

In Their Own Words:
U.S. Presidents on Matters of Faith
adapted from *The Presidents and Their Faith* by Darrin Grinder and Steve Shaw

JOHN ADAMS

“I hate polemical politics and political divinity. My religion is founded on the love of God and my neighbor; on the hope of pardon for my offenses; upon contrition; upon the duty as well as the necessity of [enduring] with patience the inevitable evils of life; in the duty of doing no wrong but all the good I can; to the creation of which I am but an infinitesimal part.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON

“I never told my own religion, nor scrutinized that of another. I never attempted to make a convert; nor wished to change another’s creed.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained...Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same. God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered, that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes.”

HARRY S TRUMAN

“If Jesus Christ were to return he’d be on the side of the persecuted all around the world. He would not be wearing a golden crown and fine raiment, he’d most likely be wearing a ready-made sack suit and be standing on a street corner preaching tolerance, brotherly love, and truth. He’d be stoned and persecuted by the most liberal of our modern-day followers of the man with the golden crown. He’d probably be placed in a sanitarium in the free countries. He’d be shot, hanged or sent to a slave labor camp behind the iron curtain....He taught that every man is the creation of a merciful God, that men are sinners and that he had come into the world to teach sinners how to approach is Father.”

JOHN F. KENNEDY

“With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.”

GEORGE W. BUSH

“I believe in tolerance, not in spite of my faith, but because of it. I believe in a God who calls us not to judge our neighbors but to love them.”

BARACK OBAMA

“As Christians, we believe that redemption can be delivered—by faith in Jesus Christ. And the possibility of redemption can make straight the crookedness of a character; make whole the incompleteness of a soul. Redemption makes life, however fleeting here on Earth, resound with eternal hope....let us commit our spirit to the pursuit of a life that is true, to act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with the Lord. And when we falter, as we will, let redemption, through commitment and through perseverance and through faith—be our abiding hope and fervent prayer.”