

American Minute with Bill Federer Presidents' Day: George Washington's Birthday

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There have been 46 U.S. Presidents. The tallest was Abraham Lincoln at 6'4" and shortest was James Madison at 5'4".



The heaviest President was William Howard Taft at 332 lbs.

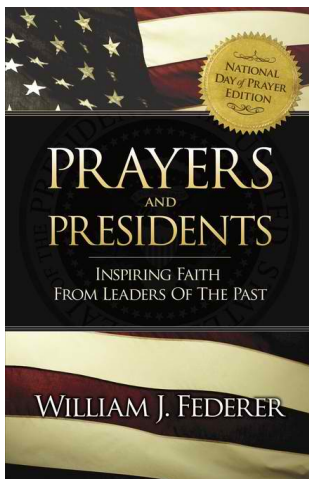
Four died in office: Harrison, Taylor, Harding, Franklin Roosevelt. Four were assassinated: Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Kennedy. One resigned, Nixon.

The youngest elected President was John F. Kennedy, at age 43, but the youngest to serve was actually Theodore Roosevelt, who assumed the office at age 42, when William McKinley was assassinated.

The oldest person to be President was Joe Biden at age 78.

But did you know President's Day is actually George Washington's Birthday?... *[continue reading ...](#)*

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Washington's Birthday was recognized by an Act of Congress for government offices in Washington, D.C., in 1879, and for all federal offices in 1885.

In 1971, the **Uniform Monday Holiday Act** to create more three day weekends moved the **observance of Washington's birthday** to the **third Monday in February ...**

As **Abraham Lincoln** was also born in **February**, so many States include him in the observance, and still other States include all the Presidents.



George Washington was born **FEBRUARY 22, 1732.**

He was:

- *unanimously* chosen as the **Army's Commander-in-Chief;**
- *unanimously* chosen as



President of the Constitutional Convention;

- *unanimously* chosen as the **first U.S. President**;
- *unanimously* re-elected to a second term.

George Washington was an Anglican, and, after the Revolution, an Episcopalian.

George's great-great-grandfather, Rev. Lawrence Washington, was an Anglican minister who taught at Oxford.



Lawrence and his wife, **Amphyllis Twigen**, had a son named **John**.

When the **Puritans** won the **English Civil War** in 1651, **Anglican ministers** were demoted. **Lawrence** was reduced to being an assistant minister - a vicar - at an impoverished parish in Essex, England.

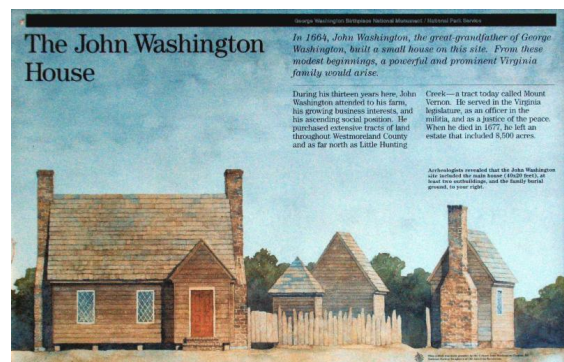
It was during this time that **John Washington, George Washington's great-grandfather**, apprenticed as a merchant in London.



He sailed as second officer on a ship to the **Colony of Virginia** to purchase tobacco.

In 1657, when a storm partially **sank their vessel** in the Potomac River, **John** swam ashore.

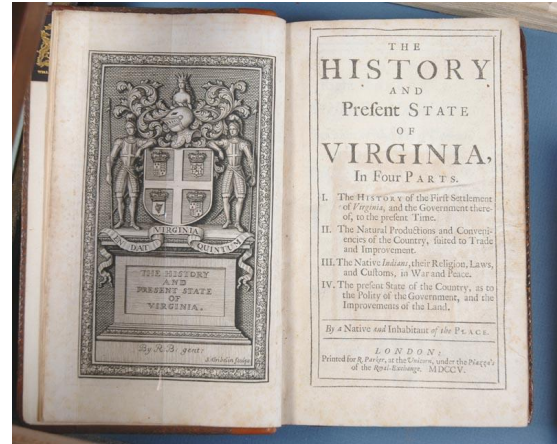
While the ship was being



repaired, **John** stayed at the home of a planter **Colonel Nathaniel Pope**, and fell in love with his daughter, **Anne**. **John** never returned to England.

