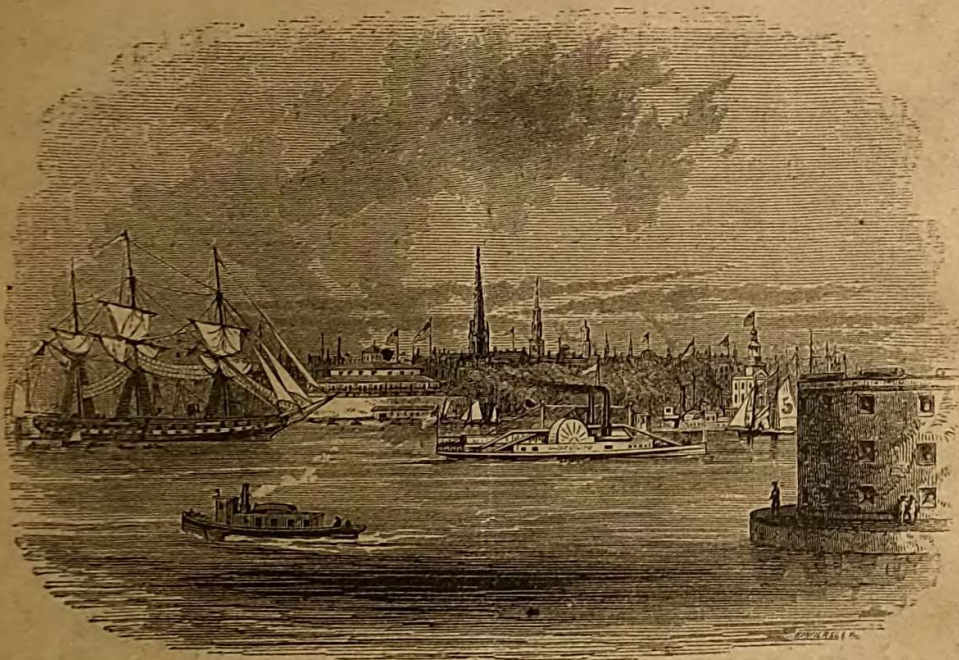


State Historical Society
OF WISCONSIN,
MADISON, WIS.

CHRISTIAN WORK



IN
NEW YORK.

50 BIBLE HOUSE,
THIRD AVENUE AND ASTOR PLACE.

1877.

But for the support of our work we need a larger constituency than this would permit. Our funds are gathered, not in large gifts of the few, but in the small contributions of the many. If we are ever to be self-supporting we must have a larger building. But, again, our Chapel constituency can never be expected to shoulder the expense for all the outside work that is done, or for the support of three pastors. And yet a pastor specifically set apart for the Germans will ever be needed if we are to do effective work in our ward. In the following statement may be found my largest hope. When the majority of our young people shall have grown into self-support we may as a church be able to raise \$3,000, or, counting the Sunday-school gifts, \$4,000 a year. Beyond this I do not believe we shall ever go at the present rate. Five years ago we gave, all told, only about \$500. This year the sum total will be about \$2,000. If we progress in the future as we have done in the past, we may reasonably hope to reach the sum of \$4,000. But I think that that is the uttermost limit to what, with our present constituency, we shall be able to do.

A. F. SCHAUFFLER.

LEBANON CHAPEL,
70 COLUMBIA STREET.

LEBANON CHAPEL: ITS LOCATION, WORK, AND PROMISE.

I. THE LOCATION.

THE New York City Mission acted wisely when they organized Lebanon Chapel, in 1870, in the midst of one of the most densely-peopled districts of New York city, for the purpose of giving the blessings of Christianity and the sacraments of the church to those in sympathy with the Protestant faith. Lebanon Chapel is the only Protestant church in the eastern section of the Seventh, Eleventh, and Thirteenth wards, skirting the East river, and extending eight blocks west of it. About fifty thousand people dwell in this churchless region, of whom the majority are native-born Americans. The Romanists have erected an immense edifice in the midst of this district, whose Protestant claims are greater, in order to retain their own members and advance their peculiar proselytism of others to their faith. The New York City Mission stands alone in active Protestant occupation, with appointments so inadequate that they seem satirical in comparison. A glance at the people in this district will justify the most liberal plans with vigorous execution to win

