William Halsey Wood and the competition for the cathedral of St. John the Divine

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WILLIAM HALSEY WOOD AND THE COMPETITION FOR THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

by

Gayle Evans Brookfield

ESSAY

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Graduate Division of Wayne State University,
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APPROVED BY:

Adviser Date
For Jonathan and Christopher ---

who made this possible . . .
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In the spring of 1888, the Trustees of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine gave a young Newark architect a splendid opportunity. Along with thirteen other architects, William Halsey Wood (Fig. 1) was invited to participate in the largest and most important architectural competition in America. If he won, Wood would have a "chance to immortalize himself" in his design for a Protestant Episcopal Cathedral in New York City. The competition, however, was stiff. As many as one hundred architects may have submitted plans, and their work evinces the eclecticism of late nineteenth century American architecture. Wood's scheme, nevertheless, was singular, and the story of his participation in the Cathedral contest is one of faith, romance, and tragedy.

The decision to invite Halsey Wood to submit a Cathedral design was not unanimous. The Trustees had originally planned to select from ten to twelve architects, but the list grew and shrank as the committee tossed names back and forth. Bishop Henry Codman Potter personally recommended William Halsey Wood as "eminently worthy" to have his name on the list of the invited. Although Wood had not designed a church in New York City, his name was suggested by two of his former clients. In 1887, John Sword wrote appreciably of Wood's design for his St. Mary's Church in Kansas City, Missouri, which far exceeded his expectations. It was, he explained; "a building unique — far removed from common place, of most honest beauty — and a very
House of Prayer.⁴ That same year Telfair Hodgson, Vice-Chancellor for the University of the South, wrote of Wood's design for the University's Convocation Hall and Breslin Tower in Sewanee, Tennessee (Figs. 2,3). The cornerstone for these buildings, which form part of a quadrangle complex, was laid on June 24, 1886, and Breslin Tower, the memorial gift of Thomas Breslin of New York, was modeled after the tower of Magdalene College Chapel in Oxford, England (Figs. 4,5).⁵ Hodgson deemed Wood's work "very satisfactory" and asked a "patient hearing" for the architect.⁶

R. J. Auchmuty, secretary of the Trustees' Joint Committee of Architecture and Finance, responded to the Bishop that he had reduced the number of invited architects by omitting R. M. Upjohn, the firm of Hartwell & Richardson, and William Halsey Wood. One Boston and one Philadelphia architect seemed enough, he reasoned, and inviting an architect like Wood from a small town "might look as if he had a friend at court."⁷ The Trustees, however, approved of Potter's recommendation and added the names of McKim, Mead & White, Henry Vaughan, and William Halsey Wood.⁸ Subsequently, the Bishop asked Morgan Dix, rector of Trinity Church, to add the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall & Russell and R. H. Robertson.⁹ When the final list was made and the invitations dispatched, Robert W. Gibson did not receive one. The Englishman, who thought he had demonstrated his art in All Saints' Cathedral in Albany, believed either he had been overlooked or his invitation was lost in the post. Immediately he wrote to the Trustees un-
abashedly advertising his skills. The competition for St. John the Divine, after all, was the opportunity of a lifetime.

The specifications for this competition were amazingly few: the fireproof building was to face south and not to exceed four hundred feet. The competitors were asked to present a ground plan, longitudinal section, exterior perspectives from the northwest and southeast, and one interior perspective. Unlike the competition for the Albany Cathedral six years earlier, there were no limitations of cost or of style. Provided with maps of the site and a ground profile, the architects were to submit plans anonymously, designated only by mottoes.

For some architects the non-restrictive program allowed ample and welcome room for experimentation. For others, the lack of specificity was intolerable. No sooner had he received the invitation, Henry Van Brunt wrote from Kansas City, Missouri, for more information. What seating accommodation was required? What additional buildings were needed? What limit of expense was there? From the very beginning, however, Bishop Potter wanted only a general rendering. "What is desired," he wrote to Morgan Dix, "is only so much as will indicate the designer's general idea not detailed drawings." The committee, he reminded Dix, were not novices, and "you can soon tell whether an architect has an idea worth considering." In July of 1888 the competition was thrown open to the profession at large, and the deadline for receipt of the
drawings at the Sea House was set for December 15, 1888. A November resolution extended the time to January 15, 1889, and designs were entered from not only American but also Canadian, British, and European architects.\textsuperscript{14}

The West Side location selected for the construction of the Cathedral was a thirteen-acre plot between 110th and 113th Streets from Tenth Avenue to Morningside Drive. The property had been the home of the Leake and Watts' orphan asylum but was purchased by the Trustees in 1887 for $850,000.\textsuperscript{15} Until the 1880's the upper West Side had grown very slowly in contrast to the East Side, and the area was largely open land dotted with small farms, country houses, shantytowns, and taverns. With poor public transportation the area was nearly inaccessible to downtown Manhattan: until 1870 the Eighth Avenue street railroad ran a single car between Fifty-ninth and Eighty-fourth and a stage traveled down Bloomingdale Road, which became Broadway in 1899, only every hour. H. J. Hardenburgh filed plans in 1880 for an elegant apartment house on Central Park West between Seventy-second and Seventy-third, but New Yorkers regarded the location so desolate they nicknamed the complex the "Dakota."\textsuperscript{16}

The farsighted, however, could envision a fine future for the upper West Side. For one thing, the land between the Hudson River and Central Park was elevated and breezy. When the Ninth Avenue el was opened in 1880, New Yorkers grew increasingly excited about the West Side's development. The West Side was, as one resident pointed out, a
section of the city that has been held in reserve until the time when the progress of wealth and refinement shall have attained that period of development when our citizens can appreciate and are ready to take advantage of the situation. 7

By the middle of the decade, there were all too many who were willing to take this advantage. The upper West Side moved into a period of boom. In 1886, the New York Times reported:

The west side of the city presents just now a scene of building activity such as was never before witnessed in that section, and which gives promise of the speedy disappearance of all the shanties in the neighborhood and the rapid population of this long neglected part of New York. 8

The upper West Side was to become a cultural mecca, an embodiment of the "City Beautiful." Morningside Park was finished in 1887; the Cathedral of St. John the Divine was begun in 1892; and, Columbia University moved uptown in 1897. Reality began to approach the ideal. 9

The high elevation of Morningside Heights made it especially suitable for a Cathedral, and Halsey Wood studied the site extensively before he put pen to paper. "In sunshine and storm, at early morning, at noon, at sunset and by moonlight and by starlight," 10 Wood explored the property. Hoping to avoid the example of Richard Upjohn's Trinity Church, Wood maintained the new Cathedral should "not be over-topped, nor obscured by any conceivable structure," 11 but a permanent and dominating presence in the city. Wood believed Trinity had been almost extinguished by the vast structures around it and despaired that the stranger approaching the city "must now hunt
up and identify Trinity spire, which has lost its structural significance and commanding importance." On the bold and commanding elevation of Morningside Heights, Halsey Wood would build a church whose identity would be secure.

Wood's architectural training and profound belief in the Anglo-Catholic church especially equipped him for the role of Cathedral builder. The son of Daniel Halsey Wood and Hannah Bell Lippincott, Wood showed a talent for drawing while still a young boy. He was given his first set of drawing instruments by John Crockett, an artist and close friend of the family's. At about age fifteen, Wood went to work for John F. Miller in New York City. Florence Wood, whom Wood married when he was thirty-four, recalls that in 1870 Miller was considered "the best authority on the subject of Gothic architecture." His expertise must have had a profound effect on the aspiring youth. It is not clear how long Wood was associated with Miller, but the experience did provide him with an introduction to the architectural profession and the diversity of taste in New York City. At this time Henry Hobson Richardson was still practicing in the city. A. T. Stewart, the mercantile king, had built himself a mansardic town house on Fifth Avenue, and Peter Wight had planned a National Academy of Design in Ruskinian Gothic. Trinity Church was already a landmark and Saint Patrick's Cathedral was nearing completion. Certainly the sight of James Renwick's Gothic pile rising on Fifth Avenue plus Miller's tutelage must have aroused in Wood a strong desire to visit the Gothic monuments of England and
Europe.

Wood made two trips abroad, one in the 1870's and another in 1881, and studied as an apprentice in the London office of George Frederick Bodley and Thomas Garner, which makes Wood one of the first native-born American architects to study with an English architectural firm. Bodley, whose reputation was already secure when he formed his partnership with Garner in 1869, had worked with George Edmund Street in the architectural office of Gothic revivalist and High Churchman, Gilbert Scott. In 1849 Street set up his own practice and engaged Bodley to assist him whenever his work load was unmanageable. Street, three years the older, and Bodley shared the same religious views and their early work reflects their mutual influence. After Street's death, Bodley wielded more influence on church design than any other architect during the last years of the nineteenth century. Well into the twentieth century, Bodleian Gothic continued to be the favorite of Anglicans, both within England and without.

By the time he began St. Augustine's at Pendlebury in Lancashire in 1869, Bodley's style was mature. A tall, spacious rectangular mass with no division between nave and chancel, St. Augustine's is an impressive brick pile with stone trim (Fig. 6). Buttressed by a pierced, internal arcade, the church has a color scheme which contrasts the browns, greys, and creamy whites of the constructive features with the rich blues, greens, and gold of the applied decoration. The influence of Garner's partner-
ship and the vast range of Bodley's talent is demonstrated in the contrast between Pendlebury and the Church of the Holy Angels at Hoar Cross.

Hoar Cross, begun in 1872 and doubtlessly seen by Wood, is in Bodley's mature fourteenth century style. Built of mellow sandstone, the church has a very prominent rectangular tower at the crossing with deep triple recesses on each side (Fig. 7). The lofty chancel is higher than the dark nave, which has a wooden tunnel roof. Bodley believed the English fourteenth century was "quite unsurpassed by any other Gothic work in the world." Characterized for the Cathedral Trustees as "a thorough artist --- but so extreme a medievalist as to repudiate the toleration of any but the strictest Gothic," Bodley maintained that "the highest Art has had its spring in Religion." He echoed John Ruskin's complaint that we build like pygmies and advocated building bigger Gothic churches. Assuredly, then, Bodley must have been pleased about the grand scale projected for the Cathedral across the ocean. Bodley must also have been delighted that two of his former pupils had been invited to enter that competition. Henry Vaughan, the enigmatic architect who came to America in 1881 to do a convent chapel, worked in Bodley's office from 1867 to 1881 and eventually became head draughtsman. Vaughan, who was ten years older than Wood, and Wood probably met in Bodley's office and it may have been Wood who urged Vaughan to come to America.

Following the financial panic of 1873 Wood most likely made his first trip to Europe. The autograph book he received
for Christmas of 1874 contains sketches of a church gable by Pugin (Fig. 8) and a medieval town by William Burges (Fig. 9), which suggest Wood had either seen or was studying the Gothic revivalists. By 1876 Wood was listed in the Newark City Directory as an architect practicing at 748 Broad in partnership with Thomas A. Roberts and Van Campen Taylor. The association, however, was short-lived. With little remuneration and no recognition, the arrangement became onerous. Taylor formed his own practice in 1879 and Wood followed suit the next year. From this time on Wood practiced alone out of offices on Broad Street in Newark and at 266 Fifth Avenue in New York. Both these offices were closed when Wood's health began to deteriorate in 1894, and the architect practiced from his home.

While Wood's architectural training gave him a background for ecclesiastical design, his faith provided the inspiration. It was intense, personal, and sacerdotal. Religion answered a need in Wood that was so poignantly revealed after the death of his father: the family became alarmed when young Holly, then fourteen years of age, "in a measure entered the next world and lived with his father for many days." This imaginative capacity for absorption into another world characterizes Wood's spiritual life. "The service touched me," he wrote to his fiance in 1889, "and I had that 'throat stopped up feeling' you know one gets when things appeal to you." Wood's response to the church was powerful, deep, and emotional.
With a profound love for ritual and the sacraments, Wood was described as a "thorough Catholic, even at a time when Catholics were regarded with considerable disfavor, even in the Diocese where he lived." He was educated by an English schoolmaster in the parish school of the House of Prayer in Newark (Fig. 10) and from these roots developed a lifelong devotion to the Anglican church. As a small child he was the first acolyte to serve in the House of Prayer. He lit the first candles ever on any altar in the diocese, swung the first censer, and carried the first processional cross. One of the first Episcopal nuptial masses in America was celebrated on his wedding day.

In 1889, Halsey Wood married Florence Hemsley in the Tannersville, New York Church of St. John Evangelist, which was built through her mother's efforts and designed by Henry Vaughan. Florence was a devout Anglo-Catholic from a rich and influential Philadelphia family. Wood's wedding presents to her were mass lights and a crucifix of copper and silver. His first Christmas gift to her was an altar. In Winmarleigh, the home Wood designed for his bride the year after they were married (Fig. 11), Wood included an oratory on the second floor of the battlemented fourteenth century style tower (Fig. 12). A spare room became the "priest's room" as the couple frequently entertained the clergy. Wood's brother Alonzo, in fact, was rector since 1885 of St. John's Church in the Woodside section of Newark, and it was through him that Halsey Wood met Florence.
Florence Wood suggests she and Halsey Wood "fell in love with each other over the 'Magnificat' and the 'Benedicta'," and their love does seem intertwined with religious sentiment. Indeed, Wood's love for Florence is scarcely distinguishable from his love for the church. On one occasion he writes to Florence: "Today I did a lot and the spires etc. of a living teacher loom up before me as I think of that lovely subject which is before me." Later he reports to her: "I stopped in Old Trinity Church today and remembered my little lover, and what a comfort the church is." At his death, Florence put a crucifix in Wood's hands and in the architect's face perceived the "agony of our dear Lord's death being made a living reality to me as I had never known it before." Religion was at the very center of their lives.

Florence enjoyed laboring for the church and "made all love her by her devoted life to the work." Eventually she was to organize New York City's St. Hilda's Guild, which made church vestments. Halsey Wood, too, was actively involved in church work. At the House of Prayer he kept three choirs in training, conducted masses and oratorios, played the organ, and managed a boys' baseball team. Wood praised his choir boys and encouraged them to put forth their finest efforts, but he personally shrank from any publicity. Despite his success, he "feared his own unworthiness." Wood's humility was more than matched by that of his wife, who once wrote to him: "Why you care for such a wretched piece of good I don't see. I suppose you live in hopes of my being worth something sometime, and so
do I." Together, the Woods were strong and nurturing. Even before they were married, Florence offered to teach Holly how to spell if he would instruct her in architecture. He expressed an interest in her needlework, while she appreciated his musical talent. Both are solicitous of each other's health, but while still an adolescent Wood had lost his father and Florence's own father was tubercular.