John and Anne married, and her father gave them 700 acres in **Westmoreland County**.

John Washington became a successful planter and a member of the **Virginia House of Burgesses**.



He was a militia leader during **Nathaniel Bacon's Rebellion** against Governor **William Berkeley** in 1676.



A local Anglican church was renamed "Washington" in honor of **John Washington**.

When **John** died, he left to the church a tablet of the Ten Commandments. His Will stated:



"In the **Name of God**, Amen. I, **John Washington**, of Washington Parish, in the **County of Westmoreland**, in Virginia, gentleman, being of good and perfect memory, thanks be unto **Almighty God** for it,

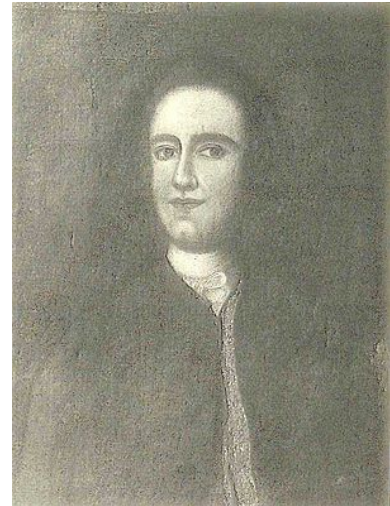
and calling to remembrance the uncertain state of

this transitory life, that all flesh must yield unto death, do make, constitute, and ordain this **my last will and testament ...**

... First, being heartily sorry, from the bottom of my heart, for my sins past, most humbly desiring forgiveness of the same from the **Almighty God, my Savior and Redeemer**, in whom and by the merits of **Jesus Christ**, I trust and believe assuredly to be saved, and to have full remission and forgiveness of all my sins,

and that my soul with my body at the general resurrection shall rise again with joy."

The oldest of John Washington's sons was **Lawrence**, the **grandfather of George Washington**.



Lawrence married **Mildred Warner**, the daughter of **Col. Augustine Warner, Jr.**, an ancestor of Queen Elizabeth II.

Lawrence and Mildred had three children, the second being **Augustine**, who would become **George Washington's father**.

When **Lawrence** died in 1698, **Mildred** married **George Gale** and moved **back to England** with her children.



When **Mildred** died, a relative in America petitioned to get custody of her children, including **Augustine**, and they were **returned to**

Virginia in 1704.

Augustine Washington served as a **vestryman** in the **Anglican Truro Parish**.



He and his wife **Jane Butler** had two sons live to adulthood, **Lawrence** and **Augustine Jr.**

Both **Lawrence** and **Augustine, Jr.**, went **back to England** to study at the prestigious **Appleby Grammar School**.

Jane died in 1729.

Augustine married **Mary Ball** in 1731, and together they had 6 children, with the oldest, **George Washington**, being born **February 22, 1732**.



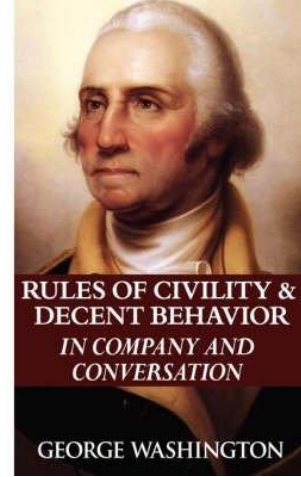
Augustine died in 1743 when **George** was only 11-years-old.



George hand copies the *Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation*, 1744, which included Rule #110:

“Labor to keep alive in your breast that **little spark of celestial fire**

called **conscience.**"



George's older half-brother **Lawrence** fought in the **British navy** under **Admiral Edward Vernon**, who had captured **Porto Bello, Panama**, from **Spain** in 1739.



