WHOREMONGERS, HERETICS, AND THE DEVIL’S DOCTRINE:
CLERICAL MARRIAGE IN MID-TUDOR ENGLAND, 1540-1555

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Whoremongers, Heretics, and the Devil’s Doctrine: Clerical Marriage in Mid-
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DEDICATION

For Sean, who wrote in pen, and for Elizabeth, who wrote in crayon.
To please or displease men’s minds, I mind not
But mind (as God knoweth) God’s mind to fulfill.
   As He will I will, and more I will not:
   So God be pleased, say men what men will.
   -John Ponet
The debate over clerical marriage was a bitter one in the English Protestant Reformation, revealing different views of human nature. For Protestants, the idea that lifelong celibacy could be required of priests was unnatural and harmful. For Catholics, celibacy and chastity was a vow that men could make freely of their own will. This debate over human nature and free will would dominate the clerical marriage controversy during the Reformation in the mid-Tudor period, from the 1530s to the 1550s. The study of clerical marriage is too-often treated in a vacuum, as a theological issue. In fact, clerical marriage debate was, at its basis, as much biological as it was political or ideological.

These English theologians attended Cambridge together and knew each other well, but wound up on opposite sides of the debate. This thesis will analyze works by Protestants such as George Joye, John Ponet, and John Hooper, as well as a book written by the Catholic Stephen Gardiner. Joye and Ponet argue that it was human nature to desire to get married and have children. Hooper extends the argument of human nature to encompass God’s will, claiming that God would not have created human nature to contradict God’s law. In contrast, Gardiner argues that humans had free will, directly contradicting the Protestants’ claims. When discussed in their entirety, these works reveal an entirely different analysis of clerical marriage, one that ties into the much larger debate of human nature and free will.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The debate over clerical marriage was a bitter one in the English Protestant Reformation, revealing different views of human nature. For some men, the idea that lifelong celibacy could be required of priests was unnatural and harmful. For others, celibacy and chastity was a vow that was difficult but not impossible, and one that men could make freely of their own will. Protestants argued that it was unrealistic to ask young men to commit to a life that they considered against human nature and God’s law. In contrast, Catholics argued that it was perfectly reasonable to expect obedience of those who willingly made such vows. This debate over human nature and free will would dominate the clerical marriage controversy during the Reformation in the mid-Tudor period, from the 1530s to the 1550s.

And yet despite this picture, the most common argument by historians until the 1990s was that clerical marriage was not very important to early English reformers. Historians claimed that priests who married did not really want to do so, and that laypeople did not want them to marry, either. In 1937, A.G. Dickens published a short essay describing the life of Archbishop Robert Holgate. According to Dickens, Holgate was merely one of many clerics who were duped into marriage by John Dudley and Edward Seymour in that brief time during the reign of Edward VI when clerical marriage was legal.¹ Some fifty-seven years later, Eric Carlson reinforced this claim, arguing that most clerics did not want to participation in this practice of marriage, and those who did fought a constant struggle, ameliorated only briefly by the reign of Edward VI.² Peter Marshall, also publishing in 1994, claimed that lay opposition to clerical marriage was much greater than its proponents would have liked, or believed.³

More recently, new perspectives have emerged in the historiography of clerical marriage, demonstrating its importance to the early English reformers as well as its historical significance. These historians argue that clerical marriage was highly desired by reform-minded clerics of the mid-Tudor period, and that clerical marriage was very significant to the English Reformation as a whole. In 2003, Nancy Basler Bjorklund published an essay about Archbishop Matthew Parker, a bishop who was very much in favor of clerical marriage, who was married himself, and who fought to have it legally recognized when Mary died and Elizabeth took the throne. Bjorklund criticized Carlson’s assessment of the historical significance of clerical marriage, arguing that it was much more important.

Specifically, the effect Mary’s reign had on married clerics was large. Although it is not possible to determine precisely how many priests were deprived of their positions during Mary’s reign, there are a few relevant statistics. For example, in the diocese of Winchester, fifty-four priests lost their titles for being married in the last two years that Stephen Gardiner held that see as bishop. This was more than four times the number of priests who lost their positions in the two years prior, when John Ponet controlled the diocese, demonstrating a significant increase in interrogations and deprivations. Therefore, the evidence shows that clerical marriage was significant to the people at the time.

Modern historiography lacks structural integrity on this subject, however. The study of clerical marriage is too-often treated in a vacuum, as a theological issue. Modern historians do not examine it in the natural context many of its proponents saw it in. They do not make the connection between the underlying debate over human nature present in early reformers’ writings and the overt debate about clerical marriage. In fact, the clerical marriage debate was, at its basis, as much biological as it was political or theological.

Thus, looking at clerical marriage through the lens of human nature is as important to the understanding the mid-Tudor period as looking at it through a political or theological

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6 Ibid. Information is not available for the number of priests who were working in Winchester at the time, but according to the Church of England’s Clergy Database, Winchester currently has approximately 450 parishes.
lens. Protestants such as George Joye and Ponet argued that it was human nature to desire to get married and have children. John Hooper, in general agreement with them, extended the argument of human nature to encompass God’s will, claiming that God would not have created human nature to contradict God’s law. In contrast, Catholics such as Gardiner believed in the competing concept of free will. This would be the major foundation of the conflict between the two ideological camps, and would comprise the major part of their writings.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION**

Much of the agenda for the English Reformation was derived from ideas that came from mainland Europe to Cambridge. The earliest ideas came from Martin Luther, an early sixteenth-century Augustinian priest in Germany who initiated controversies over the Latin Bible, the sale of indulgences, clerical marriage and transubstantiation. He was the first to successfully carve out a new and separate religion out of the Catholic Church, never again to be subsumed under its power. Men like Luther, John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli, and Heinrich Bullinger were not only influential in Europe, but also in England where their ideas were accepted and promulgated by people like English bishop John Hooper.

These ideas took hold slowly in England, but eventually led to serious religious reform. It started in 1533, when Henry VIII, seeking an annulment from his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, split England from the Roman Catholic Church so he could marry Anne Boleyn and attempt to conceive a male heir. When Henry VIII became head of the Church of England, English reformers took it as an opportunity to make religious changes that European reformers like Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli were implementing on the mainland.

By 1540, the English Reformation was heavily political. Men like Thomas Cranmer, Hooper, Joye, and Gardiner, who had received their degrees at Cambridge in the 1520s and

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who knew each other well, had entered careers in the 1530s and were gaining power by 1540. Understandably, they took what they learned in their early years and applied their beliefs to their politics. This became a source of conflict among them, as their ideological differences led them to target one another with political actions that were sometimes violent. They also faced conflict from men like John Dudley, a long-term politician who was less interested in the ideological basis for the Reformation, but still invested in the political ramifications of major religious reform.

Underneath the political basis for clerical marriage was a theological one. Since the early years of the Roman Catholic Church, clerics had been celibate as a matter of general practice. By the eleventh century CE, clerical celibacy was codified into canon law and made mandatory as a matter of discipline. In England, concern over clerical marriage was not just theological. Sons of priests inherited their fathers’ positions, making it more difficult for the Catholic Church to keep its massive land holdings undivided. As such, codifying clerical celibacy had economic benefits for the Medieval Church. But English Protestant reformers, such as Ponet and Barnes, disagreed with clerical celibacy. Drawing on the writings of reformers from mainland Europe, including Bullinger and Philipp Melanchthon, they claimed that celibacy and chastity were impossible for most people, and almost invariably led to fornication. They thought that changing the laws to allow clerical marriage would be a more godly act than ignoring what they believed was centuries of illicit sex among Catholic clerics.

However, the reformers could not persuade Henry VIII to accept clerical marriage, or most other changes. The Church of England under Henry VIII was much like the Roman Catholic Church, only instead of the pope, Henry was the head of the church. In 1539,

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12 William E. Phipps, Clerical Celibacy: The Heritage (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 2004), 129.
14 Carlson, English Reformation, 52.
15 Ibid., 49.
parliament passed Henry’s Six Articles, a piece of legislation reaffirming clerical celibacy and vows of chastity, and Henry refused to be moved any further. The reformers could only bide their time and wait until Henry, aging and painfully infirm, died. Henry’s heir Edward was young but already showed a zeal for Protestant reform. When Edward VI took the throne in 1547 at the age of nine, Henry’s Six Articles were repealed and clerical marriage was made legal. Priests and bishops who had longed to be married got married, although they were not a significant number. Some clerics who had fled England after marrying or who had married abroad, such as Hooper, returned with their wives.

When Edward VI died after reigning for six years, his Catholic sister Mary took the throne and made England a Catholic country once more. Mary faced an uphill battle not only in her attempt to bring England back to Catholicism, but also to prove that a regnant queen could act just as judiciously and firmly as a king. Under her short reign, Protestants endured great persecution, and many laypeople and clerics, Hooper included, were executed for their beliefs.

THE MAJOR FIGURES STUDIED HERE

During the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII, as well as during Edward’s and Mary’s reigns, there was a great deal of written debate on the subject of clerical marriage. The first chapter of this thesis includes a discussion of two of the major treatises written in favor of clerical marriage in the 1540s. George Joye wrote a treatise focused on the subject in 1541, as did John Ponet in 1549. This chapter emphasizing Joye’s and Ponet’s claims that marriage and sex were a part of human nature, and that to deny them was unnatural and wrong. The chapter also delves into the natural imagery they used to convey their arguments.

The second chapter discusses controversy that arose as a result of those two treatises. In 1554, Gardiner wrote a reply to Ponet’s treatise, criticizing Ponet’s arguments and affirming his own claim that clerical celibacy was the most appropriate. Two years later,

16 Ibid., 50-51.
17 Ibid., 51.
18 Ibid., 55.
Ponet replied to Gardiner, refuting Gardiner’s arguments and bolstering his own. The second chapter of this thesis illuminates the ideological controversy between Gardiner and Ponet, men who were ideologically opposed on the subject of clerical marriage and debated scriptural and historical evidence on the issue. This chapter further defines the disagreement between Catholics and Protestants on the subject of human nature, showing that while Ponet and Joye believed marriage was a part of human nature, open to all, Gardiner supported the idea that men had free will to counter their natural impulses. Finally, the chapter explains the political controversy tying the two men together as religious opponents who, at various times in this period, held the same high-ranking religious office.

The final chapter of this thesis focuses on Hooper, the first bishop to be executed over clerical marriage in Mary’s reign. Hooper was another reform-minded Cambridge colleague of Barnes and Joye, and like them was opposed to Gardiner. He supported clerical marriage and the Protestant view of human nature. Unlike the others, he did not write a long treatise in favor of clerical marriage. However, he was the first in England to lose a high-ranking religious position and eventually his life over his refusal to abandon his wife and children. Hooper’s life and actions serve best as an archetype of the English Protestant Reformation in the mid-Tudor period: a time of deep disagreement over many theological subjects, political intrigue, persecution, and death by burning for one’s beliefs. Like the other figures studied here, Hooper shows that historians need to pay more attention to the issue of clerical marriage in the English Reformation because it was more significant to the English Reformation than previously thought and because clerical marriage relates to much larger debates of the time, specifically that of human nature.
CHAPTER 2

WHOREMONGERS

Clerical marriage was a highly-charged issue in England. Theologians such as George Joye and John Ponet wrote books in favor of ending the centuries-long ban on married clergy. Writing from exile in Antwerp in 1541, Joye sought to convince then-king Henry VIII to discontinue the practice of clerical celibacy in the new Anglican Church. He was unsuccessful. Ponet, writing in England in 1549, sought to convince Edward Seymour, lord protector and regent for Edward VI, that clerical marriage ought to be an important part of the rapidly-changing canons of the church. Ponet and Joye made similar arguments and used such rhetorical devices as symbolism, allegory, and reservation to strengthen and support their positions.

Joye and Ponet focused on the unrealistic nature of vows of celibacy. Their claims represented the larger Protestant perspective, reflecting a more pessimistic, Calvinist view of human nature. Protestants broadly claimed that humans were made by God, and as such, human nature was made by God. In general, they believed that marriage was made by God to allow man to remain within God’s law and the laws of nature, which they believed reigned above and beyond any laws created by man. Specifically, they countered existing Catholic laws enforcing clerical celibacy on the basis that they were man’s law in conflict with God’s law.

GEORGE JOYE

Almost nothing is known about George Joye’s early life. He was a student at Cambridge before his ordination as a priest in Lincolnshire in 1515. In the mid-1520s, Joye

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20 Recent scholarship on these two books is scant. Both Joye and Ponet were prolific writers, and most published analyses of their writings focuses on other works. Nancy Basler Bjorklund wrote a 2003 analysis of a similar treatise written by Matthew Parker in 1567, and this chapter is derived from her approach.

and other priests and scholars with Protestant leanings began to come under fire. In November 1527, after seeing his colleague Robert Barnes forced to burn his Protestant writings, Joye was summoned to London to answer the charges of heresy leveled against him.\(^{22}\) Joye was charged with believing that priests were no closer to God than the laity, that priests could marry, and that man could not be saved by good works. All of these were considered heretical opinions, illegal to espouse. The following month, Joye fled to the mainland.\(^{23}\)

It is not clear where Joye first went, but by 1529 he was in Antwerp. While there, he spent years working on various projects including an English Primer and partial translations of the Bible into English.\(^{24}\) He also married in 1531, which significantly affected his views on clerical marriage.\(^{25}\) In this time, he maintained contact with his colleagues in England and managed to still spark controversy from across the English Channel (e.g. sending copies of English bibles to King Henry and Queen Anne in 1533, when Henry had banned other English versions of the bible).\(^{26}\)

In the middle years of the 1530s, Joye incited controversy among his own peers in the world of Bible translation. Tyndale and Joye both believed strongly that the Bible should be translated and openly available in English.\(^{27}\) Tyndale, with whom Joye had spent years in Antwerp translating and revising the Bible, fell into a quarrel with him over Joye’s editing of Tyndale’s word “resurrection.”\(^{28}\) The disagreement led to an end of the friendship and partnership in 1535. Joye returned to England in the hope that the king’s Act of Supremacy, wherein Henry VIII declared himself head of the Church in England, would lead to more support for Protestant reformers.\(^{29}\)

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 38.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 43.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 69.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 86.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 92.


\(^{28}\) Butterworth, *George Joye*, 166.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 195.
At this time, Joye was undoubtedly influenced by the writings of one of his former colleagues at Cambridge, Robert Barnes. Barnes said that, as someone who considered himself a doctor of religion, he was compelled to speak against the mistreatment of priests who married. He wrote, “For the which thing, I say, they have been sore persecuted, some cast out of their country, some drowned, some burned, and some beheaded.” Barnes noted that there were only two types of men who disagreed with clerical marriage: those who were determined to resist what Barnes believed was the truth, and those who would accept the truth but were ignorant of the scriptures. Joye, in his treatise, would write extensively about that same mistreatment.

After Joye arrived back in England, he kept a relatively quiet life. He likely worked as a printer, and did not publish new works during this period. It was plain, with the passing of Henry VIII’s Six Articles, that reform would be stalled in England. In 1540, having seen Barnes burned at Smithfield for heresy, Joye left England again. After he returned to the mainland, Joye turned his anger upon his old school-mate Stephen Gardiner. It was with that perspective that he wrote his 1541 treatise in favor of clerical marriage. Joye spent as much time blasting Gardiner for Gardiner’s opposition to the marriage of priests as he did justifying his own cause.

