

Look at this tragedy from any standpoint, and it cannot be justified in truth and reason. Those who endeavor to lift from it the heinousness of the crime, simply expose their sympathy with murder so long as its victims are "Mormons," and in setting forth their excuses for the horror, exhibit their faculty for invention and their cultivated love of falsehood. The dispatch from Governor Eli H. Murray, copied in last evening's News from the San Francisco Bulletin, contains a plain manifestation of that spirit which has led to the mobocracy in Tennessee.

The Post rightly traces the incitement to these murders to intemperate agitation and speeches about the "Mormons." These, however, do not originate in Washington. What is said at the national capital are but echoes of the sounds that emanate from Salt Lake City. Not only a disreputable, corrupt, lying and murder-advocating sheet, and mercenary, discomfited and unscrupulous sectarian preachers send out falsehood, misrepresentation and inflammable advice which are copied by other papers and repeated by other preachers, and so reach the rabble supplemented with highly colored tales, but abominable slanders have been backed with the official endorsement of Eli H. Murray as Governor of Utah, and this has helped to gain credence for these infamous libels.

The untruths contained in statements he has made for the press in his official capacity, with others expressed in official documents, have done their part in stirring up the lawlessness which meets the peaceful efforts of our Elders in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. During his visit to Kentucky, as a change from his work of maligning the "Mormons" at the extreme East, he publicly harangued the populace in that State in the neighborhood where our missionaries were laboring, and provoked so much hostility that subsequently they had to suspend their preaching for a season. His utterances were reported by persons present as vile in the extreme, and they were of such a character that the local paper, anxious as it was to publish anything anti-"Mormon," suppressed the account of his speech on that occasion.

In his hypocritical dispatch to the Governor of Tennessee, Governor Murray charges the martyred Elders with being the agents of "organized crime." Why, if not for the purpose of palliating their inhuman murder? Why pretend in one breath to endorse official efforts to punish the murderers, and in the next offer an implied excuse for their blood-guiltiness? What has the alleged infraction of a national law in Utah to do with wilful murders in Tennessee? And if the Governor really regretted the killing of these preachers of the Gospel, why thrust in his dispatch the wilful falsehood that they were sent out as the agents of "organized crime?" This term is one of his favorite expressions. It is a libel on the "Mormon" people as a body, and when used in the present connection is most infamous and mean. The term has no correct application here, and when extended to the Elders who give up home and family, business and comfort, to spend their time and talents gratuitously to turn their fellow-creatures from sin to righteousness, it is execrable and malignant.

In answer to the charges which have been trumped up against the Elders by way of excuse for the crimes of their assassins, we here present the petition to the Governor of Tennessee, signed and sworn to by men who know of what they speak. It not only gives a plain narration of the massacre, but a truthful statement of the mission of the Elders in the Southern States:

PETITION TO GOVERNOR BATE.

To His Excellency, Wm. B. Bate, Governor of Tennessee:

Sir—We, the undersigned citizens of the United States, would respectfully represent that an atrocious crime was committed on Sunday, Aug. 10th, 1884, at the house of James Condor, on Cane Creek, Lewis County, State of Tennessee, by which the laws of this State were shamefully outraged, resulting in the killing of five persons and the serious wounding of another; others narrowly escaping with their lives, two of the undersigned, viz: W. H. Jones and Henry Thompson, being among the latter number.

Before relating the circumstances of the outrage we would state that Henry Thompson was at the house of James Condor at the time of the killing. W. H. Jones was captured by the mob just previous to their committing the murder, and B. H. Roberts visited the place of slaughter Saturday, Aug. 16, and had an opportunity to make inquiries of the parties who are acquainted with what occurred. From these sources of information it appears that for some twenty years or more, Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have occasionally passed through Hickman County, Tenn., preaching their doctrines and visiting friends and members of their church who live in said county; but of late years the Elders have more frequently visited that section of the country, and have extended the borders of their operations. About six or seven years ago some of said Elders made their way to Cane Creek, Lewis County, and succeeded in organizing a branch of their church at that place.