When **Lawrence** returned to **Virginia** in 1742, he named his farm after his navy **Admiral -- Mount Vernon.**



Lawrence married **Anne Fairfax.**

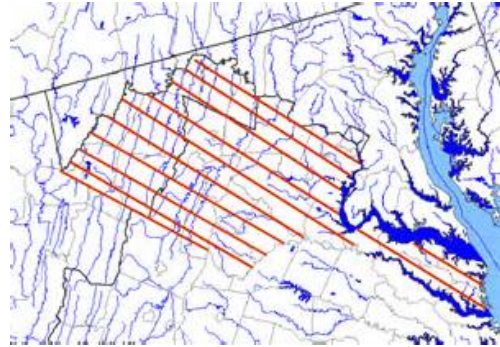
Her father, **Col. William Fairfax**, had been Collector of Customs in **Barbados**, and **Chief Justice and Governor of the Bahamas**, as well as a first cousin of **Thomas Fairfax**, who was **the largest land owner in America** with five million acres.



Lawrence arranged for **George**, at age 15, to begin a **career in the British navy** as a cabin boy, but his mother, **Mary Ball Washington**, refused.

George complied with his mother's wishes and returned home.

In 1748, the 16-year-old **George Washington** was employed by **Thomas Fairfax** to survey the western area of his vast estate.



In 1751, **Lawrence Washington** contracted tuberculosis.



In hopes that a change of climate would help him recover, doctors recommended he travel to **Barbados**, where his father-in-law had been Collector of Customs.

He brought along his 17-year-old half-brother **George**.



This was the only time that **George** left the American continent.

In **Barbados**, **George** contracted **smallpox**, but recovered. This providentially **inoculated George** so that he was immune during the **Revolutionary War**, where it is estimated that **more soldiers died of smallpox than in battle**.



Lawrence died in 1752 and his Mount Vernon estate eventually was inherited by **George**, making him one of the youngest and largest landowners in Virginia.



George became vestryman in **Truro Parish**, and was godfather in baptism to several nephews and a niece.

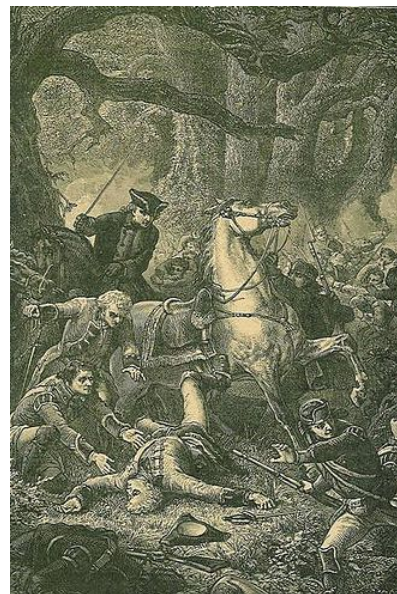


From 1753-1758, **George** served in the **French and Indian War**.

He was a colonel under **General Edward Braddock**, Commander of the British forces in America.



George miraculously survived the **Battle of Monongehela** in 1755. **Braddock** was killed, leaving George in command.



On July 18, 1755, **Washington** wrote from Fort Cumberland to his brother, **John A. Washington**:

"By the **All-Powerful Dispensations of Providence**, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had **four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me**, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me!"

Colonel Washington wrote to Fort Loudoun, April 17, 1758:

"The last Assembly ... provided for a chaplain to our regiment. On this subject I had often without any success applied to Governor Dinwiddie. I now flatter myself, that your honor will be pleased to appoint a sober, serious man for this duty. Common decency, Sir, in a camp calls for the services of a divine."



In 1759, **George** fell in love **Martha "Patsy" Dandridge Custis**, a 26-year-old widow and mother with two children, **John "Jacky" Parke Custis** and **Martha "Patsy" Parke Custis**.



Martha had inherited five plantations totaling 17,500 acres.



Martha's daughter **Patsy** died at age 16 of an **epileptic seizure** in 1773, while **George** held her in his arms. He wrote:

"The sweet, innocent girl entered into a more happy and peaceful abode than she had met in the afflicted path she had hitherto trod."

In 1775, after the Battle of

Bunker Hill, **George Washington** was commissioned as the **General of the Continental Army**.



He wrote to **Martha**, June 18, 1775:

"My Dearest ... It has been determined in Congress, that **the whole army raised for the defense of the American cause shall be put under my care**, and that it is necessary for me to proceed **immediately to Boston** to take up command of it.

