

AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

7/30/2017

We have been looking at our Christian Heritage for some time. We have looked at our heritage from many different viewpoints. Today we continue our series from another angle as we look at some of America's Presidents. Although some of them may have not been deeply enmeshed in their belief they nevertheless held to Christian principles.

I. PRESIDENT ZACKARY TAYLOR

A. Zachary Taylor was the 12th President of the United States.

1. President Taylor was given the nickname "Old Rough and Ready" for fighting the British in the War of 1812.
2. President Taylor experienced courageous victories in the Mexican War.

B. President Taylor refused to be sworn in on the Sabbath out of religious respect. (Their term for Sunday was the "Sabbath.")

C. Shortly after he was sworn in as president a delegation of ladies from Frankfort, Kentucky presented him with a Bible.

1. President Taylor was thankful for the Word of God.
2. In a letter addressed to the ladies President Taylor stated; "I accept with gratitude...your gift of this inestimable Volume. It was for the love of the truths of this great Book that our fathers abandoned their native shores for the wilderness.

"Animated by its lofty principles they toiled and suffered till the desert blossomed as a rose. The same truths sustained them...to become a free nation; and guided by the wisdom of this Book they founded a government."

- D. On July 4, 1849, President Taylor told a Sabbath-School celebration in Washington: "The only ground of hope for the continuance of our free institutions is in the proper moral and religious training of the children."
- E. On July 3, 1849, President Zachary Taylor proclaimed a National Day of Fasting: "At a season when the providence of God has manifested itself in the visitation of a fearful pestilence which is spreading itself throughout the land, it is fitting that a people whose reliance has ever been in His protection should humble themselves before His throne, and, while acknowledging past transgressions, ask a continuance of the Divine mercy.

"It is therefore earnestly recommended that the first Friday in August be observed throughout the United States as a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer...

"It is recommended to persons of all religious denominations to abstain as far as practical from secular occupations and to assemble in their respective places of public worship, to acknowledge the Infinite Goodness which has watched over our existence as a nation, and so long crowned us with manifold blessings, and to implore the Almighty in His own good time to stay the destroying hand which is now lifted up against us."

1. This proclamation was in response to a Cholera plague in America which had been responsible for the deaths of 150,000 people.
2. After President Taylor's Day of Fasting was observed August 3, 1849, Tim O'Neil wrote: "The number of deaths dropped suddenly in August.

II. PRESIDENT MILLARD FILLMORE

- A. President Fillmore was the 13th President of the United States
- B. After he was sworn in as President Mr. Fillmore stated;
 1. "The Sabbath day I always kept as a day of rest. Besides being a religious duty, it was essential to health."

2. “On commencing my Presidential career, I found that the Sabbath had frequently been employed by visitors for private interviews with the President. I determined to put an end to this custom, and ordered my doorkeeper to meet all Sunday visitors with an indiscriminate refusal.”

III. PRESIDENT JAMES GARFIELD OUR 20TH PRESIDENT

- A. He was known as the “Preacher President.”
- B. President Garfield was saved at a Camp Meeting in 1850.
- C. On one occasion he wrote to a friend and stated that he had just preached a revival meeting and over 30 people were saved.
- D. One of his most famous sermons was titled; “The material and the spiritual.”
 1. He presented Christianity as a remedy to what he saw as a growing materialism.
 2. President Garfield stated that; “Men are tending to materialism. Houses lands and worldly goods attract their attention, and, as a mirage lure them on to death. Christianity on the other hand leads only the natural body to death, and for the spirit it points out a house not built with hands, eternal in the Heavens.”
- E. When Garfield became President, he left his position as an elder in the church saying; “I resign the highest office in the land to become President of the United States.”
- F. Garfield stated about government; ““The people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless, and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness, and corruption. If it be intelligent, brave, and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature. If the next centennial does not find us a great nation...it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, and the morality of the nation do not aid in controlling the political forces.”

- G. In concluding a letter to a friend, showing his submission to the death of his little son, Garfield wrote; “In the hope of the Gospel, which is so precious in this hour of affliction, I am affectionately your brother in Christ.”
- H. While a student at Williams College he and some other student’s climbed one of the high peak seven miles away from the school.
1. At the top of the mountain Garfield stated; “Boys it is a habit of mine to read a chapter in the Bible every evening with my absent mother. Shall I read aloud?”
 2. The little company assented.
 3. Garfield removed from his pocket a well worn Testament and began reading the same passages that his mother in Ohio was reading at the same time.
 4. When Garfield finished reading the passage from Scripture he called upon a classmate to lead them in prayer.
- I. On April 15, 1865 after overcoming the shock of Lincoln’s assassination, Garfield exhorted his countrymen in a speech given in New York; “Fellow citizens! God reigns, and the Government at Washington still lives.”
- J. President James Garfield, who was shot JULY 2, 1881, as he waited in a Washington, D.C., train station.
1. The assassin was a free-love polygamist who had been a member of a communist cult .
 2. President Garfield had only been in office four months.
 3. Secretary of State James Blaine wrote James Russell Lowell, U.S. Minister in London:“**James A. Garfield**, President of the United States, died ...For nearly eighty days he suffered great pain, and during the entire period exhibited extraordinary patience, fortitude, and **Christian resignation**. Fifty millions of people stand as mourners by his bier.”