

access to history

Conflict and Reformation:

The Establishment of the Anglican Church 1529–70

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Contents

CHAPTER 1	The pre-Reformation Church before 1529	1
1	The political and social role of the Church	1
2	Popular piety and the spiritual role of the Church	9
3	Humanists, reformers and criticisms of the Church	12
4	Key debate	16
CHAPTER 2	Henry VIII and the break with Rome 1527–36	22
1	The annulment and the fall of Wolsey	22
2	The royal supremacy and the rise of Cromwell	32
3	Faction, opposition and rebellion	44
CHAPTER 3	A Church half-reformed: religious change and continuity 1535–47	60
1	The dissolution of the monasteries	61
2	Key debate	69
3	Cromwell, Cranmer and the Reformation after 1534	71
4	The state of the English Church by 1547	78
CHAPTER 4	Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation 1544–53	89
1	The reformists and the king	90
2	Doctrinal developments	98
3	Opposition and support	107

CHAPTER 5 Mary and the Catholic Counter-Reformation 1553–8 117

- 1 The restoration of the 'true faith' 117
- 2 Reformation and persecution 124
- 3 A crisis in religion? Opposition and conformity 129

CHAPTER 6 Elizabeth and the settlement of religion 1547–70 136

- 1 The Elizabethan religious settlement 137
- 2 Key debate 141
- 3 Establishing the Anglican Church 143
- 4 The end of the settlement 148

Study guide 158

Glossary of terms 167

Further reading 170

Index 172

Dedication

Keith Randell (1943–2002)

The *Access to History* series was conceived and developed by Keith, who created a series to 'cater for students as they are, not as we might wish them to be'. He leaves a living legacy of a series that for over 20 years has provided a trusted, stimulating and well-loved accompaniment to post-16 study. Our aim with these new editions is to continue to offer students the best possible support for their studies.

Mary and the Catholic Counter-Reformation 1553–8

This chapter is intended to help you to understand the next stage in the Reformation and the events connected with the changes in religion introduced by Mary. The nature, state and authority of the Roman Catholic Marian Church will be discussed, followed by an examination of the events that led to the Counter-Reformation and the attempt to turn back the clock to the period prior to the Henrician Reformation. These issues are examined as three key themes:

- ★ The restoration of the ‘true faith’
- ★ Reformation and persecution
- ★ A crisis in religion? Opposition and conformity

Key dates

1553	Succession of Mary I Execution of the Duke of Northumberland Catholic mass reintroduced	1554	Cardinal Pole returned to England as papal legate England and Rome reconciled Reintroduction of the heresy laws
1554	Wyatt Rebellion Execution of Lady Jane Grey and Guildford Dudley Marriage of Mary I and Philip of Spain	1555	Bishops Ridley and Latimer burned at the stake
		1556	Archbishop Cranmer burned at the stake
		1558	Death of Mary and Cardinal Pole

1 The restoration of the ‘true faith’

► *How successful was Mary in restoring the Catholic faith?*

Restoring the rightful succession

Mary (1516–58), the daughter of Catherine of Aragon, was 37 years old when she came to the throne. During Edward VI’s reign she had resisted Protestant reform just as strongly as she had under her father. While Somerset was in power she had been allowed to follow her Catholic religion in private, and she had remained on good terms with the Protector and Edward. With the swing towards Calvinism under Northumberland, increasing pressure had been put

**KEY FIGURES****Simon Renard
(1513–73)**

As the French-born Spanish ambassador to England, Renard exercised considerable influence over Mary I, to the point where some believe he was virtually directing English affairs until his dismissal from office in 1555. He arranged Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain but the latter did not like or trust Renard because he was not Spanish.

**William Paget
(1505–63)**

One of the most able and influential men in the governments of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary. He was a friend of Gardiner and was trusted by both Somerset and Mary, who employed him in her government, as did Elizabeth later. He was made Baron Paget in 1549.

on Mary to abandon Catholicism and to conform to the latest doctrines of the Church of England.

During this difficult period she had received constant support and advice from her Habsburg cousin, Emperor Charles V. It was fear of the Habsburgs that had prevented the reformers taking extreme measures against her. Mary was a proud woman, who resented the pressures put on her and was embittered by the treatment of her mother. This caused her to distrust her English councillors when she became queen, and instead, rely heavily on advice from the imperial ambassador, **Simon Renard**.

When Mary proclaimed herself queen on 11 July 1553, even Renard and Charles V had thought it a futile gesture. Yet when she entered London at the end of the month she was greeted with enormous enthusiasm. The reason why Mary enjoyed such enthusiastic support, even from among her Protestant subjects, was expressed by Sir Nicholas Throckmorton (c.1515–71):

*And though I liked not the religion
Which all her life Queen Mary had professed
Yet in my mind that wicked notion
Right heirs for to displace, I did detest.*

Political prisoners such as the Duke of Norfolk and Stephen Gardiner were released. Following the advice of Charles V, she showed leniency towards her opponents. Only Northumberland and two of his closest confederates were executed. Although some members of Northumberland's Council, like Sir William Cecil, were imprisoned, others, such as Sir **William Paget**, were allowed to join the new Privy Council. Throckmorton expressed what many of his contemporaries believed, that Mary 'stood for the true religion' and that, as a devout Catholic, she would insist that England return to the Church of Rome. At the same time, Mary was convinced that the kingdom's safety depended on a close alliance with the Habsburgs. Consequently, her policy rested on the achievement of these two aims:

- the restoration of England's links with Rome
- the conclusion of an alliance with the Habsburg Emperor, Charles V.

