

1857  
**STATE OF VERMONT.**

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**BY RYLAND FLETCHER,**

**GOVERNOR,**

**A PROCLAMATION.**

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THE instructive teachings of History, both sacred and profane, point unerringly to the certain destiny of the nation which sins against the Lord. The melancholy doom of those ancient monarchies, which trampled on the rules of justice and morality and turned their affections and services away from the one true God, is full of significant admonition to us. Those proud empires of the East, against which, as the reward of their sins, the Prophets of God were commanded to proclaim His righteous displeasure, have been blotted from the face of the earth, and their seats of grandeur and power converted into dreary deserts. There surely is a God, whose vengeance never sleeps over guilty communities; who fails not to visit with His judgments the people who trample on His law, disregard His Sabbaths and profane His name. Happy is that nation, whose recognition of the divine claims upon their constant devotion and faithful service does not require to be quickened by sore calamity, but which by timely penitence and humble confession secures the blessing of Heaven.

The hour of adversity is not the only fitting occasion for dependent beings to pause and consider their relations to Him, in whom alone they live. Prosperity brings its dangers, and duty enjoins us to turn from the pleasures of life to serious contemplation and humble confession of our manifold sins. We are now in the midst of plenty, enjoying in the fullest measure the highest civil and religious privileges; but whilst we are thus favored of Heaven, we are beset by public vices and individual sins, offensive to our Maker, and sure to bring upon us those calamities which have fallen upon other offending nations.

It is eminently fit that there should be set days and occasions, when the whole people of a State may assemble to make public confession of their sins and supplicate the mercy of their Creator and Judge. Our Fathers were wont to set apart a day, at the opening of the year, for contrite confession and solemn prayer, thus manifesting a becoming sense of the Divine claims upon them.

In the light, then, of holy Revelation, as well as in conformity with the hallowed custom of our ancestors, let the people of Vermont ever keep a day for such a worthy purpose.

To this end I do hereby appoint FRIDAY, THE TENTH DAY OF APRIL NEXT, as a day of public FASTING, HUMILIATION and PRAYER.

On that day let the people of this Commonwealth with one accord turn from their ordinary pursuits, and abstaining from all mere amusements, devoutly assemble in their respective places of worship and with united hearts and voices, in the name of our Saviour, in humble supplication, invoke the pardon of our individual and public offences.

Let prayer go up to the Giver of all good that He will crown the coming year with His mercies and pour out His blessings upon all our varied public and private interests. Let us earnestly pray that our nation may continue to enjoy its widely extended material prosperity, and may take no backward steps in the cause of Liberty—that Slavery may soon cease to disgrace and endanger our land, contradicting and impairing all the fundamental principles of our government—that every attempt to extend its baneful influence, from whatever source, whether emanating from the Legislative, Executive or Judicial departments of the nation, may be utterly confounded—that intemperance may soon cease its terrible ravages, and that every vice disturbing the well being of Society may be far removed; above all, that Christianity may accomplish its glorious purpose of raising man to his true dignity, and making “all the ends of the Earth see the Salvation of God.”

May that day prove such a fast as was required of the people of old, and be indeed “an acceptable day unto the Lord.”

*Given under my hand and the seal of the State, at Cavendish, this 18th 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.*

**RYLAND FLETCHER.**

*By the Governor,*

**WILLIAM G. SHAW, Secretary.**

