican liturgical calendar took place in several stages over a period of years. The shape of the trajectory is clear: the trend is toward reduction in number of feast days, reduction of feasts of postbiblical saints, and reduction in feasts of women. Cranmer's later experimental calendar represents an exception to this general pattern, and it had no long-term influence. This process was influenced by several different views, principles and practices. Only in the latter stages of this process were the motives really theological; political and social concerns were more important earlier.

It remains to ask what the consequences were of such significant changes in the liturgical calendar? Did anybody notice the lack of women in the calendar? Were women missed? What effect might this have had on Anglican spirituality, for example? If voices were raised in opposition to this, I am not aware of them.

In part these questions need to be considered in a larger context. How were liturgical feasts understood theologically? What meaning did the liturgical celebration of such feasts have with respect to spirituality? How were the biblical persons whose feasts were celebrated regarded by the people? Though of great interest, these are questions for another time.

Appendices

(I have expanded division into paragraphs.)

Decree of 1536

"A copy of the act made for the abrogation of certain holydays, according to the transumpt lately sent by the king's highness to all bishops, with his grace's strait commandment to signify his farther pleasure to all colleges, religious houses, and curates within their diocese, for the publication, and also effectual and universal observation of the same." [1536]

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*. London 1737.

Forasmoch as the nombre of holydays is so excessively grown, and yet dayly more and more by mens devocyon, yea rather supersticyon, was like further to encrease, that the same was and sholde be not onely prejudiciall to the common weale, by reason that it is occasion as well of moche sloth and ydleness, the very nourishe of theves, vacaboundes, and of dyvers other unthriftness and inconvenyences, as of decaye of good mysteryes and artes, utyle and necessary for the common wealthe, and losse of mans fode many tymes, beyng clene destroyed through the superstitious observance of the said holydayes, in not taking th'opportunitie of good and serene wheather, offered upon the same in time of harvest, but also pernycious to the soules of many men, whiche beyng entysed by the lycencyous vacacyon and lybertye of those holydayes, do upon the same commonly use and practise more excesse, ryote, and superfluitie than upon any other dayes; and sith the Sabboth day was ordeyned for mans use, and therefore ought to gyve place to the necessitie and behove of the same, whansoever that shall occurre, mouch rather any other holyday institute by man; it is therefore by the kyngs hyghnes auctoryte, as supreme head in earth of the church of Englande, with the common assent and consent of the prelates and clergy of this his realme in convocacyon lafully assembled and congregate, among other thyngs decreed, ordeyned, and established.

First, that the feest of dedicacyon of the church shall in all places throughout this realm be celebrated and kepte on the fyrst Sunday of the moenth of Octobre forever, and upon none other day.

Item, that the feest of the patrone of every church within this realme, called commonly the church holyday, shall not from henceforth be kepte or observed as a holyday, as heretofore hath been used; but that it shall be laful to all and singular persons resydent or dwelllynge within this realme to go to their work, occupacyon, or mystery, and the same truely to exercyse and occupy upon the said feest, as upon any other workeyday, excepte the said feest of the church holyday be such, as must be ells universally observed as a holyday by this ordynance following.

Also, that all those feests or day holydays which shall happen to occure eyther in the harvest time, which is to be compted from the fyrst day of July unto the 29. day of Septembre, or elles in the terme time at Westmynster, shall not be kepte or observed from henceforth as holydayes, but that it may be laful for every man to go to his work or occupacyon upon the same as upon any other workyeday, excepte alwayes the feests of the apostles, of our blessed Lady, and of saynt George; and also such feests as wherein the kings judges at Westminster Hall do not use to sytte in judgment; all which shall be kepte holy and solempne of every man, as in tyme past have been accustomed.

Provyded alwayes, that it may be lafull upon all preests and clerkes, as well secular as regular, in the foresayd holydayes now abrogate, to synge or saye their accustomed servye for those holydayes in their churches, so that they do not the same solempnely, nor do ryng to the same after the manner used in hygh holydayes, ne do commaunde or indict the same to be kepte

or observed as holydayes.

Finally, that the feest of the nativitie of our Lord, of Easter, or the nativitie of saynt John the Baptiste, and of saynt Micheaell, shall be from henceforth compted and accepted, and taken for the four general offering days.

