

BAPTISTS APPROVE \$4,000,000 PLANS FOR FOSDICK CHURCH

**Razing Starts on the Site for
Edifice to Be Built to Endure
for Generations.**

TOWER TO RISE 375 FEET

**Architects Reveal That Chartres
Cathedral Was Inspiration for
Structure on Drive.**

MORE BELLS FOR CARILLON

**Structure to Contain a Theatre and
Athletic Rooms—The Main
Auditorium to Seat 2,400.**

Plans for the \$4,000,000 church which John D. Rockefeller Jr. and others will build at Riverside Drive and 122d Street for the Rev. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick were made public yesterday in advance proofs of the Church Monthly, published by the Park Avenue Baptist Church. The magazine, out today, contains architects' drawings and a description of the proposed building by Charles Collens of Allen & Collens, associated with Henry C. Pelton as architects of the Riverside church.

It was announced that the plans had just been approved by the Park Avenue Baptist Church after a year's study by the architects and the church building committee. Except for cathedrals now being erected, the new building will be the largest church structure in the United States. The main auditorium, where Dr. Fosdick will preach, will have a seating capacity of 2,400.

The architecture will be Gothic, with the inspiration drawn from famous old church edifices of France and Spain, chiefly Chartres Cathedral. The outstanding feature will be the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Tower, the main entrance to the church on Riverside Drive, which will be adapted from one of the Chartres towers. The tower will be 375 feet high and will contain a lofty belfry from which will be sent the music of the carillon now housed in the Park Avenue Baptist Church. Four bells will be added to the present fifty-three, making the carillon the largest in number and the heaviest in the world.

"For many generations to come," Mr. Collens has written, "the tower should symbolize the finger of God pointing upward and the carillon celestial music."

Social Halls in the Tower.

Elevators will carry one to offices, schoolrooms and social halls in the twenty stories of the tower. Winding among the carillon bells, a staircase will lead to the roof, whence, Mr. Collens says, should be had "one of the finest views in New York."

The interior of the church auditorium, which will have a span of 60 feet and a height of 100, will be entirely of stone. A distinctive feature will be a low wide vault in the nave, an idea taken from old Spanish churches for the sake of better acoustics and vision than the narrow and lofty interiors of many American churches afford. Off the main auditorium will be a small chapel, with its own baptistry, chancel and organ, and with a seating capacity of 200. The interior of the chapel will be in the early pointed Romanesque style of architecture, contrasting with the later Gothic of the church proper.

A Theatre in Building.

Underneath the auditorium will be two floors with bowling alleys, a basketball court, and a theatre, besides a large assembly room for the Rockefeller Men's Bible Class, choir rooms, robing rooms, locker rooms, kitchens, &c.

Work has been started to demolish the buildings on the church site and excavation and concrete work on the new church will be begun soon. No date for its completion has been set, but it will be erected as rapidly as consistent with permanence of construction.

Mr. Collens's article in the Church Monthly reads in part as follows:

"The church purchased over a year ago a plot of land with a frontage of 225 feet on Riverside Drive, 100 feet on 122d Street and 20 feet on Clare-

