

fix its own date, and by their agreement January 29, 1777, was selected. In the autumn of that year came the surrender of Burgoyne, in consequence of which the first Continental thanksgiving day was appointed, December 18, 1777. On the 31st of October the Congress passed the following resolution, "That a Committee of three be appointed to prepare a recommendation to the several States to set apart a day for thanksgiving for the signal success lately obtained over the enemies of these United States." The members chosen were Mr. Samuel Adams, Mr. Richard Henry Lee, and Mr. Daniel Roberdeau, and thus Massachusetts, Virginia, and Pennsylvania were represented in the event, though the proclamation was probably drawn up by Samuel Adams. The action of Congress having been communicated to the governors of the several States, some reissued the proclamation with an appended recommendation, which was the early custom, rather than that at present practiced of a separate proclamation in each State. One proclamation in all the commonwealths had manifest advantages in producing a unity of sentiment in the observance, which, indeed, is as important now as then, though there are good reasons for the present custom. Considering the thanksgiving day as an institution, apart from its annual and harvest features, the day then appointed merits the honor of being the first national thanksgiving day in America. As such the proclamation is worthy of record.

IN CONGRESS

NOVEMBER 1, 1777.

*FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge*

*with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defence and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:*

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES, to set apart *THURSDAY*, the eighteenth Day of *December* next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgements and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favour; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance: That it may please him graciously to afford his Blessing on the Governments of these States respectively, and prosper the public Council of the whole: To inspire our Commanders, both by Land and Sea, and all under them, with that Wisdom and Fortitude which may render them fit Instruments, under the Providence of Almighty GOD, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human Blessings, INDEPENDENCE and PEACE: That it may please him, to prosper the Trade and Manufactures of the People, and the Labour of the Husbandman, that our Land may yield its Increase: To take Schools and Seminaries of Education, so necessary for cultivating the Principles of true Liberty, Virtue and Piety, under his nurturing Hand; and to prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth "*in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*"

And it is further recommended, That servile Labour, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.

*Extract from the Minutes,*

CHARLES THOMSON, SECR.