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MONONA COUNTY, IOWA, MORMONS.*

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The origin and development of the Mormons as a religious body, and a social and civil organization, during this century is part of the history of the United States; and the rise and fall of the colony at Preparation, Monona county, Iowa, should have its record added to the others. This colony was founded by Charles Blancher Thompson, and something of his former career and his previous connection with the general body of Mormons, throws much light on the actual origin of this settlement at Preparation. We give it as written by himself.

Charles Blancher Thompson was born January 27, 1814, at Niskanna, Schenectady county, New York. His father was a Quaker; his mother died when he was three years old, and his father supported him until he was eight, from which time until he was fourteen he earned his own living, and then commenced to learn the tailor's trade. When seventeen years old he became interested in religion and at eighteen joined the Methodist church, and commenced business as a tailor in Watervliet, N. Y. At twenty he withdrew from the Methodist church, traveled a year, as he says, searching for the Church of Christ, when he heard an elder of the Latter Day Saints preach. He went to their then headquarters at Kirtland, Ohio, Feb. 10, 1835, he then being twenty-one years old, and was baptized, and afterward confirmed by Joseph Smith, as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

*This interesting chapter of Iowa history has been somewhat abbreviated from a paper read by Hon. Constant R. Marks, before the Sioux City Academy of Science and Letters, January 11, 1898, and printed in Vol. I of the Proceedings of that organization. It presents a clear account of a curious episode in the annals of early Mormonism in our State.

He wanted to preach, and claimed that he was called of God in answer to special prayer. He was ordained by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. Thompson, in one of his papers, gives in full what he claims were the words of such blessing and commission, which purport to confer great spiritual power, and prophesy great things for him. He then started out to preach the new doctrine among his old acquaintances in New York, with indifferent success. In the fall of 1835 he came back to Kirtland, Ohio, and spent the winter, and again in 1836 went back to New York and preached in various places and was married that year. In the summer of 1837 he organized a church of Latter Day Saints at Sandusky, Ohio. In the summer of 1838, following the westward migration of the Mormons, he moved with his family to Kirtland Camp in far west Missouri, and soon afterwards to "Adam Ondie Ahem" in Daviess county, Missouri; under the exterminating order of Governor Boggs of Missouri, he was compelled to leave and went out of that state to Quincy, Illinois, with other Mormons. Early in 1839 Thompson was sent by the Mormon twelve apostles to New York, where his wife soon died from the effects of exposure in the expulsion from Missouri, leaving a five months old baby. Thompson preached in New York for about four years, baptized about 200 converts, ordained elders and teachers, and organized there what was called the "Genesee Conference of Latter Day Saints." In 1841 he published a book on the "Evidence in Proof of the Book of Mormon." In 1843 he came back from New York and under direction of Joseph Smith settled at Hancock, Illinois, twenty miles from Nauvoo, and the following year was ordained a High Priest. After the death of Joseph Smith he removed to Nauvoo, and assisted in voting the power of the church into the hands of the twelve apostles, and at first had confidence in them, but September 1, 1845, he had one of those visions so conveniently common to Mormons of that day, in which he says that he saw all the tribulations the Mormons had passed through, and that it was a punishment for their errors. Then he saw into the future; that the Lord's Hosts, under new methods, triumphed in the West. He did not then understand

the vision, and in fact it was not published for several years. He was married again in 1846 and sealed for time and eternity under what the apostles called "The Endowment." When the twelve apostles started west on their journey which finally ended in Utah, Thompson began to have doubts, and regarded them as apostates and tried to agree with the faction that followed Mr. Strang, known as the "Strangites," but they soon regarded him as an impostor, and he went off by himself to St. Louis and again went to work at the tailor's trade. In January, 1848, he claimed to have received a revelation or proclamation from "Baneemy," a spirit successor to Joseph Smith, by whom he was appointed agent, and in 1849 he claimed to have received the "Grand Key" which qualified him to act as "Chief Teacher of the Schools of Preparation," and in 1850 he organized what he called his first class in the covenant. About January 1, 1851, he commenced to publish a small monthly magazine of eight pages, which he styled "Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ." This paper was full of Mormon theology and treated of the different views of the numerous factions into which the Mormon body had been divided after the death of Joseph Smith. It contained letters from numerous correspondents and subscribers. In it Thompson published his claims as Chief Teacher under his visions and revelations from Baneemy and gathered something of a following. His spiritual claim was that Joseph Smith was only a spiritual teacher, and by assuming temporal authority had provoked divine wrath and that there was no direct spiritual successor to Joseph Smith, but under the authority as set out in the Book of Mormon, the Lord would raise up in time some one to take up the work, and that by revelation the Spirit Baneemy had received such authority, and in like manner Thompson was his (Baneemy's) duly authorized agent on the earth. When interrogated as to what Baneemy was before he was revealed in his present character and name, Thompson replied that the answer was withheld for a wise purpose by Jehovah, and would only be revealed to those found worthy to receive the key words of the Holy Priesthood.

