The Place of Church History in the Rise of Evangelicalism

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In February 1737, Dr. Isaac Watts, the English Dissenting minister and hymn-writer, wrote on behalf of himself and his associate Dr. John Guyse to American Benjamin Colman in response to reading a version of Jonathan Edwards' account of revival in Northampton, Massachusetts. "We are of [the] opinion," Watts penned, "that so strange and surprising work of God that we have not heard anything like it since the Reformation, nor perhaps since the days of the apostles, should be published, and left upon record with all its attending circumstances . . ."[1] Later that year, the two Englishmen introduced Edwards' complete *Faithful Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God*, and included in their preface the words: "never did we hear or read, since the first ages of Christianity, any event of this kind so surprising as the present narrative hath set before us."[2] Frank Lambert has recently argued that this sort of historical appeal can be taken to encapsulate early evangelicals' understandings of the place of the Anglo-American Revival[3] within sacred history. "Awakeners," says Lambert, "could point to only two truly extraordinary Works of God: Pentecost and the Protestant Reformation."[4]

With this in view, one might be tempted to think that evangelicals in the eighteenth century had a simplistic interpretation of church history, or that they only trumpeted the interpretation originating in the sixteenth century, that Protestantism represented a renewal of authentic, ancient Christianity after a long period of decline and corruption. This assumption seems to be borne out in scholarship. Despite significant academic

attention in recent decades to the Revival in Britain and North America and its place at the fountainhead of evangelicalism, only a few writers make even brief mention of church history as having played a role in early evangelical thought and life.[5]

Eighteenth-century sources, however, give a more dynamic picture; a search finds that evangelical historical interpretations were substantial and were authored by key leaders. John Newton produced his *Review of Ecclesiastical History* in 1770, the first volume of an unfinished project. In 1774, John Erskine in Edinburgh published Jonathan Edwards' *History of the Work of Redemption*, which Edwards had delivered as a sermon series in 1739. In the 1780s, John Wesley broadcast his view of church history in several sermons and issued a four-volume *Concise Ecclesiastical History* (1781) abridged from the work of respected scholar Johann Lorenz von Mosheim. At the end of the century, two important works appeared from evangelical Anglican perspectives: Joseph and Isaac Milner's four-volume *History of the Church of Christ* (1794-1809), and Thomas Haweis' three-volume *An Impartial and Succinct History of the Rise, Declension and Revival of the Church of Christ, from the Birth of Our Saviour to the Present Time* . . . (1800). From this list alone we can infer that the history of the church was a significant part of discourse by prominent, even central, individuals within early evangelicalism.

My interest here, however, is several other sources that not only assist in amplifying the importance of church history for evangelicals, but also push forward the point at which it emerged as a factor. As has been ably demonstrated by scholars, in the 1740s and 1750s Protestants on both sides of the Atlantic perceived a widespread religious awakening and formed associations with each other, in effect fashioning an "evangelical" religious impulse and identity.[6] In the midst of this religious excitement, published reflections by several evangelical leaders indicated a keen attention to church history. These sources evince not a simple regurgitation of traditional Protestant conceptions, but a real engagement by evangelical leaders with historical Christianity informed especially by the drama surrounding the "historic" events which they had experienced in the Revival.

Thomas Prince, Sr. and "The Endless Increase of Christ's Government" (1740)

An early example of historical interest arises with Thomas Prince,

Sr., a Congregational minister in Boston. On 25 May 1740, on the important occasion of an annual conference of ministers from Massachusetts Bay, Prince delivered an address entitled "The Endless Increase of Christ's Government," based on the text of Isaiah 9:7 – "Of the increase of his government there shall be no end."[7] After setting out a theological framework concerning Christ's eternal existence and role as mediator between God and humans, Prince spent more than half of his sermon attempting to trace the "endless increase" of Christ's dominion on earth and in heaven. That this goal was ambitious and difficult to realize in one sermon is an understatement: Prince himself qualified that his conclusions were not based on revelatory knowledge, but rather were hints drawn "from the appearance of the worlds about us, from the probable suggestions of reason on them, and the analogy of nature"; he had "only just opened the field of this immense vision, wherein we may wander to eternity."[8]

