Contrasting Tendencies in Protestant Church Architecture.

" Le génie de l'architecte consiste à batir des idées avec des pierres." This fine saying of Montalembert holds good of Gothic (" Scholasticism in stone "), Byzantine (" the strange, gilded and embalmed repose of a petrified civilisation "), and Baroque (" the crystallisation of the Counter-Reformation "). But the genius of Protestantism has eluded architectural form ; it has preferred " fluidity " to " frozen music." Gradually, Protestantism is perceiving the aesthetic implications of the Incarnation and the necessity of embodying its ideals. Private prayer can dispense with the arts, public prayer cannot. The simplest place of worship involves the arts of masonry, woodwork, metal-work, and glazing. As Dr Dearmer says, " They do not cease to be art when they are badly done ; they only become bad art." If the Bible is the " Book-form " of the Divine Revelation, the Church is its " Architecture-form." Beauty is a quality that permeates, not a quantity piled on in proportion to the amount of funds and the height of the ritual.[1]

The desire to enrich our worship is hindered by our sterile inheritance of apathy. The modern lack of initiative naturally results in predatory raids into the realm of mediaeval art and symbolism. It is a little doubtful whether we shall get what we want by clothing the worship of the Twentieth Century with the vestments of the Twelfth. We can learn much from the past, but we may not canonise it. We must not merely *borrow* ; we must *create.*

What types of church building have been evolved by Protestants since the Reformation ? What trend is dominant to-day—stylistic imitation, or the radical individualism that tries " to cut out all that historic stuff and get down to fundamentals " ? With an international background, I shall endeavour to discuss these questions within the limits of this paper. As the centre of architectural activity seems

[1] Thus the Dean of Canterbury finds in the simple Quaker Meeting House at Jordans " a beauty akin to that of the noblest Spanish shrines."

to have moved from Britain, westwards and eastwards, I propose to select the United States and Germany. This is unfamiliar ground to many, and the contrast is sharpened owing to the ascendancy of Neo-Mediaevalism in the " New " country, and Modernism in the " Old."

I.

" It is difficult to create, even in a new world." The 17th Century was an " Age of Memory "; the early American settlement " like an English village, badly transplanted." But trade with the Mother Country transformed New England into a land of wealthy merchants, with cultural aspirations. The 18th Century was an " Age of Books." Along with other literature, architectural manuals were imported from England. To the Colonists, the prints and plans of the London City churches seemed immeasurably superior to their square log meeting houses. Gibbs' St Martin's-in-the-Fields (1722), with its simple, rectangular plan and impressive portico (steeple astride), served as an acceptable model. There was as yet no architect in the land, but in response to the demand, there arose a race of carpenters and masons who skilfully adapted Georgian Architecture to American needs. " Colonial " was a translation of Classic into the vernacular,[1] but a very virile and racy translation in brick and wood. Thanks to men like Asher Benjamin,[2] a fine tradition of good taste and thorough craftsmanship was fostered. The classic spirit of dignified restraint, was acclimatised and embodied in many a Puritan Parish Church,[3] gleaming in brilliant white across a shady village green. No traveller in New England can fail to be impressed by the upward thrust of these steeples, which seem to grow out of the very landscape. Christian symbolism was purposely avoided, but the carved woodwork of pulpit and gallery, the well-proportioned Georgian windows filled with small panes of clear glass, the central aisle and the white pews, all combine in furnishing a restful background

[1] " Wren made Palladio speak English." In contrast to the Jesuits who developed florid Baroque as the architecture of the Counter-Reformation, Wren emphasised form rather than colour, and brought into being the Anglo-Saxon type of Protestant church that flourished till the 19th Century Gothic Revival.

[2] His *Country Builder's Assistant* (Greenfield, Mass., 1796) crystallised the tradition of a century.

[3] Such titles as " First Parish, Dedham," and " First Church of Christ in Hartford," indicate the status of New England Congregationalism. Not till 1818 in Connecticut, and 1834 in Massachusetts, did " the Standing Order " lose State support.

for worship. The "white New England church" moves the emotions of many people to-day[1] with a strength of appeal difficult to estimate.

> "The sight of a white church above thin trees in a city square
> Amazes my eyes as though it were the Parthenon.
> Clear, reticent, superbly final,
> With the pillars of its portico refined to a cautious elegance,
> It dominates the weak trees,
> And the short of its spire
> Is cool and candid,
> Rising into an unresisting sky."—(*Amy Lowell*).

Growing sophistication[2] led by easy stages to the Greek Revival in the early 19th Century, but before the Civil War the tradition of craftsmanship had died out.

