HERALD OF GOSPEL LIBERTY

BY ELIAS SMITH.

THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1808.

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

To the Subscribers for this paper, and to all who may hereafter read its contents.

Beloved and Fellow Citizens.

The age in which we live may certainly be distinguished from others in the history of Man, and particularly, as it respects the people of these United States, the increase of knowledge is very great in different parts of the world, and of course there is an increase of Liberty among the people, and an increasing desire among certain individuals, accompanied with their fruitless exertions, to prevent them from enjoying what they have been taught belongs to them, as a right given by their Creator, and guaranteed by the government of the country in which we live.

The struggle which has and still continues to convulse the nations in the old countries, is in a great measure over here. Liberty as men, is what many are now making violent exertions to obtain, and others (though few in numbers) by every possible means are endeavouring to prevent.

This Liberty is in a great measure obtained in this country, to the great advantage of Military and the grief of thousands, who care not for the people; but while we glory in being a free people, and of being independent of the nations which endeavoured to deprive us of the rights which God has given us in common with all nations, multitudes are enslaved with the principles brought from Europe by those who first settled this country. Had George the third, when he withdrew his troops from this country, withdrawn all the principles respecting civil and religious affairs, which are in opposition to the rights of mankind, we should have been a much more united and happy people than we now are: but alas! they are left among us like the Canaanites in ancient times, to be overcome by little and little; and like the army of Gog, which fell upon the mountains of Israel they are to be buried by men employed for that purpose, while every passerby is to erect a monument, wherever he finds a bone in his way. It is not now a tyrannical government which deprives us of Liberty, but the highly destructive principles of tyranny which remain in a good government; and though these principles are not protected by law, yet men's attachment to them, in a free government, prevents the enjoyment of Liberty which God has given us, and which all might enjoy according to the Constitution of the United States. A member of Congress said to me not long ago (while speaking upon the state of the people in this country, as it respects Religious Liberty) to this amount, "the people in this country are in general free, as to political matters, but in things of religion, multitudes of them are apparently ignorant of what Liberty is." This is true, many who appear to know what belongs to them as citizens, and who will contend for their rights; when they talk or act upon things of the highest importance, appear to be guided wholly by the opinions of designing men, who would bind them in the chains of ignorance all their days, and entail the same on all their posterity.

The design of this paper is to shew the liberty which belongs to men, as it respects their duty to God, and each other.

It is an established principle with me, that the man who appears in any public service and is faithful to his trust, will have a double character; by the unjust and those who judge from the testimony of such, he will be considered a disturber of the peace, as turning the world upside down, and stirring up the people to revolt; but by the well informed lovers of truth, he will be considered a light to them who otherwise would set in darkness. There is no doubt in my mind but many will be displeased at what may appear in this paper from time to time, unless they own that, right is equal among all.

How difficult the task may be, which is now undertaken, is unknown to me, experience will shew this;—this however is my design, to have a steady and persevering regard to truth, and the general good of men; and to treat every thing in a fair and manly way; not scandalizing any, or doing any thing by partiality. Should any scandalize themselves by bad conduct, let them not charge it to me. If men do not wish to have bad things said of them, let them not do bad things. It is my design in the following numbers to give a plain description of the rights of men, and to shew the principle on which they are founded, and likewise to shew the opposite. There are many things taking place in the present day respecting religion, which will be noticed as they occur. A particular attention will be paid to the accounts of revivals of religion in different parts of the world, among the various denominations who call Jesus Lord, as far as it can be obtained.

A religious News-paper, is almost a new thing under the sun; I know not but this is the first ever published to the world. *

*This was the first religious newspaper in the world.

The utility of such a paper has been suggested to me, from the great use other papers are to the community at large. In this way almost the whole state of the world is presented to us at once. In a short and cheap way, a general knowledge of our affairs is diffused through the whole; and by looking into a News-paper, we often look at the state of nations, and see them rise into importance, or crumble into ruin. If we are profited in political affairs in this way, I do not see why the knowledge of the Redeemer's kingdom may not be promoted or increased in the same way. It appears to me best to make the trial. The liberal subscriptions for this work in these trying times, has encouraged me to begin it, hoping that others will find an advantage in forwarding the work by adding their names to the list of those who have already wished such a work to appear in the world.

There are many things which will be taken up which are not new, but are important, and which, if stated to the rising generation, will serve to give them a knowledge of that liberty for which their fathers bled, and for which they ought to contend.

It is the design of the Editor, in describing the nature of civil and religious Liberty, to come to the capacities of those whose advantages have been small, as to acquiring a general knowledge of the world.