**JOHN PONET**

John Ponet’s approach to his reform agenda came from the perspective of the next generation of reformers. Joye, Gardiner, Barnes, and Hooper were contemporaries, students at Cambridge together, born in the last few years of the fifteenth century. Ponet was much younger, born in 1516 when the others were finishing their degrees or being ordained as priests. This means that Ponet’s introduction to religion came after the Protestant

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30 Robert Barnes, “A supplication unto the most gracious prynce Henry the VIII,” (London: John Byddell, 1534), Q2.
32 Ibid., 207. Butterworth describes Joye’s attitude toward Gardiner as “hysterical rage.”
33 Ibid., 221. Butterworth notes that the author of this treatise is given as James Sawtry, although this is now commonly understood to be a pseudonym Joye used to avoid persecution. Butterworth thought the ruse was entirely too weak, considering that “no one who has read Joye’s signed attacks on Gardiner can have the least doubt that this work was written by the same pen dipped in the same pot of vitriol.”
Reformation on the mainland had already begun and its ideas were well-developed. At Cambridge in the 1530s, after the first wave of Protestant fervor had swept England, Ponet became an integral part of a group of like-minded youths, interested in Protestantism and humanistic endeavors. Cambridge, among many other European universities reacting to Renaissance humanism, had expanded its colleges to teach a much wider variety of subjects. Ponet, for example, studied Greek, astronomy and mathematics as well as religion. In 1536, he was ordained a priest, but he remained at Cambridge as a lecturer of Greek. He left Cambridge in 1542 to serve as rector, later canon, and finally chaplain to Archbishop Thomas Cranmer at Canterbury in 1546.

A few years later, Ponet joined the debate over clerical marriage. His work came fifteen years after Barnes’ chapter on the subject, and eight years after Joye’s book. But the religious momentum and power had shifted in England since Henry’s death. Ponet’s treatise in favor of clerical marriage was published in 1549, likely intended to persuade Parliament to vote to legalize it in the act that was indeed passed that year.

**WHY CLERICAL MARRIAGE IS GOOD**

George Joye argued that there were several logical and theological reasons for clerical marriage. First, he thought it naïve of the Catholics to expect young men and women to swear vows of chastity and actually keep them over time:

> What an intolerable burden is it to young persons perpetually burning in concupiscence and desire of the other sex, who God created to be through wedlock the lawful remedy and help one for the other by his almighty word naturally joining and inclining the man to love the woman and the woman the man as the grass or tree in his time to grow and to bring forth fruit and yet for this

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35 Ibid., 11.
36 Grendler, “Universities,” 2.
38 Ibid., 22.
39 Ibid., 26.
damnable prohibition of the pope they may not enjoy god’s honorable ordinance and lawful remedy of wedlock instituted by God.\textsuperscript{40}

He claimed that young men and women simply did not have the ability to understand the ramifications of such a decision or to keep to it, even at 21 or 23.\textsuperscript{41} He wrote that the current vows of priests and nuns should be broken. While he did support clerics making a vow of chastity, he believed it should happen at the age of 60, which he claimed was in accordance with the apostle Paul’s writings.

John Ponet believed that there were far more people who had failed in their vows than had succeeded:

\begin{quote}
The law and wit of the lawmakers, cannot so restrain man’s will, . . . whereunto it is most willing, it will strive against the law, make it never so strong, either in mind or in deed, as it appeareth by the unchaste life of those, which have been bound by laws, not having the gift, with whole life, worse than lecherous, I am ashamed to occupy my pen how many thousands have there been, which have strived earnestly for a time to obey the law of sole life, contrary to their nature.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

The laws of men, then, could not reasonably subvert the intentions of God.

One subversion, Joye argued, was that most of the people who made such vows genuinely did not intend to fulfill them.

\begin{quote}
There is no man that ever gave priest orders that can come forth either to testify that ever he heard the priest whom he made by express words to vow in clear words simply virginal chastity or to bring forth writing of the priest his own hand that ever he vowed such chastity as Winchester bindeth them to. But upon this condition: ‘I vow chastity as far as man’s frailty will suffer me and no farther do I vow.’\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

Apparently, Joye did not believe as Ponet did, that men earnestly intended to stay true to their vows.

Joye often cited the writings of the apostles and the actions of members of the ancient church as a means to support his argument. He claimed that there was no part of Christ’s word that could be used to support the anti-clerical marriage position, arguing that Christ


\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., B3-4.


never intended this abomination to be taught. In fact, he said, there were many prophets, apostles and priests who were married:

Jethro and Moses were the priests of God and also there were of the chief of the priests of Christ and yet had they wives and children. Was not Aaron and his sons the ministers of holy things? Did they not offer up and pray for the people? And yet were they married. And had not also the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ wives? I esteem them not nor yet the other blessed men never the worse because they were coupled in wedlock: but I pray God (saith he) I may be worthy to sit at their feet in the kingdom of God with these other married persons as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph I say and as these holy married men Peter and Paul and other of the apostles which were married not for no lust but to increase their posterity.

He cited several other specific examples from the gospels to support his position, examples showing Jesus in the house of one apostle, visiting with the man’s wife, or teaching the daughters of another.

Ponet also cited many of the same examples from the Gospels, arguing that God’s word meant to encompass all men and women, with no exclusions:

These two words, every man, and every woman, betokeneth that this saying of St. Paul doth dispense with no man or woman, that cannot otherwise avoid fornication, but that he willeth all sorts, both of men and women, which be endangered by the reason of their flesh to fall into fornication, to avoideth the same by the heavenly mean of marriage, which is a remedy appointed of God for that end and purpose. This phrase of speaking to call matrimony a remedy, is not only used in the Scriptures, but in the doctors also, who affirm with one consent that matrimony ought to be used in the Church of God, not only for procreation and increase of the world, but also for a remedy of incontinency.

Nor did the apostles put away their wives when they took up their ministry. Ponet’s contemporaries, he said, might argue that a man should, for religious reasons, put away his wife when he took the position of a cleric, but that the practice ran contrary to what the people of the primitive Church advised. “The apostles decreed, as it appeareth in their Canons, that a bishop or a priest in no wise may put away his wife, under the pretense of holiness, and color of religion: by the which Canon it may appear, that the apostles did not

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44 Ibid., A4.
46 Ibid.
put away their wives.”48 After all, he wrote, Moses was married with children and was still able to live a godly life, able to part the Red Sea. This alone, he claimed, should put to rest any ideas that married bishops or priests were somehow unable to fulfill their religious duties.49 Anyone who suggested otherwise, claimed Joye, was lying.50

Additionally, Ponet was confident that his opponents would not be able to explain away any differences between the married apostles and his would-be-married contemporaries. Any explanation, he claimed, would be reflective of Catholic beliefs, not Christ’s orders:

If any man would object unto me, that marriage cannot stand with the order of priesthood: I will ask him again, whether marriage may stand as well with the order of priesthood now, as it might in the Apostles’ time or not. If it is be answered that it may not, then must you show a reason why: which reason cannot be showed, except you allege the order of priesthood devised by the bishop of Rome, which varieith in deed almost as far from the priests that were of Christ’s ordering, as a dumb picture from the thing or person whom it doth represent. And therefore ought they to be corrected and redressed to their former example: so that it must needs be confessed, that marriage may as well stand with the order of priesthood now, as it might have done in the Apostles’ time.51

According to Ponet, it was most logical to follow the words and actions of those who had known Christ best and had been present to know his commands most truthfully. After all, “One eyewitness is more worthy to be esteemed, than ten earwitnesses.”52

**WHY THE PEOPLE WHO OPPOSE CLERICAL MARRIAGE ARE BAD**

Joye also expressed ire at those in the English Catholic Church who had long supported the ban on clerical marriage, especially Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester. In Joye’s estimation, because such men knew how common it was for a priest to have a mistress (if not a wife), they became little more than whoremongers. Clerical concubinage

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48 Ibid., B5.
49 Ibid., B1.
52 Ibid., A5.
was, in many places, the rule instead of the exception.\textsuperscript{53} To Joye, men such as Gardiner knew that it was natural that men and women should come together, yet they denied it and threatened men with the loss of their everlasting souls. Of Gardiner (his favorite to attack), he said, “I could not so greatly marvel at Winchester’s and his faction’s endured blindness whereas for the defense of their abominable whoredom and destruction of chaste marriage ordained of God he so wickedly so blasphemously against the law of nature all godly order all reason and against all scripture defineth.”\textsuperscript{54} He thought this double-standard was too heinous to mention just once, and addressed Gardiner directly on several occasions in his text:

> Winchester with your fellows, but woe, woe be unto you that lay these heavy burdens upon poor men’s backs which ye will not touch to ease them with your least finger. Woe be to you that say good to be evil, bitter to be sweet, darkness to be the light and et cetera. Woe be to you that kill the pure innocents and maintain the abominable adulterers.\textsuperscript{55}

Ponet, although his approach was more general, also blasted the opponents of the marriage of priests for their duplicity:

> If men had been so ready to redress the filthy and unclean life of priests (for the which they have been noted most worthily of the whole world) as they have been to stay them from the holy state of matrimony (whereby the amendment of the same should have ensued), neither should wifeless life have had so many proctors as it had, neither unchaste living should so much have reigned as it doth: But they would have been as willing to set the pen to the book to make the unchaste and vicious livers to repent and receive the remedy of the holy state of matrimony, as some busybodies have been ready to procure statutes and laws, whereby the unchaste sole life hath been with fear of the pains of death continued, and the chaste married life in some state condemned.\textsuperscript{56}

What hypocrites, he argued, that they should spend so much time criticizing chaste married men while overlooking the obvious problems with forced clerical celibacy.

> For this duplicity and the refusal to admit that it was a problem, Joye believed people like Gardiner would be eternally damned: “Everlasting damnation abideth them that so

\textsuperscript{53} Phipps, \textit{Clerical Celibacy}, 139.


\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., B4.

\textsuperscript{56} Ponet, “Scripture,” A1.
arrogantly exalt themselves against the most high God that they will perniciously pervert and
dannably destroy that natural order and inclination of general and love which God himself
by his first firm creation with his everlasting almighty word hath engraven . . . into the nature
of man and woman.” For the Catholic priests and bishops who enforced celibacy were
misled by devilish doctrine, he wrote, “And yet doth pastor Winchester call them holy
spiritual vowers or votaries dedicated to God as himself is dedicated to the devil.”

Ponet said that it was simply impossible to obey both the words of the apostles and
the laws of the bishop of Rome. This predicament forced those who sought the truth to make
a difficult decision. He asked his readers to choose their own path, based on the information
he had provided:

The Canons of the Romish sort, and the Canons of the Apostles be contrary. The
Apostles taught one thing; the bishop of Rome brought in another. Now judge you
whether is best for us which profess Christ, to follow the Apostles of Christ, or
the Romish Antichrist? The law of God, which willetth bishops and priests to
marry: or the doctrine of the devil, as Paul calleth it, which forbiddeth them
marriage. It is an extreme wickedness and abhorred of God, to establish and
defend a doctrine of devils, contrary to the word of God, contrary to the example
of the Apostles, contrary to the order of the primitive Church, to the subversion of
chastity, to the maintenance of whoredom and other fleshly beastliness: but
whosoever forbiddeth marriage to them that have not the gift of sole life,
establisheth a doctrine of devils, with all the inconveniences before rehearsed.

The choice was simple, in Ponet’s view: follow Christ or the anti-Christ, whose physical
incarnation Ponet believed to be the pope.

Furthermore, Joye argued that the introduction of such new beliefs had come long
past the appropriate time. He wrote, “It is all too late now in the latter end of the world to
receive any new articles of our faith. Neither is there any man of the power as to make us any
one article of our faith. Our faith and religion is too old and too firm by God to be now new
turned changed and altered by man.” Such arrogance in the presence of God's word was

58 Ibid.
sure to be punished, he warned. “Repent repent Winchester with thy damnable faction lest the hasty whirlwind of God’s present heavy indignation carry you shortly away.”

According to Joye, Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) started what he called the “mischief” of clerical celibacy and the open war on married priests who refused to put away their wives. Clerical celibacy allowed Gregory to maintain a stricter control on his priests, by ensuring that he was their most direct and only source of influence. Ponet addressed the subject of Gregory directly, claiming that Gregory knew he was contradicting the laws set down by the primitive church:

And there is a place cited out of St. Gregory in the Decrees, which doth plainly declare, that it is a law of man, and directly against the law of God, that any man should put away his wife under such a pretense. These be the words: Some there be, which hold opinion, that marriage ought to be broken for religious sake, but it must be known, that although the law of man hath so granted it, yet the law of God hath forbidden it. For the truth itself said: Let not man separate them whom God hath couples. And it also saith: It is not lawful for a man to put away his wife, except for fornication. Who then may gainsay this lawmaker? For me know that it is written: they shall be two in one flesh.

In Ponet’s mind, those who advocated clerical celibacy followed not the words of God, nor the words of Christ, nor the words of the apostles; rather, they followed the words of a bishop, a bishop who knew he was leading the people astray.

**What Happens to the Clerics Who Were Married While It Was Illegal?**

In their willingness to overlook the words of God on this matter, Ponet wrote, the unmarried priests were able to convince the laypeople that they were somehow more important in the eyes of God because they were celibate. The sense of magic that surrounded the archetype of pre-Reformation Catholic priest–celibate, closer to God, more powerful in the carrying-out of God’s will–had led too many astray. Ponet wrote,

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Phipps, *Clerical Celibacy*, 132.
64 Ponet, “Scripture,” B5.
The cloud which hath so long blinded the eyes of the lay sort in this point, was the opinion of holiness that they conceived in priests, for that they married not as other men did: and the cloud that blinded the eyes of the priests was the gain that they got by their unworthy estimation. So the one being deceived by simpleness and ignorance, and the other by covetousness and vain glory, have by a mutual consent continued this devilish state of unchaste sole life, to the great hindrance of virtue, and advancement of vice, and so to the subversion of the kingdom of Christ and setting up of the kingdom of antichrist.\textsuperscript{66}

Those “blind” bishops were not only forbidding clerics to marry and misleading their congregations about God’s law, claimed Joye; they also severely punished priests who married and refused to put away their wives. He wrote, “And much less wonder is it to see such blind bishops forsaken of God to separate and flay the poor innocents whom God coupleth.”\textsuperscript{67} When they were discovered, he claimed, their wives and children were often killed.\textsuperscript{68} Based on this understanding, Joye found it not surprising that bishops would argue “that it is better for man to live alone yea to have an whores (as once said Bishop Stokesley of London in open judgment to a married priest) than to be married to his own wife.”\textsuperscript{69}

It must have been aggravating to Gardiner and other celibate bishops, Joye thought, that priests and bishops could be married, with children, enjoying a chaste married life, and still be able to tend to their congregations with wisdom and vigor. So much so, in fact, that Gardiner would seek to strike against them in his envy and obstinacy. Joye wrote:

That such flockfeeders must be chaste married men content with one wife, men that can well govern their own houses in bringing up their children, supposing that such men having these with other there prescribed qualities should be apt and able to teach well a whole parish. Who seeth not now therefore Winchester for his own proud arrogant mind and wickedness worthily smitten with blindness and obstinate induration, with Pharaoh to persecute, to divorce and flay the poor married priests.\textsuperscript{70}

Gardiner, he claimed, would be repaid for his cruelty.

\textsuperscript{66} Ponet, “Scripture,” A2.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid. Although Barnes mentioned this as well, citing a visit to the European mainland, I have found no other references to it.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., B4.
**HUMAN NATURE/NATURAL IMAGERY**

For both Ponet and Joye, clerical celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church was unnatural. Their writings on human nature and natural imagery were designed to illustrate a point. To the sixteenth-century English writer, the natural world was tied together with a unifying sense of order. In that perspective, order and relationship drove everything in the universe.\(^7^1\)

Because of the belief in the great chain of being, what was unnatural theologically also called to mind what was unnatural biologically. Thus, references to natural imagery were direct references to the natural order of life itself, and God’s law. And because celibacy was unnatural, they used unnatural imagery to represent it.

