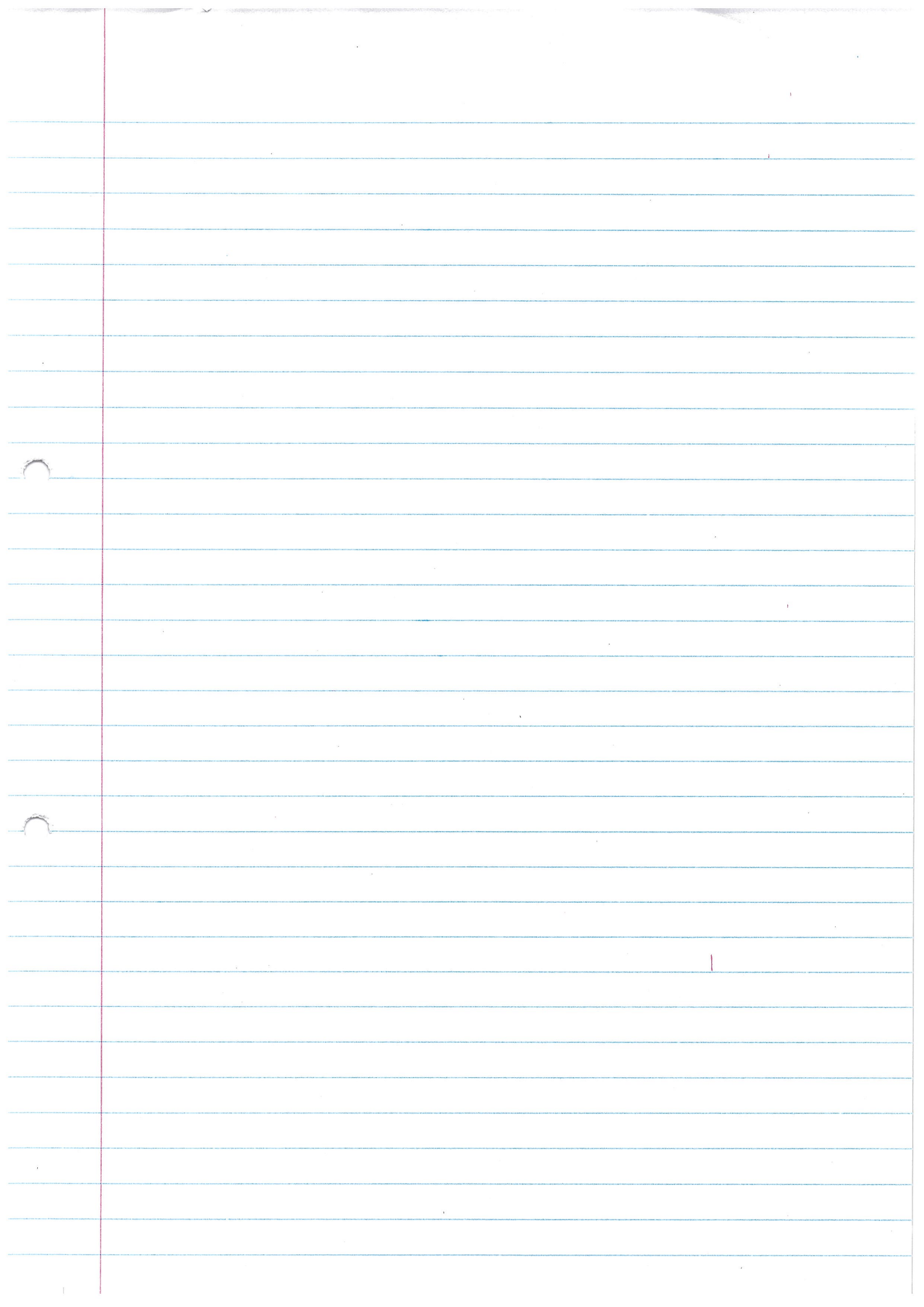


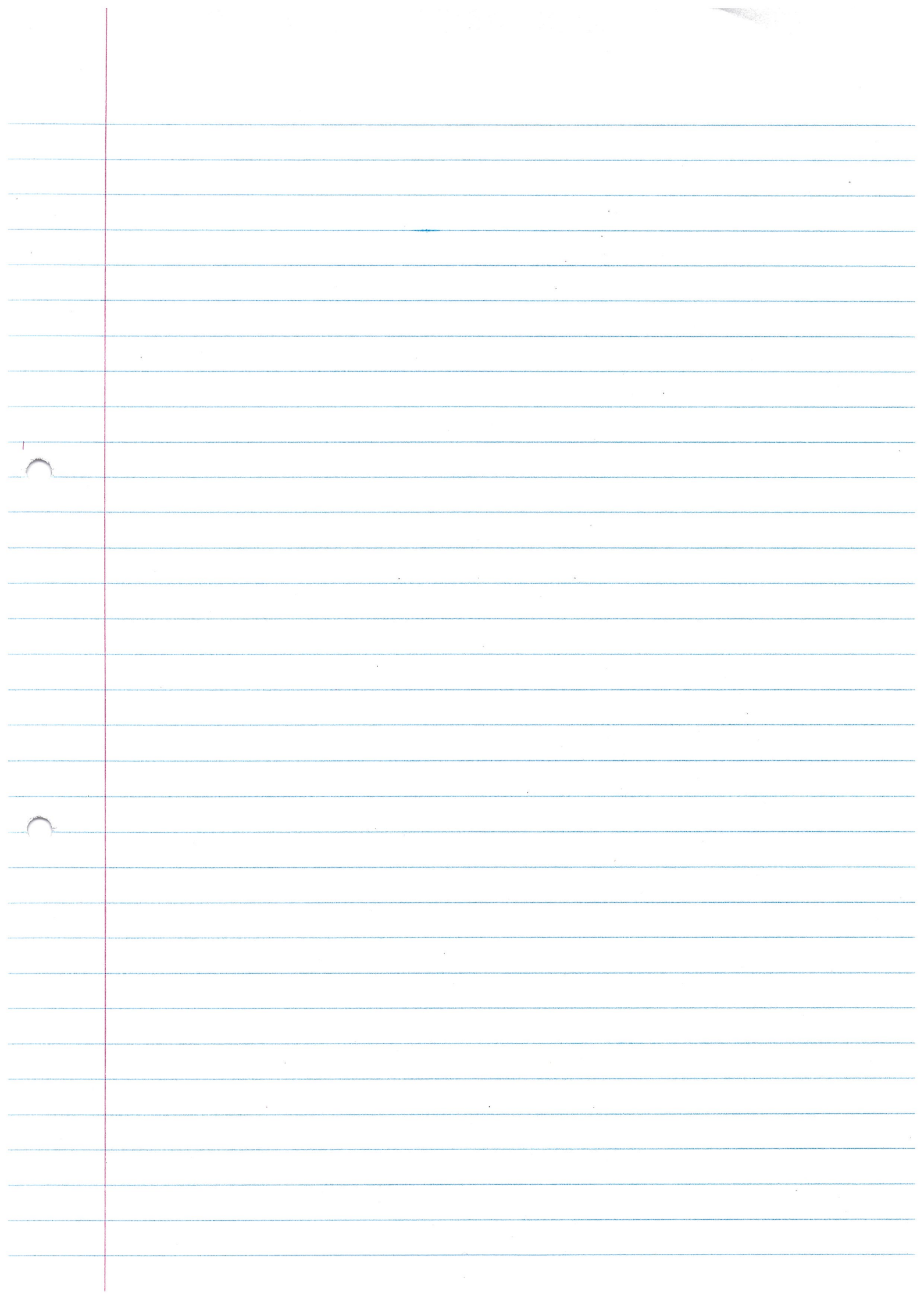
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Religion 2.

How Radical were the Religious  
Changes under Northumberland?

