

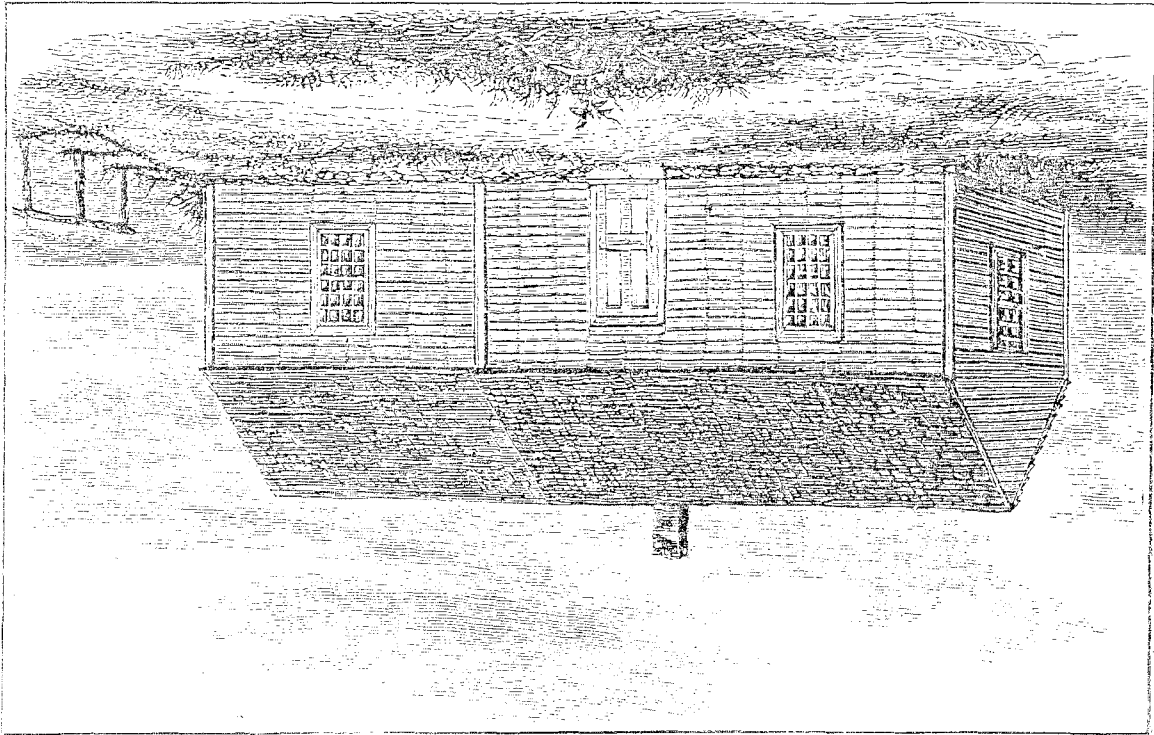
CHAPTER VI

ORDINATION AND DISPERSION

ON Sabbath morning, Nov. 5, 1843, the usually quiet town of Denmark was all astir. A great event was to occur. Every child had heard that nine young ministers, fresh from the East, had come to preach in the Territory. In anticipation of the event, Rev. Asa Turner and Rev. Reuben Gaylord had taken a long tour to spy out the land, and decide upon the places to be occupied; and on that Sabbath seven of these young ministers were to be ordained. Denmark then consisted of a few scattered farmhouses of New-England-like appearance; and convenient thereto stood a low, broken-backed, elongated building, compelled as yet to the double service of school and meeting-house.

This, at the appointed hour, was the center of attraction. The council had previously been organized, and the candidates examined. The members of the Band then ordained were Edwin B. Turner, William Salter, Ebenezer Alden, Jr., Horace Hutchinson, Ephraim Adams, Daniel Lane and Benjamin A. Spaulding. With them were ordained W. A. Thompson, who came to the Territory about the same time,

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and D. Granger, who was already here as a licentiate. The exercises were: sermon by the Rev. J. A. Reed, from Acts 20: 28 (the subject was, "Prerequisites to Success in the Gospel Ministry"); ordaining prayer by the Rev. Asa Turner; charge by the Rev. C. Burnham; right hand of fellowship by the Rev. Reuben Gaylord.

The house, of course, was crowded, and the occasion one of great interest. To the few brethren already in the field, it was a day of rejoicing. Said Brother Gaylord, "Such a day I had never seen before; such a day I had never expected to see in my lifetime. The most I could do, when alone, was to weep tears of joy, and return thanks to God."

This was an interesting and solemn occasion; but there had been, a day or two previous, in the pastor's study, a meeting of still greater interest to the young ministers. It was a meeting in which they were to decide among themselves in what particular place the scene of the future labors of each should be. In former times, and far away, they had often met for prayer, often asked God to guide them in their way. He had guided them; had turned their hearts to Iowa, and brought them thither; and now, with ordination vows soon to be taken, they had met to decide where, in the wide field around them, each should labor. It was a solemn meeting, a delicate business, a time when self must be laid aside, and each must be willing to be anything, to go anywhere. A prayer

was offered that the Spirit of God might be upon them, and with them. Then Fathers Turner and Gaylord, who had explored the field, came in, and, map in hand, described their tour, and the places visited, and retired.

Now, by free suggestion and mutual consent, the assignment began. Brother Hutchinson, for peculiar reasons, as was well known, was inclined to Burlington, and Harvey Adams to Farmington. None were disposed to object; and so their destination was fixed. "Those having wives," it was said, "ought to be provided for in places as comfortable as any in the Territory." A minister-seeking man from Keosauqua had claimed Brother Lane as the one of his choice. His promises were fair, and he was gratified. Bloomington, since called Muscatine, then "a smart town" of four hundred inhabitants, on the Mississippi, seemed a good place for one with a family; and so this, by common consent, was ceded to Brother Robbins; and thus the wives were provided for.

Away out in the new purchase, in the region of the old Indian Agency, new fields were opening, calling mostly for itinerant labor for the present, and endurance of frontier hardships as a good soldier. Brother Spaulding would as soon take this position as any other; and thither was his face turned. Some must go up into the northern counties of Jackson and Jones. This was far distant, to be sure, and the region not thickly settled; but then, the more northern

the location, the more Eastern the people; and that part of the state would some time be filled up. Brothers Sater and Turner, the David and Jonathan of the company, rather liked the idea of exploring this portion of the field together, and deciding for themselves where to locate. This they did, eventually locating themselves,—the former at Maquoketa, and the latter at Cascade. The two places yet remaining, which then seemed the most important, were Solon and Mt. Pleasant; for these there were two brethren, Ebenezer Alden and Ephraim Adams, who said they would settle the matter by themselves; which they did by referring it that evening to Father Turner. He assigned Mr. Alden to Solon, and Mr. Adams to Mt. Pleasant.

So the work was done with perfect harmony and good will,—quickly done, without an unpleasant word or a jealous thought; and every one was satisfied. Considering the nature of the meeting and the issue thereof, let God be praised!

On Sabbath night, Nov. 5, 1843, as each retired to rest after having been ordained to his work, he had his particular field in view. On Monday morning all was bustle, preparatory to their departure. Occasionally, as they met in passing to and fro, there was the grasp of the hand, the hearty "Good-bye!" and "The Lord bless you!" "Let us remember Tuesday night," was the parting suggestion. The meeting alluded to in the pastor's study was the last ever held

by the Band at which all the members were located. Such a meeting on earth where all were present, there now can never be.

[†]Note No. 4 and Appendix I.