You may believe me, my dear **Patsy**, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it ...

But as it has been **a kind of Destiny**, that has thrown me upon **this service**, I shall hope that my undertaking it **is designed to answer some good purpose** ...

I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that **Providence which** has heretofore **preserved and been bountiful to me**, not doubting but that I shall return safely to you in the fall."

On July 4, 1775, **General Washington** ordered:

"The **General** ... requires ... observance of those articles of war ... which forbid profane cursing, swearing and drunkenness; And ...

requires ... punctual attendance of Divine Services."



On October 2, 1775, **General George Washington** issued the order:

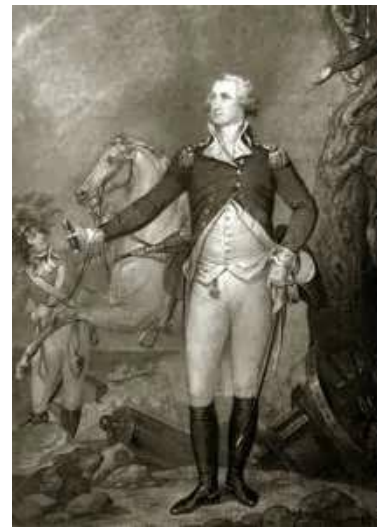
"Any ... soldier who shall hereafter be detected playing at toss-up, pitch, and hustle, or any other games of chance ... shall without delay be confined and punished ...



The General does not mean by the above to discourage sports of exercise or recreation, he only means to discountenance and punish gaming."

On February 26, 1776, **General Washington** issued the orders:

"All ... soldiers are positively forbid playing at cards and other games of chance. At this time of public distress men may find enough to do in the service of their God and their country, without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality."



Washington acknowledged God throughout the Revolution, as he wrote on May 15, 1776:

"The Continental Congress having ordered Friday the 17th instant to be observed as a **day of fasting**, humiliation, and prayer, humbly to supplicate **the mercy of Almighty God**,



that it would please Him to pardon all our manifold sins and transgressions, and to prosper the arms of the United Colonies, and finally establish the peace and freedom of America upon a solid and lasting foundation;

the General commands all officers and soldiers to pay strict obedience to the orders of the Continental Congress;

that, by their unfeigned and pious observance of their religious duties, they may incline **the Lord and Giver of victory** to prosper our arms."

On July 2, 1776, from his Head Quarters in New York, **General Washington** issued his General Orders:



"The time is now near at hand which must probably determine whether Americans are to be freemen or slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own;

whether their houses and farms are to be pillaged and destroyed, and themselves consigned to a state of wretchedness from which no human efforts will deliver them.

The fate of **unborn millions** will now depend, **under God**, on the courage and conduct of this army.

Our cruel and unrelenting enemy leaves us no choice but a brave resistance, or the most abject submission. **We have, therefore to resolve to conquer or die ..."**

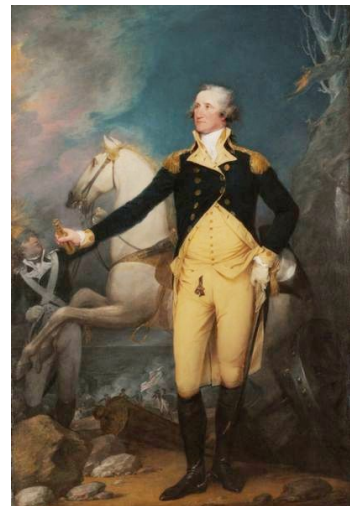
He continued:

"Our own country's honor calls upon us for a vigorous and manly exertion, and **if we now shamefully fail, we shall become infamous to the whole world.**



Let us rely upon the goodness of the cause, and **the aid of the Supreme Being in whose hands victory is**, to animate and encourage us to great and noble actions."

When the **Declaration of Independence** was written, a copy was rushed out to **Washington**, who was fortifying New York City.



He had it read to his troops, then ordered chaplains placed in each regiment, stating July 9, 1776:

"The General hopes and trusts, that every officer and man, will endeavour so to live, and act, as becomes a **Christian Soldier**, defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of his country."

