

On the Antiquity of The British Church the Primacy of Canterbury and a History of the 70 Archbishops



Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury

Primate of All England.

1572

INTRODUCTION

Notes:

The translation of Mathew Parker's work is an extensive exercise, and the translation is neither polished nor overly corrected. It is largely a straight automated translation of Parker's work which is important, or at least should be important, simply because Matthew Parker was a noted scholar, tutor to the Princess Elizabeth, and following the death of Cardinal Pole the First Archbishop of Canterbury, consecrated in an independent Anglican Church, and principal co-architect of the Elizabethan Settlement and its classic expression in the 39 Articles of Religion.

There has been an Anglican tendency to elevate the importance of Thomas Cranmer at the expense of Matthew Parker, and that has been a mistake, for Parker is as important to the shape of Anglicanism as Cranmer.

I have split the work into the sections designated by Matthew Parker, as the technology found the sheer size of the work just a bit too hard to deal with.

I have used the illustrations from the earlier document. I have included the Drop Caps, where they appear, which will remind the original is in latin, so a lot of the time, the first word will not begin as the Drop Caps suggest. I have only used them as decoration, and not as such as part of the text. Hopefully it will remind you of the antiquity of the document, and the language it was written in.

I have on many occasions shortened the sentences, often by breaking them up, as many of the sentences are too long to be meaningful in contemporary society.

INTRODUCTION



1

It is clear that history is a joyful and pleasant memory of ancient things. As with the other arts and sciences knowledge, whether of life, or talent, or morality, or religion, culture, it contains some secret and hidden knowledge, acquired and explored by a minority of those learned and industrious. This subject is very popular among all. It is equally easy for the learned and the unlearned alike, for the great fruit of establishing and passing a life, and the innate pleasure of acquainting ourselves with antiquity alone and the posterity it represents.

This, although by great familiarity, attracts us not only to the cultivated, but the unlearned and the unskilled. They are very intelligent, and much more often will they be delighted with them; yet it is always of great interest, insofar as the learned receive from histories the advantage and the fruits of the experience rather than the unlearned.

For while they admire the various misfortunes of heroes and great men both at home and abroad, while, on account of the calamities and catastrophes of the armies, the overthrowing of the republics, the devastation of states, the change of things, wars,

¹ Matthew Parker's Heraldic Device - Motto 'The world is but a passing fancy'

fires, and shipwrecks, and the variety. The inconstancy and brutality of all these, they are amazed, and not astonished they desire another advantage, or think that there is in history; by which design they do not perceive anything which has been done, by which author and Sasore the undertaking, into which outcome and progress, how it was done, and by what means each has been brought to an end.

Which, indeed, of learned and prudent men, who have never put their work to work in useless things, or for the necessary use of life not belonging to them, have always been the greatest cause of writing and reading histories. That they may be able to perceive and foresee from the knowledge of things past and past things what will be, by the use of present and future things, of what is to come.

But the stories of writers are often no less than the fault of the readers. For just as the readers generally receive no other fruit than the vain pleasure of knowing, or of recounting, and displaying the same things ignorantly and uselessly; useless, and foolish studies may perhaps obtain popular praise as an unjust reward, but, owing to the most ill-deserved human life, they defraud posterity by their ancestral knowledge as a legitimate inheritance. Then, if any suspicion of grace or animosity appears in the writer, so that he either dares to say what is false, or does not dare to be true, then both law and faith are taken away from history. Of these vicious histories, the nearest and worst are those who, having always been led by the hatred of the parties, both in war and in peace, exaggerate with every speech those things which can be turned by vice, or by no slight degree; they pass either in silence or in silence. The posterity at length smelt and thought these writers of several epochs so various as to be liars.

These, therefore, have retained their everlasting praise, and are thought to deserve the most excellent in that respect of the human race, who, aside from those trifles and fables, by which boyish and old wives' minds may be inflamed, have endeavored to explain and illustrate the truth only. For just as there is a great place for industry and labor in the other arts, so in history it is to be described sincerely and accurately.

For if anyone has carefully read Thucidides the Greek, or Caesar and Sallust from the Latins, who carefully read of his achievements in his own times, whose knowledge they could have the most certainty, he will find with what diligence they have inquired the truth, and then by what plain and faithful speech they expressed the same.

But those who looked to the most remote antiquity, and endeavored to deliver out of it and transfer to their own people those things which were worthy of their own faith, and convenient for their times, and should be left to their posterity as their heirs, and

open to their heirs, of course, as their valor and deeds were greater, so should the praise be more celebrated.

