

Odessa, Ashland Co. Wis.

July 11th 1877.

Dear Bro. Belden -

Your very kind favor of 29th ult. duly rec^d. I am truly grateful to learn of the good Missionary ^{spirit} in your Church. I see by Gen. Assen. Minutes - of '76 that your Church gave to Foreign Missions \$100. It is a sad and humiliating truth, that as many of our Churches have so little interest in, or care for almost any kind of Christian work outside of their own small circle, that they cannot fairly be termed Missionary Churches. Oh how many there ^{are} who miss of the "greater blessedness" of Christian giving. I am glad that your people know somewhat of that blessedness and that even the young girls have caught the spirit; and banded themselves together to work in the

Master's vineyard. May the Lord
anoint them for his exalted ser-
vice and bless them abundantly.

Your assurance too that we shall
be remembered in your prayers is
very cheering. The shortest way to
the heart of distant ones, though
to some it may seem a long round about
sort of way, lies hard by the Throne
of Grace. Yea there are times when this
is the most direct way to other hearts,
even of those standing in our immediate
presence. We much need the fer-
vent supplications of God's saints,
both for ourselves and for this people.
As for ourselves we are beginning to
learn more and more the lesson that
"when we are weak then we are strong".
As for the people here, there are very
few about us but what know enough
to be saved, but they refuse to yield
themselves to the Lord Jesus. Their

hearts are slow to bow to Christ. The
great want we all feel, is ^{for} the quicken-
ing power of the Holy Spirit. It is his
especial province to Regenerate, and
that is just what many about us
so much need. We have one R. and
we want the other two. i.e. ~~that is~~ we
have Rein, we want Regeneration
and Righteousness. May God in
mercy soon answer our united prayer
and grant these two.

Perhaps a word in ref. to our situation
and prospects might not be beside the mark.
It is a little over 4 years since I came
here. At that time Paganism, and
Romanism, which practically, is if pos-
sible, worse than Paganism, held and
controlled almost the whole of this people.
The "Ma-ta-wa" or "Medicine Dance",
the superstitious rite substituted for
pure worship, was a thing of almost
weekly occurrence amongst the pagans

Whilst the Papists were baptizing
right and left without regard to
moral character or fitness, and claim-
-ing the whole family where one had
been baptized as adherents to their
Church. Thus matters had been going
for some time. Only 10 persons could be
found who had ever made any "Profession
of Religion"; one of whom was a Native pre-
-cher & Licentiate. This little handful of
Christians, preacher and all - were thoroughly
disheartened. Very few thought of attend-
-ing any religious meeting save these
few Christians, and ^{very} they were very irregu-
lar. Yet in the midst of all this darkness
and superstition, there were evidences that
the Spirit of God was not far off from the
people. I reached here on the 15th of March
1873 - in the midst of ^a wild driving snow-
-storm, after traversing for 3 days an
unbroken forest of 100 miles or more on
a rough sled. Word had spread that

a new Missionary was coming and the people were all on the lookout. The next day was the Sabbath and to my surprise and joy the little plain Chapel must have held nearly 100 people. We went right to work that week and the next Sabbath had a Communion Season, when Lo! to God's name be the praise, 6 persons came forward and made a public profession of faith in Christ. And thanks to the God of all Grace, they all stand firm to this day. I am the more free to speak of this, because it must be clear to every one, that these 6 were not the fruit of my labors, but I simply garnered the sowing of others. To proceed in detail, however, would probably prove altogether too tedious. Let a few general statements therefore suffice. Last Summer a little over 3 years after

coming here, a Native Church was organized with 52 members, a Native Pastor and 2 Native Elders. Of all this matter we can only say - "Lo what hath the Lord wrought." The organizing of the church was the occasion of several serious difficulties, which threatened to rend it into several factions. But the Lord sat King over his people, and so gradually the difficulties were removed, and at our last Communion the very last remnant of the factions, came in made humble confession and was restored. Today the people are as united as such a people can well be, and have a perfect horror of disagreements, misunderstandings, and contentions. Thus hath the Lord brought good out of evil. Since the organization of the church some 3 or 4 people have been added on Profession of Faith and we be-

-lieve there are others all but ready to take the same step. The last person received may well be regarded as a miracle of Grace, if possible beyond the 11th hour. A woman wrinkled, bowed and furrowed, with the weight of at least 100 years upon her, blind, lame, and quite deaf, a voice quivering with the extreme feebleness of old age, voluntarily sent a message to us, some 2 weeks before the Communion, saying that she desired to see us, and wished to be a Christian. A heathen man brought the message, and I confess, it was a little hard to believe, that such a message could be true. However we visited her next morning, asked her a number of questions which she answered quite satisfactorily, giving good evidence that a work of Grace had evidently been wrought in her heart. The prospect of being openly received to the Church gave

her great joy. She said she desired to
take this step to show her love for the
Saviour who had saved her, and also to let
all her old heathen friends know that at
last she had found the true religion.
When the day ^{came} 2 strong young men went
to her wigwam, carried her to the river's
edge and placed her in a canoe of birch
bark and paddled her up opposite
the church, and then 4 men just
took up the canoe old lady and all
and carried them to the church door.
When I saw that poor old, crippled,
blind, woman carried thus to the House
of God, in the last moments of her earthly
existence, the tears unbidden filled my eyes. I
thought I could only the multitudes who are
slightly and despising the Saviour's mercy
see this sight and be moved by it to make
a speedy surrender to the Lord who hath
bought them how blessed it would be. Sitting
doubled together on the floor, she was baptized and
partook of the elements for the first, perchance
for the last time on earth. I trust when she goes hence
it will be to wear the crown in glory. I will write

Miss Alice H. is soon as I can. Shall be glad to hear from you again. I mean is any father or mother
work we would like to know about please speak of it. Young in the