Wood happily settled into a domestic routine and fathered one daughter, Emily Hemsley, and two sons, William Halsey and Alexander Hemsley, within the first five years of marriage. He was devoted to his wife, applauded her training of the children, and described her as "the very picture of health," "a model," and a "true sweet mother in every particular." A man of quiet tastes, Wood avoided the social life of Newark and preferred to focus his attention on his family. While he enjoyed trips to a baseball game or the mountains, Wood was pleased that he managed never to stay away from his home overnight. He simply "couldn't stand it. My family is too sweet to lose (sic) sight of," he once wrote. Keenly attuned to his feelings, Wood had no difficulty expressing them. "Somehow I am lonesome," he told Florence, "and feel as if I just wanted to hug you up and show you how I will let my little darling rest in my arms." After his death, the family nurse reminisced to the young widow that Wood "loved the whole world just because you and the children were in it. It was a little bit of Heaven to us... Everyone was so happy and full of the joys of living." Florence summarized her short married life as "one long honey-
moon" and wistfully remarked: "I think we were always lovers and always will be." Years later, in loving memory of the architect, Florence gave her diamond engagement ring to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem --- a dramatic gesture Wood surely would have admired.

Wood had been practicing on his own for eight years before the Cathedral invitation came along, and his absorption in the new project was immediate and total. With a thoroughness Pugin and Ruskin would have been proud of, Wood studied not only the environment but also the Cathedral's natural foundation in planning his "Jerusalem the Golden." He respected the curved summit of rockledge and sought to anchor his structure firmly on the rock as though it were an "outgrowth of its granite foundation." In contour and outline, Wood wanted his Cathedral to embody the idea of "pyramidal solidity and permanency." His design should compare favorably with other historic structures that crown dramatic sites, such as the Acropolis, Mont St. Michel, Salamanca Cathedral and St. Peter's (Fig. 13). Yet, Wood was acutely aware he was designing a cathedral for a city, one which, he astutely predicted, would soon surpass the other great cities of the world in population, resources, social and political consequences.

While Wood drew attention to the urban environment and physical site, he also considered the practical requirements of the religious edifice. Wood recognized that the Episcopal church had "outgrown merely spectacular worship and that a "prime necessity" was to "sacrifice perspectives in the larger
and dominant interests of the greater congregation." The modern church, Wood affirmed, is "both a worshipping and a preaching Church." It is this attention to function that informs Wood's original plan. Within the exigencies of site and use, Wood let his imagination soar.

When it came to the question of style, Wood believed the building had to have ties with the past just as did the culture and teaching of the church itself. Still, the style of the proposed Cathedral should not be an imitation of past styles; rather, it should "bind past and present in one." The structure should amalgamate the "ethnic types of civilization." Wood advocated a "devout eclecticism" that would include "all of the ancient historic types: the pyramid of Egypt, the circle that girdles the landscape, the square of the ancient Temple, the oblong of the Basilica, and the Cross of Basilica, Church, Cathedral, even the dome." Wood's Cathedral would embrace all denominations and peoples; the church's manifest destiny would be fulfilled in a noble ecumenical structure.

All parts of Wood's eclectic Cathedral were to be brought together in a "Gothic relationship," important because the Gothic suggested the spiritual heritage of the English Church. Wood turned specifically to the early Gothic because he believed it was the most adaptable to his purposes because of its "simplicity, its friendliness to the Roman arch, its inexhaustible capacity for enrichment ... its breadth and largeness of effect, and its special adaptation for granite." Finally, Wood had confidence the early Gothic could be adapted for the "geometric evolution
of a true Gothic dome as the crowning central theme of the pile."

Wood's interest in the dome must have been rooted in his admiration for this feature in Ely Cathedral and St. Paul's. According to Gothic authority James Fergusson, whom Wood cites in the text accompanying his "Jerusalem the Golden" and whose History of Architecture in All Countries was voted the one book an architect could least afford to be without, the Norman tower of Ely fell in about 1322. Of the octagon which was then constructed with a diameter of about sixty-five feet, Fergusson contended there is

no feature in the whole range of Gothic architecture either here or on the continent more beautiful ... This octagon is in reality the only true Gothic dome in existence, and the wonder is, that being once suggested, any cathedral was ever afterwards erected without it.\

The dimensions, Fergusson reminded, should not have been alarming in light of Byzantine and Italian precedents. Certainly St. Paul's with its dome spanning one hundred feet, was a stunning modern success, and Hagia Sophia still stood, "all-embracing in its beauty of width." Young Halsey Wood, "an American of all people," desired to attempt perhaps "once more the impossible."\

In crowning his Cathedral with a dome Wood was striving to resolve the central problem medieval architects left unanswered: intimating interior function through exterior form. Contemporary critic Montgomery Schuyler contended the earlier architects recognized the problem and tried to find an answer in the cimborio of a Spanish cathedral and the octagon of Ely, but the solution.
was incomplete. Further, the French fleche was inadequate and the English central tower was purely exterior ornament. In his 1881 article on the American cathedral, which must have pleased Wood, Schuyler suggested that to develop true forms for the exterior expression of the interior function was the "one advance upon past ecclesiastical architecture which seems to be possible, and to develop these may be said to be the central problem of design in an American cathedral." Wood eagerly embraced this challenge in his Cathedral design.

Henry Hobson Richardson had made a dramatic attempt to address this problem in Boston's Trinity Church where he in effect lifted the English tower from the side of the nave and placed it at the center of the crossing. The English tall tower, such as Street's St. James the Less in London (Fig. 14), was conceived of as a separate entity. Occasionally, the transept crossing was punctuated with a Puginian lantern or spire (Fig. 15), but neither scheme approached the monumentality of Richardson's tower. Richardson transformed Trinity into a "massive tower, while the spire rests on a lantern which functions as a dome." The shape of the tower was derived from the Cathedral of Salamanca, about which Street, whom Richardson admired, had written: "It seems to solve better than the lantern of any church I have yet seen elsewhere, the question of the introduction of the dome to Gothic churches." Richardson's treatment was nonetheless novel. For Schuyler, however, the solution was incomplete. Even in Richardson's later design for All Saints Cathedral in Albany, the problem was not solved.
There "the tall and narrow dome at the crossing would not be apprehensible as a crowning feature, except from a point of view almost directly beneath it, while its external form does not intimate its interior function." While Schuyler greatly admired Richardson's work and especially applauded his imaginative blending of past architectural motifs, he faulted Richardson for constructive dishonesty. Disastrous at All Saints (Fig. 16) was the interior wooden roof. Suspended from the gable, the roof concealed its support. While Richardson had brilliantly solved some problems at All Saints and at Trinity, the dome was not one of them.

Wood, whose own works reflect the strong influence of Richardson, must have relished the thought of carrying on where the master left off. Further, the dome was symbolically appealing to the young architect. It represented the "enthroned sovereignty of God 'over all,' sitting upon the circle of heavens." The dome marks the ground it covers as hallowed as in the mausoleums of the early martyrs, such as Hagia Sophia, and in contemporary monuments such as Sacre Coeur in Paris and the Cathedral of Marseilles. In addition, popular sentiment may have favored the dome as it had previously in the debate over the design for the Connecticut State Capitol in 1872.

Comments in the Hartford Courant suggested the public favored the dome as the noblest conception in architecture as opposed to the tower, which symbolized weakness. Public preference, then, coupled with the symbolic power of the dome,
must have compelled Wood toward a domical solution. As the accepted symbol of spiritual aspiration the world over, the spire too attracted Wood as well as many of the Trustees, but alone it was "too feeble and too easily merged, among challenging and competing masses of upraised structures that menace." Clearly, an alternative had to be found and it was in the "central tower-dome-spire, about which Wood remarked:

there is majesty in this dominant, central expression of the divine providence, the herald of coming and departing day for the vast metropolis as the first rays of sunrise and the last lustre of sunset light up its glowing dome, and from the apex of that finial the great tower-spires of the dome catch their keynote of significance, and fall into the pyramidal ensemble.

The key words here are "pyramidal" and "ensemble." Wood assembled his building from the ground plan up through the manipulation of mass. He did not begin with a specific detail or feature in mind but rather with a sketch of the ground plan (Fig. 17). From plan Wood moved to outline, here dominated by pyramidal lines from the apex of the dome to each descending angle incident of the structure (Fig. 18). As Wood himself described his pile,

the central mass is raised to a great height, is monumental in suggestion, and with such asymmetrical lines and well-defined stages that, under no conjunction of conceivable conditions can it be ignored, or its distinction jeopardized. Its solid stateliness culminates in a distinctly Gothic dome which harmonizes with the lines and motives of the general plan, while securing the dignity and importance of the general mass. It will be seen that the two spires assimilate with the dominant central spire; which, as will appear, is in and of itself the embodiment of the central idea of the edifice.
What Wood was attempting would have received the hearty endorsement of Schuyler who believed the architecture is artistic in that it "pyramidizes, and this implies a single culminating feature to which the parts converge and rise." Richardson succeeded remarkably well in Trinity, Schuyler believed, but All Saints was even better as the subordination was carried through with more gradation (Fig. 19): "It was more subtle and more successful." 71

In Wood's complex pyramidal scheme, his "tower-dome-spire" rises from a one hundred and fifty foot square base to a vast lantern immediately above the roof. From its high broad windows light floods the nave. The next belfry stage houses chimes and carillons. Square becomes an octagon and octagon becomes the circle of the dome by almost imperceptible refinements in outline and decoration including supporting pinnacles and chiselled gables. In designing "Jerusalem the Golden, Wood may have been thinking of John Loughborough Pearson's London church, St. John, Red Lion Square (Fig. 20), a church he greatly admired. 72 Pearson, who excelled in the design of spires, was strongly influenced by English and French precedents. He traveled widely in France from 1849 to 1855, and the multitude of spires and pinnacles at Bourges, for example, must have impressed him (Fig. 21). Wood absorbed Pearson's lesson and free-handling of the Gothic and took pride in his own accomplishment:

the square and cylindrical ideas, together with spire and dome, realize an artistic unification strictly within canons of sound architectural development. The consummation of this confessedly
daring project lies easily within the range of structural achievements and is become under the rapid march of scientific development, a far simpler matter than the dome of St. Paul's or the spires of Salisbury or Lichfield.\(^\text{73}\)

Ironically, the question of structural viability was to plague the Cathedral builders from the very inception of the project. To his credit, Wood was one of the few architects who submitted plans that exploited the use of modern materials.

The ground plan of Halsey Wood's design (Fig. 22), Greek cross in form with transsepts and nave of equal length, was dictated by practical use but inspired by the Revelation of St. John the Divine, the Psalter, and St. Bernard of Cluny's poem, "De Contemptu Mundi."\(^{74}\) Especially in the Book of Revelation, Wood found the symbolism that would "convert the mass of quarried stone into a living teacher." Every foot and inch of the structure, Wood claimed, was "interpenetrated with this Apocalyptic symbolism." The symbolism of numbers prevades. The symbolism of "tens" dictated a decimal analysis to every "inch of lateral and upright space and interrelating columns, windows, aisles and exit." The symbolism of "sevens" is repeated and multiplied indefinitely as, for example, in the seven chapels of the sanctuary. In addition, the Ten Tribes, the Twelve Apostles, the Seven Churches, the Sevenfold Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Four Evangelists, the Twofold Nature of the Blessed Lord, Lawgiving and the Beatitudes were "among the tremendous analogies" that shaped the architect's purpose (Fig. 23).\(^{75}\) Further, the human body furnished the proportional
scheme. The sanctuary, or the head, was one eighth the length of the body, or fifty feet to four hundred feet. However infused, and perhaps confused with symbolism, Wood's Cathedral plan was notably different from those schemes offered by the other competitors.


3 Letter from Henry Codman Potter, March 6, 1888, Cathedral of St. John the Divine Archives. Cited hereafter as CA.

4 Letter from John Sword, November 10, 1887, CA.

5 The Churchman, August 8, 1891, p. 172.

6 Letter from Telfair Hodgson, November 15, 1887, CA.

7 Letter from R. J. Auchmuty, April 11, 1888, CA.

8 Letter from George M. Miller, May 25, 1888, CA.

9 Letter from Henry Codman Potter, June 1, 1888, CA.

10 Letter from Robert W. Gibson, June 29, 1888, CA.


12 Letter from Henry Van Brunt, June 22, 1888, CA.

13 Letter from Henry Codman Potter, February 1, 1888, CA.

14 Letters from the competitors, various dates, 1888-89, CA.

15 Legal contract, CA.

17 Ibid., p. 315.
18 Ibid., p. 317.
19 Ibid., p. 320.
20 George Wilfred Pearce, Letter to the editor of the *Sunday Call*, June 25, 1911, NYHS, MS. Coll., W HW file.
22 Ibid.
23 Neither the church nor the area was secure. The neighborhood degenerated and the style of the church was changed from Romanesque into Gothic under the direction of Ralph Adams Cram. Ironically, William S. Rainsford, rector of St. George's, had his wish that the Cathedral "should stand among the poor" fulfilled. Rainsford was distressed with the upper West Side location of the Cathedral and was "convinced that the way to reach the non-church-going un-Americanized masses" was "to place the great churches where they are face to face with the great social need of men;" W. S. Rainsford, *The Story of a Varied Life* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), p. 248.
25 Ibid.
29 Bodley quoted in Verey, p. 94.
30 Letter, unsigned and undated, CA.
Bodley quoted in Verey, p. 95.

Ibid.

Letter from William Morgan, Louisville, Kentucky, October 25, 1982 to the author. No hard evidence exists of Wood's association with Bodley, but an autograph book Wood received for Christmas of 1874 contains a London address and references to the steamer "Egypt." Another sketchbook of Wood's 1881 European travels contains a drawing of a man sitting on a hilltop apparently describing the vista below to a young protege. The blurred caption reads, "Baldy & pupil." In his The Almighty Wall: The Architecture of Henry Vaughan, which is slated for publication in 1983, Morgan mentions in a footnote that Wood was working for Bodley & Garner around 1879, but he got this information from R. Craig Miller.

Miller, p. 4. Broad Street in 1876 was described as "one of the widest and finest thoroughfares on this continent. It is not only the great business, but the social centre of a city which spreads over an area of eighteen or more square miles... Its banks, insurance and mercantile blocks are substantial and in many instances elegant... Its churches illustrate the ornate architecture of the period... Here, in dignified mansions, reside the families enriched by industries of the busy town." A History of the City of Newark (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), p. 673.

Florence Wood, p. 20.

Miller, p. 4.


The Church Porch, April 1897. Loose clipping in NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.

Ibid.

Florence Wood, p. 25.


Florence Wood, p. 43.


Florence Wood, p. 45.


Ibid.


Mollie Cullen quoted in Florence Wood, p. 52.


William Halsey Wood, p. 4.

Ibid. Wood presented his wife with a hard-bound copy of his "Jerusalem the Golden" plan, which includes illustrations not in the soft-cover version he submitted to the Trustees.

Ibid., p. 10.

Ibid., p. 6.

Ibid., p. 7.

Ibid.


James Fergusson quoted in The Churchman, April 4, 1891, p. 545.

Florence Wood, p. 27.


