

The
Wayne
Presbyterian
Church





**“When I Survey
the Wondrous Cross”**

A sermon preached by the Rev.
John T. Galloway, D.D. on the oc-
casion of the Dedication of the new
Chancel and Church School Equip-
ment of the Wayne Presbyterian
Church, Wayne, Pennsylvania.

April 16, 1950

Thomas Carlyle wrote a book about what people wear. It is a kind of whimsical philosophy of clothes. We often hear it said that clothes make the man, or that a new hat is a wonderful boost to a woman's morale. Carlyle points out that these external things have important bearing on internal values. Even such externals as clothes have a determining effect on human character. It would be interesting to carry this study further to the houses in which people live. One wonders what the ultimate effect will be on the people who are forced to live in the little houses which are being built today. In any case experience teaches us that our character is conditioned by our surroundings.

It may be observed further that clothes and houses not only affect a person; they also reflect him. When we see a perpetually untidy person we are given a revelation of character. A slovenly, ill-kept house speaks volumes about its inhabitant. External things reflect as well as affect a man.

These observations may well be applied to the church. A property that is dingy and dirty has a depressing effect on the worshiper. A property that is beautifully conceived and zealously cared for has a beneficial effect.

By the same token it may be said that a dingy, ill-kept church property is a dark reflection on the character of the congregation, and a clean, attractive church is a credit to the people who worship there.

These factors should be sufficient to impel all congregations to maintain beautiful and well-kept houses of worship; but there is a deeper religious reason for building to the best of our ability, and maintaining property with cultured care. We want to offer our best to the glory of God. We believe in the beneficial effect of a beautiful house of worship; we want our church building to reflect our refinement; but most of all we want it to glorify God. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." As Paul said, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

In the spirit of those who seek to offer their first fruit to God our committee has sought to fashion our house of worship to conform to the highest we know and the best we can afford: all for the glory of God.

If God's glory had been the prime motivating factor in days gone by, it is safe to say that there would be fewer architectural monstrosities all over Protestant America. The grotesque, unkept, untidy church buildings across our land are a witness to our careless creed and inexcusable bad taste.

If a man wants to build a house for a friend he will be wise to build, not please himself, but to please his friend. The friend's wishes should receive first consideration. Time after time when people build a church they build it for themselves; for *their* glory, for *their* use, for *their* pleasure. God has revealed what he wants and is explicit about what he does not want.

Our catechism goes on, after pointing out that "Man's chief end is to glorify God," to say that, "The word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him."

The New Testament gives us three clues to God's desires about his house. First, Jesus said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Great care should be exercised in building a church that every part of its structure should be functional. A church should look like a church; its every wall and ornament should incline man's mind to prayer.

Jesus also said, "Teach." Thus God's house has always been a center of instruction. In recent years it has been found expedient to have a separate building equipped for the use of modern techniques in teaching. Here again it is our desire to direct the best we have to the glory of God.

A third New Testament command is to "Love." Good fellowship has always been a mark of the Christian life. A Christian Church should have a place to worship, a place to teach, and a place for growth in Christian association.

The Use of Symbols

A building designed to be a house of prayer should be more than walls and a roof protecting worshipers from the elements. It should, by its form and appointments suggest thoughts of a religious character. Then, when one's mind slips away from the service to commune with the worries of the secular world, the sight of something of sacred significance may draw it back to thoughts of God. The suggestive power of beautiful symbols, used with dignity and restraint, may provide a subtle and recurring call to worship.

The Bible is a book of symbols. If they belong in God's book, why not in God's house? We know the answer some would give: it is because of excess and abuse. We want no part of either. Our attempt has been to maintain simplicity and to direct all beauty toward edification. This we believe was the spirit of the first of the Reformation fathers, who while turning away from the perversions of the past, would have been equally horrified by the extremes of the barren, artless practice inflicted on recent generations. In the denial of beauty and symbols, we have been misled by stubborn, joyless men whose reforming zeal has carried them beyond the word of the Creator who looked on what he had made and called it "good."