For Herodotus the Greek, lest he should seem to have omitted something of antiquity, amassed all without a careful choice; and most of whom he received not from ancient writings, but from the fables of the common people, a multitude of incredible stories. Although it is said by some that he seems to have affected the father of history, yet he is rightly said to be the father of other legends. They have such enjoyment as much as a writer wishes, and are assisted by their expressions, opinions, and all kinds of speeches; yet we ought not to attach any authority, nor credit, to fictitious things.

But Titus Livius the Latin, after weighing and comparing the old Roman affairs from the beginning, published a history worthy of the Dominion of the Roman Empire. In which there is no fable, because it lacks authority and record, or that it does not seem to give credence to the reader by a consistent and probable narration. If the truth of past events is so eloquent and clear, it may be thought that if the republic, for the administration of war and peace, and the durability and preservation of the worldly empire, had much influence, They are said to be of God, as if by the divine kingdom and empire, by the will of that supreme Emperor, or deeds of the same robber and invader by Antichrist.

For just as the science of other arts are considered to be useless and null without the divine, so also human activities and events, with the state of the divine things on which they depend. Such study is lazy and an unworthy negligence for Christians. So that while all things are worthy to be known by our ancestors at home, or in military service, then those very great things by which the Church either stood firm, or wavers, to be tossed to and fro.

From which we will understand when the Lord Jesus, shining with his own truth and light, brightened it up, when again, as it were covered with clouds, covered with the sun from the eyes of the Church, that ancient serpent insinuated himself, and by what arts and deceits he acquired power, and then opened up again to the truth, what struggles and controversies over both of them the members were instituted over the principality, which in the flesh, and indeed in the spirit of God, shall yield and prevail.

In this race, indeed, Eusebius, Socrates, and Sozomen, who followed in the footsteps of the apostles, preserved those letters of our age, which were done in the last centuries by the apostles.

Likewise, Gregory, Zonaras, and Nicephorus, who not only praise the prefectures of the patriarchs of the Easterners, and then Platina and Sylvius, who recorded the lives of the Roman Pontiffs, and very many of their kind, who relate to us in external writings, we not only praise, but admire and admire. But for the most part (which is to be regretted) when in externals, and less often necessary, we break ourselves entirely, and abuse with disdain by literature and leisure, the things which have been done in the Republic and our Church at home from the beginning, we do not greatly desire to know.

In which one do we judge that we are not even worthy of this most blessed and overflowing island of divine bounty, because, while we are curious in other kingdoms, we are always ignorant of the things which are done at home. Just as our fathers and slaves are less careful who carefully examine what is done by our neighbors, and neglect their affairs at home. For if any one compares our nation to foreigners, he will find that, although small, the neighboring kingdoms preceded them by a much wider dominion by all power. For we have conducted warlike affairs, and a great number of battles, and a vigorous struggle with the enemy, and with frequent victories we have conducted the party with more bravery and success, and have administered the state with the best of our laws and customs.

And now, if any one wishes to discuss the beginning and discipline of the present institution, he will be aware of it (as those dark and error-full times, indeed) have not been described more accurately, nor more severely cultivated in any province than in England, so that there is no reason why we labored in strangers stories, rather than in our own knowledge.

And in this place the monuments of our ancient kingdom, whether they have perished through negligence or envy, and have been almost extinct, we can rightfully deplore the destruction and devastation.

For this many think is probably sufficient, while the illustrious King Henry VIII had entrusted the investigation and examination of Anglican antiquity to certain learned men designated for this purpose, and the most ancient manuscripts in the monasteries, having demolished the piles and heaps of their founders, to permit them to have a choice from that store, and for this they should take a true description of the history of the island, and to take those things which seemed most advantageous to them.

Those which they ought to have considered with the greatest judgment, being slightly and perfunctorily confused and dismayed by the very multitude of their books, or by

the malice and envy of our affairs (as concerning a certain Peregrine and an Italian he alluded to, that it was said and written by his fellow-colleagues in that office) that they either corrupted or completely destroyed, by which it is an abomination to them that the antiquity of so illustrious and illustrious a nation might fall into so much sloth and depravity.

And yet it has lately come about by a kind of divine kindness, that, just as that once multitude and abundance of some have been nearly destroyed by the sloth and sluggishness of some, and by the malice of some reluctance; and from their hiding places, and from the shops of pharmacists and other lower and almost kitchen-grounds (for so the carelessness and envy of earlier times, as the Aesopian gem was spurned by an ignorant and prone stomach, this history stirred up the attention that, apart from the foreign and foreigners, the natives themselves here publish a history of genuine and proper achievements of ancient times, and no history taken from or borrowed from any other source.

