

Commonwealth of



Massachusetts.

By His Excellency

James Sullivan, Esq.

Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

# A PROCLAMATION,

FOR A DAY OF PUBLIC FASTING AND PRAYER.

**T**HE unchangeable nature of God assures to us seed time and harvest, and the exact returns of the seasons forever. This cannot fail to excite in our hearts a sublime devotion towards Him.

At the opening of the year, when the husbandmen cast the seed into the earth, in hope of a plentiful harvest through His goodness; when the merchants spread their commerce on the sea, with an anxious eye to His favour, it especially becomes us, in a public, solemn manner, to acknowledge our dependence, and to implore the blessing of Him who maintains the sun in his place to warm the ground; who scatters plenty on the field from His clouds; of Him, who hath bound the waters in a garment, and brings the winds from His Treasuries.

I HAVE therefore thought fit to appoint and set apart, and by and with the advice and consent of the Council, do appoint and set apart *THURSDAY, the seventh day of next April*, as a day of *PUBLIC HUMILIATION, Fasting and PRAYER*, in the Commonwealth; and I do request the people of the same, to assemble themselves, on that day, in their usual places of public worship; and there among other acts of devotion, to render thanks to Almighty God for His mercies: more especially that He has created them rational creatures with capacities to discern His existence and power, from His works; His wisdom and goodness from His government. That He has been pleased, yet more fully to reveal His benevolence to the human race, by a display of His attributes and perfections in the scriptures.— That the invaluable blessings of the gospel are freely enjoyed by the people of this state, allowing them, whilst it opens to them the high privileges of religion and virtue, to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, so that no power can insert itself between them and the supreme object of their worship, or impose upon them a confession of faith which their hearts do not approve.

THAT God has been pleased, in the course of His providence, to unite, and to raise the United States, to the rank of an independent nation; and has endowed them with wisdom to agree on Constitutions of civil government, with systems of jurisprudence, which, if wisely administered, and faithfully executed, cannot fail to assure freedom and happiness to the country.

THOUGH we are instructed by our holy religion, that our Father in Heaven knows all our wants before we utter them; yet we are also taught, that He has seen fit to make our prayers the condition on which He will bestow His favors, and the means to render us suitable subjects of them. The people will, therefore, on that day, unite their sincere and ardent prayers for their country. That God will be pleased to support us in our republican forms of government; to continue and strengthen our national union and respectability; that He will inspire our rulers to make morality and virtue the care of the civil and leg-

islative authorities. That He will guard us from covetousness, fraud, oppressions, envy and slanders, and all those crimes which are a reproach to, and have a tendency to destroy a community. That He will smile on the labors of our hands, and on our enterprizes in business, prospering our navigation and fisheries, so that at the close of the year, we may come before Him rejoicing in the continuance of His goodness, and uniting in the expressions of our gratitude for His favours.

THAT He will be pleased to guide our public Councils by His wisdom, in such a manner, that our nation may be relieved from its present embarrassments, and that our peace may be secured, and the independence and sovereignty of our nation be maintained without the calamities of war. That our success in business may induce us to acts of compassion and charity; so that while the poor are satisfied with bread, they may be encouraged, by laudable examples to the practice of industry and frugality; and the pleasure of doing good be greatly increased.

THAT the arts may be encouraged, as having a tendency to dignify the human character, as well as to ameliorate the condition of human life.

THAT our public schools, academies and colleges, with all other literary and religious institutions, may be faithfully and prudently conducted, and honorably maintained; so that knowledge in the sciences, may be cultivated under the laudable impression, that they are designed to raise man from earth towards heaven, and enable him to contemplate the divine perfections and attributes in a more exalted strain of thought.

I ALSO recommend it, that, with their devotion, the people shall unite true and sincere repentance for their sins; more especially that we have, in so many instances, misimproved our invaluable privileges, and disregarded those rules of morality, charity and benevolence, which the Author of our nature, our Supreme Benefactor requires of us, as the foundation of our public happiness. That we offer our fervent prayers to God, that He will, by His grace, enable us to walk before Him hereafter, in integrity and uprightness of heart; in the exercise of that righteousness by which alone a nation can be exalted, and in the practice of those virtues which are the strength of a community.

UNDER a train of solemn reflections of this nature, the mind will be devoutly raised to the throne of the high and holy One, whose prerogative it is to forgive our sins; who alone can crown the year with health, and fill it with plenty, and by whose grace only we can be made fit subjects of his mercy, and be blessed with public and private felicity.

UNNECESSARY labour will cease of course; recreations be laid aside; worldly mirth will be silent, and the day be observed as a day consecrated to religion and piety.

Given at the Council Chamber in Boston, this Fourth day of February, in the Year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and eight; and in the thirty-second year of the Independence of the United States of America.

James Sullivan.

By His Excellency's Command, with the }  
advice and consent of the Council. }

JONATHAN L. AUSTIN, Secretary.

God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!