
Commonwealth of



Massachusetts

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

HENRY J. GARDNER,

GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

A PROCLAMATION
FOR A DAY OF PUBLIC
FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

The assurances of Divine Revelation, the experience of many centuries, and the instinctive promptings of our inward natures, alike teach that man is dependent on Almighty Love for every blessing which the Past has stored up, the Present possesses, or the Future can expect, while the same illimitable Love, though often for inscrutable ends, ordains the reverses of life, and the downfall of empires.

And as it behooves Commonwealths, as well as individuals, to bow themselves at the feet of this over-ruling Power, I appoint, with the advice and consent of the Executive Council, THURSDAY, THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF APRIL NEXT, as a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer.

May we voluntarily humiliate ourselves, without delaying until some national scourge shall be commissioned to sober our thoughtless impulses, and remind our people of the immutable subserviency of human affairs to a divine economy.

May we remember that nations, like individuals, as they culminate in worldly power and wealth, are in danger of forgetting the God of their youth, and the austerer virtues which were the foundations of their prosperity.

And may we remember that all governmental policy, as well as individual action, is fatally erroneous, which does not conduct the daily affairs of life with reference to an overruling Providence, whose secret counsels will be as plainly developed in the future, as they have been illustrated in the past.

On that day, whether by their firesides, or in their accustomed places of public worship, let our people, remembering only the day, and its appropriate subjects of contemplation, confess with contrition individual and national transgressions, and humbly imploring divine forgiveness, realize that the promise of the blessing is in its measure, as the sincerity of repentance.

And may those called to minister at God's Altar, impressed with the truth that national transgressions can only be corrected by removing individual sins, abstain from political discussions, and secular considerations, to address the spiritual wants of the individual heart; that this season, consecrated by our fathers' prayers and practice, may not degenerate from a holy day to a holiday, nor its especial associations of humble gratitude and devout aspiration be lost in those material considerations which usurp so much of life; but may its hallowed influences, as of old, penetrate each heart, and the day become again indeed a day of Humiliation, Penitence and Prayer.

Given at the Council Chamber, in Boston, this seventeenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States, the eighty-first.

HENRY J. GARDNER.

By His Excellency the Governor, with the advice }
and consent of the Council. }

FRANCIS DEWITT, Secretary.

God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!