When American craftsmen stepped aside from the well-worn path of Colonial tradition and essayed exotic forms, they failed pathetically.[3] The architect was in the land by this time, but it availed not. The period of Reconstruction that followed the Civil War was an age of rapid industrial expansion, dominated by "the parvenu mind," which assumed that culture could be purchased (along with other amenities) across the international counters of fashion—London and Paris. There was a demand for the flamboyant, the picturesque, and the "quaint"; commercial builders secured an easy market for their machine-made wares. The age was incapable of assimilating the various brands of Gothic that poured in from Europe, while the teaching of Ruskin simply led to confused eclecticism. An American architect gives a vivid description of the average Gothic Revival[4] church, c. 1870. "It was brick, in two high stories. On the corner was a spire—lean and awkward offspring of some far-away English village church. The windows were high, thin, and narrow, and the detail so scant that even to childish eyes it seemed repellent.

[1] Efforts are being made to "restore" these churches and solve problems their builders shirked. *E.g.*, too often the "copy books" left a blank wall behind the pulpit, which the evil genius of the 19th century filled with organ pipes. The chancel treatment of Episcopal Colonial churches is suggestive of Wren's ideals.

[2] *N.B.*—Influence of the brothers Adam on interior decoration. In the larger churches the galleries ran along arcaded aisles, *e.g.*, Hartford (First), and Boston (King's Chapel, Episcopal till the Revolution, now finely preserved by Unitarians—an "expurgated" edition of Prayer Book used).

[3] No need to sneer at the Doric portico in wood as "the Graeco-Baptist style." After all, the Greek Orders themselves were evolved by carpenters, who passed on their discoveries to masons. It is interesting to see this recognised by *The Home Missionary* (Dec., 1843, art., "Plan of a Log Church").

[4] The standard book (now out-of-print) is Aymar Embury's *Early American Churches* (Doubleday, 1914). Also, many popular books.

The ground floor contained the Sunday School, from the vestibule of which, by steep and narrow steps, the walnut stairway led a winding course to an upstairs vestibule. Here the late-comers, crowded together in the narrow space, awaited the end of the long prayer. An odour of damp matting permeated the air. The auditorium, once gained, was very high and very bare. It was without architectural treatment, except that the plastered walls leading up to the pointed ceiling were frescoed along the top and bottom, with what the local decorator considered to be Gothic ornament. He was mistaken. There was a high gallery running entirely around the room, supported by attenuated cast-iron columns. . . . . ."[1]

But it was Romanesque which captured the imagination of America in the 'eighties. This was mainly due to H. H. Richardson's masterpiece, Trinity Church, Boston (1877). The bold central tower at the centre of a Greek cross seemed to solve the problem of combining the ideals of auditorium and sanctuary; for *there* multitudes gathered to hear Phillips Brooks. Richardson saw the possibilities of Southern Romanesque; the largeness and simplicity of round-headed arches could express the American genius more adequately than Victorian Gothic, with its complicated detail. Unfortunately, like Ruskin, he was indirectly responsible for the hatching of an innumerable brood of ugly ducklings. The Gothic Revival church was a one-celled building. The Romanesque Revival synchronised with the emergence of the Sunday School from the basement. Various *ad hoc* devices were invented to adapt the church building to the needs of religious education. This perverted ingenuity discovered that Romanesque was easier to manipulate than Gothic. Grotesque imitations of Trinity Church appeared all over America. Here is a "composite photograph." ". . . . . Brick, and its trimming red sandstone. In place of the thin, narrow, pointed arches of the preceding era, the windows and portals are broad and squat, and have round arched heads. A tower with a dome-like cupola has supplanted the thin spire. In general appearance obesity had succeeded emaciation, and floridity, anaemia. The interior was as startingly unlike its elder brother as the outside. Instead of being long and narrow it was short, almost square, and the pulpit, organ, and choir

[1] T. E. Tallmadge, *The Story of Architecture in America*, p. 157 (W. W. Norton, 1927). Another excellent book (fully illustrated), T. F. Hamlin's *American Spirit in Architecture* (Yale, 1926).

(hardly a chancel under the circumstances) were tucked into one corner. The floor was sharply bowled, and the pews were all curved, which was inevitable in a cat-a-cornered church. The windows were picture windows—Biblical scenes done with startling realism on a grandiose scale. The woodwork was golden oak, the organ pipes much in evidence, and like the walls and ceiling, highly decorated. One wall, however, seemed to be a huge gate or portcullis, and so it was, for by some mysterious means it would rise or fall out of sight, disclosing the whole of the Sunday School, built on the celebrated Akron Plan."[1]

The epoch-making " World's Fair " of 1893 swept the Romanesque Revival into oblivion, but secular advance scarcely affected the reign of variegated tiles and " opalescent " glass.

The last shreds of ecclesiastical arrangement were abandoned. But when the night was darkest, the dawn was close at hand.

The renascence of Church Architecture would have seemed incredible in 1900. Indeed, Dr Ralph Adams Cram in his third edition of *Church Building* (1924), refers to certain " miraculous happenings of the last 25 years."