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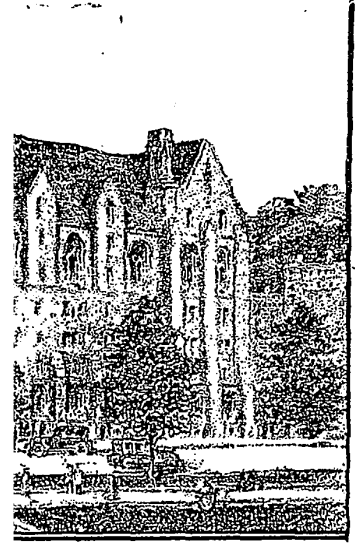
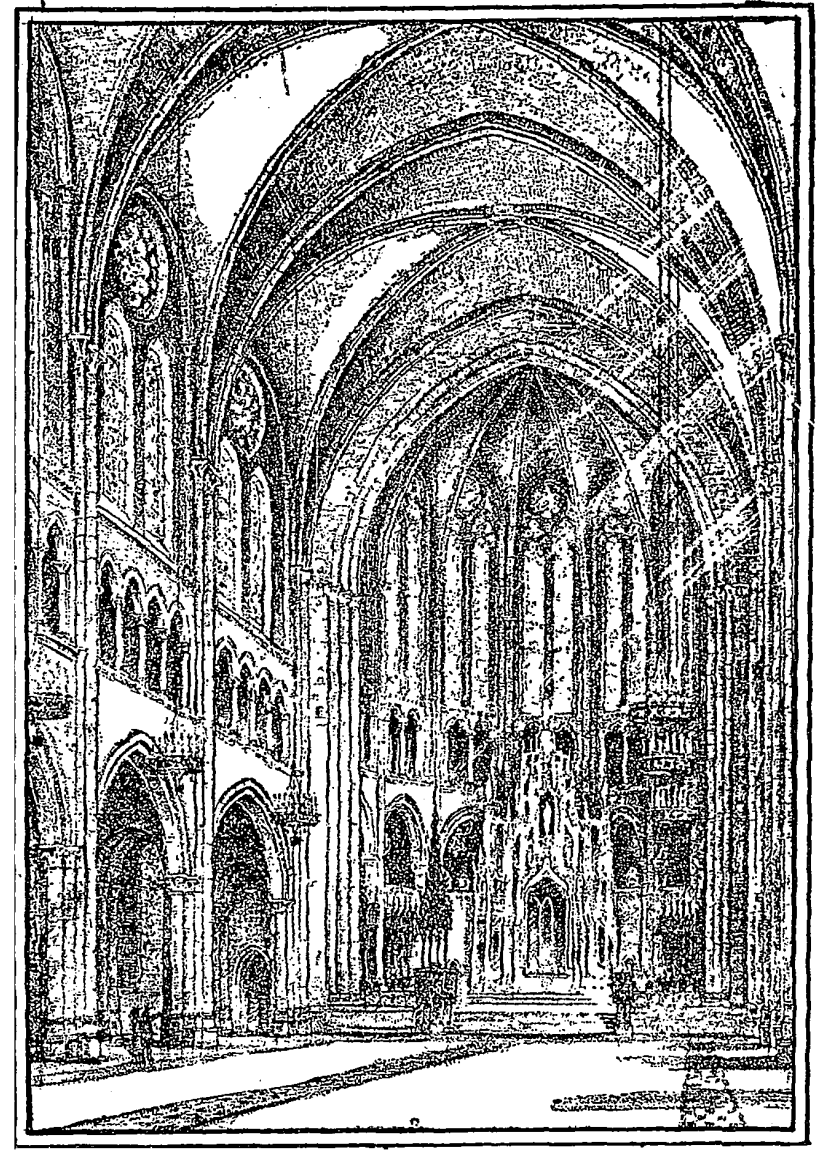