Prince focussed primarily on the spread of the gospel in the time of Christ and the apostles. But he also summarized, in sweeping fashion, subsequent ages of the church, casting their chronology in terms of a geographical progression.[9] First, Christians were scattered like seed within the Roman Empire. Then the church prospered surprisingly within this field, through three centuries of persecution culminating in the conversion of the emperor, Constantine. The figure of Constantine looms as the only individual named after Christ and the apostles: he not only halted persecution, but, in Prince's words, he "openly worships Christ as Lord of all, throws down his crown before him; and not only resigns his whole power and empire to him, but also spreads his kingdom to the remotest nations."[10] This expansion continued through the centuries, east through Bohemia, Poland and Russia, north through Germany, Denmark and Scandinavia, and west through the British Isles to the New World.[11] He left off with a novel interpretation of the course of more recent history, with an eye fixed firmly on stirrings of revival in the New World: "I shall only here observe, that as in the mysterious depths of wisdom, but in spotless justice, our divine Redeemer has been for several ages removing the light and grace of his kingdom from the eastern parts of the earth; so, like the apparent course of the sun, he comes on and rises on the western regions; and perhaps . . . he may be now opening a way to enlighten the utmost regions of America: And this may be his chief design in these great events." Prince speculated that this westward march of Christ's kingdom would continue, all the way back to its source in Jerusalem, at which point

a "conflagration" would usher in the millennial reign of Christ.[12]

William Cooper and The Distinguishing Marks (1741)

William Cooper, Prince's colleague in Boston, likewise ruminated on history in a conspicuous place: his preface to Jonathan Edwards' *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741). Besides issuing a call for the collection of contemporary narratives of religious conversion, he framed Edwards' own analysis of "revival" with a panoramic sketch of the work of God in history, progressing in stages from the Hebrew patriarchs and Moses through Christ to his own day.

Each stage, for Cooper, constituted an increase in glory, like a dawning sun that overwhelms or eclipses the light of the stars.[13] Within this overall scheme, he represented history from the time of Christ to the present as a series of dramatic renewals separated by long stretches of decline. He wrote that after the "large effusion of the Spirit" and dawn of the "Gospel light" at Pentecost, gradually the Spirit withdrew, and thus the effectiveness of the gospel waned, and "the state of Christianity withered in one place and another." At the Protestant Reformation, "Gospel light" again "broke in upon the church, and dispelled the clouds of antichristian darkness that covered it," bringing powerful preaching, conversions, and transformed lives. Yet, according to Cooper, the Protestant churches also eventually lapsed into a "dead and barren time," marked by absence of the Spirit's influence, either few or doubtful conversions, and a listless Christianity. Cooper concluded, however, with a bold assessment of the religious awakening that was the subject of Edwards' scrutiny, echoing what Watts and Guyse had written in relation to the earlier Northampton revival: "The dispensation of grace we are now under is certainly such as neither we nor our fathers have seen; and in some circumstances so wonderful, that I believe there has not been the like since the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit immediately after our Lord's ascension. The apostolical times seem to have returned upon us . . ."[14]

Initially Cooper's sketch sounds much like earlier Protestant ones depicting a glorious early Christianity, a painfully long season of declension under the weight of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and a turning of the tables with the Protestant reformers. But in important respects he developed this view. Relatively new was the admission that Protestantism itself had faltered. Michael Crawford indicates that by the early eighteenth century, "Protestants had come to the realization that the

Reformation as a period of more than usual activity of God's Spirit had come to an end."[15] This awareness no doubt contributed in part to the excitement surrounding the revivals and a belief that God was doing an even greater work than the Reformation in their midst. Cooper's parallel between the Revival and Pentecost was drawn not glibly out of ignorance, but rather specifically in the context of historical reflection.