64 G. B. Street quoted in Ibid., p. 428.

65 Schuyler, "An American Cathedral," p. 244.


67 Adams, p. 425.

68 William Halsey Wood, Jerusalem, p. 5.


70 Ibid., p. 538.

71 Schuyler, p. 243.


76 Morton asserts Wood's "exposition of symbolism is as vague as his perspectives. Indeed, Wood's symbolism got him into real trouble." Morton, n.p.
Predictably, the Gothic style predominates in the competition drawings. The favored style for Christian architecture for centuries, it was respected and safe; and, New York already had two superb examples. Upjohn, familiar with Pugin's principles, produced one of the purest Gothic edifices in America when Trinity Church was completed in 1846. Upjohn's Perpendicular style church, however, was not much imitated because of its size and expense. With the influence of the Cambridge Camden Society, the Early English and Decorated became the preferred styles for church architecture. Upjohn's St. Mary's Church in Burlington, New Jersey (Fig. 24) illustrates the Early English style the Society promoted. St. Mary's was commissioned by George Washington Doane, Bishop of New Jersey and a patron member of the Society. He strove to make American church architecture conform to English Ecclesiological standards and was aided by the New York Ecclesiological Society. Founded in 1848, this American counterpart of the Cambridge Camden Society had the express purpose of educating the clergy in church architecture, history, and liturgical tradition. Frank Wills, who had a reputation for designing ecclesiologically correct churches, was the Society's first official architect. As such, he was besieged with requests for church designs and in 1851 he produced the simple but elegant House of Prayer in Newark where, incidentally, Halsey Wood worshipped his whole lifetime.

The second notable New York Gothic edifice was James Renwick's very proper Grace Church of 1843-46, which would have been
admired by Pugin himself. It landed Renwick the St. Patrick's commission that climaxed his career. That the Catholics chose a Protestant architect for this enormous project attests to Renwick's skill, and St. Patrick's represents the first American edifice comparable to anything being done in Europe. America emerged from its provincial status in the Gothic Revival and demonstrated she was capable of high quality work on a large scale. The way for such awesome projects as the Cathedral of St. John the Divine was opened.¹

Considering the Anglican church's longstanding preference for the Gothic style and the success of Trinity and Grace, it was predictable that the Trustees would select a Gothic design for the Cathedral. Advocates of the style stressed the associational values of Gothic architecture and the inappropriateness of the Richardsonian Romanesque, for it had no indigenous relationship to Christianity in the United States.² Opponents of the Gothic, however, argued on similar grounds. Gothic, for them, was considered a foreign style unrelated to American tradition and therefore inappropriate. According to this line of reasoning, the native American style was that of the conventicle, which the Puritans erected for the purpose of hearing the preacher. The Gothic style had never taken root in America; Trinity Church was never an inspiration.³ Boston's Trinity Church, in contrast, was a success and, significantly, it had little in common with churches in any country where the Gothic flourished. Bishop Potter was warned against the "solecism of erecting a Gothic structure" and advised that Gothic cathedrals
"like the Roman on Fifth Avenue ... have a second-hand look and a want of vitality." Still, the Gothic had the force of tradition on its side. It would be a safe choice for an Episcopal, if not American, cathedral.

What the Gothic advocates had to muster was a two-pronged defense of the style. On the one hand, they had to demonstrate the style's adaptability to the needs of American churchmen. On the other hand, they had to defend the practice of archaeological borrowing. The task was formidable given late nineteenth century America's strong belief in utility and in originality. The Gothic proponents had to face the dilemma of having to harmonize seemingly mutually exclusive values, for how could a cathedral be both archaeological and innovative?

The fundamental question in connection with the Gothic style was how adaptable it was to the requirements of the American church. One's answer, of course, depended on what precisely one meant by the Gothic. The term was a slippery one. John Ruskin had celebrated the Gothic and become identified with the Italian species, but he had ignored the structural principles the Puginists drew attention to. For the Ecclesiologists the Gothic was equated with English church architecture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Gothic for some meant a kind of organic architecture where the structural elements and materials were evident and honest. For others Gothic meant the Anglican church and not the intrinsic nature of the stone pile. In this respect Gothic suggested a return to a medieval, or-
dered society with the clergy in control, an appealing prospect for some. Henry Adams, for one, preferred his Virgin at Chartres to the dynamo of Boston. In late nineteenth century American, then, Gothic had many connotations.

If the notion of Gothic is equated with a particular period or structure, the question still remains: how archaeological or innovative can the architect be in his adaptation? Slavish imitations, of course, were uniformly condemned, but borrowing was permissible. Ironically, the genial acceptance of archaeological borrowing was first articulated in a major architectural publication in connection with Richardson's Trinity Church. When a correspondent wrote to the American Architect and Building News that Trinity was successful because it borrowed from Salamanca, the Architect agreed. This defense of an academic approach to architecture, so foreign to previous ideals of assimilation and experiment, was rooted in a cultural snobbism that took pride in knowing what Salamanca Cathedral looked like, a belief that it was better to be correct than original, and possibly vulgar, and an increasing desire for universally applicable forms. Correctness, in short, was more important than creativity.

The acceptance of Gibson's Gothic design in 1883 for All Saints over Richardson's plan demonstrates how strongly wedded the Episcopal church was to the Gothic style. The program, in fact, specified a Gothic design; Richardson, nevertheless, used transitional forms for windows and other openings. Had he won
the competition, he would have further flattened the arches or made simple round arches. He had no intention of aping the Gothic mode. Although Bishop William Doane claimed Gibson's more conventional plan was selected because of the great expense and the unsatisfactory temporary structure of Richardson's plans, Richardson's loss of the commission must have been in part attributable to his use of Romanesque forms. After all, Doane's adviser on architectural matters was Charles Babcock, an Episcopal minister and architect trained by Richard Upjohn. Presumably he favored Gibson's Anglophile design.

While the Gothic is the predominant style of the entries in the Cathedral competition (Fig. 25), Richardson's popularity is apparent in many of the designs (Fig. 26). As the Trustees moved toward a final decision on a Cathedral architect, Richardson's All Saints drawings were, in fact, requested for review along with those of L. S. Buffington (Fig. 27). Further, an American Architect and Building News poll in 1886 revealed that Richardson's Trinity was the most admired building in America. The appeal of the Richardsonian Romanesque was clearly not over, but the classical revival that was to sweep the country was forecast in Carrère and Hastings ornate scheme (Fig. 28). Interest in the Byzantine style was evident in interior ornamentation, especially wall mosaics and floors, and nine plans had domes (Figs. 29, 30). Generally, the Cathedral schemes are eclectic composites.

Interest in the designs submitted in the Cathedral competition was intense, and the public longed to have a look at
various schemes. The Trustees, however, were prohibited from exhibiting any plans without the consent of the architects. When they tried to obtain permission from the competitors in the first competition, many architects flatly refused. For example, McKim, Mead & White, who were putting up the Boston Public Library and about to launch what contemporaries deemed a Renaissance Revival, claimed that their drawings were of a technical order and would not appeal to the public taste. Richard Morris Hunt, who was building a late Gothic palace for Ogden Goelet in Newport, agreed to the exhibition but only if he be allowed to make a shaded perspective as the other architects had done. No architect wanted to be at a disadvantage or have his work compared unfavorably with that of other competitors.9

Genuine confusion, however, existed over the Cathedral programme. Unlike the precise programme of the All Saints competition, the programme for St. John the Divine was vague. It specified, for example, architectural rendering had to be done "without shading other than black lining," but many different interpretations of the phrase arose as R. W. Gibson tried to explain in the American Architect and Building News.10 R. J. Upjohn resented the implication that the architects did not follow the directions; eventually he added shading to his own scheme before exhibition.11 On January 2, 1889, one of the fourteen architects originally invited to compete, C. C. Haight, wrote asking the Trustees for an absolute rule.12 Six weeks later ten architects signed a petition to discard colored
perspectives and other drawings not in conformity with the instructions. The Trustees hired a team of consultants to help sort out the confusion. William R. Ware, Professor of Architecture at the Columbia School of Mines, James Bogart, State Engineer, and Babcock, who had helped Doane in the All Saints competition, acknowledged the ambiguity in the Cathedral programme but concluded there could be no grounds for rejection on this basis: it was impossible to demarcate "between those which departed too far from the committee's programme and those which did not." The diversity of interpretations of the committee's programme was demonstrated in the architectural drawings displayed in the ante-room of the League Exhibition of 1890. About three dozen plans with elevations and perspectives were exhibited, more than enough for the American Architect and Building News to conclude that the competitors seem to have been "at sea as to the kind of drawings required of them." Quality was noticeably absent because "a large part of the competitors did not half try." Further study was needed, "not sleepy brooding over drawings" but "active, wide awake comparison ... the patient labor with tracing-paper and India rubber." The critics found drawings of every size, various scales, plans in brown ink instead of the required black and white, and even watercolors. It was "unfair and improper," they contended, "to admit any shaded or colored drawings whatever to the competition." Basic ground rules had simply not been followed.

All but thirteen of the designs submitted were eliminated.
The Trustees divided these thirteen designs into two groups: seven plans had a crossing square space of about forty feet while six had an open area of from fifty to ninety feet. The Trustees preferred the latter arrangement because of the better accommodation for an exceptionally large audience; it was "vastly more impressive and imposing." Furthermore, the great area at the crossing would be a novel feature and so "distinguish the building from most European cathedrals" and "secure for it an individuality and character of its own." The Trustees sent the thirteen plans on for comment to Ware, Bogart, and Babcock. These technical experts reduced the number to seven and especially recommended four designs. Halsey Wood's was not included.

In their May 9, 1889 meeting the Trustees accepted three of the four experts' recommendations and moved Wood, whose design had been commended for its interior space, back into the competition. The New York Sun of May 16 correctly guessed Wood and the team of William A. Potter and R. H. Robertson were finalists. But speculated the other two successful architects were C. C. Haight and Richard Morris Hunt. However, the young teams of Huss & Buck and Heins & LaFarge were chosen and announced along with the other two finalists on May 19, 1889. Nine days later Auchmuty wrote to Dix with the suggestion that the architects be told what criticisms were made of their plans by the three experts. In Halsey Wood's design, for example, the "ground plan alone made a favorable impression and, as the experts do not criticize it, some information in regard to
the estimation in which this plan is held would be fair to
the architect." Subsequently, Bogart was asked to give a
fuller criticism of the constructive features of the designs,
a second set of instructions was prepared, and the architects
were invited to meet with the committee in September to dis­
cuss their plans.

Following Auchmuty's advice, the Trustees wrote to the
four architects with specific criticisms intended to aid them
in the revision of their designs. Heins & LaFarge's Romanesque
scheme boasts a one hundred foot crossing, long nave, apsidal
chapels, and rounded transepts with memorial monuments (Figs.
31, 32). The Byzantine interior features a well-lit dome topped
by an impressive lantern tower (Fig. 33). The plan, designated
by an arabesque, was deemed the "most elegant in distribution
and arrangement," but the Trustees thought the "heavy weights
at the corners would require larger supports." Huss & Buck's
design is traditional English Gothic with double transepts, a
flat east end, and a massive central tower (Figs. 34, 35). It
was selected for the second competition "on account of the ex­
cellence of the plan and the vigorous and effective architectural
treatment both without and within." The height of the central
tower, however, was considered a defect and care was urged in
distributing pressure and thrust.

Potter & Robertson's "Gerona" also received structural
criticism. Their plan was based on the Spanish Cathedral at
Gerona and features four square towers at the corners of an
eighty-six foot crossing (Figs. 36, 37). The great thrust
of the central vault and the angles were such that both vault and towers might have to be arranged differently. Further, "whether the gabled wall over each main arch will suffice to furnish the loading necessary upon its crown and haunches must also be a matter of considerable study." Hal­sey Wood's design (Figs. 38, 39) was similarly scrutinized for structural faults, and the great height of the central tower was found suspect. In addition, in the opinion of Ware, Bogart, and Babcock, it was

impossible to say without careful com­putation whether the exceptionally large piers shown in the plan would or would not suffice for the still more exceptional weight of the mass shown in the elevations.²²

The architect was further cautioned to follow the programme's specifications for scale and rendering. With these suggestions for revision, the four architects were to go back to their drawing boards and prepare new plans due March 2, 1891.

On July 2, 1889, Auchmuty again wrote to Dix, this time to correct an error he believed made in the assessment of Wood's design and to offer specific criticisms of his own. Referring to the experts' suggestion that "Jerusalem the Golden," like "Gerona," had been selected for its "vigrous and effective architectural treatment," Auchmuty claimed he did not remember it so. Rather, "Jerusalem the Golden" was selected

because the ground plan was attractive and for no other architectural reason. It was liked by Dr. Huntington and we all like him.²³

Auchmuty, quite clearly, was opposed to Wood's design although he voiced appreciation for the "poetic influence" under which
Wood labored and the "real beauty of the ground plan." Nevertheless, to Auchmuty the design was a temple, not a church. Babcock pronounced the exterior "monstrous," Auchmuty relates, "and I think he was not altogether unjust." Auchmuty's candid aversion for Wood's plan was not matched by his tame criticism of Heins & LaFarge's front elevation, which lacked "grandeur," and Potter & Robertson's stone vault, deemed useless when "we have iron, concrete and various materials even more durable than stone." How influential Auchmuty's remarks were is inestimable, but the fire of controversy was ignited.


4. Letter from Thomas Chase, January 14, 1888, CA.


6. James F. O'Gorman, "H. H. Richardson" (exhibition organized by the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Harvard College Library, 1974), p. 53; O'Gorman refers to a letter to the editor Richardson wrote that was published in The Century Magazine, April 23, 1884.


9. Letters to the Cathedral Trustees, 1888-89, CA.


11. Ibid., p. 62.

12. Letter from C. C. Haight, January 2, 1889, CA.

13. Petition, February 15, 1889, CA.

14. Supplementary Report of Ware, Bogart, and Babcock, May, 1889, CA.


Letter from R. J. Auchmuty, May 28, 1889, CA. In this same letter Auchmuty hints Wood's plans might be excluded from competition because he failed to follow the proscribed scale. Somewhat piqued by the Newark architect, Auchmuty further suggested Wood might "with propriety be asked to remove the oak barn doors in which his plans were sent. It is as much as a man's backbone is born to handle them"

Report of Trustees' meeting, May 9, 1889, CA.

Typewritten inserts into form letter sent to the four competitors, CA.

Ibid.

Letter from R. J. Auchmuty, July 2, 1889, CA.

Ibid.

Ibid.
Curiously, the notion of building an Episcopal Cathedral in New York was never seriously questioned. The Catholic, or "foreign church," had already erected its "magnificent cathedral at the highest point in the most beautiful avenue of the city," and it was imperative, especially in a time of rapidly rising real estate values, for the Protestants to follow suit. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine was meant implicitly to outclass St. Patrick's and to compare to the cathedrals of Europe. The Cathedral enterprise coincided nicely too with a sense of manifest destiny already evident in the Protestant church. In 1885, for example, Congregationalist minister Josiah Strong sold well over one hundred thousand copies of his Our Country, a racist treatise that championed the Anglo-Saxons and their mission in the world as proponents of a pure, spiritual Christianity. In 1889, the same year that the Trustees selected the four finalists in the Cathedral competition, the Commercial and Financial Chronicle declared that the American economy could avoid collapse only by the conquest of foreign markets, and Richard T. Ely, an American economist, published his Social Aspects of Christianity. Capitalism and Christianity might seem strange bedfellows, but at one time over sixty clergymen were listed as members of the American Economic Association. A sense of urgency grew as Frederick Jackson Turner declared in 1893 that the American frontier was officially closed. As American foreign policy moved toward imperialism, so did
American clergymen exhibit a "growing conviction that their church had a special mission and destiny in the world" as it moved from narrow liturgical issues into the social and political arenas.

