

Comment by the Editor

A MISSIONARY PIONEER

A missionary is an altruistic person who goes to a strange land in the service of the church. The title implies great zeal in a holy cause, a life of hardship among primitive people in a remote part of the world, danger of disease and accident, and utter renunciation of financial profit. Modern prototypes of Paul answer the Macedonian call of Africa and the Orient.

Less than a hundred years ago, Iowa was a field of missionary endeavor. Charles E. Brown travelled twenty-four days by canal boat, lake steamer, and lumber wagon from central New York to his mission at the forks of the Maquoketa River on the frontier. He built his own cabin, suffered from rheumatism and ague, managed to live on a \$100 a year from the missionary fund, and found deep satisfaction in the conversion and baptism of more than fifty persons at a revival during the first winter. At that time there was no Baptist church west of Iowa City.

Most of the pioneers sought material advantage from the prairies of Iowa, but Reverend Brown was dominated by spiritual motives. Well edu-

cated, clear minded, and energetic, he might have achieved high distinction in his denomination, but he preferred the humbler station of rural pastor. First in Jackson and Scott counties and later in Howard County, he ministered to the religious and educational needs of his neighbors. He founded several churches, helped organize two Baptist associations, and served as a chaplain in the Union Army. Careless of opportunities for personal exaltation, he spent half a century working for the benefit of others.

Nor did he shun his civic duties. From 1858 to 1861 he was the superintendent of schools for Howard County, and in 1877 was elected Representative of that county in the State legislature. His record as a law maker, no less than his Christian ministry, was indicative of his idealism. He served on committees dealing with various charitable and educational institutions of the State, railroads, and the suppression of intemperance. His proposal to legalize majority jury verdicts in civil cases passed the House but was indefinitely postponed in the Senate — which prompted him to observe that reform in the administration of justice was hopeless “so long as our legislative bodies are made up largely of lawyers”.

J. E. B.