John Gillies' Historical Collections (1754)

The most substantial early evangelical interpretation of church history is found in a two-volume work by John Gillies, a Church of Scotland minister (1742–96) in Glasgow, entitled *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel, and Eminent Instruments Employed in Promoting It*, produced in 1754.[16] As the title of his work suggests, Gillies collected and compiled historical material from a variety of sources.[17] One might be tempted to overlook such a derivative work. But evidence indicates that within evangelical circles, Gillies' volumes had an enduring influence. Gillies was a well-connected evangelical: associate of Wesley, biographer of Whitefield, correspondent of Edwards, and central figure in Scottish and international revivalist networks.[18] Almost a century later, in 1845, the influential Scottish minister Horatius Bonar republished Gillies' work, with the observation that it had been "known and prized by the Christian Church."[19] As recently as 1981, a facsimile edition was issued by the Reformed evangelical publisher, Banner of Truth, and a Korean translation was produced in 1992.[20]

Gillies, prior to entering into the history itself, clearly set out his perspective. His volumes' frontispiece highlighted Matt. 28:19-20, which included Christ's promise to be with his followers "always, even to the end of the world." In his preface in the first volume, subtitled "Of the Characters and Uses of this Kind of History," Gillies established his interest in "historical narrations of the success of the gospel," and suggested a pattern for sacred history. The "most threatening dangers and lowest times have frequently been soon followed with the most signal appearances" in favour of the gospel, as evidenced by Israel's exodus from Egypt and return from Babylon, the spread of the early Christian Church, and the Protestant Reformation. When the Church's "power is gone, and she seems in imminent danger of being consumed," then God, in fulfilment of his promises, "seasonably interposes; and the time of need proves

the time for the Lord to work."[21] Gillies also speculated, in anticipation of his second volume concerning the revivals of the 1730s and 1740s, that "the times of the greatest and most extensive flourishing of the gospel promised to the church in the last days" might be imminent.[22]

Our main interest is in Gillies' construal, in his first volume, of Christianity's "success" in the first seventeen centuries of its history.[23] He highlighted the rapid spread of Christian belief in the first three centuries, and especially Christianity's advancement through times of both suffering and intermittent peace.[24] According to his sources, God's hand was displayed in the eventual banishment of pagan religion from the empire, even in the grisly fates of emperors who had persecuted the Church.[25] Gillies inserted a rare editorial comment on Constantine: despite the vast expansion of Christianity under his reign, "it must be owned," he observed, "that his heaping so much wealth and honour upon church-men, and his blending the church and state together, did, through human corruption, great hurt to Christianity."[26]

Gillies, intent on drawing out success stories from the past, seems to have been confounded with the Middle Ages. In a volume just shy of five hundred pages, he treated the fifth through thirteenth centuries in a single page, and prefaced his discussion with a blunt apology: "That the Reader may not be surprised to find so little said upon such a number of centuries, it is proper to observe, that this period does not afford much matter upon the success of true Christianity." He contended himself with a few references on the presence of ancient churches in India and Ethiopia, both of which condemned "the errors and corruptions of the church of Rome," and a reiteration of the common British Protestant interpretation that Celtic Christianity was of a more pure quality than the Roman variety which eventually dominated via Canterbury.[27]

Next Gillies' collection featured the medieval groups traditionally seen by Protestants as precursors to the Reformation. His presentation of Waldensians and Albigensians highlighted their antiquity, popularity, and "constancy in suffering for the truth." The imagery of Gillies' source was vivid: the Waldensians had arisen "when the darkness of Popery had overspread the Christian world," and the Albigensians, who differed "only in name," had "lay hid like sparks under the ashes" until the time of Luther.[28] These and others, such as Wycliffe, Hus, and Jerome of Prague, who voiced opposition to Rome, were people whom God had raised up to stem the tide of Antichristian corruption, who stood as evidence that God had preserved a "seed" or a "true church" through the Middle Ages.[29]