As an illustration of Thompson's classical ability in derivation of language, word making and general style of theological writing, I give his own definition of this word, Baneemy:

Why is the successor of Joseph Smith called Baneemy? First, because his mission is to give public notice of the rejection of the church, and to make public proclamation interdicting its continuance, which is a curse upon the Gentiles; for "Ban" signifies a proclamation or edict; a public order or notice, mandatory or prohibitory. Second, to say unto Zion, "Behold your God reigneth," and to Jerusalem, "Behold your warfare is accomplished and your iniquity is pardoned, for you have received of the Lord's hand double for all your sins"—for "ee" is the initials of "eece" (Latin) "Behold." Third, to cry in the name of the Lord, "Behold my curse, interdiction, and notice of future work"—for "my" is an affix to "Banee," and is a personal pronoun in the possessive case, and stands in this affix for Jehovah, our father in Heaven; whom Baneemy personates as the Father of Zion, which his name signifies in the Adamic or pure language. But as it stands in English "Baneemy" signifies, the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, and giveth notice of God's curse upon the Gentiles, in the rejection and interdiction of the church among them, and also of that which is to come, proclaiming the day of vengeance of our God, and the preparation necessary to be made for the restoration of Israel and their salvation in "that day."

Ten years later, in testifying in the litigation that followed, Thompson had evidently forgotten the foregoing definition, for he then said that the word "Baneemy" was composed of two Hebrew words *Bene* and *Emmi*, signifying "my mother's sons, or my brothers."

In February Thompson published a notice, that thereafter there would be three solemn assemblies of his organization which he called "Schools of Preparation of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion," to-wit: on April 15, August 29, and December 27 of each year, the first one to be held April 15, 1852, at St. Louis. This assembly met at Thompson's house, and this appears to have been its first regular organization. Thompson was Chief Teacher and they elected one man a Chief of Quorum of Traveling Teachers, and another Second Chief of Traveling Teachers.

At this meeting in April, 1852, a committee was appointed to select a location for the gathering of the schools and travel-

ing missionaries were sent to other states. The location committee investigated St. Joseph, Mo., but land there was too high, and September 1, 1852, they reported that they had selected the region around Kanessville (Council Bluffs), Iowa, and bought a house there; but there were no funds for the removal of Thompson.

Thompson in his paper advised his followers to go ahead to Kanessville, as it was a proper place to start a new church where the old one went to pieces; referring to the migration from there to Utah.

A branch solemn assembly of Thompson's followers was held at Job V. Barnum's house near Kanessville, Dec. 27, 1852, which was attended by about twenty-five persons.

In the February, 1853, number of his paper, he took his followers to task for their neglect, in a long article, and did what before and after was characteristic of him, when not supported as he wished; laid down the law of special revelation and commandment and for the first time published such revelation in detail, though he assumed it had actually been given months and years before. In this case he announced that the recorded command given to this committee was: To search out a location and to "make provision for Chas. B. Thompson and his family that he may be speedily located in a proper place to qualify my servants in their great and last mission," etc. That the time set by revelation for the opening of the second department of the School of Works was December 23, 1853, and that Thompson must be there by that time, or the curse would rest on them.

In the March, 1853, number of his paper, Thompson published a revelation made by Baneemy the previous January 28, 1852, as to their assemblies and feasts saying, "I appoint Chas. B. Thompson Chief Steward of my house * * * and to receive, hold and manage and direct all the sacred Treasures of my house, the obligation gifts, tythings and sacrifices of my people, that he and his family shall dwell in my house, eat at my table, and be clothed in my raiment."

At their Solemn Assembly held at St. Louis, April 15, 1853, they voted to *recommend* to their committee on loca-

tion, *selected by revelation*, to re-consider their action and select a more suitable place than Kanesville, but near there, and to make the selection quickly, and they appointed a sub-committee of three to act with them.

Finally Thompson and his family on September 9, 1853, with a new printing press, left St. Louis on the steamer El Paso and arrived at Council Bluffs, as he then names it, on the 16th. The brethren had to raise part of the money to pay the freight. A location had in the meantime been selected at a place they named Preparation, near the south line of Monona county, Iowa, near the stream called the "Soldier." A house for Thompson was in course of construction and he moved to this November 4, 1853, and set up his printing press there, and November 26th published the September number of his paper, and his colony was fairly started.

The town was laid out into acre lots and all the timber within six miles was pre-empted by members of the colony under United States laws, and at first this timber and the town were all that was contemplated to be held by the Church, or Presbytery. Thompson held the claim to the town plat. The form of the town organization was much the same as that formerly adopted by the Mormons in their settlements, especially at Nauvoo; to give each settler a block or lot of one acre for a home, and the farming to be carried on outside by those living in the town. By the time of the important Solemn Assembly, December 27, 1853, the colony had its settlement established at Preparation, and at this meeting upwards of one hundred persons were present, though not all were members of the colony; a religious service was held and a feast given on each of the three days and the real business and organization of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion began.

Thompson claimed to be commissioned by Baneemy as Chief Teacher in the Schools of Preparation; and there were also to be Schools of Faith and Schools of Works, several degrees of each, but up to this time there had been but three degrees in the Schools of Faith and only two degrees established in the Schools of Works. There were long formal covenants to be entered into by the members of each, and officers

and teachers were elected to the subordinate positions in these schools.

There was also a traveling department in the Schools of Faith, the members of which acted as missionaries, and these were divided into quorums or groups of fifteen men, who were assigned to different sections of the country.

So the School of Works had its quorum or groups of men to whom duties were assigned in the nature of the civil government or business management of the colony, and one of the early things attended to was to enclose about 1,500 acres of tillable land in the vicinity of the town for the next year's cultivation in which portions would be set off for each one according to his needs or ability to farm, as each member was then working financially for himself. The law of tything was established, by which each gave to the Presbytery one-tenth of all he or she possessed, money, clothing, cattle and all, and also one-tenth of his annual income, and one-tenth of his labor besides; so giving one-tenth of his time, and one-tenth of the products of the other nine-tenths.