These converts to the faith of the Latter-day Saints have lived in peace with their neighbors, interfering with no one, but have brought upon themselves the sneers of the bigoted by becoming identified with so unpopular

a religion as that generally denominated "Mormonism." Elders have preached regularly on Cane Creek, through this summer, and W. S. Berry and Henry Thompson had an appointment to preach at the house of James Condor, one of the members of their church, on Sunday, August 10th, at 11 o'clock a.m. The latter part of the week preceding August 10, Elders Berry and Thompson were unexpectedly joined by Elders Gibbs and Jones, who had been on an extended tour through some of the counties of Middle and West Tennessee, also going into Mississippi. Their business was to visit the leading men in the counties they passed through, and lecture in court-houses and other halls they might secure, representing the historical, social and political phases of the "Mormon question," disabusing the public mind of erroneous impressions received concerning the Latter-day saints by giving correct information as to their doctrine, way of life, etc. Elders Gibbs and Jones joined Berry and Thompson as aforesaid, and on Sunday morning, three of them, Gibbs, Thompson and Berry, met at the house of James Condor, a short time before the hour of service, and as several friends and workers came they engaged in singing and pleasant conversation.

Elder Jones had stopped about a mile above Condor's residence at a Mr. Thomas Garrett's to read part of a discourse delivered by some prominent Elder of the Church. About three-quarters of an hour before the time for preaching to commence, he started for Condor's, but had not proceeded far when he was surrounded by a mob of disguised men, armed with shot-guns and pistols, who ordered him to throw up his hands, which he did, assuring them he had no weapons. They compelled him to climb a fence into a cornfield, and here they searched him. He was taken through the cornfield by the mob, being occasionally punched with the muzzles of their guns. After passing through the cornfield they halted and questioned Jones further, and again left, taking with them all their party but one, who was left to guard Jones, with orders to shoot him if he tried to get away.

Some little time after the mob had gone Elder Jones entered into conversation with his guard, who finally told him that he intended to let him escape, and ordered him to start through the woods. Jones did so, his guard following him. They had not gone far when they heard a gun fired in the direction of Condor's house, and, after a moment's pause, several more guns, and shortly afterwards some eight or ten shots in quick succession, at which Jones' guard exclaimed: "My God! they are shooting among the women and children! Don't you hear them scream?" Jones was then ordered to run, which he did, his guard following for some distance, pistol in hand. When they came to a road, Jones and his guard separated, the latter allowing the Elder to escape.

In the meantime the mob rushed up to Condor's house and part of them seized upon James Condor, the owner of the house, who was standing at his gate, the rest going on to the house. Condor shouted to his two sons, who were out in the orchard, to get their guns. One of the men, David Hinson, entered the front door of the house, crossed the room and began taking down the gun hanging above the back door, just as Martin Condor, a boy of nineteen, reached it; but Hinson got the gun and shot Elder Gibbs, the charge taking effect under his arm, and killing him instantly. Martin Condor began struggling with Hinson, and a gun was presented at Elder Thompson, which Elder Berry clutched with both hands, holding it fast, and Elder Thompson ran out of the back door and escaped to the woods. At the same time some one shot Elder Berry, and he died without a groan. While this transpired, the struggle was going on between Hinson and Martin Condor. Hinson drew a revolver, which he snapped at Condor, but it failed to go off. Someone else then shot young Condor, and Hinson stepped out of the front door. Just then J. R. Hudson, half brother to Martin Condor, came down from the loft where he had been after his gun. Two men tried to grapple him, but he succeeded in wrenching away sufficiently to shoot David Hinson. As Hinson fell, some one said, "I'll have revenge," and shot Hudson, who died an hour later. After Hudson was shot, the part of the mob outside rushed to the window and fired a volley through the shots entering the body of Elder Berry and wounding Mrs. Condor in the hip. The mob now retired, taking the body of Hinson with them.

