

of the Christian Ritual, the *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, was written about 1286 by the French churchman and professor of canon law and onetime bishop of Mende, William Durand (1230–1296). The modern reader, who has been thoroughly conditioned to see gothic architecture as symbolic of the Christian transcendental thinking of that time, will be amazed to discover that Durand is completely oblivious to the nature of the architecture of his own time. This brings to light the fact that, even among the most learned men of the gothic period, there were probably only a few like Suger and Gervase of Canterbury who grasped the magnitude of the new formal solutions in architecture and fully saw the lofty structure as an expression of their time.

OF A CHURCH AND ITS PARTS.

1. First of all, let us consider a church and its parts. The word church hath two meanings: the one, a material building, wherein the Divine Offices are celebrated: the other, a spiritual fabric, which is the Collection of the Faithful. The church, *that is* the people forming it, is assembled by its ministers, and collected together into one place by HIM WHO MAKETH MEN TO BE OF ONE MIND IN AN HOUSE (Psalm 68:6). For as the material church is constructed from the joining together of various stones, so is the Spiritual Church by that of various men.

2. The Greek *ecclesia* is in Latin translated by *convocatio*, because it calleth men to itself: the which title doth better befit the spiritual than the material church.

The material typifieth the spiritual Church: as shall be explained when we treat of its consecration. Again, the Church is called Catholic, that is universal, because it hath been set up in, or spread over, all the world, because the whole multitude of the faithful ought to be in one congregation, or because in the Church is laid up the doctrine necessary for the instruction of all.

3. It is also called in Greek *synagoga*, in Latin *congregatio*, which was the name chosen by the Jews for their place of worship: for to them the term synagogue more appropriately belongeth, though it be also applied to a church. But the Apostles never call a church by this title, perhaps for the sake of distinction.

4. The Church Militant is also called *Sion*: because, amidst its wanderings, it expecteth the promise of a heavenly rest: for *Sion* signifieth *expectation*. But the Church Triumphant, our future home, the land of peace, is called Jerusalem: for Jerusalem signifieth *the vision of peace*. Also, the church is called the *House of God*: also sometimes *Kyriake*, that is, the *Lord's House*. At others *Basilica*, (in Latin, a royal palace), for the abodes of earthly kings are thus termed: and how much more fittingly our Houses of Prayer, the dwelling-places of the King of Kings! Again, it

is called *temple*, from *tectum amplum*, where sacrifices are offered to God: and sometimes the *tabernacle of God*, because this present life is a journey, and a progress to a lasting Country: and a tabernacle is an *hostelrie*: as will be explained when we speak of the Dedication of a church. And why it is called the *Ark of the Testimony*, we shall say in the ensuing chapter, under the title Altars. Sometimes it is called *Martyrium*, when raised in honour of any Martyr; sometimes *capella*, (chapel,) . . . sometimes *caenobium*, at others *sacrificium*; sometimes *sacellum*; sometimes the *House of Prayer*: sometimes *monastery*: sometimes *oratory*. Generally, however, any place set apart for prayers is called an oratory. Again, the Church is called the *Body of CHRIST*: sometimes a *Virgin*, as the Apostle saith, THAT I MAY PRESENT YOU AS A CHASTE VIRGIN TO CHRIST (II Cor. 11:2): sometimes a *Bride*, because CHRIST hath betrothed Her to Himself, as saith the Gospel: HE THAT HATH THE BRIDE, IS THE BRIDEGROOM (John 3:29): sometimes a *Mother*, for daily in Baptism She beareth sons to God: sometimes a *Daughter*, according to that saying of the Prophet, INSTEAD OF THY FATHERS THOU SHALT HAVE CHILDREN (Psalm 45:16): sometimes a *Widow*, because SHE SITTETH SOLITARY THROUGH HER AFFLICTIONS, AND, LIKE RACHEL, WILL NOT BE COMFORTED. . . .

7. Now a church is to be built on this fashion. The foundation being prepared, according to that saying, IT FELL NOT, FOR IT WAS FOUNDED UPON A ROCK (Matt. 7:25). . . .

8. The foundation must be so contrived, as that the Head of the Church may point due East . . . that is, to that point of the heavens, wherein the sun ariseth at the equinoxes; to signify, that the Church Militant must behave Herself with moderation, both in prosperity and adversity: and not towards that point where the sun ariseth at the solstices, which is the practice of some. . . .

10. The cement, without which there can be no stability of the walls, is made of lime, sand, and water. The lime is fervent charity, which joineth to itself the sand, that is, undertakings for the temporal welfare of our brethren: because true charity taketh care of the widow and the aged, and the infant, and the infirm: and they who have it study to work with their hands, that they may possess wherewith to benefit them. Now the lime and the sand are bound together in the wall by an admixture of water. But water is an emblem of the SPIRIT. And as without cement the stones cannot cohere, so neither can men be built up in the heavenly Jerusalem without charity, which the HOLY GHOST worketh in them. All the stones are polished and squared,—that is, holy and pure, and are built by the hands of the Great Workman into an abiding place in the Church. . . .

