

# Church, Chapel and Party

## Church, Chapel and Party

Religious Dissent and Political Modernization  
in Nineteenth-Century England

Richard D. Floyd

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Religious Dissent and Political Modernization examines the role played by religious dissent in English political life in the years after the reform act of 1832. It argues that dissent was the chief mainstay of the burgeoning liberal party, and that the conflict between dissent and the Church of England was the fundamental element in the creation of a modern two-party political system. To shed light on this phenomenon, the work examines in detail dozens of electoral contests in several carefully chosen constituencies representing unique regional and economic interests and dominant local industries, as well as different prevailing religious practices. Through systematic analysis of the circumstances of these contests-and both quantitative and more traditional methods of investigation-the evidence demonstrates that what really energized the electorate, and candidates who sought their votes, was religion.

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