To this point Gillies offered what looks like the traditional Protestant perception of a small, persecuted remnant standing against medieval Catholicism. But he also included a fascinating excerpt from the 1606 work of Anglican divine Richard Field, entitled *Of the Church*. Field had argued the common enough view that the Church of England maintained true, ancient Catholic Christianity, in contrast to the Roman Church. But Gillies highlighted his more novel position:

> Altho' we do acknowledge WICKLIFF, HUSSE, JEROM OF PRAGUE, &c. to have been the worthy servants of God, and holy martyrs, suffering for the cause of Christ against Antichrist, yet we do not think that the church was to be found only in them, or that there was no other appearance or succession of the church and ministry, as the Papists falsely charge us; for we believe that they who taught and embraced those damnable errors which the Romanists now defend, were a faction only in the church, as were they that denied the resurrection, urged circumcision, and despised the apostles of Christ in the church es of Corinth and Galatia.[30]

Curiously, then, despite a fairly traditional depiction, Gillies here assented to a more complex and irenic view that the current of "true" Christianity flowed not only on the fringe of the institutional Church, but also within "mainstream" Catholicism, in spite of anti-Christian elements.

What follows is a reasonably predictable account of the centuries from the Reformation to Gillies' own day, but cast in distinctly revivalist language. Gillies cast Luther's emergence as a fulfilment of prophecy,[31] and the Reformation generally as a special effusion of the Holy Spirit, or a "high spring-tide of the power and efficacy of the word." In contrast to the preceding ages of "darkness" and hidden faith, the Reformation was the "dawn" of a "blessed day," when God "visibly rent the heavens, and caused the mountains [to] flow down at his presence, with so solemn a down-pouring of the Spirit following the gospel, as there could be no standing before it, but cities and nations were subjected to so marvellous a power, to the embracing of the truth."[32] Gillies continued to trace the Protestant stream through the seventeenth century, highlighting stories of particularly "zealous" ministers in Britain and New England (typically Presbyterians and Puritans) and "awakenings" such as in London with the outbreak of a plague in 1665, in Halle, Germany under Lutheran Pietists, and in the rise of religious societies in the British Isles.

It is important to consider Gillies' historical presentation found in

the first volume of his *Collections* in the light of the second, which exclusively gave recent revival accounts.[33] The effect is a continuous narrative of revival in the Church, but with the emphasis most heavily on the present day. Crawford comments: "Gillies's collection gives the impression that the first seventeen centuries since Christ were but a prelude to the extraordinary activity of the Spirit in the eighteenth . . ."[34] But one should not interpret this as an undervaluing of Gillies' historical effort. From this work he extrapolated a pattern of recurring and progressive revival that lent weight to recent accounts of revival, and heightened the sense of eschatological import.[35]

Crawford observes Gillies' conviction "that God is working in history, and that his kingdom will spread gradually by means of revivals until it encompasses the globe."[36] The influence of Gillies' revival-centred historical interpretation is suggested by the words in the 1840s of the sympathetic Horatius Bonar, who described Gillies as zealous in "search[ing] out the times of refreshing enjoyed by the churches in other days" for the benefit of the contemporary Church, and who called his *Historical Collections* "by far the fullest and completest History of Revivals of Religion."[37]

Comparison

Several common features emerge from these three examples. One notices, first of all, the consistent interest in the *spread* of Christianity, the interest to identify its leading edge. Gillies' rendering called this the "success of the gospel." In Cooper's summary, manifestations of the Spirit, widespread conversions, and proclamation of the gospel were key criteria for depicting the landscape of church history. Prince uniquely represented Christianity's expansion as a traceable historical movement from east to west. But his interpretation shared with the others an inherent idea of progress, an upward trajectory in history despite setbacks.

