

# THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

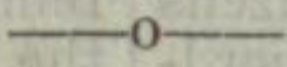
“HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD, O YE NATIONS, AND DECLARE IT IN THE ISLES AFAR OFF, AND SAY, HE THAT SCATTERETH ISRAEL WILL GATHER HIM, AND KEEP HIM, AS A SHEPHERD DOTH HIS FLOCK.”—*Jeremiah xxxi, 10.*

No. 34, Vol. XLI.

Monday, August 25, 1879.

Price One Penny.

## THE MURDER OF ELDER JOSEPH STANDING.



In order to present to our readers a somewhat connected narrative of this cold-blooded crime, we make the following extract from an article which appeared in the *Deseret News* of July 12th :

On the 8th of July, Brother Standing wrote to Elder Morgan from Ludville, Picken's County, that he would leave in a day or two with Brother Rudger Clawson, to attend Conference at Rome, State of Georgia, and would call by the way at Varnell's, which is about equi-distant from Ludville and Rome. On the 15th inst. he wrote from Spring Place, Murray County, about half way to Varnell's, stating that he and Brother Rudger would stay there a few days, then go to Varnell's and spend a day or two with the Saints, and accompany them to Conference at Rome.

Previous to this, in consequence of mobocracy at Varnell's, he had written the following letter to the Governor of Georgia :

“Van Zant Store,  
Fannin County, Georgia,  
June 12th, 1879.

Dear Sir, — As an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints, commonly called “Mormons,” I take this occasion to address a few lines to you as the highest officer of the State.

I have recently received several letters from members of our denomination residing at Varnell Station, Whitfield County, informing me that elders of my profession have been obliged at times to flee for their lives, as armed men to the number of 40 and 50 have come out against them, and have also on various occasions entered their houses in search of said elders.

I am fully aware, dear sir, that the popular prejudice is very much against the “Mormons,” and that there are minor officers who have apparently winked at the condition of affairs above referred to. But I also am aware that the laws of Georgia are strictly opposed to all lawlessness, and extend to her citizens the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience.

History, however, repeats itself, and the laws, where prejudice exists, are not always executed with impartiality.

A word or line from the Governor would undoubtedly have the desired

effect. Ministers of the Gospel could then travel without fear of being stoned or shot, and the houses of the Saints would not be entered into in defiance of all good law and order.

Your kind attention to this matter will be duly appreciated by

Your humble and obedient servant,  
JOSEPH STANDING,  
Presiding Elder of the Georgia  
Conference.

To his Excellency Gov. Colquitt,  
Atlanta, Georgia."

To this he received the following reply :

"Atlanta, Georgia,  
June 21st, 1879.

*Mr. Joseph Standing.*

Van Zant Store, Georgia.

Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 12th inst., the Governor directs me to say that your statement is entirely correct, that 'the laws of Georgia are strictly opposed to all lawlessness, and extend to her citizens the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience.'

Under the provisions of our State Constitution, the reformation of religious faith, or of opinion on any subject, cannot legitimately be the object of legislation, and no human authority can interfere with the right to worship God according to the requirements of conscience. So long as the *conduct* of men shall conform to the law, they cannot be molested, and, even for non-conformity thereto, they can be interfered with only as the law may direct. No individual or combination of individuals can assume to vindicate the law. Courts and juries are instituted for that purpose, and to them alone is committed the office of legally ascertaining the perpetration of crime, and of awarding punishment therefor.

The Governor regrets to hear the report you give from Whitfield County. He will instruct the State Prosecuting Attorney for that district to inquire into the matter, and if the report be true, to prosecute the offenders.

I am, sir,

Very respectfully yours,

J. W. WARREN,

Sec. Executive Department."

The following appeared in the *News* of August 1st :

ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON'S ACCOUNT.