Examination of trends in church building reveals a movement which crosses all denominational lines and unites us in common worship. This movement is the outgrowth of a widespread desire to find forms in architecture which best reflect the centralities of our faith. The original designers of our present property felt the early impulses of this movement when they built our church in the form of a cross. All building committees, sensitive to the liturgical movement, are now going on to build churches with an open chancel where the cross is the most conspicuous visible symbol. The logical reasons for the open chancel will appear as we consider the different furnishings.

The Doors

The doors of the church should be attractive, conspicuous, and when possible, open. The doors of our church are painted red because red is colorful and inviting; also because of our Lord's own word and work. Jesus said, "I am the door." It is by the shedding of His blood that the door is opened for us into the sanctuary of eternal life. We recall, too, the sprinkling of blood on the doorposts in ancient times; that the angel of death might pass over.

The Cross

Upon entering the church one has an unobstructed view of the cross at the back of the chancel. The cross, like the doors, should be beautiful, conspicuous, accessible. It is sometimes objected that Jesus did not die on a brass cross. Suffice it to say that the literal mind is seldom happy with the use of symbols; it is unfortunate that such literalists have been allowed to direct the ways of so many churches, for they have distorted God's word and impoverished His worship. The cross in our chancel is not a crucifix; it is an empty cross, symbolizing the fact that death could not hold our Blessed Lord. Our cross points to the resurrection. Thus we sing, "When I survey the wondrous cross."

The cross is superimposed on an orb symbolizing the world. Here we have the idea, "Christ for the world and the world for Christ." The orb is surrounded by a seamless band representing the endless love of God holding the world together under the cross. Beside the cross are two vases containing flowers, the symbols of resurrection. Also near the cross are two candlesticks. They represent the human and divine nature of Christ, and when the candles are lighted they cast their light on the orb beneath the cross and signify that Christ is the light of the world.

The Reredos and Dossal

The word "reredos" literally means "the back of the back." The word "dossal" is a variation of the word "dorsal," also meaning the back. In our usage we refer to the stone tracing at the back of the chancel as the reredos and the cloth which hangs in it as the dossal. The purpose of both is to provide a back which focuses attention on the cross.

At the top center of the reredos is a shield bearing the letters "IHS." These letters are a contraction of the Greek word "Jesus."

The dossal cloth is hand-woven of silk and gold. A close view reveals two symbols: the rose and the crosslet. The rose is a representation of the coming Messiah. The prophet Isaiah wrote that "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose." The little crosses with ends branching point to the wide range of the influence of Christ. They symbolize the Christian mission to the uttermost parts of the world.

The hangings on each side of the dossal are called "riddels." Their only function is to accent the cross and other symbols at the back of the chancel. On the riddels are little figures known as "gamadions." They are a kind of cross made from the Greek letter gamma, traditionally the symbol of Christ, the cornerstone.