Thompson's paper, "The Harbinger and Organ," continually warned his followers of the necessity of being faithful to the covenants if they expected to progress in these Schools of Faith and Works, and to be ready for the third degree in the School of Works, which was to be opened at the Solemn Assembly in August, 1856. He warned them to observe the law of tything and also the law of gift obligations which had been in force for some time. This seemed to be the making of donations by the brethren in other districts, towards the common cause, as well as by the members of the colony. Books of account had been opened and the several gifts and tythings were set down in detail.

Thompson seems to have had prepared at St. Louis a blank book in which had been written in a good legible hand some of his revelations and covenants, and in the back of this he entered the names and contributions under the various tythings, gifts and sacrifices, and many of the members subscribed their names to some of the covenants written there. This book, which I have examined, was regarded by them as

the chief record of the Presbytery. The book commences with a title-page and the three following leaves are written in a fine hand setting out the revelations of April 15, 1850, and one or two covenants, and the rest is mostly in Thompson's writing. The revelation of April 15, 1850, while good enough for the purposes of that period was hardly explicit enough to sustain Thompson's authority at later periods when he was managing his colony at Preparation, and one significant interlineation in Thompson's poor handwriting, as it stands beside that other fine penmanship is characteristic of his whole career. It had been written originally as follows:

"And now behold I send unto you my servant Baneemy in the spirit and name of Elias to write in your heart my law," etc.

Thompson interlined and corrected it so as to read:

"And now behold I send unto you my servant *Charles B. Thompson in whom is regenerated my dear son Ephraim my first born with the voice of Baneemy in the name and spirit of Elias,*" etc.

Baneemy was evidently in his spiritual authority not quite potent enough to control a frontier settlement, and Thompson found it necessary to have a direct revelation as to his own personal authority.

One of the early acts of the quorum of Works, which acted as a sort of town council, was to forbid hogs from running at large under penalty of forfeiture at the pleasure of the Chief Steward, Charles B. Thompson. He was impatient for the success of his town, and published the following invitation:

"Let all those who desire to be instructed in the things pertaining to their salvation and deliverance with Israel come on speedily with their tythes, gift obligations, and sin offerings to the House of God that they may be justified from sin and receive an inheritance," etc.

In the early spring of 1854 Thompson seems to have conceived the possibility of a great enlargement of his spiritual and temporal organization, and through his paper outlined his plans for gathering in the followers. His system of or-

ganization for his quorum of traveling teachers in his schools of faith was as elaborate in its details of organization as that of a large army. At the Solemn Assembly in April this year and in the subsequent issue of his paper, he explained the financial arrangements under the law of tything, gift oblations and conducting the colony; as now that the work was actually begun, those who joined, wanted to know how it was to be carried on, and just what the plan was. When a convert joined the colony, the practical questions arose, what amount of tything he had to pay down, what he should do with his family, on what land he should labor, and what he should get for it.

A record had been kept of the gift oblations, chiefly in small sums, but on becoming members of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion at Preparation, an inventory of all worldly possessions was taken, and one-tenth of this was paid into the Lord's treasury, that is, to Charles B. Thompson, generally in kind, even to clothing; and in the first year each one who could work was expected to labor one day in ten for the Presbytery (Thompson).

Most of those who joined had very little property beyond tools, stock and furniture; only seven, as shown by the tything record, had over one thousand dollars worth of property each, though it cropped out later that some who had money, discreetly gave it to their children, and so were enabled to honestly take the oaths and covenants, and yet keep a little money for emergencies.

Thompson's explanation as to the disposition that would be made of the tything was, that it ought to be sufficient to know that it would be used as directed by the Lord. He had appointed an agent (Thompson) to receive it and manage it, and this ought to be a sufficient guaranty; that but one person was ever appointed by revelation to receive and manage the tything. "If the Word of God is not sufficient assurance to any man that his tything will be prudently managed and used where most needed if *payed* into the hands of the Lord's Steward, he had better not pay it." That it was to be used, first, to create a capital for the establishment of the House of

the Lord, etc.; second, to create a capital to be expended in establishing schools among the Indian tribes; third, to create a fund to purchase Mount Zion.

Thompson was profuse in his promises as to the great results that were to come from this organization. By the spring of 1854, twenty families were already established at Preparation, and at the April Solemn Assembly one hundred and twenty partook of the feast, all from the vicinity. Monona county, Iowa, was organized in April of that year and Thompson was elected to the chief office, that of County Judge, and a majority of the county officers, and all the township officers were members of the Presbytery. There was only one other township. So for the time the civil government of the township and county was in their hands, and soon after, when the postoffice was established, Thompson was appointed postmaster.

Thompson seems also to have carried on a mercantile business, as he advertises as follows: "Flour, meal, pork and butter are for sale at the Lord's storehouse in Preparation." "Wanted, at the Lord's storehouse, on tything and gift oblations, all kinds of country produce, money, dry goods and groceries, young stock, cows, horses, oxen, harness, wagons and farming tools." He also republished in his paper some of the early proclamations or revelations that came to him in 1848. He also had a new revelation in June, 1854, which begins as follows:

"The word of the Lord by the voice of Baneemy, came unto Charles B. Thompson, Chief Steward of the Lord's House, in June, 1854, saying: 'Behold I say unto you, my son, I have beheld the works which thou hast done in Preparation, and am well pleased,' " etc. Then followed a review of what had preceded, and a scathing rebuke for some who had evidently held back, who had been expected to join the settlement, and had not paid their tything; of these he says, "Woe unto them, for their reward lurketh from beneath and not from above, for they have lied unto me," etc.

