A Denominational Church

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A DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH

BY

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

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If there is any particular class of buildings that should be really artistic it is certainly the churches. And if we take it for a settled fact that art is "the beautiful way of doing things", it is not hard to trace back through the ages and find that art is inspired through the church. When the church lost its power in the sixteenth century art received a most disastrous blow. The church shall continue to inspire persons to nobler lives and surely it should be a beautiful place itself; so we want to try and find what it is that makes a church beautiful without the lavishing of labor that was characteristic of the Middle Ages.

With what I have read on the subject, it seems to me that the most important point to remember is that a church is a church, the house of God, and cannot be classed with any other kind of buildings. If a man wants to build a store and has money enough only to make it of wood he is at liberty to do so, but it is a rather general opinion that it would be even better to worship a while in a tent rather than to erect a house for the worship of God out of planks, such a perishable material. However, before we consider material, except for this one point, it is well to notice that the law of simplicity is the most attractive feature of the most successful designs. This is most evident in the small country churches of England, and since that
is the kind of building that I am considering I shall talk mostly about that type.

There are many, many churches that are attempts at picturesqueness, but there are many more failures than good results. It is not picturesque to use cobble stone or rough faced ashlar, that is rough to an extreme. It is true that there may be a good texture obtained by the use of these stones, but it should not be carried to an extent, that is too often done, such as will make the wall appear chopped up; it must hold together and form a unit, otherwise it is not a wall. The little country churches of England are the most picturesque of any churches anywhere, yet the most inspiring ones do not make such strides at picturesqueness as to attract one's attention to that entirely, but rather by a simple way of "piling up" seem wonderfully stable, making the matter of texture somewhat secondary, but surely making it count in helping to obtain unity rather than the opposite. An impressive church service must not have coarse features of any kind. If the minister's voice is rasping to the ear it should be trained, yet it should be a strong voice. So with the music and other parts of the services, and surely the appearance of the church itself should possess a unity that will not call forth in one's mind that there is anything that is frivolous or harsh. The plan of the temple that God gave to Solomon was full of simplicity yet we always imagine that that temple must have been a wonderfully impressive worshipping place.
However, I shall not here attempt to put forth various creeds and try to find a particular style for each, but let it suffice to say that there are two distinct types that influence the design of a church in particular, the Catholic and the Liberal churches. To be sure many churches are more liberal than others and in the following it shall be my idea to follow the requirements of the Universalist church, a very liberal church.

First of all, the concise creed of the Universalist may be stated by the belief in

1. The universal fatherhood of God.
2. The spiritual authority and leadership of his son, Jesus Christ.
3. The trustworthiness of the bible as containing a revelation from God.
4. The just punishment for all sin.
5. The final harmony of all souls with God.

Although this is one of the oldest creeds in our country, it is not generally understood, therefore, I would like to suggest that anyone reading a part of the creed above be sure and understand all of it for the point that has turned many away from the creed is from absorbing, say the point of the final harmony of all souls with God and overlooking the important prerequisite of the just punishment for all sin. To me it is a beautiful faith and surely there should be a beautiful building for it to be spread to others who perhaps
know nothing about it. The better country chapels of England just fit the belief, it seems to me, but they do not fit the present day needs, so it shall be my problem to attempt the solution of the fitness of materials, plan, and design to a particular lot and in it try to use some of the methods of English Chapels. These methods said briefly are; "to plan with strictest simplicity possible; design both interior and exterior with reserve, formality, and self control; have the mass simple, the composition equally so; and, most dangerous, imitate no form or detail of larger structures, but work for the dignity and the reverence that belong to the chapels; and above all, let the spirit be that of the unchanging Church, the form alone that of the present day".
Perhaps Mr. Ralph Adams Crom is the most successful American Church Architect and an examination of his work shows that the law of simplicity was his rule and guide for making "the church that will continue to be admired and loved" such churches as the Trinity Church of New York, St. Stephen's Church, Fall River, Mass., and work of other architects such as St. Mary's, Dalton-in-Furness, by Paley and Austin, and the Parish Church at Waterloo. The type that I am particularly interested in for the present is such as St. Stephen's, Cohasset, Mass., by Mr. Crom and St. Peter's Morristown, N. J., by McKim, Mead and White.

The "Perfect Type" as pointed out in a description by Mr. Crom would not fit many present-day problems at all. In the country where there might be a beautiful setting for that type there are too limited funds to put so much money in the tower, and in the town or city the lot, and perhaps the funds too are very limited. However, it is possible to obtain good English design without any tower at all, but the problem is usually made more difficult by certain authorities insisting on some kind of a tower. Therefore, reasons come up for architects violating their own judgment in their design oftentimes because they are forced to by the church board who have very wonderful ideas as to how a church should be built, even though they usually confess that they know nothing of design. Then absolutely all of the conditions and requirements are dictated, the work of the architect becomes that of a draftsman only, and perhaps the resulting unsatis-
factory building, defects must remedy, bills for extras, etc., will be a demonstration of what experience or preliminary study would have avoided. This is the real cause of the many unsatisfactory church edifices, which are a hindrance, rather than a help, to the cause. The services of an architect should be those of an expert, experienced advisor and not those of a mere draftsman.