As recorded in ***The Writings of George Washington*** (March 10,

1778, 11:83-84, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934), **George Washington** ordered:



"At a General Court Marshall ... Lieutt. Enslin of Colo. Malcom's Regiment tried for attempting to commit sodomy, with John Monhort a soldier...and do sentence him to be dismiss'd the service with Infamy.

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief

approves the sentence and with Abhorrence and Detestation of such Infamous Crimes orders Liett. Enslin to be drummed out of Camp tomorrow morning by all the Drummers and Fifers in the Army **never to return.**"

General Washington wrote at Valley Forge, May 2, 1778:



"To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to laud the more distinguished **Character of Christian.**"

To the **Delaware Indian Chiefs** who brought three youths to be trained in American schools, **General Washington** stated, May 12, 1779:



"You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, **the religion of Jesus Christ.**"

The tremendous victory at

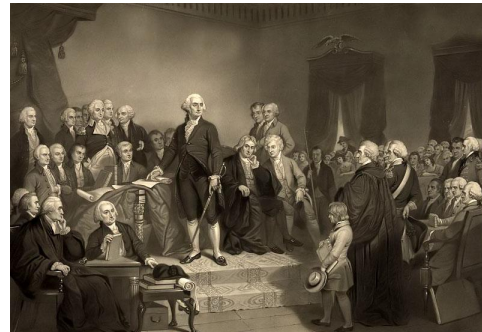
the **Battle of Yorktown**, October 19, 1781, securing America's independence, was personally bittersweet for **Washington**, as his wife's son, **John Parke Custis**, who had been an aide-de-camp, **died there of camp fever**, November 5, 1781.



Though never having children of his own, **George** agreed to adopt **John Parke Custis'** two young children as his own: **Eleanor "Nelly" Parke Custis** and **George Washington Parke Custis**, whose daughter, **Mary Anna**, married **Robert E. Lee**.



When the **Articles of Confederation** proved inadequate for the new nation **George Washington** agreed to preside over the **Constitutional Convention** in 1787.



He opened the Constitutional Convention with the line:

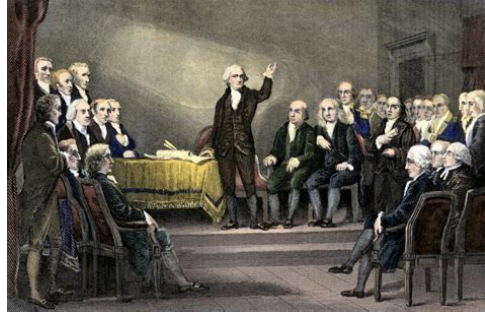
"The event is in the **hand of God**."

In 1789, he was sworn in as the **first President of the United States**.

President Washington thanked God for the Constitution, October 3,

1789:

"Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the **Providence of Almighty God** ...



I do recommend ... **rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks**, for ... the favorable interpositions of **His Providence** ... we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war ... for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish **constitutions of government.**"

On August 15, 1787, in a letter from Philadelphia to the **Marquis de Lafayette, Washington** wrote:

"I am not less ardent in my wish that you may succeed in your plan of **toleration in religious matters.**

Being no bigot myself to any mode of worship, **I am disposed to indulge the professors of Christianity** in the church with that road to **Heaven** which to them shall seem the **most direct, plainest and easiest, and the least liable to exception.**"

Washington sent a letters to the **Jewish Congregation** in Newport, Rhode Island, and in Savannah, Georgia, stating:

"May the same **wonder-working Deity**, who long since delivered the **Hebrews** from their Egyptian oppressors, planted

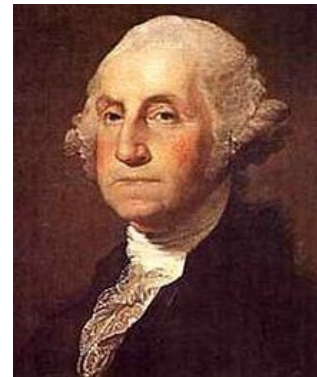


them in a promised land, whose providential agency has lately been conspicuous in establishing these United States as an independent nation, still continue to **water them with the dew of heaven.**"

In 1794, during the Whiskey Rebellion, **Washington** became the **only sitting President, as Commander-in-Chief, to lead the United States Army into the field.**



Washington chose only to served **two terms as President**, leaving an example which every succeeding President follow till **Franklin Roosevelt**, necessitating the **22nd Amendment.**



Washington continually had toothaches. By the time of his Inauguration, he had only one tooth.