It may be that some may wish to know why this paper should be named the "HERALD OF GOSPEL LIBERTY." This kind of Liberty is the only one which can make us happy, being the glorious Liberty of the sons of God which Christ proclaimed; and which all who have, are exhorted to stand fast in, being that which is given and enjoyed by the law of Liberty; which is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes free from the law of sin and death.

In this place, I give the meaning of the word Herald. This word is derived from the Saxon word Herediel, and by abbreviation, Herald, which in that language signifies the Champion of an army, and growing to be a name of office, it was given to him who, in the army, had the special charge to denounce war, to challenge to battle and combat, to proclaim peace, and to execute martial messages. The business of an Herald in the English government is as follows—"To marshal, order, and conduct all royal cavalcades, ceremonies at coronations, royal marriages, installations, creations of Dukes, Marquisses, Earls, Viscounts
Barons, Baronets, and dubbings of Knights, embassies, funeral processions, declarations of war, proclamations of peace, &c. to record and biazen the arms of the nobility and gentry; and to regulate any abuses therein through the English dominions, under the authority of the earl Marshal, to whom they are subservient. As this is the meaning of an Herald and as many such things ought now to be attended to, I see a great propriety in the name. The origin of Herald is very ancient.

Senator, is represented by Homer, as Herald of the Greeks, who had a voice louder than fifty men together. O may the voice of real liberty be heard above all the opposite sounds which can be made by tyrant kings, and priests!

**LIBERTY. NO. 1.**

IT was mentioned in the proposal, that a description would be given of the nature of civil and religious Liberty. These stand in connection with each other, and one cannot be enjoyed without the other. Where men are deprived of civil Liberty, they never enjoy the other.

Liberty, means a state of freedom, in opposition to slavery or restraint, and may be considered as either natural, civil, or religious.

The absolute rights of man, considered as a free agent, endowed with discernment to know good from evil, and with powers of choosing those measures which appear to him to be most desirable, are usually summed up in one general appellation, and denominated, the natural liberty of mankind.

This natural liberty, consists properly, in a power of acting as one thinks fit, without any restraint or control, unless by the law of nature; being a right inherent in us by birth, and one of the gifts of God to man at his creation, when he endowed him with the faculty of freewill. But every man, when he enters into society, gives up a part of his natural liberty, as a price of so valuable a purchase; and, in consideration of receiving the advantages of mutual commerce, obliges himself to conform to those laws which the community has thought proper to establish. This species of legal obedience and conformity, is infinitely more desirable than that wild and savage liberty which is sacrificed to obtain it. No man, that considers a moment, would wish to retain the absolute and uncontrolled power of doing whatever he pleases; the consequence of which is, that all other men would have the same power; in this way there would be no security to individuals, in any of the enjoyments of life.

Political or civil Liberty, which is that of a member of society, is no other than natural Liberty, so far restrained by laws (and no further) as is needful and expedient for the general good of the whole. Hence the law which restrains a man from injuring his fellow citizen, increases the civil liberty of mankind. Every causeless restraint of the will of a subject, whether done by one or more is tyranny, and every law concerning things indifferent, is a law destructive of liberty. How many such laws are there to be found in the history of nations? To mention a few may suffice.

In the ninth, and tenth centuries, the greatest princes in Europe wore wooden shoes, with long points to them. The Clergy who ruled, being highly offended, decreed against the long pointed shoes with great vehemence. The points however continued to increase, till, in the reign of Richard 2d. they were of so enormous a length, that they were tied to the knees, with chains, sometimes of gold, sometimes of silver. At one time the upper part of the shoes were in imitation of a church window. The long pointed shoes were called dragones; and continued in fashion for three centuries in spite of the bull's of popes, the decrees of councils, and the declarations of the clergy. At length the Parliament of England interposed by an act, A. D. 1463, prohibiting the use of shoes or boots with pikes exceeding two inches in length, and prohibited all shoemaker's from making shoes or boots with longer pikes under severe penalties. This was not sufficient; it was necessary to denounce the dreadful sentence of excommunication against all who wore shoes or boots with points longer than two inches.

What folly stands in connection with such tyrannical laws as these! This is like many of the clerical laws of ancient times.

Once in France potatoes were forbidden as an article of food. Once in Connecticut a fine of six pence was laid on every man who should smokc tobacco within so many rods or miles of any house.

Such laws as these, are now almost out of date in this country.

