

EDITORIAL

IN MEMORIAM, EMMETT TILL

In Mississippi the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till still goes unpunished. It will be punished, nevertheless, for there is a higher law than Mississippi's.

Emmett Till was a child. One of the South's traditions is the religion of Jesus, who said: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Men can be forgiven for prejudice, as a sign of ignorance or imperfect understanding of their religion; no righteous man can condone a brutal murder. Those in Sumner, and elsewhere, who do condone it, are in far worse danger than Emmett Till ever was. He had only his life to lose, and many others have done that, including his soldier-father who was killed in France fighting for the American proposition that all men are equal. Those who condone a deed so foul as this are in danger of losing their souls.

The soul of Emmett Till himself was known but to few but it was a thing of value. It was fashioned on July 25, 1941 by the Lord God Almighty who placed on it this distinctive seal:

This is My son, akin to all others, but unlike any one of them. Like each of My children he is unique, irreplaceable, immortal. I hereby send him among other men, who are his brothers.

He went, and was slain. In the dark night of this deed his childish cries for mercy fell on deaf ears. But they were heard, nonetheless, and the Hearer made an entry, that night, beneath certain names, writing once more: "It must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."

Sleep well, Emmett Till; you will be avenged. You will also be remembered, as long as men have tongues to cry against evil. It is true now as it was when Christ said it almost 2,000 years ago: "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known. . . . Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light. . . . Be not afraid of them that kill the body. . . . Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell. . . . Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? . . . Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."