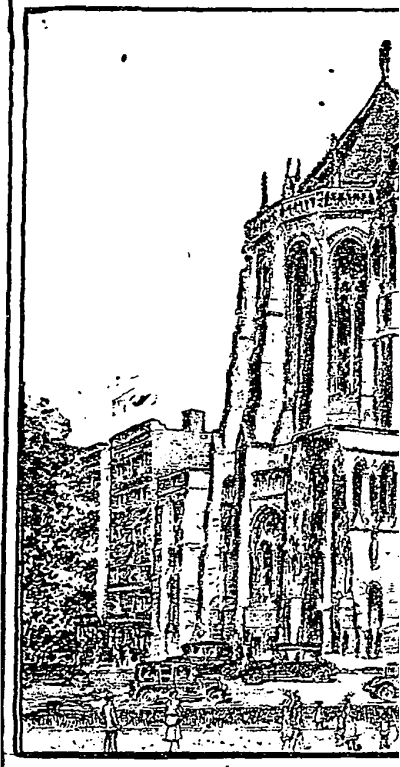
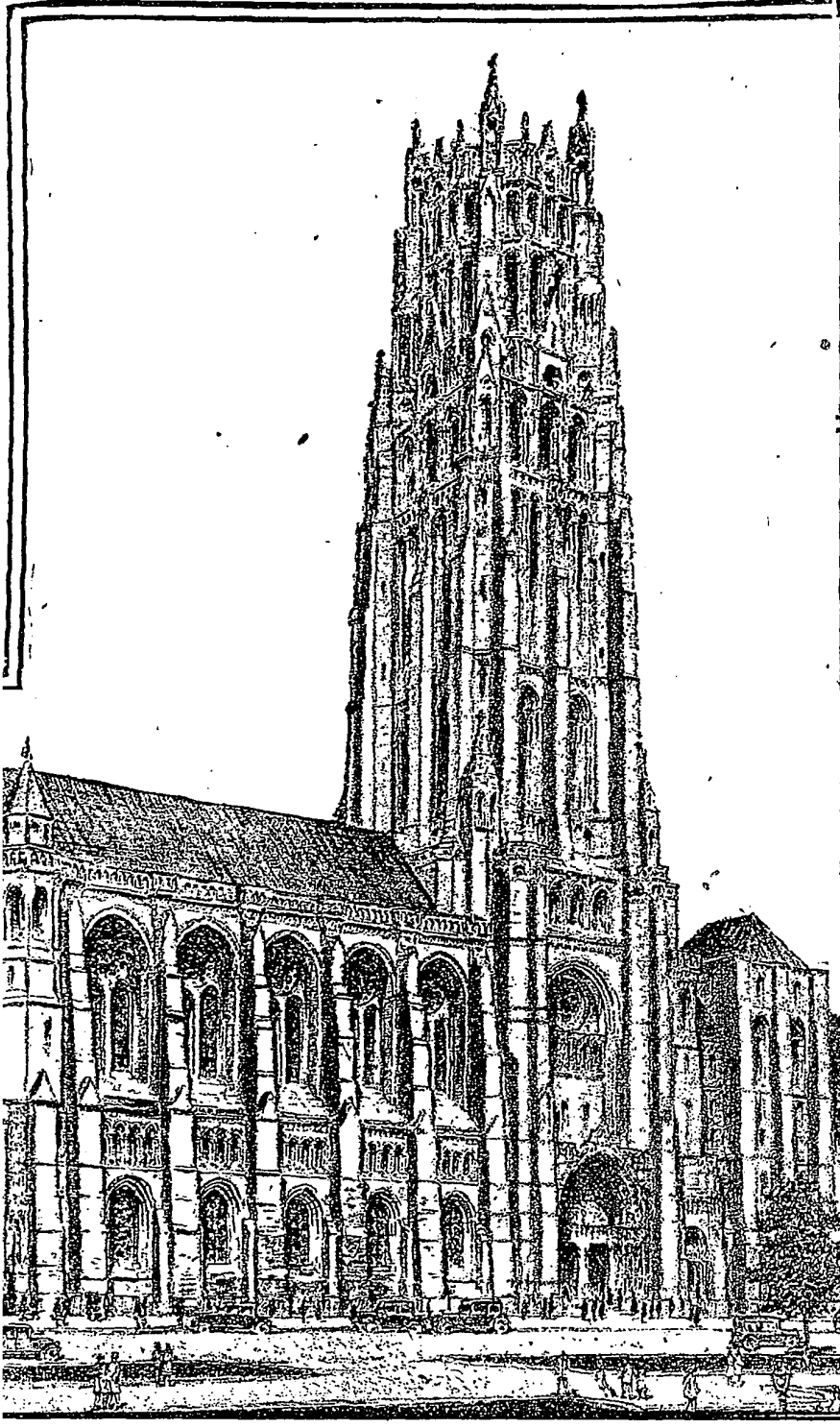
Dr. Fosdick's New \$4,000,000 Church As Shown by the Plans Now Approved