In keeping with perspectives of the time, Ponet and Joye used natural imagery to support their arguments. For example, Joye compared his opponents to pernicious beasts that encroached into the hearts and minds of the faithful by device and deceit:

> But under what holy hypocritical pretense (I pray you) hath this spiritual serpentine lead, transfiguring themselves into angels of light, thus perverted and destroyed this first god’s holy ordinance of wedlock. Verily even under the faked glittering color of wifeless chastity, the fountain of all whoredom, forbidding to marry which is as the Holy Ghost constantly affirmeth, the plain doctrine of the devil.\(^7^2\)

Joye was not to be fooled by this chimera, this unnatural beast cloaked in heavenly thought:

> These venomous cockatrice’s eggs and poisoned spiders’ webs whereof (as I . . . saith) no cloth may be made to cover their own naked mischief and robbery (God afflicting me with his holy word) I shall now stamp them down under my feet and also break them that all men may see their open present poison and beware of it: creep thereforth never so virulent venomous and subtle a serpent as bold as arrogant and as crafty as is pestiferous pastor Winchester himself to defend their manifest impiety.\(^7^3\)

Joye, uncomfortable in exile in Antwerp, sought to correct the ignorance and naïveté reflected by Gardiner’s insistence upon clerical celibacy.

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\(^7^1\) E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), 8. He writes, “The sun, the king, primogeniture hang together; the war of the planets is echoed by the war of the elements and by civil war on earth; the homely brotherhoods or guilds in cities are found along with an oblique reference to creation out of the confusion of chaos. Here is a picture of immense and varied activity, constantly threatened with dissolution, and yet preserved from it by a superior unifying power.”


\(^7^3\) Ibid.
Ponet, although his writing was generally clearer and more focused upon logical arguments, also used this natural imagery. He compared the celibate priests to a tree that has been forced to grow in an unnatural way:

Bow a tree by art with all the wisdom you can devise, straining it, then it may not grow right, and yet will it enjoy the power of growing (although it be crooked) as long as it continueth in life, obeying the ordinance and commandment of God, who at the beginning bade it grow and multiply: Even so the man, who hath not the gift to live without a wife, but is framed in his first creation to be one of them, by whom the world shall be increased, keep him down with laws and statutes as straightly as you can, yet will he at one time or other, kick against the law, and seek means to maintain and exercise that nature, which God for the continuance of procreation, hath planted in his flesh.74

In Ponet’s mind, God’s natural law stood far above the man-made laws of Rome, and it was more powerful. Just as the tree would fight to grow, and would grow despite all attempts to alter its progress, so would the clerics find ways to subvert the unjust laws of the Catholic Church:

Neither fasting neither watching, neither anything such like, is more able to stay their desire (their life and health being preserved) then ministering of moisture and earth about the root of a tree, (so you kill it not) is able to stay the same tree from bringing forth of leaves and blossoms in the springtime of the year: whereby it may appear howfore the lawmakers of sole life, have thus long time strives against the stream, purposing to bind the mind, which being imbued with the spirit of God, is at liberty, than their bands have no further force, but upon the body only and the outward actions.75

Ponet, writing in 1549, saw that at least in England, such laws no longer had any power.

In the years of Edward’s reign, Joye enjoyed the greatest level of peace he would ever experience in his turbulent life. Under Edward, he knew that his many written works would not be considered heretical, as they had been under Henry VIII.76 Mary could have presented a much more significant problem to Joye and his safety, but he died the same year as Edward, 1553. Ponet, on the other hand, would live to see Mary’s Catholic backlash against Edward’s Protestant reign.

75 Ibid., A4.
76 Butterworth, George Joye, 258.
Whatever their differences, Joye and Ponet were in agreement about the necessity of the legal marriage of priests. They are but two examples of wide Protestant support for this particular issue, from English reformers and those on the mainland. Clerical marriage was a controversial issue, but one dividing Catholics and Protestants, not dividing the Protestants of varying sects. As Protestant power waned under Mary, clerical marriage would become a matter of contention with much more serious consequences. At that time, strong resistance to clerical marriage and its proponents emerged, in the form of Stephen Gardiner.
CHAPTER 3

HERETICS AND TRAITORS

Ye Papists peruse me in no wise throughout
Before ye refuse me and judge me to fire.
Lest ye should excuse ye and say lo no doubt
These new men misuse ye for we much desire
That they would make answer but answer they cannot.
They speak not they write not for answer they have not.

Speak on and spare not and fear not the fire.
If fire say we shall not make answer with pen
Thou shalt see the papists want that their desire
The printer doth promise for two copies ten.
Wherefore let their fury broil burn and spare not
They shall not lack answer though they brag we dare not.

- John Ponet

The second half of the mid-Tudor period—the years represented by the reign of Mary I—saw the height of controversy over clerical marriage. In her struggle to bring England back to Catholicism, Mary found ways either to persuade outspoken Protestants to conform to the old Catholic beliefs or punish and silence them. Her major supporter was Stephen Gardiner, an unabashedly Catholic cleric who had served as bishop of Winchester for many years, but had been deprived of his bishopric and sent to prison under Edward VI. When Mary took the throne after Edward’s death, Gardiner was returned to his position as bishop and made Lord Chancellor, the highest position in Mary’s council. Gardiner displaced John Ponet, who as bishop had briefly held the diocese of Winchester under Edward. Ponet was one of the outspoken Protestants, particularly on the issue of clerical marriage. After Ponet’s 1549 treatise on the subject, discussed in the previous chapter, Gardiner published a long reply in 1554.77 Ponet responded with a last refutation in 1555. These latter two documents, written

77 The author of this document is listed as Thomas Martin. However, Ponet claims in the introduction to his reply that the original author was, in fact, Stephen Gardiner. It is commonly accepted that Ponet’s assessment is correct that Gardiner wrote the document or at the least did the bulk of the research for it.
by men who once held the same see, reflect the deep controversy surrounding this particular theological issue.

**STEPHEN GARDINER**

Unlike Joye, Ponet, or Hooper, Gardiner did not study divinity at Cambridge. Rather, he studied canon and civil law, receiving his doctorate by 1522. He also formed friendships that would prove significant in later years, when he was appointed to serve as an emissary to Lord Chancellor Thomas Wolsey. In 1526, when his former colleague Robert Barnes was arrested by Wolsey for heresy, Gardiner used his close relationship to Wolsey to cool Wolsey’s anger at Barnes. Gardiner convinced Wolsey to drop the charges, and Barnes was freed. He would do the same for Joye in 1527, allowing Joye to flee England instead of facing similar charges. This was reflective of Gardiner’s general opinion of opposing viewpoints. In essence, he feared heresy not so much because of the person’s soul but rather because of the effect it would have on society. He retained a more political perspective on Reformation ideology, especially in comparison to Joye. He saw no need to deal with heretics outside England as they did not present the same opportunities for intrigue and treason that they did while living in England. As such, he had no problem with Protestant reformers fleeing England, and would always try to persuade men he considered heretics to change their opinions or leave rather than suffer the pain of imprisonment or execution.

Gardiner’s actions would later catch the king’s eye. As a man in Wolsey’s service, Gardiner was with others sent to the continent to convince the pope to grant Henry VIII an annulment. Gardiner’s determination to see the king’s wishes enacted and his willingness to overlook differences of opinion in the carrying out of his duties endeared him to Henry. In the early 1530s, Henry still enjoyed showing off his theological knowledge and was unafraid of men like Gardiner, who believed his marriage was valid but willingly sought to have it

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79 Ibid., 13.
80 Ibid., 11.
81 Ibid., 14.
82 Rosendale, “Fiery toungues,” 1142.
annuled. During this time, Gardiner joined the king’s service as secretary. In 1531, as a reward for his hard work, Henry awarded Gardiner the diocese of Winchester.\(^8^4\) Winchester covered Hampshire and parts of Surrey to the south bank of the River Thames. It included control of 75 separate properties and the income from them, as well as the ability appoint two MPs to the House of Commons.\(^8^5\)

1532 was the year when courtiers could be expected to show how far they were going to show support for ecclesiastical reform. Gardiner did not initially support the king’s supremacy, and for that he was banished from court.\(^8^6\) Gardiner noted that he was no scholar of divinity, and as such would have to defer to decisions regarding the Church of England. This reflected the deep ambivalence he felt about his devotion to his religion and to his king.\(^8^7\) In 1535, Gardiner wrote a tract supporting the king’s supremacy, called “Of True Obedience.”\(^8^8\) In his mind, those who could not subordinate their religious opinions to the service of the king were weak. Gardiner believed that all humans had free will to control themselves and the expression of their beliefs, and this perspective would be reflected in his later writings.

This changing perspective was reflected in Gardiner’s relationship with Barnes. Where Gardiner had been willing, even eager to help Barnes escape the country in 1526, he was no longer willing to do so in 1540. At that time, Barnes made an open, verbal attack on Gardiner for his refusal to support ecclesiastical reform. Because Gardiner had become a highly respected member of Henry’s administration, such an attack was taken very seriously and Barnes was burned at the stake as a result. Gardiner stood by, no longer supporting such recklessness.

By 1547, however, Gardiner saw that Edward’s reign would be very different from Henry’s. In the beginning of Edward’s reign, Gardiner wrote many letters to various privy

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\(^8^4\) Ibid., 42.

\(^8^5\) Redworth, *Church Catholic*, 31.

\(^8^6\) Ibid., 38.

\(^8^7\) Ibid., 43.

\(^8^8\) Ibid., 66.
councilors, asking them to limit their religious reform.\textsuperscript{89} He warned the council of the folly of making radical changes while the king was still in his minority. Gardiner, who had enjoyed a certain degree of political freedom, fell from favor when he began criticizing religious reform and the availability of heretical books.\textsuperscript{90} Gardiner was sent to the Tower by Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector over the young king, where he would remain for five years. In 1551, he was deprived of his bishopric because he refused to admit he was guilty of anti-Protestant leanings, although he accepted the religious reforms that had happened in that time.\textsuperscript{91}

Gardiner emerged from the Tower a much darker man. Overt loyalty to king and country, coupled with polite disagreement, had not earned Gardiner one whit of reprieve from a Protestant ruler. When Mary took the throne, Gardiner’s days of strategic agreement were over. In 1553 Gardiner, the man John Foxe loved to call “Wily Winchester” for his willingness to change opinions at a moment’s notice, would take a much more powerful political position and abandon the mercy he had once bestowed upon his Protestant former colleagues.

It was with that darker perspective that Gardiner published his book criticizing Ponet’s arguments in favor of clerical marriage.\textsuperscript{92} Although Gardiner made little reference to it, the roles of both men and the status of Protestant reform in England had radically changed in the five years between Ponet’s first treatise and Gardiner’s reply. Gardiner and Catholicism had returned to power in England. Debate over clerical marriage would continue, but the consequences had increased dramatically.

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\textbf{JOHN PONET}
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Ponet’s earlier experience under Edward was similar to Gardiner’s re-emergence to power under Mary. In 1550, Ponet was appointed by Cranmer to deliver the king’s Lenten sermons along with John Hooper.\textsuperscript{93} This may have been an act designed to prepare them for

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\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 249.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 258-59.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 287.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 316.
\textsuperscript{93} Hudson, \textit{John Ponet}, 37.
\end{flushright}
higher appointments in the English Church. Hooper’s sermons railed against certain artifacts of the new church, including vestments, presaging the disagreements he would later have with his Protestant colleagues.\textsuperscript{94} By comparison, Ponet’s sermons were decidedly non-controversial.\textsuperscript{95} Shortly thereafter, Ponet was appointed to the bishopric of Rochester.\textsuperscript{96} He would only hold that position for a year, however, and took over as bishop of Winchester in March 1551 after Gardiner was removed.\textsuperscript{97}

Ponet rose to power in the midst of a political struggle for dominance in Edward’s council. In 1551, this battle was fought by Cranmer and John Dudley, duke of Northumberland and effective regent for Edward. Dudley was annoyed by Cranmer’s dominance of the council’s reform agenda in the first four years of Edward’s reign.\textsuperscript{98} He was intimidated by Cranmer’s position of influence in the young king’s religious education, the close relationship he had with the boy, and fearful of the power Cranmer wielded in Edward’s council.\textsuperscript{99} Thus, the atmosphere of the privy council in the early 1550s was that of power struggles and compromise. Cranmer succeeded in appointing close friends such as Ponet to powerful positions, but they would come at a cost. For Ponet, as a compromise to Dudley, was obliged to forfeit the temporalities of his see to the crown, in exchange for an annual stipend of 2,000 marks.\textsuperscript{100}

When Mary was crowned queen in October 1553, Ponet was one of the first to lose his bishopric. Then Ponet participated (minimally) in a rebellion orchestrated by Sir Thomas Wyatt. When the rebellion was unsuccessful and its members punished, Ponet fled to the continent.\textsuperscript{101} By August 1554 he had arrived in Strasbourg, where many Marian exiles had already arrived.\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 42.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 48.
\textsuperscript{98} MacCulloch, \textit{Later Reformation}, 14.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{100} Hudson, \textit{John Ponet}, 49.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 65.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 73.
Not much is known about Ponet’s time in Strasbour. He did spend a great deal of
time writing, however. One of the major projects in the period just before his death was a
response to Gardiner on the subject of priests’ marriage. The book, which was intended to be
the first of several responses to Gardiner’s 1554 work, was published no earlier than May
1556.\textsuperscript{103} He is believed to have composed a draft of his second reply that was later published
by Matthew Parker, but his authorship cannot be confirmed. He died in August of 1556 in
Strasbour.

**WRITING STYLE/COGENCY OF ARGUMENT**

At the beginning of the tenth chapter of his fourteen-chapter work, Gardiner claimed
that Ponet’s 1549 book was so untruthful that it was not worthy of a response.\textsuperscript{104} Yet respond
he did, with a four-chapter refutation of Ponet’s work specifically, as a means to make
clearer Ponet’s attempt to deceive.\textsuperscript{105} Situated in an historical context, Gardiner’s purpose is
made clearer. Ponet’s first treatise was written in 1549, when clerical marriage had first
become legal under Edward VI. Although Gardiner spent much of Edward’s reign in prison,
it would not have been impossible for him to publish his response during that time. At this
time, it was common to allow a prisoner of Gardiner’s status written materials and Gardiner
had even shown Edward’s privy council a treatise he had written during his time in the
Tower.\textsuperscript{106} By publishing this work in 1554, after Edward’s death, Mary’s coronation and the
return of England to Catholicism, Gardiner sent a stronger message to proponents of clerical
marriage and of Protestantism in general. His message, that new ideas were to be regarded as
“false and counterfeit,” applied to the whole of previously Protestant England.

Ponet, perceiving that there would be animosity against Gardiner and others enforcing
the change back to Catholicism, took advantage of it. He claimed that he expected others to

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[103]{Ibid., 85.}
\footnotetext[104]{Stephen Gardiner, “A traictise declarynge and plainly provyng, that the pretended marriage of
priestes, and professed persones, is no mariage, but altogether unlawful, and in all ages, and al countreies of
Christendome, bothe forbidden, and also punished,” (London: Mense Maij, 1554), U2. He wrote, “His book
hath in him more railing than reason, and is so thoroughly stuffed with cavils and untruths, that it is not answer
worthy.”}
\footnotetext[105]{Ibid., U3.}
\footnotetext[106]{Redworth, *Church Catholic*, 289.}
\end{footnotes}
say that he said “too little, and do use him more reverently, than his arrogant folly doth deserve.” 107 He wrote that it would be easy to see Gardiner’s obvious lies and that the reader could not miss that Gardiner, a Catholic, was a very dangerous enemy. However, Ponet did not expect Gardiner to believe him. Ponet claimed that God was punishing Gardiner and other Catholics for their insolence.

And God may so shift up the hearts of the papists (as he useth in a time of punishment) that they shall not see the truth when it is laid upon before their faces. Yet shall I do my best endeavor to stand fast by the truth, and because there is nothing more true than the lively word of God thereunto will I only cleave, leaving to the old doctors their worthy praise and commendation, using them in place, as well for the proof of my matter, as for my defense, with a desire to be plain that the truth may appear. 108

As such, though many of his arguments were targeted at Gardiner specifically, he also spoke to other possible readers, who might be more easily convinced.