Until 1555 this strategy appeared to be prospering, but thereafter Mary's popularity steadily declined and, at her death in 1558, the strategy had unravelled.

Mary: character and personality

The cause of this unpopularity has generally been attributed to Mary's own character. Renard's assessment of the queen in 1555, following his dismissal from office, that she was 'good, easily influenced, inexperienced in worldly matters and a novice all round' was scarcely a flattering tribute. Elizabethan propagandists later were eager to depict Mary as a weak and unsuccessful

pro-Spanish monarch in order to highlight the achievements of their own queen. Protestant reformers reviled her as a cruel tyrant trying to enforce Catholicism through torture and burnings. This has produced a popular picture of 'Bloody Mary': a stubborn, arrogant, Catholic bigot, who burned Protestants and lost Calais to the French because of her infatuation with Philip of Spain.

In a modified form, this has been the view of many historians, but recently there have been attempts to revise this critical appraisal. It has been pointed out that she showed skill and resolution in defeating Northumberland's attempted *coup d'état*. Mary has also been criticised for indecision in the negotiations over the restoration of Catholicism to England and her marriage to Philip of Spain. However, this, it has been suggested, was in fact masterly political inactivity and pretended weakness, designed to win greater concessions from the papacy and the Habsburgs, similar tactics to those that her half sister Elizabeth used so successfully.

SOURCE A



KEY TERM

Coup d'état The French term for a sudden and illegal seizure of a government.

Study Source A. What does this portrait reveal about the relationship between Mary and her father Henry VIII?

A portrait of Mary Tudor painted in 1544, when she was 28 years old. The text in the background reads: 'Anno domini 1544 – In the year of our Lord, Lady Mary daughter to the most Vertuous prince King Henry the Eighth. The age of XXVIII (28) years'.

Indeed, it is suggested that Mary had the broad support of the majority of the people until 1555. The problem was not the weakness of Mary's character and policies, but her failure to produce an heir to consolidate her position. This, the outbreak of war with France and the declining economic position, were the real causes of Mary's growing unpopularity.

The religious situation in 1553

In 1553 no one in England doubted that Mary, after her twenty years of resistance to the royal supremacy for the sake of her religion, would restore Roman Catholicism. There is good evidence to suggest that it was just as much Edward VI's wish to preserve Protestantism, as Northumberland's personal ambition, that led to the attempt to exclude Mary from the throne. Mary and her Catholic supporters saw the failure of the scheme as a miracle, and she was determined to restore England to the authority of Rome as quickly as possible. What Mary failed to realise was that her initial popularity sprang not from a desire for a return to the Roman Catholic Church, but from a dislike of Northumberland, and respect for the legitimate succession.

Mary's main supporters in England and abroad urged caution. Both Charles V and Pope Julius III (1550–5) warned her not to risk her throne by acting too rashly. Cardinal Reginald Pole, appointed as papal legate to restore England to the authority of Rome, stayed in the Netherlands for a year before coming to England. Whether this was because Charles V refused to allow the Cardinal to leave until the planned marriage between Philip and Mary had come to fruition, or whether it reflected Pole's natural caution about returning to his native land and a possibly hostile reception, is difficult to decide. Even Gardiner, Mary's most trusted English advisor, who had consistently resisted reform, was unenthusiastic about returning to papal authority.

SOURCE B

From the Royal Proclamation issued by Mary I in August 1553. This proclamation set out Mary's religious policy.

Her Majesty will observe the Catholic religion she has professed all her life, and desires that all her subjects would quietly follow suit. However she will not compel any to this until further decisions are made. She commands her subjects to live together in Christian charity, avoiding the new and devilish terms of papist and heretic, and trying to live peaceful Christian lives. Any man who stirs up the people to disorder will be severely punished. Printers have published books and ballads written in English which discuss controversial religious teachings. Let nobody do so in future without the Queen's permission.

So I accept myself bound on my behalf to show such example as may encourage and maintain well those persons doing their Christian duty.

? Study Source B. Why might this declaration have served to confuse rather than clarify the nature of Mary's religious policy?

Mary singularly failed to realise the political implications of restoring Roman Catholicism to England. A return to papal authority would mean an end to the royal supremacy, which was strongly supported by the ruling and landed elites. Even the most ardent of the leading conservatives had been firm in their allegiance to the Crown and the Tudor State. It is agreed by most historians that the major causes of Mary's widespread unpopularity by the end of her reign, apart from the religious persecution, were the return to papal authority and the Spanish marriage. Most of the population regarded this as interference by foreigners and an affront to English nationalism.

The restoration of Anglo-Catholicism

In 1553 there was no doubting Mary's popularity and the ruling elites rallied to her support. The aristocracy and gentry were initially prepared to conform to Mary's religious views, and the bulk of the population followed their example. But some 800 strongly committed Protestant gentry, clergy and members of the middle orders left the country and spent the remainder of the reign on the Continent. Such an escape was less easy for the **lower orders**, and most of the 274 Protestant activists executed during Mary's reign came from this group. At the beginning of the reign even the most zealous of **urban radicals** were not prepared to go against the mainstream of public opinion, and waited to see what would happen. Certainly, when Mary, using the royal prerogative, suspended the second Act of Uniformity and restored the mass, there was no public outcry.

