

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

JAMES BUCHANAN,

President of the United States of America.

A PROCLAMATION

FOR A DAY OF

HUMILIATION, FASTING, AND PRAYER.

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TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

A RECOMMENDATION.

Numerous appeals have been made to me by pious and patriotic associations and citizens, in view of the present distracted and dangerous condition of our country, to recommend that a day be set apart for HUMILIATION, FASTING, and PRAYER, throughout the Union. In compliance with their request, and my own sense of duty, I designate FRIDAY, THE FOURTH DAY OF JANUARY, 1861, for this purpose, and recommend that the People assemble on that day, according to their several forms of worship, to keep it as a solemn Fast.

The Union of the States is at the present moment threatened with alarming and immediate danger; panic and distress of a fearful character prevail throughout the land; our laboring population are without employment, and consequently deprived of the means of earning their bread—indeed, hope seems to have deserted the minds of men. All classes are in a state of confusion and dismay, and the wisest counsels of our best and purest men are wholly disregarded.

In this the hour of our calamity and peril, to whom shall we resort for relief but to the God of our Fathers? His Omnipotent Arm only can save us from the awful effects of our own crimes and follies, our own ingratitude and guilt towards our Heavenly Father.

Let us, then, with deep contrition and penitent sorrow, unite in humbling ourselves before the Most High, in confessing our individual and national sins, and in acknowledging the justness of our punishment. Let us implore Him to remove from our hearts that false pride of opinion which would impel us to persevere in wrong for the sake of consistency, rather than yield a just submission to the unforeseen exigencies by which we are now surrounded. Let us, with deep reverence, beseech Him to restore the friendship and good-will which prevailed, in former days, among the people of the several States; and, above all, to save us from the horrors of civil war and "blood-guiltiness." Let our fervent prayers ascend to His Throne, that He would not desert us in this hour of extreme peril, but remember us as He did our fathers in the darkest days of the Revolution, and preserve our Constitution and our Union, the work of their hands, for ages yet to come. An Omnipotent Providence may overrule existing evils for permanent good. He can make the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He can restrain. Let me invoke every individual, in whatever sphere of life he may be placed, to feel a personal responsibility to God and his country for keeping this day holy, and for contributing all in his power to remove our actual and impending calamities.

JAMES BUCHANAN.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14, 1860.