And for further declaracyon of the premysses, be it known that Easter terme begyneth alwayes the 18. day after Easter, reckoning Easter day for one, and endeth the Monday next after th'Ascenyon day. Trinity terme begynneth alwayes the Wednesday next after th'octave of Trinitie Sunday, and endeth the 11. ro 12. day of July. Mighelmas terme beginneth the 9 or 10. day of October, and endeth the 29. or 29. day of November. Hillary terme begynneth the 23. ro 24. day of January, and endeth the 12. or 13. day of February.

In Easter terme upon th'Ascension daye, in Trinitie terme upon the nativity of sayne John Baptist, in Mighelmas terme upon Alhollen day, in Hillary terme upon Candelmas day, the kings judges at Westminster do not use to syt in judgment, nor upon any Sondayes.

Decrees of 1538 and 1539

“Process against Thomas Becket, and order for demolishing his shrine at Canterbury.”

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*. London 1737. vol 3, 835-6

“Certain injunctions set forth by the authority of the king against English books, sects, and sacramentaries; also the putting down the day of Thomas Becket.”

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*. London 1737. vol 3, 847-848 [here excerpt, p 848]

Item, forasmuch as it appeareth now clearly, that Thomas Becket, sometime archbishop of Canterbury, stubbornly, notwithstanding the wholesom laws established against the enormities of the clergy by the king's highness's noble progenitor king Henry the IId. for the common wealth, rest, and tranquillity of this realm, of his froward mind, fled the realm into France, and to the bishop of Rome, maintainer of those enormities, to procure the abrogation of the said laws (whereby arose much trouble in this said realm) and that his death, which they untruly called martyrdom, happened upon a rescue made; and that (as it is written) he gave opprobrious words to the gentlemen, which then counseled him to leave his stubbornness, and to avoid the commotion of the people risen up for that rescue; and he not only called the one of them bawd, but also took Tracy by the bosom, and violently shook him, and plucked him in such manner, that he had almost overthrown him to the pavement of the church; so that upon this fray one of their company perceiving the same, struck him, and so in the throng Becket was slain: and further, that his canonization was made only by the bishop of Rome, because he had been a

champion to maintain his usurped authority, and a bearer of the iniquity of the clergy.

For these, and for other great and urgent causes long to recite, the king's majesty, by the advice of his council, hath thought expedient to declare to his loving subjects, that notwithstanding the said canonization, there appeareth nothing in his life and exterior conversation, whereby he should be called a saint, but rather esteemed to have been a rebel, and a traitor to his prince.

Therefore his grace straitly chargeth and commandeth, that from henceforth the said Thomas Becket shall not be esteemed, named, and reputed and called a saint, but bishop Becket; and that his images and pictures through the whole realm shall be plucked down and avoided out of all churches, chapels, and other places; and that from henceforth the day used to be festival in his name, shall not be observed, nor the service, office, antiphons, collects, and prayers in his name read, but rased and put out of all the books; and that all their festival days already abrogated, shall be in no wise solemnized, but his grace's ordinances and injunctions thereupon observed, to the intent his grace's loving subjects shall be no longer blindly lead and abused to commit idolatry, as they have done in time passed, upon pain of his majesty's indignation, and imprisonment at his grace's pleasure.

Decree of 1541

“A decree for observing the feasts of S. Luke, S. Mark, and S. Mary Magdalene, etc.”
[1541]

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*. London 1737. vol 3, pp 859-860

Forasmuche as the feastes of saynte Luke and saynte Mark evangelistes occurring within the termes holden at Westm. and also the feast of saynte Marye Magdalene falling within the time of harviest, were emongist other abrogated and commanded not to be observed as hollye dayes; the kings highness considerying, that the same saints been often and many tymes mentioned in playne and manifest Scripture, willeth and commanudeth, that the said three feasts from henceforth shall be celebrated and kepte holye days, as in tymes past they have been used. And furthermore whereas in dyverse parties of this realme sainte Markes daye hathe been used as a fasting daye, and in some other places of this his realme the people hathe used customablye to eat fleshe; the kings moost gracyous majestie willing an uniforme maner and fashion therein to be observed throughe this his realme and domynyons of the same,

and for that the day of noo sainte hathe been used to be fasted, but only the said day of sainte Mark, willeth and commaundeth, that from henceforth throughe owte all this his realme

the said day of sainte Mark shall not be takyn, ne kepte as a fasting day, but that it shall be lawfull to all and every his graces subjects to eate feashe, or such other meate, as to them shall be thought expedyent, withoute grudge or scruple.

