

Feb 18, 1927

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY

# DR. WATKINS TALKS ON GOTHIC PERIOD

## INFLUENCE ON CHURCH BUILDING IN ENGLAND APPARENT, HE SAYS.

### LECTURE ILLUSTRATED

#### Success of Architectural Exhibit Prompts Club to Make It an Annual Affair.

The development of Gothic architecture in English church building and its relation to English civilization was outlined at the architectural exhibit Friday evening, when Dr. William Ward Watkins of Rice Institute at Houston, delivered an illustrated lecture on "Church building of the Gothic Period in England."

The lecture was given in the junior ballroom of the Jefferson Hotel and was the last of a series of lectures which have been given under the auspices of the Dallas Architectural Club in connection with their first annual exhibition of Texas architectural and allied arts. An audience which filled the ballroom to capacity followed Dr. Watkins with close attention throughout his lecture. Stereopticon slides showing various examples of Gothic church architecture in England and other countries were shown.

"In my subject for tonight," said Dr. Watkins in opening his lecture, "we will wander back into the period particularly of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when England was intensely active in church building. It is a period of progressive art. The church building of the Gothic period in England is one of the richest fields of expression of the intimate artistic genius, finding abundant means to create significant and treasured form and fabrics. Its simple, heavy, rural churches seem to sleep amid the historic England of their church yards, while in every city, town and hamlet its towers and spires give to England of today the artist's distinctive memorial of a civilization which grew to manhood in the shadows of Christian influence and effort."

#### Church Influence in Art.

"What we need primarily to stimulate a vital art is a sincere belief in the permanency of the institution of the church, what we need scarcely second to the belief in its permanency is the conviction of Ruskin of his lamp of sacrifice that no art is too great, no material too splendid, to be devoted to church building, and to know and to feel clearly that cheapness, imitation and ignorance in design and material is detestable to the spirit of church architecture."

"You can't get your design to feel like Gothic building when you choose details from a cathedral for use in a small church. That, in general, has been the reason the development of modern building in the Gothic style has been slow. The buildings we have to build are usually of modest size, and very limited means. The knowledge of the character of small buildings, (the most economical real building of history), in medieval England has been wanting to the draftsmen of our offices. The great abbeys and cathedrals alone represented Gothic architecture, and from these have been copied windows and doors reduced to doll's house scale."

"Gothic architecture holds for all English speaking peoples a peculiar emotional charm," said Dr. Watkins in closing. "The nature of the architectural qualities which cause such a reaction in the senses of one who sees a building well designed in the English Gothic is not generally a matter of knowledge, but of emotion. Each piece of excellent work you carefully produce in this style stimulates the public appreciation of its merit. The reaction upon the designer is twofold. It encourages him to find his work possessing a quality which the public frankly enjoys, and it stimulates him to compare his work with that field of medieval architecture in England, a field of rich and abundant resource for inspiration of achievement, the towers and spires of whose churches cast a holy shadow over the gray masses of the centuries of English civilization."

#### Exhibit Proves Success.

W. L. Love, former president of the club, introduced Dr. Watkins. Mr. Love declared the success of the exhibit had far exceeded his expectations, and that the club planned to make the exhibit an annual affair, as they had received many requests to do so. The club will issue a yearbook in April. Mr. Love said, containing the best displays at the exhibit, and from the proceeds of this book it is hoped to derive funds to give the snowing day of the exhibit.

Today is the last day of the exhibit. It will remain open to the public until 9:30 o'clock this evening. Ralph Bryan, president of the club, said Mr. Bryan said many requests had been received to continue the exhibit for another week, but owing to the fact that many of the works on display will have to be sent elsewhere it will close tonight.