We had a call this morning from Elder Rudger Clawson, who arrived home last evening with the body of his murdered companion, Elder Joseph Standing. The public are already in possession of various accounts of the assassination, but the narrative of Elder Clawson, who was present when the murder was committed, and narrowly escaped a similar fate himself, will no doubt prove interesting to those who desire to know the whole truth. From what can be learned, the horrid act was instigated by the preaching of three "Christian" ministers, two Methodist and one Baptist, who, jealous of the increasing success attending the labors of the "Mormon" missionaries in that region, had, in the heat of their holy passion, let fall remarks which were seized upon by the ignorant perpetrators of the act as an incitement to their wicked deed. Corroborative evidence of this is furnished in the fact that one of the band of assassins was a Baptist deacon, by name Benjamin Clark. We will now give the substance of the affair as related to us. Elders Standing and Clawson had been staying at the house of Mr. Henry Holston, about three miles from Varnell's station, Whitfield County, Georgia, who, though not a member of the Church, was very friendly to the cause, and they had been through the forest to the house of a Latter-day Saint, a mile and a half away, and about 10.30 a.m. were returning to Mr. Holston's, just previous to leaving to attend a conference at Rome. Before reaching the house, three horsemen came up, meeting them, and ordering them to halt, began signalling to others behind and shouting, "We've got them, we've got them." The Elders, on being arrested by the horsemen, during which the latter were joined by nine others on foot, armed to the teeth with clubs, pistols and guns, asked for the warrant of their arrest, and by what authority they were apprehended. They were informed that they would know all soon enough, and

despite expostulation were hurried off away further from the house, deeper into the woods. On the way the party were met by a young lady, Miss Mollie Hamlin, who, it transpired, had seen the gang pass by their house in the morning and had been sent to warn the young men of their approach. Some of the men accosted her with, "We've got your brethren, and we'll attend to you hereafter." While going along, Ben. Clark, the Baptist deacon referred to, struck Elder Clawson with his fist in the back of the head from behind. The latter staggered and nearly fell, but recovering himself cast one look at his cowardly assailant and continued his way. His self-control exasperated Clark, who soon afterward raised his cudgel to strike again, but was prevented by his companions. The Elders were told that it was the intention of their captors to give them a "sound thrashing," and were repeatedly asked of the whereabouts of President Morgan, if he was in Salt Lake and when he intended returning to Georgia. In response to a remark by Brother Clawson, that he was under the impression that the United States was a country of religious liberty, one of the mob said: "There is no law in Georgia for Mormons, and the Government is against you."

Stopping beside a spring to rest, the three men on horseback left the main party for the purpose of finding a more secluded place for the punishment of the Elders, and one of the mob said: "Gentlemen, I am captain of this party, and I want you to understand that if after to-day you ever come back to this part of the country, we will hang you up by the neck." The others also abused the brethren in the vilest language. About twenty minutes after the halt, the three horsemen returned, and riding up exclaimed, "Follow us." It was at this juncture that Elder Standing, by some means, secured a pistol from one of the party, and thoughts of former threats of death and of the cruel torture to which they were about to be subjected rushing through his mind, he arose to his feet, and levelling the weapon at the horsemen, exclaimed, "Surrender," As quick

as thought, one of the mob seated on the left of Elder Standing, arose and fired into his face. The ball entered just above the left eye, putting it out, and made its exit about an inch above on the forehead. He reeled twice and fell with scarcely a groan. All eyes were then turned on Elder Clawson, who glanced quickly around to take in the situation, when one of the men, thinking he intended to escape or offer resistance, said, "Shoot that man." Thinking his last moment had come as he gazed into the muzzles of the twelve weapons, Elder Clawson folded his arms and quietly said, "shoot." His coolness and resignation again staggered the cowardly crew and they lowered their guns. Brother Clawson then turned his attention to his companion and while he was examining the wound one of the men drew near and said, "Well, he shot himself, didn't he?" Seeing the necessity of caution, the Elder replied, "I don't know." Others took up the ingenious subterfuge and endeavored to persuade him that his brother had accidentally killed himself while bringing his weapon into position. He remained silent, not caring to reply that he had witnessed the act, and that Elder Standing had had his weapon already pointed away from himself when he was shot. He was allowed to go to Holston's house for assistance, Elder Standing already having breathed his last, and on reaching there, asked Mr. H. to take care of the body while he went to Catoosa Springs after the coroner. About five miles from the place, he met several of the assassins, who asked him where he was going. He pointed west, and thinking he was leaving the country, they offered him no opposition, but rode quickly away. Arriving at his destination, Elder Clawson telegraphed to Governor Colquit, of Georgia, to the Prosecuting Attorney of Whitfield County, and to President Morgan at Salt Lake.

