

SAINT WILLIAM WINDOW, YORK MINSTER, ABOUT 1421

## STAINED GLASS WINDOWS—COLORED SUNLIGHT

BY CHARLES J. CONNICK

**T**HIS FASCINATING craft is still fresh and youthful although its age is known to be between eight hundred and one thousand years. This gives a dash of humor to the title of "Pioneer" that is sometimes applied to me in relation to my work in it. This title has another significance, however, that relates particularly to the craft in America.

The old windows were made with transparent bits of colored glass in flat, decorative designs made forceful and eloquent by the clever use of the supporting bands or leads between them. These designs were further accented by paint lines on the glass, fired in charcoal kilns, and so made practically indestructible.

You can find by looking closely through

opera glasses at the splendid old windows in Chartres, or Bourges, or Le Mans, the deft brush strokes of the painter who lived and worked some eight hundred years ago.

This painting on glass should never be confused with painting on canvas, or any other opaque surface. It was always dark brown or black, and served to suggest, mostly in lines, faces and hands and drapery, always in design and never in the full toned, pictorial fashion that we associate with painting on canvas.

The artist of the thirteenth century knew little about realistic painting as we know it today. His figures were more like symbols than like portraits or photographs. The camera, with its blessings and disservices, was fortunately unknown to him.





FOURTEENTH CENTURY FRAGMENT FROM WINDOW, LADY CHAPEL,  
WELLS CATHEDRAL

This playful bit of Oliver Herford's verse, made up of nonsense and wisdom, may be enlightening right here. As an illustration he has a long-legged bird, holding a gun under one wing, and the verse runs:

The Adjutant, I may explain,  
Is a gigantic sort of crane.  
A realist would dance with rage,  
To see him pictured on this page  
Holding a gun.

But that is where the art comes in,  
The artist does not care a pin  
Always to follow nature's groove.  
It is art's mission to improve  
On nature, just as I have done.

But if you do not like the gun  
And realistic art prefer  
Then go to a photographer.

This quaintly suggests the symbol as opposed to the literal likeness, and the students of the splendid old glass may well rejoice that the old craftsmen could not go to a photographer.

Some cynical observers have said that those stately masterpieces—themselves a part of the architectural fabric of mighty structures—would never have had their simple eloquence of design if Michael Angelo and Raphael had arrived on the scene a little earlier.





SAINT REMI—DETAIL, WINDOW CONFESSOR'S CHAPEL, CHARTRES

The point to interest us is that the old artists in glass, through whatever combination of circumstances, used their medium to such purpose, expressing their ideals and emotions in terms of design and color, that their work has never been equalled in the centuries since they lived and worked.

Forty or fifty years ago, an American artist who was then known as a successful decorator and a superb colorist, was greatly impressed with the windows in the Cathedral of Chartres, France. He realized, through careful study, that those old windows had a mysterious quality of low vibra-

tion in color through the action of varying atmospheres and chemical change.

Little bits of corrosion on the weather side of the glass and a thin scum or patina served to make it partially opaque. He reasoned, and correctly, that as the American light is much more intense than the light of France, a similar opacity might pleasantly reduce glare and also obtain a quality of color and light similar to those lovely windows for our own churches. With the help of a well-known glass maker in Philadelphia, Mr. La Farge produced a glass at first only partially opaque, with streaks of pure color

running through it, which he called opalescent glass. His early works in that glass are to be found in Trinity Church, Boston (the window over the entrance) and in the left transept window in the Ames Memorial

in the delineation of realistic effects that belong rightly to the painter's craft, and not to the craft of stained glass.

Now you can understand why the term "Pioneer" is used for one who has reverted



ANGELS SUPPORTING THE THRONE OF OUR LADY IN "OUR LADY OF THE BEAUTIFUL WINDOW," CHARTRES

Church in North Boston, Massachusetts. Both windows show a certain relationship with the jewelled windows of France.

