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On the Construction of Churches

405

by Ernst Gisel

Since Ronchamp people have been much more open-minded with regard to modern designs in church architecture. Although this is pleasant to note, it does at the same time give rise to certain reservations, in the sense that "novelty for the sake of novelty" is always vitiated by intellectualist mannerism, whereas the very essence of the architecture of a church, and this is true precisely of Ronchamp, consists in the way in which it expresses not merely this or that denomination or liturgy but the meaning of the sacred itself. In this respect, the contemporary Roman Catholic Church has done pioneer work; but a gradually growing number of Protestant churches are giving evidence of an increased awareness of the legitimate need to place modern architecture at the service of the formal aspects of religion no matter how spiritual they may be.

On the Notion of Ecclesiastical Art

413

by Karl Ringger

Ecclesiastical art did not begin to constitute a problem until after the first effulgence of the Renaissance when, for example, Veronese barely escaped persecution by the Inquisition for having, in "The Last Supper at the house of Levi", painted the head of a negro beside that of the Saviour. Formerly, among the Greeks, in Rome, among the Primitive Christians and in the Middle Ages there had never been any conflict between art and religious conceptions, just as if there had existed spontaneously an awareness of the truth that every work of art exists in and for itself independently of its subject. After all, the religious character, the sacred aspect, of a work of art is but "accidental", and it is only the eminent dignity of religious subjects that, in a period when these were being called in question, drew major attention to the sacred theme treated by the artist. Therefore to speak of the problem of sacred art is in the last analysis to speak of an unreal problem. Do we then still have any warrant for speaking of Christian art? We do, on condition that we are aware that the term signifies only art that arose in Christian societies and means in effect Western art. What we have then is no longer an aesthetic concept as such but simply what would be referred to nowadays as existential "roots".

Belltowers

416

by Benedikt Huber

It is mainly the bell-tower of modern churches that appears to be giving rise to most public discussion, and, moreover, it is certain that the function of the tower as a simple support for the bells presents for our functionalist architecture some difficulty from the standpoint of design. A possible solution consists no doubt in treating the bell-tower both as a communal focus and symbol and as a plastic element warranting a marriage of architecture as such and sculpture.

On Communion in Protestant Churches

420

by Helmut Tacke

Not only Luther but Calvin as well insisted on the necessity, as they saw it, of clearly showing that the altar no longer has any justification for being in the Protestant faith. Henceforth it is replaced solely by a communion table which is best thought of as a true table around which the worshippers can gather to partake together of the bread and wine of Communion.

Expression in Catholic Church Architecture

422

by Eduard Ladner

Whether we like it or not, the architecture of a church is an affirmation of values and of their hierarchy, a manifestation of a supernatural reality, something sacred. This architecture ought essentially to serve both the needs of the liturgy and the accomplishment of the sacraments and of individual piety, but without nevertheless wishing to impose a fixed architectural form on the details of the liturgy, which must be left free to develop. The spatial complex as a whole ought obviously to be oriented in line with the altar, which must at the same time not be allowed to become a mere stage prop.

Effretikon Protestant Church

424

1959/61. Architect: E. Gisel FAS/SIA, Zurich

The steeply sloping roof demanded has, after all, been plastically integrated into the building as a whole and the internal perimeter, which was at first envisaged as a quadrilateral, has been handled freely. Pains have been taken to avoid any air of pseudo-mysticism and to aid the faithful in their meditation.

A Propos the Works of Art in the Church at Effretikon

426

by Marianne Gisel

However serious the artistic effort employed here may be, it is impossible (except in the case of the cock by Mattioli—this has not yet been set up owing to the resistance displayed by certain interested parties) to avoid feeling that peculiar form of uneasiness that always comes over one upon meeting religious works of art carried out by today's artists, with the exception of Rouault. There seems to be a prohibition in modern times of the representing of religious subjects. This is not a question of faith but rather one of discretion. Perhaps the solution is to be sought in an attitude which would replace purely religious and ecclesiastical art by one that is, in the widest sense of the word, sacred.

St. Thomas's Church at Vällingby (Sweden)

428

1955/59. Architect: P. Celsing, Stockholm; collaborators: D. Maney and E. Öström

An attempt has been made to build a place of serene, almost cloistral, meditation in a modern Stockholm suburb.

Parish Centre at Zollikerberg

430

1959/60. Architects: H. and A. Hubacher FAS/SIA, Zurich

The assignment here involved the building of a church (lucidly designed to be one in which sermons would be given), a parish house and the house of the sacristan.

Lutheran Church of Christ at Bochum (Germany)

432

1958. Architect: D. Oesterlen, Hanover

The form of the building as a whole evokes the crown and the numerous triangles on the ceiling the Trinity.

St. Joseph's Church at Schlieren

434

1959/60. Architect: K. Higi SIA, Zurich; engineer: E. Schubiger, Zurich

By abandoning the distinction between nave and choir, the architects have attempted to favour a new conception of the congregation and to shun the "theatrical"; as regards the baptismal fonts, their site, which is visible to the assembled congregation, underlines the social nature of baptism.

The Catholic Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Sulgen

435

1959/61. Architect: E. Brantschen FAS/SIA, St. Gallen; collaborator: A. Weisser SIA, St. Gallen; engineer: J. Ganahl SIA, Weinfelden

The religious character of the building has been intentionally emphasized; its decoration is as simple as possible.

St. John's Church at Döttingen

436, 448

1960/61. Architect: H. Baur FAS/SIA, Basle

A large roof surmounts the total complex asymmetrically. The baptismal fonts take the form of a real fountain. The altar, tabernacle and candelabre were designed by the Zurich sculptor Paul Speck.

A New Illustration of the Bible

438

by Georges Peillex

A new edition of the Bible (Imprimerie La Concorde, Lausanne) is to be illustrated by Jacques Perrenoud. The artist, who was chosen by way of a competition, has very carefully adopted the most ancient of Christian symbols and has also handled his themes in a way that lies between the archaic and the stylized.

The Stained-glass Windows in the Parish Church of Herisau

440

These windows are the work of the young St. Gall painter Köbi Lämmler. They take the form of leaded non-painted glass mosaic. The subjects were chosen by the church committee.

The Stained-glass Windows in the Protestant Church at Elsau

442

The work of Robert Wehrli, these windows display a conception that is in part figurative, in part abstract.

The Lucerne Pilgrim Churches at Hergiswald and Blatten

444

by Adolf Reinle

Recently restored, these two 17th century churches, the first of which contains a duplicate of the Loreto Casa Santa, are precious evidence of a popular form of Baroque art very different from the Jesuit style and the work of Vorarlberg architects.