An inquest was held over the body the same night, when, beside Elder Clawson's testimony, the evidence of those who had seen the mob in the vicinity and recognized them, was adduced. Examination of the body showed that besides the first shot, the

fiends had stabbed the body repeatedly and fired a charge of shot into his left cheek. The following is the verdict of the coroner's jury on the event, published in the *Independent Headlight*, Dalton, Georgia, on the 26th ult :

"We, the jury sitting upon inquest over the dead body of Joseph Standing, having heard all the evidence in the premises, and having made examination of the dead body, find that the deceased came to his death by gun and pistol shots, or both, inflicted upon the head and neck of deceased, said wounds consisting of twenty shots or more from guns or pistols in the hands of David D. Nations, Jasper N. Nations, A. S. Smith, David Smith, Benj. Clark, Wm. Nations, Andrew Bradley, James Fawcett, Hugh Blair, Jos. Nations, Jefferson Hunter and Mack McClure, and in view of the above stated facts we, the jury, do hereby recommend that the coroner of said county do issue a warrant for the arrest of the above-named parties forthwith."

Brother Clawson says the general sentiment of all good citizens in the

neighborhood of the place where the horrible deed was perpetrated, is one of abhorrence for the murderers and sympathy for the deceased.

After seeing to the encasing of the body, Elder Clawson started with it for home, and arrived last night, as stated, having been met at the Ogden depot by the Y. M. M. I. A. of that place and escorted to the Utah Central train, and on the arrival here being received by a large multitude at the depot. The body was taken to Sexton Taylor's, to prepare it for the funeral on Sunday morning.

Elder Standing would have been 25 years of age on the 5th of October.

It will be observed by the foregoing narrative that, in addition to the first shot, the examination of the remains disclosed the fact that another charge had been fired into the left cheek, and that the body had been stabbed in several places. We learn from another account, published in the *Salt Lake Herald*, that all the wounds after the first were inflicted by the human fiends as the body lay upon the ground, while Elder Clawson was absent, seeking for assistance.—Ed. MILL. STAR.

### MINUTES OF A DISTRICT MEETING,

HELD IN THE ST. THOMAS' HALL, CHESTERFIELD, SUNDAY, AUG. 10TH, 1879.

—O—

There were present: Wm. Budge, President of the European Mission; Francis Cope, from the MILLENNIAL STAR Office; George R. Emery, President of, and W. B. Parkinson and Joseph Goddard, traveling elders in the Sheffield Conference; John C. Schofield, from Leeds Conference.

10 a.m.

Singing. Prayer by Elder Parkinson.

Sacrament was administered by Charles Parkin and Eli Hardwicke, local elders.

Elder Parkinson remarked that he had been in England two months, during which time he had assisted the brethren in holding a large num-

ber of meetings. He felt well, and should try to faithfully discharge his duties in preaching the Gospel.

Elder Goddard knew the work of the latter-day kingdom was progressing, notwithstanding the continued opposition it met with. Great kindness had been shown him amongst his relations in England, to whom he had borne a strong testimony of the divinity of the Gospel as taught and practised by the Saints.

Elder Emery observed that he found the Saints trying to live their religion, and many were doing all they could to extend a knowledge of the Gospel. Some of the Saints did not at present pay their tithing, but he trusted they would do so before long.