

AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HISTORY

6/18/2017

Today we once again look at our great history. We will look today at one of the men who was probably most responsible for setting in place our religious freedom.

I. THAT WHICH CHALLENGED JAMES MADISON TO ACTION

A. James Madison was travelling in Culpeper County Virginia.

- 1 Madison stood outside a jail in the village of Orange and listened to several Baptists preach from their cell windows, having been imprisoned for their religious opinions.
 - a. The demonstration of their faith was issued at a great cost
 - b. They were preaching religious opinions not approved by the Government.
 - c. Madison wrote on the fate of some Baptist ministers to William Bradford, January 24, 1774 "There are at this time in the adjacent Culpeper County not less than 5 or 6 well meaning men in jail for publishing their religious sentiments which in the main are very orthodox."
2. Madison bristled with indignation at what he called; "diabolical Hell conceived principle of persecution."
3. Madison writing to his friend Willian Bradford stated; "So I leave you to pity me and pray for Liberty and conscience to revive among us."

B. Biographer Ralph Ketcham stated about Madison that there was nothing; "To which he held with greater vigor and tenacity than this one of religious liberty."

C. Madison influenced the First Amendment more than any other Father; "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion"

D. James Madison assisted George Mason in his drafting of Article 16 of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, ratified June 12, 1776: "That Religion, or the duty which we owe to our CREATOR, and the manner of discharging it, can be

directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience, and that it is the mutual duty of all to Christian forbearance, love, and charity, towards each other."

E. It is obvious that religious freedom was priority in Madison's life.

II. JAMES MADISON AND GOVERNMENT

- A. Madison was known as the "Chief Architect of the Constitution."
- B. Madison was a member of the Constitutional Convention, speaking 161 times more than anyone else.
- C. Madison authored 29 of the 85 Federalist Papers.
- D. Madison was the fourth President of the United States.
- E. In 1812, President Madison signed a federal bill which aided a Bible Society in its goal of the mass distribution of the Bible.

III. THE SAYINGS OF MADISON WERE POWERFUL

- A. On June 20, 1785 Madison wrote in regard to the relationship between religion and civil government; "Religion is the basis and foundation of Government."
- B. In July 1778 Madison stated; "We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God."
- C. Madison further stated; "Religion, or the duty we owe to our Creator, and manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence."
- D. In a letter to Frederick Beasley Madison wrote; "The belief in a God all Powerful wise and good, is so essential to the moral order of the World and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources..."

- E. On June 20, 1775 Madison wrote; "It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage, and such only, as he believes to be acceptable to Him...Much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular civil society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign. We maintain therefore that in matters of Religion, no man's right is abridged by the institution of civil society, and that Religion is wholly exempt from its cognizance..."
- F. In his Inaugural Address on March 4, 1809 Madison said; "We have all been encouraged to feel in the guardianship and guidance of that Almighty Being, whose power regulates the destiny of nations."
- G. In his personal Bible Madison wrote about the Bereans in Acts and stated;
 - 1. "As a noble example for all succeeding Christians to imitate."
 - 2. "It is not the talking but the walking and working person that is the true Christian."
- H. Madison who outlived all of the other 54 founders of the American Republic wrote to his friend William Bradford on November 9, 1772; "A watchful eye must be kept on ourselves lest while we are building ideal monuments of renown and bliss here we neglect to have our names enrolled in the Annals of Heaven.
- I. Madison further stated; 'The equal right of every citizen to the free exercise of his religion according to the dictates of his conscience' is held by the same tenure with all our other rights."
- J. James Madison entered in his journal, June 12, 1788: "There is not a shadow of right in the general government to inter-meddle with religion... The subject is, for the honor of America, perfectly free and unshackled. The government has no jurisdiction over it."
- K. James Madison wrote to Frederick Beasley, November 20, 1825: "The belief in a God All Powerful wise and good, is so essential to the moral order of the World and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources."

IV. MADISON AND THE WAR OF 1812

- A. When the War of 1812 began with Britain, James Madison proclaimed a National Day of Public Humiliation and Prayer, July 9, 1812: "...recommend the third Thursday of August...for...rendering the Sovereign of the Universe...public homage...that He would inspire all...with a reverence for the unerring precept of our holy religion, to do to others as they would require that others should do to them."
- B. After the British burned the U.S. Capitol, James Madison proclaimed a National Day of Fasting, on November 16, 1814: "...recommend...a day on which all may have an opportunity of voluntarily offering...their humble adoration to the Great Sovereign of the Universe, of confessing their sins and transgressions, and of strengthening their vows of repentance."
1. History records a miracle on August 25, 1814
 2. The British were trying to burn the city to the ground
 3. A huge storm like a tornado engulfed Washington
 4. British cannons were hurled into the air
 5. Red coated soldiers feared for their lives and laid flat in the mud.
 6. A large cloud stopped over the Capitol and extinguished the flames
 7. A number of the houses were destroyed killing the British soldiers who had taken refuge there
 8. It is stated that the storm of that day did more to save Washington than the American soldier.
- C. When the War of 1812 ended, James Madison proclaimed a National Day of Thanksgiving, on March 4, 1815: "To the same Divine Author of Every Good and Perfect Gift we are indebted for all those privileges and advantages, religious as well as civil...I now recommend...the people of every religious denomination...unite their hearts and their voices in a freewill offering to their Heavenly Benefactor of their homage...and of their songs of praise."