CHURCH-BUILDING IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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MANY years ago, that great liturgical scholar and antiquary, Edmund Bishop, wrote a delightful essay entitled "How a cathedral was built in the fourteenth century". He used the accounts of Milan Cathedral from 1387 onwards to give a vivid picture of the variety of effort and ingenuity of organization which was used to raise funds for this enormous enterprise. There were house-to-house collections and money-boxes put on shop counters. All sorts of gifts in kind came in and a jumble sale was held weekly or fortnightly to dispose of them. The craft-gilds of armourers, drapers, and others, mobilized their members to work on the site without payment. Penitents paid money to the fabric-fund as part of the satisfaction for their sins. An unexpected contribution came when old coins were dug up in the foundations, to the value of six pounds thirteen shillings.

Every one of our great medieval churches is the result of similar prolonged and varied efforts. France and England could produce parallels to all the methods of the Milanese. I wish to-day to consider this matter of raising funds for churches in connexion with the uses for which churches were designed and the reason why men responded to appeals. I shall confine myself to the great churches attached to cathedrals and monasteries. Most of my remarks will directly concern English and French churches within the four centuries between 1100 and 1500, but you will readily discern how they apply to other periods and places.

1 A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 10th of January, 1951.

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How and why were the churches built? The questions, though separate, are related. I am concerned, not with the technique of building or the history of the masonic craft in the Middle Ages, but with certain ways in which money was found for advancing these great projects and with the shape the churches took. Each part of my subject is covered by an ample and learned literature. Yet there is, maybe, justification for trying to deal—imperfectly and at the risk of confusion—with several questions in one, and to treat together several subjects which are normally discussed separately in their own right.

The cathedral and monastic churches were not parochial churches in the ordinary sense: they were churches for communities of canons and monks and nuns; and those communities employed the labour and paid for the buildings. They did so either out of their general fund of accumulated capital or by persuading others to subscribe to the work in hand. In some few cases, a single benefactor, prelate or prince, bore the whole cost. Why this generosity? Why did the canons of a cathedral or the monks of a monastery choose to spend their money in this way, and why did their benefactors provide them with the means, directly or indirectly? The short answer is that the Catholic faith held such an empire in the minds of men that they were persuaded to build churches to the greater glory of God, and to think no building too magnificent for His service. But we can and ought to be more precise. Certain specific articles of the Catholic faith and certain features of the popular cult were of overwhelming importance in determining both the direction and the volume of this activity.

Foremost among these are the belief in miracles and the belief in the intercession of saints. These hallow certain spots because of events which happened there, or because of the holy relics which they contain, or because of both. The Palestinian churches connected with the life of Jesus Christ are of the first sort; of the second one may instance three celebrated centres.

in Western Europe: the tombs of St. Peter at Rome, of St. Denis near Paris, of St. Edmund at Bury. At each place, a church has incorporated the shrine. What was at first an oratory connected with a sacred incident or a saint became a place for congregational and liturgical worship.

The implications of this development have lately been the subject of a remarkable study by M. André Grabar, of the Collège de France.¹ M. Grabar traces the evolution of oratories known as *martyria* in the first Christian centuries, both in East and West. The cult of martyrs, 'witnesses' *par excellence* of the faith, found monumental expression in buildings of a sepulchral character, and their forms show a distinct and conscious dependence on the *heroa* which celebrated heroes in the pagan world.² Even when the shrine did not contain the entire body of a martyr (and already by the fourth century it was not unusual to dismember bodies of the saints) the building normally retained the form of a sepulchre. Many traces, though few complete examples, survive in Western Europe from the period between Constantine and Charlemagne. Some were circular, some were polygonal or trefoil in plan, some were made cruciform (like the palace-chapel of Galla Placidia at Ravenna, because it contained a relic of the true Cross 'a quo habet et nomen et formam').³ In the fifth century and after, many sanctuaries were built in East and West in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, her cult possibly stimulated by the definition of the Council of Ephesus (431). Their architects often adopted the central plan common for *martyria*, and it is interesting to learn from a twelfth-century writer that St. Wilfrid's buildings at Hexham included a church 'in modum turris erecta, et fere rotunda,'³


² Here M. Grabar's archaeological evidence seems to be of weight in a controversy in which the late Père H. Delehaye expressed a contrary opinion (*Les origines du culte des martyrs*, 1912).

a quatuor partibus totidem porticus habens, in honorem sanctae Mariae semper virginis dedicata'.