During this summer Thompson went to St. Louis to buy more printing material and a mill, going by team to south-

eastern Iowa, and the rest of the way by boat, stopping at Nauvoo to moralize over the sins that had caused the downfall of that settlement; he returned by the same route.

Affairs at Preparation were not at all harmonious. The first year in a new settlement is hard at best, and in addition to this a sort of surrender of independence, an acknowledgment of Thompson's authority and the paying in of one-tenth of all one's earthly possessions and services, created a condition which required the spirit of a saint to endure. Those who had paid would criticise those who had not, and some who had been prominent in organizing the colony seceded, and in the Kanessville paper denounced Thompson as an imposter and tyrant, and declared that none but fools would allow themselves to be controlled by him.

An unexpected difficulty had presented itself in the matter of the land; when Thompson and his followers first came to Preparation the land there had been surveyed by the United States authorities, but was not all subject to private entry and could only be taken by actual settlers under pre-emption laws, and they intended to claim two congressional townships and had filed pre-emptions on the pieces that were timbered, but the General Land Office had ordered the land thrown into market to be publicly offered for sale in September, 1854, when speculators would enter the land. At that time, this was sure to be the case, especially as bounty land warrants for soldiers in the Mexican and other wars, had been issued by the United States and were bought up for this purpose by capitalists who located on such lands. The land had to be taken in some valid form in order to hold it for this colony.

So Thompson announced that while it had not been originally intended to open up the third degree in the School of Works until the August Solemn Assembly of 1856, yet he now advised all to anticipate that period and to enter a new order of sacrifice, which, while not strictly obligatory, and would not exclude from the Presbytery those who did not join it, yet would sanctify those who entered it. The order of sacrifice was that each one should surrender to Thompson, the Chief Steward, all his property and enter into bond to work for

him two years; he to furnish them with board, lodging and clothing not exceeding in value a specific sum per year. Written bonds from the husband and wife of each family were entered into in August, 1854, by thirty families, nearly all that remained faithful.

They were organized into a quorum, as it was called, and the work of the colony was apportioned. Specified ones were to do the sowing, reaping, grist and saw-mill work and logging; a head cook was appointed, and thereafter, until August, 1855, they were all fed as one community. An inventory of property thus put into the Chief Steward's hands, exclusive of the saw and grist mills, printing establishment, agricultural and mechanical tools and household goods, was as follows: 27 horses, 300 cattle, 61 hogs, 80 sheep.

At the Solemn Assembly in August, 1854, several were expelled for apostacy, heresy, misrepresentation and lying to immigrants on their way to Preparation, and calumniating the chief teacher, Charles B. Thompson. For some cause the order for public sale of the lands by the government was not carried out, and they were not obliged to buy all the land or prove up on the pre-emption, but Thompson bought some, including the town site. There can be no doubt that these members who thus sacrificed their property to the common cause were sincere and devout and possessed more than ordinary self-denial.

In September, 1854, Thompson started a weekly newspaper called "The Preparation News," after the plan of an ordinary country weekly religious and family newspaper. His former monthly "Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ" had been irregularly published and at times was not issued until three or four months after its ostensible date, the December, 1854, number contained news under the date of May, 1855. In the spring of 1855 this magazine was consolidated with "The Preparation News" which latter paper was called "Preparation News and Ephriam's Messenger." His "Organ and Harbinger" he was to publish thereafter three times a year immediately after each Solemn Assembly, and it was to be the grand channel of promulgating the ecclesiastical laws of

Jehovah through Baneemy to Ephriam and to make known the decrees of Heaven unto men.

After the colony had thus gone into the order of sacrifice for two years, Thompson became a sort of dictator in a communistic settlement and the utmost economy of living was observed. All were instructed in the healthfulness of a vegetable diet. Rich foods were an abomination and for their spiritual welfare and physical health plain food was required; meat was forbidden. At one time butter was regarded as a useless and unknown luxury, and though an extensive dairy of forty cows was carried on, the butter and cheese were all sold at Council Bluffs. Some pork and beef fattened for meat was killed and sold with the butter to increase the fund to buy the land for an inheritance.

It was claimed by the irreverent that the Chief Teacher, Thompson, did not share in all this self-denial. He taught that this abstemiousness was not to be perpetual, but was essential in those two years for the common good of themselves and others who might join, so that in the end after purification they would all come again into their inheritance in the spiritual and temporal things in store for them.

Some became discontented and departed without settling with Thompson, leaving their sacrifices, tythings and oblations with him. Others made a settlement, got some of their property back and exchanged receipts, for Thompson was getting careful to put his dealings in writing, as only by a show of fairness to those who had left, was he able to hold those who remained; but he grew more cautious and sought to get renewed binding contracts according to accepted business forms at every possible opportunity. At and after the Solemn Assembly of August, 1855, Thompson prepared to put his business on a legal basis. He organized two corporations, one called the "Sacred Treasury of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion," and the other the "House of Ephriam."