The mob did not number more than twelve or eighteen. They were disguised with masks, fantastic hats, coats and pantaloons of bright colors, and were more or less under the influence of liquor. Great prejudice exists against the Latter-day Saints or "Mormons" as they are vulgarly called, because of the many false statements made about them, and misrepresentations which are scattered broadcast, and because the people generally are unacquainted with the true situation of affairs in Utah, prejudice completely closing their ears to what the Latter-day Saints may have to say in their own defense, or what others may have to say for them. Under these circumstances, ridiculous and indecent acts are charged against them, and it is beyond their power to correct them or prevent their mischief. So these things go on creating public sentiment against

them until it culminates in acts of mob violence, such as this tragedy on Cane Creek.

It has been reported and quite extensively published throughout the South, that the "Mormons" have in several instances baptized women in a nude state; that they have broken up families, that being their special mission; that they are seeking to establish polygamy in this and other States; that the women converts are initiated by degrees into prostitution, and that the elders are commonly licentious and corrupt—these things being now brought forward as an excuse for those who do them violence.

Were we in a community where we were known we would not stoop to notice these vile slanders, as they would be beneath our notice, and would not be received as true, but we are in a land of strangers whose minds are prejudiced against us, and who are prepared to believe anything, however ridiculous or absurd, concerning a "Mormon," and this must excuse us for denying the foul charges.

1. No nude baptisms have ever occurred, neither would such indecency be allowed in the Church.

2. We have not broken up families or caused man and wife to separate, as we believe the believing wife should bear with the unbelieving husband, and vice versa, fulfilling their covenant with each other, as made at the marriage altar. We do not baptize a woman against the expressed wishes of her husband, nor children under age contrary to the wishes of their parents or guardians.

3. No effort whatever is being made to establish polygamy in this or any other State, though it is never denied that plurality of wives under proper regulations and restrictions is believed in by the Latter-day Saints; but those, to us, sacred obligations, can only be entered into in the Temple of God, erected for such purposes, and as there are no Temples here, there are no plural marriages.

4. Concerning the charge of Elders prostituting women, we deny it. It is untrue. Every Elder that leaves Utah as a missionary is under sacred obligations to be virtuous. As a proof of this we insert a clause from a letter of instructions to the presidents of conferences and traveling Elders in the Southern Mission, published in January, 1884, and sent to all Elders in the Southern States, by Elders John Morgan and B. H. Roberts.

"You will remember, brethren, that we are representatives of the Kingdom of God, and as such it behooves us to walk wisely and circumspectly in all things, keeping ourselves unspotted from the sins of the world, avoiding all excessive light-mindedness, and the very appearance of evil; for we are under the most sacred obligations to preserve our chastity and to maintain the vows and covenants we have made in holy places, which, if broken or transgressed, place us in a position of misery, from which there is no redemption. In fact, we should exemplify the gospel in our lives, and preach it by example as well as by precept."

In addition to this we append one of our articles of faith:

"We believe in being honest, true, virtuous, chaste, benevolent, and in doing good to all men. If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report, or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."

It is true that our religion is unpopular, and in many respects different from the orthodox religions of this nation; but we understand that we have the right to worship God according to the dictates of our consciences, so long as we trespass not upon the rights of others—these views being based upon the first amendment to the Constitution, which says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Certainly, if Congress has no power to prohibit the free exercise of religion, individuals and mobs have no right to interfere in the matter.

We also understand that we are at liberty to freely express our views, as there is a provision in the Constitution to the effect that the freedom of speech and of the press shall not be abridged.

Under these guarantees of religious liberty and freedom of speech the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have traveled through your State preaching what they believe to be the gospel of Jesus Christ; and in doing so they have not violated any of your State laws, and therefore should be protected by the law; and even if they had violated the laws, their faults are open to the law, and the law, not mobs, should correct them."

This atrocious deed committed on Cane Creek, which some seek to palliate because they consider any and every means sanctified that will drive the "Mormons" from the State, will leave a blot upon the escutcheon of the justly proud old State of Tennessee, if the State and county officers do not make every proper effort to drag to justice the murderers of these innocent men, and, furthermore, should the State and county officers remain inactive, it would give encouragement to mob violence, which, if allowed to go "unwhipped of justice," would ere long subvert good government, destroy liberty, and make a mockery of justice.