> What I mean is this, that while then such religious art, or sorts, as there was could be found (by careful scrutiny) in the Episcopal Church alone, now the Roman Catholic Church and several of the Protestant denominations have become very dangerous rivals for the primacy. . . . . At present the tendency is altogether away from Puritanism and intellectualism, back towards more spiritual, devotional and liturgical standards, and correspondingly comes a hunger for the same qualities in architecture; hence we find a pronounced drift towards Gothic and a demand for churches that in their assemblage of all the arts, including liturgics, would have been considered rather extreme by the Episcopal Church of the early 19th century or even of the end of the century in Virginia. Not only is the architecture that of the Catholic era in England, but stained glass rich with saints and symbolism, statues, splendid woodwork and metal-work, great organs and vested choirs, Communion Tables centrally placed, vested with rich frontals and bearing even cross and candles . . . . . all these things have come in the last 25 years, and the end is not yet.

These " miraculous happenings " are in no small measure due to Dr Cram himself. As plausible apologist for Mediaevalism, the learned Doctor would have us all living in walled towns, vassals of some baron or bishop, and we would be dragging stones to the rising cathedral, chanting the *Dies Irae*. But his rhetoric, wit, and sarcasm reached a wide

[1] Tallmadge, ibid, p. 193. " The Plan," first used at Akron, Ohio.

public untouched by architectural writing of the more prosaic kind. Anathemas and interdicts were launched against a type of church building hitherto accepted as perfectly normal; new aspirations were awakened. Medicine strong as this, diluted with a little sober sense, was necessary to purge the Churches of the false ideas so prevalent. Dr Cram's reputation rests, however, on his works rather than on his words.

By the Gothic churches he has designed within the last thirty years, he has acclimatised Gothic in America[1], won for himself a tremendous reputation and raised a new school of ecclesiastical architects. He was the Man for the hour. Public opinion was growing out of the immaturity characteristic of "the frontier mind"; the denominations were passing from the "Sect-type" to the "Church-type."

Good architecture had now publicity value, for had not great railway stations and business palaces placed America "on the map," internationally? Travel was no longer confined to the leisured classes. The citizen of Kalamazoo, Mich., discovered for himself that there were churches in Europe more beautiful as well as larger, than the "First Methodist Episcopal Church" of his home-town. A conscious lack was felt of the "fine old ecclesiastical arrogance" which Henry James had lamented—the tangible representation of religion in "bullion" rather than in "small change." The ambitious cathedral-building projects of the Episcopalians were a challenge to the non-liturgical Churches. There was an irresistible urge to "rise up and build." While there was no desire for conventional Gothic pinnacles that would only be dwarfed by skyscrapers (Victorian rocks in the swift stream of modern life), there was a recoil from the upholstered auditorium, with its secular platform, fetish-like organ pipes, and balcony suggestive of the running-track of a gymnasium. There was no desire for affected ecclesiasticism in worship, but the futility of individualistic and "vaudeville" methods was apparent. Worship had hitherto been thrust into the background by the theological, evangelistic, and administrative emphasis of American Protestantism. It was now acclaimed as the basis of faith by liberals weary of acrid fundamentalist controversy and arid modernist negation.

[1] Dr Cram in his earlier days had no use for anything but Gothic, and Perpendicular Gothic at that; the Renascence to him was "a mere interlude." But he is now quite tolerant of "Colonial" and other non-Gothic styles.

His best-known churches are:—St Thomas', New York (Episcopal, 1906); First Baptist, Pittsburgh (1909); Fourth Presbyterian, Chicago (1912); and Princeton University Chapel (1928).

The appeal was now to the common experiences that can be shared through worship, music, liturgy, and symbolism.[1] In Bushnell's fine phrase, " the Gospel is a gift to the Imagination." The liturgical and ecclesiological treasure of Catholic Europe has been revaluated, but in process of transplantation " doth suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange." There have been mistakes, of course. Innovaters eager to " enrich " the service have sometimes rebounded from the bare to the meaningless, garlanding the Puritan tree with all manner of exotic fruits that never flourished on New England soil. Committees have vainly endeavoured to prepare revisions of historic material—cleverly dovetailed mosaics without life. But fortunately a considerable body of opinion realises that a service cannot be mechanically " assembled " ; it must be " grown." Careful, intelligent experiment, based on broad historic background and a thorough grasp of the psychology of worship, will lead in due time to a rich new growth that will bear fruit ; it is only hasty, ill-considered experiment that produces the effect of new wine in old wineskins.

Excellent guidance has been vouchsafed by one of the most stimulating books ever written on the synthesis of ancient and modern, Dr Van Ogden Vogt's *Modern Worship*.[2] The need for creative effort to express the immanence of God, the sacramental quality of all life, and the implications of such " patterns " as the worship-experience of Isaiah, are treated in relation to " The Aesthetics of Structure." Since the Great War there has been quite a spate of books on Worship.[3] At least one Theological Institution has decided to develop a Department " to study aesthetics and worship as seriously and as thoroughly as the problem of Biblical Criticism."[4] Popular religious papers such as *The Christian Herald* offer annual awards for the best

[1] This movement has been attacked by ardent Fundamentalists as a mere substitute for the Gospel, and by some Modernists as an evasion of issues raised by the "Social Gospel." But the progressive *Christian Century* (Nov. 8th, 1928), while hinting at " the peril of the Gothic," editorially admits—" Puritan Evangelicalism evidently lacked something which is inherent in the genius of religion and the nature of the soul itself."