Religious Liberty signifies a freedom to believe in God, and to obey him according to the manifestation which he has made to man, in his works, in the scriptures, and by the spirit of truth, the manifestations of which is given to every man to profit withal.

Every kind of human law respecting religion, is inconsistent with real Religious Liberty, and the interference of the magistrate in matters of Religion, is the same as though they should make laws to bind us to our food, manner of preparing it, how and when it should be eaten, &c. The operations of the mind, are not, cannot be subject to the laws of men, no more than the light of the sun, the rain, wind, or seasons of the year can be under their control.

Liberty, either civil, or religious, has respect to something more than the name of liberty. Real liberty respects the rights of mankind in general, and this subject cannot be well understood, unless the rights of men are understood; this shall be the subject of the next number.
State of Religion in Portsmouth, and the towns in the vicinity.

Since last March to the present time, God has visited us with His Spirit in a remarkable manner. In Portsmouth and Newington, about one hundred have been baptized within a few months, who now walk in love. Etonum S. has baptized 127 within four months, chiefly in Portsmouth and within a few miles. The attention has been great in Newington—Ten have been baptized there lately. Several in Kittery, some in York—About twenty in Berwick—In Greenland there is a good work, four have of late been baptized—in Newmar-thor the work is increasing; several of late have been set at liberty to rejoice in God. There is some revival in Durham, and a great attention to hear the word. In Dover, the Lord going on in the north part of W

Extract of a Letter from a Brother in Woodstock (Vt.) dated August 5, 1808.

"Dear and Beloved Friend,

We need help from the Lord Jesus by the communications of his servants as frequently as they can gain permission from him, and especially from you.

There is an increase of the good work of the Lord going on in the north part of Woodstock, in Pomphret, Barnard, Bridgewater and Windsor. A goodly number have of late been baptized, both of converts and old professors.—Nine of late were baptized at the place where you baptized sister Davis; five of whom were congregationalists. It was supposed that 50 or 60 honest people attended, of men, women, and children. Notwithstanding the appointment was at 5 o'clock, A. M. I attend through much weakness—the people gathered in Br. M'Kinzie's door-yard, the people were so numerous, and so unexpected, for so short an exercise, that many of the brethren could not come near enough (for the press) to hear the candidates tell what the Lord had done for them. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest, for it is great, and labourers are few.

Opposition in the minds and conduct of many professors of religion is extraordinary. Some Elders and their Brethren have said that we, (meaning you and me and others in our fellowship) are persecutors of those that are established in the faith. This appears to me to be the last resource to turn in that way, in order to put a colour of blame upon our characters.

I verily thought our ultimate object was Christ—Union of saints to all who love his appearing—to follow peace with all men, and
REDEEMING LOVE.

HAD I a thousand mouths, a thousand tongues,
A thousand tongues, and a thousand tongues,
I'd sound redeeming love through all the world;
The love that gave me, first and second birth;
I'd tell to all creation's utmost space,
How great his goodness and how rich his grace;
Till wonder'st and wonder'st, till wonder'st and wonder'st,
Jebusah's Christ, God bless forever more.

ANECDOTAL.

THE celebrated Mr. Robert Robertson, (a Baptist minister) in England, much respected on account of his wit, Learning, and Religion, was often in the company of some of the first men in the kingdom. One day, being in company with one of them, the gentleman put this question to him—"Mr. Robertson, what is the reason that our ministers of the Church of England, preach well for a time after they first begin; but your ministers of the Dissenters continue to preach well through all their lives?"

I will tell you Sir, (said Mr. Robertson,) and then taking his bible, turned to John, 1. 1. and read "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." Now said he, when your ministers of the Church of England, begin to preach, they read this text as it is, "The word was with God and the word was God," and while they read so, they preach well. He then laid a Guinea on the last word of the verse, the God. Now (said he) after your ministers have preached a while, a rich living is presented to them; and, instead of, "The word was God," they begin to read, "And the word was Gold," this spoils their preaching. Our ministers are in general poor, and the people being obliged to support you ministers, are not able to do much for their own; this keeps them poor, and as they do not read, "The word was Gold," they read "The word was God," here they are called to look continually; and, in this way they preach WELL.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Those who hold subscriptions for the Herald, dated April 6th 1806, are requested to return them to the Environ at Portsmouth immediately, by mail or otherwise, in order that the subscribers may receive their papers.

Subscribers are requested to notice that one of the conditions of the Herald is fifty cents to be paid when the first number is delivered... This sum is necessary to enable the Editor to prosecute the business.

** The agents will receive the money.

September 1, 1806.