Dicken & Fellows 126-8





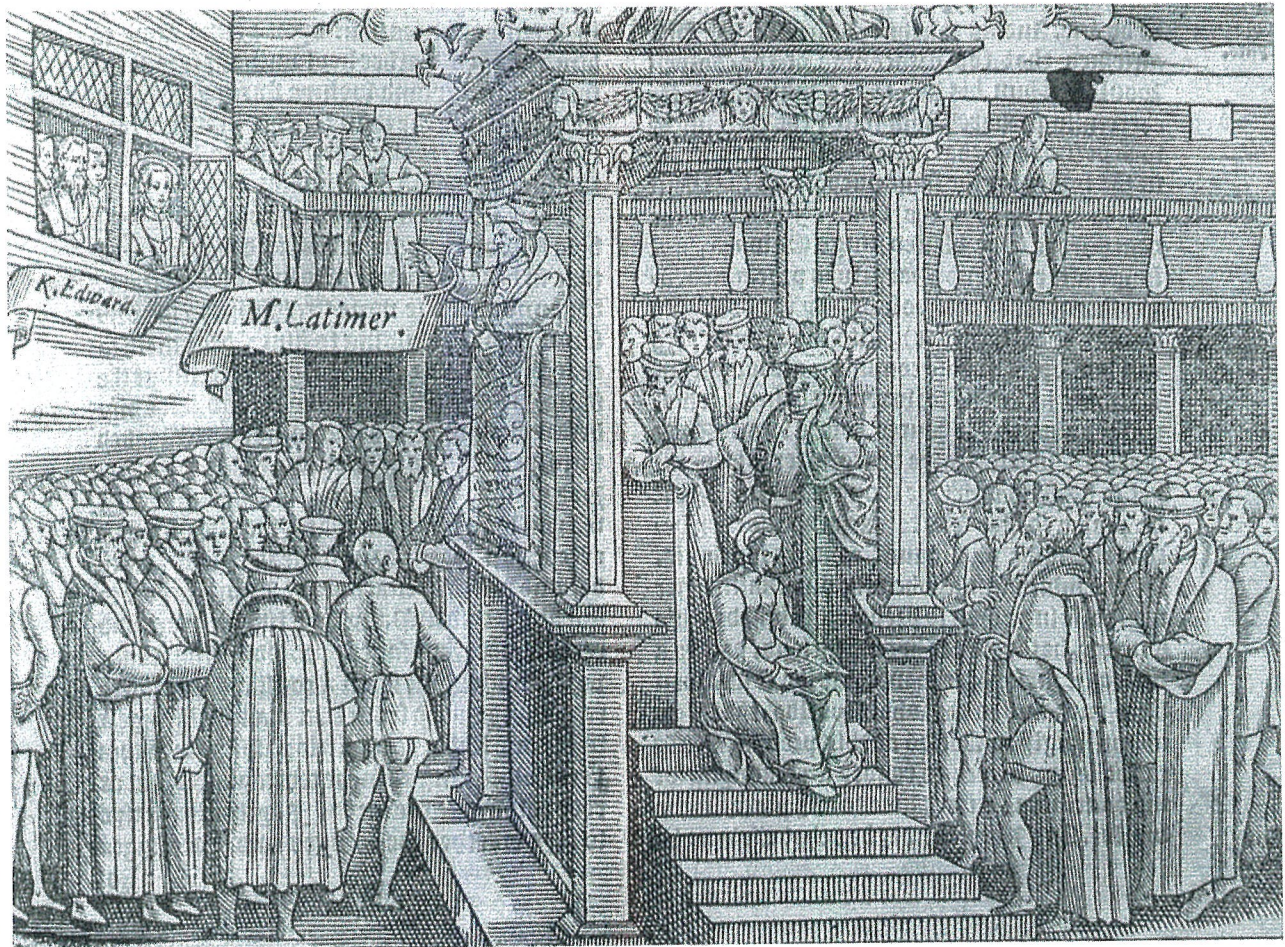


Fig. 10 Latimer, who was burnt as a heretic during the reign of Mary I, was the most highly regarded Protestant preacher during Edward VI's reign. This woodcut is taken from the first edition of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs' published in 1563

Northumberland himself has often been seen as a man of few, if any, religious convictions. However, both his recent biographer David Loades and Diarmaid MacCulloch are convinced that he had been leaning towards the evangelical Protestant cause since about 1532, although they both suspect that Cranmer was correct in being suspicious of his lurch towards radicalism in 1552. Northumberland's Protestantism was unmistakable from February 1550 when he outmanoeuvred the conservatives on the Privy Council, arranged for the appointment of known Protestants to the Council and secured the dismissal of Southampton and Arundel.

