



CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

The American Church in Berlin.

American and British Union Services.

This Church, formerly called The American Chapel, was established some twenty years ago in Junker Str. 5 and 6, in order to furnish Evangelical Union services in the English language. For its establishment special credit is due to Governor Wright, at that time Minister of the United States in Berlin. The term „Union“ is used to indicate that the various nationalities which speak English, and also the various Evangelical denominations, participate in the worship. The predominance of members from the different churches of America and Great-Britain varies greatly, so that the spiritual needs of the community can better be met by a Union on a basis similar to that of the Evangelical Alliance or the young Men's Christian Associations than by a denominational organization. The Church is managed by a Committee elected annually by the congregation. On the present Committee both America and Great-Britain are represented, as well as the Congregational, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches. The services are held in a building rented from the German Methodists, with which body there is, however, no organic connection. There is no permanent pastor, but the pastoral work is performed by the Chairman of the Committee. Since the death of Rev. George Palmer Davies, Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in 1881, this work has devolved on the present Chairman. Scores of ministers from America, England and Scotland have occupied the pulpit, among them Rev. Phillips Brooks, D. D., Bishop Foster, Rev. M. Hoge, D. D., Professor C. M. Mead, Ph. D., Professor E. L. Curtis, Professor D. W. Simon, D. D., Rev. George Palmer Davies, and the Rev. Dr. Somerville. Besides the work in Berlin, preachers have also been furnished to the neighbouring English (Yorkshire) colonies, at Rummelsburg and Schoenweide. Excepting the Church of England, there is in Berlin no other religious service in the English language.

Owing to the large increase in the number of English speaking persons in Berlin the work of the Church has recently been greatly enlarged. Berlin is growing in popularity with foreigners, particularly with students. At present, besides the English and Scotch, there are 149 American students at the university; but these are far outnumbered by those who study German, music, and art, or who sojourn here for business or recreation. The hundreds of young people who come here annually to enjoy the highest educational advantages are subject to temptations peculiarly subtle and strong, while they are deprived of the safeguards and spiritual influences of their homes. When they arrive, the language, manners and customs are strange; they misunderstand and are misunderstood; and in a great metropolis there are many to take advantage of their inexperience. They find the prevalent views on temperance and the Sabbath totally different from those at their homes; and with few opportunities to meet earnest Christians, they find that the American and English type of piety is often ridiculed. Friendless and alone, they are suddenly thrown into the midst of the greatest temptations, and their spirituality is subjected to the severest strain. To furnish them a spiritual home and promote their religious welfare under circumstances singularly trying is a duty of the first importance.

During 1886 the Church sustained a severe loss in the death of Dr. F. P. Abbot, a warm friend and active supporter from the beginning, and for many years the secretary and treasurer. There have, however, been many encouraging features during the year and evidences of signal blessing on the work. Not only is the attendance larger than ever before, but there is also an increased desire to make the Church more efficient and to promote the spiritual interests of those committed to its charge. A Ladies' Union has been formed to aid the Church financially and spiritually. It has found the work abundant and important, and has proved a great blessing to the Church. Meetings are held monthly to hear reports on Christian work and to devise means for its prosecution. There are committees to welcome strangers, to visit the sick, and to promote the social and religious welfare of young ladies.

In order to remove all restrictions the pews are free. Thus far the Church has been supported by voluntary contributions of attendants and friends in Berlin, a task the more difficult because so many of the worshippers are transient or else students pursuing their studies here at much expense and, perhaps, self-denial. The work has attained such magnitude that there is urgent demand for a permanent pastor adapted to the peculiarities of the situation. There is also need of a church building consecrated wholly to the use of Evangelical Christians who speak English. The present building has not the conveniences required, and the time when it is at our disposal is too limited. But one Sabbath service can now be held, because the audience room of the German Chapel cannot be secured at any other convenient time. With a continuance of the recent rate of increase in the attendance it will also soon be too small. Until recently, the average number at worship was one hundred; now it is two hundred.

The position of the Church in the Capital of Germany, and the character of the audience — composed so largely of those preparing for preaching, teaching, and authorship — make the work unusually important, certainly second to none in any church on the Continent for the use of Americans and English. Those on whom the responsibility of the work rests feel that necessity is laid upon them to make an earnest effort to enlarge the work of the Church. To this end we desire to lay this cause on the hearts of all who love those principles which make believers one in Christ.

We do not believe that American and English Christians can understand the urgent spiritual needs of those who come from their homes and churches, and yet remain indifferent to those needs. The following summary gives an idea of what is required now.

First. A resident pastor, devoting his whole time to the needs of the Church. Besides the ordinary pulpit and pastoral work, he ought to welcome strangers on their arrival, must be prepared to give such counsel and help as cannot be expected from banking houses and public officials, and should make his home a centre for social Christian intercourse. Numerous cases of illness occur among those not accustomed to the climate, food, and mode of life. These sick persons in strange homes and in hospitals, and this floating parish composed so largely of gifted and cultivated young people in a foreign land, require peculiar pastoral work.

Second. A church building adapted to the present needs of the congregation. We are under great obligation to the Society whose building we now occupy; but the growth of the Church and its work has made new demands which can only be met by a suitable building owned by the congregation.

Third. Rooms for social and religious gatherings, with the best papers and choice literature, so that pure entertainment and positive influences may be used as means to counter-

act the temptations to which the young are subjected. The best moral and religious agencies are required to preserve the pure, to support the falling, and to rescue the fallen.

In view of the fact that we live in an expensive city, pay rent for the building, and have a field requiring much labor, the financial report has astonished the friends of the enterprise. One seventh of the amount expended was required to meet a deficit of the previous year. It will not be possible to prosecute the work successfully in the future without a greatly enlarged income. The receipts during the year ending Dec. 1, 1886, were 3557,43 Marks, a sum less than 900 dollars or 175 pounds sterling. The amount in the treasury at the same date was 14,17 Marks.

Besides the regular Sunday contributions, the receipt of the following sums is gratefully acknowledged:

Hon. Geo. H. Pendleton, Minister of the United States	100,00 M.	Dr. A. Sylvester	100,00 M.
Consul-General F. Raine	150,00 "	Consul Sander	100,00 "
Mrs. Dr. F. P. Abbot	372,11 "	Mr. H. Villard	100,00 "
Hon. H. Kreismann	200,00 "	Mr. Pullar	66,65 "

The Ladies' Union acknowledge with gratitude the following:

Mrs. Victor Lawson	200 M.
Mrs. Elizabeth Wendell Ten Eyck	100 "
Mrs. Lucien A. Hagans	100 "

Contributions will be thankfully received by the Treasurer; by the Pastor; or by Mr. James Watt at the Bible Depository, Wilhelmstr. 33.

J. H. W. Stuckenberg,

Chairman of Committee and acting Pastor.
Buelow St. 18.

Committee for 1887.

Hon. Theo. S. Fay. Rev. Professor J. H. W. Stuckenberg, D. D.
Professor W. D. Miller, Ph. D., Treasurer, Hausvoigteiplatz 2. Dr. C. H. Abbot. Hon. H. Kreismann.
Rev. Professor C. M. Mead, Ph. D. Mr. James Watt, Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society.
Mr. W. M. Griscom. Professor J. T. Anderson. Professor J. S. Simonton.
Rev. G. Frei.

Berlin, Jan. 1, 1887.