M. Grabar's analysis of these forms is fascinating; for a consideration of later, medieval, churches in the West it is specially significant because he demonstrates 'how the principal churches, the schools of architecture which created the new styles of the Middle Ages, followed the line formerly indicated by the Constantinian architects of Rome and accepted and consecrated by the Church. Instead of creating an independent building, they treated the enclosure for the relic as an interior martyrium or shrine in the chevet of the basilica'. The shrine usually occupied the east end of a church, formed as it were a casual excrescence upon a basilican plan; but it was an excrescence which altered the whole balance of the building, introducing different planes, rounded walls, and vaulted roofs.

The effect upon church architecture was overwhelming because the cult of saints and the veneration of their relics became one of the most prominent features of medieval worship. In this cult the miraculous played an all-important part. St. Benedict appears in the Dialogues of Gregory the Great as the wonder-worker rather than the model monk; so it was throughout the Middle Ages—and beyond. Saints were remembered less for the holiness of their lives than for their miracles. Their relics were not mere commemorative objects to be gazed at. Those of Ste. Foy de Conques, carried in procession, could quell a riot. The body of St. Lambert of Liège could bring to a successful end the siege of the castle of Bouillon. Others cured at touch mental and physical diseases. Small wonder, then, that the clergy of the Middle Ages frequently display a pious ferocity and lack of scruple in their hunt for relics. Duchesne has said that the theft of relics was practised throughout Christendom, nor was there any sin so venial in the eyes of the sinner and of public opinion. Even such a saintly man as Hugh of Avallon was so overcome by his devout greed, when confronted by a

3 E. de Moreau, Hist. de l'Église en Belgique, iii (1945), 572-573.
bone of St. Mary Magdalen in the abbey of Fécamp, that (as his biographer tells us), unable to break it with his fingers he applied first his incisor teeth and then his molars to the task and quickly broke off two bits, which he handed to his attendant to preserve. If anyone doubts the part played by relics in medieval religion, let him look at the numerous inventories surviving from these times, or study those remarkable two volumes entitled *Exuviae sacrae constantinopolitanae* (Geneva, 1877-1878) in which the Comte de Riant collected the records of relics looted from Byzantium after the Fourth Crusade.

It is not necessary to expatiate on this cult, which is a thing of common knowledge, but I would emphasize that both the early romanesque crypts, with central chamber and surrounding ambulatory, and the fully developed gothic retrochoir were alike designed to serve it. Abbot Suger explicitly tells us that he re-planned St. Denis to admit of easier access for the concourse of pilgrims who thronged to the shrine at festivals. Most of our medieval churches have been denuded of the shrines which were once their chief glory; but despite the English Reformation we still possess the shrine of St. Edward the Confessor in situ, much mutilated, behind the high altar of Westminster Abbey. And in the church of St. Sernin of Toulouse one may still see the elaborate arrangement of shrines constructed in the eleventh century round an eastern ambulatory to house those bodies of apostles which Charlemagne is said to have deposited on his return from Spain, and a crypt-full of other relics besides, beneath the high altar.

I will only venture one more illustration. If we examine the history of some of the principal English churches, we find a

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1 *Magna vita Hugonis*, ed. J. Dimock (Rolls series), p. 317. His excuse and another episode of the same sort are recorded on the next page.


4 These are not negligible. They include the head of St. Thomas Aquinas and (with very dubious credentials) the bodies of St. Edmund, king and martyr, and St. Gilbert of Sempringham.
re-building of the east end in the course of the thirteenth century. It happens a little earlier at Canterbury and then, soon after 1200, at Winchester and Rochester. A little later, we see this happening at Worcester, Ely, Durham, Fountains, Westminster. In the latter part of the century, St. Paul’s of London, Lincoln and Hereford cathedrals and two great Benedictine churches, Chester and St. Albans, follow suit. In each place one object was evidently to provide a more worthy, magnificent, and spacious shrine for the principal relics. Access must be made easy for the devout. Space was needed, too, if the desire of the faithful to be buried ad sanctos were to be fulfilled. King John, it will be remembered, chose to be laid at rest at Worcester near to St. Wulfstan, while his successors sought for their mortal remains propinquity to the shrines of St. Edward or St. Thomas.¹

