

SPIRITUAL LIVES

GENERAL EDITOR: TIMOTHY LARSEN

Benjamin Franklin grew up in a devout Protestant family with limited prospects for wealth and fame. By hard work, limitless curiosity, native intelligence, and luck (what he called “providence”), Franklin became one of Philadelphia’s most prominent leaders, a world recognized scientist, and the United States’ leading diplomat during the War for Independence. Along the way, Franklin embodied the Protestant ethics and cultural habits he learned and observed as a youth in Puritan Boston. *Benjamin Franklin: Cultural Protestant* follows Franklin’s remarkable career through the lens of the trends and innovations that the Protestant Reformation started (both directly and indirectly) almost two centuries earlier.

In this biography, D. G. Hart recognizes Franklin as a cultural or non-observant Protestant, someone who thought of himself as a Presbyterian, ordered his life as other Protestants did, sometimes went to worship services, read his Bible, and prayed, but could not go all the way and join a church.

Jacket image: Charles Willson Peale, *Portrait of Benjamin Franklin*, 1789. Philadelphia History Museum, Pennsylvania. De Agostini Picture Library/De Agostini Editore/agefotostock.

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The *Spiritual Lives* series features biographies of prominent men and women whose eminence is not primarily based on a specifically religious contribution. Each volume provides a general account of the figure's life and thought, while giving special attention to his or her religious contexts, convictions, doubts, objections, ideas, and actions. Many leading politicians, writers, musicians, philosophers, and scientists have engaged deeply with religion in significant and resonant ways that have often been overlooked or underexplored. Some of the volumes will even focus on men and women who were lifelong unbelievers, attending to how they navigated and resisted religious questions, assumptions, and settings. The books in this series will therefore recast important figures in fresh and thought-provoking ways.