If the church were to be erected for church services only, the problem would be comparatively an easy one; but in the present day the various auxiliaries make the problem much more complex. The relative position of different parts must be considered so that they may serve a two and sometimes three fold purpose. Therefore, the problems reduce themselves for solution to probably about four factors; the requirements, - the cost, - the material and character of building, - and perhaps least of all, the ability of the chosen architect.

PARTICULAR PROBLEM:— Coming to the particular problem of this thesis, I was influenced directly in taking such a subject, by the needs at the present time of a new church building of the Universalist faith here at Urbana, Illinois. Building funds are now being raised and the prospects are that there will soon be a new church. However, I am not making this my thesis expecting to be financially benefited by making this a practical problem, but simply want the problem to be a practical one and also it will probably have received more study than if all had been left to a busy
practicing architect.

THE SITE:— The same site, the southeast corner of Green and Birch Streets, is to be retained for the new church. The present church, so ruined by age and weather that it is unwise to use any part of it as it now stands, shall be completely torn down and part of the material saved for the new building. The lot is only fifty-seven feet wide and one hundred and twenty feet deep, the shorter dimension being along Green Street.

Since it does not seem advisable to buy adjoining property or to change the site, the problem is naturally limited to very few solutions. Green Street is the more important street, hence should have the main entrance leading at least toward that street, and this one feature probably caused more trouble than all else. The lot is entirely too narrow to give any setting to the church, but I have kept the actual conditions as rigidly as if the church were to be built from these drawings directly.

CHOICE OF STYLE:— As before stated, the country church of England has in it all the features that seem appropriate to a free and liberal church and since there is no better style anywhere I have tried to design my problem with as much of the English Country Gothic as possible.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH COUNTRY GOTHIC:— The abbeys and ruins of abbeys that mark numerous places in England are said to be some of the most beautiful places that there are. The Monks who decorated these "Cliffs of Wells" with all the wealth
of carving devoted their lives to the work, leaving monuments from the very beginning of the history of England. However, many of these country churches are very simple, but they are always finished to a very definite state. From one hundred views selected by Mr. Ralph Adams Cram, the following are some that appeal to me most: - St. Mary's Church, Beverly; St. Botolph Church, Boston; Church at Bray; St. John's Priory Church, Precon, Wales; St. Martin's Church, Canterbury; the bell tower of the church at Chichester, stone work of a beautiful texture and the top of the tower, original yet not at all pretentious; St. Petrock's Church, Dartmouth; Parish Church at East Ernstead; St. Lawrence Church, Evesham, having a large window completely covering the space between the buttresses on the tower yet it surprised one by not looking bad after all; The Nave of the Church at Ledbury, stonework exposed on the interior, in this case giving a beautiful effect; Prior Church from West, Leominster; Priory Church, Malvern; Nave of Priory Church, Malvern, showing immense columns at the sides of the central aisle; Nave of Parish Church, Mold, Wales, showing a wonderfully skillful handling of the moulding of interior arches and columns; Greyfriar's Tower, Richmond; Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon; Wimborne Minster; and the beautiful vine covered church at Winchelsea with flying buttresses that certainly make the place attractive. And the whole reason for the English Country and village church being so artistic is that they were the work of such
a great part of the populus, and Mr. Crom says, "The sanest, most wholesome art is that which is the heritage of all the people, the natural language through which they express their joy of life."

During the Middle Ages architecture was practiced in England with even greater success than among any of the contemporary nations. Only in construction and actual dimensions were they inferior. The beauty of line and extremely careful workmanship made the English Gothic surpass that on the Continent.

The English Gothic grew from the Early Round-arched or Saxon style into the Norman Round-arched style in about the twelfth century. Later the early pointed Lancet, or Plantagenet style developed in the latter part of the twelfth century up to about 1216, out of which grew the Perfected pointed decorated or Edwardian style to the end of the 14th century. The late pointed or Perpendicular Gothic was also known as Lancastrian and it lasted until 1483, which was followed by the Fan-vaulted, Transitional or Tudor Style. The entire English Gothic lives a life which has a definite beginning and just as definite an end.

To a young student of architecture it is really like a drama, a tragedy if we may say so, for in the life there is a steady rise then a fall and the moral of it all is so clear for the reasons for the rise and fall are so clear. In the Elizabethan period there was too much time being spent making palaces for the nobility for there to be much energy devoted to church building.
The definite date of the introduction of the pointed arch into England is not known, but it is thought to have been at the rebuilding of the Cathedral at Canterbury after the fire of 1174. William Sens was superintendent of this work, and it is believed that his influence in England was quite strong. This is not the first time the style had been used for in fact it was used in the Church at St. Denis at least thirty years previous but not to any completed stage as at Canterbury. Great originality in design was shown in the window tracery produced by the English architects. Henry VII chapel has some of the most beautifully designed windows that there are anywhere; mouldings of stone so refined that they look like the work of much skilled sculptors.