The first was a corporation of a single individual, Charles B. Thompson, as he expressed it in the article; "incorporating that portion of my individual prosperity which has been obtained by my labors and by the voluntary gifts, tythings

and sacrifices of the members of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion for that purpose." Its object was, "To establish schools of preparation for the intellectual, moral and physical culture of the members of the colony, to publish books and papers, to buy land and improve it for the future inheritance of the saints who shall be found worthy; and to erect the necessary edifices for schools, colleges and temples." The capital was to be \$10,000.00, to be increased indefinitely. The funds of the corporation were to be the individual property of Charles B. Thompson and he to be the manager and director of the business. Any person who wanted to, whether a member of Jehovah's Presbytery or not, could contribute to the funds by gift oblations, tythings or sacrifices; but such donations could never return to those donors nor were they to be entitled to any pecuniary remuneration therefor, but must abide the final issue of the work of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion for their reward.

The other corporation, the "House of Ephriam," was composed of members of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion; its capital stock was \$6,000.00 in shares of \$5.00 each, which might be indefinitely increased, and certificates of stock were to be issued. Its purpose was to carry on farming, milling and mechanical business. Its affairs were to be managed by Charles B. Thompson, and from one to seven patriarchs appointed by him, and Thompson for his compensation was to receive one-tenth of the annual increase of its capital stock. Dividends of the annual increase could only be drawn by the shareholders in case of their actual need thereof for the necessities of life.

All persons, whether Jew, Gentile or Ephriamites, who should pay into his other corporation, "The Sacred Treasury of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion," one-fifth of all their worldly possessions should be eligible to take stock in this House of Ephriam to the amount of all their remaining surplus property.

Thompson had blank bills of sale printed with space for the enumeration of horses, cattle, sheep, swine, grain, tools, vehicles, furniture, clothing and credits, and he had each one

of the colony make one or more bills of sale to him personally enumerating the specific property, which included the houses in which they lived, and their wearing apparel; judging from the price the houses were very simple affairs, as for instance one enumerates a "cave" valued at ten dollars.

For the Sacred Treasury he had formerly taken a tything of one-tenth, but the change to one-fifth at this time was, as he told them, in order to make it equal to cash. The remaining four-fifths of their property was conveyed to him for stock in the House of Ephriam. He also had title before this to much of the common property, as the mills, printing-press, the gifts and their proceeds. So now Thompson had title to everything the colonists possessed, even to the clothes on their backs. For some balances of property he gave them a due bill or certificate for a small specified amount in goods or grain out of the House of Ephriam and took from each a receipt in full for the certificates.

In the spring of 1856 Thompson proposed to buy their stock in the House of Ephriam and pay for it in script to be given by him in the House of Ephriam, which he might sell them from that owned by this corporation; which proposition, being compulsory, was accepted, and they all assigned their stock to Thompson and took his script for it and gave a receipt for the script, and published notice that they had all sold out, but that the business of the corporation would be carried on as usual by Thompson. These corporations were a sort of legal myth to cover the personal transactions of Thompson, as under these forms he had received all the stock in both corporations.

Their land had not come into the markets in the fall of 1854 as expected, but did so come in the spring of 1856, and they were compelled to enter it from the United States, or take pre-emptions upon it which would need to be proved up on and paid for within a year. A great strain was put upon the financial resources of the colony, for if the members did not get the land, the object of all their labor and sacrifices would be lost. As many as legally could took pre-emptions; and as in law it would be necessary for all to take these pre-emptions

in their own name, and build houses and reside on them, there was danger that when the full titles were secured it might be hard to control them.

So the most solemn rites and ceremonies were gone through at the August Solemn Assembly in 1856; a full and complete sacrifice was called for. It was argued by Thompson that as every one had for the past two years been in the "order of sacrifice" and hence was incapable of taking or holding title to anything, that everything acquired during that period went under the law of sacrifice into the Chief Teacher's (Thompson's) control, to be laid up for future inheritance. So each again gave Thompson a bill of sale of everything for the House of Ephriam, including growing crops and clothing; a list of these things was written on a piece of paper, and all came into a darkened room where Thompson poured alcohol on the paper and burned it over the fire in token of their complete sacrifice of all they had; then all, both men and women, were required to go through the ceremony of a sacrifice and consecration of their bodies to the Lord.

The two chiefs, right and left supporters of Thompson, Guy C. Barnum and Rowland Cobb, came into the room stripped naked and surrendered their clothing in token of complete surrender and sacrifice of their bodies, and they were then given a single coarse cotton garment or frock, coming below the knees like a nightshirt, such as used to be worn in early days as an over garment by New England farmers, called a smock frock. This Thompson named the "Garment of Holiness." Barnum and Cobb then seated themselves on either side of Thompson, and the rest of the members, men and women in turn, came into their presence and went through a like ceremony. This garment was worn for a short time, but was not retained as a permanent fashion, but they kept only such clothing as was barely necessary, in fact, this had been the case for some time; practically all their clothing and jewelry was given into the custody of Thompson, and he had large quantities stored in chests and boxes in his house. In consideration of the actual necessary clothing given back to them, which he nominally valued at ten dollars for each

family, and five dollars for single persons, he again took a receipt and release from each, discharging himself and his two corporations from all demands to date; and from many who had had money for any purpose, and especially from those heads of families who were again living by themselves on pre-emptions, for the value of the very property sacrificed, such as furniture, teams, and tools needed to farm, which he then re-sold to them, or let them use. At this time, he took notes or bonds payable seven years thereafter, with interest at ten per cent. per annum, thus having the title to the property, and their note for its value besides. The inventoried value of the whole property sacrificed at this time as recorded in his official book by families, was the sum of \$11,174 26, from forty-four persons.