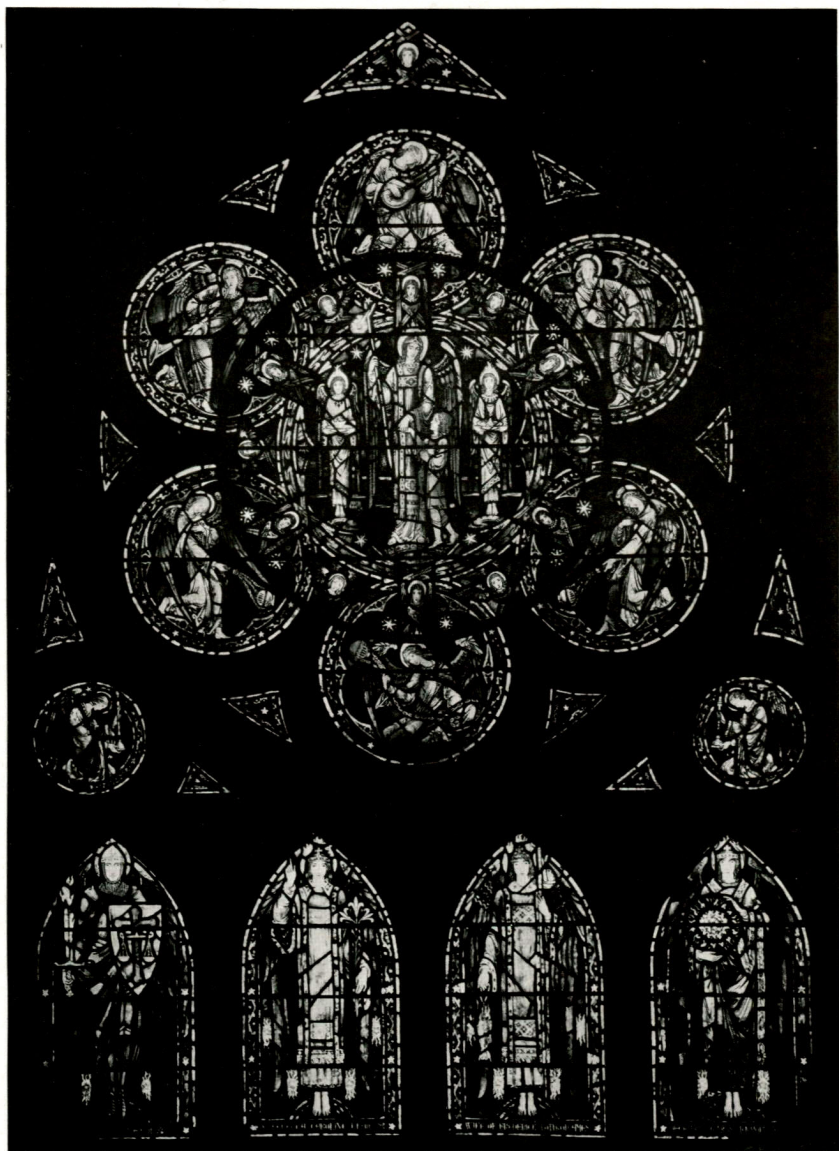
His later work, well represented by several windows in Trinity Church, Boston, took on the quality of paintings on canvas. In other words, La Farge the glass man was overwhelmed by La Farge the painter, and in this way began what is known as the American school of stained glass.

Windows of this type are to be found everywhere and often reveal great cleverness

to the transparent glass, the simple design, and the symbolical terms of the masters who nobly served the world of art.

It is an interesting coincidence, if it is a coincidence, that modern art in painting is beginning to follow a tendency toward design closely related to the expressive methods of the old masters in glass. Wouldn't it be one of life's ironies if the painter were to be marked as an imitator of the glass man, when so recently the glass man has done his best to imitate the painter?