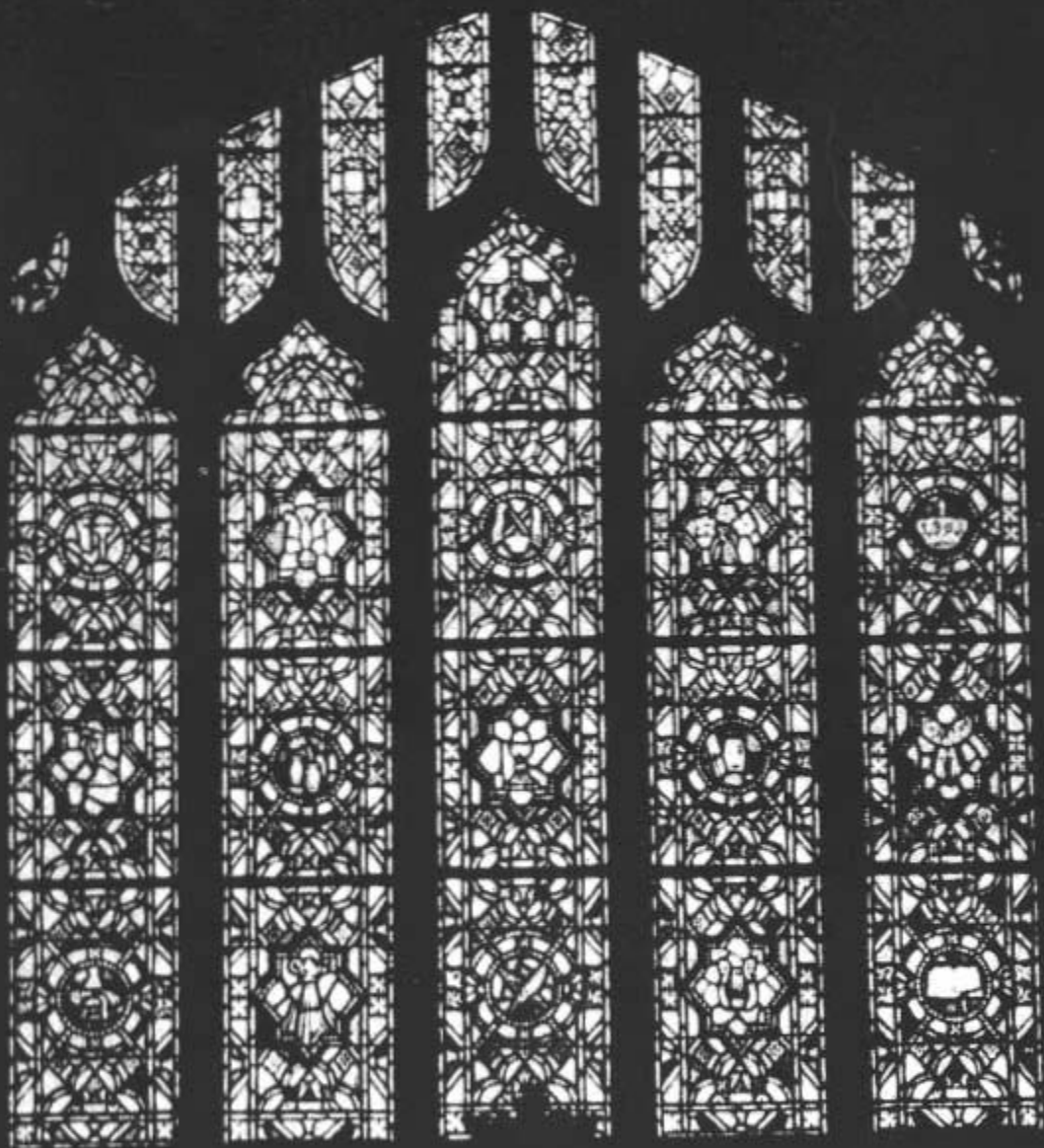
The stone base of the reredos is called the "retable" or "gradine," meaning rear shelf. Traditionally it is the "table back of the table" which holds the cross, candlesticks and vases.

The Window

A window in a chancel is usually considered by competent architects to be a doubtful blessing. It may cause a glare which disturbs the worshipers, or there is always the peril of forgetting our standards and falling into the pre-Reformation practice of placing images at the center of worship. Both problems have been avoided in our situation. If figures are used in a chancel window they should be small and suggestive rather than conspicuous. The window is simply a flash of glorious color to symbolize the resurrection light that rises above the cross. The symbols in our window are small and suggestive, rather than large and commanding. They graphically represent a few phases of the life of our Lord. In making the glass for this window, the artisans have gone back to an old 12th Century process which has proved to be of more lasting merit than the innovations of recent years.

The first panel on the left begins with the star over the manger. Above are the symbols of the flight into Egypt and at the top the tools of the carpenter shop.

The second panel on the left suggests the adult life of Christ. First, at the bottom the lamp, the sign of Christ the light of the world; then the water pots reminding us of the first miracle when Jesus turned the water into wine. The upper symbol is a dove. In Matthew's description of His baptism we read, "He saw the spirit of God descending like a dove upon Him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"



**“And Christ Shall
Give Thee Light”**

The center panel contains the symbols of the Passion Week. At the bottom the palm branches for Palm Sunday; then the sacramental cup and wafer. The trial is symbolized by the whips and the basin. Pilate ordered Jesus flogged and then washed his hands of the whole matter. Over all is the cross and the crown of thorns.

