

Executive Speech
of
Thomas Chittenden
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Gentlemen of the Council and Assembly – You are so well knowing to the manifold favours and blessings bestowed on us, as a people, by the great ruler of the universe, that it would be unnecessary for me to recapitulate them. I would therefore only observe, that but a few years since we were without constitution, law or government, in a state of anarchy and confusion, at war with a potent foreign power, opposed by a powerful neighbouring state, discountenanced by the congress, distressed by internal dissensions, all our landed property in imminent danger, and without the means of defence.

Now your eyes behold the happy day, when we are in the full and uninterrupted enjoyment of a well regulated government, suited to the situation and genius of the people, acknowledged by all the powers of the earth, supported by the congress, at peace with our sister states, among ourselves and all the world.

From whence did these great blessings come? From God. Are they not worth enjoying? They surely are. Does it not become us as a people, to improve them, that we may have reason to hope they may be continued to us, and transmitted to posterity? It certainly does.

What are the most likely measures to be taken by us, as a people, to obtain this great end? To be a faithful, virtuous, industrious, and a moral people.

Does it not become us as the legislature, to take every method in our power to encourage virtue, industry, morality, religion, and learning? I think it does.

Is there any better method that can be taken by us, to answer this purpose, than by our own example, and having a sacred regard to virtue, industry, integrity, and morality, in all our appointments of executive and judicial offices? This is the day we have appointed to nominate all our subordinate, executive, and judicial officers, through the state, for the present year.

The people by their free suffrages, have given us the power, and in us they have placed their confidence, and to God, to them, and our own consciences we are accountable.

Suffer me, Sir, as a leader, as a father, as a friend and a lover of this people, and as one whose voice cannot be much longer heard here, to instruct you in all your appointments, to have regard to none, but those who maintain a good moral character, men of integrity, and distinguished for wisdom and abilities; in doing this you will encourage virtue which is the glory of a people, and discountenance and discourage vice and profaneness, which is a reproach to any people.