

WESLEY AND THE WESLEYANS

Wesley and the Wesleyans challenges the cherished myth that at the moment when the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution were threatening the soul of eighteenth-century England, an evangelical revival – led by the Wesleys – saved it. It will interest anyone concerned with the history of Methodism and the Church of England, the evangelical tradition, and eighteenth-century religious thought and experience.

The book starts from the assumption that there was no large-scale religious revival during the eighteenth century. Instead, the role of what is called ‘primary religion’ – the normal human search for ways of drawing supernatural power into the private life of the individual – is analysed in terms of the emergence of the Wesleyan societies from the Church of England. The Wesleys’ achievements are reassessed; there is a fresh, unsentimental description of the role of women in the movement; and an unexpectedly sympathetic picture emerges of Hanoverian Anglicanism.

JOHN KENT is Emeritus Professor of Theology, University of Bristol. His many publications include *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (1978), *The End of the Line?: The Development of Theology since 1700* (1982), *The Unacceptable Face: The Modern Historian and the Church* (1987) and *William Temple: Church, State and Society in Britain, 1880–1950* (1993).

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