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Whoever you are, wherever you come from, welcome! in Rocky Mount

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## Church of England

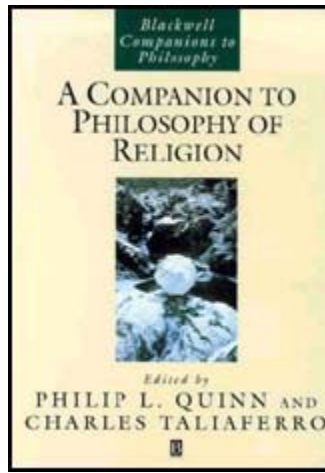


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At the beginning of the 19th century the Church of England was the official established church of the nation. [Nonconformists](#), [Roman Catholics](#) and members of the [Jewish Church](#) all suffered from legal discrimination. Members of these religious groups were unable to hold civil or military office. Nor were they able to be awarded degrees from [Oxford](#) and [Cambridge](#) universities. As both the [House of Commons](#) and the [House of Lords](#) only admitted Anglicans, members of other churches found it impossible to persuade Parliament to introduce laws that would guarantee religious liberty.

Anglicans lost their monopoly of public office after the repeal of the [Test and Corporation Act](#) in 1828. Eight years later, the Prime Minister, [Robert Peel](#), set up an Ecclesiastical Commission to propose reforms to the Church of England. The result was an Act of Parliament that reshaped some dioceses and distributed bishops' incomes more equitably. Other reforms followed including the abolition of sinecures and non-residence among the clergy.

The religious census of 1851 showed that non-Anglicans had more chapels and active members than the Church of England. The census also revealed that 42% of the population attended no church at all. By the 1880s church non-attenders were in the majority. Although Anglicanism remained strong in the rural areas, people living in the fast growing industrial towns and cities were more likely to be members of [Nonconformist](#) churches.



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