Simeon Baldwin Oration, New Haven 4 July 1788 (excerpts)

. . . The best system of government cannot insure freedom, riches, and national respect, without the vigilance, the industry and the virtuous exertions of the people. The labours of the patriot and the friend of humanity are not yet completed. It is their task to remove those blemishes which have hitherto sullied the glory of these States. We may feed our vanity with the pompous recital of noble atchievements—we may pride ourselves in the excellency of our government–we may boast of the anticipated glories of the western continent:—But virtue will mourn that injustice and ingratitude have, in too many instances, had the countenance of law–Humanity will mourn that an odious slavery, cruel in itself, degrading to the dignity of man, and shocking to human nature, is tolerated, and in many instances practised with barbarian cruelty.—Yes, even in this land of boasted freedom, this asylum for the oppressed, that inhuman practice has lost its horrors by the sanction of custom.

To remedy this evil will be a work of time.—God be thanked it is already begun. Most of the southern [Baldwin likely meant "northern"] & middle states have made salutary provision by law for the future emancipation of this unfortunate race of men, and it does honour to the candour and philanthropy of the southern states, that they consented to that liberal clause in our new constitution evidently calculated to abolish a slavery upon which they calculated their riches. It is the duty of every friend to his country to lead his fellow citizens to rational reflections upon these interesting subjects, to abolish as much as possible the vices peculiar to us as a nation and as individuals, and to disseminate still farther those principles of wisdom and virtue which form the pillars of republican government. . . .

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