And whereas by the varyable and uncertayne falling of the feast of Easter, the feast of the invention of the Crosse, commonly called sainte Elyns day, of the most parte channce within Easter terme, holden at Westmynster, and yet some yere owte of the said terme, ambiguitie and doubte hath risen amongst the kynges subjectes, whether the said feast shulde be celebrated and kept holye day, or noo; the kings moost benynge grace of his infinite goodness willing one uniforme ordre herein to be observed emongist all his faithfull subjects, ordeyneth and commaundeth, that as the saide feast falling within the terme is not kepte holye daye, so likewise at all tymes from henceforth it shall not be observed, accepted, ne takyn as holye day, though yt fall out of the terme, but that it shall be lawfull unto all the kyngs subjects to use and exercise all manner of labours and occupations, as of any other working daye.

And likewise the exaltation of the Crosse falling in harvest or owte of harviest, shall not be kept as holye day, but that all the kyngs subjects to use all manner labours as of any other worke daye.

Also whereas the day of sainte Laurence falling within the tyme of harviest, was abrogated and commaunded not to be observed as holye day, and yet notwithstanding many of the kyngs subjects dothe observe and keape the feast upon the eve, thinking themselves to be bounde in conscience so to doo, in asmoche as in the abrogation of the holye day ther was no express mention made of the taking away of the faste upon the evyn, some other like, as in dede it was mente at the making of the saide ordinaunce, dothe omitt as well the fasting of the said evyn, as the hallowing of the day; the kyng our soveraigne lorde willing to remove and put away from emongst his liege people all occasion of variaunce, diversitie, discorde, dissention, or debate, and to establishe them all in one conformable and uniforme ordre in all such publique observations, declareth and commaundeth, that from henceforth the said feaste of sainte Laurence shall not be takyn ne kept as a fasting day, but that it may be lawfull to all and every of his graces loving subjects to eate fleashe, and other kyndes of meates, without any grudge or scruple of conscience.

And whereas heretofore dyverse and many superstitious and chilydysse observations have been used, and yet to this day are observed and kept in many and sondry parties of this realm, as upon saint Nicolas, sainte Catheryne, sainte Clement, the holy Innocentes, and such like; children be strangely decked and apparelid to counterfaite priests, bysshopps, and women; and so ledde with songes and daunces from house to house, bleassing the people, and gatheryng of monye; and boyes doo singe masse, and preache in the pupitt, with suche other unfittinge and inconvenyent usages, rather to the derision than to any true glory of God, or honour of his saints; the kyngs' majestie therefore mynding nothing so moche, as to avance the true glorie of God without vayne superstition, willith and commaundeth, that from henceforth all such superstitious be loste and clyerlye extinguisshed throughowte all this his realmes and dominions, forasmoche as the same doo resentle rather the unlawfull superstition of gentilitie, than the pure and sincere

religion of Christe.

Decree of 1543

“Concovatio praelatorum et cleri provinciae Cant. ad 24 diem Martii continuata.”
[1542/43]

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*. London 1737. vol 3,
p 863

“Reverendissimus significabat regiam majestatem, velle; that all mass books, antiphoners, portuises in the church of England should be newly examined, corrected, reformed, and castigated

from all manner of mention of the bishop of Rome’s name, from all apocrypha, feigned legends, superstitious orations, collects, versicles, and responses;

that the names and memories of all saints, which be not mentioned in the Scripture, or authentical doctors, should be abolished and put out of the same books and calendars;

and that the services should be made out of the Scriptures, and other authentic doctors.

It was ordered also, that every Sunday and holyday throughout the year, the curate of every parish church after the Te Deum, and Magnificat, should openly read unto the people one chapter of the New Testament in English, without exposition; and when the New Testament was read over, then to begin the Old.