Surprisingly, it was the Episcopal church, despite its association with wealth, culture, and aristocracy, that led other denominations in establishing Social Gospel organizations. English Christian Socialism provided a precedent, but this alone does not explain why the Episcopal church supplied so many of the leaders in the Social Gospel movement. One important factor might have been the high opinion Episcopal priests had of themselves. The most outspoken were High Churchmen with a "lofty conception of their own status as priests." These men functioned from a relatively secure base reinforced by the authority and discipline characteristic of the Episcopal tradition. Episcopalism, in short, had never completely lost touch with the "medieval dream of a society guided and led by the church," an outmoded vision that nonetheless strengthened the clergy as they tackled the problems created by urban growth, industrialization, and immigration.

How persuasive priestly authority could be was demonstrated in the dispute between William S. Rainsford, rector of St. George's in New York City and a moderate exponent of the Social Gospel, and J. Pierpont Morgan, his senior warden. Through his social preaching and welfare work Rainsford had attracted a large number of wage earners into the parish and
wanted to provide for their representation by increasing the size of the vestry. Morgan, who supported Rainsford's desire to democratize the church, bitterly fought his vestry proposal and declared he wanted the vestry "to remain a body of gentlemen who I can ask to meet me in my study." In the end, however, the rector prevailed.

Priestly authority, then, perhaps best explains how Episcopal church leaders could heartily embrace the Social Gospel without fear of censure. Bishop Potter personally demonstrated the church's increasing concern with social issues as he moved into the slums of the East Side of New York to experience labor and living conditions firsthand. When a group of Episcopal clergymen founded the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor in 1887, Potter served as the organization's first president. Potter had already changed the life of Grace Church when as rector there he moved into the community at large, instead of focusing solely on the needs of his own parish. The Bishop's desire for a Cathedral was the logical outgrowth of ideas he had begun to explore at Grace.

The Cathedral, to begin with, should be a "working center" for the life and worship of the church. It was to be a people's church with no reserved rights for any constituency. Potter never wanted an imitation, in architecture or in ritual, of the Anglican church with its sometimes little exclusive congregations of retired army and navy or government officers, its devout widows, its single ladies of means, and
its pious old couples of small incomes or pensions. In Bishop Potter's cathedral ideals there was always an American element. The greater multitude was not be scorned. Potter sought widespread support for the cathedral ideas. To those who feared an increase and centralization of Episcopal power, Potter pointed to English cathedrals as examples of how little power a bishop actually has. It was not the aggrandizement of the church that Potter sought; rather, he stressed the practical needs which the Cathedral could fulfill. To those few who might protest the money spent for a noble edifice might be better employed for direct amelioration of social problems the church had a ready answer; it was not a question of either/or, for "it is just the people who worship in our noblest churches that are today building & sustaining hospitals, asylums, etc." Specifically, the Cathedral would be a center for philanthropy with foundations and endowments for mission work, a shrine of memorials to the honored dead, and a forum for the best preachers. Revivalism and evangelism held little interest for Potter, but improving Sunday schools or social conditions or rationalizing the relationship between the church and the theatre engaged him. It was the utility of the church that Potter underscored.

Just as Potter abhorred controversy and tried to reconcile the interests of the Broad Churchmen with the Anglo-Catholics within his own church, so did he endeavor to present the Cathedral as a meeting place for all Protestant Christians, not just the Episcopalians. Interchurch cooperation was his ideal, a
liberal attitude that subjected him to frequent criticism. Potter, nevertheless, "always held that the Episcopal Church had a wonderful opportunity in the United States of America if it would only be sane and kindly and helpful cooperating to the fullest extent with Christians of every name." At the General Convention in Chicago in 1886 over one thousand clergymen signed a memorial urging action favorable to Christian unity. By 1887, the press reported:

there is to be observed at present among the Protestant sects the beginning of a common sympathy which will naturally seek occasional opportunities of expressing itself. Under wise management, a great church building, open at least to all Protestants ... might become, we fancy, the object of an almost passionate enthusiasm among a people so sympathetic, we almost say romantic, as Americans are at heart.17

Five years later art enthusiast George Shinn echoed these sentiments in his definition of the American cathedral as the "people's church with dignified and impressive services, with a pulpit from which the best speakers shall speak, with multiplied agencies for benevolence, and with open doors for all who will enjoy its benefits."18 As the Cathedral competition progressed, however, the Cathedral became more and more identified with narrow Episcopal interests despite Potter's broad and universal defense.

Besides promoting a Cathedral for its missionary function and ecumenical role, Potter advocated a Cathedral for its symbolic importance. In an age of rapid industrial expansion and spectacular business growth, the Cathedral would embody great
"moral and spiritual growth." Montgomery Schuyler endorsed Potter's defense of the Cathedral on symbolic grounds and claimed a monumental and impressive church would "counteract utilitarian spirit and remind one of something other than commercial interests and physical needs." Schuyler articulated America's secret longing for the monumental, grand, and opulent, but Potter went even further and linked the Cathedral to republican ideals. "That trust in God which kept alive our fathers courage, heroism and rectitude," Potter declared,

needs today some nobler visible expression -- commensurate, in one word, with that material prosperity which we have reached as a people owning its dependence upon God and upon His blessing on our undertaking."

There are subtle links here between morality, democracy and capitalism, which suggest the Episcopal church as an influential ally of a burgeoning business community.

Without a doubt it was within the best interests of the business community to support the church as it tackled problems of labor unrest, social welfare, and the conditions of the poor. Cornelius Vanderbilt II and his mother, for example, generously footed most of the four hundred thousand dollar bill for St. Bartholomew's parish house. Completed in 1891, the East Forty-second Street facility expended nearly eleven million dollars within ten years for a vast array of programs including a medical clinic, employment bureau, children's home, and a working girls' boarding house. Correspondingly, it was within the best interests of the church to support the business community, which,
after all, controlled the money and had the power to build a Cathedral. "Great wealth is a great power," Bishop Potter succinctly put it. With the increased secularization of society and the subsequent loss of status and prestige the clergy were to suffer, it was clear a major effort had to be made to restore the influence of the church. The Cathedral can perhaps best be seen in this context: it was a last ditch effort to celebrate Protestantism, democracy, and capitalism before the hungry hoards of immigrants, socialists, and revolutionaries subverted American society.

If the clergy demonstrated an enlightened self-interest, the businessmen had a less clear notion of how to stem the tide of discontent. The Progressive movement and the Social Gospel offered some answers. Individual entrepreneurs, however, frequently proposed their own solutions. Andrew Carnegie, for example, in the very year the Cathedral competition opened, proclaimed his Gospel of Wealth, which balked at monetary gifts to churches and suggested a private benevolence in the lifetime of the donor. Carnegie's stance was certainly not popular among the clergy; indeed, he was characterized as an "anti-Christian phenomenon." Potter himself responded to Carnegie's strategy with his own Gospel for Wealth. What the Bishop proposed was personal, not vicarious involvement. Potter rued the way in which social problems were typically handled through eloquent speeches, public meetings, the appointment of committees, and the raising of funds.
Instead, the Bishop suggested individual action which would make the businessman feel good about himself.

It is questionable whether Potter was interested so much in the well-being of the entrepreneur or determined to squelch Carnegie's anti-church posture. Significantly, Carnegie's brand of philanthropy was not very far removed from Potter's, for the Bishop himself claimed

music, painting, sculpture, the multiplication of means for placing the advantages of artistic culture and recreation within the reach of those whose lives are hard --- surely these are avenues for the employment of wealth that stain no innocent soul, and leave no heartbreak behind them.28

Carnegie's funding of community cultural centers, then, was the very kind of benevolence the Bishop heartily endorsed.

In the end, perhaps Potter hoped to persuade the steel king to make a sizable donation to the Cathedral building fund, for Carnegie would countenance contributions to churches on one basis only: to improve ecclesiastical architecture.29 Ironically, it was to one of the four finalists in the Cathedral competition that Carnegie gave his first library commission. The Carnegie Library in Braddock, Pennsylvania was designed by none other than William Halsey Wood.
The Architectural Record voiced a minority opinion when it pleaded: "Why not admit at once and frankly that the Cathedral is a medieval monument, as the castle was, or the monastery; and that to go to work in cold blood at the close of the nineteenth century to build such a monument in New York is as ridiculous as it would be to surround the city with a wall and moat." "American Architecture," The Architectural Record, July-September, 1892, p. 107.


Landau, p. 211.


Ibid., p. 185.


Clyde Griffen, An Urban Church in Ferment: The Episcopal Church in New York City, 1880-1900 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1960), p. ix. As the 1880's drew to a close, the New York churches became increasingly anxious that they were not attracting a higher percentage of the city's population. James M. King, a Methodist minister famous for his attacks on rum, Romanism, and Tammany Hall, drew attention to the city's Protestant population of 500,000, its church seating capacity of 300,000 but its average attendance of 150,000. In a 1889 speech, King lamented that there was one saloon for every 150 inhabitants and but one Protestant church for every 4,464 residents. Robert D. Cross (ed.), The Church and the City, 1865-1910 (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), p. xi. William Reed Huntington, rector of Grace Church, articulated the "painful" suggestion "that America may not continue permanently Christian" and stressed the need for Christian unity in the most forceful terms: "The task set before the Christian Church in America is her familiar one of conquest; but open-eyed observers have to acknowledge that the conditions of the warfare are, in many respects, unparalleled," W. R. Huntington, The Peace of the Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), p. xi.


Ibid., p. 186.


13 Sheerin, p. 73.

14 The Churchman, April 21, 1888, p. 469.

15 Potter, like William Reed Huntington who succeeded him at Grace, was a liberal but in the conservative mold. Huntington provided a four-fold platform, or quadrilateral, as a basis for popular discussion of Christian unity and led the way for the Prayer Book revision in the 1880's; Potter refused to condemn criticism of the Bible. The orthodoxy of both men, however, was never questioned. In contrast, Phillips Brooks, rector of Trinity Church in Boston, had to contend with the rancor of Bishop Seymour of Illinois, who objected to Brooks' consecration as Bishop of Massachusetts in 1892 because the rector had invited two prominent Unitarians to receive Communion at the consecration of Trinity Church. William Wilson Manross, A History of the American Episcopal Church (New York: Morehouse-Gorham Company, 1959), pp. 310-314.

16 Sheerin, p. 146.


19 Schuyler quoted in Jordy, p. 230.

20 Vincent Scully draws attention to the "real craving for grandeur, opulence, and architectural display" that de-
veloped from a "weak and partly secret longing in America for the vaguely monumental and the 'non-utilitarian,' sanctified by Beaux-Arts example, that already was in evidence in 1877." Scully, p. 53.

21 Hodges, p. 201.


24 Richard Hofstadter suggests the clergy were "probably the most conspicuous losers from the status revolution... Everywhere their judgments seemed to carry less weight. Religion itself seemed less important year by year..." He suggests the clergy's turn to reform might be attributed "not solely to their disinterested perception of social problems and their earnest desire to improve the world but also to the fact that as men who were in their own way suffering from the incidence of the status revolution they were able to understand and sympathize with the problems of other disinherited groups." Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 152.

25 The Protestant search for social justice was stimulated greatly by the threat of socialism, which in the 1880's signified "Marxism and anarchism, evoking horrible images of violence, atheism, the Commune, the Haymarket Affair, and the despoiling of the Protestant business community." Arthur Mann, Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), p. 77.


27 Potter, p. 518.

28 Ibid., p. 516.

29 Kirkland, p. 150. Apparently Bishop Potter and Andrew Carnegie were fond of chiding each other and it is not inconceivable that Potter might have jollied him into a donation for the Cathedral. Rainsford relates one humorous episode when he got the better of the Pittsburgh magnate after Carnegie had chosen Arthur Hamerschlag as director of the Carnegie Institute of Technology at Pittsburgh. Hamer-
schlag, incidentally, was a graduate of Colonel R. J. Auchmuty's trade school, the same Auchmuty who was a Cathedral Trustee. Rainsford thought Carnegie had gone too far in his attack on the clergy and raillery of Bishop Potter, so he stepped in with a few barbs of his own. See Rainsford, pp. 254-255.
Dedicated in 1889, the Braddock facility (Fig. 40) was the first Carnegie library to be opened to the public. It was not merely a collection of books but an auditorium, gymnasium, and social hall as well. The complex was the immediate expression of Carnegie's style of philanthropy and satisfied him immensely.\(^1\) Conveniently, it directly benefitted Carnegie's own employees. Executed in Wood's early Richardsonian Romanesque manner, the Braddock Library was the prototype for Carnegie's Allegheny Library and Pittsburgh Library, dedicated in 1890 and 1895 respectively. Although he did not receive these commissions, Wood submitted designs for both. A comparison of the two designs indicates the direction Wood's style would take in the very years he was involved in the Cathedral competition.

Two years before he submitted his first Cathedral plan, Wood was putting together plans for the Carnegie Library in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. A cultural center designed to serve the needs of the middle and lower classes especially, the Allegheny building houses the library, stacks, reading room and offices on the first floor and a music hall with a capacity of close to two thousand people on the second floor (Figs. 41, 42). The interior space shapes the exterior form, here simplified, bold, and massive. The heavy, rough textured stone edifice is punctuated with deeply recessed windows and doors (Fig. 43). The domed music hall is topped with an awkward, circular cap pierced by round windows and
circled by a horizontal band of frieze work. The circular
motifs plus the flowing interior make this one of Wood's
most original buildings even if the entire scheme is not
fully integrated (Fig. 44).