14. The arrangement of a material church resembleth that of the human body: the Chancel, or place where the Altar is, representeth the head: the Transepts, the hands and arms, and the remainder,—towards

the west,—the rest of the body. The sacrifice of the Altar denoteth the vows of the heart. . . .

15. Furthermore, the church consisteth of four walls, that is, is built on the doctrine of the Four Evangelists; and hath length, breadth, and height: the height representeth courage,—the length fortitude, which patiently endureth till it attaineth its heavenly Home; the breadth is charity, which, with long suffering, loveth its friends in God, and its foes for God; and again, its height is the hope of future retribution, which despiseth prosperity and adversity, hoping TO SEE THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING (Psalm 27:13).

16. Again, in the Temple of God, the foundation is Faith, which is conversant with unseen things: the roof, Charity, WHICH COVERETH A MULTITUDE OF SINS (I Peter 4:8). The door, Obedience, of which the LORD saith, IF THOU WILT ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS (Matt. 19:17). The pavement, humility, of which the Psalmist saith, MY SOUL CLEAVETH TO THE PAVEMENT (Psalm 119:25).

17. The four side walls, the four cardinal virtues, justice, fortitude, temperance, prudence. . . . But some churches are built in the shape of a Cross, to signify, that we are crucified to the world, and should tread in the steps of The Crucified. . . . Some also are built in the form of a circle: to signify that the Church hath been extended throughout the circle of the world. . . .

18. The Choir is so called from the harmony of the clergy in their chanting, or from the multitude collected at the divine offices. . . .

19. The Exedra is an apsis, separated a little from a temple or palace; so called because it projecteth a little from the wall. . . .

21. The towers are the preachers and Prelates of the Church, which are Her bulwark and defence. . . .

22. The cock at the summit of the church is a type of preachers. For the cock, ever watchful even in the depth of night, giveth notice how the hours pass, wakeneth the sleepers, predicteth the approach of day, but first exciteth himself to crow by striking his sides with his wings. There is a mystery conveyed in each of these particulars. The night is this world: the sleepers are the children of this world who are asleep in their sins. The cock is the preacher, who preacheth boldly, and exciteth the sleepers to cast away the works of darkness, exclaiming, WOE TO THEM THAT SLEEP! AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST! (Eph. 5:14). . . .

24. The glass windows in a church are Holy Scriptures, which expel the wind and the rain, that is all things hurtful, but transmit the light of the True Sun, that is, God, into the hearts of the Faithful. These are wider within than without, because the mystical sense is the more ample, and precedeth the literal meaning. Also, by the windows the senses of the body are signified: which ought to be shut to the vanities of this world, and open to receive with all freedom spiritual gifts. . . .

26. The door of the church is CHRIST: according to that saying in the Gospel, I AM THE DOOR (John 10:9). The Apostles are also called doors. . . .

27. The Piers of the church are Bishops and Doctors: who specially sustain the Church of God by their doctrine. . . . The bases of the columns are the Apostolic Bishops, who support the frame of the whole Church. The capitals of the Piers are the opinions of the Bishops and Doctors. For as the members are directed and moved by the head, so are our words and works governed by their mind. The ornaments of the capitals are the words of Sacred Scripture, to the meditation and observance of which we are bound.

28. The pavement of the church is the foundation of our faith. But in the spiritual Church the pavement is the poor of CHRIST: the poor in spirit, who humble themselves in all things. . . .

29. The beams which join together the church are the princes of this world, or the preachers who defend the unity of the Church, the one by deed, the other by argument.³³

THE CHRONICLE OF SAINT ALBAN'S CONCERNING SOME OF THE ABBEY'S ARTISTIC ENDEAVORS

For the most part, monastic and episcopal records speak of building activities and the acquisition or the production of art works in simple matter-of-fact terms, even though the recording cleric, in mentioning events of his own time, succeeds in conveying the pleasure and pride of the community not only in the richness but in the beauty of an artistic achievement. A few pages from the chronicle of the ancient and powerful abbey of Saint Alban's in Hertfordshire may convey how this recording was done, interspersed as it was with running accounts of historical, church historical and purely local administrative occurrences.³⁴

³³ Translated from the Latin and published under the title *The Symbolism of Churches and Church Ornaments* by John Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb (Leeds: n.p., 1843), pp. 17–30.

³⁴ *Gesta abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani* (Cottonian MS. Claudius E. IV, British Museum), ed. Henry Thomas Riley (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1867), I (A.D. 793–1290), translated from the Latin by Professor Margaret Taylor. The *Gesta* commence with the founding of the Benedictine abbey of Saint Alban's by Offa, king of Mercia, in A.D. 793, and the nomination of Willegod as first abbot. They end with the closing days of Abbot Thomas de la Mare, who died in 1396. The first part comes largely from the pen of no less a person than Matthew Paris, whom we quote here. He informs us that he used existing older chronicles of the monastery for the account of that part which preceded him. An Englishman, historian of distinction and monk of Saint Alban's from 1217, Paris was, as historiographer to Henry III, familiar with the events