For these reasons, we owe great gratitude to those who, in so great a loss to our antiquity, and from the wreckage itself, nevertheless collected the remains of those that were floating in the waves.

By these we can be brought to the memory of our affairs, safeguarded. And it is our purpose to explain the origin of the British Church, and of its most ancient (so to say) origin, from its infancy and to trace it down and hidden for many centuries by hostile incursions, and changed into a new form by the arrival of Augustine, who was sent by Pope Gregory. This history, although there are so many famous episcopal sees in England, can be illustrated by very many famous monuments, yet there exist two more famous ones, namely the Canterbury and York metropolitan cities.

The writers of both of these works, and of the archbishops, he finds the former one Stobaeus, the other Gervaseus, and Stephen Birchington, archbishop of Canterbury, and Ralph de Diceto, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, London. These, however, neither fully treated the archbishops, nor the deeds of those times in the Churches, and persecuted them so that they could satisfy the reader with the abundance of things, or the order of the times when he desires them.

Then Gervase and Ralph do not advance beyond Archbishop Hubert, who died during the reign of John. But Stephen ends in William Courteney so that the same things appear to be more fully and more accurate, so that they may seem to be more fitly drawn back and drawn out to our times.

And since the dominion of the Church of Canterbury is greater, more distinguished in acts, and in every amplitude more excellent than the rest of the Churches in England (for in the administration of York and of the Province and of the Church it has generally followed and imitated this; nor any other Church what in the ecclesiastical affairs of the whole of England has been changed by the decree of individual ages and ages it has been enacted and repealed, as we may mention this) we thought it best to explain it, so that it may be seen by what tricks and techniques of Satan.

The bondage of that antichrist, the horrendous usurpation of the Roman power, invaded the Christian ingenuity in England, and as soon as he had once again sprung up and avenged the light of the Gospel, he again recovered and avenged himself in his primeval liberty and the old splendour of his birth.

The thing is, therefore, in those times in which the Lord, after the darkness of Satan had been overthrown, shone forth, known and strategically known, a succession of archbishops of Canterbury has hitherto been established from the very beginning. Which, taken from the various ancients, you see here aptly and neatly composed and coherent, so that the series of one writer may be seen rather than the quotations and sentences gathered from many. The reason, however, of so great antiquity has been made by us, that the authors in the margin designate their authors in the margin almost every single place for the greater certainty of the testimony. And besides those words, we have used most often, by which those ancient writers have expressed the actions and customs of their times.

These things have indeed been done by us on purpose, lest, when the crimes of the Papists have been so notably marked and detected by the monks themselves and ancient writers, no one may devise the same things that are feigned or depraved by us. It befits us to have had an account of this thing rather than of any adornment or elegance, who will study not to decorate, but to explain the truth purely and simply.

Let us attain it, and let us bring over to the knowledge of our people the history of so many hidden centuries of these things, that we will appear to have received the fruit of our labours which we seek and hope for. For we are so far from pursuing our glory, or the popular breath, that we bear with equanimity the voices of our envious and detractors, which are wont to tear the best and which are wont to tear. For if any are so affected, that the novelty of things, or the treatment of old things, may injure them, or the labours of strangers seem ungrateful to them, and bear distaste, to these we think

that our work collected from all Anglican antiquity, and studied by some study, is not written.

For there are two kinds of men, whose unjust rash judgments we do not fear, but despise. Of those, who are devoted to one study and contend with it alone, not only do they neglect, but criticize, criticize, and even often condemn one another; they are eager to take away or criticize the praise of another's industry. The former are to be compared to the dogs, who always bark at the unknown; the latter to the pigs, who first tread them under foot, and wrap them in the mud and the mire, which they soon devour with great eagerness. Both, indeed, are the pernicious race of men, and must be driven away from the company of men of letters and custom.

For if all humanity and culture and life are thought to be more polished more elegant in letters and interests than they seem to have progressed a little in letters to others (whatever they think of themselves), who are not only so inhuman as they are also rude and barbaric, that they reproach others with their zeal, and find fault with them.