In 1890, Pittsburgh accepted Carnegie's offer of a
million dollars to build a cultural palace to house a li-
brary, art galleries, a museum, headquarters for learned
societies, and a music hall. Wood was one of ninety-seven
architects who submitted designs (Fig. 45), and his work: shows
an integration and cohesiveness not found in the Allegheny
plan. Wood has toned down his audacious spirit, effectively
subordinating his massive forms to a tall tower in the Ri-
chardsonian Romanesque style. Wood effectively plays off
verticals and horizontals, round arches with rectangular
windows, solid surfaces with voids (Fig. 46). The rather
horrid fascination one feels looking at the Allegheny scheme
is tempered in the Pittsburgh design, but the conception is
still a grandiose fantasy. Wood's Cathedral design was exe-
cuted between the Allegheny and Pittsburgh competitions and
represents yet another dream palace that even Carnegie, de-
spite his anti-church tendencies, was interested in.²

At the same time that he was discussing libraries with
Carnegie and planning a Cathedral, Wood was involved in build-
ing two other New York churches. The cornerstone for the
Church of the Redeemer on Eighty-fourth Street was laid in
1887, but construction was delayed as John W. Schackelford,
the rector, was sparring with city officials over taxes on
the church property. In 1888, however, Wood made several trips to supervise the construction and found the "work just looked fine --- simple and strong; the interior will be very effective indeed." Wood's other New York church, Zion and St. Timothy on Fifty-seventh Street near Eighth Avenue (Fig. 47) was completed in 1891. It was a Gothic inspired design but simplified, massive, and severe. The symmetrical facade undulated with towers, pinnacles, and deeply recessed doors and windows (Fig. 48). The rectangular chapel, located behind the sanctuary and running perpendicular to the nave (Figs. 49, 50), presented to the street side a quiet, symmetrical composition with three uniform gables. The interior featured red brick walls relieved by wide bands of grey brick and an open timberwork roof (Fig. 51). The sanctuary was raised several feet above the choir floor and housed the bold alabaster reredos (Fig. 52). In addition to work on these two New York churches, Wood was finishing a large project in Anniston, Alabama (Figs. 53, 54, 55, 56) "unequaled by anything south of the Ohio river" and other small commissions in Summit, in Orange, and in Glenridge, New Jersey.

In Newark, however, Wood's most exciting construction was taking place. Here the imagination that conceived of "Jerusalem the Golden" was being shaped into stone. Wood, at the same time that he was planning a Cathedral for the Episcopalians, was constructing a church for the Baptists.
Former Newark mayor, Thomas B. Peddie, who had made a fortune manufacturing trunks and bags, financed the project at the corner of Broad and Fulton Streets, but he never lived to see the construction completed. The cornerstone was laid June 18, 1888; Peddie died in 1890. The structure is unique and reveals Wood's capacity at the height of his creative powers.

That Wood was designing for the Baptists and not the Episcopalians is vividly demonstrated in the plan of First Baptist Peddie Memorial Church (Fig. 57). The exterior form takes its shape from the primary interior function, preaching. The pulpit is at the center of a one hundred foot square plot of ground, and the church seats for over three thousand parishioners are placed in concentric circles around the pulpit (Fig. 58). From the exterior the church is a round, domed mass punctuated with three towers, abstract versions of Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse turrets. The juxtaposition of square and circular motifs creates an exciting vitality and rhythm. The cloisters that surround the church on two sides reinforce the circular flow, while the deeply recessed, arched openings seduce the pedestrian and promise mysteries; only the one hundred and ten foot bell tower and the brass angel Gabriel suggest their religious nature (Fig. 59).

The contrast of horizontals and verticals, voids and solids, and rectangles and circles creates a compelling rhythm similar to that of Wood's design for the Carnegie Library in Allegheny, but with Peddie Wood is more in control of his design. Through the use of roll moldings Wood divides the ex-
terior walls into basement, principal story, and attic. The moldings transverse the towers and not only unify but also add depth to the facade. Wood eliminates the abacus of column capitals and reduces his frieze to boldly sculpted faces (Fig. 60). Although the whole exterior is unified by the monochromatic gray color of the Westerly, Rhode Island granite, Wood strives to animate his facade through three-dimensionality.

While Wood was primarily a church architect, his few domestic designs illustrate this movement away from decorative, two-dimensional schemes to simplified, three-dimensional forms. His sketch for a "Summer Residence" (Fig. 61) of 1875 is an asymmetrical, picturesque pastiche of architectural elements. The Stick style timbering of the gables and towers gives the facade a flat, two-dimensional additive quality. Wood continues in this derivative mode with his 1879 Jacobethan house for William Clark (Fig. 62) and his 1878 house for D. Smith Wood of 1878 (Fig. 63), which opposes the verticality of the Stick style with the horizontality Robert Norman Shaw used in his manorial houses. Within the next ten years, however, Wood comes to grips with the problems of working in three dimensions and succeeds in expressing the interior arrangement of his houses in the exterior massing. In "C. S. French's house (Fig. 64), East Orange, New Jersey, Wood borrows forms from the past but simplifies and utilizes them to express the interior forms. In F. Q. Geiger's East Orange house (Fig. 65); Wood succeeds in eliminating picturesque, decorative details and produces a com-
pact, stark mass in the form of a Greek cross. His goal is the expression of the interior space in the external form, a significant departure from the Shingle Style designs of the 1880's where the roof spread over the entire house in one continuous surface. 6

Wood's church architecture shows a similar, distinct progression toward the simplification of form and massing. His early churches were largely derivative. A 1875 "Design for a City Church" (Fig. 66) is typically Gothic with pointed arches, countless crockets and pinnacles, while his "Design for Mortuary Chapel" (Fig. 67) is standard, polychromatic High Victorian fare. A sketch for "A Small Church" of 1876 (Fig. 68) includes the round-arched windows of the Richardsonian Romanesque and the horizontal banding Wood was to develop so effectively, while the "Design for a Small Country Church" (Fig. 69) boasts a massive crossing tower that dwarfs the nave. None of these designs, however, suggests the imaginative genius that was to produce "Jerusalem the Golden" or to inspire the Peddie design.

The sheer weight and solidity of the Peddie structure is impressive. Even those genteel critics of Wood's "unnecessarily rude" and aberrant structure had to give "high praise to the architect who was evidently building a structure of masonry, and not merely making a drawing to be afterwards translated into masonry." 7 Still, Wood walled up "almost solidly" the openings in his towers and was misunderstood.
His simplification of form, vigor, and massiveness were sus­pect. His harsh and turgid forms were intriguing but had a nightmarish quality similar to that of Antoni Gaudi's Sa­grada Familia, the facade of which was not begun until 1891.

Wood thrived on his many commissions and hectic schedule. Although he was ever cautious about his health, he had a "system fixed" that would allow him "more time and not draw too much" on his reserved strength. Busy days and "one continual push" permitted him to "go home feeling that lots has been done," and to the young architect it was "such a satisfaction." At age thirty-four, Wood had every reason to feel pleased: he had designed over twenty churches, he was about to marry the woman he loved, and he had a good chance of winning the Cathedral competition.

2 Ibid.

3 Letter from William Halsey Wood, October 1, 1889, NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.

4 The Churchman, October 18, 1890. The church complex was the gift of John W. Noble, who was from a family of Christian philanthropists. Noble wanted the church for workmen from the local foundry factory. It was built of limestone, quarried near the place, and situated on a high, four-acre plot surrounded by stone walls, gravel walks and carriage ways. Noble found the church "grand" and was "delighted" with the alabaster reredos. He left Wood "alone with his pocket book" and hoped the church would be a future Cathedral. Letter from William Halsey Wood, October 8, 1889, NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.

5 Letters from William Halsey Wood, October 30, 1889; November 1, 1889; NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.

6 Miller, pp. 9-25.

7 "Architectural Aberrations," The Architectural Record, July-September, 1892, p. 90.

8 Letter from William Halsey Wood, October 1, 1889, NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.


Two days before Wood met with the Cathedral Trustees to discuss the instructions for the second competition he enthusiastically wrote to his fiance: "I only wish you were here to see how we begin a Cathedral." After the September 12, 1889 conference of the four architects, Trustees Dix, Astor, and Auchmuty, and the Bishop, Wood was buoyant:

It was fun to meet the committee and the other architects and I am very happy over the whole affair. Potter was full of spirits and the other men kept fearfully still. I open (sic) the meeting with a speech, and this started them going. In brief, I gained every point I wanted and the entire instructions are to be modified. I think Potter suggested two things, and they left Mr. P. and Myself to fix the matter up. The compensation will be fixed I think at $2,000 and the cost is to be entirely left out and the drawings may now contain chapels, porches, etc. all complete and this gives me just what I want.

Before the end of the month Wood had begun his revisions and reported to Florence that his men "were busy" and the "office looks well filled up." Wood studied the Cathedral drawings extensively and if he was "not satisfied with some of the Cathedral detail," he "pulled it apart considerable." The dome, for example, "was not well connected & the tie lines not well placed;" therefore, the architect personally corrected the mistake and ended his day peaceably.

Wood's plans for the second Cathedral competition reveal a number of important changes (Fig. 70). All auxiliary buildings on the close including the bishop's palace and school buildings have been subordinated to the Cathedral proper. The apsidal chapels have been reduced in size and unified in shape.
Continuous side aisles and an ambulatory allow one to circumnavigate the interior, while a magnificent cloisters circumscribes the exterior. Wood has extended the arms of the cloisters to embrace the whole of the 110th Street frontage and added a carriage drive via a subcloister. Whether one is on foot or in carriage, "Jerusalem the Golden" reaches out to enfold the congregation as it at the same time soars toward the heavens.

The question of what method was most appropriate for presenting Wood's plan and others to the public was raised again in the second competition. As early as 1889, the American Architect and Building News had hoped to give the public a look at the various schemes through the publication of a large folio edition. The idea was abandoned, however, because the architects could not agree about how their plans should be laid before the public. Instead, beginning in October of 1889, the magazine published a portion of the designs in weekly issues. What the competitors had feared was the seductive power of architectural drawings, for the architect's perspective is, almost of necessity, "false and alluring; the shadows are made the most of; the material is idealized; perfect effects of light are at the end of the ready brush or pen." Public taste might be easily swayed by a dazzling design. Halsey Wood was well aware of the problem and wrote to the Trustees with the suggestion that the drawings be professionally photographed and sent to several magazines and "thus be brought before the public in a uniform and perfect
manner." Wood wanted "equal opportunity" for all four architects and hoped to avoid the production of distorted and crude pictures which would "largely prejudice the minds of the people at the start." The Trustees were well aware of the possible problems they might face as a result of exposing the four amended designs to the public eye, but they were being pressured to conduct the competition openly.

In a letter published in the New York Post in February of 1891, Henry Y. Satterlee, rector of Calvary Church, urged the Cathedral Trustees to involve the people of New York in their decision and exhibit the drawings. "Public sentiment," the Reverend Satterlee reminded them, "is not aroused in behalf of any project that is conducted in the spirit of a closed corporation." Evidently, the Trustees concurred and less than two weeks later resolved to exhibit three of the four Cathedral designs at the National Academy of Design. Huss & Buck's design would be represented by seven drawings and two paintings; Heins and LaFarge would submit nine drawings and one painting; William Halsey Wood would present eight drawings and one painting. Potter & Robertson's plans were noticeably absent and finally included for exhibition only over the negative vote of the Bishop.

Potter & Robertson's participation in the Cathedral competition was troublesome from the very beginning, for William Appleton Potter was the Bishop's half-brother. Although Potter & Robertson had not been among those fourteen architects who
received a special invitation to submit Cathedral designs, the Bishop was keenly aware that a charge of nepotism could be leveled at any time. Having succeeded his uncle Horatio in the post of Bishop, Potter was determined that no breadth of scandal would touch him. When he realized his brother's plans had been selected as one of the four schemes to enter a second competition, the Bishop became dead set against it.¹²

When Potter & Robertson's revised plans were not received by the March 2, 1891 deadline, the press speculated that the firm had withdrawn from the competition. What had happened was the architects wrote to Auchmuty as secretary of the Joint Committee of Finance and Architecture as early as January 30 requesting an extension because the deadline was practically prohibitive for them. Without responding, Auchmuty sent the architects' letter on to the Bishop. On March 2, the firm sent another letter saying their plans were on the way. The architects assumed that Auchmuty's silence meant consent for an extension, while Auchmuty supposed Potter & Robertson were out of the competition. Confusion followed. On March 6 the New York Commercial Advertiser claimed Potter's plans were not out.¹³ Two days later, however, the New York Sun reported Potter & Robertson were out and portrayed the Bishop as somewhat fiendishly delighting in their exclusion. Asked why he refused to grant the firm the extension requested on January 30, the Bishop allegedly replied:

There was no excuse for asking or granting such an extension, and it would have been
manifestly unfair to the other architects who were working to prepare their plans in time. 'You see,' he said, 'taking a letter from his desk and burning it, laughing as he did so, 'the gentlemen either had to keep up with the procession or get run over.'

In reality, the Trustees met on March 18 and resolved to accept the firm's late plans over the Bishop's objections. Why Potter & Robertson's designs were so delayed is unclear, but the pressure of other commissions, including one for Trinity Parish, is the most likely explanation.

The Bishop justifiably feared a charge of nepotism given the unpleasant aftermath of the Trinity Parish competition. Two months before the four finalists in the Cathedral competition were announced, William A. Potter was chosen as architect of St. Agnes Chapel. He had not been invited to participate in the competition, nor was he compensated one thousand dollars for his entry. Yet, Potter had previously done work for Trinity Parish. The Parish seems to have made every effort to avoid favoritism; still, the losing architects claimed the St. Agnes competition had been unfair.

Potter & Robertson's designs were exhibited at the Academy of Design along with revised drawings of the other three competitors. The public's reaction reveals the ambivalence, if not confusion, Americans had about architecture. No consensus is evident. Those designs inspired by European examples as well as the more eclectic schemes are alternately derided and applauded. Huss & Buck's "very good Gothic" plan, for example, is described as "derivative" and Potter and Robertson's
"Gerona" is deemed a "sorely blurred imitation of something." Yet, the New York Evening Post declares "new things are less apt to be good things in architecture than anywhere else in the world of thought." Heins & LaFarge's "pleasant Romanesque design" is admired for being inspired by Richardson's Trinity Church, while William Halsey Wood is chastised for having exaggerated some of the faults of the late Mr. Richardson by crushing all subordinate parts under a disproportionate mass... The big tower alone would be imposing but useless; the collection is useless and not imposing --- except to the ignorant.

Montgomery Schuyler was a lone figure in debunking the "Gerona" cathedral to a "table upside down with four legs in the air," but all critics generally agreed the exterior of a cathedral should express the interior. Heins & LaFarge were faulted for masking their dome with a tower, but curiously Halsey Wood was rarely commended for his harmonious blend of interior and exterior. The New York Times reported the "tide is setting away" from the Gothic style in ecclesiastical building, but The Churchman revivified Gothic art as "plastic and facile in its adaptations" and announced "the time of original suggestion has come." Clearly, there was no perceptible agreement among architects or critics.

William Halsey Wood's designs were assuredly the most provocative in the exhibition that opened in March of 1891. The Academy, located on Fourth Avenue and Twenty-third Street, had been favored by the Bishop over the See House for exhibition because it was a public building and had better lighting. Here Wood himself previewed the exhibition and found his
designs placed in a "most acceptable" manner. His wife recalls the excitement of her first glimpse:

One evening my husband and I, for this was about a year after our marriage, went over to the private opening of this exhibition. The rooms were crowded; Halsey Wood's name was on everyone's lips. I stood for some time waiting for him, in the midst of an excited throng, while the cry, 'Where are Halsey Wood's designs?' rang out continuously from those about me. It was to say the least a thrilling experience.

No allowance need be made for the new bride's exuberance; Florence Wood was accurate in her assessment. The New York Commercial Advertiser stated: "If one of the four sets attracts more attention than another, it is the design of William Halsey Wood." The New York Times declared the designs now visible at the National Academy of Design are calculated to catch the eye of him who is unused to architectural plans. There are no cross sections or longitudinal sections in outline simply; everything is shaded or colored so as to offer a pretty picture.