Ponet was so annoyed by Gardiner’s work, he said, that he could not even use the structure of Gardiner’s treatise as a way to compose his own work, a common practice for a refutation. “I must refuse to follow [Gardiner]’s order, who beginneth his book with a chapter of railing, stuffed up with as many lies as there be lines.” 109 Instead, he began with a long criticism of Gardiner’s dedication of his book to Mary I and the title of his work, writing, “You think you have made so witty a discourse, and so profound a resolution, in this so weighty a matter, by your clerkly wisdom: and sophitical cunning, that you can find none so worthy a patron, to whom you may dedicate the first fruits of your fantasy as not only to a Queen but also to a virgin Queen, as by the end of your preface more plainly appeareth.” 110

The queen, Ponet postulated, would have been horrified if she had read the content of Gardiner’s work. “Not doubting be like the offending of her grace’s ears with your ungodly and unchaste beastliness and railing. As when you use the terms of detestable bawdry, of

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108 Ibid., 4.
109 Ibid., 2.
110 Ibid., 7-8.
stinking lechery, of beastly bitchery, of concubines and of common strumpets, of lecherous and filthy beasts, and of your heathenish ruffian like, and abominable talk.”

Ponet was even more critical of the title of Gardiner’s work, which he claimed stated far more than Gardiner could possibly prove. The full title of Gardiner’s treatise is “A traictise declaryng and plainly provyng, that the pretensed marriage of priestes, and professed persones, is no mariage, but altogether unlawful, and in all ages, and al countreies of Christendome, bothe forbidden, and also punished.”

In response to the title, Ponet wrote, “The title of your book is not unlike to a taverner’s wine bush hanged out for a show where there is not one drop of wine or at the least way of no good wine in the cellar. For as the bush maketh the people believe, that somewhat is there which in deed is not. So it is with the title of your book and also with every chapter in the first leaf.” Several pages of Ponet’s rebuke related specifically to Gardiner’s title, and are addressed later in this chapter.

Although Gardiner focused more on direct argumentation, he had also criticized Ponet’s motivations. He claimed, “This good Doctor Ponet dissembling that reason of Saint Paul, deviseth merrily with himself that the cause of this unmarried life in priests is not other, but to win thereby a cloak of holiness, and a singular estimation among the laity.” He was correct in his assessment; in Ponet’s reply, he confirmed that belief. “What kind of people have more deceived the word than such as have colored their naughtiness with austerity of life and seem to differ from others in outward state? … The ancient heretics in the beginning of the church for the most part did win their first estimation: some by abhorring all marriages, saying they were unclean and devilish.”

In fact, Ponet was open about his contempt for Catholic priests as a whole; his intent was not just to seek the continuance of clerical marriage, but, as Gardiner intimated, to expose the Catholic clergy for what he believed it was: “All the world seeth that their whole life is spent almost in nothing else than in eating and drinking, in idle walking and pastimes, and in providing for furring of their

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111 Ibid., 8.
112 Gardiner, “Traictise,” Title Page.
back and fatted of their belly, and in gorgeously decked chambers and soft sleeping.”

Ponet, writing from exile, had cause to worry that the Catholic cause would win in England.

**CURRENT EVENTS**

Ponet was not the only one to criticize his opponent. Gardiner also took this opportunity to expose not just what he saw were Ponet’s weaknesses, but the weak arguments of many of Ponet’s contemporaries. He focused especially on comparisons of Ponet and Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism in the German states. Gardiner claimed that they were both weak in argument, and that they often presented arguments that, while intended to support clerical marriage, still opposed one another. For example, Gardiner noted that Luther had agreed that the widows who had taken vows of chastity after their husbands died but broke those vows would be forever damned. As such, Luther and Ponet could not fundamentally be in agreement because Ponet had argued that vows of chastity were only taken in vain.

Gardiner criticized Ponet’s translations of Paul’s epistles from the original Greek, finding inconsistencies between his and other accepted translations. Gardiner claimed that Ponet and Luther were drawing large conclusions from small snippets of scripture. The use of bad logic and bad translations, Gardiner argued, seemed to be a problem with many German Protestants, whom Gardiner linked with Ponet. He wrote, “What a lewd teaching was it of the said Doctor Ponet to bring the people thereby to think, that priests and all professed persons might lawfully marry, for so doth he infer by the said place of Saint Paul, and so doth Luther, Bucer, and Peter Martyr, and all the Germans of that sect.”

That “lewd teaching,” as Gardiner put it, had severe consequences. He claimed that Ponet’s lies had convinced other clerics to ignore their marriage vows in favor of fornication:

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116 Ibid., 36.
118 Ibid., Cc3. He wrote, Why then may not we turn in his own neck his own argument, ergo it must so mean: especially seeing he bringeth not, he can bring any good writer that expoundeth this place of Saint Paul after his sense, and we have the consent of all the ancient and learned Doctors in Christendom, and the common translation also on our side? But mark here, I beseech thee good reader, that like as Ponet would fain pick out some pretty matter out of the Greek to maintain his caviling; so Luther against the Greek grateth upon a word or two in the Latin, for the defense of his corrupt opinion.”
119 Ibid., U3.
But Ponet, not thinking it enough to have so lewdly perverted the sense of holy scriptures for maintenance of his unchaste assertion against the continency of priests and bishops: nor satisfied with the bait of such poisoned honey, both to allure and entrap a number of ignorant priests, so many as were anything inclined to sensuality and carnal delectation, and also to deceive the whole multitude of the unlearned by abusing their simplicity to credit his untrue glossings, he wadeth yet farther into the huge depth of folly to defend the blessed marriage (God save it) of monks, nuns, and friars.\footnote{Ibid., Cc1.}

 Clerics or no, ill-educated people could be easily swayed and should be given only accurate information, Gardiner argued.

 Gardiner again challenged Ponet’s motivation, citing Ponet as wishing that some learned man would have gone before him to speak in favor of clerical marriage:

 Of the which words and wishes by the way I note, that he judgeth and pronounceth Sir John Hooper to be no learned man. For Hooper in his commentary upon the ten commandments, fell freshly into that matter, and there talketh of it apace. Which if it be unlearnedly done, then is he shamefully deceived himself, and so be some others too, that of late believed more upon one of Hooper’s fantastical glosses and dreams, than upon the texts of holy scripture truly expounded. But seeing that never a learned man had learnedly written therein before him (as he wished) therefore (quod he) ‘I thought good to leave of wishing, and fall unto writing.’\footnote{Ibid., Cc1.}

 This is the first and only reference either writer made of John Hooper, a contemporary English bishop of England who wrote in favor of clerical marriage at about the same time Ponet’s first treatise was published. Gardiner fails to mention that, at the time of his writing, Hooper was in London’s Newgate prison on Gardiner’s orders for refusing to end his own marriage.\footnote{David H. Pill, The English Reformation 1529-1558 (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 173.}

 Such an oversight did not escape Ponet’s pen, however. Although he did not refer to Hooper specifically, he referenced contemporary actions by Mary’s government. Gardiner was Lord Chancellor under Mary. As such, when Mary called for a return to Catholicism, which meant for this context that all priests must be celibate, Gardiner acted directly in the interrogation of these priests and the deprivation of their positions if they were married.
Ponet rebuked the logic in Gardiner’s title of his work, wherein Gardiner stated that the marriages of priests were not marriages at all. If that was so, Ponet claimed, then why the fuss over married priests?

[Gardiner] saith not only that the marriages of priests be evil and unlawfull marriages but he saith plainly with all that they be no marriages. I pray you master Doctor if I may be so bold with you, answer me by your law without sophistry (for your logic is so little that no man needeth to regard it) and your divinity much less as your book beareth witness. Answer me I say by your law if you have any to this reason. Where there is no marriage there needeth no divorce but the proceedings of the Queen and the bishops and of all the lawyers in England declareth that a divorce is needful of priest’s marriage before they be again admitted to the ministry, or that the wife may marry again.123

Indeed, Gardiner presided at many meetings with married priests, wherein he promised them they would again have their positions if they would formally sever their relationships with their wives and children.124

After all, Ponet argued, if a Catholic priest could live free and safe in his benefice despite being a whoremonger, why would a married priest who had entered into “no marriage” need to be punished for such actions?125 His claim rests largely upon the fact that most of these marriages had occurred during that brief period in Edward’s reign when priests’ marriage was legal.

They had the consent of the king, the supreme head under Christ of the church, and of the parliament and realm, and that joined with the consent of the congregations assembled where they were married, and for the testimony of the king’s consent, and others both of the nobles and commons, for lawfulness thereof, many of them received benefices after they were married at the king’s and other nobles’ hands. All this lawfulness notwithstanding, I say other cause

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124 Redworth, *Church Catholic*, 316.
125 Ponet, “Apologie,” 23-24. He wrote, “If priests’ marriage be no marriage as you say, what cause I pray you had the Queen and the bishops to deprive the married bishops and priests of England from their benefices? They were not deprived for ignorance in God’s word, neither for not doing their devotions, nor for gluttony, nor swearing, nor [dishing], nor hunting, nor buggery nor whoredom, for these be common faults among your priests nowadays. And a benefice and any of them, or all of them be so compatible, and may so well be enjoyed together that any popish priest may quietly have those faults and their benefice together without deprivation. Other fault there is none known, but only that they were married, though for the lawfulness of their marriage besides God’s plain word and the evidence consent of the ancient and godly Canons and Doctors, etc.”
have ye none wherefore ye deprived the priests of England from their benefices but only that they were married.\textsuperscript{126}

Although many clerics would be deprived of their benefices for other reasons as well, clerical marriage was considered a sufficient charge to lose one’s positions.\textsuperscript{127}

Ponet claimed that it was not just that the clerics lost their positions. These positions were paid, and were often accompanied by lodging arrangements. Married priests who lost their positions risked losing their homes and income as well. All this, Ponet posited, was implemented for no genuine cause. He wrote, “Now come you forth and say that the pretended marriage of priests is no marriage. Wherefore it must follow that the pretended cause of England of priests’ divorcement is no cause, and that the priests be put from their livings without a cause.”\textsuperscript{128} Turning someone out of his home and taking his income, without just cause, could only have had one true motive in Ponet’s mind: greed.

If therefore without a cause, then be they either way both by your fond supposal and in very deed the true possessors of their benefices still, though others by violence and extortion enjoy the profits of their possessions. Whom I would should right well note that like as princes and rulers be subject to changes, and that death as soon knocketh at the door of the rich as of the poor: so a man’s right dieth not. And law in another world will charge the transgressor for though ease in this world so flatter the confidence that God is forgotten and the flesh maketh full merry. What is extortion if this be not extortion to put out of goods and livings one without a cause and to thrust in another without a just title?\textsuperscript{129}

Ponet did not find it difficult to conclude that Catholic clerics could be extortionists, as he already thought little of their moral character. A single life, a “straight life,” could be good if someone truly intended to live such a life. But, Ponet argued, few Catholics lived a true straight life. Instead, he said that the Catholics exalted people who demonstrated mental instability, given to bouts of what Keith Thomas calls “uncontrolled prophecy.”\textsuperscript{130} Ponet cited contemporary, local examples of nuns and priests whose vows of celibacy had not been kept very strictly:

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} Carlson, \textit{Marriage}, 53.
\textsuperscript{128} Ponet, “Apologie,” 24.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{130} Thomas, \textit{Decline of Magic}, 131.
A straight life is good when it is joined with a truth as it was in holy John Baptist. But when a straight life is joined with a falsehood, as it is in all the pope’s creatures and other sectaries and heretics, the members of Antichrist: there is nothing more perilous, than the straightness of life. What lecherous life led the holy maid of Leominster pretending her food to be nothing else than the mass cakes … What bawdry practiced the holy, nay, the devilish maid of Kent, with monks, friars, and priests under the color of straight nunnish life, as appeareth partly by the act of parliament but more largely in the book of her life?

By the 1530s, many Protestants in England widely derided such people. Thomas Cromwell wrote that people like the nun of Kent, mentioned by Ponet, threatened the social order of English society. Ponet argued that they were clear examples of Catholic corruption:

Was there not a holy man named Master Doctor Boord, a physician … who under the color of virginity, and oft wearing of a shirt of hair and hanging his shroud and stocking or burial sheet at his bed’s feet, and mortifying his body and straightness of life, kept three whores at once in his chamber at Winchester, to serve not only himself also to help the virgin priests about in the country as it was proved that they might with more ease and less pain keep their blessed virginity.  

The “straight life,” then, was very easy to maintain as long as one did not worry too much about following the actual rules of such a life.

By this point, Ponet had left England. He had been deprived of his position as bishop of Winchester when Mary became queen. A married priest himself, he sensed that there would be serious repercussions for those in the same predicament, and so fled to the European continent. There, he condemned Gardiner for his persecution of married clerics, claiming that Gardiner would never be satisfied:

But all this cannot suffice you unless you may please your throat and ears with crying out upon us, thieves, heretics, and traitors, etc. when you have taken from us both our country, our goods, and most lawful possessions. Yea and all that we have save God alone whom with his word ye have . . . to us and driven away from you to our comfort and your eternal shame and perpetual infamy.

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131 Ibid., 149.
133 Ibid., 25.
Gardiner and Ponet chose to cite several examples out of the Bible to prove their own claims or to disprove their opponent’s arguments. Gardiner, due to the much greater length of his work and the fact that he refuted Ponet’s entire treatise (whereas Ponet only refuted a single chapter of Gardiner’s), used the scriptures to a much greater degree. He argued that Ponet was wrong in his claim that most of the apostles were married, and that those who were married had become so before they had received their clerical positions. Also, he addressed and refuted several points in Ponet’s text where he had cited St. Paul’s writings as proof of the respectability of clerical marriage.

Gardiner began with Ponet’s claim that no one could make a vow of celibacy that was truly irrevocable. He criticized Ponet’s logic, arguing that this could not possibly be the will of God, that man should make a vow that he would not uphold, without any consequence:

And it should seem Ponet’s meaning to be, that God’s pleasure is, a man should live an unchaste life, for else, why addeth he fondly these words: ‘When it shall please God to call him to a contrary state.” Nay he should rather have said, when the Devil, and the concupiscence of the flesh, and amorous affections call him to a Devilish state. For God forbid we should think Christ the author of sin, or to think that he would call any man from his godly vow of chastity, that he hath made, which to break doeth after Saint Paul’s mind, all the old fathers, deserve present damnation.134

Damnation, then, was reserved for those who broke their vows to God. Damnation would come especially for people like Ponet, who in Gardiner’s mind broke their vows and flaunted it.

To Gardiner, there were very good reasons for commanding the celibacy of clerics. These men had to forsake worldly life to serve the people, and could not be encumbered by worldly concerns:

To the end that he may be God’s servant holy, and not divided (saith Saint Paul), therefore it is good to be sole and single. And this reason the church well considering, thought it most expedient to decree, that priests should not marry, whose office is not private, but public: not to solace himself, but to pray for the people, to teach, to minister the Sacraments, to be liberal unto the poor.135

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135 Ibid., U3.
A wife and children, Gardiner claimed, would make constant demands upon a priest’s time, rendering him unable to fulfill his post. He wrote, “Saint Paul biddeth him keep hospitality: yea, but keep for me and your children shall his wife saith: ‘if you so do good husband, what shall become of us, that are your own flesh and blood? We shall be utterly undone, and cast away forever.’” This would inevitably lead to a priest abandoning his position entirely, Gardiner argued. To Gardiner, the single life, dedicated to God, would obviously be an easier and holier path.

Next, Gardiner stated that the weakness of Ponet’s arguments lay largely in his taking the writings of Paul out of context. He noted that Ponet had cited Paul as saying that every man and woman should marry to avoid fornication. This, Gardiner said, was simply not correct.

Here I require every man that will not willingly be deceived, to read but so much as twelve lines farther of the same chapter of St. Paul which Doctor Ponet allegeth. For whoso readeth the said place of Saint Paul, shall find these words. ‘But I saw to them that be unmarried, and are widows, good it were for them, if they continue still even as I also do.’ By the which words it appeareth, that the beginning of the said chapter speaketh not in that sense that Doctor Ponet brought it for, which was to infer thereby, that every man should marry for fear of fornication. For Saint Paul speaketh in that place not of every man, but of every married man: nor of every woman, but of every married woman.