For concerning certain people who are so zealous in new things, that they desire all things to be disturbed and mingled, and do not wish to be approved by anyone other than those which bear the doctrines themselves, lest we should say that there is need of anything more grievous than a censor's chastisement rather than the correction of words. If they are willing to waste their pride and disdain, we, in this labour undertaken in piety and truth, not submissive to the rumours of men, being attracted by any man's bland and fictitious, or unjust and incriminating language, are intimidated by whatever we have been able to obtain and trace through the long history of the ancient monuments of this kingdom, to the judgment of all. to undergo a public crisis, we finally released it into open light. In which we ask our friendly and candid readers to consider two things that are not the same as fitting.

First, we can defend and defend the dignity of the Church of Canterbury, and the length of time, the grants of the princes, and the rights which they attribute to it. The other is that, although we may no less expound the vices of the archbishops themselves, than they were rightly deeds, the reader will not, therefore, be more averse to his dignity. For as Caius Suetonius Tranquillus, who is said to have portrayed the lives of the twelve first Caesars, is said to have portrayed the same freedom in which they lived, in which he recounted many heinous acts they are often administered by evils) are appointed by God, subvert or despise it; so those things which we have

written about the Archbishops of Canterbury, in which they wrongly and wrongly cut off when they rightly find fault.

And yet, that we may reply to all, and to those very envious and malevolent (whatever they may vomit) to one answer: If that Papal domination and power, which they were defended and worshipped more by blindness and superstition than by obstinacy, had none, either wiser in judging matters, or from all luxury more continent, or in their whole life more moderate and more economical, and beneficent to the poor, and as often as they chose the Republic, they will feel that they were generally more profitable to kings and kingdoms than the Archbishops of Canterbury.

But that papal usurpation, which was then observed by all as a divine deity, often caused them to be hostile to the kings of the times, (for who at that time was almost alive, whom that blindness was not obsessed with) than by their own or peculiar faults; they were considered pious, and when the darkness was overthrown, the impious were made manifest. That, therefore, ought not to be turned chiefly to the fault of the one race of men, which, as it has taken possession of all, is not the case in private individuals, but in general among all.

But you, a pious and candid reader, receive the fruit of this artifice, without envy and reluctance.

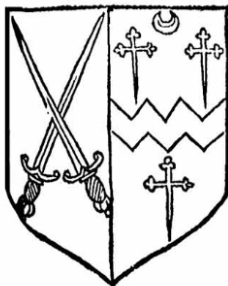
All whose praise is to be bestowed on him, who, with the same vigilance and diligence with which he probes and gathers all the details which are necessary for the conduct of the Christian Church, has also thoroughly looked back on the antiquity of this see home To whom, so that a long life may be left for such holy and wholesome Lord's flock as watches and watches to be kept, and eternity itself at length may be granted, that great shepherd of the flock must be interrupted by the constant prayers of all good men, whose majesty is with the Father and Paraclete, one and boundless.



2

² The world is a passing fancy

S. London. Edw. Sandr.



S. Winton. Rob. Horne.



S. Norwic.



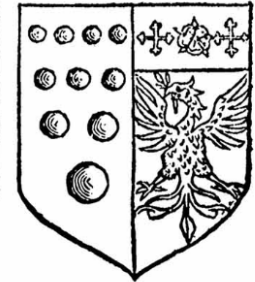
Ioh. Parcust.

