

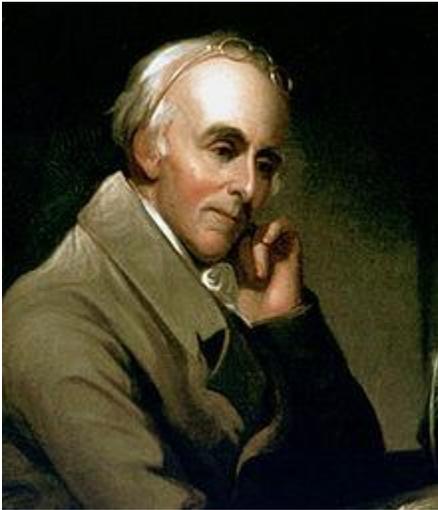
In The Fathers' Corner

by Keith Davis

Our country was founded by God fearing, religious and spiritual believers. We know this because their writings reflect their devotion and praise to the Creator and His Word as revealed in the Bible. They knew God was instrumental in the formation of the United States of America.

In each issue of the “People’s Pen”, we look at just a few of the many writings that exemplify the Founding Fathers’ beliefs.

Founding Fathers' Words:



One of our Founding Fathers was Benjamin Rush, who signed the Declaration of Independence, was a member of the Continental Congress, a doctor and a professor. A deeply religious man, he strongly advocated for a “Department of Peace” and said that the Secretary be a “*genuine republican and a sincere Christian, for the principles of republicanism and Christianity are no less friendly to universal and perpetual peace, than they are to universal and equal liberty.*”

He stated that this same Secretary establish and maintain free schools in every town and that he be responsible, “*for the talents, principles and morals of all his schoolmasters. Let the youth of our country be carefully instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic, and in the doctrines of a religion of some kind: the Christian religion should be preferred to all others; for it belongs to this religion exclusively to teach us not only to cultivate peace with men, but to forgive, nay more – to love our very enemies.*”

He also wanted the government to supply a Bible to every American family.

Finally, he said, “*Let the following sentence be inscribed in letters of gold over the doors of every State and Court house in the United States: THE SON OF MAN CAME INTO THE WORLD, NOT TO DESTROY MEN’S LIVES, BUT TO SAVE THEM.*”

Rush clearly knew of the First Amendment - *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,* yet saw no conflict with his proposals and the Constitution, and did not believe the government was “establishing a religion,” much in the same way other Founders viewed the true meaning of the First Amendment.

Indeed, Thomas Jefferson, whose “separation of church and state” letter to the Danbury Baptist Association was used by the courts to rule God “out of order,” was for teaching religious principles in schools as long as what was taught was common to all beliefs. He said, *“No religious reading, instruction, or exercise shall be prescribed or practiced inconsistent with the tenets of any religious sect or denomination.”*

Benjamin Franklin found the common ground with all denominations: *“Here is my creed. I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is in doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion.”*

While not a Founding Father, French historian and author Alexis de Tocqueville who wrote *“Democracy in America,”* recognized the universal reach of religion in America, both within the leadership and the citizenry. He wrote, *“Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it. Indeed, it is in this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion--for who can search the human heart?--but I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions. This opinion is not peculiar to a class of citizens or to a party, but it belongs to the whole nation and to every rank of society.”*

Yes, the loss of religious beliefs by our government will surely lead to the destruction of the Republic. Is it the intent of those who remove God from our lives to do that very thing? May God be with us in our battle to recognize such damage and to maintain our republic.