Accurate interpretation of the scriptures, Gardiner argued, required reading the whole text, not short snippets.

In his 1556 reply, Ponet disagreed that he had taken Paul’s arguments out of context. He wrote that marriage was a creature of God, and like all other creatures of God, was sacred: “Whereupon must follow this conclusion, ergo marriage is good and not to be refused being taken with thanksgiving for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. This sound syllogism proveth plainly that the marriage of a priest is not only a marriage, but also a good

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136 Ibid., U3.
137 Ibid. He wrote, “Saint Paul saith to Timothy, keep thyself chaste: but the wife shall say, pay your debt due by the bond of matrimony. Saint Matthew writeth how the Apostles forsook all, and followed Christ: but in our married priests, might it not for the more part of them, be turned clean contrary, that they forsook Christ, and followed all things worldly? Buying and selling, purchasing and improving, not visiting the sick in the night not keeping hospitality in the day, but living more secularly than the more part of seculars?”
138 Ibid.
marriage and a good thing for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." He said that marriage was either a good creation of God, or it is an evil institution of the devil. It made no sense to him to separate marriage into separate categories, as good for some but not for others. Clearly, Ponet wrote, Paul had known of married priests, because he had written of them:

Yea and Saint Paul calleth the bishop, priests, and deacon, by the name of husband, and their fellows by the name of wives, and saith the bishop must be the husband of one wife and likewise the deacon. And further he saith for the avoiding of fornication let every man have his wife, etc. In which general sentence, priests must be comprehended, if they be men. Yea and their marriage is not only a marriage but also an honorable marriage or else cannot marriage be honorable in all estates, as Saint Paul write to the Hebrews.140

If priests were men, then Paul must have been speaking to them as well. That alone, Ponet argued, should be proof enough that marriage of priests had been an acceptable practice to him.

Still, Gardiner, argued, Ponet was wrong. If Paul was saying what Ponet argued he was saying, either Paul’s writings were contrary to what he had said otherwise or Paul did not mean his words to be applied universally, as Ponet interpreted them. Paul’s words must be understood in context, Gardiner said.141 For example, Gardiner agreed that Paul was discussing married priests specifically. However, Gardiner claimed that those priests had already been married when they accepted their positions, instead of marrying after taking vows of celibacy. He wrote, “But yet Paul doth grant them they may by permission continue in the use of marriage, he granteth it not by a commandment, but by permission, that is to say, bearing with the so doing, not bidding it to be done.”142 And, “There is a great difference whether one may marry, and whether one should abstain from his wife that he hath married.”143

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140 Ibid., 22-23.
141 Gardiner, “Traictise,” U3.
142 Ibid., X1.
143 Ibid.
Gardiner criticized Ponet’s claim that Philip and Paul had been married. Philip, for example, was married with daughters, but obviously they were born long before he accepted the position of deacon. Besides, he said, Philip was not actually an apostle, and had had his four daughters long before his devotion to the clergy. The fact that Philip was married and had children before he became a deacon did nothing to support Ponet’s position. Ponet, he said, argued in favor of priests marrying after they had taken their vows of celibacy, not before.

Now then, granting that Philip was before his calling married: what can this help our married priests which after their calling and election, do nevertheless marry contrary to their calling? Except it may peradventure be said . . . that such carnal merchants were never for like holiness and virtuous example of living, as was found in Philip and his company of Deacons, specially elected and called to the order of priesthood, but rather that for living sake they did seek unto it, and without devotion intrused themselves into the holy ministry without God’s calling.

Gardiner maintained that the apostles who had been married before they were called to their positions were chaste afterward, forsaking their wives and children.

This assessment was in direct conflict with Gardiner’s interpretation, wherein he claimed Ponet had argued that the women who had followed the apostles to serve them were, in fact, the wives of the apostles.

Ponet, what saith he? ‘Forsooth the brothers of the Lord and Cephas carried their wives about with them.’ To what purpose I pray you, if it were not for the avoiding of the inconvenience, against the which matrimony is provided of god for a remedy? And a little after he saith, ‘I doubt not but the apostles would have discharged themselves of such a clogging carriage, if the infirmity of the flesh had not dissuaded them to the contrary.’ O merciful Lord, whoever read or heard time of such a strange, and an unchaste doctrine of all the learned men that ever wrote

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144 Ibid., Gg2. Gardiner wrote, “But although he had been an Apostle, what should the account also of his four daughters make for the maintenance or proof of priest’s marriages, since his daughters were gotten long before Philip had the charge of a preacher given unto him, as may well appear by the scriptures, which do commend in the said young women, both their virginity, and also the gift of prophecy? It cannot be doubted, but that they were of a good age already, and well towards woman’s state. For else what commendation were it, to say, that a maid of six or seven years old were a virgin?”

145 Ibid.

146 Ibid., Gg2. He wrote, “Lo here by Paul himself ye may perceive that he never meant, that the apostles’ women which followed the apostles, followed them to keep them from an incontinent life, but to find them necessaries, to nourish, and relieve them, to comfort them, to aid them, to serve for their board and not at their bed, to travail in the gospel with them and other that were faithful and diligent ministers of the same.”
before these carnal, and traitorous heresies began, all (I say) reported that the
Apostles, and disciples of Christ, either were virgins, or after their Apostleship,
and following of Christ live in perpetual chastity: Ponet avoweth, they carried
their wives about the country to lie with them for fear of incontinency.\footnote{Ibid.}

Again, Gardiner claimed that the apostles remained chaste after making their vows,
contrasting them directly with Ponet and his married contemporaries.

Overall, Gardiner considered Ponet to have interpreted scripture too widely, and to be
too overblown. Not all or even most of the apostles were married, Gardiner wrote, yet Ponet
devoted so much of his treatise to using them as examples.

First of all, where Dr. Ponet allegeth all the Apostles of Christ in the new
testament to have been married: this is undoubtedly most untrue. For where read
he in all his life of the marriage of Saint John the Evangelist? Do not all stories
agree in this point, and evidently show that Saint John the Evangelist lived in
perpetual virginity? Yea, doth not Dr. Ponet himself in the sixth leaf of his book
confess the same by an authority that he bringeth for his purpose, out of St.
Ambrose? Be not these sure men to trust unto that say and unsay, affirm and
deny, within two leaves one matter?\footnote{Ibid., Gg1.}

Someone who wrote using such superlatives would surely contradict himself, and Gardiner
contended that Ponet had done this several times.

**Ancient Doctors on Free Will**

The writings of the gospels and Paul’s letters were not the only fodder Gardiner and
Ponet used to prove their points. Both delved deep into the writings of the ancient doctors
and early popes of the early church. Gardiner argued that the early writers had similar
interpretations of the same scripture as he did, which would render Ponet’s claims inaccurate.
He contended that the “old authors” had believed that vows of celibacy and chastity were
both good and possible to keep. In reply, Ponet claimed that several others had supported
clerical marriage, including some of the early popes.

Gardiner used the interpretations of early saints and doctors of the church, St. Jerome
and St. Ambrose, to support his interpretation of Paul’s writings. Since they did not arrive at
Ponet’s conclusion, that all men may lawfully marry, Gardiner concluded his interpretation

\footnote{147 Ibid.}

\footnote{148 Ibid., Gg1.}
was superior. One interpretation that Gardiner focused on was the vow of chastity, and Ponet’s assertion that it was not intended to be perpetual:

Can it not be proven by scripture, that a man may make an absolute vote of perpetual chastity? Why was it then spoken of Christ that some there were that made themselves chaste for the kingdom of heaven? Meant he not thereby the profession of perpetual chastity, that such persons should forever abstain from the pleasure of the body, like as the other eunuchs, that were of necessity made chaste, either by violence or by nature?

No, Gardiner wrote; the doctors of the early church believed such a vow was sacred and never to be put asunder. Citing St. Augustine, he claimed that those who had taken such vows meant that they would forsake their old lives forever, not just for a little while. In essence, he wrote that a vow was permanent, not temporary, however Ponet may have interpreted it.

Gardiner argued that such a permanent vow of celibacy was important for the early members of the church to make, and that they took comfort in God as a means to fulfill that vow. He challenged the Protestant approach to human nature, claiming that God had given men free will to control their nature:

All the old fathers every one wrote that a man may live chaste with the help of God. Ponet affirmeth that the ordinance of God is planted in man’s nature to the contrary. All the old writers expound that place, ask and you shall have, to import a free will and power given to man to obtain the grace of God in anything he shall lawfully desire of him. Ponet understandeth the same to be promised but with a condition, that is to say, if God will, and then that condition, he turneth into a negative, saying that God many times, and to many persons will not give that he promiseth to give.

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149 Ibid., X1.
150 Ibid., Cc2.
151 Ibid. He wrote, “When Peter said to Christ, ‘Lo we have forsaken all Lord, and we have followed thee’: meant Peter thereby to forsake his wife, if then he had any, and to forsake the world for a time, and afterward to become a man of the world again? Meant Peter to be Christ’s disciple and Apostle for a while, and then to return to his old occupation of fishing and other worldly business, giving up his Apostleship? Made Peter the vow to follow Christ for a space, and at the motion of a new spirit, to revoke his promise again and to bid Christ farewell? Or is it to be thought that Christ on the other side, whoso earnestly and peremptorily called Peter to follow him, mean to change his mind afterward, and call Peter to a contrary state again? Do we find any such inconstancy in Christ and his callings? But to our purpose of wives, meant Peter any of those things aforementioned, trowe we? No no, saith Austin. Peter and the other Apostles had most mightily and strongly made this vow.”
152 Ibid., Gg3.
This reflected his long-held lawyer’s perspective, that people could control their actions, especially if such behavior was meant to comply with the word of God. Such a vow could not have been unnatural, Gardiner said, because so few apostles were married. Citing Tertullian, he claimed that Peter was the only married apostle, noting that Peter was married before he accepted vows and maintained his chastity afterward. Thus, Ponet’s claim that most of them were married was not only out of context, but also far out of proportion. On top of that, Gardiner wrote, any suggestion that the women who traveled with the apostles were anything but caregivers in the most basic sense, was outlandish.

Ponet replied that this was nonsense. The council at Nicaea ruled that priests who had married before taking vows were not required to forsake their wives and children, as Gardiner had written Peter had done. They would not have done so, Ponet said, if it was not right: “One of the first and most ancient counsels after the Apostles called the Nicene counsel, calleth the marriages of priests lawful marriages. When suggestion was made that priests should not sleep with their wives they determined saying ‘we will that lawful marriages from henceforth stand in force.’” In addition, Ponet cited writings of many of the early popes, arguing that they all supported the propriety of priests’ marriages.

Gardiner saw this as a few examples in a sea of examples to the contrary. He criticized Ponet’s references, claiming that Ponet used the writings of wicked men to support his arguments, while Gardiner used the ancient doctors of the church:

Chrysostom likewise and Saint Austin report that Paul lived a continent and chaste life. Pierius an ancient Greek writer, pressing upon Paul his words where he wisheth all men to be like himself, saith plainly that Paul in the same place exhorted the unmarried to live a single life . . . But what saith Doctor Ponet to these, and an infinite source of like authorities? He hath nothing for him but a couple of doctors, corrupted in the print contrary to the letter and text of the old exemplaries, and two or three places of the scriptures by himself in his own reprobate sense most sensually expounded contrary to all the old writers, and to the received truth of the whole Catholic Church.

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153 Ibid., Gg1.
154 Ibid., Gg1.
156 Ibid., 17.
157 Gardiner, “Traictise,” Gg3.
Gardiner claimed that he, not Ponet, had the weight of evidence in his favor. In reply, Ponet contradicted Gardiner’s arguments against priests who married after taking vows. Citing Augustine, Ponet wrote, “Saint Austin in his book maketh a plain resolution in this matter as well against [Gardiner], as against all the rest of the popish rout in Christendom, where speaking of them that marry after they have vowed, he saith in plain words, ‘the marriage come of such as marry after they have vowed are not to be condemned.’”\(^{158}\) Nothing could be gained by forcing a priest to forsake his wife and children, Ponet claimed. The women would be treated like whores, he said, with no choice but to marry another.\(^{159}\) By Ponet’s perspective, in the context of his time, forcing priests to either abandon their wives or their benefices was simply illogical and inhumane.

**THE THREAT OF DAMNATION**

At the end of their works, both Gardiner and Ponet included a passionate plea to the reader. Gardiner, from a position of great political and clerical power, offered peace, freedom, and salvation to those who, in his mind, had strayed from their vows and from God. In contrast, Ponet, in exile and near death, encouraged the reader to avoid the entreaties of men like Gardiner, who only sought to lead them into sin and away from God’s truth. When Gardiner offered safety to the penitent, his position as lord chancellor allowed him to guarantee it.

Gardiner began by reminding his opponents of their vows to God:

I desire all such as have offended in the premises, earnestly and unfainedly to acknowledge their fault before God, against whom they have trespassed, to reconcile themselves to the weak brethren, to whom they have been a stumbling block, and to make satisfaction unto the church, from whom like lost sheep they have run astray. And first, as touching God, let them remember, if it be so great an offense to break an appointment, which is made by a man to a man, how heinous a trespass then is it to break fidelity promised and vowed unto God, and to that God almighty, who hath power to cast both body and soul, into the depth of hellfire.\(^{160}\)

\(^{158}\) Ponet, “Apologie,” 19.

\(^{159}\) Ibid., 19-20.

\(^{160}\) Gardiner, “Traictise,” Mm1.
Damnation, Gardiner reminded them. Eternal damnation. It was not enough that they had violated their covenant with God, however. To Gardiner, they had also corrupted others with their lies and bad influence. Only by a strict return to their vows could these men restore the good name of their holy orders. If they did, Gardiner said, all would be forgiven. In fact, it would be greater for them to admit their fault and change, than to deny it and risk burning on earth and in the hereafter.

Ye shall surely be again received of the church, and after satisfaction exhibited and duly performed, ye shall be restored to your former estate of ministration and honest living, to the great joy and comfort of all faithful Christians, the salvation of your own souls, and the glory of God, to whom as it is most due, so be it given both now and evermore.

It did not end this easily for many married priests, but Gardiner had at least made the offer. He would make it several times to clerics under scrutiny, including John Hooper.

Ponet, having nothing to offer his reader but his words, took a decidedly less conciliatory position in his conclusion. He told Gardiner that the readers would sit in judgment of him, as would God:

All men may give sentence against them and such like, by the judgment of thine own pen, and by the force of thine own arguments. That thou and such thy fellowes be at this present all rank traitors. This reason is none of mine but thine own reason it is that cutteth thine own throat. And I doubt not but the indifferent reader will confess that hitherto I have fought with them with thine own weapons and reasons as well in proving the Papists heretics and lechers as also in this part provie them and such like traitors.

He encouraged the reader to conclude that Gardiner was wrong, and that all Roman Catholic clerics were meant to lead the reader astray, away from the word of God.

Yea all the doctrine of the pope chopped together and mingled as herbs to the pot, and couched in his antichristian law, is almost nothing else, than a lump of learning besides and against the lively word of God. Now therefore good reader I will end as St. Paul doth, desiring and beseeching thee in the name of Jesus Christ to beware of all the Papists and all other heretics that cause dissentions and offenses against the doctrine which you have learned out of God’s word, and shun

161 Ibid., Mm2.
162 Ibid.
163 Muller, Stephen Gardiner, 268.
and fly the company of such, for they serve not Christ our lord but their own bellies.\textsuperscript{165}

Ponet attempted to show that his perspective on human nature was superior to Gardiner’s. Gardiner could make any claim about the ability of men to fulfill their vows to God, but such claims meant nothing if they did not exist in practice. He knew that Gardiner had power, but he argued that Gardiner’s power was temporal, not spiritual, and was more likely to cause people to fall away from God’s influence.