S. Elye.

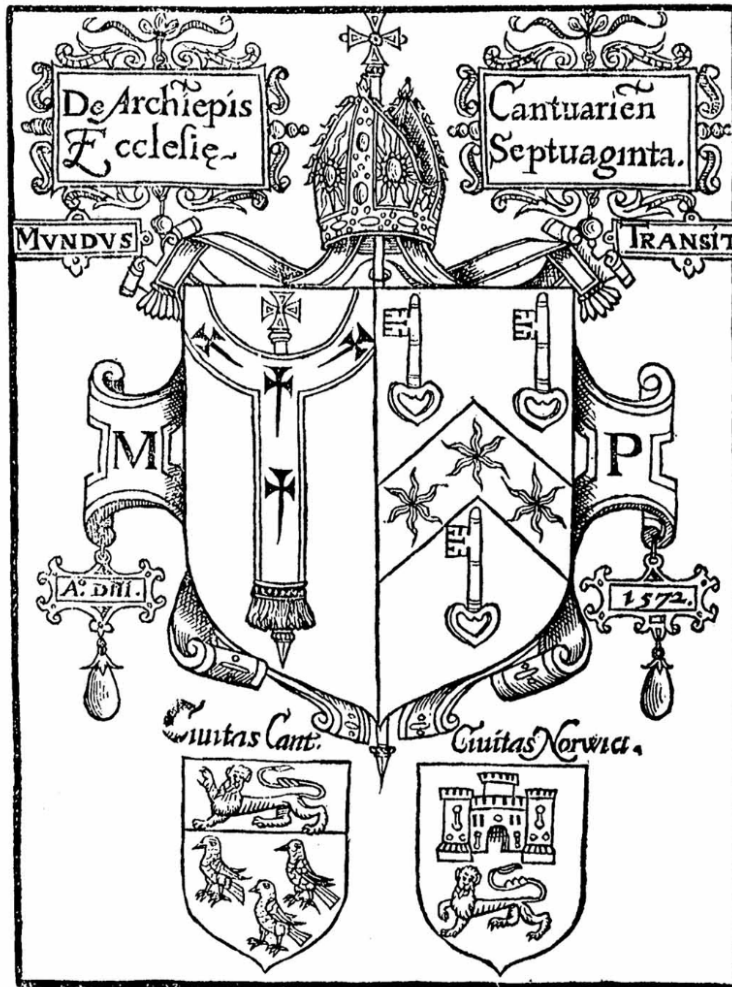


Ric. Cox.

S. Wigorn. N. Bolingham.



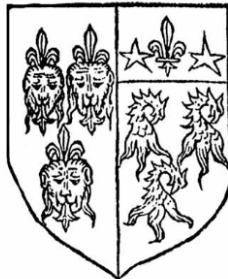
S. Sarum. Ed. Gueff.



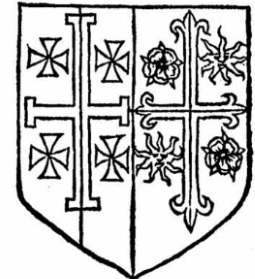
S. Lincoln. T. Cooper.



Hereford. Ioh. Scorey.



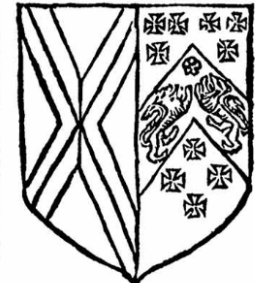
S. Lich. & Couen. Is. Benthā.



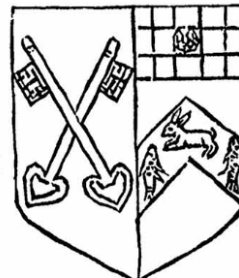
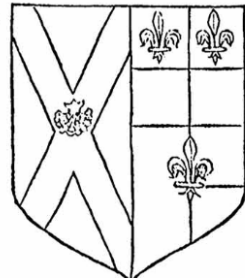
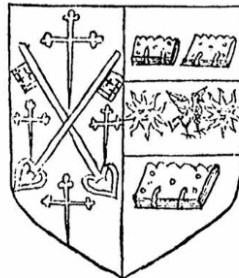
Cicestren. R. Curteis.



S. Bath. & Wel. G. Barchley.



Exon. W. Bradbrige. S. Peterborgh. E. Scambler. S. Rossen. E. Freake. S. Glocestren. R. Chense. S. Briffow.



Oxon.

Hu. Coren.

S. Meneuen.

Ri. Davis.

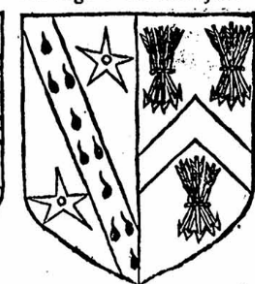
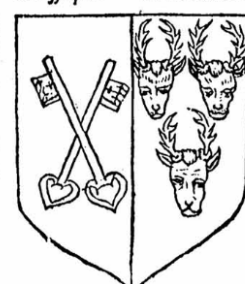
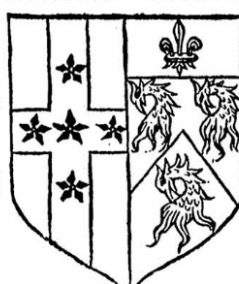
S. Assaph.

Th. Davies.

S. Landaph.

A. Davis.

S. Banger. N. Robinson.



Sedes Eborac. Edm: Grindall.



S: Dunelmen. Ia: Pilkington. S: Cestren. W: Downam. S: Carlisl. Ri: Barnes.



Mortui ex vtraq; prouincia.

S: Eborac. T: Yonge. S: Ranger. R: Merick. S: Landaph. A: Dunfion.



S: Ciceft. W: Barlowe. S: Exon. W: Alleye. S: Carlisl. Io. Beff.



S: Oxon. H: Coren. S: Sarum. Iob: Inell.