[2] (Yale, 1927). A book well worth possessing. See also *Art and Religion* (Yale, 1921), suggestive, if discursive. The author is minister of the First Unitarian Church, Chicago.

[3] *E.g., Reality in Worship* by Dean Sperry of Harvard (Macmillan, 1925) ; Schutz and Odgers, *The Technique of Public Worship*, a " typically American " book (Methodist Book Concern).

[4] The Chicago Theological Seminary and University Divinity School (1928). I had the interesting experience of giving courses on Worship and Architecture there during the summer term of 1931.

church designs. The Commission on Evangelism[1] of the National Congregational Council, with characteristic American efficiency, dispatches pamphlets and circular letters to ministers, holds regional conferences and attempts to adapt theories to widely varying conditions, through close group co-operation.

The powerful Methodist Episcopal Church, hitherto extremely backward in everything aesthetic (despite its retention of the Anglican Communion Service), has established a Bureau of Church Architecture[2] to advise congregations that wish to build or remodel their sanctuaries. The architects on the staff are experts on the practical problems of planning for good acoustics and efficient hall accommodation. At the same time they seek to "educate the community in the language and spirit of architecture" through books, pamphlets, and lectures. Costly mistakes have been saved in the case of the less cultured congregations, and the whole standard of Methodist architecture has been raised.

The bureau "is committed with enthusiasm to the chancel[3] plan." In the place of honour is the altar,[4] on which "a cross[5] may be placed to signify the sacrifice made once for all."

Gothic has been advocated, perhaps without much discrimination. One motive, however, has been the danger of the "Parish House" overshadowing the Sanctuary. Class-rooms that attempt to rival those of the Day School in efficiency,[6] fellowship lounges on hotel lines, equipment for recreation, and the provision of solid meals, all this suggests the danger of worship being subordinated to the ideal of the mere club.

Secularisation must be offset by Sanctification. Gothic architecture is one means of ensuring that "the whole plant be dominated by a churchly motive, with the sanctuary

[1] *N.B.*—The new association of Worship and "Evangelism."

[2] Director, Dr E. M. Conover, 1701 Arch St., Philadelphia. He will be glad to send pamphlets. See his manual, *Building the House of God* (N. Y., 1928, $2).

[3] For exhibition purposes an exquisite Model Chancel has been designed (scale 1 in. to the foot). The Communion rail at the front of the chancel is in accordance with Methodist Episcopal ritual).

[4] Congregationalists and Presbyterians in America, with a glaring disregard of Function, have in some cases abandoned the genuine Table for a sideboard-like "altar," merely because "we like it." To Dr Vogt, the altar appeals, not because of its sacramentarian associations, but because *all* ancient religion was impregnated with its numinous mystery.

[5] The cross seems to excite little of the prejudice that it still does in Scotland.

[6] *E.g.*—Over-belief in the supreme efficacy of "permanently insulated and sound-proof class-rooms"; the emphasis on technique at the expense of the Gospel. In America the burden of Religious Education rests on the Churches, not on the State Schools.

always significant."[1] The mediaeval monastery embodies the ideal of Christian civilisation ; the Church, as the heart, transmits its vital spirit to other parts of the organism—the library, refectory, garden, and cloisters. If the English village church be the model, the hall of the manor (with its timbered roof, great fireplace, and minstrels' gallery) may suggest dignified treatment for a " hall of fellowship " ; the traditional English cottages with their leaded casements might provide ideas for class-room design ; coloured medallions and heraldic devices, naive and romantic, may feed the starved imagination of Sunday School children.

We who are still in the Dark Ages of Church Hall architecture (or at any rate in the Spartan Age !) can learn much from the Religious Education Movement in America. Its aim is far broader than mere Sunday School methods, it is to further the growth of personality, intellectually, physically, and socially, as well as spiritually,—Christian nurture in the Master's footsteps.[2] With the emphasis resting on experience and the appreciation of life's best values, there is an urge to embody the Beautiful in city, home, school, and church.[3] Religious education, despite its dangers,[4] has done much to vitalise America's contribution to the Church architecture of Protestantism.

It would be difficult to give an adequate idea of America's achievements apart from photographs.[5] Were Henry James to survey " the American Scene " once more, he would be amazed at the cathedral-like churches of Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists in the East and Middle West. Even in provincial towns there is a high standard of excellence. In Goodhue's Chicago University[6] Chapel, modern Gothic reaches its high-water mark. With its massive tower, clean-cut outlines, and spacious interior, this great sanctuary may well claim to be the 20th century embodiment of the eternal Gothic spirit, blended with the rational clarity[7] of to-day. Then there is the Church of the Heavenly Rest in New York, serenely holding its own among high business buildings by its sheer

[1] " Building the Seven-Day-a-Week Church " (pamphlet).