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mont Avenue. Later, an additional 40 feet was purchased to the south. This lot has the unique advantage of a park, fronting on International House and Grant's Tomb, and an elevation which admits of an uninterrupted view of the Hudson River and the Palisades for miles in both directions. For several months sketches were made in an endeavor to confine the church to the northerly end of the block, preserving a large apartment house which occupied the centre of the 450-foot frontage on the Drive.

Decided to Raze Apartment House.
"It was definitely proved, however, that no satisfactory results could be obtained thereby, and plans were ultimately developed for demolishing the apartment house, placing the church with its axis parallel to the Drive, linking it up with the future Gothic buildings of the Union Theological Seminary to the south, and erecting in the centre of the combined facade the great Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Tower.

"A simple, bold type of Gothic architecture has been used, the inspira-



tion for which has come largely from Chartres Cathedral. This involves the elimination of tracery motifs in the fenestration and throughout the tower openings, replaced by the engaged colonette and flattened arch, and the use of plate tracery rose windows with great areas of stained glass framed in heavy metal bars and leadings.
"Following closely the dimensions of the interior of Albi Cathedral in Southern France, the church auditorium has a span of 60 feet and a clear height to the ridge of the vault of 100 feet. This interior is planned with narrow vaulted aisles, triforium and clerestory, the northerly end terminating in an apsidal treatment, with choir and ambulatory, and the southerly end in a double gallery motif made necessary by the requirements of fitting a seating capacity of 2,400 to a restricted New York lot. The interior will be entirely of stone. As a focal point to the whole composition the usual reredos has been replaced by an intricate Gothic canopy or baldachino covering the baptistry and communion table at the rear of the chancel. A great organ will occupy the turrelles on either side of the chancel with antiphonal and echo organ in the gallery.

Main Entrance on Drive.
"The main entrance to the church is on Riverside Drive. To the south of this main portal is a smaller doorway which gives entrance into the chapel. The chapel has been designed in the pointed Romanesque, such as is found in the beautiful little cathedral in the old city of Carcassonne. The treatment of early style in the chapel as contrasted with a later style in the church proper is derived from the charming effect produced by the proximity of the old and new cath-

edrals at Salamanca. The chapel will be all of stone, will seat about 200 and will have its own baptistry, chancel and organ. It is planned to remove from the chancel of the present Park Avenue Baptist Church the antique glass medallions and install them in the chancel of the chapel of the new building.
"The two floors under the church auditorium contain the large assembly room for the Men's Bible Class, plays and entertainments, a basket ball court, and bowling alleys. In addition are the necessary coat and locker rooms, showers, kitchen and serving rooms, choir rooms, robing rooms, and all of the service rooms incidental to such a plant.
"The floors over the chapel contain church school class rooms. The women's rooms, sewing rooms, young people's room, class rooms for the lower school, church offices and studies are all located in the tower.
"Access to the carillon can be had by a staircase that winds among the bells and leads to the roof walk between the sounding board over the bells and the top parapet of the tower. From this point should be obtained one of the finest views in New York, an uninterrupted outlook in all directions as far as the eye can see.
"The work of demolishing the existing buildings has already been started and will be immediately followed by the excavation and concrete work. No actual date can be promised for the completion of the church, which will be furthered as rapidly as is consistent with the importance of the work.

Plan a Permanent Structure.
"It is not planned to consider this building as of a temporary character. Forty years is the average life of a

New York church building. Stone, steel and concrete will all be so designed and assembled as to create a structure whose enduring qualities will far outlast its more temporary neighbors. For many generations to come the tower should symbolize the finger of God pointing upward and the carillon celestial music. The church itself should embody that religious inspiration which its prototypes have for centuries afforded the worshippers within their walls."
Mr. Collins gave the following account of a twenty-one day automobile trip through France and Spain with his colleague, Mr. Peiton, to study famous ancient cathedrals and churches, telling where and how they obtained inspiration for the new church:
"A route was taken from Paris through Chartres to Le Mans, whose great piles vividly brought back the magnificent Gothic of Northern France. Then a short tour was made to the Romanesque Churches of Perigueux and Angoulême, but these churches yielded nothing to the search, as they are cold in feeling and fail to create the highly charged atmosphere of religion and worship which characterizes the Gothic. Next came Bordeaux, where a precedent was found for the main entrance to the church at the side rather than on the axis of the nave. Bordeaux Cathedral has its towers and main portals at the transept rather than at the west front. There is a curious symbolical reason for the side entrance in the early Christian churches based on the entrance of the

spear into the side of the crucified Savior. From Bordeaux the route lead through Biarritz and the pass at the Western end of the Pyrenees into Spain.

