

# James A. Garfield

## Quotes

*Men, People, Government, Country, Science, Money, War, Character,  
Inspirational, Ignorance, Law, Believe, Patriotic, Political, Life, Mean,  
Presidential, Party, Mind, Organization*

The truth will set you free, but first it will make you miserable.

~James A. Garfield

Poverty is uncomfortable; but nine times out of ten the best thing that can happen to a young man is to be tossed overboard and compelled to sink or swim.

~James A. Garfield

A brave man is a man who dares to look the Devil in the face and tell him he is a Devil.

~James A. Garfield

If the power to do hard work is not a skill, it's the best possible substitute for it.

~James A. Garfield

If wrinkles must be written on our brows, let them not be written upon the heart. The spirit should never grow old.

~James A. Garfield

I never meet a ragged boy in the street without feeling that i may owe him a salute, for I know not what possibilities may be buttoned up under his coat.

~James A. Garfield

I love agitation and investigation and glory in defending unpopular truth against popular error.

~James A. Garfield

Ideas are the great warriors of the world, and a war that has no idea behind it, is simply a brutality.

~James A. Garfield

The return to solid values is always hard... Distress, panic, and hard

times have marked our pathway in returning to solid values.

~James A. Garfield

If there is one thing upon this earth that mankind love and admire better than another, it is a brave man, - it is the man who dares to look the devil in the face and tell him he is a devil.

~James A. Garfield

Right reason is stronger than force.

~James A. Garfield

Things don't turn up in this world until somebody turns them up.

~James A. Garfield

It is the high privilege and sacred duty of those now living to educate their successors and fit them, by intelligence and virtue, for the inheritance which awaits them.

~James A. Garfield

I mean to make myself a man, and if I succeed in that, I shall succeed in everything else.

~James A. Garfield

Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained.

~James A. Garfield

I believe in God, and I trust myself in His hands.

~James A. Garfield

I will not vote against the truths of the multiplication table.

~James A. Garfield

We are apt to be deluded into false security by political catch-words,

devised to flatter rather than instruct.

~James A. Garfield

The lesson of history is rarely learned by the actors themselves.

~James A. Garfield

I have had many troubles in my life, but the worst of them never came.

~James A. Garfield

Nobody but radicals have ever accomplished anything in a great crisis.

~James A. Garfield

I am trying to do two things: dare to be a radical and not a fool, which is a matter of no small difficulty.

~James A. Garfield

The chief duty of government is to keep the peace and stand out of the sunshine of the people.

~James A. Garfield

Few men in our history have ever obtained the Presidency by planning to obtain it.

~James A. Garfield

The men who succeed best in public life are those who take the risk of standing by their own convictions.

~James A. Garfield

Most human organizations that fall short of their goals do so not because of stupidity or faulty doctrines, but because of internal decay and rigidification.

~James A. Garfield

The people are responsible for the character of their Congress.

~James A. Garfield

He who controls the money supply of a nation controls the nation.

~James A. Garfield

Whoever controls the volume of money in any country is absolute master of all industry and commerce.

~James A. Garfield

I must do something to keep my thoughts fresh and growing. I dread nothing so much as falling into a rut and feeling myself becoming a fossil.

~James A. Garfield

History is philosophy teaching by example, and also warning; its two eyes are geography and chronology.

~James A. Garfield

If you are not too large for the place you occupy, you are too small for it.

~James A. Garfield

We can not overestimate the fervent love of liberty, the intelligent courage, and the sum of common sense with which our fathers made the great experiment of self-government.

~James A. Garfield

For love of country, they accepted death.

~James A. Garfield

For mere vengeance I would do nothing. This nation is too great to look for mere revenge. But for security of the future I would do every thing.

~James A. Garfield

Statistics has been the handmaid of science, and has poured a flood of light upon the dark questions of famine and pestilence, ignorance and crime, disease and death.

~James A. Garfield

It is not right or manly to lie even about Satan.

~James A. Garfield

The right of private judgment is absolute in every American citizen.

~James A. Garfield

Territory is but the body of a nation. The people who inhabit its hills and valleys are its soul, its spirit, its life.

~James A. Garfield

In the minds of most men, the kingdom of opinion is divided into three territories,--the territory of yes, the territory of no, and a broad, unexplored middle ground of doubt.

~James A. Garfield

Of course I deprecate war, but if it is brought to my door the bringer will find me at home.

~James A. Garfield

[I]t would be unjust to our people and dangerous to our institutions to apply any portion of revenues of the nation or of the States to the support of sectarian schools.

~James A. Garfield

I am receiving what I suppose to be the usual number of threatening letters on the subject. Assassination can be no more guarded against than death by lightning; it is best not to worry about either.

~James A. Garfield

Commerce links all mankind in one common brotherhood of mutual dependence and interests.

~James A. Garfield

The sin of slavery is one of which it may be said that without the shedding of blood there is no remission.