In August, 1856, Thompson and Butts commenced the publication of another paper called the "Western Nucleus and Democratic Echo," which supported James Buchanan's claim to the presidency, though many of Thompson's religious writings were against slavery.

In the spring of 1857 it became necessary to pay up for the land. The winter had been very severe and one hundred head of cattle worth about \$2,000.00, which had been an expected source of getting money to pay for the land, had died, and some were unable to prove up. Directions were given to prove up the best claims and to some extent individuals were allowed to use such property as could be converted into money for that purpose. But as entries of the land were made, Thompson demanded that each one should convey the land to him, for the reasons given before, that it was all taken while they were on the sacrifice and hence belonged to the Sacred Treasury. In some cases the money to enter was borrowed of money lenders to whom the land was conveyed for security and a time bond taken back and later paid for, and deeded to Thompson. Much dispute afterwards arose over just what was agreed on at this time when the deeds were given.

The people afterwards claimed it was all to be deeded back to them when they were out of the sacrifice, the period of

which Thompson had prolonged beyond the time at first set, two years from August, 1854, giving as the principal reason that it was necessary to include the time for the entry of the land, and that divine commands were therefor. At any rate Thompson got deeds for most of the land; in some instances giving back bonds for deeds at largely increased prices, in which the time of payment was made the essence of the contract, and with conditions of forfeiture if not paid for, and then in some instances getting the bond surrendered. He also entered in his own name from the United States considerably more land with the money that came into his hands from the proceeds of sales of stock and produce, also borrowing some on short time.

On February 17, 1857, Thompson had another opportune proclamation or revelation by the voice of Baneemy, concerning the treasurers of the Kingdom of Zion, which ordered in substance: that the funds were to be expended under the direction of the Steward in purchasing land for the future inheritance of the Saints who should be found worthy. That no one could receive his inheritance until there was sufficient land owned by the Chief Steward to furnish an inheritance for each family entitled thereto. That the title should be vested in "Charles B. Thompson in whom Ephriam the first born of Israel is regenerated." This revelation was a very full and long creed, minute in details of church government and indicating a return to missionary work.

After Thompson had secured title to the land early in 1857 he planned a reorganization of the colony for the purpose of either keeping the members employed with new thoughts or the better to confirm his title to the property and to prepare for a winding up of his connection with it.

On April 15, 1857, what he called the "Congregation of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion," was organized, of which Guy C. Barnum was appointed Bishop and Chief Scribe. This seems to have been intended as a sort of return to a mere church organization. The unmarried ones seemed to have stayed in Thompson's household and to have worked in common, as did all in 1854. But the married heads of families

had gone out onto their pre-emptions, and paid to Thompson one-third of the crop as rent.

At the Solemn Assembly in August, 1857, Thompson declared the schools of Preparation, Faith and Works, closed and called on all to settle up the affairs of the schools preparatory to the organization of what was called the "Traveling Ministry of the Congregation of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion." This was organized at the Solemn Assembly, but only four settled up at that time, and three only were ordained Traveling Presbyters and started on missions to the eastern states.

This settling consisted in giving Thompson a new bill of sale of property to which each might possibly have a claim, followed in a day or so by a written release by each to Thompson for all demands, and then a turning back to each head of a family some of the property named in the bill of sale, such as furniture to enable them to carry on the farms under the family stewardship which he then organized, under which they paid rent for such land as they cultivated. They did not all settle until in February, 1858, but in August, 1857, Thompson made a change in the temporal management evidently intended to allay the growing dissatisfaction. He appointed a number of the most reliable men as stewards and gave them each farms to manage. Stewardship was a great honor and each one of these gave his personal bond in the sum of fifty thousand dollars, conditioned to perform the duties of family assistant steward of the Ecclesiastical Kingdom of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion, and account to Charles B. Thompson, Chief Steward, for all property that came into his hands. And later, when he settled with them, as above stated, Thompson delivered to them household goods and clothing with which to carry on this stewardship, and he took their receipts for it as held under their bond. It is noticeable that this receipt and bond say nothing of the two corporations which nominally held title to all the property; but as before stated just before giving them such property under their stewardship he took the precaution to take from each this new release to himself and to both of his corporations

for all sums named equal to the stock they had before had in the House of Ephriam.

Thompson in 1857 published a book of about two hundred and ten pages entitled "The Law and Covenants," which contained all the proclamations, revelations and covenants, including those for his new congregation. It was divided into chapters and sections, the latter numbered up to 746, and was indexed. It was pocket size, its pages about $2\frac{1}{2}$ by 4 inches. This book is a veritable medley, a combination of the writings of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, church government, orders and decrees, and is hopelessly entangled, and judiciously interlarded with commands as to the authority of Charles B. Thompson in things spiritual and temporal.

After he made his settlement under the old order of schools of Preparation, his new plan was to be in force. Hitherto it had been only preparation; now his disciples were fully educated in these schools and were graduates in the ministry, and were fully ordained in the order of the "Traveling Ministry of the Congregation of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion," and all were "Traveling Presbyters" ready to go out on missions, chiefly to organize new congregations of Jehovah's Presbyteries of Zion, the people at Preparation forming the first of such congregations. Then on paper Thompson had got the title to and possession of all the personal property except household goods and such tools and teams as were in the hands of the family stewards and they were paying rent for the land to all of which he had title.

