

“democratic” church leadership and government as opposed to the historic and scriptural pre-eminence of the Catholic hierarchy. *With more plausibility that the High Church Anglican but still confusedly, the Low Church Anglican tries to justify his position by appealing to the Book of Common Prayer.* The mutual appeal of two diametrically opposed opposites to one and the same norm of doctrine, discipline and worship demonstrates the unsubstantial nature of their basic assumption.

A small group of Catholic minded Anglicans carries on a more or less active agitation for the historic truth of the Papal claims and the necessity of a return of Anglicanism to its former home in the Mystical Body of Christ; i.e., to loving and obedient communion with the Holy Apostolic See of Rome.

As Catholics, we have a deep regard for these many misguided men and women of good will who profess faith in our Lord and His Church but who have been deceived into accepting a warped picture of that Church. Our comprehension of the Pauline doctrine of the Mystical Body, together with our conviction that the keystone of Christianity is Caritas (i.e., Love or charity) makes it imperative that our dealings with them be guided by a Christ-like love and patience. They constitute a portion of those “other sheep” so dear to Christ, whom He has said that He must gather into the “One Fold” of the one true Church, under the loving care of the “One Shepherd”. Our task is to show them that the earthly Shepherd is none other than the Vicar of the Heavenly Shepherd: the present-day successor of the Apostolic

Rock, upon the lasting and unswerving solidity of which our Lord told us that He had built His Universal Church, which Saint Paul instructs us “is His Body”. We must never forget that the one question at issue between Anglicans and ourselves is the scriptural and historic validity of the claim of the Pope of Rome to exercise universal leadership and authority in the earthly portion of the Mystical Body. This claim we know to be Christian truth, and to the support of truth, at all costs, we are sworn.

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Pamphlet 387

## **Anglicanism**

Theodore C. P. Vermilye.



**King Henry VIII**  
**1491-1547**

The Anglicanism of today is the crystallization of a series of historic compromises between mutually exclusive ideals and systems. The net result is a distillation of confused concepts, presenting widely differing aspects from time to time and from place to place, and almost defying exact definition. The Anglican Communion is a loosely knit confederation of international bodies., which recognizes no central authority in matters of doctrine, discipline and worship but which has taken on a distinctive character over the years and may thereby be recognized. It embraces the Established Church of England, the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Church of England in Ireland, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, the Church of England in Canada and many other organizations,

each independent of the others but recognizing their ministries and maintaining inter-communion with each other. It is the uneasy religious home of persons of widely differing beliefs and practices, so that the utmost confusion exists within its borders. In the important categories of doctrine, discipline and worship its members occupy positions so far apart and so diversified that their possible classifications are numerous. They range from pro-Papacy on the right to the near-Unitarian on the left.

Anglicanism is a half way point between Catholicism and Protestantism, sharing some of the characteristics of each while lacking the essentials of either. Because it is wholly subject to the will of the state it admits no supreme authority of a purely spiritual nature and subordinates the ecclesiastical to the secular, the ideal to the pragmatic; exalts expedience over principle. To those of its members who are seriously concerned with religious matters it never is entirely satisfactory in theory or in practice, and to them it fails to bring peace of mind and soul. Many Anglicans are sympathetic toward Catholicism, many toward Protestantism. Both of these groups feel that the official position of the Anglican Church is "off center" because it cannot be clearly labeled as native to Catholicism or Protestantism. Their nominal guides, from whom they have every right to expect clear and definitive decisions, speak with muted voices and deliver a wide variety of opinions.

Henry VIII was a typical Prince of the Renaissance, rapacious, luxurious and licentious. His lust for power, increasing as

he grew older, led to his conviction that he was the anointed instrument of God, released from obedience to the divine law of the Church and the human law of the State. His selfishness, pride and greed led him on until he had made himself the unopposed autocrat of the English State and the officially proclaimed "Head on earth of the English Church". In complete disregard of the facts of fifteen hundred years of ecclesiastical history, he repudiated the primacy and supremacy of the Holy See of Rome, denying that spiritual leadership and guidance which had been the God-given characteristic of that See since the days of Saint Peter. He officially "abolished" the historical status and rights of the Papacy within his realm; he presumed to invest the Crown with those rights, in other words to make himself the Pope of England. By his act the Church of England was far cut off from the Universal Church, without the paternal care of the Father of Christendom, chained to the chariot of Cesar in the person of the tyrant Henry.

There is within Anglicanism two, basically opposed, schools of thought, two parties with quite distinct ideas of Christianity: "High Church" and "Low Church".

High Church Anglicanism is decidedly friendly to Catholicism in so far as sacramental teaching is concerned. Its denial of the world-wide primacy and supremacy of the Holy See of Rome cuts it off from the communion of the Catholic Church and delivers it over to a heretical ideology. But it teaches the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist and of the other sacraments; it is

convinced that its priests are validly ordained and celebrate valid Masses (repudiated by the Holy See); it professes to be governed in doctrinal matters by the decisions of the General Councils and the teaching of the Church Fathers; it conducts its worship in a manner closely resembling Catholic services; it venerates the Mother of God and the other saints; teaches the doctrine of Purgatory. In only one detail does it depart from Roman Catholicism, but that detail is so important that the effect is to exclude Anglicans from the brotherhood of the Mystical Body of Christ; it is refusal to acknowledge the Pope as the Vicar on earth of Jesus Christ, the supreme and infallible Head, Teacher and Ruler of the Church Militant. *In spite of solid historical evidence to the contrary, High Church Anglicanism professes to derive its doctrine, discipline and worship from the Book of Common Prayer!*

Low Church Anglicanism is strongly conscious of its affinity with the innumerable forms of Protestantism and of all its hostility to all things Catholic. It flatly denies the Catholic doctrines accepted by the High Church Party; and teaches modified forms of Calvinism and Lutheranism; it denies any existence of Apostolic Succession in any Christian body, as well as the Priesthood and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. It has no knowledge of the sublime Pauline teaching as to the Mystical Body of Christ, the tremendous importance of unswerving loyalty to that body, the necessity of the four marks of the Body: Unity, sanctity, Universality and Apostolicity. In church policy it favors