

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS IN CHRIST CHURCH, GLENDALE

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by

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The stained glass windows in Christ Church, Glendale, designed by Charles J. Connick, are among the finest examples of that type of modern stained glass windows to be found in this country. They follow the tradition of the brilliant windows of medieval times, such as those at Chartres Cathedral in France.

In contrast to the picture windows of the nineteenth century, an example of which is the brown window of the Good Shepherd at the east end of the church, these windows depend for their beauty on the "active translucence" of the glass, the changing colors and jewel-like quality of the windows as the outdoor light filters through them. Like the stained glass windows of the Middle Ages, the aisle windows tell a story, and each small detail carries out the symbolism of the whole.

Until the present century there was little good stained glass in America. Tourists admired the magnificent windows in the European cathedrals and regarded the making of that kind of glass a "lost art". In one sense this was true. Mr. Connick, whose book "Adventures in Light and Color" explains his theories about stained glass, also tells how he worked out the making of such windows as these in Christ Church.

Charles J. Connick, now recognized as the leading artist in this field, was born in Pittsburgh on September 27, 1875. He worked in earlier types of church windows, then went abroad and developed his own techniques for the designing and building of this kind of stained glass window. Although he had a limited formal school education, stopping at the end of high school to help support his mother, he became much of a scholar as well as an artist. He studied carefully not only the location, light problems, and pattern for each window he made; for the Dante window at Princeton University he became a Dante scholar. As he also made, for that college, windows on Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", "Paradise Lost",

and Mallory's "Morte d'Arthur", he must have had a wide knowledge of English literature as well as Biblical knowledge.

It was he who developed not only the method of setting in the small panes of glass, but also the way to achieve the clear bright colors in the glass itself. Here in Christ Church can be seen the difference between the opalescent window of the last century and the clear sparkling jewel-like quality of the Connick windows. In the older glass the colors are pastel shades rather than strong primary colors, and the lead lines and other structural elements are suppressed as much as possible to give the effect of an oil painting. One of the best of the artists who designed this type of window was John LaFarge, and he made attractive windows in rich color which could resist our brilliant American light, but they often subdued the light so much that church interiors became too dim. In fact the whole problem of using the light, both from within and without, is one of the great challenges in creating stained glass windows, and Mr. Connick devotes a great deal of space in his book to discussing this problem. He also admits that "the making of colored glass is still enlivened by change."

At its best the opalescent window can be pleasing, but when one comes to know the strong alive qualities of the clear glass, the older school seems weak and timid. In the 19th century there was a tendency toward realistic drawing, in modelling and perspective, fatal to the decorative as distinct from the pictorial arts. The design of a window should not attempt to disguise that it is a window.

First look at the Victory Window over the altar. Here is a bit of its history:

After the First World War the members of Christ Church, let by Mrs. Mortimer Matthews, were so grateful that no man had been lost in the service, and that, as it then seemed, war was ended for all time, they decided to erect

a window in the chancel in thanksgiving. The Reverend Gilbert P. Symons, Rector of the church and himself an artist, did not like the type of art glass then being sold to churches throughout the country. It was he, studying and planning for our victory window, who came upon a small hand-drawn advertisement in a magazine, in which Mr. Connick described his stained glass work. Mr. Symons answered this, telling his feeling about the art, the problems in Glendale, and offering the artist almost a carte-blanche opportunity to design our window. I'm told that Mr. Connick, then just beginning his work in Boston, was so excited and thrilled over Mr. Symons' letter that he had it framed over his desk for years. In all events Mr. Connick, then in Washington, came to Glendale, was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Symons in the rectory for about a week, during which time he studied the space for the window, the problems of light and color, and the spirit of the community. As a result of this visit Mr. Symons and Mr. Connick became life-long friends, and Mr. Symons told me many anecdotes of this friendship.

The Victory Window presented special problems. It is an off shape, a Gothic arch which is too wide for its height. This became apparent before 1919 and Mr. Symons had presented the problem to Mr. Cram who solved it beautifully by making not only the handsome tracery but by putting in two strong upward arms of masonry which have the effect of narrowing the opening. Mr. Connick designed the window to fit this, and was enthusiastic about adopting Mr. Symons' suggestion that he use Biblical texts in the window.

The general subject at the base of the central figure of Christ is "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory". The dominating figure is Christ upon His cross. The nobility and power of the Great Sacrifice are suggested by His triumphant resignation, by the vestica, by cherubim surrounding Him, by the royal red behind Him, and by the challenging text "Consider Him who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down

at the right hand of the throne of God." Below stand the Blessed Virgin, St. John, and Mary Magdalen.

