For almost fifteen hundred years after Theodosius proclaimed Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire, the principle of church establishment was generally accepted as a necessary part of the natural order of society. This assumption was challenged by certain Protestant sects during and after the Reformation, but these groups were such feeble minorities that even in the Protestant states of western Europe church establishment was still accepted as an essential of any constitution. In England the Henrician Reformation at first amounted to no mor...