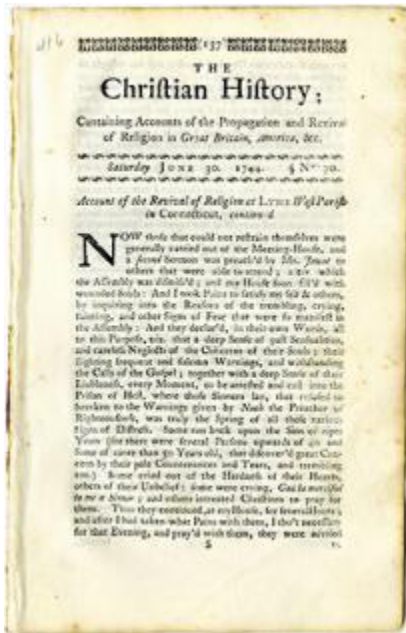


A revival of religious fervor, 1744

A primary source by Thomas Prince



The Christian History, June 30, 1744, published by Thomas Prince

The Christian History was a revivalist periodical founded by the Boston clergyman Thomas Prince in 1743 to report on the religious revivals sweeping across Europe and the United States. It was the first Christian periodical published in the United States, but lasted only two years. The revivals of that period were ignited by Jonathan Edwards, whose theology sparked renewed enthusiasm and emphasized human depravity, divine omnipotence, and a personal relationship with God. This period is often referred to as the “First Great Awakening,” although the term “Great Awakening” wasn’t broadly used to describe the religious revivals that took place in the American colonies until the 1842 publication of Reverend Joseph Tracy’s book of that title.

As Prince traveled from church to church in New England to preach, he recorded the reactions of the various congregations in his periodical. This June 1744 issue of the journal comments on the evangelical spirit present in Connecticut.

EXCERPT

June the 15th, I rode out to Mr. *Throop’s* a new Society in *Norwich*, and preach’d *one* Sermon for him, to a full Assembly. There seem’d to be a great listning to the Word; great Concern appear’d in the Countenances of many; a great Number were in Tears, and several cried out: Some fainted away, and *one* or *two* rag’d. After the Sermon was over I took Pains to find out the Spring of that Distress which appeared in many Instances, and I think, they gave Grounds to judge it was from Conviction of Sin; except those Instances that were distress’d with their out-rageous Passions.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Read the introduction, view the image of the actual document, and read the transcribed excerpt. Then apply your knowledge of American history as well as the text of *The Christian History* to answer the following questions:

1. Who was the author of this account and what was he describing?
2. Describe the reaction of two or three individuals to the sermon.

3. How does the author explain these reactions?

Additional Question: How did the evangelical practices in the church service described here differ from worship in mainline Protestant churches?