Most of the parties after proving up on their claims had moved back into Preparation, preferring to live in town, so the religious congregation composed of his tenants could go on, but as they still clung to his oral promises that after these sacrifices of the past they should come into their inheritance, something had to be done to divert their minds.

Thompson still found it hard to control them all. From what he said in confidence to some, as appeared from their testimony later in the suits, it seems probable that he thought it advisable to send the leaders out on their missions to different parts of the country, while he managed affairs at home

getting ready for departure. It is said the commands to go on these missions were sent suddenly to each by a messenger telling them they were commanded to go instantly, just as they were, to the places named to them and to take no money.

Take two instances, as related by the parties afterward: Rowland Cobb, about seventy years old, one of the chief stewards, was coming home from towards the Missouri river with a load of lumber, and was met by a messenger from Thompson, telling him he was commanded by the Lord to start without an instant's delay, without money or change of clothing, and go to Virginia (I think it was), to the Legislature in session there, and pronounce the vengeance of the Lord upon them if they did not free the slaves. Cobb at once gave his team to Thompson's messenger to take home, and started across the country on his mission and actually went to Virginia, and delivered his message to the state officers. They treated him decently, and from his dress and the strangeness of his mission evidently thought him insane, or what we would now call a crank, and most likely from his relation of it afterwards he had himself lost faith in the likelihood of his mission being successful. He then wrote Thompson for permission to visit his old home at Elliottville, N. Y., where he had been once a leading business man. He got such permission in due time, and made a visit, and while there received a letter from J. J. Perrin, one of the leading stewards of Preparation, which indicated that all was not harmonious, and Cobb at once hastened home.

Another chief man, Thomas Lewis, well educated and intelligent, originally from Kentucky and very devout, while ploughing, had taken off his boots and stockings, coat and vest, and left them at one end of the field; he was met by a messenger from Thompson with the same command for Kentucky that Cobb had for Virginia. He started instantly in his straw hat, shirt and pants, without crossing back to get his other clothes, and without money, went to the Kentucky Legislature. His advent seems to have been regarded as a huge joke, and the members of the Legislature and state officers treated him with mock distinction. He was allowed to ad-

dress the Legislature either in or out of official session. They got up a supper for him; raised quite a purse with which they got him new clothes, and money for expenses, but there is no record in their proceedings that they acceded to the demands of a message from so potent an individual even as Charles B. Thompson.

Thompson had started another newspaper in Onawa, which town had become the county seat. This he called the "Onawa Advocate," and in 1858 he moved to Onawa, and his head man, Guy C. Barnum, was with him there more or less.

Thompson corresponded with his missionaries, but somehow or other the people had become suspicious. He had deeded some property in the summer to his wife and to Barnum. The leaders sent out to preach, seemed by contact again with the world to have recovered their mental balance, and took a different view of matters than the one they had when under the immediate influence of Thompson, and some of them came back in 1858 sooner than was anticipated, and disconcerted Thompson's plans for getting his property disposed of, if he had formed any. It was afterwards asserted that Thompson had said that by his numerous bills of sale, bonds, receipts, corporations and other papers, he had got them all so tied up they could do nothing in law, and that he would sell the personal property and deed the land to some one and go away, but that Guy C. Barnum had advised that the better course would be to settle with the dissatisfied ones on some cheap basis, give the others, faithful ones, some land, and keep the rest for themselves (Thompson and Barnum). Thompson, however, stood upon his rights, and when a few leaders made trouble, he refused to settle, and turned them out of his Presbytery. Among these were Rowland Cobb, Charles C. Perrin and George Rarick.

This only aggravated the trouble, as it provoked discussion among the rest, and others, who had left before, came back to Preparation, and canvassed the situation. Expecting Thompson to come from Onawa on a certain day in October, 1858, a crowd assembled intending to demand of him a settlement. Sentinels who had been posted on the bluffs saw him

coming with Guy C. Barnum in the distance over the Missouri bottom lands. But one, Melinda Butts, a daughter of one of the colonists who lived in Thompson's family, probably sent by Mrs. Thompson along the road to warn him of the possible danger, met Thompson and Barnum, and told them of the crowd assembled; they immediately turned their team around and started at full speed back to Onawa.

News of this return soon came to Preparation and several men at once started on horseback to follow them, and did, so closely that Thompson and Barnum unhitched their team and fled on horseback, two pursuing them to Onawa. Thompson sought protection among the citizens of Onawa, and that night fled to Sioux City, staying a week; negotiations were had seeking a settlement, but Thompson made only promises, and worked for delay. The men returned to Preparation the next day and went to his house and took possession of the household goods and clothing that had been put into the sacrifice, and in Mrs. Thompson's presence opened the trunks and boxes in which they were stored, and returned the articles to the original owners who were there to identify them. No property was destroyed except a collection of Thompson's printed books, tracts and papers, and some pork and mutton killed for food. The sheriff of the county, and Judge Whiting came over from Onawa to keep the peace, and witnessed much of this last day's proceedings. Mrs. Thompson, with much of her furniture and goods, was moved that day to Onawa. Suits were begun in replevin to get possession of the farming tools and other property. Thompson had conveyed away all but 40 acres of land, that being his homestead; about 1,000 acres to his wife, who afterwards deeded it to his brother, D. S. Thompson in St. Louis, and 1,360 acres in trust to Guy C. Barnum, this part for settlement with those who had remained faithful, in case anything might be due them, and to allay the excitement as he said; 320 acres to Barnum personally, and later 320 acres to Thompson's brother, so that Thompson, himself, held about 3,000 acres.