[2] " And Jesus advanced in *wisdom* and *stature*, and in favour with *God* and *man*." (Luke, 2, 52).

[3] See Soares, *Religious Education* (Chicago, 1928), for an excellent presentation.

[4] *E.g.*—" Behaviourism " and " Humanism."

[5] See R. A. Cram's *American Church Building of To-Day* (New York, 1929), an illustrated survey of the work of contemporary architects. Dr Cram published a similar collection in 1916.

[6] Standing in the open " Midway," it dominates the University. As a creative achievement, I think it surpasses Liverpool Cathedral.

[7] See Prof. Goodspeed's excellent Guide (Chicago Univ. Press. $1).

breadth, simplicity of mass, relieved at strategic points by rich tracery.

Under Dr Vogt's auspices old and new have been delightfully blended in the First Unitarian Church of Chicago; a sense of colour and fellowship has been infused into Gothic forms, and traditional symbolism has been reinforced by sociological symbols indicating the co-operation of head, heart, and hand.[1]

That religion is no mere flight from the issues of life is intimated by the inscription over the portal:

On entering—
"Up from the world of the Many
To the over-world of the One."
On leaving—
"Back to the world of the Many
To fulfil the life of the One."

Dr Vogt's ideal is "a free cathedral" in every great city, "where all the major strains of religious experience are recognised and all the major types of worship are utilised."[2] The nearest approximation to this ideal of a civic cathedral is Riverside Church, New York,[3] built for Dr H. E. Fosdick in 1931. Provision is made for every type of service—liturgical, rationalistic, evangelical,[4] and the silent devotions of the Friends. Site limitation has involved building upwards. The great tower is externally thirteenth century French Gothic, in impressive masonry. Internally, it is a steel skeleton framework running up to a height of 400 feet, the elevator shaft rising from the bowling alleys in the basement, past innumerable Sunday School department floors and offices, to the 72-bell carillon ("the largest in the world"), 24 stories up. The acoustical engineer and sound insulating expert have presided over the destinies of Riverside Church, but the interior is as mediaeval as possible, from the narthex to the altar (in spite of modern iconography in stained glass and statuary, celebrating hundreds of scientists, humanitarians, and reformers). Riverside Church illustrates, on a large scale, the desire to combine things new and old, but excessive detail and rich

[1] "New and Old" represented by a crypt, furnished for "urn-burial."

[2] *Century Magazine*, March, 1925.

[3] Architects, Allen & Collens, Boston. Owes much to munificence of John D. Rockfeller. A commanding site near the Hudson, dominating the University quarter. Seats 2500.

[4] Riverside Church is nominally Baptist. The Sacrament of Baptism is finely symbolised by the baptistery immediately behind the marble Communion Table. (See *Riverside Church Monthly*, Dec., 1930, for full account, illustrated, 50c.)

profusion rather defeat the object in view ; it is " stylistic "; it provokes admiration, but it does not satisfy, in spite of its sumptuous devotional chapels.

While Gothic has been the dominant trend in the American Architectural Renascence, Roman Catholics have experimented adventurously in Romanesque, Jews in Byzantine, and Christian Scientists in Neo-Classic. " Regionalism " has stimulated the free development of styles native to different parts of the country. The New England tradition has been re-interpreted for congregations of the Pilgrim Faith. In California and the south west, the Spanish Mission style (a dialect version of Baroque in tiles and adobe) has been received into the American family. "And this new old blood, crossed with the Puritan tradition, has produced perhaps the loveliest daughter of our architecture--a daughter with the vigorous constitution of the north and the slumberous eyes and orchid colouring of old Mexico." Add to this, the contributions of Scandinavian, German, and Dutch elements in American society. It may surprise some people to learn that there is but little radical modernism[1] in contemporary American church architecture. Why ? Santayana reminds us that :—

" America is a country with two mentalities, one a survival of the beliefs and standards of the fathers, the other an expression of the instincts, practices, and discoveries of the younger generations . . . . One half of the American mind, that is not occupied intensely in practical affairs, has remained slightly becalmed ; it has floated gently in the back waters, while alongside, in inventions and industry . . . . the other half was leaping down a sort of Niagara rapids. This division may be found symbolised in American architecture ; a neat reproduction of the Colonial mansion—with some modern comforts introduced surreptitiously —stands beside the skyscraper. The American *will* inhabits the skyscraper ; the American *intellect* inherits the Colonial mansion . . ."[2]

This is equally true if we substitute " church " for " Colonial mansion." When people refuse to think, they are willing traditionalists. Now that Church architecture has aroused interest in America, great possibilities lie latent in the raw material of the " melting-pot," but the period of

[1] A notable exception being the striking Boston Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, Tulsa, Okla. Miss Adah Robinson, architect. A well-illustrated brochure is obtainable.