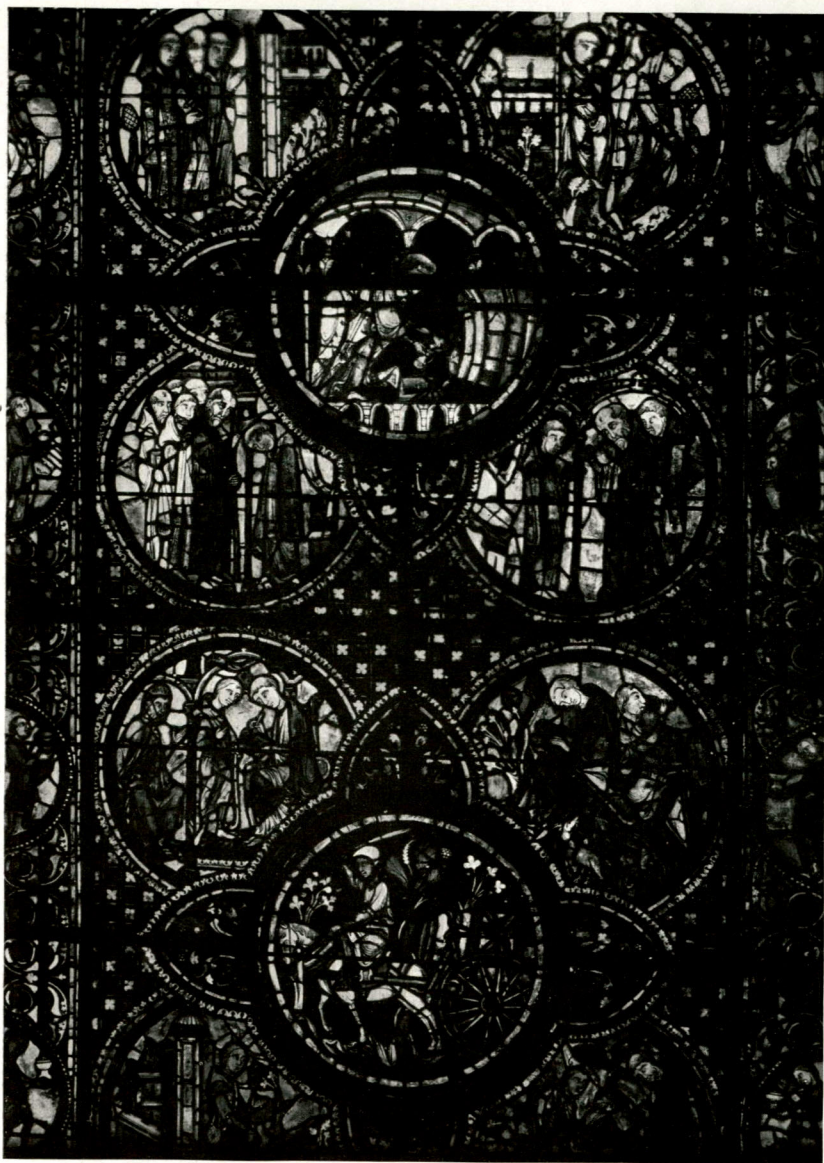
AMES MEMORIAL WINDOW, UNITY CHURCH, NORTH EASTON, MASS.  
DESIGNED AND MADE BY CHARLES J. CONNICK

When you look at transparent stained glass windows, old or new, your first impression may be more nearly related to jewels or flowers in sunlight than to the world of pictorial art with which you are more familiar. Their first appeal should be emotional rather than intellectual, and it

may be that you will recall those first impressions like strains of music long after the actual subject matter has been forgotten.

When you come to know superb windows you will realize that their actual composition is related to the work of poets, symbolists and teachers, as well as to great artists and





LOWER SECTION OF SAINT LUBIN WINDOW, NORTH AISLE, CHARTRES

craftsmen, for color and line in glass, afire with light, offer a medium of expression for ideals and emotions second to none.

This naturally means that its beauty and power is not necessarily limited to the enrichment of churches; a renewed appreciation of its gracious influence is making it

welcome in schools and hospitals, as well as in distinctive homes.

Large areas of leaded white or clear glass, enriched with medallions in splendid color, have a superb decorative effect that is made more significant by the character and meaning of the designs themselves.





LOT'S WIFE. WINDOW CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL. THIRTEENTH CENTURY

The donors of a large children's hospital, now being built in Cincinnati, appreciate the value of this medium and are filling the children's play-room of that institution with leaded glass, medallions and small figures in such fascinating subjects as Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Joan of Arc, Sir Galahad and the Holy Grail, "Pilgrim's Progress," "The Child's Garden of Verses," "Hiawatha," "Mother Goose," "Huckleberry Finn," and "Tom Sawyer."