Neither Gardiner nor Ponet would live to see the long-term effects of their writings. Gardiner, having been released from prison by Mary in 1553, died in 1555. Ponet, who fled to Strasbourg when Mary became queen, died in 1556. He had planned to write more in response to Gardiner’s long treatise against clerical marriage, but died not long after crafting his reply described here. In sum, these two writings represent the extreme volatility of this controversy during the years of the reign of Mary I. They reflect the fact that it was dangerous at this time to hold opinions contrary to the crown, and that despite this fact, there were men who professed those opinions regardless. One of those men was John Hooper, who became of the first to be directly affected by Gardiner’s views on free will.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 157.
CHAPTER 4

JOHN HOOPER

As described in the last chapter, clerical marriage had become a controversy with serious political and social consequences. Under Mary, those who had married after taking holy orders could at the least expect to be deprived of their religious positions, and at the most expect to be imprisoned and executed for heresy. John Hooper was the first to suffer all three punishments. Like Ponet, Hooper was an outspoken opponent of England’s return to Catholicism and Gardiner’s program to bring Protestants into submission. Unlike Ponet, Hooper refused to flee England when Mary became queen on the basis that he felt he would be effectively abandoning his cause there.166

Hooper is a unique figure in the English Protestant Reformation because he was a religious reformer—a theologian at Oxford, and later a bishop—who refused to change his ideological positions to reflect changes in political attitudes and was seemingly unafraid of the consequences. Often despised by both Catholics and Protestants for his stubborn refusal to compromise, he clearly stood out from the rest. He was also married with two children. An extensive writer of religious texts, he was an outspoken proponent of clerical marriage. He agreed with his fellow Protestants on some issues, such as man’s nature and transubstantiation. He disagreed with them on others, such as clerical vestments. His position as an outlier among reformers (often for his opinions, but mostly for his refusal to be politically savvy in his actions) has meant that Hooper presents a problem for modern historiography. In essence, Hooper was a major contributor to the Protestant Reformation in England, though modern historiography tends to marginalize his contribution.

For many years, historians have written about the ideological differences between English Catholics and Protestants. They tend to treat the Protestant reformers as if they were usually in agreement; or, if they disagreed, that it was minimal and the mal-contents were just causing trouble. John Hooper has been relegated to this latter group for his intransigence.

166 Muller, Stephen Gardiner, 232-33.
and his general refusal to play politics. In his 1994 work *The Catholic Priesthood and the English Reformation*, which focuses on lay reactions to the Protestant reformers, Peter Marshall marginalizes Hooper’s contribution. The few times Marshall mentions Hooper or his actions, he either presents Hooper as a lone antagonistic dissident, or else inaccurately lumps his beliefs with that of other Protestant reformers, as he did on the subject of vestments. Similarly, Diarmid MacCulloch, in his 1990 work *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, argues that the reformers were generally in agreement. He claims that, after the executions of Hooper and Nicholas Ridley, another Protestant bishop, there were no clerics interested in dissent. Even further, Lewis Spitz writes as if discussion of the mid-Tudor Reformation was irrelevant. In his 1985 book *The Protestant Reformation 1517-1559*, he devotes a 45-page chapter to the English Reformation. In that chapter, the first half is spent describing the introduction of the reformation ideas to England. The last half is effectively a laundry list of political actions against or in favor of Roman Catholicism in the mid-Tudor period. Yet Spitz says nothing about the differences of opinion between the various reformers, writing as if Cranmer was the only reformer in that period.

It is partially this oversimplification of the English Protestant Reformation that relegates Hooper to the sidelines, as a pompous old windbag who did not know when to silence his mouth or his pen. These historians do not consider him to be a central character to the English Protestant Reformation. In fact, Hooper was a man who fought both English Catholics and Protestants over issues of reform; who used his office as bishop to further those ends while others in similar positions of power were content not to rock the boat; who maintained his religious stance no matter who was in power and what they thought of him; and who was burned at the stake, chastising those who spread rumors of his recantation and admonishing others not to give up their beliefs, even though they would suffer the same fate as he. In essence, Hooper was one of the most significant contributors of the English Protestant Reformation.

168 Ibid., 139.
HOOPER’S EARLY LIFE

During the last tumultuous years of the reign of Henry VIII, religious reformers simply did not know which of their ideas would be accepted by the king and which would earn them his wrath. Many reformers, expecting that Henry would either eventually change his mind or die and leave his throne to the young Protestant Edward, fled England in favor of the reform-friendly Switzerland. John Hooper was one of them; in fact, Hooper went to the continent twice during Henry’s reign, in 1539 and 1546. It is unclear when Hooper became a believer in Protestant theology. Likely, he learned of it during his study at Cambridge in the 1530s. It is also unclear when he was originally made a priest, but it is certain to have been before 1539. At that time, he was a steward in Thomas Arundel’s house. Arundel, a fervent Catholic who respected Hooper as a man but disliked his Protestant ideas, sent Hooper to Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, asking him if there was anything he could do to change Hooper’s opinions. Gardiner, after four or five days of discussion, determined that he could not influence Hooper in matters of religion and sent him back to Arundel. Hooper interpreted this exchange as a threat and, securing whatever property he could in 1539, he fled to Paris for an unknown amount of time. He returned to England, however, and moved to Gloucestershire.

Fearing that Henry VIII might strike out against the most dogmatic Protestant reformers, Hooper again fled England and went to Germany, reaching Strasbourg by 1546. He moved from there to Zurich, where he first met his long-time friend and mentor, Heinrich Bullinger. It was there that he was married to Anne de Tserclaes, a Burgonian. Bullinger housed many Henrician and later Marian exiles in Zurich. Many of them, when they returned to England during the reign of Edward VI and after the death of Mary I, took his works with them. Hooper was one of them.

172 Ibid., 1503.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid. There seems to be some inconsistency about the location of Hooper’s marriage. Foxe claims that he was married in Zurich, but other historians have mentioned Strasbourg.
Bullinger, successor to Huldrych Zwingli of the Protestant church in Zurich, shared many beliefs with Hooper. Although traditional historiography places Bullinger in a secondary position to other early Reformers, more recent scholarship shows that he was far more influential to the English Reformation.\(^{176}\) Bullinger, following Zwingli, had instilled in Hooper his belief in a symbolic representation of the Eucharist.\(^{177}\) Bullinger was also a fervent believer in clerical marriage.\(^{178}\) In his treatise “The Christen State of Matrimony,” he argued that marriage was a practice that was once open to all, including priests, and should be allowed again.\(^{179}\)

Hooper stayed in Zurich for a longer time, waiting until it was safe for him to return to England. In 1549, it was clear that the accession of Edward VI had made England a safe place for Protestant exiles. But a young king years from his minority did not present a long-term guarantee of safety, no matter how politically powerful his council was. As such, there was no guarantee of permanent safety. Yet Hooper left with his wife, his friends praising his dedication to his cause in England.

My source for some of Hooper’s story is John Foxe. As an historical source, John Foxe should be treated carefully and used in corroboration with other evidence. Foxe, a contemporary of the early English Protestant reformers, wrote a long chronicle of the lives and deaths of all Protestants who were burned for heresy under Mary. As his chronicles of the Marian martyrs treads more into the realm of hagiography than history, he is not always the best source. But modern historiography recognizes Foxe’s accuracy on several accounts, and his writing on Hooper is often corroborated in the records.

The time when Hooper left Zurich was two years after Henry VIII died and his son, Edward VI, already a fervent Protestant at the tender age of nine, took the throne.\(^{180}\) Edward was surrounded by counselors who were also intensely interested in reform, although the

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degree of zeal varied between them. The primary executor of most of these religious changes was Thomas Cranmer, a man who had risen to the position of Archbishop of Canterbury through his willingness to assist Henry VIII in the dissolution of his first marriage. He was also a powerful member of Edward’s privy council. One of the first acts performed under Edward’s reign was the legalization of clerical marriage and the repeal of Henry VIII’s Six Acts, which had previously affirmed the Anglican Church as being ideologically similar to the Roman Catholic Church.

**HOOPER THE REFORMER**

Hooper started out his life as a Protestant reformer while at Oxford in the 1530s. He had been studying religion for many years, first as a student at Cambridge, and had become very interested in the Protestant reforms occurring in mainland Europe. As time passed, the other scholars at Oxford became less impressed and more concerned with Hooper’s growing Protestant leanings. He was forced to leave Oxford. The next ten years had him flitting back and forth between England and various parts of the European continent. When he returned, world-wise and full of ideas for reforming the Protestant church in England, he was met with political opposition, from Protestants as well as Catholics.

Although Hooper had many political differences in opinion from the other English Protestants, from a theological perspective, they often agreed. For example, several of Hooper’s writings on a variety of subjects reflect his opinion of human nature, which was very similar to arguments made by Joye and Ponet. In his treatise titled “A Lesson of the Incarnation of Christ,” Hooper argued that Christ had come from the seed of a woman, and therefore was born with human nature. This was not a fault of either Christ or man, he believed. This argument was reflective of common attitudes at the time that celebrated the physical nature of the Virgin Mary’s pregnancy. "It is no ignominy or contempt at all, but

rather a certain argument of God’s mercy (which passeth all his works), that he would not abhor to be partaker of our infirm nature.” As such, human nature, having been created by God, could not be criticized by God. In Hooper’s mind, God’s laws and the laws of nature had come from the same being and thus should be treated as the same. He criticized Catholic clerics because they did not revere this connection between God’s laws and human nature, saying, “In their Pharaonic and blind fury they have no respect to nature.”

To Hooper, marriage was a logical extension of God’s law and human nature. In essence, marriage and human nature were natural partners. “Seeing the Lord made man to be a creature, prone and ready to associate another sex and kind like to himself, . . . God did institute and command matrimony, to all such as after the fall of Adam were in danger of fornication.” As Joye and Ponet had written earlier, Hooper believed that marriage was necessary for all men and women who “had not the gift of chastity.” He meant that to apply to all men, clergy included.

Hooper agreed with other Protestants on other issues as well. For example, Hooper was a fervent believer in the symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist. In his mind, the bread and wine were symbolically the body and blood of Christ, but were not physically transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ, contradicting the standard Catholic belief in transubstantiation. In the sixty-fourth article of his 1550 work “A Brief and Clear Confession of the Christian Faith,” Hooper said:

I believe that in this holy sacrament these signs or badges are not changed in any point, but the same do remain wholly in their nature: that is to say, the bread is not changed and transubstantiation (as the fond papists and false doctors do teach, deceiving the poor people) into the body of Jesus Christ, neither is the wine transubstantiated into his blood; but the bread remaineth still bread, and the wine remaineth still wine, every one in his proper and first nature.

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185 Hooper, *Later Writings*, 17.
186 Ibid., 194.
187 Ibid., 580.
189 Hooper, *Later Writings*, 48. See Appendix A.
This belief follows the idea put forth by Zwingli, who supported a belief in the symbolic representation of Christ in the Eucharist.

Nicholas Ridley, the bishop of London who was to be burned at the stake eight months after Hooper, noted that there were many who agreed with Hooper’s religious beliefs. While prisoner in the Tower, Ridley recounted a discussion he had with Queen Mary’s master secretary John Bourne on the subject of transubstantiation. Ridley wrote that John Feckenham, the abbot of Westminster and a fervent Catholic, had noted that at one point, all Englishmen were in agreement on the subject of transubstantiation. Ridley’s concession to that argument was that there was also a point where all Englishmen were in agreement on the universal power of the bishop of Rome. Although Ridley did not admit that he did not believe in transubstantiation, he showed that there were many others who shared Hooper’s opinions.

However much the Protestants may have agreed on the subject of transubstantiation, it was a major issue of contention between them and the Roman Catholic Church. Hooper had a different interpretation of Christ’s claim during the first communion during his Last Supper:

And that is the very transubstantiation and change that God delighteth in [in] use of the sacrament most, that we should earnestly and from the bottom of our hearts be converted into Christ and Christ’s holy commandments, to live a Christian life, and die from sin as he gave us example both by his life and his doctrine; and meaneth not that the bread and wine should in substance be turned or converted into the substance of his body and blood, or else that the substance of bread should be taken away, and in the place thereof to be the substance, matter, and corporal presence of the Christ’s holy human and natural body. Thus, Hooper did not believe in the miracle of transubstantiation, nor did he think much of those who did:

And whosoever be of the contrary opinion, and would defend transubstantiation or corporal presence, I do condemn his faith as an error and opinion contrary to

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191 Ibid., 1427.
192 Hooper, *Later Writings*, 152-53. Nevinson notes that this particular claim comes from a routine clerical examination of Hooper on April 29, 1551. Nevinson notes that, of the 311 clerics who were examined, 168 could not repeat the ten commandments; thirty-one did not know where in the Bible the commandments could be found; forty did not know where the Lord’s Prayer was written; and thirty-one did not know its author.
the express word of God, and will, with all my learning, wit, diligence, and study, daily improve, confute, speak against, and utterly subvert unto the uttermost of my power.\textsuperscript{193}

However, Hooper still supported the concept of the Eucharist, symbolic though he thought it was, and decried those who sought to do away with it entirely.

For the ungodly sort would have no substance of bread and wine to remain in the sacrament, and yet a corporal presence of body and blood, contrary not only to the articles of our faith, that telleth us he is in heaven, and shall abide there until he come to judge the quick and the dead, but also contrary to many other places of the scriptures.\textsuperscript{194}

On the subject of the Eucharist, as in many other things, Hooper was largely uncompromising. He would not change, no matter how angry or frustrated he made other clerics in England.

The differences between Hooper and the other English Protestant reformers, however, were more political than ideological. These conflicts typically involved debates over what was most practical and politically prudent instead of debates over what was theologically accurate. Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, was one of the first men Hooper came into conflict with. Cranmer had had about three years of reasonably unchallenged control over the direction of the English Protestant Reformation from early 1547 to late 1549, and was accustomed to doing whatever he thought best. This was largely based on the success of his primary supporter, Edward Hertford, duke of Somerset and Lord Protector over the young Edward VI.\textsuperscript{195} When Hertford was removed from the council and executed for treason, John Dudley, the rising leader of the council and the man who would sit as an informal regent over Edward VI in the last three years of his reign, saw this as an opportunity to wrest some political control of the reformation from Cranmer. To do this, he recommended Hooper for the bishopric of Gloucester in 1550.\textsuperscript{196}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[196] Ibid. Foxe, \textit{Acts and Monuments}, 1504. Foxe published the letter of Hooper’s recommendation from Edward VI to Archbishop Cranmer, which recommended Hooper “As well for his great knowledge, deep judgment and long study, both in the scriptures and other profane learning, as also for his good discretion, ready utterance and honest life for that kind of vocation.”
\end{footnotes}
Dudley’s plan, however, backfired dramatically. When Cranmer had composed and published the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, which contained dramatic changes to the previously near-Catholic Church of England, he left out any changes of vestments for the consecration ceremony of bishops. However, the expectation that Hooper would wear such relics of popery was too much for Hooper, and he refused to wear them.\textsuperscript{197} “For notwithstanding that godly reformation of religion then begun in the church of England, besides other ceremonies more ambitious than profitable or tending to edification, they used to wear such garments and apparel as the popish Bishops were wont to do.”\textsuperscript{198} Though the vestments bishops were expected to wear ideologically inconsistent with other English Protestant beliefs, it was inconvenient to consider changing the rules to suit the opinion of only one outspoken would-be bishop. As such, Cranmer made it known that he was not willing to concede the point to Hooper. Dudley did not count on Hooper being as uncompromising as he was, and all were surprised when he refused the bishopric on the grounds that he could not wear such vestments. Dudley wrote a letter to Cranmer and Ridley, beseeching them not to “charge this said bearer with an oath burdensome to his conscience.”\textsuperscript{199}

Ridley, though typically not very ideologically different from Hooper, was annoyed by Hooper’s refusal to bow to political authority. As such, Ridley determined this to be a battle Hooper would not win. Ridley successfully convinced the Privy Council that Hooper was not merely furthering a goal of the reformation, but openly defying church administration and English government.\textsuperscript{200} Hooper agreed to occasionally wear the specified vestments, and was made bishop in 1551. In this instance, he obeyed the political authority, and Cranmer maintained power over the direction of the reformation in England.\textsuperscript{201}

There seems to be a difference between the early English Protestant reformers. Hooper had spent a fairly significant amount of time (at least four years) of the previous decade on the European continent, in France, Germany, and Switzerland. He conversed with

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{198} Foxe, \textit{Acts and Monuments}, 1503.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 1504.
\textsuperscript{200} MacCulloch, \textit{Later Reformation}, 16.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 17.
many of the most prominent Protestant reformers. But when he brought back a new set of European Protestant ideals, he was met with disagreement from some of his fellow Protestants. It appears that the parts of the new Church of England that clung to certain vestiges of the Roman Catholic Church (such as clerical vestments) were supported by reformers who had a distinctly English view of the reformation; that is, a view that based reformation on the largely Catholic Anglican Church of England as it was under Henry VIII, instead of a concept of reformation based on the more radical ideals of the European Protestants, which included a firm belief in clerical marriage.