We therefore petition your Excellency to offer a reward for the detection and arrest of any or all of the parties engaged in the mobbing on Cane Creek,

Lewis County, on the 10th day of August, 1884. Very respectfully,

B. H. ROBERTS,
J. G. KIMBALL,
WM. H. JONES,
HENRY THOMPSON,
W. E. ROBINSON.

Nicholson House, Nashville, Tenn., August 20, 1884.

State of Tennessee, Davidson County.

Personally appeared before me, Jas. Everett, an acting notary public in and for said county, B. H. Roberts, J. G. Kimball, Wm. H. Jones, Henry Thompson and W. E. Robinson, and make oath that the attached is correct according to the best information they have.

Witness my hand and official seal of office in the city of Nashville, Tenn., this 20th day of August, 1884.

JAMES EVERETT,
Notary Public.

In answer to our explanation, corroborated in the foregoing petition, that our missionaries do not preach or join or practise plural marriage outside of Utah, it is claimed that they deceive the people in regard to this doctrine. This is not any more true than the charge that the object of our Elders is to convert the people to polygamy. It is never denied by them that celestial marriage is a part of the "Mormon" creed. It is explained where information is desired. But, as Elder Roberts and the petition show, it can only be administered in sacred places in Zion. But the question is then put with a purpose, "Do not your Elders require those people in the South who receive their teachings to follow them to Utah, and if so, what then?" In reply to that we will quote further from the letter of instructions to the Elders, published by Elders Morgan and Roberts who are in charge of the Southern States mission:

Concerning the gathering of the Saints, it is desired that you counsel them to go to the settlements of our people in San Luis Valley, Colorado, instead of to Utah. There are a number of reasons why this should be done. In the first place it is the desire of the brethren of the authorities that they should gather there, and that of itself is reason sufficient, but there are others also. The Saints who come from the South, as a rule, are poor, and it would be difficult for them to secure homes in Utah; whereas, in Colorado, it is an easy matter, as they can obtain land at government prices. Besides this they will be settling among a people who are acquainted with their customs, and who can sympathize with them, and assist them better than those can who are unacquainted with their habits and condition. Particularly would we counsel the Elders to refrain from advising or persuading the emigrating Saints to pass the gathering place in Colorado in order to come to the localities where they themselves reside. In this connection, we would advise that you do not hold out material advantages as inducements to the Saints to gather out of Babylon. If they gather to the place appointed, let it be for the Gospel's sake, because God has commanded it, and that they and their children may be more perfectly instructed in the things of God and His Kingdom.

So the converts from the South gather to Colorado, where plural marriage is not practised, instead of coming to Utah. This effectually disposes of the charge that the object of our missionary work there is to "obtain supplies for harems." The reason why our malicious opponents make this charge is because their purblind minds dwell on nothing but lust. They cannot look upon plural marriage, or indeed any kind of marriage, except from an animal standpoint. And they cannot conceive of any other object as the aim and purpose of our missionaries except to gather in women. And yet the facts stare them in the face that the masses of the converts from abroad come here as families, the lame, the feeble, the aged and the blind included. But those who thus assail us and our motives do not want to recognize the facts nor yield to the truth, but only to lie and deceive and arouse the antagonism abroad which they feel in their own hearts, and which if they but dared they would manifest as it blazed out in the massacre in Tennessee. But they are in too small a minority. All they can do is to stir up others to the deeds they dare not perform themselves, and to pursue the coward's part of abusing and reviling a people who they know will not retaliate by violence. And even they should remember that there are limits to human patience and bounds to the most enlarged forbearance.

We have the greatest pity mingled with the most profound contempt for those miserable wretches, official, clerical and literary, who shed crocodile tears about lawlessness in the South, while they grin with joy over the slaughter of the Elders, and, with the caution common to their cowardice, applaud the deed only by the excuses implied in their false charges against the slain. "Verily they will have their reward."

Russian efforts to evangelize the Greek church are futile. Some years since a church was established, with a few members, in New York City. The parent organization after a time became discouraged and cut off supplies. The resident pastor then became Presbyterian. Later a mission was started, which last week shared the fate of its predecessor, and now no Greek church exists on American soil.

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