Related to progress is a shared impression of eschatological moment. This is most evident in Prince's image of the gospel sun, rising in Jerusalem and now arching from Western Europe to the New World towards a millennial kingdom.[38] But Cooper and Gillies also indicated development in the historical Church's seasons of blessing and in the weight which they gave to contemporary events.

These interpretations demonstrate continuities and developments in comparison with traditional Protestant views. Cooper and Gillies

especially, in line with their forebears, portrayed a picture of vital Christianity in early centuries, followed by a long season of decline, and then a new burst of life with the Reformation. A comparatively novel element was their continued identification of declension and renewal beyond the sixteenth century, so that one beheld not simply a golden age, a period of darkness, and the dawn of a new, Protestant day, but rather a repeating cycle which culminated (perhaps finally, in these leaders' views) in the transatlantic Revival. Prince's sermon clearly reflected an interest in placing contemporary events in a much wider context. And while on the surface his interpretation appears quite different from the traditional rendering, it nonetheless implied a storyline of Christianity's expansion in Europe and subsequent decay as the vanguard of the Spirit marched westward.

Implications

Several broader arguments are warranted in regard to the significance of the evangelical turn to church history amidst the religious awakenings and rise of evangelicalism. In the first place, consider the frequent recurrence of historical treatments and especially the prominent authorship of this discourse. Besides the household names of Edwards, Newton, and Wesley, or the influential Milners and Thomas Haweis, other leading ministers – Prince and Cooper in Boston, John Gillies in Glasgow – drew attention to the Christian past.[39] To scholarship on the forging of transatlantic networks and the crafting of an evangelical ethos in the eighteenth century[40] could be added, as an important facet, a vital interest in church history.

It is one thing to notice the preoccupation; a more challenging task is addressing the question of why this occurred. Undoubtedly a mixture of factors was at work. One general aspect is the use of history in giving identity to the fledgling evangelical movement. More specifically, this turn to past expressions of Christianity speaks to a defensive effort against the impression of evangelicalism as a novelty, akin to the stance of sixteenth-century Protestants in response to the question, "Where was your Church before Luther?" Evangelicals were, after all, derided as "enthusiasts," and examples of historical precedent either gave them legitimacy or, at worst, company in a long line of reformers and radicals. There seems indeed to have been a perceived need for continuity, not only out of a practical desire for credibility, but also from a theological conviction that God was

continually present in His Church, even if this Church was reduced to a maligned, persecuted remnant. Gillies' work, as we have seen, inscribed from the outset Christ's promise of his presence. He and other evangelical leaders searched out historical examples which they believed mirrored their own situation, and they expressed their views in the language of divine providence.

Clearly one of the most important factors in evangelical leaders' turn to history is their perception of the contemporary transatlantic Revival. The sense of wonderment at whether anything like what they were witnessing had happened before is highly visible in early sources, including what we have seen in Prince, Cooper, and Gillies. But Lambert's assertion, referenced above, that evangelicals drew parallels only with Pentecost and the Protestant Reformation is misleading. Rather, we find the rapid development from early articulations of this nature to Gillies' comprehensive compilation in 1754. Crawford argues that with the outbreak of widespread revival, evangelical leaders "attempted to assess its meaning not only for their own localities, but also for all of Christianity," and then after the excitement had subsided, expanded this into a more complete historical picture.[41] This more compelling position can be further nuanced with the point that an historical interpretation which made the "revival" theme key appeared already within the crucible of the Revival itself. I have highlighted two brief examples from 1740 and 1741; but it is useful to remind that Jonathan Edwards presented his vision of the redemptive "work of God" in history to his congregation already in 1739, in response to the more localized awakening of the mid-1730s. These early reflections lacked much in the way of historical detail. But they indicate the establishment of a pattern that was enshrined in the influential volumes of John Gillies; indeed, Bruce Hindmarsh refers in passing to the *Historical Collections* as "a landmark work in evangelical revival historiography."[42]

