

# Digital History

www.digitalhistory.uh.edu

---

[Close this Window]

## **The Liberator Comments on Nat Turner's Insurrection** **Digital History ID 358**

Author: Weld

Date: 1831

### **Annotation:**

On January 1, 1831, William Lloyd Garrison founded The Liberator, a militant abolitionist newspaper that was one of the country's first publications to demand an immediate end to slavery. On the front page of the first issue, he defiantly declared: "I will not equivocate--I will not excuse--I will not retreat a single inch-- AND I WILL BE HEARD." Incensed by Garrison's proclamation, the state of Georgia offered a \$5000 reward to anyone who brought him to that state for trial.

### **Document:**

The Insurrection

What we have long predicted,--at the peril of being stigmatized as an alarmist and declaimer,--has commenced its fulfillment. The first step of the earthquake, which is ultimately to shake down the fabric of oppression, leaving not one stone upon the other, has been made. The first drops of blood, which are but the prelude to a deluge from the gathering clouds, have fallen....

Read the account of the insurrection in Virginia, and say whether our prophecy be not fulfilled....

True, the rebellion is quelled. Those of the slaves who were not killed in combat have been secured, and the prison is crowded with victims destined for the gallows!... You have seen, it is to be feared, but the beginning of sorrows. All the blood which has been shed will be acquired at your hands. At your hands alone? No--but at the hands of the people of New-England and of all the free states. The crime of oppression is national. The South is only the agent in this guilty traffic. But, remember! the same causes are at work which must inevitably produce the same effects; and when the contest shall have again begun, it must be a war of extermination....

Ye accuse the pacific friends of emancipation of instigating the slaves to revolt.... The slaves need no incentive at our hands. They will find in their stripes--in their

emaciated bodies--in their ceaseless toil--in their ignorant minds...in your speeches and conversations, your celebrations, your pamphlets, your newspapers--voices in the air, sounds from across the ocean, invitations to resistance above, below, around them! What more do they need....

For ourselves, we are horror-struck at the late tidings. We have exerted our utmost efforts to avert the calamity. We have warned our countrymen of the danger of persisting in their unrighteous conduct. We have preached to the slaves the pacific precepts of Jesus Christ. We have appealed to christians, philanthropists and patriots, for their assistance to accomplish the great work of national redemption through the agency of moral power--of public opinion--of individual duty. How have we been received? We have been threatened, proscribed, vilified and imprisoned.... If we have been hitherto urgent, and bold, and denunciatory in our efforts-- hereafter we shall grow vehement and active with the increase of danger. We shall cry, in trumpet tones, night and day,--Wo to this guilty land, unless she speedily repents of her evil doings! The blood of millions of her sons cries aloud for redress! IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION can alone save her from the vengeance of Heaven, and cancel the debt of ages!

Copyright 2012 Digital History