[2] v. *Significance of the Fine Arts*, p. 234 (Boston, 1923). Several " skyscraper churches " have been projected. " The big idea is in the star-spangled manner." The Broadway M. E. Temple, New York, is an " income-producing plant " ; a huge illuminated cross is to change Manhattan's skyline, but the concern is to be financed by letting out many of the 36 stories as offices. This new Tower of Babel is to combine " Religion and Revenue, Salvation and 5 per cent." based on " ethical grounds," also gilt-edged real-estate mortgage. " Invest in your fellow-men's salvation ! "

receptivity and discipline must not be evaded. Even as it is, " the New World has been called into being to redress the balance of the Old."

II.

It is strange to turn to the Old World and find oneself confronted with a tradition-denying Functionalism that reduces architecture to machinery. Even in Catholic France churches of the " bird-cage " type may be seen, a series of articulations filled in with glass, concrete, cold and uninviting. Since the Great War, architects like Otto Bartning[1] have strenuously advocated Modernistic Church Building, as the only logical expression of a Protestantism that claims to be progressive ; the issue is a live one, as we may gather from the reports of congresses and the periodical literature devoted to this problem.[2] Bartning's steel church at Pressa, Cologne, is one of the best examples of the extreme tendency. It stands on a great white concrete base, which contains the parish house. The walls of the church consist of a vast expanse of glass divided by strips of steel. The roof is of burnished copper. The east end forms a parabola : the west end is square, strengthened by two angular and unadorned towers, with a high metal cross between. The bones of the structure are laid bare in the interior, but the glassy walls are irradiated by a flood of fiery light. For chancel there is a proscenium, with pulpit desk in the centre, and Communion Table up a further flight of steps ; behind that, a crucifix like a mast.[3]

This church is by no means an isolated example. The appeal of modernistic architecture in Central Europe is demonstrated by examining one of the many illustrated Surveys.[4] In Holland and Germany, municipalities take kindly to building methods that would appal most of our authorities responsible for Housing Schemes. In such an environment a modernistic church is not too bizarre. Yet a church ought to symbolise our aspirations as well as our needs. This is an age of Technocracy (an American has recently " named the beast "). We must let our needs

[1] *Vom neuen Kirchen* (Berlin, 1919). Many of his plans are circular. One is star-shaped.

[2] *E.g.*—Proceedings of 3rd Congress of Protestant Church Building (Halle, 1928). *N.B.*—The Quarterly (illustrated) *Kunst u. Kirche* (Berlin). Organ of Union for Protestant Church Art.

[3] Paul Girkon, *Die Stahlkirche* (Berlin, 1928).

[4] I. J. G. Wattjes, *Moderne Kerken* (Amsterdam, 1931)—an illustrated international survey (37s 6d). An inexpensive survey is published by Doxa, Milan ; N. Servattaz, *Architettura razionale religiose.*

shape our buildings, rather than contort our buildings to the requirements of some Period style. But in realising the relationship of architectonic beauty to machinery, we are apt to lose sight of the difference.[1] A machine fulfils its purpose if it is good construction truthfully expressed. But a public building fails to fulfil its purpose if it neglects the effect of structure on the human spirit. Machinery can have a numinous effect; we are awed by the engine room of a liner. Such awe is akin to the more primitive forms of the worship-experience, in which we are acutely aware of our creatureliness. But the fear of the Lord is only the beginning of wisdom; true worship is only realised when we are "lost in wonder, love, and praise." To go out of one's way to give an exaggerated machine-made look to a place of worship is the architectural equivalent of the unhealthy-minded reversion to non-Christian and non-European types in sculpture and painting.[2] "Machines for praying in" may be suggestive of certain phases of Buddhism, and appropriately mechanical in Churches where the Sacrament is an *opus operatum*. The machine is an unfortunate symbol for a Protestantism that is trying to escape from "closed systems" of thought. If we believe with Aristophanes that "Whirl is King, having driven out Zeus," if we seek to celebrate the triumphs of applied science, then we may turn whole-heartedly to reinforced concrete.

But if, with the late Professor Geddes, we seek emancipation from the present pecuniary and mechanistic culture, we will not put all our trust in the *deus ex machina*.[3] Man's religious instinct is best satisfied by the craftsmanship that labours to redeem and consecrate natural materials—wood, brick, and stone. Not engineering but biology should be the root idea of religious architecture. We disown the Past to our own impoverishment, but we must weave new patterns with the thread of development, related to the

[1] Any machinery soon becomes out of date. Only gradually do new functions emerge in Church Architecture. A spacious 18th century meeting-house is in some ways more up-to-date than many a Victorian Gothic sanctuary with bad lighting and bad acoustics.

[2] The distinction between Modernism in Theology and in Art is a very real one! Religious sculpture and painting in modern Germany is often grotesque. *E.g.*, Zeller's morbid Christ, and Hitzberger's morbid Crucifix.

[3] Mr F. C. Mears, architect, and Mr W. Power of *The Scots Observer*, visualise a "Clydeside Cathedral"—tapering, mast-like spires of steel rising above the ship-building yards, swung above the green-and-grey Scots countryside like a lamp let down from heaven. This attempt to bridge the gulf between Church and People might well be made in a hideous industrial area, even at the risk of failure. Such a church would at least cause more interest than the irrelevant intrusion of Period Gothic. Not escape, but transformation.

finished part of the design, yet fresh and original. The law of growth excludes architectural revivalism, one Period mode succeeding another in as arbitrary a way as ladies' fashions.