Several dentists made make-shift dentures for him.

Washington had slaves from inheritance, marriage, and purchase, as did almost half of the founders.



As the influence of **Baptists, Methodists** and **Quakers** spread, many founders abandoned slavery -- similar to today, how more and more pro-abortion supporters are becoming pro-life.

Washington freed his mulatto man William:

"And to **my Mulatto man William** (calling himself William Lee) **I give immediate freedom** ... I allow him an annuity of thirty dollars during his natural life...& this I give him as a testimony of my sense of his attachment to me, and **for his faithful services during the Revolutionary War.**"

In his Will, **Washington** freed the rest of his slaves upon his wife **Martha's** death. **Martha** freed them the year after **Washington** died.

In his Will, **George** also made provision that **elderly and sick slaves** were to be **supported by his estate in perpetuity.**

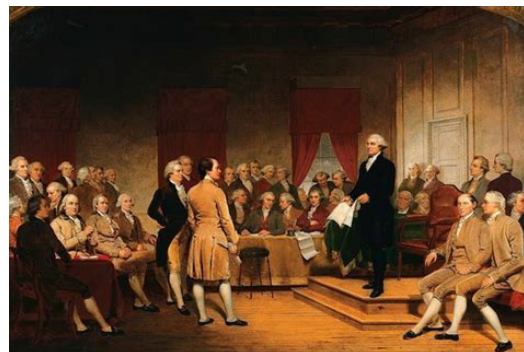
On May 10, 1786, **George Washington** wrote from to **Marquis de Lafayette:**



"Your late purchase of an **estate in the colony of Cayenne**, with a view of **emancipating the slaves** on it, is a generous and **noble proof of your humanity** ...

Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally **into the minds of the people of this country.**"

As the early country took shape, partisan politics became increasingly vicious, with **Washington** even being the victim of ungracious attacks.



He warned how ambitious politicians would be tempted to use crises as opportunities to usurp power.

In his **Farewell Address**, 1796, **Washington** warned of those who would usurp power and rule through executive orders:

"Disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an Individual ... (who) turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty ...

The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism ...

Let there be no change by **usurpation**; for though this, in one instance, may be **the instrument of good**, it is the **customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed**.

The precedent (of usurpation) must always greatly overbalance in **permanent evil** any partial or **transient benefit** which the use can at any time yield."

Earlier, in 1783, the American-born painter **Benjamin West** was in England painting the portrait of **King George III**.

When the **King** asked what General Washington planned

to do now that he had won the war.

West replied:

"They say he will return to his farm."

King George exclaimed:

"If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world."



Poet Robert Frost once wrote:

"I often say of **George Washington** that he was one of the few men in the whole history of the worlds who was not carried away by power."



Charles Francis Adams, the grandson of John Adams, wrote:

"More than all, and above all, **Washington** was master of himself. If there be one quality more than another in his character which may exercise a useful control over the men of the present hour, it is **the total disregard of self when in the most elevated positions** for influence and example."

George Washington added a warning in his **Farewell Address**, 1796:

"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to



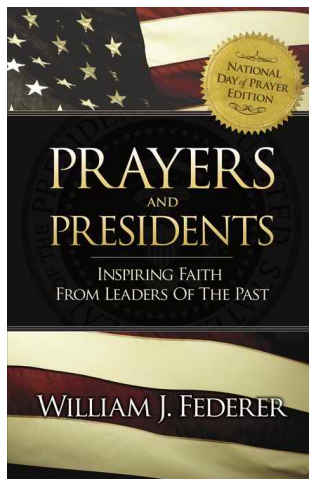
political prosperity, **Religion and Morality** are **indispensable supports.**

In vain would that man claim the tribute of **Patriotism**, who should labor to subvert **these great Pillars of human happiness."**

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