One feature of this cult points directly to the next part of my subject. It was early considered proper for altars (whenever possible) to be sanctified by the presence of relics.² Gregory the Great instructed the missionaries in England to de-contaminate pagan temples, erect altars, and place relics there.³ The altar was an essential part of the church. The great cathedral and monastic communities consisted of clerics, and the liturgy developed in their churches demanded first and foremost ample room in the choir and opportunity for processions. Along with the elaboration of day and night offices went important eucharistic developments. The church building was, in a great measure, intended for the celebration of Mass; Mass was not to be celebrated outside consecrated churches and except at consecrated altars.⁴ The insistence that there must be relics about the altar meant that on this point, under the church’s roof, were focused the doctrines and the liturgy connected with the saints and the eucharist. This was the first stage: a concentration of interest

² Grabar, op. cit., i. 38 and R. W. Muncey, A hist. of the consecration of churches and churchyards (1930), pp. 40-46. Decretum III de cons. dist. 1 c. 26 was interpreted in this sense.
³ Councils, ed. Haddan and Stubbs, iii. 37.
⁴ Decretum III de cons. dist. 1 c. 33.
on the high altar, with the shrine on the altar, or within it, or beneath it, or projecting eastward from the back of it.

The second stage is a diffusion of interest. The main shrine often becomes self-standing, in a special crypt or in a retrochoir or transept. That was the purpose of those extensions of English churches in the thirteenth century to which I have referred. But here we must also take into account the multiplication of Masses and its consequences. This dates from the earliest period of the Middle Ages. The cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary led to the celebrating of Masses additional to the Masses of the day. Other votive Masses were added, commemorative and expiatory; above all, Masses for the dead, intended to redeem their souls from purgatory. This had the first consequence of causing more monks and clergy to become priests. St. Benedict was never ordained priest. Two centuries after his day the abbey of St. Gall apparently had only two or three priests in a community about fifty strong.1 Finally, in 1311, the decree Ne in agro ensured that practically all monks would proceed to priesthood.2 By that time monasteries had become, to use Coulton's words, 'great Mass-machines'.3 And the change was reflected in the design of their churches. From the sixth century onward more than one altar might sometimes be found in a church. The first church of Cluny cannot have had more than two or three altars; the second church, built late in the tenth century had thirteen;4 the third church, begun a century later, eventually provided at least twice as many.5 When Suger's church of St. Denis was consecrated in 1144 Mass was celebrated simultaneously at twenty altars. For the same reason, many churches of the Cistercian Order soon developed beyond their primitive simplicity. The first church of Pontigny, built soon after 1114, had one or two altars. Reconstruction completed by 1170 provided for chapels on all sides of the transept. The third and final stage was reached before 1210

2 Clementin. III, 10, 1, para. 8.
3 G. C. Coulton, Five centuries of religion, i. 126.
when, with thirteen chapels opening on to the eastern ambulatory, there were twenty-five chapels in the church. This explains a feature of those great reconstructions of the east ends of English churches. The east end was not merely lengthened; it was expanded with a cluster of chapels growing out of the ambulatory round the shrine, and sometimes a second, eastern, transept was added, to contain more altars. This development was not, of course, confined to monasteries. Secular clergy likewise took on Mass-obligations. In all the greater churches of the Middle Ages, as well as many parish churches, votive Masses were daily said or sung. Chantries were founded to ensure perpetual commemoration of individuals; and where the chapels provided by the architects did not allow enough altars for the celebrant chantry-priests, narrow chapels were inserted into the choir or nave-arcade, and altars set against the pillars of the nave.

Thus specific doctrines connected with the saints and the Mass did much to determine the functions of the churches and their shape. Builders not unnaturally worked as a rule from east to west in the construction and reconstruction of churches; the nave mattered least and was often left unfinished. The main lines of the plan were fixed to a certain extent irrespective of architectural style.

The same theme might be developed regarding decoration; for in church the decorative arts, when they become representational, are devoted mainly to the iconography of saints. Quite apart from the influence worked by the cult of any one saint, the very development of main lines of pilgrim-traffic and the exchange of ideas along those routes had profound influence on the evolution of artistic styles. Leaving on one side this vast and fascinating topic, I turn to consider the economic consequences of these doctrines, as they relate to church-building.