The report of the mob had reached Thompson, who kept himself in hiding for several days in the attic of Judge Addi-

son Oliver's house in Onawa; the judge was then acting as his attorney. Mrs. Thompson stopped there also, and it was said she had a small bag of jewelry, presumably that which had been given up in the sacrifice by the women. She seemed to set great value on this collection, much beyond its real worth. When Thompson was driven up to Sioux City and Sergeant Bluffs, Woodbury county, he seemed to be in great fear of personal violence, and would start at every sound.

Thus ended the unity of the colony and the religious organization. A suit was brought in behalf of the colonists against Thompson and those to whom he had conveyed the property in the nature of a bill in equity, to declare the colony a partnership, and Thompson a trustee, holding the title in trust for the members, and to set aside the conveyance from him to his wife, brother and Barnum.

Thompson's defense was that so far as the people had put any property in his hands it was in payment for his services as chief teacher and that this was expressly understood between them and that the written contracts he made with them established these facts.

The case went to the Supreme Court of Iowa, and the people won. There was an order for an accounting between the members as to what they had put in, and a division of the property was had. Addison Dimmock and Isaac Parrish, of Onawa, and Pat Robb and Wm. L. Joy, of Sioux City, represented the people, and in different stages Addison Oliver, B. D. Holbrook, of Onawa, Wakely & Test, Polk & Hubbell, and Thos. F. Withrow, of Des Moines, appeared for the defendants. J. C. C. Hoskins was appointed under the order for apportionment (Mr. Hoskins being from Sioux City), as referee to take the evidence as to what each one had contributed, and report the facts, and finally a distribution was made among the numerous persons entitled to it. Though the litigation began in 1859 it did not end until about 1867. The decision of the Supreme Court of Iowa is found in 21 Iowa Supreme Court Reports, page 599, *Scott vs. Thompson*.

In the trial of this cause the records, the newspapers, publications, contracts, bonds, notes and bills of sale, gathered

during the continuance of the colony, with much oral testimony, were offered in evidence and were thus preserved, and it is from these that the definite details of this Mormon settlement at Preparation have been obtained.

With the meeting of the people at Preparation when they forcibly divided the clothing and personal property in sight in October, 1858, the colony or organization of Jehovah's Presbytery of Zion under its many names, ended. Many remained in that vicinity until they got their lands by suit, and they and their descendants are living in northwestern Iowa, scattered like any western people. Only three or four finally remained faithful to Thompson; but many of them, though denouncing him as a false prophet, remained believers in the general Mormon religion.

In all, about one hundred and fifty persons were connected with the colony, men, women and children; it endured for five years. Thompson, in that time, had, with the pre-emptions taken by the settlers, and his own entries, got title to over 3,000 acres of land, at a cost primarily of \$1.25 an acre, but with the expenses of the sums borrowed at high rates to enter part of it, it must have cost over \$4,500 in money, besides the improvements. The gifts, tythings and sacrifices nominally inventoried amounted to about \$15,000.00, but considerable of this in clothing, tools and teams was practically kept by the people, while most of the money raised went into the buildings, mills, printing material and living expenses, but on the other hand, the increase of the cattle, and the sale of the crops provided quite an income.

Barnum seems to have been the chief leader and business manager for Thompson. He was much shrewder and had more directness in business matters, and less sanctimoniousness. He went to Columbus, Neb., became a member of the State senate, and later for a time went insane. I am as yet unable to trace Thompson's later career; he resided in St. Louis for several years.

Most of these colonists were sincere, honest, upright, devout citizens, with strong religious convictions, and lived up to their beliefs and hoped and expected much from their

long season of sacrifice and self-denial. Having accepted the divine authority of Thompson, they felt compelled to yield obedience to it, and were more easily deluded by his plausible promises.

It is hard to measure Thompson's motives. From the beginning he was undoubtedly a combination of fanatic and knave. So long as the colonists yielded obedience to his commands and leadership, he was apparently working to build up his Presbytery, and he knew that so long as he held ownership to the property he could better control them; but when any became dissatisfied, he was revengeful and wished to get rid of them as cheaply as possible. He had been poor all his life, and the possession, even as the Lord's Steward, of the little property that came into his hands at first, seems to have excited his cupidity, and he was, as time progressed, more and more reluctant to part with it, and convinced himself that it should all belong to him.

He was a man of very ordinary ability, and the times and circumstances were not calculated to insure such a man success. He could only control for a time such a limited number of persons as were pure minded and faithful; had he possessed the ability of Brigham Young and contented himself with a less avaricious financial policy, he might have filled northwestern Iowa, which was then entirely unoccupied by settlers, with the so-called followers of Mormonism, who were opposed to polygamy.

The times were then ripe for it, but Thompson was not the man, and his colony scarcely made an impression on the large number that were even then in northwestern Iowa. His followers remained chiefly those whom he had attracted by the publication of his paper at St. Louis. He never had any really clear idea of what his belief and mission was, and could not make plain to others that which was a fog on his own mind, and he concealed his thought in a great mass of words, prophecies, revelations, proclamations, orders, decrees and systems which were ever being changed.

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