Northumberland had a twofold strategy in relation to the Church: he wished to continue the Protestant reforms initiated by Somerset and he sought to plunder some of its wealth. Moreover, the wider political context helped to shape a more radical approach to Protestantism than might have been expected of a political figure like Northumberland, who had seemed hitherto to be fairly cautious in religious matters. This reflected the influence of senior clergy such as Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, and the pressure exerted by more radical figures such as John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, who became quite close to Northumberland. Most importantly, however, according to Diarmaid MacCulloch, it reflected the increasing influence, as the reign progressed, of Edward VI on the policy-making process. The King took very seriously his appointed role as the new Josiah, the young king who would destroy idolatry, which he and his religious advisers identified with the remnants of Catholicism.

## Key profiles

### Nicholas Ridley

Nicholas Ridley (c.1500–55) was a Cambridge-educated reformer. He was a chaplain to Henry VIII and quickly emerged as a prominent reformer early in Edward VI's reign. He was successively bishop of Rochester and of London, and was burnt as a heretic during Mary's reign.

### John Hooper

John Hooper (c.1495–1555) was the most radical of the bishops of Edward VI's reign. He spent much of 1540s in some of the centres of continental Protestantism, and did not return to England until 1549, when he was appointed chaplain to Somerset. He managed successfully to transfer his allegiance to Northumberland, to whom he also became chaplain. He was appointed Bishop of Gloucester, and quickly showed his radicalism by criticising the rules on clerical dress. He was burnt as a heretic during Mary's reign.

This led to what Eamon Duffy has described as a 'flood-tide of radicalism'. There was widespread removal of altars and their replacement by communion tables. (Altars had been condemned in a sermon by Hooper.) After an initiative taken by reforming bishops such as Ridley and William Barlow (Bath and Wells) to get rid of them, the policy was confirmed by Privy Council order in November 1550. The conservative George Day, Bishop of Chichester, refused to order their removal in his diocese and was imprisoned in the Tower for his pains. This was followed by the removal of conservative bishops and their replacement by active Protestants.

### Did you know?

Religious reformers often looked for precedents from the Bible to justify their views. The Book of Kings in the Old Testament relates how Josiah became King of Judah at the age of eight and was noted for his destruction of pagan gods and idols. Reformers drew the parallel with Edward VI, another boy king who, in their minds, would destroy the idolatry of Catholicism.

It is in this context of increasing radicalism that the passing in 1552 of a new Act of Uniformity, which required the consequent publication of a revised Book of Common Prayer, needs to be placed. The political will of the King, Cranmer's own theological shift, the influence of more radical churchmen like Ridley and Hooper and the criticisms of the 1549 prayer book by eminent foreign reformers such as Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, who were working in England, all contributed to this process which, according to Christopher Haigh, 'broke decisively with the past'.

**Table 2** *Changes introduced by the revised Book of Common Prayer, 1552*

Key change	Reason for change	Significance of change
Removal of remaining 'conservative' ceremonies	No longer fitted in with the regime's religious radicalism	Conservatives could no longer find anything in the prayer book which they could accept
Rewriting of baptism, confirmation and burial services	To make services more easily understood by congregations	Showed Cranmer's desire to see greater simplicity in church services
Radical reform of communion service, including replacement of wafer by ordinary bread	Need for decisive change from ambiguity of 1549 prayer book	Showed influence of Zwinglianism in the Eucharistic declaration: 'Do this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee'
Ban on use of 'popish' vestments	Seen as objects of 'superstition'	Simpler clerical vestments were seen as more in keeping with the simpler approach to sermons
Restriction on use of church music	Moderate Protestants thought that church music hindered religious understanding; radical opinion considered it idolatrous	A simpler approach to music marked the emphasis on greater simplicity in church services