From the standpoint of the English the French Cathedrals seem lost; they tower out above all surrounding buildings having no connection of scale whatever. While in the English churches the plan was so arranged that it was not necessary to run the walls so high, hence the towers were high above the room without making so much of a misfit with other buildings, in this way serving their purpose, but making it possible for the church building to harmonize with the surrounding chapter-house, cloister and conventual building. The same spirit that existed in the building of the cathedrals also existed in the smaller country churches.
MATERIALS:

Considering the materials we may begin with the foundation and go right up in the building, however, we may decide now that there need not necessarily be any connection between the English church materials and present day building materials except that we would do well to notice some of their mistakes in construction.

The vital importance of sufficient and perfect foundations cannot be overestimated. Thoroughness in all the smaller details and matters are essential to economy in the end; for the building that is only superficially complete is a constant source of expense. Precautions should be taken to prevent any dampness whatever from going through the wall, and in the basement wall and floor there should be a course of waterproofing such as tar and paper unless there is no danger of water staying in the ground higher than the basement floor for any length of time. There must be some preventive of dampness, however, even for walls above the ground. They may be built hollow, or lined with hollow brick or furred on the inner surfaces, then lathed and plastered, or treated on a vertical joint with some waterproof preparation. A hollow wall is much weaker than a solid one. Considering everything it is best to use a hollow brick, for the wall is then just as strong, it is damp proof, it is lighter and it makes the building less susceptible to changes of temperature on account of the air spaces. Furring is just as much expense and it adds to the thickness of the wall and also makes a thru hollow air space which serves as a fire trap unless stop off in some manner.
For plastering there is no material better than good lime and sand mortar properly made, care being taken in securing moderately coarse sharp sand. The lime should be slaked 30 to 90 days before using, being covered to retain the water. Use good fibre instead of hair.

The wall will be brick up to the grade line and above there it should be veneered with six inches of stone. The choice of stone is noe very difficult, for there is only one stone that is practicable here, that is within possible limits of cost, and that is Indiana lime stone. If it is used just as it comes from the quarry, there will be a variation of color that makes it more desirable for a church than if it were selected. The face should be left rock face, but not too extreme. The method of laying shall be in definite horizontal courses of varying widths and the trimming all of selected (near white) limestone of the same kind. In order to give the wall a little more character and life it should have a stone reaching thru a couple of courses every 10 or 12 square feet or so.

All timbers shall be well seasoned and must be free from knots and other defects. The present church has some fine oak timbers which certainly should be used again in the new building, and I have designed the hammer-beam trusses in such a manner as to allow the use of the members in the present church trusses. The roof is to be supported by the trusses, purlins on the trusses, rafters on the purlins, and sheathing on the rafters. The shingles shall be of slate and should be well nailed to insure no slipping. The floor joists should be of the best joist in the present old church and new ones of a quality as good. The
main floor should have double flooring, the top floor being of very narrow strips for it will probably be carpeted sooner or later and if it is laid with wide strips the carpet is bound to wear on the joints.

The interior walls shall be plastered and where there are partitions that are not bearing partitions they may be of wood studs but must be plastered on metal lath. Bearing partitions shall be of brick but need not contain any hollow brick. Nail grips should be placed in the wall wherever there is apt to be nailing required but in no case put in wooden blocks in the brick work for nailing to.

All interior trim should be kept as simple as possible to harmonize with the coarse trusses and the heavy "V" matched and beaded ceiling. The wainscoting up to the windows sills, the ceiling and the trusses themselves should be stained with a dark oak stain, rubbed, but not varnished to be glistening. As Mr. Geo. W. Kramer said in an article of his, "Coarse, elaborate detail or design only appeals to the vulgar taste; refined esthetic natures with cultivated taste are shocked with the bad taste and lack of harmony". Therefore, only constructive members should be coarse and everything kept very simple.

The plumbing, electric wiring, gas fittings, etc., shall be taken care of at the proper time, in no case making it necessary to break any plaster or lathing to correct work not done on time.

The painting of the window frames on the exterior and the exposed wood work anywhere else shall have one coat of lin-
seed oil and two coats of paint, to be selected.

For heating it is probably most advisable to use a two-pipe steam heating system, the boiler to be placed as shown on the plans.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE PLAN:

The "Ladies' Aid" of the church have regular meetings every week when they quilt bed covers and do other such things; so they require a good light room for such purposes. In order that they shall not have to climb to the second story I have provided their room on the southwest corner on the first floor. This room will have sunshine all afternoon.

The ladies are noted for their excellent suppers so are desirous of having a large banquet room, which is provided in the basement, the room being so arranged that it may also be used for entertainments or plays in which a platform or stage is required.

The Pastor's study is provided for on the second floor of the tower, the little room at the side of the altar being merely an entrance and retiring room for the pastor.
CONCLUSION:—

When I started this problem I would like to have been able to design a church that would seem unique and "home-like", but now my ideas are entirely changed and I can scarcely see how I ever had such an idea, but being thankful that I am free to change my convictions I sincerely trust that this paper shall not offend anybody, not even the person who might be desirous of doing such a crude act as placing horizontal tie rods across the church. I used to think that field stones would make a nice church, but now my idea of picturesqueness is changed and if anyone reads this I hope it may change the ideas of some, if their ideas were ever as crude as mine.