'The cultus of relics', wrote Baldwin Brown, 'gave medieval architects much to do and at the same time provided means for

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1 See M. Anselme Dimier, Recueil de plans d'églises cisterciennes (2 vols., Paris and N. D. d'Aiguebelle, 1949), i. 36-38.
achieving the desired ends. The relics of an important saint were of financial value to their owner. The saint was forever living, exercising a decisive effect on the lives of those who sought his intercession by prayer, and visiting with affliction those who infringed his rights. The church which held his relics was his home. We find this notion expressed in the phraseology of deeds of gift. When a church was endowed in the early Middle Ages a saint was commonly named as the beneficiary or among the beneficiaries. To take two charters at random: between 1060 and 1087 Eude, lord of Blaison, gave an arpent of land to ‘God and St. Aubin and his monks’ at Angers; about the years 1136-1138 Adeliz, wife of Gilbert Fitz Richard, and her children give land to St. Mary and St. Botulf of Thorney.

Miracles of healing and other wonders proclaimed the saint’s sanctity; they were most often performed where his relics rested. Moreover, these sanctuaries had such virtue that the prayers poured forth there, and the Masses sung there, had particular efficacy. So they attracted pilgrims. Besides those pilgrims who went to shrines out of gratuitous piety, were many on whom the pilgrimage was enjoined as penance. I will cite one example only: in 1325, at Rochester, Simon Heyroun confessed to adultery, and his bishop ordered him for penance to go annually for seven years to St. Thomas of Canterbury (note the personification), and within the same period thrice to St. Thomas of Hereford, thrice to St. Edmund of Bury, thrice to St. Mary of Walsingham. He was also to feed one poor person every Friday. His partner in sin was sent on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

Not only is the economic aspect of this system obvious to us. Medieval churchmen were well aware of the financial implications. Abbot Samson of Bury challenged the barons of the Exchequer to despoil St. Edmund's tomb for King Richard's ransom, and none dared. Thereafter, the abbot invested spare capital in a very precious crest for the shrine of the glorious martyr, for 'no man would dare to lay hands upon it'. A little earlier than this the Winchester annalist reports that 'St. Barnabas first became notable at Hyde Abbey by the miracles wrought by God through his merits, and then that church began to be renovated and improved'. A century earlier a monk of Battle, who had been put in charge of a cell at Exeter, set himself to improve its position. He was at pains to extend as much as possible the fame of the relics by which the place was distinguished and thus acquired lands and churches and tithes in and around the city of Exeter. Bromholm Priory rose suddenly to prosperity after its reception of a piece of the true Cross, stolen from Constantinople in 1205; but that story is too well known to be repeated now. Relics were bought, borrowed, stolen, and manufactured. If they were not well enough known, their owners gave publicity to them and their miracles. The history of relics is full of faked relics and feigned miracles, for the opportunities for fraud were many and the inducement was immense. I shall not discuss this subject beyond observing that the getting of relics and the propaganda for them are often associated significantly with building operations.

When work on the west front of St. Albans was interrupted for lack of funds at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the abbot organized a preaching tour through many dioceses. 'He sent relics, and also a clerk named Amphibalus whom the Lord had raised from the dead after four days, by the merits of St. Alban and St. Amphibalus, so that he might bear ocular evidence

1 Cf. three valuable chapters (vi-viii) in G. G. Coulton's *Five centuries of religion*, iii (1936).
3 *Annales monastici* (Rolls series), ii. 62.
5 Recent accounts are by G. G. Coulton, *op. cit.*, iii. 90-92 and F. Wormald. 'The Rood of Bromholm', *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, i (1937), 31-45.
for the miracles of these saints', and in this way he accumulated a good deal of money (non minimam pecuniam coacervavit).\textsuperscript{1} Preaching tours of this sort sometimes went far afield: we have the account of the canons of Laon who, in 1112-1113, took their relics overseas to gain funds for rebuilding their cathedral, and who went as far as Exeter.\textsuperscript{2} A shorter tour, undertaken for the church of Xanten in 1487, cost 20 marks and yielded 382 marks for the fabric fund.\textsuperscript{3} Professor Wormald has lately remarked on the synchronizing of the forgeries by the monks of St. Martial of Limoges, designed to prove that St. Martial was an apostle, and the rebuilding of their church between 1017 and 1028. He observes: 'the promulgation of the cult of St. Martial as an apostle would be likely to prove not only glorious but profitable, since pilgrims and subscriptions would be likely to come from it'.\textsuperscript{4} He points out in passing how the discovery of the bones of King Arthur at Glastonbury (1191) coincided with the great rebuilding of that abbey.