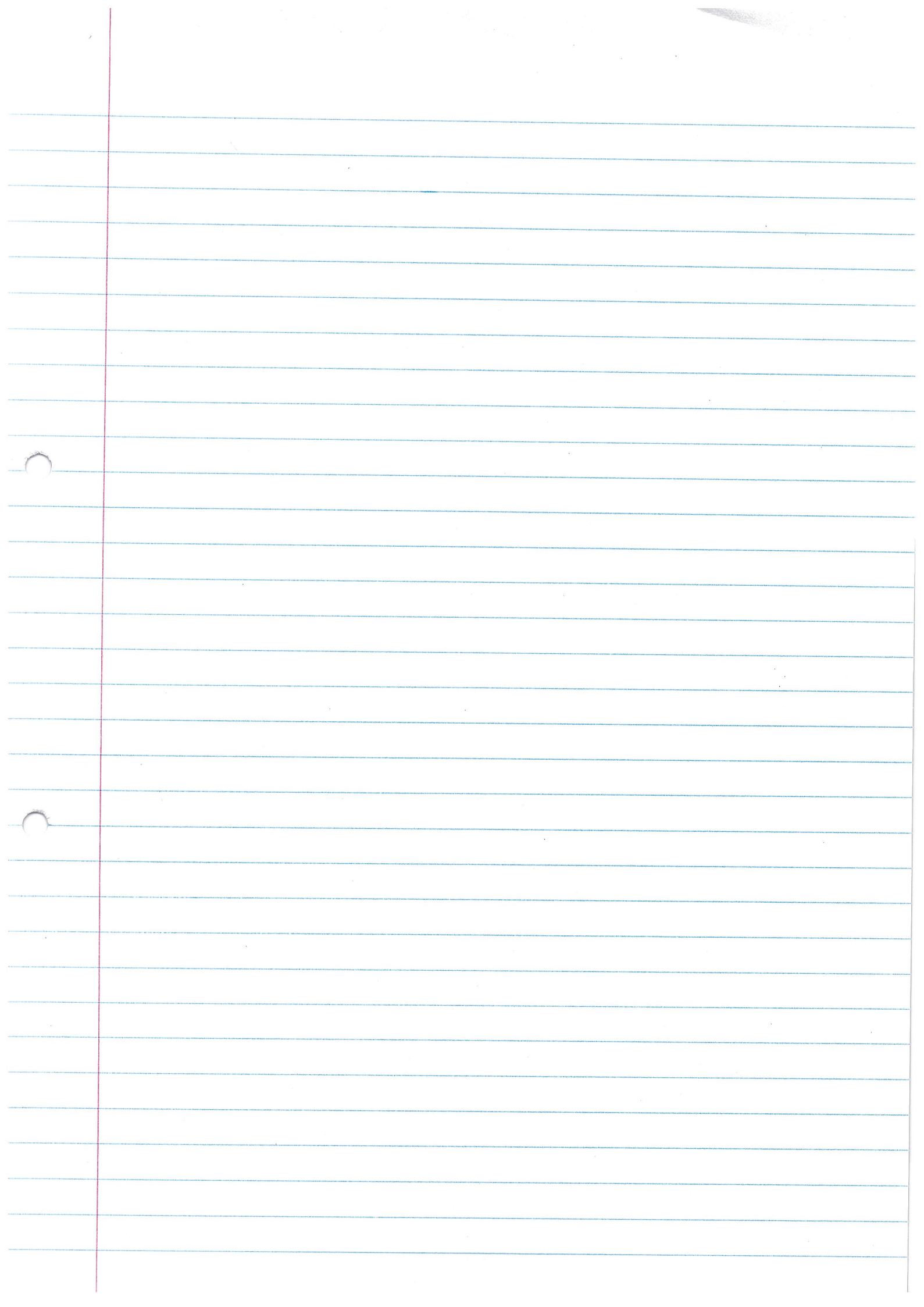
The firmly Protestant nature of official doctrine was confirmed in the Forty-Two Articles of Religion, although they did leave some ambiguity between competing varieties of Protestantism.

