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W. B. M. U. TIDINGS.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS PER YEAR.

Vol. 4.

Amherst, N. S., Mar., 1897.

No. 38.

MOTTO FOR THE YEAR.

"Workers together with Him."

PRAYER TOPIC.

For Mr and Mrs Archibald and Miss Wright that the seed long and faithfully sown at Chicacole may soon yield a faithful harvest. For all the native helpers on this field.

Suggested Programme for March.

HYMN.

PRAYER by the leader. All joining in "The Lord's Prayer" at the close.

SCRIPTURE reading, responsive, Rev. 7 : 9—17.

HYMN.

READING, "Tidings."

PRAYER.

SEVERAL readings on China, Africa, Japan.

PRAYER for these countries.

HYMN.

MINUTES of last meeting.

CLOSING prayer.

Suggested Programme for April.

HYMN.

PRAYER, remembering the topic.

SCRIPTURE, John 17.

HYMN.

READING, "Tidings."

SEVERAL prayers.

READING, Report on Grande Ligne in Year Book, 1896, P. 61.

HYMN.

MINUTES of last meeting.

CLOSING Prayer.

By sending to Miss Myra J. Black, Amherst, several readings on Grande Ligne may be had.

LETTER FOR TIDINGS.

Edmonton, Alberta.

Nov. 19, 1896.

Dear Sisters :

Having been requested to write for "Tidings" I presume that I am expected to speak especially of this corner of our great North West—concerning which alone I can speak from experience. My experience has however given me clear impressions concerning the future of this district and strong convictions of its importance as a field for Baptist Mission work. At the same time I may further preface my "Tidings" by expressing what I believe to be a well-founded assurance that this is but one of many points in Manitoba and the North West where a consistent application of *your* principles will lead to a more vigorous support of our work. Without discussing the advantages or disadvantages of this country as a place for settlement, its future settlement is an assured thing. That settlement may be effected more rapidly than we think. The incoming tide must be met early and turned into channels of gospel privilege. It will be a short-sighted prudence that waits till the tide is

high. Here was the grand mistake of the Baptists regarding Manitoba—as well as points in the Territories. Consequently we find many churches still needing outside help, where, had the work been taken up in time and prosecuted vigorously, there might be to-day strong self-supporting churches. The first era in the settlement of the Canadian West is past—and with it have passed the opportunities which every flood-tide of settlement presents. Unless “all signs fail” a new era is about to begin. Let it find us ready. Let the old channels be widened by a generous support, and new ones dug broad and deep as opportunity invites. In my opinion Edmonton district demands now the former work, and ere long will need the latter.

With a map of the Dominion before you, journey with me to Edmonton. To our fathers in the Maritime provinces, Ontario was “the West.” To the present generation Manitoba was long the outpost of civilization. To-day Winnipeg is but a “halfway house” to our real Canadian West. Halifax to Toronto, Toronto to Winnipeg, Winnipeg to Edmonton give three stages of about equal length. (Nor am I sure, by the way, that in twenty years time the first three places need be ashamed to be named with the fourth as places of great importance.)

For many years Fort Edmonton was a trading post of the Hudson Bay Company. When the railway reached it, it quickly became a town of size and business importance—the business centre of the district to which it gives its name. Large hopes for its future growth are, I believe, reasonably based on resources in sight. From here the regions of the far north are pierced

—provisions carried to trappers and trading posts, and furs brought to be re-shipped to American, Canadian and European markets. This Northern trade does and will for an indefinite time contribute largely to the business done here.

The mineral resources also constitute a growing source of wealth. An inexhaustible supply of coal (cropping out at intervals for miles along the river bank) means not only as now cheap fuel for local consumption, but will be of vast importance for distribution through the North West, with growth of population and of facilities for carriage.

The gravel beds of the district are rich in gold dust, which has already yielded no small treasure to the pioneer gold-washer, and with improved methods now being adopted, will contribute increasingly to the business of the district.

But most important of all—as bearing on the future growth of district and town—are the rich agricultural resources of Northern Alberta. Though we are farther north than Manitoba, the climate is so far modified by relation to the Pacific and by other causes as to be considerably less severe than that of Manitoba. With a soil wonderfully fertile and well adapted for general farming, the only thing needed to ensure rapid development is a convenient market. This is likely quite soon (and sure in the end) to be furnished by the Province of British Columbia, with its marvellous mineral wealth, and its utter inability to raise its own food.

But what has all this to do with Baptist Missions? Much! If this land is to be possessed in the name of

industry and wealth, it must also be possessed in the name of Christ. And whether in this spiritual conquest the Baptists take the place they should, depends something on you, my sisters, and the churches you represent.

Let me now briefly review our work in this district up to the present time. April 29, 1892, seven Baptists met and decided to ask the Board for a missionary. They also opened a subscription list for weekly offerings for pastoral support and decided to hold weekly prayer meetings.

In Sept. 1892, a Sunday School was organized. Feb. 19, 1893, Supt. Mellick being present, eighteen members of Baptist churches, residing in and near Edmonton, organized the Edmonton Baptist Church, called the Rev. A. McDonald to be pastor (guaranteeing \$400 towards his salary) and decided to build. Pastor McDonald began work in March 1893. A neat brick chapel, capable of seating 200 was completed in Jan. 1894, at total cost for house and lot of \$3,300. The situation is the most central in town. The cost does not represent luxurious furnishing but the high cost of building in Edmonton. At its completion, there was a debt of \$1,300. Though this debt is to-day a heavy burden to have avoided it by a cheaper location or building would have been disastrous. Indeed such alternative would not have precluded debt, for assistance from the Board was made dependant upon good location and building.