I do not think that any medieval records which survive enable one to calculate just how much money accrued to any one church through the alms of pilgrims or other gifts and legacies prompted by devotion to the saints. Nor can we often say what proportion of this income was spent on the enlargement and adornment of the structure. There are, to be sure, many fabric accounts which are of utmost value for studying the organization and technique of building. There are also the charters and chronicles recording endowments and the accounts presented by custodians of shrines. Though these records are insufficient for accurate statistical analysis, they are worth attention. According to a statement of income drawn up at Mont St. Michel in 1338, a sixth of the abbey's income was derived from pilgrims.\textsuperscript{5} At St. Trond, in eastern Belgium, during the rule of Abbot Adelard II (1055-1082), the fame of

\textsuperscript{1}Gesta abbatum, i. 219. The 'invention' of St. Amphibalus was fairly recent (1178, cf. ibid., i. 192-193), but the saint is a wholly fictitious figure.
\textsuperscript{2}V. Mortet, Recueil de textes relatifs a l'hist. de l'architecture, i (1911), 319-321.
\textsuperscript{4}F. Wormald, 'The Engl. saints in the Litany in Arundel MS. 60', Analecta bollandiana, lxiv (1946), 86.
\textsuperscript{5}L. Delisle, 'Enquete sur la fortune des établissements de l'Ordre de S. Benoît, en 1338', Notices et extraits des MSS., xxxix (1916), 368, 372.
miracles worked at the tomb of St. Trond produced floods of pilgrims. They offered in enormous quantity not only money but livestock, linen, wax, and cheeses. 'In those days', says a later abbot of the house, 'the income of the altar far exceeded all the revenue then or now collected by the abbey'. The abbot spent a large part of these offerings on rebuilding the church; and the new church had a second transept and a spacious crypt.\footnote{E. de Moreau, \textit{op. cit.}, ii (1940), 251, 291.}

Again, according to the chronicler of Gloucester Abbey, it was the offerings at the tomb of King Edward II which provided the funds for rebuilding the transept and modifying the choir in the middle of the fourteenth century; and had all the offerings gone to the fabric, they would (it was said) have sufficed to rebuild the whole church.\footnote{Hist. monast. \textit{S. Petri Gloucestriæ} (Rolls series), i. 46-47.}

Some years ago, the late Canon C. E. Woodruff devoted a study to 'The financial aspect of the cult of St. Thomas of Canterbury'.\footnote{Archaeologia Cantiana, xlv (1932), 13-32.} Using the lengthy series of Treasurers' accounts, he was able to show that the monks received annual offerings between the years 1198 and 1206 amounting on average to £426 3s. 7d. The offerings at the two shrines of Becket averaged £349 2s. 6d. and the rest came from other altars. The Treasurer's receipts from all sources averaged £1,406 1s. 8d. a year; so that the martyr may be said to have produced almost exactly one quarter of the gross income. By the time of Chaucer offerings had increased in amount, though not perhaps enough to compensate for change in the value of money. Thereafter there was a steep decline in takings.

From late in the eleventh century, pilgrims had more inducement to visit certain churches because of the indulgences offered to visitors by ecclesiastical authority. The relaxation of thirty or forty days of penance was the usual spiritual reward for those who came and piously contributed to the needs of the church. An indulgence of this sort was granted by a papal legate in 1121 for those who visited Westminster Abbey, and prayed and made offerings, on the feast of the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul.\footnote{Papsturkunden in England, ed. W. Holtzmann, i, ii (1931), 234-236. The authenticity of the indulgence is not altogether beyond doubt.} Nor were indulgences always restricted
to visitors. In 1125 a papal legate, announcing that Bishop Urban of Llandaff had begun to rebuild his church from the foundations and would be unable to complete it without alms, confirmed an indulgence granted by the archbishop of Canterbury to all contributors and relaxed the penance of fourteen days in addition.¹

The idea of a church as the home of a saint, who rewards benefactors by intercession, appears from the terms of the charters of endowment which the churches received. Laymen who endowed churches expected a quid pro quo. That is elaborately expressed by the clerk who in the year 910 drafted for Duke William of Aquitaine the charter recording his foundation of Cluny. 'The ransom of a man's life are his riches', he says (quoting Proverbs xiii, 8), 'I will maintain at my own cost persons living together in the monastic profession, in the faith and hope that, if I cannot myself despise all earthly things, yet by maintaining those who do and whom I believe to be righteous in the eyes of God, I shall receive the recompense of the righteous.' The hope of buying salvation is expressed with more usual brevity in a charter, drawn up about the year 1200, now preserved in the John Rylands Library.² It begins:

To all Christ's faithful to whom this present writing shall come, Robert Marmion gives greeting in the Lord. Let it be known to you all that I, for the salvation of my soul and those of Philippa my wife and of all my ancestors and successors and for the release from my journey to Jerusalem (pro absolutione itineris mei Ierosolimitani), have granted to God and St. Mary of Barbery and the monks there serving God, to build and construct their Church, five hundred pounds of money of Angers . . .³

The general feeling that the chance of salvation was improved by such piety as this was not enough. People looked for the measured mitigation of penance expressed in indulgences or for some assurance that prayers and Masses would be said for their especial benefit, either for a period or in perpetuity.

¹ Councils, ed. A. W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, i. 318.
² J. R. L., Beaumont charter 43.
³ For Robert Marmion see Dict. Nat. Biog. s.v. He died in 1218; Philippa was his second wife. The Cistercian abbey of Barbery was in the diocese of Bayeux. The present charter also included lands in England, which seem to be exchanged for an earlier donation.
Donations were attracted by specific promises. The development of Mass-obligations prepares us for finding innumerable transactions of this sort. The churches offer special prayers and Masses to those who help them with this world's goods. While many donations and legacies are simply for the general expenses of the churches or for the communities' food or clothing, some —like Robert Marmion's—are earmarked for building.

In particular, the general type of fratermitas offered from early times by churches to their benefactors took on the special form of a fraternity of the fabric to advance building operations. Dr. Rose Graham has lately called attention to the earliest known English example, established by Bishop Gilbert Foliot for the completion of St. Paul's Cathedral, about the years 1174-1175. Here the priests of the diocese of London each undertook to 'sing thirty masses for members of the confraternity, fifteen for the living and fifteen for the dead. The cathedral chapter undertook every week to have two masses in St. Paul's, one for the living and one for the dead. Even if a member died in mortal sin, he should be buried in consecrated ground.' A dozen years later, Archbishop Baldwin proposed to build a church in honour of St. Thomas and ordained a fraternity throughout the province of Canterbury to last for seven years from this year of grace 1186. To all who enter this fraternity and send some donation annually for the said fabric or bequeath it at their death, we remit a third of their penance for those sins truly confessed for which they are doing seven years or more of penance; if their penance be less, we remit sixty days; let slight sins and those forgotten, and offences against parents short of violence, be included in the penance imposed for other sins. To those also who for penance have been excluded from church for a whole year, except for Lent, we grant free access to church. We add, moreover, that all members of the fraternity shall have christian burial unless they committed suicide or

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1 Dr. Georg Schreiber brings together a wealth of material about this under the heading 'Schenkungsmotive' in his recent work, Gemeinschaften des Mittelalters (Münster, 1948), pp. 99-125.
3 Epistolae Cantuarienses (Rolls series), pp. 8-9.
died excommunicate by name. And if a church lies under interdict when a parishioner who is a brother or sister of the fraternity dies, let the interdict be lifted until the brother or sister be buried, and let the bells be rung and the service said for the dead. And if a sister die in childbirth, let her be brought to church and solemnly given christian burial. Moreover we grant that all who shall have joined this fraternity shall participate in all the Masses, prayers, and observances for the departed which occur in all the churches of the province of Canterbury; and we grant the benefit of this fraternity to their children under the age of fifteen years.

What money these fraternities yielded we do not know, but when, in this period, St. Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, established a new general fraternity of the church of Lincoln he collected (it was said) a thousand marks a year by this means for the building of the new cathedral. Like the archbishop's fraternity, this one mitigated the severity of interdicts, and ensured Christian burial for those whose names were inscribed in the *liber fraternitatis*.

A generation later, a reference to the services for deceased brethren and sisters of the fabric of Salisbury indicates pretty clearly that Bishop Richard Poore had instituted a fraternity to help the building of his new cathedral. A little later still, in 1230, we hear of a *confraria novi operis* at Osney Abbey. Not *all* the endowments which were applied to the building of churches were of this kind: free-will offerings granted in expectation of reward in Heaven; but in general it was so. I have been concerned with the forms of this inducement, and I shall not dwell on the various forms of gift.