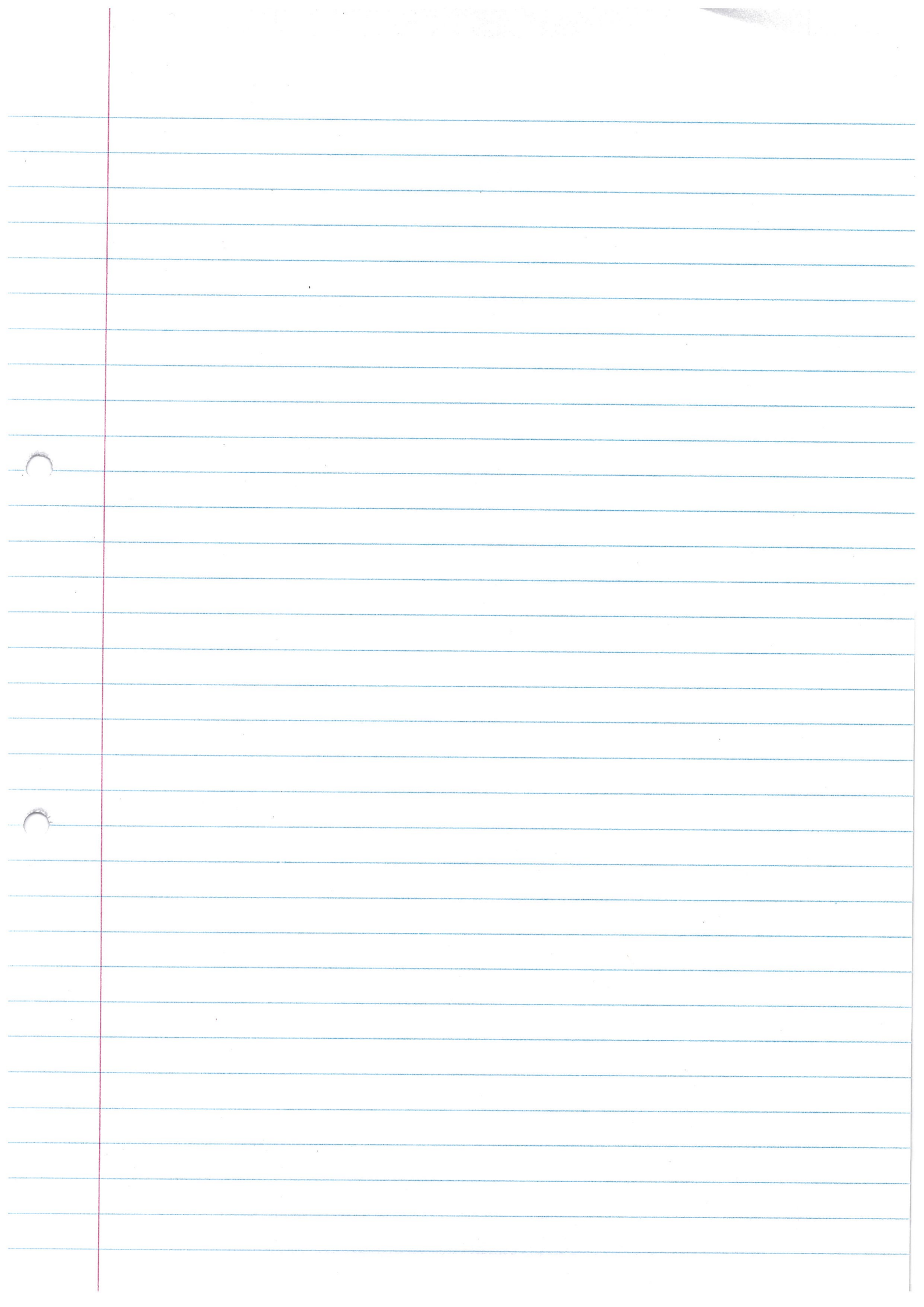
In addition, the Crown, still in financial difficulties after the ruinous expenditure of the Protectorate, pursued a systematic policy of extracting wealth from the Church through the plundering of the property of bishoprics. For example, the dioceses of Gloucester and Worcester were combined, with two-thirds of the Worcester estate going to the Crown, the bishops of Exeter and Winchester made substantial 'grants' from their property to the Crown and there was a plan, never implemented, to divide the bishopric of Durham and to appropriate much of its wealth to the Crown.