The chapel opening from this room will have medallion windows in full color with subjects taken from the life of Christ, with special reference to his love for little children.

Four larger windows are to contain the four best known archangels as guardians of children, with birds and flowers and tiny animals made a part of the design and its symbolism.

Simplicity of form and brilliance of color and light are the distinguishing features of

this happy group, which we are all enjoying as we work upon it day after day.

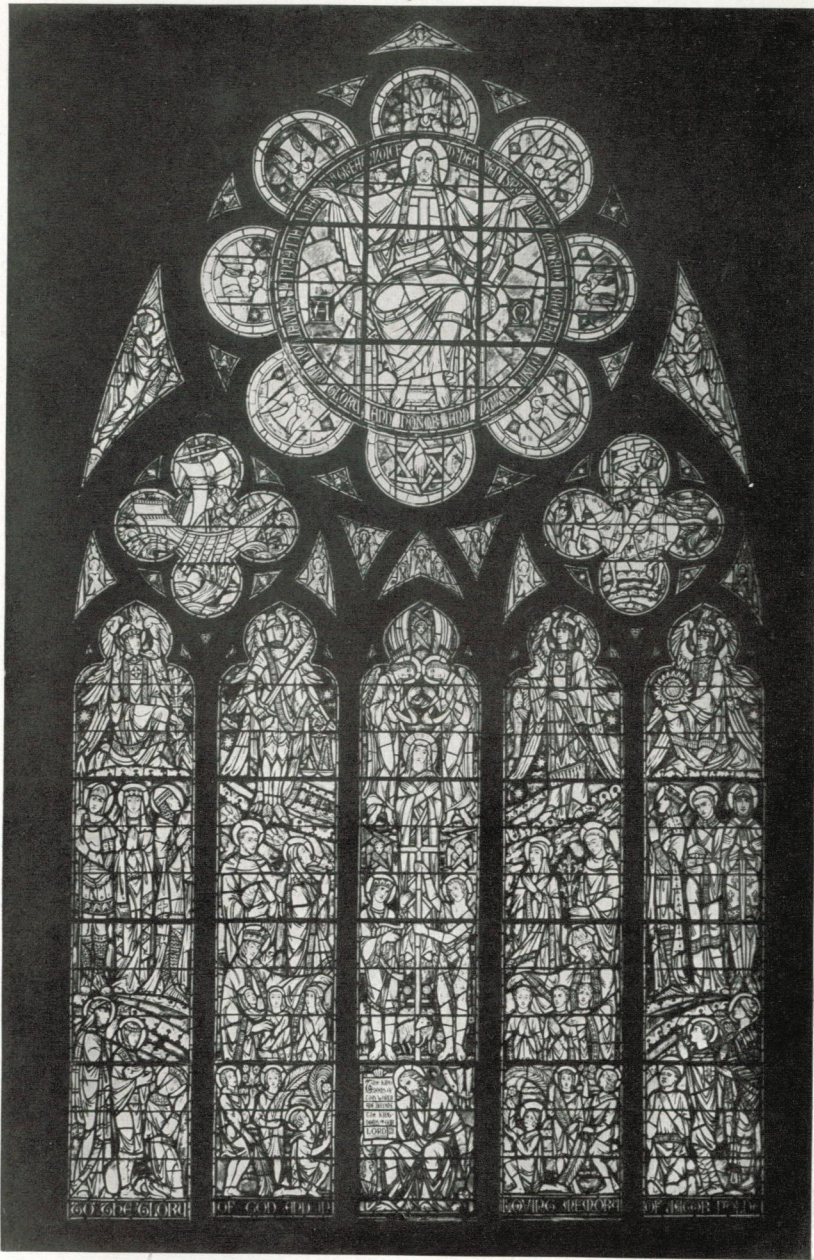
It takes some of us a long time to feel at home with simple forms of design that serve as symbols when we are surrounded on all sides by realistic pictures and photographs, but children get their messages instinctively, for they live in a world of symbolism.