them for our self-defence and for Christ's glory. First, there is a subsidiary American population, large in number and intelligent in character, living in their own homes, and clinging with affection to the local traditions of their ancestors. Secondly, there is a large population of American birth, chiefly of German parentage, whose sympathy and interest are with American life and Protestant Christianity. Thirdly, it is a district of family life, more fixed, less drifting, than many sections so densely populated. The people belong to the working classes of all departments of industry, whose quarters and incomes are small, yet nevertheless they are honest, industrious, intelligent, appreciate quite fully their restraints, but are ambitious for a better future, both to educate their children and preserve the individuality of their family life. Fourthly, there is scattered through this whole section what are truly called "the poor," the shiftless, reckless poor, the "always" poor, the soured poor, the criminal poor, the unpatriotic poor, whose franchise is a legal fiction beyond its value in bread and whiskey; the irreligious poor, whose creed shuts rich men out of heaven, if there be one, and makes non-existence preferable to life, if it does not bring its comforts without their personal effort. Fifthly, one more class is always visible; they seem the knight-errants of all the rest, coming you know not whence, going you know not whither, doing you care not to ask what nor dare divine, but always full of adventure, prowess, and desire to leave or take something. No richer field for discovery, sifting, organization, restoration in Christian work. In view of these facts, Lebanon Chapel is certainly wisely located. Three things are essential for grand results: adequate appointments, organized effort, and competent workers, endowed, first, with apostolic zeal to save souls rather than win honors; secondly, with infinite adaptation in the Pauline sense; and, thirdly, active faith in the historic fact that the Anglo-Saxon element which here prevails, when sanctified, is the sheet-anchor of God's militant church.

II. THE WORK.

The agencies employed to accomplish the evangelization of the people above described are as follows: 1. The church organization; 2. The Sabbath-school; 3. The benevolent system; 4. The Young People's Association; and 5. The Lebanon Club for Workingmen.

1. The church organization. All the pastoral machinery of a church is at work, with aid committees. The Sabbath services are judged of prime importance. The pastor guides the inside work,

preaching, leading prayer-meetings, superintending the Sabbath-school, presiding at all meetings as President of the Lebanon Club for Workingmen, and joining with the German pastor, the Rev. Conrad Doench, an assistant, Mr. C. E. Havens, and two visitors, Miss Dye and Miss Bartlett, in rendering efficient the outside work. And all the work, outside and inside, by all parties concerned, is so conducted as to exalt Christian work and contribute to the power and the profit of public worship.

(1.) The character of the church membership is truly unique, composed of both English and German members, who are admitted either by letter or on examination. There is but one church, though preaching in two languages : on Sabbath morning in German, for the benefit of those members who cannot understand English ; in the evening in English, at which are present many hearers, who are the children of German parents who attend the morning service. Each portion has its weekly church prayer-meeting, female prayer-meeting, and missionary meeting. Once in three months regularly the two portions meet together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, at which new members are received. The services are partly in English and partly in German, while the hymn-singing is in both languages at the same time. These features of a church are not common, and to one engaged in lifting souls to God out of every tongue and tribe and nation, they are most suggestive, interesting, and solemn. !!

(2.) The methods employed to build up the church are the same as in any parish. Every member of the church, congregation, Sabbath-school, prayer-meeting, and sewing-school is considered the finger-post to a door that will open for the admission of any of the Christian workers abovementioned. Wonderful are the revelations sometimes, both sad and joyous. Congeries of families are as deeply interesting to philanthropic explorers as sidereal groups are to astronomers. No social forces compel them to go to church as in richer communities, hence the easily-acquired habit of non-church-going has made them iron-clad against any reason to change. So here in obscurity are the once rich and cultured. They met life's battle and failed. Their blasted hopes and blunted tastes have hardened into unbelief. Others are tender, submissive, Christlike—the Lord's "hidden ones." Others are substantially heathen in all that repels or attracts in heathen character. Others are truly what the heathen call "Christian devils." Following thus the chapel attendants to their homes, saves for the church the few chosen, and presents to the many called the gospel of Christ. Such house-to-house methods for gleaning, inviting,

instructing, both build up the church and preach to multitudes who never felt the dawn of religion in the soul or darkened the door of the house of God.

