

Presidential Remarks Commemorating America's 150th Birthday

About the Declaration there is a finality that is exceedingly restful. It is often asserted that the world has made a great deal of progress since 1776, that we have had new thoughts and new experiences which have given us a great advance over the people of that day, and that we may therefore very well discard their conclusions for something more modern. But that reasoning can not be applied to this great charter. If all men are created equal, that is final. If they are endowed with inalienable rights, that is final. If governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, that is final. No advance, no progress can be made beyond these

propositions. If anyone wishes to deny their truth or their soundness, the only direction in which he can proceed historically is not forward, but backward toward the time when there was no equality, no rights of the individual, no rule of the people. Those who wish to proceed in that direction can not lay claim to progress. They are reactionary. Their ideas are not more modern, but more ancient, than those of the Revolutionary fathers....

The rights of the individual are held sacred and protected by constitutional guaranties, which even the Government itself is bound not to violate.

—Calvin Coolidge, in a speech titled “The Inspiration of the Declaration of Independence.” President Coolidge delivered the speech in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on July 5, 1926, at the Sesquicentennial Exposition, a world’s fair held for the express purpose of commemorating the 150th birthday of the United States of America and the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

For more information about the speech, the Declaration of Independence, and the Declaration’s biblical underpinnings, please visit wordfoundations.com/coolidge1926/.