3 *Registrum antiquissimum of ... Lincoln*, ii, ed. C. W. Foster (Linc. Rec. Soc. 1933), 86, where a letter of St. Hugh is wrongly attributed to Hugh de Wells.


The facts which I have laid before you justify us in treating the medieval cathedrals and monastic churches both as illustrations and products of the Catholic faith of the Middle Ages. (It is not, therefore, surprising that those which have come into the hands of Protestant communions in modern times should prove to be ill-adapted to their present uses. 1) These churches were deliberately shaped to modes of worship which demanded space and magnificence and mystery. The nearness of the saints and the recurrent miracle of the Mass were ideas adapted to various stages of comprehension, by minds crude or refined. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages never declined to reduce theological doctrines of the most spiritual sort to material expression. The shrine, the altar, the chantry-chapel, not only emphasized beliefs concerning the Communion of Saints and Purgatory and vicarious salvation in their most popular forms; they positively encouraged them. Although the underlying doctrine was that of the Universal Church, devotion was concentrated on local and tangible objects. The calendar of saints and the liturgical year varied from place to place. The pious layman could turn to a saint whose human remains were present in his own church, whose spiritual presence was testified by local miracles, whose favour was bestowed specially on this locality or that class of people or gild-fraternity. 2 There was local pride in the prodigies connected with a shrine, and competition between rival establishments possessed of different relics (or occasionally claiming the possession of the same). Devotion was stimulated by the offer of specific recompense, a recompense all the more

1 Cf. G. W. O. Addleshaw and Frederick Etchells, The architectural setting of Anglican worship (1948).
2 It is not generally realized how common in the later Middle Ages was the veneration accorded to relics of uncanonized persons. For a discussion of what may be called 'popular canonization' see E. W. Kemp, Canonization and authority in the Western Church (1948), pp. 116-128. Cf. J. C. Russell, 'The canonization of opposition to the King in Angevin England', in Anniversary essays in med. hist. by students of C. H. Haskins (1929). Cf. cases recorded in Hist. mon. Gloucestriae (Rolls series), i. 32; Annales monastici: (Rolls series), ii. 266; Coulton, Five centuries, i. 545-546; Reg. of John de Grandisson, bishop of Exeter, ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, iii (1899), 1231-1234. For the votive wax figures and pilgrim's badge in honour of Edmund Lacey, bishop of Exeter, which were recently discovered in the cathedral, see The Antiquaries Journal, xxix (1949), 164-168.
urgently desired because of current teaching about hell-fire and the high proportion of the damned. One cannot but recognize that all these doctrines added together, and expressed with the force and even brutality which we find in the sermons and hagiography of the age, gave the clergy of a great church a powerful claim upon the people's alms. Along with the purely religious motive, the existence of which no one would deny, the lowest motive of worldly prudence encouraged the clergy to advertise the miracles performed at their shrines, to multiply the indulgences granted at their altars. The spirit of emulation made builders anxious to surpass neighbouring churches.¹

In other words, the clergy of the greater churches were impelled for reasons both good and bad to build magnificently, and generally they built beyond their means. That explains why it so often happened that the choir-altars were consecrated, long before the final dedication of a church, as soon as the choir was complete; and the dedication of the whole church was apparently permitted as soon as its walls were raised.² In the fine fifteenth-century Flemish service-book which is now Rylands Latin MS. 39, the feast in dedicatione ecclesie is illustrated by a delightful picture of a bishop proceeding round a church to anoint the consecration-crosses with chrism; either the nave or the choir (it is not clearly indicated) has only the beginnings of a roof, dominated by ' a huge pair of wheels for raising stones '.³ Maybe those who planned these buildings sometimes feared that the inflow of alms would diminish or dry up once the work was finished: the crane which stood for centuries on the unfinished south tower of Cologne Cathedral was a visible appeal for funds. Be that as it may, it was exceptional for a great church to be constructed by a single generation of men. More often it was the work of centuries. Some cathedrals (Cologne, Florence, Toulouse for example) were never completed in the Middle Ages. They may be taken to symbolize the unattained ideal of the medieval Church, seeking always to explain the immaterial by the material.

¹ Harvey, The Gothic World, p. 8.
³ M. R. James, Catalogue of the Latin MSS. (1921), i. 100, and ii. pl. 92.