

**Selections from *The Liberator*, Boston, Massachusetts, 3 September 1831**

(Use with Lesson 2)

THE INSURRECTION

In the first number of the *Liberator*, we alluded to the hour of vengeance in the following lines:

Wo if it comes with storm, and blood, and fire,  
When midnight darkness veils the earth and sky!  
*Wo to the innocent babe—the guilty sire—  
Mother and daughter—friends of kindred tie  
Stranger and citizen alike shall die!*  
Red-handed Slaughter his revenge shall feed,  
And Havoc yell his ominous death-cry,  
And wild Despair in vain for Mercy plead,--  
While hell itself shall shrink and sicken at the deed!

Read the account of the insurrection in Virginia, and say whether our prophecy be not fulfilled. What was poetry—imagination—in January, I saw a bloody reality... Turn again to the record of slaughter! Whole families have been cut off—not a mother, not a daughter, not a babe left. Dreadful retaliation! “The dead bodies of white and black lying just as they were slain, unburied”—the oppressor and the oppressed equal at last in death—what a spectacle!....

Ye patriotic hypocrites! Ye panegyrists of Frenchmen, Greeks and Poles! Ye fustian declaimers for liberty! Ye valiant sticklers for equal rights among yourselves!... Cast no reproach upon the conduct of the slaves, but let your lips and cheeks wear the blisters of condemnation!

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 every field, in every valley, on every hill top and mountain, wherever you and your fathers have fought for liberty—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? Surrounded by such influences,

and smarting under the newly made wounds, is it wonderful that they should rise to contend—as other “heroes” have contended—for their lost rights? It is *not* wonderful.

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 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!