Wood's designs, in particular, were so good the Times insinuated the Newark architect was trying to hide his dearth of talent behind imposing pictures.

Wood's drawings were striking (Fig. 71). Along with ground plan, section, and perspectives, Wood submitted an etching on vellum of the exterior and two watercolors over four feet by three feet. Wood's wife describes them as framed in plain chestnut wood overlaid with gold leaf... Gold mats surrounded the gorgeous pictures. In the picture of the exterior of the cathedral, the clouds and sunlight played round the Gothic dome. In that of the interior picture, the wall of the nave was cut through sharply, lighting up the shades and shadows in a wonderfully beautiful way.
The pictures were painted by an English artist under Wood's supervision. They were, Florence Wood declares, "in a class by themselves, beyond expression." W. R. Huntington, rector of Grace Church and a Trustee, was likewise overawed with their loveliness and "lived for weeks with 'Jerusalem the Golden' in his heart all the day long, and dreamed of it all the night through. He could not get the design out of his mind." Another Wood fan similarly claimed the drawings had "possessed and fascinated" him from the beginning. "I remember and dwell upon them," he continued as if I had already walked about the Zion they show forth, and worshipped in the glorious Sanctuary they figure. I detect nothing imitative or conventional in conception, or development. They come to me as a definite unmistakable disclosure of a Psalmistic inspiration ... it is blazing and effulgent with symbolic radiance ... It is a Te Deum in Stone.

Even the American Architect and Building News remarked Wood's southeast perspective of the Cathedral was "very, very near to being one of the most remarkable and interesting pen-and-ink drawings ever made." The artist, a Mr. Davidson, was ill when he worked on it and one of the Trustees, so the magazine reported, declared the drawing was inspired, "done under the direct guidance of heavenly hosts." Whoever did the pictures was certainly inspired, if not by God then by Wood himself. He loved "to go about with the men and assist and keep ahead of them." Wood had, in short, a "feast with the designs."

Wood took no personal credit for his architectural genius.
rather, he claimed his work was divinely inspired. "God alone," he wrote to a friend, "was given me the knowledge and way to see visions which when realized have frozen in architectural poems." It was during Mass that these visions "possessed" Wood, and then "designs would flow from his fingers like water from a clear spring." Wood's "gift," however, was unreliable:

Often he would wait for days, even weeks for this gift to come, labouring on for hours without it, only to tear the sheets of brown paper to pieces in the end. Then suddenly it would return and he would revel in it, working hard to accomplish all that had been waiting to be done.

Wood's experience at his own parish church is illustrative. When asked to design a new altar and reredos for the House of Prayer, a commission he had always dreamed of, he was paralyzed: "I cannot see my way clear, I do not know what to do concerning it," he told his wife. But finally a vision did come and the architect rejoiced (Fig. 72). "Jerusalem the Golden" was the result of a similar process; it was not only the product of careful study but also a subject of prayer and "an offering of love to the Great Head of the Church." The text accompanying the plan is permeated with a spirit of love and reverence, consistent with Wood's belief in the intrinsic relation between the form of a church and its faith. Wood often remarked to his wife how careful he had to be with his designs:

If the lines are not correct and especially the undercuts in the mouldings, etc. are not deep and full of shadows, I shall be teaching heresy, and not the Catholic faith.
With this strong desire that the building of a church embody its faith, Wood was joyous whenever a cleric informed him that the devotion and reverence of a congregation had increased markedly with the construction of a new edifice.  

Wood's enthusiasm for the Cathedral project was boundless and must have been one of the reasons Bishop Potter favored his design. As early as March 6, 1888, Wood wrote to Potter: "I have been thinking of all that you told me at our interview and feel ambitious to begin work in earnest." Wood continued an eager participant throughout the course of the competition, and his designs for the second competition were turned in four months before those of his competitors. Wood's piety must also have impressed the Bishop. The Ecclesiologists had for decades maintained an architect must be sympathetic to the church's faith, and this tendency to fuse art and morality characterized the thinking of all the leading Gothic polemicists of the nineteenth century, from Pugin and Ruskin to Ralph Adams Cram, who was ultimately to take over the Cathedral construction. Letters in support of Wood's designs stressed his dedication to the church. E. M. Pecke, a founder of the New York Ecclesiological Society, was "very sure" that Wood was a "devout, conscientious churchman, full of deep piety and good works in the church." Two other clergymen for whom Wood had done churches recommended him on the basis of both his work and his religiousity. Telfair Hodgson suggested Wood because he was "a good churchman, young and inspiring and industrious," while John Sword recommended Wood as a "faithful churchman"
and "a man of genius as an Architect and Artist." Many of Wood's friends were clergymen and could attest to his devotion; the architect knew the ways of the clergy and their requirements.

A lover of architecture, Bishop Potter must have hoped for a Cathedral scheme that suggested the new and dynamic position the church was to occupy in an urban community. The Gothic plans of Huss & Buck and Potter & Robertson were too reminiscent of the past to excite the Bishop. Besides, to choose the Potter plan would have been to risk a charge of nepotism. Heins & LaFarge's design was a possibility, but the incomplete marriage of the Romanesque exterior with the Byzantine interior must have displeased Potter. He was particularly drawn to Wood's plans because the architect's desires corresponded to his own. Both men were adamant about erecting a high and stately structure which no office building should overtop. Potter saw in his vision a Cathedral with vast spaces open to all people, free and hospitable, for public services and for private prayers. It should be a place of inspiration out of which men and women would go to undertake and maintain great social purposes.

Wood's plan with its great central space, immense height, inviting cloisters, dramatic approaches, and novel carriageway was bold, unique, and happily devoid of archaic emotional baggage. It meshed nicely with the Bishop's dream. A contemporary observer remarked Wood's plan with its
unusual extent of covered walks or ambula­
tories, driveways, porches, & the like also
adds to the monumental appearance of the struc­
ture, suggesting provision and shelter for im­
mense crowds of visitors, indeed for all visi­
tors who may fill the neighboring parks on a
summer Sunday afternoon.

Decades later Cram described "Jerusalem the Golden" as
"ecumenical." Clearly, it was what the Bishop desired.

The Bishop's enthusiasm for Halsey Wood's design was
manifest at a See House luncheon he gave for sixty of his
clergy. At this particular time, Wood's plan alone had been
received, so the luncheon must have been some time between
November 1, 1890, the original deadline for the second com­
petition, and March 2, 1891, the new deadline. The Newark
Daily Advertiser reported:

The luncheon was the most delightful and
the Bishop, as always the prince of hosts.
After all had enjoyed the dainty viands pro­
vided, his lordship invited the attention of
his guests to a series of superb drawings and
colored sketches from Mr. Halsey Wood ...
That they gave the greatest satisfaction to
all the clergy present (not excluding the
Bishop) by no means expresses the exceeding
interest and pleasure that was shown them.
The design is a most magnificent and daring
conception: ...

Florence Wood had a similar memory of the event and added that
the Bishop on that occasion had intended to speak about the
late Canon Liddon of St. Paul's but instead proposed "to talk
to them of 'Jerusalem the Golden,' the accepted design for the
cathedral." After this luncheon, she continues, "letters be­
gan to reach us congratulating my husband upon having won the
competition. Many of the priests present at the luncheon were
her personal friends, and naturally their enthusiasm ran high at his success. Wood's joy must have been unbounded. He adored his work, his drawings were astounding, and even more importantly, the Bishop was drawn to his design. The construction of his Cathedral plan seemed certain.


3 Letter from William Halsey Wood, October 1, 1889, NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.


7 Letter from William Halsey Wood, March 7, 1891, CA.


9 Cathedral Trustees Minutes, March 4, 1891, CA.


11 Cathedral Trustees Minutes, March 18, 1891, CA.

12 Landau; p. 205.


14 New York Sun, March 8, 1891, in WHW's Scrapbook, NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.

15 Potter's relative suggests his Cathedral designs were far superior to "all the others" and that "there was no question in the minds of the public that it ought to be chosen." In his view the second competition was a vehicle to avoid the charge of nepotism. This conclusion is unwarranted. Given the large number of designs submitted, the uncertainty of the Trustees, and the interest of the public, a second competition was inevitable.
Moreover, in that second competition Potter & Robertson's plans were never thrown out, as the author suggests; nor was the selection of Potter & Robertson's plans ever a foregone conclusion. Frank Hunter Potter, p. 59.

16 Landau, p. 205.


18 "Four Cathedral Builders," (typed assessment of the four final designs), NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.


21 Montgomery Schuyler, Harpers Weekly, April 4, 1891, p. 211.


24 "Art," The Churchman, September 1, 1888, p. 266.

25 Letter from William Halsey Wood, March 30, 1891, CA.

26 Florence Wood, p. 28.


29 Florence Wood, p. 31.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.


33 American Architect and Building News, May 9, 1891, p. 91.


36 Florence Wood, p. 45.

37 Ibid.

38 Newark Daily Advertiser cited in The Church Porch, April, 1897, NYHS, MS. Coll., WHW file.

39 Florence Wood, p. 44.

40 Ibid., p. 45.

41 Letter from William Halsey Wood, March 6, 1888, CA.


43 Letter from E. M. Pecke, April 18, 1891, CA.

44 Letter from Telfair Hodgson, November 15, 1887, CA.

45 Letter from John Sword, November 10, 1887, CA.

46 Hodges, p. 277.

47 Ibid.


50 Florence Wood, p. 29.
Wood's Cathedral scheme was rejected because it was unique. Montgomery Schuyler summed up popular opinion when he averred: "Nobody could mistake it for anything he had seen before, nor, at the first glance, take it for the representation of a cathedral." It reminded him of Coleridge's poem:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree;  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to the sunless sea.

Wood's design was "absolutely original." Originality, however, had its price: Wood's design was attacked with vengeance by both the New York Sun and the New York Times. The Sun claimed it was "impossible to speak too strongly of the demerits" of Wood's plan and labeled it the "insanest scheme ever seriously presented to the public's eye." The Newark Sunday Call defended its own and contended the Sun's vituperative article was a ploy to gain attention for Mr. Wood, for "the Sun never goes about a thing as people might expect it to." The Times suggested Wood's design was a "hodgepodge," while other newspaper correspondents mused that the hostility generated by Wood's plan was to be expected, for

nobody ever yet worked on original lines  
in the field of poetry, music, architecture,  
or other arts without bringing down on his  
head maledictions from lovers of the trite  
and conventional."

Whether celebrated or condemned, Wood's plan represented something new.

"Jerusalem the Golden," as Schuyler noted, did not look like a cathedral. It might be a "work of genius," but "it is
not a design for a Protestant church." Wood's plan was described as a "mausoleum" or a large "memorial tomb or similar monumental structure" but it defied one's notion of an Anglican church. The "forest of towers" and great number of pinnacles were especially criticized; they lacked utility. A correspondent to the New York Evening Post counted thirty-four conical roofs and towers and decreed the "aim is effectiveness rather than usefulness, and this presents a false ideal." The Times found the "multitude of turrets" an attempt to "harass the mind" and suggested mixing different styles ran the risk of "producing colossal nonsense, even if the design were in the hands of a genius of the first rank. Styles," the article continued, have been mixed heretofore, "but it makes one shudder to imagine the result of such an architectural pudding." Wood's eclectic profusion was, in short, an abomination.

The New York Times and The Churchman both supported the Romanesque design of Heins & LaFarge. The Churchman celebrated the team's "original" design that avoided "servile imitation" and the "chimerical and impracticable pursuit of the abnormal." By "abnormal," The Churchman was unquestionably alluding to Wood's design, but its assessment followed the announcement of the competition winner and therefore was not prejudicial to Wood's position. In contrast, the Times flagrantly berated Wood's conception. It not only concluded Wood's design was an "inorganic mixture of styles hunted out of any and every quarter of the world" but also went on to
attack Wood's descriptive pamphlet.

Wood was accused of trying to forestall criticism of his plan with the pamphlet that discussed such things as the Seven Churches, the Four Evangelists, the Sevenfold Gift of the Holy Ghost, and the Twofold Nature of our Blessed Lord. The "tremendous analogies" that impressed the architect were derided by reporters. The New York Times called Wood's pamphlet "argumentative, didactic, and confusing." It scorned his "unctuous piety, high-flown language, and unmerciful verbiage." It concluded: "If the reader fails to find the flamboyant in Mr. Wood's designs, he will discover plenty in the pamphlet."10 Although Montgomery Schuyler had found in Wood's design a "fully organized cathedral, the west front, the western towers, the transepts --- albeit very shallow transepts --- and the nave," even he had to admit that an "architect designing a great building ought to be thinking of something else than its symbolic significance."11

Wood's use of a different scale was also vigorously attacked. After the first competition, the committee of experts pointed out that "Jerusalem the Golden" distinctly violated the instructions which required the drawings be in the scale of one sixteenth of an inch to one foot. The committee concluded, however, that the Trustees had waived their own requirements in regard to scale when they accepted and considered Wood's drawings in the first competition. When the drawings were exhibited in the second competition, Wood's critics claimed the architect was trying to disguise the
great size of his Cathedral. He was accused of purposely deceiving the public by labeling his drawing in which the scale was one tenth of an inch to one foot as one sixteenth of an inch to one foot. Wood must surely have been aghast at the charge of deception and explained in a letter to the *American Architect and Building News* that a draughtsman had blundered and affixed the scale to the wrong drawing. He had, he explained himself, taken the liberty of using the one tenth scale because he thought the instructions allowed the architects to use their own "discretion."¹² There is no reason to suspect Wood was less than forthright. His detractors could make much of his use of a different scale, but their criticism was more properly aimed at the Trustees with their vague programme and mismanaged competition.

The competition was assuredly confusing both to the competitors and to the public because the Trustees were not entirely certain what sort of Cathedral was desired. Within the Episcopal Church Broad Churchmen had sparred with High Churchmen for decades, but as the nineteenth century moved to a close dynamic changes in American society exacerbated the tension. Without knowing it, the Trustees expected architecture to effect a compromise between church traditions and modern innovations. Bishop Potter alone had a clear idea of the kind of Cathedral required, but his ecumenical vision was not universally accepted. The place of ritual, ceremony, and sermons was never fixed by the Trustees; consequently, the resulting programme was a patchwork affair made up of good
but conflicting intentions.

At the very outset the Trustees were unrealistic to expect the architects to compete on an equal basis when the fourteen invited architects were compensated for designs but the public entries were not. That the committee pledged not to exhibit any plans without the consent of all the architects was another error. The Trustees became suspect; the public felt excluded. An air of mystery shrouded the acts of the committee and prompted a great deal of newspaper criticism. Strange coincidence was perceived at every turn and befogged the real issues, which were plentiful.¹³

The issue of nepotism was disturbing by itself but then Heins & LaFarge were taken to court because they left a third architect's name off their plans. William W. Kent claimed he was an equal partner in the Cathedral designs and brought suit for ten thousand dollars.¹⁴ The New York Herald continued the nastiness and enraged architects when it insinuated they were in the competition for the innumerable opportunities the Cathedral construction would provide for cash under the table:

A sharp architect would be apt to make friends with the quarry men, the iron men, and the various other contractors who come in for a slice, and if he was a selfish man he ought to squeeze from a third to a half million out of the job, to say nothing of the everlasting glory and future work ...¹⁵

The ambiguous programme that resulted in conflicting interpretations, the architectural drawings that were rendered according to pleasure not prescription, and the use of technical experts whose advice could be ignored raised other issues.
The competition, as it dragged into its third year, was increasingly troublesome.