The law of growth is recognised by a number of German architects who might be called " constitutional modernists." The historic styles, Gothic, Byzantine, but more particularly Romanesque and Renaissance are used, freely, not archaeologically. It is difficult to describe these churches apart from illustrations ;[1] they express the Teutonic spirit so much that they could not bear transplanting. But they are particularly interesting as examples of an attempt to plan in accordance with the genius and needs of Protestant worship, irrespective of the Catholic traditionalism so characteristic of Anglicanism.

At the Reformation, Lutherans soon became conscious of the disadvantages of the cruciform Gothic Church from the practical point of view,[2] in spite of the retention of the altar and a good deal of symbolism. In the first church built for Lutheran worship,[3] the large Schlosskapelle at Torgau (1543), the chancel was dispensed with and the altar became a *trapeza* or monumental table. At Schmalkalden (1590), the pulpit was raised " axial " over the altar, with a small choir balcony and organ immediately above. After the ravages of the Thirty Years' War, Joseph Furttembach's recommendations for simple, compact, and convenient churches were widely followed (1649). The problem of Protestant architecture aroused considerable interest in the 18th century. Of the " theoretikers," L. C. Sturm is the most significant. He inveighs against the continued use of the cruciform plan, recommends the " Centralbau," and declares that the ideal model is the Greek theatre. Altar, pulpit, and organ should be integrated (*in Verbindung*). He is a pioneer in grouping halls, class-rooms, library, &c., around the church as a parish house.[4] He preferred form

[1] An inexpensive collection of illustrations, with excellent introduction, is Otto Schönhagen's *Stätten der Weihe* (Berlin, 1919).

[2] In spite of the installation of galleries in the aisles (often two tiers, *e.g.*, Stadtkirche, Wittenberg). In some cathedrals (*e.g.*, Naumburg) the " western choir " was set apart for baptisms and funerals, the nave for preaching, and the chancel for Communion.

[3] See Fritsch, *Der Kirchenbau des Protestantismus* (Berlin, 1893). A mine of information, plans, and sketches, dealing with the evolution of the Protestant Church, particularly in Germany.

Also v. *Ency. Religion in Geschichte u. Gegenwart*, vol. III. Excellent art. by C. Horn, *Kirchenbau* for evolution of the Protestant Church, with Bibliography.

[4] Sturm's *Vollständige Anweisung aller Arten von Kirchen wohl anzugeben* (1718).

to ornament, but he could not resist the Baroque fashion of the German Courts to "load some vain church with old theatric state."[1] A purer classicism came in, however, with the Aufklärung, when liturgies and hymn-books were recast on more rational lines. The Gothic Revival was a pathetic and sentimentalist attempt to re-create a dead art, repudiated alike by Protestants and Romanists for three centuries.[2] In Germany it was strongly tinged with political reaction. Frederick William III. of Prussia, the "liturgiker" on the throne, tried to force mediaeval ecclesiology on the Evangelical Church into which Lutheran and Reformed were compelled to enter (1817). His successor wanted to throw a veil of glamour over his State Church by borrowing Apostolic Succession from England and building a rival Westminster in Berlin. Luther had been content to use the ancient altars in deference to custom; Löhe and other ecclesiastics deliberately adopted the High Altar of 19th century Romanism. This neo-Catholic movement reached its high-water mark in 1861, when the Eisenach Conference on Church Architecture definitely recommended Gothic, with all its liturgical implications. But "the lost tradition" of the 18th century was emphatically re-asserted at the Wiesbaden Conference in 1891. The following "Programme" was generally approved, and has been followed to a large extent. The church should be a one-celled building, with the pews converging on the two co-ordinate symbols of the Word and Sacraments. The pulpit is to be central, but the altar is to be built into the front of it, and treated in a significant and dignified manner. All the practical advantages of the American "auditorium" are to be conserved by effective, concentrated planning. But the religious note is to dominate a building that is organic; galleries are to be properly "integrated"; the resources of symbolism are to be used impressively.[3] The weak point of the Wiesbaden Programme is undoubtedly the insistence on obtrusive organ pipes, rising in serried ranks behind the pulpit. Even when Lutherans prefer the chancel

[1] The petty artificiality of German principalitic and the consequent popularity of Baroque as a *Hofkunst* is finely visualised in *Jew Süss*. Bähr's Frauenkirche in Dresden (1722) is an amazing building. Externally a huge dome, it resembles a deep well inside, supported by eight colossal piers. The decoration is that of a theatre. Seven tiers of balconies, including screened boxes for the grandees ("little bedrooms"); the chancel like a stage, with the altar at the top of a great flight of steps. Above the altar, tower the organ pipes. Bähr's wish was to have the reading desk (now in front of the altar) as the pulpit.

