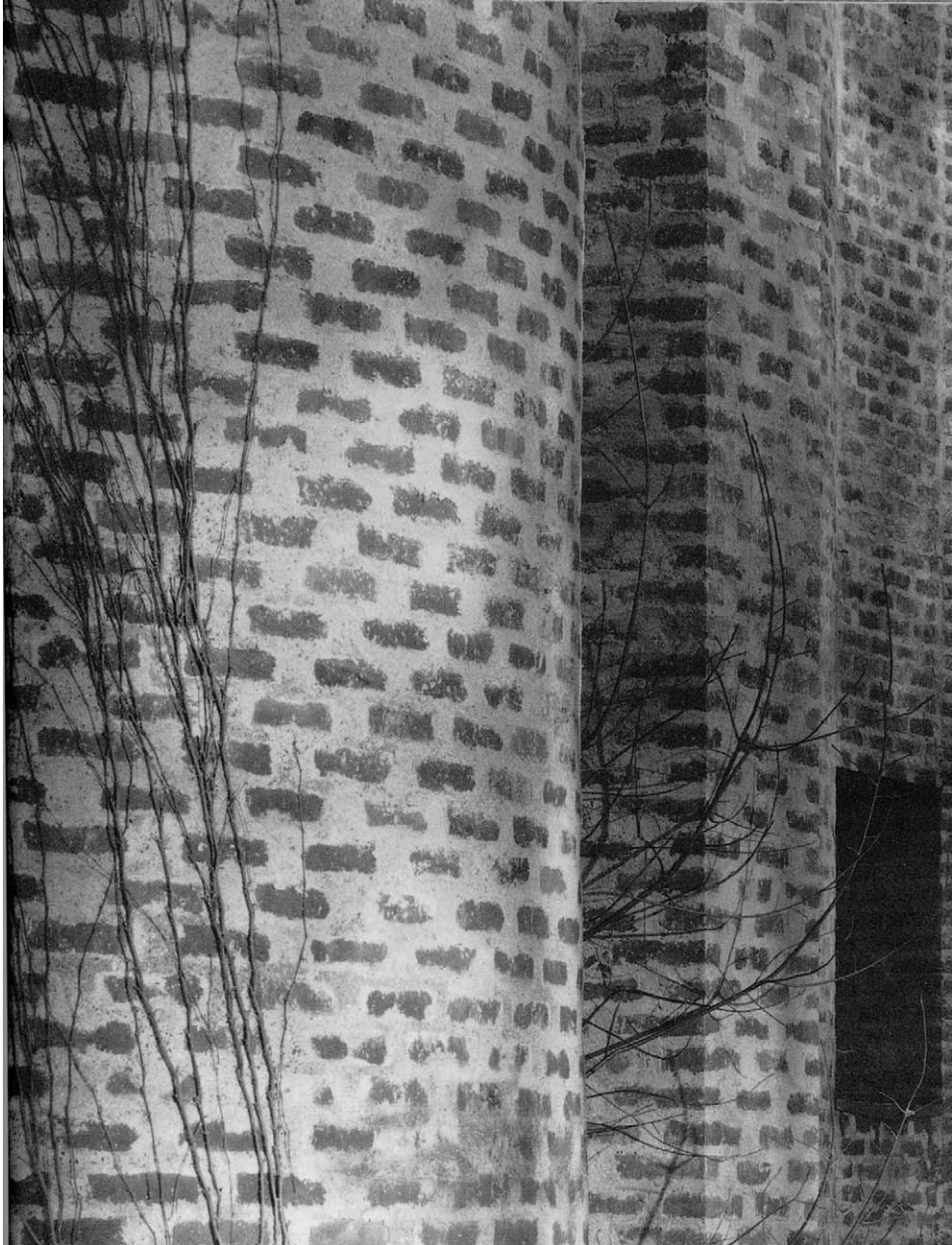


Below
Sigurd Lewerentz,
Church of St Mark,
Björkhagen, Sweden
1956-60

130



Ecclesiologist (Slater, 1856) which remained a project; built examples are, in fact, extremely rare and continue to be so during the 20th century. When Sigurd Lewerentz, for example, used rolled steel sections in his Church of St Peter at Klippan outside Stockholm of 1963–66, he did so sparingly and probably because of structural necessity in a very dominantly brick building. The steel supports brick vaults to reduce their span and at the same time column and beam become a memory of the crucifix.

Lewerentz's church at Klippan and his earlier church at Björkhagen are both wonderful examples of taking a material—brick—and celebrating its nature with love. Lewerentz recognised that to make a wall you need both bricks *and* mortar. Both are given their due weight. Very frequent visits to the site persuaded bricklayers that there is more than one way of making a brick wall.

Both churches were built in a period when 'truth to materials' was a strongly held belief. Derived from Ruskin, perpetuated by Frank Lloyd Wright, it became a mantra of modern architecture, was confined to a limited palette of materials in Brutalism and then tended to become less significant towards the end of the 20th century. In its heyday it was a clear cut question of morality. The moral imperative has at the beginning of the 21st century, switched to green issues which affect all of architecture including, crucially, the selection of materials.

Clearly general attitudes in society bear on the visual choices made by architects; our eye does not operate in isolation. A casual leafing through architectural magazines of 2001 would, for example, show the frequent use of timber cladding. Wood is seen as a renewable resource which makes relatively small demands on energy in its conversion into a building material. The frequency in the same magazines would have been much less ten or fifteen years earlier.

Historically we associate certain materials with specific periods of architecture and specific localities. The conjunction of time, place and material is, however, a matter of the availability of resources. We make an immediate link between