(3.) The principle applied in prosecuting the above work is this : The gospel is the best remedy for the sins of adults, and the best prevention of sins in children. The Bible before souls unsaved is the source of order, prosperity, and peace. Coupling belief and relief matters is the source of confusion, hypocrisy, and strife. The union of spiritual and temporal relief is the marplot of mission work. "Church doles" have not only manufactured but slain regiments of paupers. They have helped to enrich those blighting Goliaths met with in mission work—the publican, the pawnbroker, and the policy-dealer. Give the poor the gospel, and command the respect of men. God's poor will find the hidden manna. They will not suffer. Let heroic treatment, not emollient, prevail, and no doubt mission work in New York will rise to the level at least of mission work among the Fiji. The people need manhood and womanhood, springing from knowledge and practice of God's truth, more than they need bread. Scotland's great Chalmers says that it is a moral impossibility to Christianize and aliment the people with one and the same machinery. Therefore the work should command the best to help save the worst.

2. The Sabbath-school. There are two Sabbath-schools—the German, Sabbath morning ; the English, Sabbath afternoon.

(1.) The English Sabbath-school numbers over three hundred scholars and twenty-seven officers and teachers. Had we adequate accommodations, five times that number might be gathered, and then the waste of family life fail to be recovered into salutary influence, for the streets and courts are more attractive playground than dark halls and stairways, and families are constantly overflowing and wasting away through their vicious associations.

(2.) The principles enforced in the school are stability, order, study, and gratitude. Of course, the soul's salvation is the chief object. Everything else is a means to this end. Several scholars have joined the church during the year. We enforce stability to destroy vagabondage. Regular attendance of a few is preferable to the irregular Sunday-school mobs. Order is as essential in Sabbath-school sessions as in church worship. This inculcation of reverence has brought a large portion of the school regularly to the evening service. Study of the lesson has thus been secured, and the weekly memorized verses are the basis of substantial instruction by the

teacher and interest in the scholar. Gratitude to God for these privileges dispels the common judgment of Sabbath-school members, that attendance is a favor conferred. Children may, as well as adults, be pauperized ; therefore no sensational inducements are the price of attendance. The gift-system is not in vogue. Over fifty boys and girls have bought their own thirty-five cent Bibles during the year. Waste is prevented and care instilled by a strict return, for review purposes, of the monthly lesson leaves, and also Sabbath-school papers, for redistribution in the Primary Department. The cent-each contribution is recommended, and commended and urged, to show gratitude to God as well as to practise self-denial in shutting their eyes to peanuts, candy, and gum on their way to Sunday-school. No child too poor to give a cent. It will not prevent starvation, and will educate heart and develop character. If parents and children die by this sacrifice, it will be in a good cause. This systematic giving by the school enabled it to give to the treasurer for its current expenses eight times as much in 1879 as in 1876. Figures are nothing, but every one doing something is everything. This discipline has increased the school so there is no more room. Scholars pass through the street mobs on Sabbaths uninfluenced from the chapel to their homes. Their intelligent grasp of the lesson reveals their growing interest, and their loyalty to the place shows that these restraints and demands and self-helps have won their hearts and judgments. If Christian parents are behind the teacher's effort, his work is easier ; but here, where character thus acquired becomes by the Sabbath-school work the source of its own moral steadiness, the moral revenue is a thousand-fold in advance of the temporal expense.

(3.) The morning German school is under the same tutelage. The Rev. Conrad Doench is in perfect sympathy with this practice. He conducts, not the service to Germanize, but to lead to Christianizing the children of parents in attendance at German worship unable to understand English. Hence the German Sabbath-school is the gathering-point of the children of German members, who are thereby saved to Christianity and the church. A striking evidence of harmony between these portions of worshippers is the fact that many of the most faithful attendants and supporters of the English Sabbath-school and evening worship are the American-born children of the German parents, who by age and national habit must live and die in praise and prayer to God in their native tongue.

