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WHOLE NO. 1.

GARY W. LLOYD, Editor

Our Country is the World, our Countrymen are all Mankind

L.D. BLISS, Printer

INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPER RESURRECTED FOR NEW ERA OF ABOLITIONISM

On January 1, 1831, the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison published the first issue of a broadsheet entitled *The Liberator*. Thereafter Garrison published weekly without fail for thirty-five years until its final edition, December 29, 1865. Also in that month, Secretary of State William H. Seward announced the ratification by the necessary number of states of the Thirteenth Amendment. Slavery was finally abolished throughout the United States of America.

To publish the first edition of our newspaper *The Liberator Today* on New Years Day, 2015 does not celebrate any of these anniversaries, but rather laments them. It recognizes a sesquicentennial hiatus, one hundred and fifty years of silence from the spirit of a man who declared in *his* first edition: "I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD." *The Liberator Today* is published with the premise that whereas the great historical legislation of the United States—whether the Thirteen Amendment (1865) or the Civil Rights Act (1964)—can put an end to slavery or segregation, only the gospel of Jesus Christ can abolish prejudice, hatred, and fear. "The slave," according to a famous observation of W.E.B. DuBois, "went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery." Abolition-ism has more ambitious, eternally-enduring goals than just abolition itself as a movement. The modern abolitionist's goals—characterized by the triumph of faith, hope, and love over the *slave power*—is illustrated in a Page Two article as our correspondent, A.O.B., examines the new masthead of our newspaper.

The Liberator Today is a new media broadsheet which will seek, through the spiritual discipline of *diakrisis* (discernment), to apply the gospel of Christ to a politics currently characterized by fear and hatred. Garrison's newspaper ended up with many subscribers from among freed blacks, but his intended audience was a nation

made up of white and privileged citizens. *The Liberator Today* assumes the same audience, albeit an audience that is 150 years older. A motto we will employ is "O White Man, love as Jesus Christ loved you!" We will eventually find a home online at www.theliberator.today, publishing once at the beginning of the week with new content, and then again at the end of the week with responses (e.g. letters to the editor) and extensions. The newspaper is published free-of-charge but paid subscriptions will assist the paper and give subscribers access to exclusive extras such as occasional white papers, e-books, podcasts, and video clips. "New Boston, KS" is one of the original names of Manhattan, KS to where correspondence can be directed to the editor at editor@theliberator.today.

-the editor

The Liberator Today as "Ressourcement"

Ressourcement is a French neologism which describes a movement "from a less perfect tradition to a more perfect tradition, a call from a shallower tradition to a deeper tradition, a backing up of tradition, an overtaking of depth, an investigation into deeper sources; a return to the source in the literal sense of the word" (poet and essayist Charles Péguy).

Consider "forming a more perfect union" by reading the U.S. Constitution *through* the Declaration of Independence, as Abraham Lincoln did, not the other way around as the slaveholding states did and our current Congress does. Lincoln employed *ressourcement*. Consider returning to how Jesus used and defined the words *love*, *thy neighbor*, or *your enemy*. Our current tradition (i.e. habits of thought, affection, and deed) of relating to Others needs to be overtaken by more perfect and deeper sources: Philadelphia of 1776, Boston of 1865, (and most importantly) Galilee of the first century.

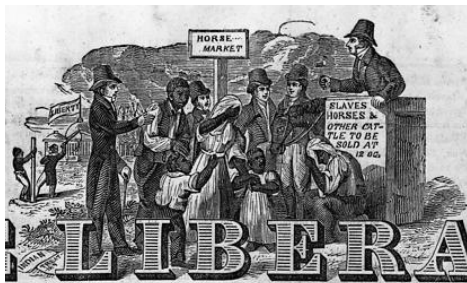
Hope and Love reflected in New Masthead

Editors abandon cynicism for new vision of freedom, peace, and justice

Both slave holder and slave find emancipation

“We present our patrons, to-day, a new head for the *Liberator*,” editor William Lloyd Garrison announced in the April 23, 1831 issue. “It is illustrative of a slave auction—the scene appropriately located at the the seat of the National Government.” The masthead was apparently designed by David Claypoole Johnston and Garrison describes its features: “On the left side are seen in the distance, the Capitol of the United States with the American flag (on which is conspicuous the word LIBERTY) floating on the breeze; a purchaser examining a negro, as a butcher would an ox; and a whipping-post, to which a slave is chained, who is receiving a severe flagellation.”

At this point, Garrison points out, “Down in the dust, our Indian Treaties are seen.” Garrison’s concern extended more broadly than just for blacks. For example, he was a pioneering advocate for Women’s Rights as well. Similarly, *The Liberator Today* is not exclusively, nor even primarily, about black-white racial relations. We are interested in all whom Jesus meant when he commanded us to “love thy neighbor” and “love your enemy.” As editor of *The Liberator Today*, I look at the skin of my hand and the mottled coloration that I see there (though I be purely of Northern European descent) doesn’t seem to justify my designation of being a “white man.” My “whiteness” is determined by how my own consciousness, reinforced by my culture, defines itself in contrast to a presumed Other. Jesus Christ died on the cross so that I might now, in his grace and power, love the Other. What does the Gospel look like applied to the mass incarceration of young black males, to the Keystone XL pipeline’s appropriation of ranch land, or to Dick Cheney’s justification of torturing Muslims? Let’s, with humility, seek to find out.



The *Liberator* masthead introduced on April 23, 1831.

Most reprints of Garrison’s notice of April 23, 1831 stop with what has already been stated, but he rather bitingly continues, “In view of these things, who will not exultingly exclaim, ‘Hail Columbia! happy land!’ Is it not delightful to know, that the the Fourth of July is at hand, when we may laud ourselves and our country above all nations, and indignantly point the finger of scorn at foreign oppression? O consistency! thou art a precious jewel!” Is that the tone which *The Liberator Today* is destined to adopt? Will the White Man as reader be constantly beaten over the head by our newly-linked presses here in New Boston, KS? Heaven forbid! Even Garrison found a new way... and a new masthead.

Two years before Hammat Billings went on to illustrate the pages of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), he contributed the masthead below to *The Liberator*. Take time to study it and be inspired. The scene of the slave market remains, but reading from left to right as one does with a newspaper, we are brought to Jesus Christ, the center of all things. “I have come to break the bonds of the oppressor,” Jesus proclaims. Below him, the banner reads, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” And then to the left is an archway of emancipation through whom all may enter. It remains a long way from the slave cabin to the flag-waving throng, but the way is visible. It is this spirit of love and hope, founded in the finished work of Jesus Christ, which will animate the pages of the *The Liberator Today*. All who wish to grow in their capacity to love, all who

wish to liberate themselves and others from oppression through the love of Christ, I invite you into our pages.

-A.O.B.

