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About 1,000 words
Usual Rates
Usual Rights

Dependence or Independence?

by

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Since stumbling upon this bit of Americana, I'm low man on the totem pole at our house, especially with my five grade-schoolers. Their reactions went like this -- "You didn't have to study that when you were in school. We already got 30 years more stuff to learn than you did, so what're you diggin' up that junk for?"

I answered with just a leer and stalked off. My ace-in-the-sleeve was this article which I won't let them read.

In my newspapering days, I ran across something that impressed me deeply. It's America's "Declaration of Dependence." Perhaps a relative few ardent students of history know of it, but I didn't and none of my friends or acquaintances did either.

To me this Declaration of **Dependence** packs more **punch** than the great Declaration of Independence which we celebrate with volatile American **spirit** every Fourth of July. Because, to my humble mind, there would be no **Independence** Day without it. What's more, it keeps alive my mental picture of those strong pioneers who made this land of mine the keystone of freedom in this mixed-up world of today.

These ancestors of mine (and yours) were, to ma, a tolerant, understanding, peace-loving bunch of folks who just wanted to be left alone to fashion homes and families. As you and I today, they worried and worked for a roof, some clothes, some food, a dab of tin, and a bit for rainy weather. And they had something else--a **strong** love for God and His Word. They asked Him to bless their labors, their hopes, their dreams, and they thanked Him for His gifts. When the going got tough, they asked Him to smooth the way. To them, He was real.

And when their Mother Country threatened the freedom they cherished so much, they got fighting mad, After the first battle of the Revolutionary War in **April 1775**, they knew for sure they had to drop the hoe **and shoulder** the rifle,

Before taking **up** the fight, they **took** time out to turn to Him. The Continental Congress was meeting in **Philadelphia**. **During** its second session, on June 7, 1775, it named a committee of three to draft a momentous resolution--a resolution practically unknown today.

They were William Hooper of North Carolina and John Adams and Robert T. Payne, both of Massachusetts. They summed up the feeling of the day by calling for a day of "public humiliation, fasting and prayer" to seek their Friend's help in this war with Great Britain. The Continental Congress accepted it and set the day--July 20, 1775. The resolution read in part:

"This Congress, considering the present critical, alarming and calamitous state of those Colonies, do earnestly recommend that Thursday, the 20th of July next, be observed by the Inhabitants of all the English colonies on this continent as a day of public humiliation, fasting and prayer; that we may with united hearts and voices, unfeignedly confess and deplore our many sins, and offer up joint supplications to the all-wise Omnipotent and merciful Disposer of all events, humbly beseeching Him to forgive our iniquities, to remove our present calamities, to avert these desolating judgments with which we are threatened, and to bless our rightful Sovereign, King George III, and inspire him with wisdom to discern and pursue the true interest of all his subjects; that a speedy end may be put to the civil discard between Great Britain and the American Colonies, without further effusion of blood..."

Dramatic, isn't it? And listen to the opening paragraph which preceded it:

"As the great Governor of the world by His supreme and universal providence, not only conducts the course of nature with unerring wisdom and rectitude, but frequently influences the minds of men to serve the wise and gracious purposes of his providential **government**; and being at all times our indispensable duty devoutly to acknowledge His **superintending** providence, especially in times of impending danger and public **calamity**, to reverence and adore His immutable justice, as well as to implore His merciful interposition for our deliverance, therefore..."

What a people, our forefathers!

How was this trust rewarded? Three days later George Washington, the Father of Our Country, was named commander-in-chief of the existing American forces and those to be raised.

Talk about faith! There was then no army, no navy, no organization, no war chest, no general. There wasn't even a friendly foreign nation able to defend these lovers of liberty. But they had Him.

Fortunately for the Colonies, for the oppressed of every land, for you and for me, those God-fearing representatives of the 12 original colonies did not forget Him. **With** God in their hearts, they turned back the mighty enemy. **They firmly planted the** seed of freedom which has flourished into a mighty nation whose governing principle is "freedom and justice for all."

They accomplished this because they **were** accustomed to asking for His help and because they knew what to request. They asked:

That the divine blessing may descend and rest upon all the country's civil rulers and upon the representatives of the people in their several **assemblies** and conventions.

That they be directed to wise and effectual measures for preserving the Union and securing the just rights and privileges of the colonies.

That virtue and true religion may revive and flourish throughout the land.

That America may soon behold a gracious interdisposition of Heaven for **the** redress of her many grievances, the restoration of her invaded rights, a reconciliation with the parent state on terms constitutional and honorable to both.

That her civil and religious liberties may be secured to the latest posterity.

And **they** closed their **unmatched** Declaration of Dependence on God with the recommendation that "Christians of all denominations assemble for public worship and abstain from servile labor and recreation on said day," meaning July 20, **1775**.

Where is this document? You can find it in Volume 2, Page **184**, American Archives, **by** Peter Force, as the minutes of the Continental Congress.

Oh, one more item. **I'm** out from under. My oldest sneaked a carbon of this story. After reading it, he **came** up to me with a sober look on his **13-year-old** face and said:

"Sorry, Dad. Guess you're right again. Darn it."

BACKGROUND FOR FREDERICK J. McCOOL

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