Basically, the Trustees were unsure of themselves and how to proceed. They were fair-minded and willing to compromise, as Halsey Wood discovered in his conference before the second competition, but they were unorganized. In the first competition, for example, Henry Vaughan was compensated for designs he never submitted. In the second competition, the Trustees postponed setting the compensation for the revised drawings with the result that two of the competitors shelved the project until they got a firm commitment while Wood and the other finalists worked on their plans.

When the Trustees finally responded, they gave the architects but two weeks to submit the required designs. The selection process was not thought out, and chaos was the result.

In June of 1891 the Trustees chose Heins & LaFarge as Cathedral architects. Their decision was a compromise, for the Trustees, although they articulated a desire for a novel arrangement, were more comfortable with traditional ecclesiastical architecture. LaFarge shrewdly understood the clergy's ambivalence and accurately assessed the contemporary scene:

For the average American with all his love of untrammeled freedom, and his hankering after originality, seems, for some inscrutable reason, to be quite satisfied as to the excellence of any great building ... if he can be assured that it is just like one or another European original.

Heins & LaFarge's design was no slavish copy of an English cathedral but it had recognizable roots, such as the round arch at the Cathedral of Durham, which the firm underscored
in its Cathedral description. In addition, Heins & LaFarge promoted the utility of their design and addressed practical questions raised by the construction of a Cathedral at the end of the nineteenth century. Their pragmatic approach surely must have pleased the Trustees.

In their Cathedral description Heins & LaFarge appeal to reason and common sense; they stress practicality and economy. Their transepts have a "definite function" in housing monuments which need "large, simple wall surfaces" or "ample floor space." Windows are of two kinds; those that are intended primarily to give light and those that are meant to delight through a depth and richness of color. Heins & LaFarge offer a "rational and simple" arrangement by which the buttresses can be brought under roof and "protected from the weather" and advocate air spaces between walls to protect the structure from "dampness and cold." Hailing "progress," the architects suggest using the "best and most suitable form of construction available at the present day" and the "most economical method of permanent vaulting." While iron and steel construction is not desirable because of possible oxidation, the architects promote tile-arch vault construction because the "saving would be great." The architects caution against the "irreparable damage" from a "severe climate" and emphasize construction that will ensure "freedom from repairs." This focus on utility, durability, and economy must have persuaded the Trustees.
Wood, too, was concerned with matters of economy and practicality, but he did not stress these areas in his Cathedral description. The programme, after all, imposed no financial limits. In actual practice, however, Wood was forever trying to save his clients money. He carefully monitored estimates and was pleased whenever he could shave a few thousand dollars from the total cost. Unlike Heins & LaFarge, Wood was quite eager to make use of modern iron and steel construction techniques. What he would not countenance, however, was constructive dishonesty. He was too much a part of the Ecclesiologist tradition to allow anything but the use of honest materials. The structure had to be "real," a word first used in connection with architecture in the first issue of the Ecclesiologist, published in 1841.

But if ornamental appendages are bad when anything real is given up for their sake, much more are they so when they are imitations of that which they are not. Stucco, and paint, and composition, and graining are not out of place in the theatre or the ball-room; but in God's House everything should be real.

Wood inherited this regard for the integrity of materials; therefore, he tried to build his ornamentation into the very structure and form of the church itself. He depended "more on the turn of an arch than on the tracing of a frieze." In Peddie Memorial Baptist Church, for example, all beams, rafters, and pipes in the building are exposed. The woodwork of the sycamore and cherry pews and galleries fades from a rich dark brown to a light yellow tone and is "one of the more artistic features" of the church.
In his own home, Wood demonstrates how one may use new materials and at the same time cut costs. The exterior of Winmarleigh is constructed of half-timbered work with pebble dash and over-burnt brick. The mortar along the horizontal lines of the brickwork is dug out for an unusual decorative effect. Wood created a market for this brick and at one time all one required could be obtained from the brickyards of Haverstraw for only the cost of the canal boat transportation. In the interior of Winmarleigh Wood also uses inexpensive materials to obtain stunning results. The reception room, for instance, features a globe of silver fretwork in the center of a domed ceiling. The carpet is gray as well as the linen wall covering, which is divided into panels by strings of aluminum. There is not a picture in the room; instead, mirrors set in oxidized silver frames of Wood's design adorn the walls. The silver and gray scheme makes the whole room seem "illuminated by moonlight," a dramatic effect created through the economy of means.

The Woods' bedroom featured a floor to ceiling fireplace, covered with white unglazed tiles, in the center of the room. The stark library (Fig. 73) had woodwork of yellow pine and walls hung with gray burlap. A massive and severe fireplace faced with slabs of Georgia marble dominates the room but is enlivened by a limestone carving of a griffin set into the marble. Wood relished the contrast of materials and textures and his European sketchbook includes numerous notes about colors and textures (Fig. 74). In the dining room the walls
were covered with a modest blue denim. The white selvages marked the dark material off into panels, a decorative and novel touch the architect adored. In his use of inexpensive materials, Wood demonstrated his imagination, flamboyance, and skill. Unfortunately, his ingenuity does not surface in his Cathedral description which is remote, visionary and symbolic. Had Wood focused on more practical matters, the question of structural viability might never arisen.

Over this very issue, Wood's widow believed "Jerusalem the Golden" was accepted and then rejected in a "mysterious reversal of official judgment." The question was raised in the press when one correspondent, alluding to the symbolism of the "Jerusalem the Golden" design, affirmed that the congregation "would prefer to think that their church was based on a judicious application of the laws of gravitation and resistance which prevail in this sublunary sphere." Some critics longed for something more "practicable," while others contended Wood's plan was impossible even if supported by iron construction.

After his experience in the St. Agnes competition, Wood had every reason to fear such criticism. According to Florence Wood, the selection committee of Trinity Parish was "swept off its feet by the daring beauty" of Wood's plan (Fig. 75), which was symmetrical in elevation and featured an enormous rectangular crossing tower. The facade (Fig. 76) was based loosely on the west front of Lincoln Cathedral and the style was one of Wood's favorite, eleventh to twelfth century transitional
In making their decision, the selection committee sought the opinion of Professor Eccleston from Columbia's School of Architecture. He condemned Wood's scheme as unpracticable because the lantern was too large for the building. Eccleston's view was apparently heeded and Wood lost the commission to William A. Potter. Even had there been no irregularity in the competition, Wood's plans, although interesting, may have been too massive for the side street location. Whatever the case, Wood learned from the experience and included with his Cathedral designs a sworn affidavit from a firm of engineers he frequently employed. Norcross Brothers affirmed that the dome was structurally sound and that they were prepared to undertake the construction. For some unknown reason, the Norcross document was neither opened nor read by the Trustees.

It may have been politically expedient for the Trustees to ignore the Norcross testimony; they needed a solid reason for rejecting a design that pleased the Bishop and fascinated the public. Cram himself believed that Wood's plan "could easily have been given a rational practicality" but allowed that "nothing like Halsey Wood's project had ever been seen before." "Jerusalem the Golden" was the "most original and creative piece of architectural design thus far produced in America" but it "diverged completely from every Anglican tradition, both architectural and doctrinal." To proceed with Wood's Cathedral plan would have required more imagination and courage than the Trustees were capable of. Risks
were taken in business, not architecture.

The Trustees, it should be remembered, were conservative men, rich, well-bred, and High Churchmen. William Waldorf Astor, Morgan Dix, and R. J. Auchmuty, the Trustees' Committee on Architecture, were a severe trio one could hardly expect to embrace Wood's visionary design. Astor entertained his own visions and could scarcely be distracted from his own fantasy world; in 1889 he published his Sforza and the next year his father died leaving a personal fortune of close to one hundred million dollars. That same year, allegedly fearing kidnappers, Astor moved his family to London and submitted his resignation to the Cathedral Trustees, who tabled it in their October 13, 1890 meeting. Because of his emigration, Astor's part in the selection of an architect for St. John the Divine must have been minimal. Morgan Dix played a larger role. He had been associated with Trinity Parish since 1855 and noted for his strongly conservative viewpoints. While he agreed to Heins & LaFarge's Cathedral plans, he wished the dome-spire were more of a spire. A traditionalist, Dix found novelty hard to bear.

R. J. Auchmuty's role was key. He, too, was a traditionalist who studied architecture with James Renwick at one point. Made a colonel by brevet for gallantry at Gettysburg during the Civil War, Auchmuty had strong opinions and a vigorous personality. He dispensed his own brand of philanthropy and founded the New York Trade School in 1881. Until 1892 he maintained the school which was founded to provide an
opportunity for mechanically inclined young men in poor circumstances to learn a trade without having to submit to a labor union apprenticeship. With a large endowment from J. Pierpont Morgan, the school was incorporated in 1892. Like Morgan, Auchmuty was a vestryman but in Dix's Trinity Church. He was conscientious in both speech and action, and he disliked Halsey Wood's plans from the very beginning. He was irritated that Wood sent his drawings crated in barn doors and wanted it made clear to Wood that only his ground plan was highly regarded.

The choice of an architect for St. John the Divine was the responsibility primarily of the Trustees' Joint Committee composed of the Committee on Architecture and the Committee of Finance, which included Morgan, Vanderbilt, Samuel D. Babcock, and E. W. Donald. The role of Donald, who was rector of Ascension Parish, and Babcock in the selection process is unknown save that Donald thought Heins & LaFarge's west front lacked sufficient force and expression. Vanderbilt sailed for Europe in the spring of 1889 and was unable to examine the plans submitted for the first competition. Morgan, then, had the key role on the finance committee, and in church matters Morgan was intensely conservative. He was deeply religious and could sit for hours listening to dry ecclesiastical debates that would interest only a clergyman. Although he disliked ritualism, Morgan had little sympathy with reform. He was, rather, drawn strongly to the ecclesiastical side of the Episcopal Church's life. Its very archaic element, its atmosphere of withdrawal from common everyday affairs of men, answered to some need of his soul.
Morgan was opposed to Rainsford's ecumenical spirit and disliked his notion of offering St. George's pulpit to any other than Episcopal clergy. Although in later years Morgan saw the necessity of uniting all Christian churches, "in matters ecclesiastical old things were good enough for him." Given Morgan's traditionalism, it was improbable that he should support Wood's design. Huss & Buck's Gothic plan seems more likely. When it came to building his own library, Morgan opted for the very proper classicism of McKim, Mead & White.

To have chosen Halsey Wood as Cathedral architect would have been a radical decision for the Trustees, even though the Bishop favored his design. That Potter was not delighted with the selection of Heins & LaFarge was evidenced in his letter to them in 1892. Distressed by this letter, George Heins sent it on to his friend, J. C. Ropes in Boston, who commented:

The letter of the Bishop is extraordinary indeed. It is not pleasant reading. He complains of a contract into which both parties deliberately entered. He insinuates that your motives are mercenary. He goes out of his way to spread discredit on your plans. In a word, he makes it very plain that the action of the Committee in selecting you and Grant as the architects of the Cathedral was exceedingly disappointing to him, and that you have got to count on his hostility throughout.

Ropes urged Heins to consult the law firm of Wickersham and Cadwalader for necessary legal advice. Subsequently, Heins & LaFarge responded to the Bishop's letter and received the following terse reply:
I am sincerely glad to learn that, on some points concerning which I wrote you, I have been misinformed, and that concerning others your explanation is so satisfactory.\textsuperscript{35}

Ropes, however, was not convinced and commented:

The Bishop could hardly have said less, and, as an honest man, he had to say as much. But as you say, there are 'Breakers ahead!' His animus against you both unquestionably is bad.\textsuperscript{36}

Heins & LaFarge did consult with George Wickersham, and the matter was resolved without legal action. The episode, however, reveals the Bishop's predilections. After the death of Heins, the Cathedral commission was given to Ralph Adams Cram in what has been described as "one of the most bizarre and arbitrary decisions in the history of American architecture."\textsuperscript{37} LaFarge subsequently characterized the whole scenario as a "greasy performance" and claimed "the more you stir it the worse it stinks."\textsuperscript{38}

From the very beginning Cram was greedy for the Cathedral commission. His firm submitted two designs for the first competition in 1889: one was a weak imitation of Richardson's Romanesque and the other a Gothic model. By 1899, Cram had publicly called Heins & LaFarge's designs ridiculous.\textsuperscript{39} After Heins' death in 1907, LaFarge heard whispers that Cram, Goodhue, and Fergusson were "energetically scheming to get the Cathedral work in a very discrete and astute manner,"\textsuperscript{40} When the Trustees abandoned Heins & LaFarge's winning design and engaged Cram as consulting architect, Cram was jubilant.\textsuperscript{41} Under his direction Heins & LaFarge's Romanesque scheme would be metamorphosed into a Gothic edifice.\textsuperscript{42}
Ironically, Cram was one of the most ardent fans of the Cathedral architect Bishop Potter preferred, Halsey Wood. Cram believed "Jerusalem the Golden" was far better than Heins & LaFarge's design and viewed Wood as "potentially one of the greatest architects of modern times."\(^4^3\) His design was "simply astounding" and had it been built it might have "considerably altered the course of development in American architecture."\(^4^4\) The Newark architect was "well in advance of his time, a voice crying in the wilderness." "Jerusalem the Golden" came as a "revelation of architectural genius." The profession might have enthusiastically accepted Wood's design because the Richardsonian Romanesque had been "discredited by the ineptitude of followers of the dead master and there was a real desire not to revert to archaeology;" furthermore, society at that time was at loose ends "with no very clear idea of where it was going or why or what it believed in or wanted anyway." But Wood's conception was a "devasting shock." Neither Richardsonian nor Victorian Gothic, it was "an artistic tour de force, completely original and unprecedented."\(^4^5\) Very few churchmen knew what to do with it. Potter was the exception.