**Clerical Marriage and the “Devilish Doctrine”**

Clerical marriage was one of the most controversial issues of the English Protestant Reformation. The death of Henry VIII and the reign of young Edward VI gave reformers the freedom to lift the ban on clerical marriage. This change, and the decades-long debate over the theology and political matters surrounding clerical marriage, proved positive and negative for reformers like John Hooper. Hooper, who was married, rose to power as bishop under Edward VI, and wrote many treatises supporting the legality and theological doctrine of clerical marriage. However, he later suffered for his writings and his marriage when Mary took the throne after Edward’s death in 1553.

At his home, Hooper was as dedicated as a husband and father as he was a bishop in his church, according to his contemporary John Foxe. Foxe recalled visits to Hooper’s house in Worcester fondly:

> And certainly there appeared in him at home no less example of a worthy prelate’s life. For although he bestowed and converted the most part of his care upon the public flock and congregation of Christ, for the which also he spent his blood; yet nevertheless there lacked no provision in him, and to bring up his own children in learning and good manners; even so much that you could not discern whether he deserved more praise for his fatherly usage at home, or for his bishoply doings abroad. For everywhere he kept one religion in one uniform doctrine and integrity. So that if you entered into the Bishop’s palace, you would suppose to have entered into some church or temple. In every corner thereof, there was some smell of virtue, good example, honest conversation, and reading of holy scriptures.202

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This account is quite possibly the only one that describes from a first-hand account what home life was like for the married bishop. Foxe saw Hooper as a man who needed to support an incorruptibly religious life, both inside and out.

Hooper was the only bishop to use his position to publicly support clerical marriage. In his visitation book at Gloucester in 1549, Hooper published a treatise he titled “Articles Concerning Christian Religion.” In Article XXIX, he wrote, “Item, seeing that St. Paul doth plainly say that the forbidding of marriage is the doctrine of devils, therefore it is not to be judged that the marriage of priests, bishops, or any other ministers of the church, should be unlawful, but that the same is both holy, and agreeable with God’s word.” To Hooper, requiring priests to remain celibate was the “doctrine of devils,” the same language used by Joye and Ponet.

He made the same argument again in two treatises in 1550. The first was titled, “A Brief and Clear Confession of the Christian Faith.” In the eighty-second article, he claimed,

> I believe and confess that marriage is an honourable estate amongst all men . . . It is instituted and ordained of God for the bringing forth of children, and to eschew fornication; from the which estate of marriage none ought, nor can be restrained, if there be no just and lawful let by the word of God; but the same ought to be free to everybody.\(^\text{205}\)

The eighty-third article returned to the language of the “devilish doctrine,” when Hooper wrote,

> I believe also that the forbidding of marriage for certain persons . . . is the devilish doctrine of Antichrist, and wholly against the christian liberty of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore to compel the Christians to these things is but to take from them and to rob them of their christian liberty, and by tyranny to set them under the curse of the law, from the which Christ by his death and passion hath delivered them: and it is one true mark and note to know Antichrist by.\(^\text{206}\)

Hooper was not simply arguing that those who sought to keep priests from marrying were wrong; he was arguing that it was against the true church and against God to do so.

\(^{203}\) Ibid., 54.

\(^{204}\) Hooper, Later Writings, 126.

\(^{205}\) Ibid., 55. See Appendix B.

\(^{206}\) Ibid., 56. See Appendix B.
As proof, Hooper cited scripture in his 1550 work “A Declaration of the Ten Commandments.” He claimed again that clerical celibacy was the “doctrine of the devil.” In his writings on the Seventh Commandment, he said:

No man should continue in a sole life, but such as hath no need of matrimony, following the world of God and the ordinance of man’s nature, according to the examples of the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles; which were not excluded from matrimony . . . but reciteth the matrimony of the ministers among the virtues and necessary gifts that is required in the minister, 1 Tim. iii., Tit. i., and calleth the prohibition of matrimony the doctrine of the devil.\textsuperscript{207}

Thus, in his writings as well as his deeds, Hooper made a clear stand in favor of clerical marriage.

However, the days when Hooper could write such statements without fear of reprisal were numbered. Edward reigned for only six years, and at the age of 15, he died of consumption. His counselors, in a desperate attempt to keep a Protestant on the throne, tried to displace fervent Catholic Mary Tudor, Henry VIII’s oldest daughter and Edward’s rightful heir, in favor of her cousin, Lady Jane Grey. The attempt was unsuccessful, however, and Mary took the throne in late 1553.

When she did so, Mary immediately took steps to put the Church of England back under the control of the Vatican. This included banning clerical marriage, and punishing those clerics who were married and refused to put away their wives.\textsuperscript{208} Many of them were questioned, and deprived of their clerical posts. Some of them would be executed for these and other charges, including Hooper.\textsuperscript{209}

\textbf{INTERROGATIONS AND IMPRISONMENT}

Hooper’s marriage and his intransigence on the matter of church reform made him an easy target in the early months of the Marian regime. If Hooper would not willingly defer to fellow reformers like Archbishop Cranmer, then he certainly would not quietly accept the changes to the English Church under Mary. When Mary took the throne in October 1553, she immediately took steps to reconcile the Church of England with the Roman Catholic Church.

\textsuperscript{207} Hooper, \textit{Early Writings}, 375. See Appendix C.

\textsuperscript{208} Pill, \textit{English Reformation}, 173.

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., 186.
This reconciliation, which Mary thought would be an easy process, was anything but simple. Instead, it was the beginning of the period where 283 Protestant reformers would beinterrogated, some deprived of their clerical positions, and burned at the stake, earning the queen the moniker “Bloody Mary.” On all accounts, Hooper, for his reputation as a stalwart reformer and his status as a married bishop, was one of the first of these to be martyred for his beliefs. Hooper’s sixteen months of imprisonment and several interrogations from October 1553-February 1555 provide a rich resource of information from letters and interrogation records about the last months of the bishop. They tell of his suffering in prison, his attempts to be freed without sacrificing his religious beliefs, and his attempts to give others confidence in their own religious beliefs.

In March of 1554, Hooper was summoned to present his case before Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor under Mary, and others who sat as commissioners. Gardiner asked Hooper if he was married. When Hooper replied in the affirmative, Gardiner told him that his married state alone was enough to deprive him of his bishoprics. Hooper’s statement caused a tumult very short of a riot among the men present. Those present—George Day, bishop of Chichester; Cuthbert Tunstal, bishop of Durham; Edmund Bonner, bishop of London; Anthony Kitchin, bishop of Llandaff; as well as other unnamed members of Mary’s council—raised their voices in criticism against Hooper. Day called him a hypocrite; others called him a beast, making such a clamor that Gardiner could not discuss the reasons for clerical celibacy with Hooper. Gardiner said that Hooper obviously had not read the verdicts of the many Vatican counsels on the subject. Hooper replied that he had, saying that it was decreed at the council of Nicaea that a married minister would not be forced to put aside his wife. To this statement the commissioners were so incensed that they could not discuss it.

As a result of this discussion, Hooper was deprived of his bishoprics and sent to Fleet Prison in London. There he languished. Initially, he was given freedom to walk the grounds

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212 Ibid.
213 Ibid.
inside the prison, but after the warden made several complaints to Gardiner about Hooper’s behavior, he was confined to a cell. Hooper wrote that the warden did not attend to his needs, did not provide him with sufficient care for his ailing health, and repeatedly told Hooper that his death would be “good riddance.”

While Hooper was in prison, many of the Protestant reformers were invited to a disputation at either Cambridge or Oxford. In essence, they were invited to come to the universities to present and defend their religious beliefs. While several of the free Protestants decided to attend, those who were in prison at the time (Hooper included) discussed the situation and decided against attending a formal disputation, even though they were allowed to do so. On May 8, 1554, they composed a letter explaining their decision. They claimed that there were several reasons, including the inability to write or study in prison, which would make them more likely to make mistakes when questioned on details of scripture. They argued that the universities were against the true church anyway, and would not be conducive to real religious debate. More importantly, they suspected that they would not be able to reasonably and quietly share their beliefs and expound on them; rather, they would be silenced whenever they attempted to speak, and their words used against them and their Protestant causes. They said that the only way they would participate in any disputation would be by writing, so that they may confirm their statements and not have them misconstrued. Silence was one way that the reformers could prevent the spread of inaccurate information.

Hooper was mindful that he was not the only captive for religious causes, and on January 4, 1555, he wrote a letter to his fellow prisoners. He told them that he was sorry that

214 Ibid. Of his lodging, Hooper wrote that he had “nothing appointed to me for my bed but a little pad of straw, and a rotten covering with a tike a few feathers therein, the chamber being vile and stinking, until by God’s means good people sent me bedding to lie in. Of the one side of which prison is the sink and filth of the house, and on the other side the town ditch, so that the stench of the house hath infected me with sundry diseases. During which time I have been sick, the doors, bars, hasps, and chains being all closed, and made fast upon me. I have mourned, called and cried for help. But the warden when he hath known me many times ready to die, and when the poor men of the wards have called to help me, hath commanded the doors to be kept fast, and charged that none of his men should come at me, saying, ’Let him along, it were a good riddance of him.’ And among many other time, he did thus the 18th of October, 1553, as many can witness.”

215 Ibid., 1470.

216 Ibid., 1469.

217 Ibid., 1471.
they were put in prison, but he was glad to see them “bent in prayer,” continuing what he called God’s gospel while suffering for his truth. Hooper also used this as an opportunity to lambast the Catholics who enacted and enforced such cruelty. What saddened him the most was the jailers, however, men who were “so cruel, devilish, and tyrannical, to persecute the people of God for serving, saying, and hearing of the holy psalms and the word of eternal life. These cruel doings do declare that the papists’ church is more bloody and tyrannical than ever was the sword of the ethnics and gentiles.”

Hooper also wrote to his friends, encouraging them not to give up the fight for the Protestant cause. One of the letters was written on January 21, 1555. Of the changes to the church in England, he wrote about “the extremity the parliament had concluded upon concerning religion, suppressing the true, and setting forth the untrue; intending to cause all men by extremity to forswear themselves, and to take again for the head of the church him that is neither head nor member of it, but a very enemy.” Here, he argued that forcing men to follow the Roman Catholic Church was in effect placing an enemy as the head of the Anglican Church. He noted that the Marian government would use “force and extremity” to convince people to change, but he argued that this was a great opportunity for Protestants to show “whether we fear more God or man.” He admonished them not to “run away when it is most time to fight: remember that none shall be crowned but such as fight manfully; and he that endureth unto the end shall be saved.”

Hooper also wrote about his final impressions of his imprisonment in this letter. He said, “Imprisonment is painful; but yet liberty upon evil conditions is more painful. The prisons stink; but yet not so much as sweet houses where as the fear and true honour of God lacketh.” This is a far cry from his letters from months earlier, where he complained many times about his illness and treatment. The change in his demeanor in the last weeks before his

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219 Ibid., 615.
220 Ibid., 618.
221 Ibid.
222 Ibid.
death reflects a certain resolve, a determination that he would rather die than turn his back on his religion.

The next day, Hooper was taken from Fleet Prison to be examined by Gardiner once more. Gardiner beseeched Hooper to forsake his Protestant beliefs and acknowledge the Catholic Church and the pope as its head. Gardiner told him that those who recanted would receive “the pope’s blessing and the queen’s mercy.” Hooper replied that as long as the pope espoused and taught beliefs that were contrary, in Hooper’s opinion, to the doctrine of the true church, then Hooper would not consider the pope a member of the true church, much less its head. He implored the queen for forgiveness if he had offended her in any way, but maintained that he only wanted her mercy “if mercy may be had with safety of conscience, and without the displeasure of God.” Gardiner told Hooper that the queen would show no mercy to the enemies of the pope, and ordered him sent back to Fleet Prison.

Six days later, on January 28, Hooper was sent one final time to Southwark where Gardiner waited to question him again. Gardiner asked him again to renounce his heretical beliefs, but Hooper refused. Hooper knew that he would be one of the first to burn for his beliefs. While he was at the residence of Gardiner in Southwark, he met John Rogers, another cleric who had been charged with heresy and, like Hooper, sentenced to death. Hooper asked Rogers, “Must we two take this matter first in hand, and begin to fry these faggots?” Rogers was burned at Smithfield on February 4, 1555, but Hooper was not executed until February 9, because of the time needed to transport him to Gloucester. Gardiner recapitulated Mary’s offer of mercy upon Hooper’s recantation, but Hooper again declined. Thus, Hooper was formally charged with heresy, on the following counts: first, that “being a priest, and of a religious order, he had himself married, and openly maintained and taught the lawfulness of the marriage of the clergy;” second, that he sanctioned divorce; third, that he preached against transubstantiation. Hooper agreed to all these charges, offering to defend them, and again refused to recant. He was sent back to Southwark to reflect upon his future. But when

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223 Ibid., 1507.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid.
Gardiner discovered that Hooper had not changed overnight, condemned Hooper as a heretic and had him excommunicated. After his excommunication, Hooper was sent to the Clink, a prison near Southwark. But when it was feared that he might be rescued from there, he was returned to Newgate prison. There, Bishop Bonner and others tried to sway Hooper, but they were unsuccessful. Hooper was as resolute in his life as he would be in death, and was already in the process of accepting his fate.

**HOOPER’S LAST DAYS**

Hooper’s early premonition, wherein he told his friend Heinrich Bullinger that he would die in the fire, turned out to be correct. By February 1555, it was apparent to Hooper that he was going to be sentenced to death. Gone were the days of feeling bad over his treatment; instead, he focused his short time on giving instructions and comfort to his friends and colleagues. In his last days, he wrote three versions of a letter, arguing against claims that he was ignorant in religious matters and against rumors of his recantation.

As Hooper sat in prison, waiting for news of his death sentence, he wrote letters to his friends. On February 2 and 3, 1555, he wrote several copies of a particular letter, aiming to discredit rumors of his recantation and encourage fellow reformers to stay the course. One version was transcribed and published by Charles Nevinson in 1852, another version was published in the 1583 edition of John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*; the third version is available as an original in the British Library. Each version of the letter is slightly different and, while emphasizing the same overall message, the differences reflect changes made by Hooper to emphasize different issues. Specifically, he changes his position about his frustration about rumors that he had recanted, and the chances he might have had to be saved from execution.

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227 Ibid.