Mary's relationship with Parliament

This lack of religious opposition was apparent when Parliament met in October 1553. Admittedly, the arrest and imprisonment of Cranmer (see page 106), John Hooper (see page 103) and **Nicholas Ridley**, along with other leading Protestant bishops, removed the major source of opposition in the House of Lords. After a lively, but not hostile debate, the first step towards removing all traces of Protestantism from the Church of England was achieved with the passing of the first Statute of Repeal. This Act swept away all the religious legislation approved by Parliament during the reign of Edward VI, and the doctrine of the Church of England was restored to what it had been in 1547 under the Act of the Six Articles. Thus, the mass, clerical celibacy and ritual worship were reinstated.

Although Mary had succeeded in re-establishing the Anglo-Catholicism of her father, her advisers had managed to persuade her into some caution. There had been no attempt to question the royal supremacy, or to discuss the issue of the Church lands which had been sold to the laity. Both these issues were likely to provoke a more heated debate.

When Parliament reassembled it refused to repeal the Act of Supremacy, despite Mary's insistence. Mary responded to Parliament's refusal to repeal the Act of Supremacy by rejecting the title of Supreme Head of the English Church. Opposition to Mary's proposed marriage to Philip II of Spain and the



KEY TERMS

Lower orders The social class representing the mass of the population that occupied a position below the upper classes of nobility and gentry.

Urban radicals Educated artisans, tradesmen and merchants who had embraced the teachings and ideas of Protestantism.



KEY FIGURE

Nicholas Ridley (1502–55)

Radical Protestant cleric and martyr who served as Bishop of London. He tried and failed to persuade Mary to accept the new Protestant faith. His support for Queen Jane made him an enemy of Mary. On her accession he was dismissed from office, tried for treason and heresy, and executed.

consequent rebellion meant that further religious legislation was postponed until the spring of 1554. In the meantime Mary issued royal injunctions ordering the following:

- removal of married clergy from office
- the suppression of heresy
- the restoration of Holy Days and attendant ceremonies
- the ordination of clergy who had been ordained under the **English Ordinal**.



KEY TERM

English Ordinal The process by which priests were appointed and consecrated. This ceremony was to be conducted in English rather than in Latin.

Gardiner's conflict with Paget

Gardiner, anxious to regain royal favour after his opposition to Mary's marriage, tried to quicken the pace at which Protestantism was removed by beginning a methodical purge of married clergy. He demanded that all married clergy should give up their wives and families, or lose their livings. The authorities

Stephen Gardiner

c. 1483	Born in Bury St Edmunds to John Gardiner, a prosperous cloth merchant
1530–4	Principal secretary to Henry VIII
1532	Appointed Bishop of Winchester
1535–8	Ambassador to France
1539	Promoted Act of Six Articles
1548	Forced out of government and imprisoned in the Tower of London for opposing Somerset
1553	Appointed Lord Chancellor
1555	Died

Gardiner was educated at Cambridge University and became a doctor of civil law. He continued his studies and was awarded a doctorate in canon law. His legal expertise in common law and ecclesiastical law provided a firm foundation for future promotion. In 1521 he was appointed tutor to the Duke of Norfolk's son. His first significant appointment to public office came in 1524 when he became secretary to Lord Chancellor Wolsey (see page 22), Henry VIII's chief minister.

Gardiner supported Henry VIII over the divorce and approved of the royal supremacy but he disagreed with the religious changes proposed by Cromwell. Because of his opposition to Cromwell he fell out of favour with the king. He got his revenge later when he

took part in the destruction of Cromwell. Together with the Duke of Norfolk, he led the conservative faction at court. Back in royal favour, he became

one of Henry VIII's leading ministers between 1542 and the king's death in 1547. In Edward's reign he fell foul of the new Protestant regime; he was imprisoned and stripped of his title of Bishop of Winchester. In 1553 he was restored to all his offices and titles by Mary, who appointed him Lord Chancellor. He presided over the wedding of Philip and Mary.

Gardiner was a talented government minister, and respected thinker and theologian. His opposition to Somerset in the final years of Henry VIII's reign ensured his downfall after the king's death. Although Somerset was prepared to work with Gardiner, the two could not agree on the religious direction the Edwardian government should take. In spite of his strong Catholic beliefs, he tried to save the leaders of the reformist party, Cranmer and Northumberland, from execution. The accession of Mary rescued his career and although he had supported the break with Rome in 1534 he was willing to restore the Pope as head of the Church in 1554. He led the Catholic Counter-Reformation and promoted conservative legislation in Parliament. He served out the remainder of his life as a trusted adviser to the Crown.

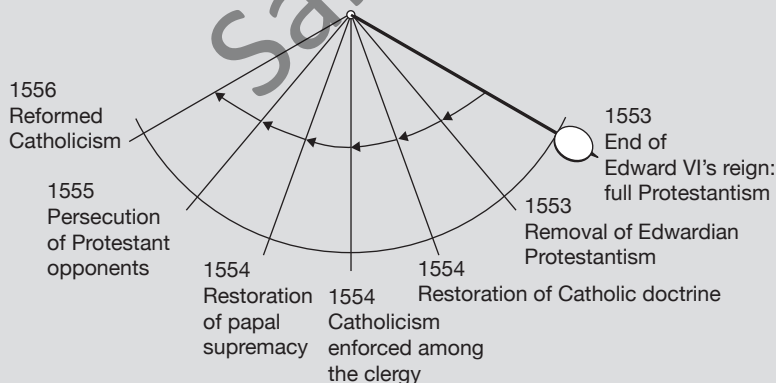


largely complied with these instructions, and some 800 parish clergy (almost a quarter) were so deprived. Although some fled abroad, the majority were found employment elsewhere in the country. The government made no provision for the wives and children of deprived clerics and many were forced to seek charity or to rely on the support of family. Gardiner also persuaded Parliament to support the queen's injunction by passing into law a bill to reintroduce the heresy laws. He was successfully opposed by Sir William Paget, who feared that such a measure might provoke further disorder.