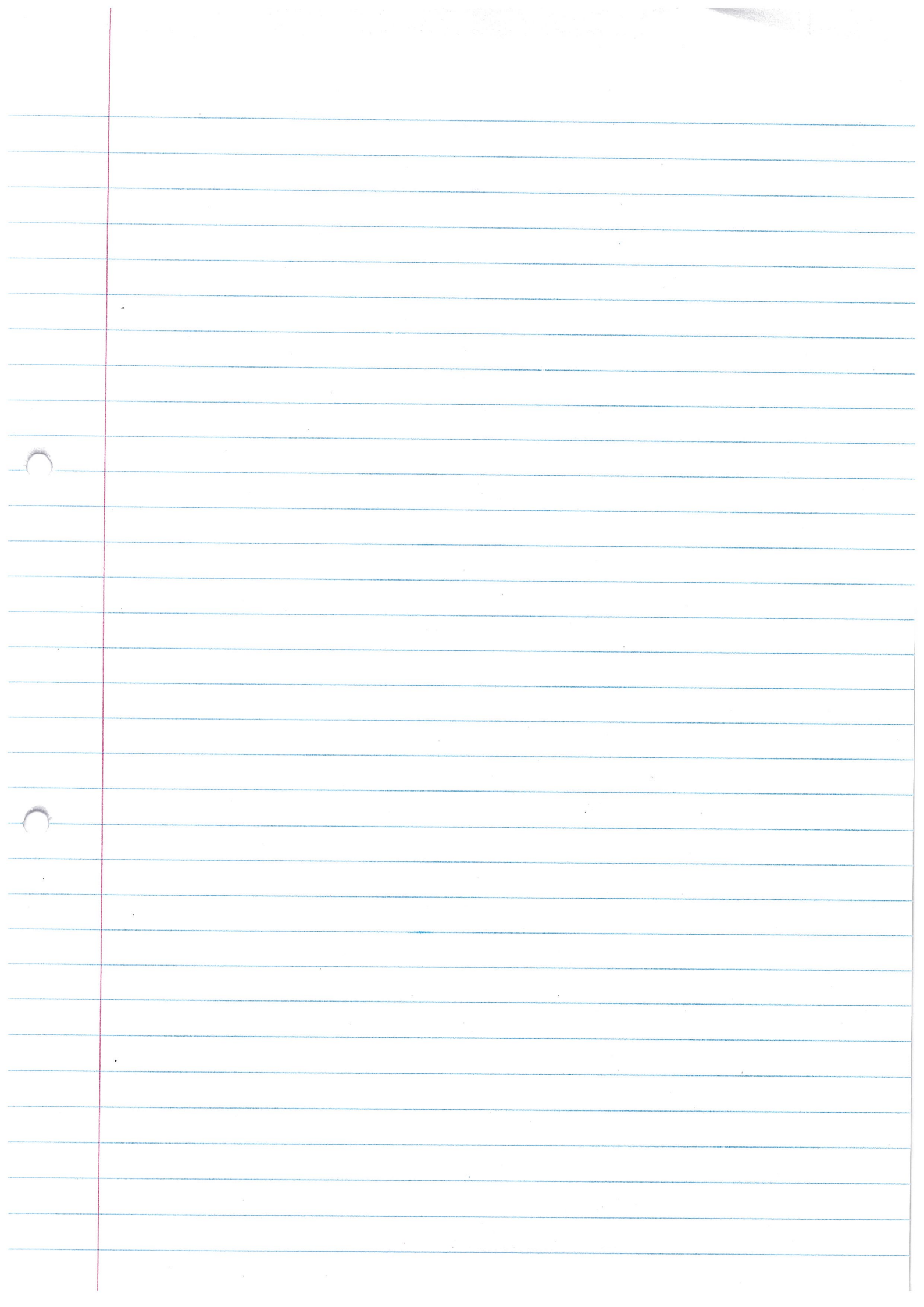
### Exploring the detail

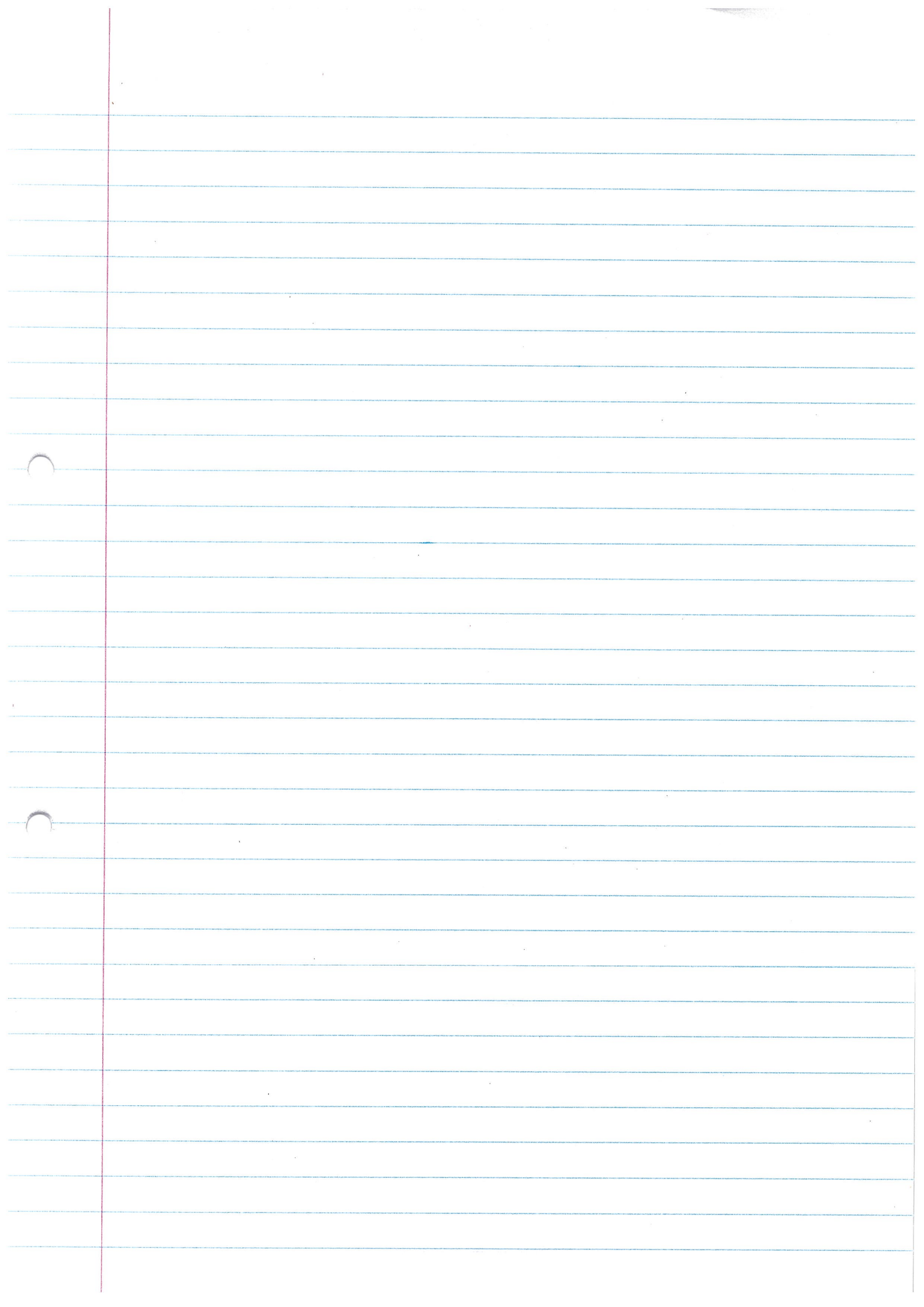
#### The Forty-Two Articles of Religion

The Forty-Two Articles were issued by Archbishop Cranmer in June 1552 and defined the essentials of the faith of the Church of England. As such, they reflected the influence on Cranmer of the Swiss reformers Zwingli and Bullinger. They confirmed the firmly reformed path along which the Church had headed in Edward VI's reign. However, the King's death within a few weeks of their issue meant that they were never implemented. A revised and more moderate version, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, was adopted in Elizabeth's reign.









SHP  $(213-215) + (218-221)$  Really important key individuals

