

## Summer History & Heritage -- #7 (July 23)

This week, our Q&A are based on *Almanac* biographical sketches and *Tabletalk* lessons on the Bible and historic Christian theology. An introduction to agrarian sage John Taylor of Caroline (Caroline County, Virginia), a remarkable patriot with whom all Americans should have some familiarity, appears on page 2.

### **Thomas McKean --- (*Almanac*, July 10)**

**This American Founder (1734--1817)** served in a variety of public offices for Delaware and Pennsylvania as well as the United States over a 50-year political career? In the Stamp Act Congress (1765) he proposed a voting method that acknowledged the independence and equality of the existing Anglo-American republics: each colony, regardless of size, would be accorded one vote. This principle prevailed not only in the stamp crisis with Britain but in succeeding continental congresses.

### **Jonathan Edwards --- (*Almanac*, July 12)**

**This New England pastor-theologian (1703--1758)** may indeed have been America's greatest philosopher, but his preaching manner would hardly go over well today? "In fact," writes George Grant, "he read his densely theological and tautly philosophical sermons from painstakingly researched longhand manuscripts---often in a flat, monotonous voice. Only rarely did he deign to make eye contact with his congregation. Though not unpleasant in demeanor, he hardly cut a dashing or charismatic figure."

### **Plutarch --- (*Almanac*, July 17)**

According to Boswell (a fair biographer in his own right), **this Greek scholar (c. 46--126 AD)** was "the prince of the ancient biographers"? He is best known for his *Parallel Lives*, character studies of illustrious Greeks and Romans arranged in pairs, from which we derive much of our sense of the thematic unity of a Greco-Roman world. He served imperial Rome faithfully, but devoted himself chiefly to his Greek heritage and his communal roots (Chaeronea in provincial Boeotia, NW of Athens).

### **Gospel --- (W. Robert Godfrey; *Tabletalk*, June 2012)**

The Greek New Testament's *euangelion*, from which we get "evangelism" as word and concept, ordinarily appears as **this word in our English Bibles?** Meaning "good news," the word was not foreign to pagans in the ancient world who used it to refer to happy announcements of any sort. In the Bible the emphasis of Christ's apostles is on its heavenly origin (from God), its holy character (true, gracious, glorious, etc.), and its divine power to save sinners (through faith).

### **Circumcision --- (*Tabletalk*, June 27)**

"[Abraham] received **[this sacramental sign?]** as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still [without the sign]" (Rom. 4:11). The sacrament was the basic membership rite of the Old Covenant, pointing to the fact that the Israelites, by faith like their ancestor Abraham, had been cut from the world and consecrated to God.

Furthermore, the sacrament was an authenticating seal or mark of God's ownership of and promises to Abraham and his true, that is faithful, descendants.

### **Sacraments --- (*Tabletalk*, June 25-29)**

**These religious rites** (for Protestants, Baptism and the Lord's Supper) may be defined as visible signs and seals of invisible spiritual realities, the Word or Gospel in pictures? The New Testament rites call for common physical elements like water and bread & wine, at the same time affirming a very close connection between the material signs and the non-material blessings they signify. Thus classical Protestantism insisted that true divine benefits were conveyed by the divine rites, but only for believers.

### **John Taylor of Caroline --- (Clyde Wilson; *Chronicles*, June 2012)**

"A crocodile has been worshiped and its priesthood have asserted, that morality required the people to suffer themselves to be eaten by the crocodile." Such was the scathing critique of his nation's general or central government and the chief promoters of its powers penned by **this Virginia planter and statesman (1753--1824)?** His books, including *An Inquiry Into the Principles and Policy of the Government of the United States* (1814), champion the liberties of the states and the people.

### **More on John Taylor of Caroline --- (C. Wilson; *Chronicles*, June 2012)**

What follows are a couple of reflections on John Taylor written by history professor emeritus Clyde Wilson in "The Cassandra of Caroline County." (In passing, are my students and readers all familiar with the Cassandra of Greek mythology?)

**A Man of Modest Ambitions:** *John Taylor never sought public office, though three times Virginia, a commonwealth overflowing with gifted men, sent him to the U.S. Senate to fill unfinished terms. He preferred the practice of good husbandry on the plantation north of Richmond where he spent his life. In Taylor's opinion, a good farmer was worth far more to his fellow citizens than any number of eminent politicians, bankers, stock speculators, judges, military heroes, or busybodies. Of course, the farmers he honored were of the presubsidy variety. What would he have made of agribusiness or a government that paid farmers not to grow their crops?*

**His Books (published between 1804 and 1823):** *Taylor's works are reputed to be slow going for readers. His friend John Randolph of Roanoke is said to have remarked that the books would be very influential, if they could be translated into English. The criticism is exaggerated. Taylor's style is loquacious, colloquial, and full of nuggets of wisdom and wry humor. He well repays the work of perusal. His writing is playful and serious at the same time, like the best of 18th-century English prose, that of a good man discoursing with neighbors in the shade of the front veranda.*