**Alternatives to Christianity**

***Lollardy***

A small minority such as Lollardy were critical of the Church. They were founded by John Wycliffe and emerged in the 2nd half of the 14th Century.

They favoured translation of the bible into English. They were critical about transubstantiation and the principles of the Eucharist as well as thinking that the Catholic Church were corrupt. Lollardy also rejected the special status of priesthood.

Although Lollard views were considered heresy, they still persisted in South England especially South Buckinghamshire and Newbury.

However, popularity declined after the failed 1414 Lollard uprising. They were then fewer in member, less intellectually coherent and more geographically restricted.

***Anticlericalism***

The burning of heretics was put into law in 1401 but relatively few were affected.

Some assume that anticlericalism was widespread in late medieval England but this assumption was challenged by historians like Christopher Haigh. He argued that the outbursts of anticlericalism were rare, politically motivated and that many numbers of candidates for the priesthood remained, showing they still had support of the laity (non-members of the religious order).

***Humanism***

This emerged due to the development of the Renaissance and was founded on the rediscovery of Latin and Greek texts. They wanted to establish the reliability of Latin and Greek texts to purify the religious texts. Humanists were also believers in the Catholic faith, especially free will.

William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre were the earliest humanist scholars and had experienced humanist approaches to Classics in Florence in the late 1480s.

John Colet was also an influential educator and saw humanist approaches as a means of reforming the Church. His most important ally was Dutch Sailor Erasmus who wanted to emphasise education and reject the Church’s traditional ceremonies. His friendship with Thomas More gave a huge boost to humanist ideas in the early part of Henry VIII’s reign.

In Henry VIII’s reign, humanism and the renaissance made little impressions on England because it continued to be dominated by traditional medieval scholastic philosophy which humanists considered too formal and old fashioned.