

Spring 2015 History & Heritage -- #6

(A Seasonal Catechism for the Study of Western and American Civilization)

Edwards Turns Back the Clock --- **(Kirk; *Roots*, pp. 332-344)**

This heading may describe the multifaceted ministry of New England's Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), including his labors in the so-called Great Awakening? Edwards defended brilliantly biblical orthodoxy against potent foes, rationalistic darlings like Deism and Unitarianism or humanistic denials of salvation by God's will alone. The staggering effect in New England and elsewhere, for a season at least, was a turning backward to the severe mercies of the old Puritan mind.

Quaker State --- **(Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 332-344)**

This title reflects early patterns of colonization in the New World territory granted by England's Charles II to William Penn in the 1680's? The colony began as a refuge for the quirky Christianity of the Society of Friends, prominent members of which controlled the assembly in Philadelphia until their pacifism proved unsuited to warfare on the western frontier in the 1750's. The Friends never regained leadership in their land, but their disciplined personal morals contributed to the climate of ordered liberty in America.

Christianity in America --- **(Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 332-344)**

This New World version of an old faith, wrote Tocqueville, "takes no direct part in the government...but it must be regarded as the first of [Americans'] political institutions"? The Frenchman, in the 1830's, found the faith's many denominational practices unencumbered with ritual while offering "distinct, simple, and general notions to the mind." Despite differences with respect to the worship of God, he noted broad religious consensus on the morals and mores regulating society and safeguarded by the state.

Wesleyan Revival --- **(Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 332-344)**

This Christian awakening, in England and to some extent in America in the 1700's, brought into being what is called Methodism? The awakening is associated principally with the evangelistic fervor of Anglicans John Wesley and George Whitefield, preachers whose ministries fell under the category of "enthusiasm" in their day. Redemptive transformation of life through personal faith in Christ was their message for a church and society seeming to have a form of religion or righteousness but little of its reality.

Jefferson Conceals his Deism --- **(Kirk; *Roots*, pp. 332-344)**

This heading may describe the discretion of Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) in choosing, in the main, to keep his unorthodox religious beliefs out of the public eye? Jefferson, like a few other Founders, departed from historic Christianity at several points, holding more to Reason and Nature than Scripture and Scripture's God as supreme Enlightenment. His unpublished gospel (*The Life and Morals of Jesus*) turned the God-Man, Redeemer of the world, into just an extraordinarily true and good rabbi.