When we older folks realize that creation is a higher form than imitation, and that symbolism is a universal language for the expression of spiritual truths, we are more patient with naive and primitive works of art that at first sight appear bizarre and strange and which children would probably accept without question.

The late Sir Walter Raleigh has lightly voiced an idea related not only to modern art, but to realistic expressions of all time.

The artist is an awful man—  
He does not do the thing he can.  
He does the thing he cannot do,  
And we attend the private view.





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WINDOW IN MERCERSBURG MEMORIAL CHAPEL  
DESIGNED AND MADE BY CHARLES J. CONNICK

CRAM AND FERGUSON, ARCHITECTS



This world of ours is fair to see;  
 The artist will not let it be.  
 He fiddles with the works of God  
 And makes them look uncommon odd.

Anything unfamiliar we are ready to dismiss as "odd" unless some quality of beauty or power holds us.

The artist in glass wants to thrill you and hold you with an appeal that sings of eternal beauty in colored light; be patient with him, even if, at times, both he and his work seem "uncommon odd."

Colors themselves are symbols, according to old traditions which our own sensitive reactions amplify and strengthen.

We have surely felt—all of us—that pure reds symbolize divine love, passionate devotion, courage and valor; that blue suggests loyalty, divine wisdom, eternity; green, hope and youth; gold, riches and achievement, white, peace and serenity; violet, humility.

My own feeling is that the exuberant splendor of pure color and the powerful blacks of lead lines should be recognized everywhere as a most promising medium for vigorous talent. While we must submit to the rigors of a craft that must be patiently, even painfully learned, we need not be slaves to the factory idea.

From the first water color design, which is made to scale, the exact shape of the window, through the full sized charcoal drawings (or cartoons) which serve as working drawings to those who cut the glass, and later, to those who paint it—still later to the glaziers who wrap the pieces of glass in leads—the same compelling idea should persist, as free from time-clocks and routine as possible.

Stained glass may be made a truly great expression of the spiritual verities when it is designed and made by one craftsman-artist, or when he must have the help of other hands and brains and talent, but it can never reach its real distinction through factory rules and rigid formulas.

The same forces that unite to create great architecture, great music, and great poetry, are the inspiration of the masterpieces in glass—that thrill us in the old cathedrals of France and England.

They are behind the worthy efforts we are all making to express the joy and fullness of life that we know, whatever our medium.

Like the old masters before us, we sing in the colors of nature's vast heraldic banners—the blue of sky and water and distant hills; the reds, golds and violets of sunsets; the prismatic varieties of rainbows, trees, grass, and flowers.

Some of our windows may serve as a spirit accompaniment in color to these lines of Richard Hovey; and if they serve to recall them, or the feeling behind them, they shall have served well, regardless of their own subject-matter.

Look Without!  
 Behold the beauty of the day  
 The Shout  
 Of color to glad color  
 Rocks and Trees  
 And Sun and Sea  
 And Wind and Sky  
 All these  
 Are God's Expression,  
 Art Work of His Hand,  
 Which men must love, ere they may understand.

The Societe des Architectes Diplomes par le Gouvernement Francais has, through its American Group, awarded to Frederic A. Delano, its medal for distinguished service in the advancement of art and architecture. This medal was handed to Mr. Delano by Edwin H. Denby, president of the American Group, at a dinner in his honor. Mr. Denby, in the course of his presentation address, drew attention to the fact that other distinguished Americans to receive this medal were Elihu Root, George B. McClellan, former Mayor of New York, and E. Kirk Price of Philadelphia.

A memorial exhibition of the works of Mary Cassatt opened in the Pennsylvania Museum, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, on April 30 to continue to May 29. The collection includes paintings, drawings and prints, lent by a number of the leading American museums and private collectors. The work of assembling this exhibition was in charge of a committee of artists, associates of Mary Cassatt, and members of the Museum's staff, among whom were Adolphe Borie, John F. Braun, Arthur Edwin Bye, Mrs. J. Gardner Cassatt, Robert K. Cassatt, Mrs. Horace O. Havemeyer, and Fiske Kimball.