3. The benevolent system.

(1.) The charity most valuable at all times under all circumstances is that which "suffereth long and is kind," which "seeketh not her own," and which "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The Scriptural system of weekly offerings by envelopes was introduced at Lebanon Chapel, March, 1879. The principle involved is that the systematic habit of giving to the Lord is coupled in worship with praying. The widow's mite in God's sight is equal to the rich man's millions. Envelopes are given to holders, now numbering eighty-one, for three months in advance, superscribed with holders' numbers and monthly date of all the Sabbaths in that quarter. The treasurer of the Chapel collections keeps a book-account with each number, and the pastor does the same. But the pastor alone has the names corresponding to the numbers. The pastor and treasurer open the envelopes together and credit the amounts therein to the numbers in their books corresponding to the numbers on the envelopes. Quarterly the treasurer reports the amount for each number to the pastor, who encloses a note to each contributor of his amount for the past three months. The labor is great, but the trouble pays in educational results; for in 1879 the money raised was four times what it was in 1876, and equal to the amount raised in both 1877 and 1878. And this remarkable fact shows the unity of the whole work, that one-half of the envelope holders are teachers and scholars of the afternoon service, and are seldom absent from either Sabbath-school or preaching service. The gifts of the people are small, but large for them. It has been so customary to address the people of these districts as the "poor" and the "lower classes," that those able to do better, were they in the church, have imagined that Christian work and Christian claims were not for them; hence much wealth here is consecrated to substantial heathenism. Let City Mission work in up-town church and down-town chapel address itself more to the people's self-respect and their responsibility to God, and they will give more cheerfully their money and time for Christ's work in their midst in proportion as they are able. The wornout ceremonies of this religious coddling of the poor are ever-recurring ghosts whenever you try to present Christ's claims to the well-to-do and too often unbelieving classes. The multitudes of irreligious traders coining money from these people ought to give to help bless their constituency, the customers for their wares.

(2.) There are missionary societies among the women, both English and German, which meet monthly. The members bring both money and work as offerings. Special countries are selected for

knowledge, and all members capable are requested to give what information they can about said countries. Home missions also command their attention and interest. This labor and study for the good of others at home and abroad deepen spiritual life in themselves, and leads them more faithfully to the Woman's Prayer-meeting.

(3.) The German members have a "Burial Society" for mutual benefit. In addition to the several hundred dollars raised for all purposes by the German portion of Lebanon Chapel during 1879, this society assessed itself \$225 for funeral expenses. So much sacrifice and self-assessment among poor people for the good of others and anticipative good to themselves are worthy of all praise.

(4.) The Girls' Sewing-school is one of the best agencies under the benevolent phase of the Christian work. Multitudes of girls "go out" to work in shops at all branches of in-door industry, which must be pursued for profit, however, at the shops. They cannot take their work home and continue to earn their small wages in emergent times when household affairs forbid them to be absent. Hence no one thing is so generally needed and useful as the skilful use of the needle. This school, under the management of Miss Bartlett and Miss Dye, deserves the greatest merit for its system and thoroughness. Test-pieces of different kinds of sewing are given to each girl as she enters the school, and her ability to perform these is made the basis of her classification. While this system in any case leads to excellence, it also stimulates the desire for improvement, in order that the reward thereof may be promotion to sew on garments.

(5.) The Helping Hand for women perhaps meets one need of this myriad-phased work which no other organization could do. Women of all creeds and conditions live under the supply of charity's graduating scale. Some need more and some less help. And while they are quietly engaged in sewing, the ladies in charge, by their very contact and presence and words, are lifting them to better thoughts and modes of life. This society has been organized several years, and is conducted and sustained entirely by the ladies of the Presbyterian church of Englewood, N. J. It takes women of all creeds and conditions, if subjects for Christian charity, and teaches them by methods of self-help to help themselves.