Paget was a formidable enemy. He was trusted by Henry VIII and the Duke of Somerset but not by Northumberland. His support of Mary earned her trust and gratitude and his handling of the marriage negotiations won the admiration of Philip of Spain. However, his opposition to what he regarded as extreme religious legislation drawn up by Gardiner, his one-time friend and with whom he quarrelled quite violently, led to his losing his leading place in Mary's government.

Thwarted by Paget, Gardiner proceeded to turn his attention to senior Protestant clergy. The bishops of Gloucester, Hereford, Lincoln and Rochester and the Archbishop of York were deprived of their bishoprics, and were replaced by committed Catholics. In March 1554 the bishops were instructed to enforce all the religious legislation of the final year of Henry VIII's reign. Apart from ensuring a return to 'the old order of the Church, in the Latin tongue', these injunctions demanded that all married clergy should give up their wives and families or lose their livings. Around 800 parish priests were deprived of their livings.

Summary diagram: The restoration of the 'true faith'



2

Reformation and persecution

► *Why did Mary follow a policy of religious persecution?*

Restoration of papal authority

Cardinal Pole finally arrived in England in November 1554, after a delay of some months, and this marked the next decisive stage in the restoration of Roman Catholicism and papal authority. Parliament met in the same month and passed the second Statute of Repeal. This Act ended the royal supremacy, and returned England to papal authority by repealing all the religious legislation of the reign of Henry VIII back to the time of the break with Rome.

For Mary to achieve her aim of sweeping away all anti-papal legislation she had to come to a compromise with the landed elites. In fact, Parliament's threatened refusal to restore papal primacy in England unless the queen agreed to let confiscated Church wealth (mainly monastic and chantry property) remain in the hands of its new lay owners, angered Mary. Nevertheless, in spite of her anger, careful provision was made in the Act to protect the property rights of all those who had bought Church land since 1536. This demonstrates that Mary had no choice but to recognise the authority of Parliament over matters of religion. It meant that she had to abandon her plans for a full-scale restoration of the monasteries. Instead, she had to be content with merely returning the monastic lands, worth £60,000 a year and still held by the Crown, to those religious orders who were persuaded to return to England. Clearly, there were limits to the restoration of religion intended by Mary, who was constrained to work within them.

Consolidation of the Marian Church

In December 1555 Cardinal Pole was appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury. In his new role as head of the Church, Pole set out to eradicate Protestantism, although he soon realised that in order to accomplish this mission he first had to restore some measure of stability after twenty years of religious turmoil. It is widely considered that, in view of his lack of administrative experience and ability, such a formal and legalistic approach was a mistake. Ecclesiastical revenues had been so reduced that there were insufficient resources available to reorganise the Marian Church effectively. Indeed, a great part of Pole's three years in office was spent in the virtually hopeless task of trying to restore the Church of England's financial position.

Pole's attempts to reorganise and reconcile the Church of England to Rome were not helped by the death of Pope Julius III in 1555. The new Pope, Paul IV, disliked Pole and hated the Spanish Habsburgs. He stripped Pole of his title of legate and replaced him with Friar William Peto. However, Mary refused to recognise the appointment. The Pope then ordered Pole to return to Rome to

Reginald Pole

- 1500 Born in Stourton Castle in Staffordshire to Sir Richard Pole, a senior official in the household of Prince Arthur
- 1527 Became Dean of Exeter Cathedral
- 1530 Became Dean of Windsor but refused the king's offer of the Archbishopric of York
- 1537 Summoned to Rome by the Pope, who made him a cardinal and papal legate to England
- 1549 Narrowly failed to get elected Pope
- 1554 Returned to England as papal legate and helped return the Church to Rome
- 1555 Succeeded Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury
- 1558 Died on the same day as Mary I

Pole was born a younger son of Sir Richard Pole and Margaret, Countess of Salisbury. He was educated at Oxford University where he received his degree in divinity. He continued his studies on the Continent between 1521 and 1530, including two years in Paris. His mother was executed in 1541.

Pole was a dedicated Catholic who risked his life, and the lives of his family, to oppose Henry VIII's break with Rome. He criticised in print Henry VIII's supremacy of the Church in England. Henry VIII was furious and had his mother and brother arrested, charged with treason and executed. In the immediate aftermath of the death of Henry VIII he failed to persuade Somerset to return England to the Roman Church. He spent most of his life abroad and was out of touch with the feelings and attitudes of his fellow English when he returned in 1554. On his return to England he was invited to address Parliament, where he assured the audience that he came 'to reconcile, not to condemn, ... not to destroy but to build, ... not to compel but to call agayne'.

Pole's impact on English religious thinking was limited and he failed to turn the clock back to the 1520s. His restoration of the Pope as head of the English Church lasted only three years and it did not survive his death. His greatest achievement was to maintain an English presence at the papal court.



answer charges of heresy. With Mary's backing, Pole refused to comply, and continued his work in England as Archbishop of Canterbury, but the papacy would not recognise his authority. This further hindered his work because he could not appoint bishops, and by 1558, seven dioceses were vacant. Such quarrels, and the blatant papal intervention in English affairs, did little to convince anyone except the most zealous Catholics of the wisdom of returning to the authority of Rome.