The cornerstone for Heins & LaFarge's Cathedral was laid on December 27, 1892. Less than one year later, Halsey Wood's plans alone were selected by the New York committee of the American Institute of Architects for exhibition at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. "Jerusalem the Golden" received a bronze medal. Wood might then have felt vindicated for his loss of the commission, but in 1891 he only regretted
that an unworthy design had been chosen. His wife recalls that he humbly accepted his loss and happily went on with his other work. 46

But something was missing. Cram suggests that Wood died of a broken heart after he lost the Cathedral competition, an overstatement which nonetheless has a certain truth. 47 Wood, in fact, died in 1897, the same year Pearson passed on leaving Truro Cathedral unfinished. Florence Wood was heartbroken. Three weeks before her husband's death, she moved him to Philadelphia in a frantic effort to get medical attention that might prolong the architect's life. Wood's tuberculosis, however, was too far advanced. He lay dying while the hymns sung on his wedding day were read to him and his wife, tears blinding her eyes, despaired: "Oh it is so pathetic to see him!" 48 Moments before his final breath, Florence Wood relates "a bright, wonderful light" broke over her husband's face, "radiated, then quivered for a moment, and went out." Wood had, she explains, "entered in by the gates to the Holy City, Jerusalem the Golden of which he had dreamed and loved for so many years." 49

Wood's early death cut short the career of an extraordinary architect who never quite reached his full potential. His ecclesiastical designs after 1891 are bold and handsome but too often derivative. The loss of the Cathedral commission killed Wood's penchant for wild experimentation. Instead, Wood did proper ecclesiastical designs that generally
feature a massive tower. The same hand that created the enormous tower at Anniston (Fig. 77), placed a high central lantern over a church in Bloomfield, New Jersey (Fig. 78) and square towers at the end of the naves in churches in New Haven (Fig. 79) and in Pittsburgh (Fig. 80). The designs are pleasing and vigorous, but something is missing.

At the time of the Cathedral competition, Wood was at his most confident and exuberant. His work is Richardsonian, not because it revives Romanesque forms, but because it is romantic. What is "Jerusalem the Golden" if not a castle of religion, a palace of prayer? It was Wood's courage, the same courage that enabled him to save a young boy from drowning, that equipped him to produce such fabulous creations. The dignified masonry of the Peddie Memorial Baptist Church gives one a powerful example of what Wood might have accomplished on Morningside Heights. It is awesome — a remarkable abstraction of Gothic forms that leaves one breathless. Wood is extraordinarily successful here in achieving the dramatic effect.

Had Wood the Ecole des Beaux-Arts training of a Richardson, his work might have obtained the integration and unity he so often sacrificed for the sake of a rude originality. Wood certainly had the talent and the ability, but he was erratic and emotional. After hours, Wood's wife recalls, Wood would play the organ in his studio and the melodies
that would "drift in through the open casement windows of the house" were a "joy and a grief" to her. Wood reveled in both architecture and music. Had he been able to focus solely on architecture, he might have been able to achieve the discipline and cohesion his work frequently lacked.

Cram claimed that Wood, in a sense, anticipated Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Bertram Goodhue, and other "path-breakers towards modernism."

Wright himself allegedly credited Wood for being one of the pioneers of modern architecture. Wood's own home, although based on Haddon Hall in England, bears a resemblance to Wright's Taliesin, begun over thirty-five years later (Figs. 81, 82). In his willingness to experiment with unusual massing, in his attention to environment and use of site, in his respect for textures, color, and the nature of materials, and in his desire to express interior space through exterior form, Wood was a herald of modern architecture. Although Wood never achieved the Cathedral commission he so desperately wanted or the success his talent deserved, Wood did serve as a bridge between the archaeological impulse of the nineteenth century and the iconoclasm of the twentieth. His work has been all but forgotten but merits attention and respect. Wood is a transition figure in American architecture who fumbles grandly into the twentieth century because he took a nostalgic, backward glance.


3 "Hither and Thither," Newark Sunday Call, April 12, 1891 in WHW's Scrapbook, NYHS, M.S. Coll., WHW file.

4 Ibid.

5 Schuyler, Harpers Weekly.


7 Ibid.


9 The Churchman, September 26, 1891, p. 392.

10 New York Times, April 12, 1891.

11 Schuyler, Harpers Weekly.


19 Scully, p. xlvi.


22 Florence Wood, p. 23.

23 Ibid., p. 24.

24 Ibid.


26 Landau, p. 207.

27 Ibid., p. 211.

28 Florence Wood, p. 33.


30 Cathedral Trustees Minutes, May 25, 1891, CA.

31 On March 26, 1889 Trustee George M. Miller wrote to the Trustees and requested their opinions about the best of the Cathedral designs. Astor, Donald, Auchmuty, Huntington, and Nash responded with their choices, but the total number of selections varied from four to twenty. What one might conclude is that Miller's instructions and the process of selection were very ambiguous. Who played what role in that process may never be known. Letters, CA.
32 Rainsford, p. 285.

33 Ibid., p. 291.

34 Letter from J. C. Ropes, September 7, 1892, Columbia University, Avery Library Achieves. Cited hereafter as CU, ALA.

35 Letter from Henry Codman Potter, September 8, 1892, CU, ALA.

36 Letter from J. C. Ropes, September 12, 1892, CU, ALA.

37 Pierson, p. 264.

38 Letter from C. Grant LaFarge, March 30, 1921, CU, ALA.

39 Muccigrosso, p. 91.

40 Letter from G.H.B., 18 41st St., New York, November 5, 1907, CU, ALA.

41 The Trustees' decision should be seen as simply "a matter of the impossibility on the part of a gentle and rather retiring man to maintain a no longer popular style as over against a convinced evangelist of the newly popular Gothic," according to LaFarge's brother John. West, p. 4. Fourteen years later a red-faced Cram apologized to LaFarge for his less than gracious remarks about Heins & LaFarge's Romanesque plans and underscored LaFarge's civility: "Your attitude toward me in the whole affair has been marked by the most scrupulous courtesy and consideration. I have been anxious not to fall short of the precedent you had established." How LaFarge must have winced! Letter from Ralph Adams Cram, March 26, 1921, CU, ALA.

42 Bishop Potter anticipated alterations in the Cathedral as the construction progressed, but he made sure the dimensions would not change. Asked why he advocated such a stupendous plan, the Bishop responded: "To make it impossible that the timid souls of this generation can reduce the design to something that future generations would hold inadequate unworthy." Alfred D. F. Hamlin, A Study of the Designs for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, March, 1924, p. 19.
43 Cram quoted in Florence Wood, p. 11.
44 Ibid., p. 11.
46 Florence Wood, p. 32.
47 Cram, My Life, p. 170.
49 Florence Wood, p. 43.
51 Peddie still stands proudly in downtown Newark, but it has been dwarfed by the tall buildings around it (Fig. 8). Just down the street, Wood's beloved House of Prayer, although restored in 1966, cries out for attention.
52 Cram quoted in Florence Wood, p. 11.
APPENDIX

A Partial List of Works by William Halsey Wood

NEW YORK

New York City

All Angels Church, chancel (demolished, 1979)
    West End Avenue and 81st Street

Bellevue Hospital Library

Cathedral of St. John the Divine*
    Morningside Drive and 110th Street

Church of the Redeemer
    Park Avenue and 84th Street

St. Agnes Chapel, Trinity Parish*
    Ninth Avenue and 91st Street

St. Matthew and St. Timothy (destroyed by fire, 1965)

St. Paul’s Church
    Morrisania

Zion and St. Timothy (destroyed by fire, 1922)
    332 West 57th Street

Cohoes

St. John’s Church

Owego

St. Paul’s Church

Peekskill

Convent for the Community of St. Mary*

Saratoga Springs

William Trask House

* design not executed
NEW JERSEY

Newark
William Clark House
Mt. Prospect Avenue

First Congregational Jube Memorial Church
Clinton Avenue and Wright Street

House of Prayer, altar and reredos
Broad Street

Peddie Memorial Baptist Church
Broad Street

St. Alban's
Thirteenth Avenue and Eight Street

St. Luke's

Sixth Presbyterian Church
Lafayette and Union Street

Wickliffe Presbyterian
Thirteenth Avenue and Boston Street

Winmarleigh
D. Smith Wood House

Bloomfield
Christ Church

East Orange
C. S. French House
F. C. Geiger House
St. Paul's Church

Jersey City
St. Mark's Church

Montrose
Marcus Sayers House
Newton
Christ Church, Newton Parish House

Passaic
St. John's Church

Paterson
St. Paul's Church

Princeton
Princeton University Library*

PENNSYLVANIA

Allegheny City
Carnegie Free Library*

Braddock
Carnegie Free Library

Corry
Emmanuel Church

Pittsburgh
Carnegie Free Library*
Church of the Ascension
Presbyterian Church

Smethport
St. Luke's Church

Wellsboro
St. Paul's Church
OHIO
Youngstown
St. John's Church

CONNECTICUT
New Haven
St. John's Church
Dominican Monastery*

ALABAMA
Anniston
St. Michael's and All Angels

TENNESSEE
Chattanooga
St. Paul's Church

Memphis
St. Mary's Cathedral*

Sewanee
University of the South, Breslin Tower, Convocation Hall

MISSOURI
Kansas City
Church of the Society of St. Mary
TEXAS

Dallas
St. Matthew's Church*

WYOMING

Laramie
St. Matthew's Cathedral

WISCONSIN

Nashotah
Nashotah Theological Seminary

CHINA

Shanghai
St. John's College
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One Hundred Fifty Years' History of the First Baptist Peddie Memorial Church. Newark, 1951.


Periodicals

The American Architect and Building News
The Architectural Record
Building: An Architectural Weekly
The Churchman
Harper's Weekly

Archival Material

Avery Library Archives, Columbia University. Letters and documents in George L. Heins and C. Grant La-Farge file.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine Archives. Letters, documents, contracts in Competition Drawings file and Cathedral Trustees Minutes.


Picture Collections

Newark Public Library. Newark, New Jersey.
Fig. 1. William Halsey Wood, at age 24.
Fig. 3. Breslin Tower and Convocation Hall, University of the South.
Fig. 4. Quadrangle, University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.
Fig. 5. Ground Plan. University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee.
Fig. 6. George Frederick Bodley: St. Augustine's Church, Pendlebury, England, 1869.
Fig. 7. George Frederick Bodley:
Church of the Hoar Cross,
near Lichfield, England,
1872.
Fig. 8. William Halsey Wood: Sketch, 1875.
Fig. 9. William Halsey Wood: Sketch, 1875.
Fig. 10. Frank Wills, House of Prayer, Newark, New Jersey, 1851.
Fig. 11. William Halsey Wood: Winmarleigh, Newark, New Jersey, 1889.
Fig. 12. William Halsey Wood: Oratory at Winmarleigh, Newark, New Jersey, 1889.
Fig. 13. William Halsey Wood; Book Illustration, 1889.
Fig. 14. George E. Street: St. James the Less, London, 1859.
Fig. 15. A. W. N. Pugin: St. Barnabas' Cathedral, Nottingham, England.
Fig. 16. H. H. Richardson: All Saints Cathedral, Albany, New York. Competition Drawing, 1883.
Fig. 17. William Halsey Wood: Cathedral sketch, 1889.
Fig. 18. William Halsey Wood; Competition Drawing, 1889.
Fig. 19. H. H. Richardson: All Saints Cathedral, Albany, New York, Competition Drawing, 1883.
Fig. 20. John Loughborough Pearson: St. John's Church, London, 1875-78.
Fig. 21. Chevet, Bourges Cathedral, Bourges, France.
Fig. 22. William Halsey Wood: Ground Plan, St. John the Divine, 1889.
Fig. 23. William Halsey Wood: Book Illustration, 1889.
Fig. 24. Richard Upjohn: St. Mary's Church, Burlington, New Jersey, 1846-54.
Fig. 25. Frederick C. Withers: Competition Drawing, 1889.
Cram & Wentworth, architects.

Boston, Mass.

Competitive Design for the CATHEDRAL of St John the Divine, New York.

Fig. 26. Cram & Wentworth: Competition Drawing, 1889.
Competitive Design for the Cathedral of St John the Divine, New York.

L. S. Buffington, Architect.

Chapel Hill, N.C.

Fig. 27. L. S. Buffington: Competition Drawing, 1889.

Fig. 28. Carrère & Hastings, Competition Drawing, 1889.
Competitive · Design · for · the · CATHEDRAL · of
St John the DIVINE · New York.

B. G. Goodhue · ARCHITECT
- NEW YORK, N. Y.

Fig. 29. B. G. Goodhue: Competition Drawing, 1889.
Fig. 30. H. M. Congdon: Competition Drawing, 1889.
Fig. 31. Heins & LaFarge: Competition Drawing, 1889.
Fig. 2 Heins & LaFarge: Ground Plan, St. John the Divine, 1889.
Fig. 33. Heins & LaFarge: Interior, Competition Drawing, 1889.
Fig. 34. Huss & Buck: Competition Drawing, 1889.
Fig. 35. Huss & Buck: Ground Plan, St. John the Divine, 1889.
Fig. 36. Potter & Robertson: Competition Drawing, 1889.
Fig. 37. Potter & Robertson: Ground Plan, St. John the Divine, 1889.
Fig. 38. William Halsey Wood: Longitudinal Section, St. John the Divine, 1889.
Fig. 39. William Halsey Wood: Interior, St. John the Divine, 1889.
Fig. 40. William Halsey Wood: Carnegie Free Library, Braddock, Pennsylvania, 1888-89; 1893.
Fig. 41. William Halsey Wood: First Floor Plan, Carnegie Free Library Design, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, 1886.
Fig. 42. William Halsey Wood: Interior section, Carnegie Free Library Design, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, 1886.
Fig. 43. William Halsey Wood: Detail, Carnegie Free Library Design, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, 1886.
Fig. 44. William Halsey Wood: Carnegie Free Library Design, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, 1886.
Fig. 45. William Halsey Wood: Ground Plan, Carnegie Library Design, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
Fig. 46. William Halsey Wood: Carnegie Library Design, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Fig. 48. William Halsey Wood; Zion and St. Timothy Church, New York, 1891.
Fig. 50. William Halsey Wood: Rear, Zion and St. Timothy Church, New York, 1891.
Fig. 51. Interior, Zion and St. Timothy Church, New York, 1891.
Fig. 53. William Halsey Wood: St. Michael and All Angels Church, Anniston, Alabama, 1890.
Fig. 59. William Halsey Wood: Peddie Memorial Church, Newark, New Jersey, 1889.
Fig. 60. Detail, Peddie Memorial Church, Newark, New Jersey, 1889.
Fig. 61. William Halsey Wood: Sketch, 1875.
Fig. 62 William Halsey Wood: William Clark House, Newark, New Jersey.
Fig. 63. William Halsey Wood: D. Smith Wood House, Newark, New Jersey, 1878.
Fig. 64. William Halsey Wood: C. S. French House, East Orange, New Jersey, before 1887.
Fig. 65. William Halsey Wood; F. C. Geiger House, East Orange, New Jersey, before 1887.
Fig. 66. William Halsey Wood: Sketch, 1875.
Fig. 67. William Halsey Wood: Sketch, 1875.
Fig. 68. William Halsey Wood; Sketch, 1876.
Fig. 69. William Halsey Wood: Sketch, 1875.
Fig. 70. William Halsey Wood: Ground Plan, St. John the Divine, 1889.
Fig. 71. William Halsey Wood: Southeast Perspective, St. John the Divine, 1890.
Fig. 72. William Halsey Wood: Reredos, House of Prayer, Newark, New Jersey.
Fig. 73. William Halsey Wood: Library, Winmarleigh, Newark, New Jersey, 1889.
Fig. 74. William Halsey Wood: Sketch, 1881.