Regular services were now held at Edmonton, South Edmonton (on south of river) and Poplar Lake eight miles from Edmonton, some of the members residing in the latter places.

In April 1895 a church was organized at S. Edmonton with 19 members. In May 1895 Pastor McDonald resigned the past rate of the Edmonton Church and accepted that of the S. Edmonton Church. The latter Church now reports 35 members, resident in S. Edmonton and other points south of the river. An outgrown schoolhouse was purchased and fitted into a neat chapel.

The Edmonton Church remained

pastorless until June 1896 when the writer came to the field—including Edmonton and other points north of River. In July 1896, the third church in the district was organized at Sturgeon River 18 miles north of Edmonton, with 15 members, of whom all but four had brought letters from Nebraska whence they had removed to Alberta. Mr. McDonald held some special services here last winter which resulted in revived interest and some conversions. Since the organization of the church several have been added by letter and seven by baptism, and others are now ready to present their letters. The great need is a student pastor who could reside at this point. If the work is to be properly developed in the three townships in which the members of the Sturgeon church are settled, more work must be done than can be by the Edmonton pastor with any justice to the work at the latter place.

The Edmonton church has had on its books up to the present time 86 names. Of these there have been dismissed to the S. Edmonton church 24, to the Sturgeon church four, and to other churches four. There have been lost by death and exclusion 10. Thus the present membership is 44. Of this number nine are strictly non-resident, 17 others are virtually such, being settlers living at various points in northern Alberta from eight to sixty miles from Edmonton, while but 18 now reside in Edmonton.

Thus the parent church stands to-day about where it was at its organization in point of real numerical strength. Financially the present resident members are weaker than those who organized the church. Bravely have these shouldered the burdens left to them. The members living away from town are in nearly every case, those who, without capital, have undertaken to make a home in a new land. They are thus unable to give any great assistance to the church.

A glance at our church life may be of interest. Without putting our trust in intricate organization, we are trying to develop activity along all possible

lines. While with our present forces the aggregate results may not be large, we hope by utilizing these forces to realize on the promise, "To him that hath shall be given." Our S. S. is well sustained and growing in interest. The Woman's Mission Circle works for foreign and home missions and has a quick eye and ready hand for the helpless in our own town. The Circle also sustains a short prayer meeting before the Sunday evening service. Besides the Wednesday evening prayer and social service the Young People's Union meets for devotional service and the Sacred Literature Course on Friday evening.

A complete survey of the Baptist cause in Northern Alberta must include notice of the German Baptist work. At LeDuc, 20 miles south from Edmonton is a church with 142 resident members, and at Ataskwan another of 52 members at last report.

In conclusion, returning to the English work, if the main points now occupied are thoroughly worked, with the blessing of God a few years will show self-supporting churches able and willing to aid the further advance of our principles in the North-west and throughout the world. On the other hand with the measure of support so often made necessary by the inadequate resources of the Board these and many other churches in the west may eke out a miserable existence for an indefinite period and be as far as ever from self-support at a time when they should have repaid for the evangelization of the world more than had been expended upon them. Trusting that the facts I have recounted may prove of some interest and stimulus,

I am,
Yours in the Master's service,
CHAS. B. FREEMAN.

Notes for Tidings.

Home Missions. It has been brought to our notice by the Sec'y of Home Missions Com. that there has been a falling off in the contributions for that

object. Will not each society devise some means by which our contributions will be increased? Not that we should do less for Foreign Missions, but that at this time we will add to our gifts to Home Missions.

Now is a good time for those, whose greatest interest is given to the home field, to make their offerings.

The field is the world and the North-West, Grand Ligne, etc., form part of the world. Let us be stirring, soon our last opportunity will come.

The Prov. Sec'y for N. B. would ask each Aid Society to please notice the following:

1st. Will you have the Constitution read in the regular meeting of your Society, at least once a quarter?

2nd. Will the Societies please remember that all moneys raised by us as a body, should be sent to the Treasurer Mrs. Mary Smith, Amherst, N. S., whether for H. M. or F. M., and also to state whether the H. M. money is for N. B. Con. That is easily done, but if you simply say for N. B. in regard to this money, you only puzzle the Treasurer. Please state if for N. B. Convention.

3rd. What are your Mission Bands doing?

A new Aid Society has been formed in Lewisville, a branch of 1st Moncton. No list of officers has been sent the Prov. Sec'y, so their names are not at hand.

Our new Society at Penlyn is working. Mrs. Wm. Payce, Pres., Mrs. J. R. Lunny, Treas., Miss Amy Peck, Vice, Mrs. Wm. Leckey, Sec'y, Mrs. H. Elkin, Auditor. This little band of ten should have the prayers of all.

The letters from the Societies all over the province breathe a spirit of devotion that is very encouraging.

If every sister would do twice as much as she did last year, by bringing a new member who would do as much. Think of the gain!

Yours in the work,
M. S. COX,
Prov. Sec'y, N. B.