228 In Nevinson’s collection, for evidence of the letter, he cites the same edition of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* cited here, but it is clearly not the same version of the letter. Allowance can and should be made for mistakes or transposed words in transcription, but it is clearly not the same version. Whole sentences exist in Nevinson’s version that are not present in Foxe’s version. It is likely that Nevinson’s work cited incorrectly the edition of Acts and Monuments.
The first difference is in Hooper’s expression of concern and frustration over rumors of his recantation. Nevinson’s version of the letter is longest.²²⁹ Hooper wrote:

O Lord, how slippery the love of man, yea, man himself is! It were better for them to pray for us, rather than to credit or raise rumours that be untrue, unless they were more certain thereof than ever they shall be able to prove. We have enemies enough of such as know not God. Truly this report of weak brethren is a double trouble and a triple cross.²³⁰

The first sentence of this portion of the letter is not present in the other versions, and there exists much more discussion about the people who were giving him reports of such rumors. For example, in Foxe’s version, Hooper wrote, “It were better for them to pray for us, then to credit or report such rumors that be untrue. We have enemies enough of such as know not God truely. But yet the false report of weake brethren is a double crosse.”²³¹ The comparison of Nevinson’s version to Foxe’s version seems to show that Hooper was either trying to express less frustration about the rumors or possibly he was writing to one who had sent such a report to him.

There was another difference in his discussion of his alleged recantation. Nevinson’s and Foxe’s versions are very similar: “And ye that may, send to the weak brethren abroad, praying them that they trouble me not with such reports of recantation as they do.”²³² The version in the British Library is also similar, but changes “weak brethren” to “Christian brethren.”²³³ Clearly, the version in the British Library claims that those who send him such reports are not necessarily weak. This supports the conclusion reached in the paragraph above—that he may have been writing to some of the ones who had been giving him such reports.

The conclusion of his letter holds the final significant difference. Nevinson’s version and the British Library’s version are similar: “I wish you eternal salvation in Christ Jesus, and also require your continual prayer that he what hath begun in us, may save us in the

²²⁹ Hooper, Later Writings, 621-22. For the letter in its entirety as transcribed by Nevinson, see Appendix D.

²³⁰ Ibid., 622.

²³¹ Foxe, Acts and Monuments, 1508.

²³² Hooper, Later Writings, 622.

end.”\textsuperscript{234} This indicates that he might have maintained some hope of surviving his persecution and imprisonment. However, Foxe’s version exchanges “save us in the end” with “continue it to the end.”\textsuperscript{235} It may be that in this version of the letter, Hooper’s intended recipient was someone he felt he could admit his acceptance of his given fate. Or, it could be that this version was written first or last, reflecting a change of mind. It could also be an intentional change made by Foxe to present Hooper as more courageous.

On February 4, the day after he wrote this letter, Hooper was sentenced to death by burning.\textsuperscript{236} Mary I had judged him to be “a most obstinate false detestible heretic.”\textsuperscript{237} He was told that he would be sent to Gloucester for his execution, and he remarked that he was happy to be doing so because he would die “amongst his own flock.”\textsuperscript{238} Mary said, that because Hooper had persisted in teaching his “horrific doctrine” and “hath refused mercy when it was graciously offered,” he would “be put to execution in the said city of Gloucester for the example and terrors of others.”\textsuperscript{239} He spent the night in Newgate Prison in London, and the next morning, the queen’s guards arrived to take him to Gloucester. When they got within a mile of the town, there were many people there to lament his case; so much so that the guards feared the people might take Hooper from them.\textsuperscript{240}

The next morning, Hooper was taken to the site of his execution. He was dressed in a gown given by his hosts, and used a staff for support. Although the people surrounded him as he walked, he was told sternly that he must not speak. Mary had ordered, “that the said Hooper be neither at the time of his execution nor in going to the place suffered to speak at large but thither to be led quietly and in silence.”\textsuperscript{241} Just before he reached the field, he stopped to pray. Then he declared that he was ready and climbed up to the stake. The guards

\textsuperscript{234} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{235} Foxe, \textit{Acts and Monuments}, 1508.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid., 1507.
\textsuperscript{238} Foxe, \textit{Acts and Monuments}, 1508.
\textsuperscript{239} BL Cotton Cleopatra EV, f. 412.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{241} BL Cotton Cleopatra EV, f. 412.
tied his arms and body so that he could not escape, and gave him small pouches filled with gunpowder to put under his arms and between his legs, to encourage a quicker death.

But if anything, John Hooper’s execution on February 9 was not quick. By Foxe’s account, it was long and drawn-out. The sticks used to burn him were green and, when lit, produced a lot of smoke but very little fire. The first fire blew out and another had to be lit. The second blew out and, this time, Hooper himself asked, “For God’s love, good people, let me have more fire!” The third fire stayed lit, and Hooper’s last words were those of prayer: “Lord Jesus have mercy upon me; Lord Jesus have mercy upon me; Lord Jesus receive my spirit.” Then, when his mouth was blackened and his tongue too swollen for speech, he beat his hands against his chest until one of his arms fell off; he kept knocking with the other until the skin and fat and blood had burned away, leaving only bone. He knocked until he had no other strength, and after forty-five minutes, gave up the ghost.

Certainly Hooper’s death was not the end of Protestant dissent. However, his death represented the beginning of the end of a particular stage of the Protestant Reformation. Dudley, who had supported Hooper’s appointment as bishop, was executed for treason early in Mary’s reign. Cranmer, with whom Hooper had argued for a year over clerical vestments, died by burning about a year after Hooper did. Most of Hooper’s contemporaries were dead by the end of Mary’s reign, either by old age or infirmity or the fire. The debates that Hooper had participated in over human nature, clerical marriage, and transubstantiation would continue, but by different men and with different consequences.


243 Ibid.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The disagreement over human nature ended as the major dividing line between these Protestants and Catholics, particularly in relation to clerical marriage. Joye and Ponet followed Barnes in his assertion that marriage was a natural institution, ordained by God for all men, not excluding priests. Joye and Ponet went further than Barnes, however, in their exposition of clerical marriage as a matter of human nature. It was natural to expect men to wish to get married and have children, they argued. As such, they claimed that clerical celibacy was an unnatural institution designed by wicked men in the medieval Roman Catholic Church. The vows of chastity that the Church convinced young men to make were unnatural and unrealistic, they said. Ponet postulated that this was for the Church’s economic benefit, instead of the spiritual advantage of the clerics who made such vows.

Hooper extended Joye’s and Ponet’s arguments, saying that human nature was effectively a natural law designed by God. God’s law, Hooper claimed, could not be violated by men if they were doing what they were designed to do. After all, he wrote, Jesus Christ was born as a man with human nature, and God would not have done so if human nature had been inherently evil. He applied his beliefs to marriage, demonstrating that he too believed marriage was a natural institution that should be available to all men.

In contrast, Stephen Gardiner did not believe that human nature made vows of chastity impossible. He supported the Roman Catholic position in this debate, arguing that God had given men free will. He claimed that clerical celibacy was a commandment of God, and therefore could not be impossible to maintain. Those who found it difficult, he said, would seek God’s help as it was intended for them to do. In essence, he believed that men could subjugate their human nature, even their own religious beliefs, to control by themselves, the Church or the state. His beliefs in this reflected his lawyer’s approach to ideology and politics, wherein he held that nothing—human nature or personal belief—should get in the way of unfailing service to one’s ruler. Those who argued against it, he said, were not utilizing the free will God had given them to control themselves and their behavior.
Considering that Gardiner died not long after Hooper in 1555, he was only involved in the interrogation and execution of a few of those Protestant reformers executed under Mary. Still, he remains one of the most significant players in the early Protestant reformation, particularly the Catholic backlash under Mary. His single-minded interrogations and her determination to eradicate every last vestige of Protestantism in England drove most Protestants underground or out of the country. There, they spent their time waiting and hoping that a Protestant would again take the throne. In late 1558, they got their wish in Mary’s half-sister Elizabeth.

The social, political and ideological controversies that were common during the mid-Tudor period would continue to a lesser extent in Elizabeth’s reign. As would her sister Mary, Elizabeth would never truly feel safe on her throne with the threat of a religious uprising. As Mary did with Protestant revolts, Elizabeth was able to crush occasional Catholic uprisings and remain on the throne. As Protestants did under Mary, Catholics under Elizabeth were effectively driven underground, especially after 1588.244 Ideological controversy changed from Catholic vs. Protestant to the various Protestant sects, as competing Protestant ideologies became more separate and defined. Political controversy involved other matters, including alliances with other countries related to Elizabeth’s marriage and threats from Catholic countries such as Spain.

Clerical marriage continued to be controversial throughout Elizabeth’s reign, but at a much different level. Elizabeth held a notorious reticence to the idea of marriage for anyone, much less the clergy. But she was pressed to make priests’ marriage legal once again, and she did in 1559, very shortly after her accession.245 Elizabeth’s reign led to a major change in discourse about ideology. Elizabeth was not in favor of clerical marriage, which reflected her general, negative attitude about marriage in general. Despite her own opinions, it was certainly much safer to discuss it during her reign than Mary’s.246 Many men would write treatises in favor of it during Elizabeth’s reign, as Elizabethan Archbishop of Canterbury

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244 MacCulloch, *Later Reformation*, 146.
Matthew Parker did in 1567.247 Parker was another Cambridge contemporary of Joye, Hooper, and Gardiner, who rose to power rather later.248 But by then, the consequences of such opinions were far less significant. In the mid-1550s, along with the early reformers and their opponents, major controversy simply faded away. There would be Catholic uprisings during Elizabeth’s reign, but they were all unsuccessful, and indeed it could be argued that most or all of them were doomed to fail. Never again would England suffer such a radical change in religious dogma as was experienced during Edward’s and Mary’s reigns.

247 Ibid., 347.
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APPENDIX A

A BRIEF CONFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, 1550
A BRIEF AND CLEAR CONFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, 1550

Article 63. I believe that the holy sacrament of the supper is an holy and outward ceremony, instituted by Jesus Christ in the gospel a day before his death, in the nature and substance of bread and wine, in remembrance and for a memorial of his death and passion, having and containing in it a promise of the remission of sins. By this sacrament we are indeed made partakers of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and be therewith nourished and bed in the house of the Lord, which is his church, after that into the same we are entered through baptism. The same ought to be given and ministered to all under both the kinds, according to the ordinance and commandments of Christ, for the altering whereof none ought to be so hard as to attempt any thing.²⁴⁹

₂⁴⁹ Hooper, Later Writings, 47-8.

Article 64. I believe that in this holy sacrament these signs or badges are not changed in any point, but the same do remain wholly in their nature: that is to say, the bread is not changed and transubstantiation (as the fond papists and false doctors do teach, deceiving the poor people) into the body of Jesus Christ, neither is the wine transubstantiated into his blood; but the bread remaineth still bread, and the wine remaineth still wine, every one in his proper and first nature. For the words that Christ spake to his disciples in giving them the bread, saying, “This is my body,” I understand and believe to be spoken by a figurative manner of speech, called metonomia, which is a manner of speaking very common in the scriptures; as the same was understood [sic] and also declared by the writings of the holy
fathers and doctors of the church, Irenæus, Cyprian, Tertullian, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, and other like, which lived before the council of Lateran, where it was concluded that the bread was transubstantiated into the body of Christ, and the wine into his blood; and then was it given forth for an article of our faith, to the great dishonor of God, and to the great slander of all the church. And it was done in the year of our Lord 1050, by pope Leo the Ninth: in the which time the devil was unbound, as it was prophesied of in the Apocalypse, and troubled the church of Christ more than ever he did before.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ Nevinson, 48.
APPENDIX B

A BRIEF AND CLEAR CONFESSION OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH, 1550
A BRIEF AND CLEAR CONFESSION OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH, 1550

Article 82. I believe and confess that marriage is an honourable estate amongst all men, and the bed undefiled is holy and ought not to be broken. It is instituted and ordained of God for the bringing forth of children, and to eschew fornication; from the which estate of marriage none ought, nor can be restrained, if there be no just and lawful let by the word of God; but the same ought to be free to everybody, of what estate, sort, or condition soever the same be of: for it is much better to marry than to burn; and for that cause all, whatsoever they be, men or women, which have not the gift to live unmarried, ought to marry, to the intent the temple of the Holy Ghost, that is to say, our bodies, may not be polluted and defiled.  

Article 83. I believe also that the forbidding of marriage for certain persons, likewise the forbidding of certain meats, the difference of days, garments, and such-like, is the devilish doctrine of Antichrist, and wholly against the christian liberty of the gospel taught by Jesus Christ, the which delivereth us from all outward ceremonies of the law, and setteth us at liberty to use all things with giving God thanks, so that it be not done to the hurt of our neighbour. For all things are made holy by the word of God and prayer to him that knoweth and receiveth the truth. Therefore to compel the Christians to these things is but to take from them and to rob them of their christian liberty, and by tyranny to set them under the curse of

251 Nevinson, 55.
the law, from the which Christ by his death and passion hath delivered them: and it is one true mark and note to know Antichrist by.\textsuperscript{252}

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid, 56.
APPENDIX C

A DECLARATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, 1550
A DECLARATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Commandment 7. No man should continue in a sole life, but such as hath no need of matrimony, following the world of God and the ordinance of man’s nature, according to the examples of the patriarchs, prophets, and the apostles; which were not excluded from matrimony, although they were ministers of the church; nor never made law to exclude their successors, but reciteth the matrimony of the ministers among the virtues and necessary gifts that is required in the minister, 1 Tim. iii., Tit. i., and calleth the prohibition of matrimony the doctrine of the devil: the which the iniquity of our doctors, that defend with sword and fire the sole life of the ministers, would put from them unto the old heretics the Tatians, who forbid matrimony to all men.253

253 Hooper, Early Writings, 375.
APPENDIX D

LETTER FROM JOHN HOOPER, DATED
FEBRUARY 2, 1555
LETTER FROM JOHN HOOPER, DATED
FEBRUARY 2, 1555

The peace and favor of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all them that unfeignedly look for
the coming of our Savior Christ. Amen. Dear brethren and sisters in our Lord, and my fellow-
prisoners for the cause of God’s gospel, I do rejoice and give thanks unto God for your constancy
and perseverance in affliction, wishing and praying unto him for your continuance therein to the
end. And as I do rejoice in your faithful and constant afflictions that be in prison, even so I do
mourn and lament to hear of our dear brethren abroad, that yet have not suffered nor felt such
dangers for God’s truth as we have and do feel, and are like daily to suffer more, yea, the very
extreme death of the fire: yet such is the report abroad (as I am credibly informed), that I, John
Hooper, a condemned man for the cause of Christ, now after sentence of death (being in
Newgate prisoner, looking daily for execution) should recant and abjure that heretofore I have
preached. And this talk riseth of this, that the bishop of London and his chaplains resort unto me.
Doubtless, if our brethren were as godly as I could wish them to be, they would think that, in
case I did refuse to talk with them, they might have just occasion to say that I were unlearned,
and durst not speak with learned men; or else proud, and disdainful to speak with them.
Therefore, to avoid just suspicion of both, I have and do daily speak with them when they come,
not doubting but they will report that I am neither proud nor unlearned. And I would wish all
men to do as I do in this point. For I fear not neither their arguments, neither is death terrible
unto me. Wherefore I pray you to make true report of the same, as occasion shall serve; and also
that I am more confirmed in the truth that I have preached heretofore by their communication.
And ye that may, send to the weak brethren abroad, praying them that they trouble me not with
such report of recantation as they do. For I have hitherto left all things of this world, and suffered
great pains and long imprisonment; and I thank God I am ready even as gladly to suffer death for
the truth I have preached as a mortal man may be. O Lord, how slippery the love of man, yea,
man himself is! It were better for them to pray for us, rather than to credit or raise rumours that
be untrue, unless they were more certain thereof than ever they shall be able to prove. We have
enemies enough of such as know not God. Truly this report of weak brethren is a double trouble
and a triple cross. I do wish you eternal salvation in Christ Jesu, and also require your continual
prayer, that he which hath begun in us, may save us to the end. I have taught this truth with my
tongue and pen heretofore, and hereafter shortly will confirm by God’s grace the same with my
blood. Pray for me, gentle brethren, and have no mistrust. From Newgate, 2d. February.254

Your brother,

John Hooper

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254 Hooper, Later Writings, 621-22.