4. The Young People's Association. How shall the interest of so many young people as live in this region be arrested and properly directed? The press teems with steaming trash to fascinate the mind and destroy true character. To help the young people at Leb-

anon and encourage the accession of others, this society was formed two years since for social, literary, and spiritual profit. Meeting semi-monthly at private houses, the first hour is devoted to the study of some historical or literary subject. If an author, a sketch is given; then from four to ten members read or recite selections from his standard works. These exercises are followed by some suitable words, closing with prayer. The time, until 10 p. m., is then spent in music and conversation. The whole meeting is informal, where all are free to ask and answer and enjoy the social amenities of pleasant intercourse. The character of the meetings upon the members may be inferred from the subjects of study. During the past year an evening or two was devoted to Bryant, Longfellow, Tennyson, Taylor, Coleridge, Whittier, Lowell, Washington Irving, the Book of Esther, Oliver Wendel Holmes, and others. Such associations have supplanted the filthy trash formerly uppermost in their reading tastes. Three lectures have been held under the auspices of this society to secure standard books for a permanent library. Two lectures were by the pastor upon cities in Europe, and one by Prof. Fairchild upon "Strange Animals of the Sea," all with lantern illustrations. This effort to benefit permanently the young people has led to the formation of the Lebanon Circulating Library, for the Sabbath-school and church and community who observe the rules. Herein the ladies of Englewood have been most generous in the donation of books. Over one hundred volumes are drawn and read monthly. These facts plead strongly for more adequate appointments. The labors for usefulness could be expanded indefinitely.

5. The Lebanon Club for Workingmen. The origin of this institution was in answer to the questions in the early part of 1877, Why are not men in the churches? Where do they spend their time? How do they improve their leisure moments? To create a place where the privileges of coöperation, amusement, and education could be enjoyed, and where the gin-shop as a gathering-place could be superseded, would be an object worth working and waiting for. The Lebanon Club, on corner of Stanton and Columbia streets, originated thus in Lebanon Chapel in 1877, organized in March, 1878, and opened for business and reception of the public, December 13, 1878. Library, reading-room, lecture-hall, coffee-house, etc., are among its appurtenances. Self-support from fees and dues and coffee-house business is the temporal side to meet the higher wants of life's upper and moral side. Three prominent facts have carried their blessings to the parties concerned: first, the members have had the privileges

of the place at the nominal sum of twenty-five cents monthly. Secondly, the public have had as fine a course of lectures from our well-known men of the city as any portion of the city have enjoyed. These lectures and the concerts have permeated the whole community, and created a new life and spirit and interest among the people. Thirdly, the coffee-house has been and is a boon to the public in furnishing to the workingman and the poor widow good food at the cheapest price. It is not yet self-supporting, but is slowly approaching such a foundation. Had we funds, its usefulness might be enlarged. But it is already a fact and a force for good in the vicinity. Its growth and permanency are like all questions of moral consideration, questions of time. We must wait. The people here will learn its value; the friends of humanity will yet give it more efficiency. Although not yet self-supporting after a year's existence and great success in all its moral influences, still the general benefit and the future promise have exceeded the expectations of its founders.

III. THE PROMISE.

A promise is always stimulating, though its fulfilment may be far in the future. The sheaves already garnered are an earnest of the plenteous harvest. The future is full of bright hopes and happy homes through the efficient application of the means of grace. But in order to realize the prophetic vision, there is first of all needed the serious study of the demands of the fields by Christian people of wealth. Radically bad fields seem the most popular; but this is the region of family life, instead of the abode of the knight-errantries of evil. Another need, in order to be enthused with the immediate results of earnest labor, are architectural protests against the occupation by Romanism of ground abandoned by Protestantism. The church must appear as the pillar of cloud and fire. Unbelief will lose its sneer that Christianity has lost its power over the people. Thousands will then fall into line for the hope of God's word and civil freedom. Countless arguments will spring to the lips as the faith of the heart in the sufficiency of God's word through the Holy Spirit to cast down everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

JAMES MARSHALL,
Pastor of Lebanon Chapel.

NEW YORK, December, 1879.