

Extract from Professor W.J. Sheils on *Diversity & Dissension*

DIVERSITY & DISSENSION

Introduction

England had its own indigenous form of **heresy** from the late fourteenth century among the followers of **John Wyclif**, generally known as **Lollards**, and was therefore used to the presence of **heterodox** opinions among the population, the religious changes of the **Reformation**, the **evangelical** movements of the earlier sixteenth century, followed by the **theological** changes of **Edward VI's** reign, and the restoration of **Catholicism** under **Mary**, had left large numbers of people, **clergy** as well as **laity**, confused about the place of religion in the new polity, and about the ultimate destination of the changes which they had lived through (see **Context**; **Daily Life and Worship**).

The **Elizabethan Settlement**, when it emerged through the Acts of **Supremacy** and **Uniformity** and the **Thirty Nine Articles**, combined a broadly conservative **Episcopal** ecclesiology and mode of worship with a more

radical **Calvinist** theology. This formulation disappointed many traditionalists who were unhappy with the dismantling of a **liturgical** cycle of which they had grown fond through the familiarity of practice, (see **Liturgy**) but it also proved troubling to many of those who supported reform, who viewed the mix of conservative ecclesiology and radical theology with discomfort if not with suspicion. As a result there were large numbers among the political and intellectual elites who were lukewarm about the settlement in its early years.



Burning of Thomas Cranmer from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, 1563 edition.

Origin/Date: 1563

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Key:

Interactive glossary terms

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