An important finding from Hindmarsh's research with evangelical correspondence networks and conversion and revival narratives is the expanding sense among evangelicals that they were part of an international work of God.[43] Sources such as the ones we have introduced above warrant carrying this point further, that the broadening perspective among evangelicals was not only geographical, from individual conversion narrative to localized revival narrative to a story of transatlantic revival, but also chronological, from depiction of a contemporary revival to a comprehensive historical account.[44] We find among early evangelicals, I

would argue, a novel interpretation of church history which reworked the traditional Protestant conception of a golden apostolic age, a long, dark age of Roman Catholic corruption, and a glorious Reformation. Evangelicals, themselves reacting against perceived religious declension in Britain and the New World and spurred on by their experiences, developed an historical vision which established religious revival as a central interpretive criterion, and depicted a cycle of declension and renewal progressing towards, in their view perhaps culminating in, evangelicalism itself.

Endnotes

1. Cited in the editor's introduction, in *The Great Awakening*, ed. C.C. Goen, vol. 4 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 36.

2. Cited in the editor's introduction, in *The Great Awakening*, ed., C.C. Goen, vol. 4: 130.

3. Capitalized "Revival" throughout refers to the religious awakenings which occurred, according to both contemporary and scholarly accounts, in the 1730s and 1740s in Britain and North America. These events entailed both renewed Christian commitment by those already within the Church, and new participation by some previously outside the Church; thus the term implies more than simply "revivification" of those who had declined or lapsed in Christian faith or practice. Unless defined otherwise, lower-case "revival" refers to the phenomenon in general terms but involving the same aspects, renewal and new converts. One of the arguments to be developed here is that evangelicals looked for instances of "revival" in history that corresponded with what they experienced in the Revival. For an eighteenth-century definition along these lines, see Solomon Stoddard, *The Efficacy of the Fear of Hell, to Restrain Men from Sin. Shewed in a Sermon before the Inferiour Court in Northampton. Decem. 3d. 1712* . . . (Boston, 1713), 52-53. Available at Eighteenth-Century Collections Online.

4. Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1999), 27; see 4, 19, and 255 for reiterations.

5. These authors are cited below.

6. On correspondence and publishing networks, see Susan Durden [O'Brien], "A Study of the First Evangelical Magazines, 1740-1748," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27, no. 3 (1976): 258-74; Susan O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 4 (1986); Michael

J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context*, Religion in America (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 156-57, 172-74, 223-33; Frank Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity: George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737-1770* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 73-75; Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening,"* 151-79; D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 67-72; and Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, History of Evangelicalism (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 118. The latter work also is helpful as a recent treatment of the Revival and creation of an evangelical consensus.

7. Thomas Prince, "The Endless Increase of Christ's Government," in *Six sermons by the late Thomas Prince, A.M. one of the ministers of the South Church in Boston. Published from his manuscripts* . . ., ed. John Erskine (Edinburgh: printed by David Paterson, for William Martin, 1785), 1-39. Available at Eighteenth-Century Collections Online. Erskine includes a prefatory glimpse of Prince's life and work (iii-xvi); according to this account, Prince maintained a lifelong historical fascination, especially in chronicling New England's religious and civil affairs (v).

8. Prince, "Endless Increase," 34, 35.

9. Prince's account of Christ's government in the lower world runs from pages 18 to 29, but includes only three pages (25 to 27) on the history from post-apostolic days to his own.

10. Prince, "Endless Increase," 25-26, quote at 26.

11. Prince, "Endless Increase," 27. Prince somewhat atypically gave no denunciation of the Catholic "dark ages" and limelight on the Reformation. But his geographical sketch still may reflect this traditional rendering by deftly avoiding Europe's enduring centres of Catholicism, such as Italy, Spain, and France.