Thrilled by Old Cathedrals.
"At Burgos came the first initiation into the Spanish adaptation of French and German influence in Gothic art. It is a wonderful cathedral, full of mystery and feeling, where one is pleasurably bewildered at the richness of detail in vaulting, chapel, and screen. The same emotional thrill greets one at Leon, Palencia, Salamanca, Segovia, Toledo and Barcelona, but none of these cathedrals seemed to contribute anything specific other than an increasing sense of the fact that he who designs a great church in anything but Gothic has lost a divine spark in the structure itself which only that great art can supply.
"In several of the Barcelona churches and at Gerona, however, the architects were greatly interested in noting the magnificent effects produced by the use of a low, wide vault in the nave. Gothic churches have been so frequently patterned after the narrow lofty proportions of the Northern French and English Cathedrals that we have overlooked the possibility of the low, wide vault. This latter type, while embodying all of the inspirational qualities of the former, is much more suited to the modern church where the worshippers insist on better acoustics and an uninterrupted vision of the services.
"From Gerona the architects crossed the eastern pass of the Pyrenees into France again, where still more churches

of widespanned vaults were found at Perpignan, Carcassonne and Albi, all of which accentuated the advisability of applying this feature to the new Riverside church. At Rodez, in Southern France, the architects found what at first seemed to them a suitable motif for the great bell tower of the new church, a tower built in stages and with a fine terminating belfry, all of which would lend itself to a treatment somewhat different from the other famous towers built in recent times in this country. Later studies of the Riverside church, however, discarded this tower for a different type.

Chartres Cathedral Not Copied.

"With their minds refreshed by all of this priceless material, some of which had been seen for the first time, the architects attacked the problem from the standpoint of detail. After sitting out and attempting to adapt various motifs, it was found that Chartres Cathedral lent itself best to this particular church. It must not be assumed that Chartres Cathedral has in any sense been copied. Architecture cannot be invented. It must be evolved, and the evolution is a very slow process. Any new style that suddenly bursts upon us is practiced by the unwary and in a very short time becomes a prey to the building wrecker.

"All the buildings in this country that have outlived criticism are based on famous precedents. For many reasons too lengthy to discuss in this short article, the world has not created any style since Gothic gave place to the Imitative Types. If the Riverside Church is to endure, it must be by reason of a foundation laid in one of the great examples of church architecture which has outlived many centuries. Chartres Cathedral has lent the motifs and inspiration, and the architects have adapted them to this particular problem. Chartres Cathedral and the Riverside Church bear no resemblance in outline, merely in fundamental principles.

"There were two especial reasons for this selection: first, so much of the modern church design in New York and throughout the country has made use of the traceried types of the later French and English Gothic that it appeared advisable to obtain a certain individuality by employing this noble and imposing type of sturdier design. Secondly, the erection of a great tower in which every floor is used for some practical purpose required a fenestration devoid of tracery, which the superimposed and offset arcades of the older of the two Chartres towers furnishes in an admirable manner."

It was decided to build the Riverside church early in 1925, when Dr. Fosdick accepted the call to the pastorate of the Park Avenue Baptist church. He stipulated conditions, which the church accepted, that it should build a new home near Columbia University, that it should open its membership to all Christians regardless of dogma and that it should not insist upon the principle of baptism by immersion.

The original plan was to build a combined church and income-producing building, but this was abandoned last December in favor of a building "solely for use as a church and of a recognized churchly type."