Certainly, such events did not help the government in its task of winning the hearts and minds of the English to the Roman Catholic faith. Pole's hopes that the re-establishment of the old religion would lead to wholehearted acceptance of Roman Catholicism were not to be realised. Pole was fully in favour of the educational programme which was being adopted on the Continent. He appointed capable and active bishops, all of whom subsequently refused to serve in the Elizabethan Protestant Church of England.

The Twelve Decrees

In 1555 the Westminster synod approved the passing of the Twelve Decrees that included the establishment of seminaries in every diocese for the training of priests, but shortage of money limited the programme to a single creation at

York. This meant that the majority of the parish clergy remained too uneducated, and lacking in evangelical zeal, for the new laws to have any immediate impact on the laity. Mary's death in November 1558 came too soon for Catholic reform to have had any lasting effect. That is not to say that if Mary had lived longer, Catholicism would not have gained wider support than the significant minority, who clung to their faith even after the establishment of the Elizabethan Church.

Religious persecution

Parliament's approval of the restoration of the old heresy laws marked the beginning of religious persecution. The extract in Source C suggests that at the beginning of her reign Mary was prepared to be tolerant.

SOURCE C

Extract of a Royal Proclamation issued by Queen Mary in 1553.

Touching the punishment of heretics, we thinkeith it ought to be done without rashness ... and [the people] not to be condemned without just oration. And especially within London I would wish none to be burnt without some of the Council's presence and – both there and everywhere – good sermons [preached] at the same.

? Study Source C. How true a reflection of Mary's religious beliefs and intentions is this statement?

The first Protestant was burned at the stake for heresy on 4 February 1555, and Hooper suffered a similar fate five days later in his own city of Gloucester. In October, Ridley and Hugh Latimer, the former Bishop of Worcester, were likewise executed at Oxford (see Source D), where they were followed by Cranmer in March 1556 (see Source E). The death of Gardiner in November 1555 had removed a trusted and restraining influence, and thereafter the regime became more repressive. Although Gardiner had started the persecution on the grounds that some executions would frighten the Protestant extremists into submission, he was too astute a politician to fail to see that the policy was not working. Far from cowing the Protestants, he realised that the executions were hardening the opposition to Mary and encouraging the colonies of English exiles on the Continent. He counselled caution, but his advice was ignored.

After Gardiner's death, Mary and Pole felt that it was their sacred duty to stamp out heresy, and stepped up the level of persecution. Pole was so confident of success that he declined the offer of Jesuit missionaries to help infuse the English laity with enthusiasm for the 'old faith'. In the long term this proved to be a mistake because there was no attempt to win over the doubters, there was only fear. It has been estimated that the 274 religious executions carried out during the final three years of Mary's reign exceeded the number recorded in any Catholic country on the Continent over the same period, even though it was much less than in some other periods. This modifies the claim by some historians that the Marian regime was more moderate than those on the Continent.

SOURCE D

Report of the burning of Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, and Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, contained in *Acts and Monuments*, popularly known as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, published by John Foxe in 1563.

Then they brought a faggot kindled with fire, and laid the same down at Dr. Ridley's feet. To whom Master Latimer spoke in this manner 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out'.

Study Source D. What do you think Latimer meant by this quotation?

SOURCE E



The martyrdom of Cranmer (1556), from John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (published in 1563).

How is Cranmer depicted in Source E? In your opinion, was Foxe a Catholic or a Protestant author?

SOURCE F

Report by Simon Renard to King Philip, February 1555.

Sire,

The people of London are murmuring about the cruel enforcement of the recent acts of parliament on heresy which has now begun, as shown publicly when a certain Rogers was burnt yesterday. Some of the onlookers wept, others prayed to God to give them strength ... others gathered the ashes and bones ... yet others did threaten the bishops. The haste in which the bishops have proceeded in this matter may well cause a revolt. I do not think it well that your Majesty should allow further executions to take place unless the reasons are strong. Tell the bishops that they are not to proceed without having first consulted you and the Queen. Your Majesty will also consider that the Lady Elizabeth has her supporters and that there are Englishmen who do not love foreigners.

Read Source F. What does the source reveal about the dangers of the Marian persecution?

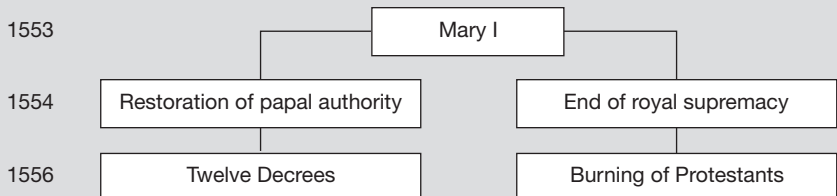
Popular reactions against religious persecution

Gardiner's unheeded warnings were soon justified, and Mary's popularity waned rapidly. There was widespread revulsion in the south-east of England at the persecution, and to many people Catholicism became firmly linked with dislike of Rome and Spain. According to historian David Loades, writing in his biography entitled *Mary Tudor: A Life* (1989), 'it was during Mary's reign that Catholicism first began to be seen as something foreign' whereas Protestantism was gradually acquiring the status of being more 'English, even patriotic'. The terror associated with the policy of 'turn or burn' not only made for a bad press but tarnished the image of 'caring' Catholicism. It was a godsend for Protestant propagandists who were able to demonise the queen and attack the tyrannical nature of her rule. Thus, the myth of 'Bloody Mary' was born.

