

## Fall History & Heritage -- #3 (October 1)

This week, after a few entries based on readings in *Tabletalk* and *The Christian Almanac*, we'll highlight the basic political outlook of America's Andrew Jackson.

### **Apostolos --- (Tabletalk daily studies, July 18)**

**This Greek title**, identifying one sent on ambassadorial business, was used in Rome for Caesar's delegates who roamed about to deliver with authority Caesar's directives? Likewise, the New Testament employs the title for those commissioned and sent, not by an imperial despot, but by Christ Himself to proclaim truly good news in His name. Ambassadors for Christ, their Spirit-inspired teachings and writings, along with those of the prophets, make up the foundation of the church.

### **Kurios --- (Tabletalk daily studies, July 19)**

The English term "church" and its Dutch & German equivalents ("Kirke" & "Kirche"), naming the assembly of God's people, come from **this Greek title meaning "lord"?** The title in the ancient world was used for a variety of lords (noblemen and landowners), especially those who were the owners and masters of slaves. It is hardly surprising, then, that the church derives her name from her Lord & Master, the One who bought her with His own blood, thereby staking an incontestable right of possession.

### **Jonathan Edwards --- (Owen Strachan; Tabletalk; Aug. 2012)**

"There are false affections, and there are true. A man's having much affection, don't prove that he has any true religion: but if he has no affection, it proves that he has no true religion." Thus wrote **this colonial New England pastor-theologian (1703--1758)** in his treatise entitled *Religious Affections?* Distinguishing true from false signs of Christian conversion, a duty made all the more compelling in light of the spiritual awakening fervor of the 1730s & 1740s, was the writer's purpose.

### **John Witherspoon --- (Almanac, July 31)**

A signer of the Declaration of Independence, **this Scots Presbyterian pastor (1723--1794)** came to America in 1768 to assume the academic headship of Princeton? His sermon *The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men* (1776), widely-circulated and influential, provided moral justification for the separation of the colonies from Britain, even if it resulted in war. He taught many prominent Americans (Madison among them), including 9 of the 55 delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

### **William Wilberforce --- (Almanac, July 26)**

Born and bred in the English upper class, **this parliamentarian (1759--1833)** is remembered for his herculean efforts to abolish slavery in the British Empire? In the course of a 45-year political career, he introduced antislavery bills in Parliament with tireless regularity before seeing his cause finally prevail in his dying days. He was an influential member of the Clapham Sect, a small group of wealthy evangelicals whose aim was to raise the moral and material standards of the poor and destitute.

### **Abortion --- (Almanac, July 19)**

“The enormous amount of medical malpractice that exists and flourishes, almost unchecked, in the city of New York, is a theme for most serious consideration.” Thus wrote *New York Times* reporter Augustus St. Clair in an 1871 investigative article on **this murderous trade**, for which “medical malpractice” was a euphemism? Entitled “The Evil of the Age,” St. Clair’s exposé prodded condemnation of the trade by the American Medical Association and laws banning it in all the states.

### **Jackson’s Democracy -- (F. McDonald; *States’ Rights & the Union*, pp. 110-111)**

The relentless **Andrew Jackson (1767--1845)** is often portrayed, falsely, as a rabid nationalist. To be sure, Jackson loved the Union. He believed he stood for it when, as president in the early 1830s, he threatened military force against South Carolina for that state’s challenge to U.S. tariff laws in the so-called “nullification crisis.” Nonetheless, as historian Forrest McDonald points out in the passage below, Old Hickory’s Union was no unitary, centralized, consolidated nation-state:

*The doctrine of states’ rights, as embraced by most Americans, was not concerned exclusively or even primarily with state resistance to federal authority. Rather, it was addressed mainly to keeping federal activity at a bare-bones minimum. Jackson captured its spirit well when he wrote that “our Government” was not “to be maintained or our Union preserved by invasions of the rights and powers of the several States.” He continued, in “attempting to make our General Government strong we make it weak. Its true strength consists in leaving individuals and states as much as possible to themselves—in making itself felt, not in its power, but in its beneficence; not in its control, but in its protection; not in binding the States more closely to the center, but leaving each to move unobstructed in its proper orbit.”*

Whether Jackson would have supported Lincoln’s war against the secessionist South in 1861—as so many nationalist historians and writers, Bill Bennett among them, believe he would have—is far from a foregone conclusion. Jackson was a Southern man who professed fidelity to Jeffersonian principles (republican government, constitutionally legitimized & limited, and established and preserved in a decentralized, confederated framework of smaller jurisdictions). Admittedly, his political acts were not always consistent with his Jeffersonianism.

We simply don’t know what Jackson would have done if he had been president in the secession crisis of the 1860s. A speculative case can be made, it seems to this teacher, for whatever outcome you prefer.