[2] The 19th century was at the same time eclectic. See Fritsch for for some original and bizarre designs of the period. (Compare Barclay Church, Edinburgh).

[3] Examples in *Stätten der Weihe*.

the choir is seated inconspicuously in a gallery; nor is the chancel filled with prayer desks and lecterns of the type popularised by the Oxford[1] Movement.

As to style, I believe that true progress lies along the path of a Constitutional Modernism. Whatever style is chosen, it is a broad, simple, and massive treatment that is required, in relation to the " special problem," and without undue deference to academic theories and historic precedent. We are no longer conscious of " the sinister undertone of Popery " in the solemn music of Gothic. But the fact remains that there are Reformed ideals and democratic ideals not adequately expressed by the formal type of Gothic church. There is a spruce suburbanity and cold clericalism that make a Gothic sanctuary seem unhomely to many working class folk who are nevertheless awakening to the appreciation of the beautiful. A Gothic Church is very unsatisfying when cheaply executed and filled with the factory-made wares of the so-called " Ecclesiastical Furnisher." But Scotland like other countries has a kind of simple vernacular Gothic tradition that survived the Reformation ;[2] this should be developed. Let

> " use be suggester of Beauty ;
> Nothing concealed that is done, but all things done to adornment ;
> Meanest utilities seized as occasion to grace and embellish."

With the less informed elements of the public, classic forms imply a secular art—an unhappy legacy of Romantic Revival mentality. Admitting the weakness of the neo-Georgian church to convey enthusiasm through direct Christian symbolism, there is no doubt that impressiveness and a diffused spirituality can be expressed at moderate cost through form, mass, and symmetry.[3] Dr Lloyd Thomas, of Old Meeting, Birmingham, gives a striking example of this :—

I know an old Puritan building, vacated long ago for a more pretentious " architectural " sanctuary, by a prosperous Nonconformist congregation. The Roman Catholics bought it as it stood. I went over it with the priest to see how much alteration they had made. Hardly any ! The old gallery stands. The two-decker pulpit was away of course. There were a few additions—an altar, a confessional box, and a few

[1] The secretary of The Church Association defends the three-decker-pulpit, and says, " the prayer desk should always face the people."

[2] Dr Coulton recommends as model a simple Perpendicular hall, *e.g.*, the Dominican Church, Norwich. Perpendicular being exotic in Scotland, some of our 17th C. T-shaped churches are suggestive, and are " an excellent auditory type." (See Col. Eustace Balfour, Articles in *The Scottish Church*, vols. II., III.).

[3] The restraint of Wren's Palladian Renascence, not the exuberant colour of Jesuit Baroque.

statues. In the main, the difference amounted to this, that one crab had left and a hermit R. C. crab had occupied the shell. Now note ! The priest told me that many Catholics came to this church for private prayer, rather than to the Cathedral or to another famous church near by, because they found this old Puritan oak-pewed and galleried meeting house " so devotional." I said slowly : " Of course, the godly Puritans have so consecrated it with prayer and preaching that their influence vibrates here still." The priest chuckled and took it kindly like a wise father.[1]

If the classic façade is most appropriate in the city street, the simpler Romanesque forms should prove suggestive for suburban and rural areas ; their very " unfinished[2] appearance " (compared to fully developed Gothic) indicates further development. Byzantine shares with Romanesque great possibilities of restful serenity obtained through light and shade, rich ornament standing out against a white background ; here, brick and plaster come into their own, and the simple arcade and apse can be used in a fresh and interesting[3] way. And galleries can be used structurally in the arms of a Greek cross, with a shallow dome as dominant feature.

With the active co-operation of educationists, ministers, architects, and sociologists,[4] the hope will be increasingly fulfilled that our churches " instead of being mere Classic or Gothic *recitations* will become original exhibitions of *spontaneous eloquence,* ornate with old quotations but emphatic with *new experiences.*"[5]

The Church of the Future will be moulded by the needs of each changing generation ; as the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, it will intimate the abiding message of Christianity ; and it will grow out of the Classicist's love of Truth, the Romanticist's love of Beauty, and the Puritan's zeal for Sincerity.

ANDREW L. DRUMMOND.

[1] Cp. Cardinal Mündelein's confessed model for his new church near Chicago—the old Congregational meeting house at Lyme, Conn.

[2] See a very interesting new Congregational Church at Southbourne, Bournemouth.

[3] *E.g.*, St Peter's R. C. Church, Morningside, Edinburgh.

[4] A church must grow out of its environment and enshrine the best ideals of the local community. Instead of dreary gravel, there will be a lawn and shrubs, when possible. Railings (the property symbol) will be discouraged. Symbolism that is too esoteric (*e.g.*, IHS) will give way to symbols of Place, Work, Folk, Head, Heart, and Hand. Meaningless symbolism will be eschewed. *E.g.*, Polygons and triangles that say " I believe in Euclid," or declare the " verbal inspiration " of the local house painter!

[5] Weale's " Quarterly Papers on Architecture," 1844.