Many local authorities either ignored or tried to avoid enforcing the unpopular legislation. The number of people fleeing abroad increased (over 800 had fled during the reign), reinforcing the groups of English exiles living in centres of Lutheranism and Calvinism on the Continent. They became the nucleus of an active and well-informed opposition, which began to flood England with anti-Catholic books and pamphlets. The effectiveness of this campaign is shown in the proclamations issued by the Privy Council in 1558, ordering the death penalty by martial law for anyone found with heretical or seditious literature. In truth, government censorship was not rigorous enough to stop the importation and circulation of illicit Protestant literature. If before 1555 the English people were generally undecided about religion, the Marian repression succeeded in creating a core of highly committed English Protestants.

The Marian government lost the propaganda war because it was ill-equipped to deal with it. Historian Robert Tittler (1983) has pointed out that one of the major weaknesses of the Counter-Reformation was the fact that Mary's government 'neglected to mount a sustained propaganda campaign'. Whereas Henry VIII and Cromwell had conducted a massive propaganda exercise (see pages 33–4) to help 'sell' the Henrician Reformation, Mary believed this was unnecessary as the people were, at heart, genuine Catholics who required no such motivation to embrace the 'true faith'. Consequently, as Tittler stated, 'Mary's regime concentrated on the suppression of opposition voices rather than the projection of its own.'

Summary diagram: Reformation and persecution



3 A crisis in religion? Opposition and conformity

► *How serious was the crisis in religion during Mary's reign?*

Potential crisis: the Spanish marriage

Mary's political inexperience and stubbornness are shown in the first major issue of her reign: the royal marriage. This had the potential to turn into a political crisis which had major implications for Mary's desire for religious reform. The Privy Council was divided on the matter. There were two realistic candidates for Mary's hand:

- Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, who was favoured by Gardiner
- Philip of Spain, who was supported by Paget.

Courtenay was a descendant of the Plantagenet kings and such a marriage would have strengthened the Tudor dynasty, but Mary favoured a closer link with the Habsburgs through Philip. It was not until 27 October that Mary raised the matter in Council, and then only to announce that she was going to marry Philip. This disconcerted Gardiner, who was blamed by Mary for the petition from the House of Commons in November asking her to marry within the realm. Mary disregarded all opposition to her plans.

On 7 December a marriage treaty, drafted by Mary, Paget, Gardiner and Renard, was presented to the Council. It was ratified at the beginning of January 1554. Mary had achieved her objective of forming a closer alliance with the Habsburgs. The terms of the treaty were very favourable to England. Philip was to have no regal power in England, no foreign appointments were to be made to the Privy Council, and England was not to be involved in, or pay towards the cost of any of Philip's wars. If the marriage was childless, the succession was to pass to Elizabeth.

In spite of these safeguards, Mary's popularity began to ebb, as many people still thought that England would be drawn into Philip's wars and become a mere province of the Habsburg Empire. The objections to the marriage were mainly political but Mary's reasons for the union with Philip were largely religious. She wanted the powerful, prestigious and devoutly Catholic Philip to assist her in her religious mission to re-Catholicise England. In the final analysis it must be remembered that Mary was herself half Spanish.

By the end of January 1554, anti-Spanish feelings led to rebellion. The rebellion was led by Sir James Croft, Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt. These men had all held important offices at court under both Henry VIII and Edward VI. Although they had supported Mary's accession, they feared that the growing Spanish influence would endanger their own careers.

Actual crisis: Wyatt's Rebellion

Sir Thomas Wyatt was a member of a wealthy and well-connected gentry family from Kent. He succeeded to the family estates on the death of his father, also called Sir Thomas, in 1542. Sir Thomas Wyatt senior had been a courtier and diplomat, and his son was expected to follow suit. He became friendly with the influential Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, who acted as his patron. Wyatt fought in France under Surrey in 1543–4 and in 1545 he was promoted to the English council governing English-controlled Boulogne. Unfortunately for Wyatt, his career suffered a setback in 1546 when Surrey fell into disfavour with Henry VIII and was later executed. As a committed Protestant, Wyatt found favour with the Edwardian regime, which he defended in 1549 when riots broke out in Kent. He was trusted by Northumberland, who appointed him to represent the English government in negotiations with the French in 1550.

Wyatt served the Edwardian regime loyally but he declared his support for Mary when Jane Grey was proclaimed queen. Wyatt's initial support for Mary soon evaporated when he heard of the Spanish marriage. As an MP he became involved in the opposition to the proposed marriage in Parliament but his hopes of persuading the queen to reject the marriage failed.

Conspiracy and rebellion

Unlike the rebellions of 1549, Wyatt's Rebellion of 1554 was a political conspiracy among the ruling elites, and there was little popular support. The conspirators planned to marry Elizabeth to Edward Courtenay, Earl of Devon, who Mary had rejected as an unsuitable match.

Simultaneous rebellions in the West Country (Carew), the Welsh borderland (Croft), the Midlands (Suffolk, father of Lady Jane Grey) and Kent (Wyatt) were to be supported by a French fleet. The plan failed because the inept Courtenay disclosed the scheme to his patron, Gardiner, before the conspirators were ready. In any case, Carew, Croft and the Duke of Suffolk bungled the uprisings. Wyatt succeeded in raising 3000 men in Kent, and this caused real fear in the government because the rebels were so close to London, the capital. The situation was made worse because a number of royal troops sent to crush the revolt under the command of the aged Duke of Norfolk deserted to the rebels. Realising the danger, the Privy Council desperately tried to raise fresh forces to protect London.