The panel second from the right contains the emblems of the resurrection: the lyre representing sacred music; the empty tomb, and at the top the lilies, traditional symbols of resurrection.

The last panel describes the post-resurrection period. The last words of Jesus were the command to preach the gospel. This word is symbolized by the open book. The middle symbol in the last panel represents the ascension. The final, top figure is the crown, symbolizing Christ, the King of Kings.

The Communion Table

It is around the communion table that the followers of Christ come to a new fellowship with God and with each other. Here they dramatically set forth the message which is symbolically heralded by the cross. Thus the table becomes a symbol which gives meaning to the cross. It is *from* the table that we receive the symbols of Christ's offering; it is *to* the table that we bring the symbols of our offering. Empty offering plates should never be allowed to rest on the table.

We have a table, not an altar. Both words have New Testament sanction, but the use of the table is increasing in favor even in some of the high liturgical churches. The idea of the altar is contrary to early Christian precept, for the New Testament writers wanted it clearly understood that Christ's once offering of Himself was the all-sufficient sacrifice.

The table occupies the central symbolic position in the chancel rather than the pulpit. The minister and the book are not first in the Christian hierarchy of values. They are instruments of God's Holy Spirit through which the sacrifice of Christ comes to be known and the Saviour adored. Let the symbols of *His* work be central.

The Organ and Choir

The new Aeolian Skinner Organ will be on each side in the chancel above and back of the choir. Organs have had a varied history in the church. At first they were abhorred because of their association with the Arena and the persecution of Christians, but in time this ancient instrument was redeemed and turned to praise. During the reformation it was again cast out with the choir, but both were soon brought back. Bringing them back was no simple matter for in the interim church buildings had been erected with no place for them. Thus they were thrust into the center of things in a more obnoxious position than they



**“Ye Do Show
the Lord’s Death”**

had ever occupied before the reformation. New reformation was required. The organ and choir have now been restored to a contributing, worshiping position in our church, and relegated to the side where they belong. Music should be heard and not seen in Church; if seen, only to suggest a contributing part.

The Lectern and Pulpit

It is through the reading and preaching of the word that the music, the table, and the cross become meaningful. The ministers, like the musicians, are but servants of Christ leading their fellow servants of the Word in devotion. Our Presbyterian Directory for worship admonishes ministers "to be careful not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with the more important duties of prayer and praise."

The Presbyterian Church will never minimize preaching, but John Calvin preached from a high, side pulpit. It has only been in recent years that we have turned away from the tradition of keeping the high pulpit for the preaching of the word. The relatively modern zeal for a center pulpit was born in a desire to glorify the word by making the book central. All too often the result of this worthy desire was the centering of a very limited personality. Architecture should not glorify the man but the Master. In the open chancel arrangement the man is put to one side and the symbols of God's love and grace are conspicuous to direct us to Him.

The Steps

The stone steps provide seven levels in the chancel, symbolic of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are set forth in Revelation 5:12—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

The Wainscot

Around the church and chancel is a band of beautiful Indiana limestone. This architectural device ties the chancel and church together, symbolizing the priesthood of all believers, and the oneness of the leaders of worship with the worshipers. We may find significance in the fact that limestone is formed from life given centuries ago in the depths of the sea. Let this remind us of the love and devotion of those who in years gone by made possible the building of these walls.

"Wherefore seeing, we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

A Bible-believing Church must inevitably accept symbols as a means of grace, and be grateful for the appreciation of beauty, which is the Creator's gift. In periods of persecution these symbols have been doubly precious. They are of value today only as instruments of enlightenment and must never be allowed to degenerate to superstitious mummery. They will be for edification as long as we remember that our ultimate goal should be to worship in holiness, in spirit, and in truth. We thank God for our deep desire to please Him, for every beauty that directs us to Him, and for our church, erected to His honour and glory. May the lives here dedicated, grow in the knowledge and love of Christ, our God.