~James A. Garfield

Suicide is not a remedy

~James A. Garfield

I would rather believe something and suffer for it, than to slide along into success without opinions.

~James A. Garfield

Ideas control the world.

~James A. Garfield

I love to deal with doctrines and events. The contests of men about men I greatly dislike.

~James A. Garfield

A law is not a law without coercion behind it.

~James A. Garfield

The separation of Church and State in everything relating to taxation should be absolute.

~James A. Garfield

A pound of pluck is worth a ton of luck.

~James A. Garfield

Justice and goodwill will outlast passion.

~James A. Garfield

Coercion is the basis of every law in the universe,--human or divine. A law is not law without coercion behind it.

~James A. Garfield

Mankind have been slow to believe that order reigns in the universe-that the world is a cosmos and a chaos.

~James A. Garfield

Swift defined observation to be an old man's memory.

~James A. Garfield

All free governments are managed by the combined wisdom and folly of the people.

~James A. Garfield

The divorce between church and state should be absolute.

~James A. Garfield

The ideal college is Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other.

~James A. Garfield

The civil service can never be placed on a satisfactory basis until it is regulated by law.

~James A. Garfield

The possession of great powers no doubt carries with it a contempt for mere external show

~James A. Garfield

Monuments may be builded to express the affection or pride of friends, or to display their wealth, but they are only valuable for the characters which they perpetuate.

~James A. Garfield



But for we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare... are to be found portrayed in it.

~James A. Garfield

The President is the last person in the world to know what the people really want and think.

~James A. Garfield

In the long, fierce struggle for freedom of opinion, the press, like the Church, counted its martyrs by thousands.

~James A. Garfield

The worst days of darkness through which I have ever passed have been greatly alleviated by throwing myself with all my energy into some work relating to others.

~James A. Garfield

History is constantly repeating itself, making only such changes of programme as the growth of nations and centuries requires.

~James A. Garfield

There can be no permanent disfranchised peasantry in the United States.

~James A. Garfield

Nobody but radicals have ever accomplished anything in a great crisis. Conservatives have their place in the piping times of peace; but in emergencies only rugged issue men amount to much.

~James A. Garfield

Honesty is the best policy, says the familiar axiom; but people who are honest on that principle defraud no one but themselves.

~James A. Garfield

Tortured for the Republic.

~James A. Garfield

The refunding of the national debt at a lower rate of interest should be accomplished without compelling the withdrawal of the national-bank notes, and thus disturbing the business of the country.

~James A. Garfield

Talleyrand once said to the first Napoleon that the United States is a giant without bones. Since that time our gristle has been rapidly hardening.

~James A. Garfield

No man can make a speech alone. It is the great human power that strikes up from a thousand minds that acts upon him, and makes the speech.

~James A. Garfield

They grow stiff in the joints. They get in a rut. They go to seed.

~James A. Garfield

At present, the most valuable gift which can be bestowed upon women is something to do which they can do well and worthily, and thereby maintain themselves.

~James A. Garfield

God reigns, and the Government at Washington still lives!

~James A. Garfield

History is but the unrolled scroll of prophecy.

~James A. Garfield

Heroes did not make our liberties; they but reflected and illustrated them.

~James A. Garfield

When the Divine Artist would produce a poem, He plants a germ of it in a human soul, and out of that soul the poem springs and grows as from the rose-tree the rose.

~James A. Garfield

A noble life crowned with heroic death, rises above and outlives the pride and pomp and glory of the mightiest empire of the earth.

~James A. Garfield

When the shadow of the Presidential and Congressional election is lifted we shall, I hope to be in a better temper to legislate.

~James A. Garfield

True art is but the anti-type of nature; the embodiment of discovered beauty in utility.

~James A. Garfield

[Science] is the literature of God written on the stars-the trees-the rocks-and more important because [of] its marked utilitarian character.

~James A. Garfield

To all our means of culture is added the powerful incentive to personal ambition, no post of honor is so high but the poorest may hope to reach it.

~James A. Garfield

Liberty is no negation. It is a substantive, tangible reality.

~James A. Garfield

There are some things I am afraid of: I am afraid to do a mean thing.

~James A. Garfield

Great ideas travel slowly, and for a time noiselessly, as the gods whose feet were shod with wool.

~James A. Garfield

My God! What is there in this place that a man should ever want to get into it?

~James A. Garfield

Whatever I may believe in theology, I do not believe in the doctrine of vicarious atonement in politics.

~James A. Garfield

..remember that under our institutions there was no middle ground for the negro race between slavery and equal citizenship.

~James A. Garfield

I found a kind of party terrorism pervading and oppressing the minds of our best men.

~James A. Garfield

Battles are never the end of war; for the dead must be buried and the cost of the conflict must be paid.

~James A. Garfield

Light itself is a great corrective. A thousand wrongs and abuses that are grown in darkness disappear, like owls and bats, before the light of day.

~James A. Garfield

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