Failure of Wyatt's Rebellion

An overcautious Wyatt failed to press home his advantage and although he led his motley troops with some dash, his delay in marching on London gave Mary the time she needed to see to the capital's defence. In refusing to flee her capital, Mary's courage impressed those whom she called on to support her regime. By the time Wyatt arrived at the gates of the city the revolt was doomed.

to fail. Repulsed at London Bridge and the Tower, Wyatt crossed the Thames at Kingston, but found Ludgate closed and his troops began deserting in droves.

Wyatt surrendered and the revolt was crushed. Paget suggested leniency for the rebels for fear of provoking further revolts. Fewer than a hundred executions took place among the commons and most were pardoned. As for the rebel elite, apart from Wyatt and Suffolk, only Jane Grey and her husband Guildford Dudley were executed. Croft was tried and imprisoned but he was pardoned and released after nine months in the Tower. Carew fled to France but returned in 1556 on promise of a pardon. Both Elizabeth and Courtenay were interrogated and imprisoned but were later released.

The Wyatt Rebellion came as close as any to overthrowing the monarchy. According to historian Paul Thomas, writing in *Authority and Disorder in Tudor Times 1485–1603* (1999): ‘Mary’s new regime was pushing its luck, not so much with a policy of Catholic restoration, as with the Spanish marriage and the provocation of those members of the Court elite who either felt excluded or feared imminent exclusion.’

Frustrated and increasingly desperate, men like Wyatt felt compelled to act in a way that had only two possible outcomes: failure would result in their own death while success would almost inevitably lead to the death of the monarch. In the opinion of historian Diarmaid MacCulloch, writing in *Tudor Rebellions* (2008), the fact that the Wyatt Rebellion failed demonstrates ‘the bankruptcy of rebellion as a way of solving political crises’.

SOURCE G

From Sir Nicholas Throckmorton’s evidence given at his trial for treason in 1554. He made no effort to conceal his distaste for the queen’s marriage but he denied that there was anything treasonable about this.

I did see the whole realm was against it [the marriage] and although I counselled caution and urged restraint on those who would do mischief, it is I who is brought here before you. My lords, in no wise am I guilty of treason because it was no treason, nor no procurement of treason, to talk against the coming hither of the Spaniards.

Study Source G. Throckmorton (see page 118) was found not guilty and was acquitted of all charges. Why do you think he was spared while Wyatt (see below) was executed?

War with France and the loss of Calais

In 1557 Mary declared war on France. She did so not out of any justifiable grievance but on account of her alliance with Spain. As the conflict between Spain and France intensified, Philip put pressure on Mary to join him in making war on the French. Some royal councillors advocated against war for the following reasons:

- Mary and Philip had promised that their marriage would not result in England being dragged into Spain’s Continental conflicts.
- War would damage an already fragile English economy by disrupting trade.

- War might lead to the revival of the Franco-Scottish alliance, thus threatening England's northern border.
- The safety and security of Calais would be put in danger.

Mary ignored her councillors' advice and allied herself with Philip.

SOURCE H

Mary's declaration of war, issued on 7 June 1557.

All Englishmen to regard Henry, the French King, and his vassals as public enemies of this kingdom and to harm them wherever possible, abstaining from trading or any other business with them. We have seen fit to allow his subjects and merchants forty days to leave this kingdom with such property as the law permits them to export.

? Study Source H. After declaring war on France why did Mary permit Frenchmen 40 days to leave England?

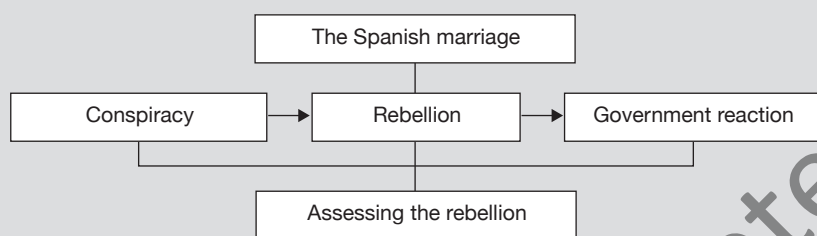
In spite of some minor successes, the war went badly for Mary. A Scottish invasion was repulsed and the city of St Quentin was captured by Anglo-Spanish forces but French power proved too strong. Defeat and retreat led to the fall of Calais, the last English possession in Continental Europe. As the merchants had feared, trade was disrupted and the economy suffered. Of greater concern to Mary was the possibility that by making war on the French she might risk conflict with the papacy. The Franco-Papal alliance against Spain would be likely to extend to England if Mary dared join her husband in war. Having worked so hard to repair England's relations with the papacy and to restore papal power over the English Church, Mary could not face the prospect of a new schism. In the event, Mary was spared this embarrassment when a serious rift developed in Franco-Papal relations.

Religion and the Church of England under Mary

To assess the state of religion and the Church in England at the end of Mary's reign in 1558 is just as difficult as it is to measure the advance of Protestantism by its beginning in 1553. It is almost impossible to decide to what extent the bulk of the population had any particular leanings towards either the Protestant or the Catholic faith. While it is easy to trace the changing pattern of official doctrine in the Church of England through the acts and statutes passed in Parliament, it is a much greater problem to determine what the general public thought about religion. At present, the consensus among historians is that the ruling elites accepted the principle of the royal supremacy and were prepared to conform to whichever form of religion was favoured by the monarch. Although the lower orders are generally considered to have had a conservative affection for the traditional forms of worship, it is thought that they were prepared to follow the lead of the local elites. It is also fair to say that a sizeable proportion of the population – the doubters – may still have been undecided about religion. Whether the religious legislation passed in Parliament was put into effect very much depended on the attitudes of the local elites, and to a lesser extent those of the parish authorities.