12. Prince, "Endless Increase," 27-28. In the final section of his sermon, Prince pondered on the enlarging population of heaven from creation to the end of time, and included a brief exclamation on the Christian historical era which reflected his theme of progress: "But what increasing multitudes in every age and nation, since for above 1700 years, have been continually saved, and transported to him in that growing world above!" (Prince, "Endless Increase," 29-34, quote at 32).

13. Cooper, preface to Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks Of a Work of the Spirit of God*, in C.C. Goen, ed., *The Great Awakening*, vol. 4, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1972), 215.

14. Cooper, preface to Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks*, 216-17. George M. Marsden highlights Cooper's historical sketch but uses it primarily to comment on his interpretation of contemporary events and implicit criticism of fellow ministers who did not support the Revival. Cooper's historical depiction, in its broad temporal scope, division into progressive "dispensations," focus on the Spirit's role in conversion, and language (for example use of light / darkness imagery, or particular Scripture references), seems to echo Jonathan Edwards' 1739 sermon series on the "History of the Work of Redemption." Cooper rubbed shoulders with Edwards, but there is no direct evidence of his familiarity with Edwards' historical interpretation (*Jonathan Edwards: A Life* [New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003], 235-36).

15. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 129.

16. John Gillies, *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel, and Eminent Instruments Employed in Promoting It . . .* (Glasgow: printed by Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1754). Available at Eighteenth-Century Collections Online. Gillies added an *Appendix* in 1761, and, in the year he died, 1796, his associate John Erskine of Edinburgh published a ninety-three page *Supplement to ... Historical Collections*, based on Gillies' notes. These latter additions focused almost exclusively on contemporary stories.

17. Gillies conveniently listed the majority of his sources at the front of the volume.

18. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 225, 231, 233, 307 n. 42; and David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 33. Crawford describes Gillies in the decade of the 1750s as "the focal point of the British/American evangelical connection for collecting and publishing religious intelligence" (233).

19. John Gillies, *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel* (Kelso, Scotland: printed at the Border Watch Office, 1845), 584. This edition included the content of the *Appendix* and *Supplement*. Bonar's basic biographical details can be found in Hew Scott, ed., *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, rev. ed., 7 vols., vol. 2, Synods of Merse and Teviot-

dale, Dumfries, and Galloway (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1917), 74.

20. John Gillies, *Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival* (Fairfield, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1981), and Gillies, *18-segi ŭi widaehan yŏngchŏk puhŭng*, ed. Horatius Bonar, trans. Nam-Joon Kim (Sŏul: Tosŏ Ch'ulp'an Sollomon, 1992).

21. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:x. In support, Gillies referenced Deut. 32:36 and Psalm 119:126.

22. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:x. Gillies cited Sir Isaac Newton as his authority, in reference to his *Observations upon the prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John. In two parts* (London: printed by J. Darby and T. Browne; Dublin: printed by S. Powell, 1733). Information from the English Short Title Catalogue, British Library, http://estc.bl.uk/ (accessed 15 February 2007).

23. Gillies' construction was based on some of the best and most popular of the sympathetic sources available. These tended to be respected works by well-known Presbyterians or Puritans, who, for the most part, shared an anti-Catholic but otherwise temperate spirit and a sense of God's providential hand in the English or Scottish Protestant tradition. Older sources included moderate Puritan Samuel Clarke's *General Martyrologie* (first published 1660) and *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age* (1683), and Presbyterian Robert Fleming's *The Fulfilling of the Scriptures* (1669). Contemporary sources included Wesley's noticeably eclectic and catholic *Christian Library* (1749-55), and two works by Gillies' fellow Church of Scotland ministers: Robert Millar's erudite *History of the Propagation of Christianity, and Overthrow of Paganism* (1723), and Benjamin Bennet's *A Memorial of the Reformation* (first published 1717). *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. "Bennet, Benjamin (c.1674-1726)," "Clarke, Samuel (1599-1682)," "Fleming, Robert (1630-1694)," "Millar, Robert (1672-1752)" http://www.oxforddnb.com/ (accessed 14 February 2007).

24. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:1-20, esp. 16.

25. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:18-20.

26. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:20-21, quote at 21 n. 'b'. John Wesley echoed this judgment, in highly dramatic terms, in the 1780s. See especially his 1783 sermon entitled "The Mystery of Iniquity," in *Sermons*, ed. Albert C. Outler, vols. 1-4 of *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987), 2:462-63.

27. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:29.

28. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:30-33, quotes at 30, 33. Gillies drew this material from Clarke's *General Martyrologie*.

29. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:35. Gillies' source here is Millar's *Propagation of Christianity*.

30. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:35. Gillies drew Field's interpretation from Clarke's *Martyrologie*.

31. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:57, also 57 n. 'a' and 'b,' in which Gillies linked Luther's first opposition to Rome with the Waldensian renewal in France 350 years prior (interpreted as Revelation's three and a half days), and with Hus's martyrdom 100 years prior (in reference to Hus' alleged prophecy from his martyr's stake, which Gillies included at page 39).

32. Gillies, *Historical Collections*, 1:127.

33. Gillies drew material for the second volume extensively from early evangelical magazines offering revival accounts, including the Boston *Christian History* produced by Prince and his son Thomas, Jr., as well as substantial tracts from the journals of Wesley (over fifty pages) and Whitefield (almost thirty pages). On the magazines, see the authors referenced at note #6, above, and discussion below at note #35.

34. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 226.

35. In this sense, Gillies' volumes can be seen as an expansion of the combination of contemporary accounts of revival with historical material found in early evangelical magazines. Most prominent in this respect was *The Christian's Amusement containing Letters Concerning the Progress of the Gospel both at Home and Abroad etc. Together with an Account of the Waldenses and Albigenses* . . . produced by Calvinist Methodist John Lewis in London beginning in September 1740. Besides the ancient spiritual ancestry implied by Lewis' treatment of Waldenses and Albigenses, his early issues also included excerpts from, or recommendations of, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century divinity. After George Whitefield adopted the magazine in 1741 and contemporary revival narratives multiplied, its historical content waned. Durden [O'Brien], "First Evangelical Magazines," 257 n.5, and analysis 258-66. Lambert, Inventing the "Great Awakening," 173, characterizes Gillies' work as motivated by a growing evangelical need for a narration of "revival as a coherent story linked across temporal as well as spatial boundaries."

36. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 226.

37. Gillies, *Historical Collections (Bonar ed.)*, xv, 584, also 556: "a work in which is contained a fuller and completer history of the wonderful doings of the Spirit of God than any other extant." Bonar does not offer any explicit comparison, but his statements imply a familiarity with other evangelical church histories.

38. Prince's ambitious eschatological framework and cosmic proportions combined with his keen eye to contemporary events corresponds with the view of his New England colleague, Jonathan Edwards. See *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John Frederick Wilson, vol. 9 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

39. To this list could be added John Erskine of Edinburgh, who spearheaded the publication of Edwards' *History of the Work of Redemption* and edited and published the supplement to Gillies' *Historical Collections* (along with a eulogizing of the late author).

40. See note #6.

41. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace*, 223.

42. Hindmarsh, *Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 195, n. 6.

43. Hindmarsh, *Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 71.

44. Hindmarsh highlights the heightened eschatological expectation which accompanied the emergence of conversion narrative in Cromwell's Puritan England and expansion in the eighteenth-century revivals. He comments, "Millennialism, charismata, and revival have often appeared side by side in the course of history, but the web of international religious news available in the eighteenth century heightened expectations with an up-to-the-minute sense of contemporaneity. In an unprecedented way revival was now concentrated in time and extended in space" (see *Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, 72). I would not deny the emphasis placed by evangelicals on current events and their sense that conversions were multiplying exponentially – this is clearly their preoccupation. But eschatological expectation included, perhaps even grew out of, reflection on the past, and thus the evangelical perspective should not be seen as limited to the here and now.