Arguably, although there were small minorities of committed Protestants and Catholics, neither religion seems to have had a strong hold in England when Mary I died. When Elizabeth I came to the throne the country was willing to return to a form of moderate Protestantism. However, during her reign deeper religious divisions began to appear, and the unity of the Church of England came to an end.

Summary diagram: A crisis in religion? Opposition and conformity



Chapter summary

The accession of Mary witnessed the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic faith in England. As a devout Catholic, Mary was determined to erase the Protestant reforms introduced to the Church by her half-brother Edward VI. She restored the Pope as head of the Church, reintroduced the Catholic mass and re-established the heresy laws. Adopting the tactics of the European Counter-Reformation, Mary set about returning the people to the 'true faith'. She was aided in her mission by Cardinal Pole, who returned from exile as papal legate and was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. For

those who opposed her, she resorted to fear and persecution, which resulted in the public burnings of nearly 300 people. Among the victims was the former Archbishop of Canterbury and architect of the Protestant reformation, Thomas Cranmer. The harsh treatment of Protestants proved counter-productive since distinguished clerics such as bishops Ridley and Latimer became martyrs. As the first female monarch to rule England, Mary faced a unique situation since her male-dominated court expected her to marry. However, the Spanish marriage, with Philip of Spain, proved controversial and provoked men such as Sir Thomas Wyatt to rebel. Her reign proved too short to establish Roman Catholicism firmly.



Refresher questions

Use these questions to remind yourself of the key material covered in this chapter.

- 1 What problems did Mary face when she became queen?
- 2 Why did Mary restore Roman Catholicism?
- 3 How popular were Mary's religious changes?
- 4 Why did Mary follow a policy of religious persecution?
- 5 How significant was Gardiner's contribution to religious change during Mary's reign?
- 6 Why was Cranmer executed?
- 7 What impact did Pole have on the religious changes introduced during Mary's reign?
- 8 Why was the Spanish marriage so important for Mary?
- 9 What caused the Wyatt Rebellion?
- 10 Why was the Wyatt Rebellion so dangerous to Mary and her government?
- 11 What was the state of the English Church at the end of Mary's reign?



Question practice

ESSAY QUESTIONS

- 1 'Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain did more harm than good to the cause of religious reform.' Assess the validity of this view.
- 2 To what extent did the re-establishment of Catholicism in England owe more to the work of Gardiner than it did to Pole?
- 3 'The restoration of the Pope as head of the English Church encouraged more opposition than support for Mary's attempts to re-Catholicise England.' Assess the validity of this view.
- 4 'The Marian Counter-Reformation was a failure and the persecutions and burnings prove it.' Assess the validity of this view.

SOURCE ANALYSIS QUESTION

- 1 With reference to Sources 1, 2 and 3 below, and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these sources to a historian studying the effectiveness of the Marian Counter-Reformation.

SOURCE 1

From the Royal Proclamation issued by Mary I in August 1553. This proclamation set out Mary's religious policy.

Her Majesty will observe the Catholic religion she has professed all her life, and desires that all her subjects would quietly follow suit. However she will not compel any to this until further decisions are made. She commands her subjects to live together in Christian charity, avoiding the new and devilish terms of papist and heretic, and trying to live peaceful Christian lives. Any man who stirs up the people to disorder will be severely punished. Printers have published books and ballads written in English which discuss controversial religious teachings. Let nobody do so in future without the Queen's permission.

So I accept myself bound on my behalf to show such example as may encourage and maintain well those persons doing their Christian duty.

SOURCE 2

From a report sent by Simon Renard, the Spanish ambassador, to his master, King Philip of Spain, in February 1555.

The people of this town of London are murmuring about the cruel enforcement of the recent acts of Parliament against heresy which has now begun, as shown publicly when a certain Rogers was burnt yesterday. Some of the onlookers wept. Others prayed to God to give them strength, persistence, and patience to bear the pain and not to convert back to Catholicism. Others gathered the ashes and bones and wrapped them up in paper to preserve them. Yet others threatened the bishops. The haste with which the bishops have proceeded in this matter may well cause a revolt. If the people got the upper hand, not only would the cause of religion be again menaced, but the persons of your Majesty and the Queen might be in peril.

SOURCE 3

From John Foxe's book *Acts and Monuments*, published in 1563. Foxe was a Protestant writer who described here the execution of Agnes Potter and Joan Trunchfield.

These two advocates and sufferers for the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, lived in the town of Ipswich. Being apprehended on information of heresy, they were brought before the bishop of Norwich, who examined them concerning their religion in general and their faith in the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the altar in particular. With respect to the latter they both delivered their opinion, that in the sacrament of the Lord's supper there was represented the memorial only of Christ's death and passion, saying that according to the scriptures he was ascended up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God the Father, and therefore his body could not really be in the sacrament.

A few days later, they were examined by the bishop when both of them still continuing steadfast in the profession of their faith, sentence was pronounced against them as heretics, and they were delivered over to the secular power.

On the day appointed for their execution, which was in the month of March 1556, they were both led to the stake and burnt, in the town of Ipswich. Their courage and conviction was admired by the multitude who saw them suffer.