In the left lancet, looking toward the figure of Christ, are the militant heroes of the Old Testament: Abraham, ready to offer Isaac as our parents were ready to offer their sons; David, the victor over the giant enemy; brave Joshua; and the devout and patriotic Maccabeus. Among them runs the legend "These are they which came out of tribulation."

In the right lancet stand St. John the Baptist; St. Stephen; St. Paul; and, holding her little child, that sweet saint of cruel days, Perpetua. For these the text is "They loved not their lives unto the death."

In the base medallions are the Last Supper (center), Victory in the Wilderness, indicated by the text "Get thee behind me Satan, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God", and Victory in the Temple, with the text "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

St. Michael, the Archangel, is at the apex of the window, and each of the figures below is significant . . . St. Genevieve, St. Joan of Arc, St. George, and King Alfred among them.

Much of the appeal of the window is from the color. The dominant tone is a true blue, the traditional color for heavenly love, constancy, and loyalty, with red for divine passion, gold for achievement, white for purity, peace and serenity, and green for youth and victory.

The entire group of aisle windows was designed to complement and enhance the chancel group in color and light. Growing vine forms enrich the field and outline the medallions devoted to expressive symbols of the Parables of our Lord, with related symbols below. In the upper circles of each window are archangels whose attributes and characteristics are related to each of the parables. The

stone tracery which replaced the original wooden frames of the windows was designed by Mr. A. C. Denison before the 75th anniversary, and was installed at the time the first four of the aisle windows were erected. It is of Indiana limestone, and was inspired by the English Gothic designs of the Fourteenth Century.

The Parables represented in the group of windows on either side of the nave are easily recognizable. On your right, as you look toward the chancel, they are: The Parable of the Ten Virgins, the Parable of the Prodigal Son (notice the many examples of human kindness and acts of mercy - "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat", and in the lower medallions a figure with a pitcher of water - "I was thirsty and ye gave me drink", and a figure under shelter - "I was a stranger and ye took me in"), the Parable of the Talents, and the Parable of the Sower.

On your left are the Parable of the Last Judgment (nearest the door), of the Man Who Built His House on a Rock, and of the Good Samaritan. Each of these is thought out in detail and most of the symbolism is very intelligible. For example, in the window devoted to the Parable of the Good Samaritan you can see the unfortunate man who fell among thieves, and balancing this the figure of the Good Samaritan who came to his aid. In the medallions below are the thief, contrasted with the hospitable innkeeper, and at the bottom the priest and Levite who passed by. St. Chamael, the Angel who succored Christ in Gethsemane, is represented with his symbol, the chalice.

Mr. Connick died December 28, 1945. His work has been carried on by Connick Associates in Boston, and they designed and installed the window in the north transept dedicated to Rhoda van Nes Allen. This tells the story of how St. Peter, after he had been rescued from prison by an angel, went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, and the door was answered by a maid named Rhoda, who recognized his voice and was so overjoyed that instead of opening the dooe she ran in and announced that Peter was standing outside.

Mr. Connick also designed and made the windows in the Chapel of Christ Church. The two chancel windows express Christ's relation to children through His miracles of healing and His thoughtfulness toward young people. The windows along the side are called "grisaille", with pale-colored glass to admit more light, and each has a medallion showing the life of Jesus.

Victory Window

Installed in March, Nineteen Hundred Twenty
In the Chancel of Christ Church, Glendale, Ohio
Reverend Gilbert P. Symons, Rector

Designed and Made by Charles J. Connick, Boston

Thanksgiving for Victory

Chancel Window : Christ Church : Glendale : Ohio



The General Subject

The general subject is announced by the main text, "Thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory." The dominating figure is Christ upon the Cross. The nobility and power of the Great Sacrifice are suggested by His triumphant resignation, by the vesica, by cherubim surrounding Him, by the royal red behind Him, and by the challenging text, "Consider Him, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Below stand the Blessed Virgin, St. John, and St. Mary Magdalen.

The Left Lancet

Looking towards the Promised One from the left lancet are militant heroes of the Old Dispensation: Abraham, ready to offer Isaac as our parents were ready to offer their sons; David, the victor over the giant enemy; brave Joshua; and the devout and patriotic Maccabeus. Among these runs the legend: "These are they which came out of great tribulation."

The Right Lancet

On the opposite side stand St. John Baptist, St. Stephen, and St. Paul; and, holding her little child, that sweet saint of cruel days, Perpetua. For these is the text: "They loved not their lives unto the death."

The Base Medallions

At the base of each great lancet is a medallion. In the center is the "Last Supper," by which we constantly set forth the sacrifice of Christ. At the south is "Victory in the Wilderness," indicated by the text: "Get thee behind me, satan!" At the north is "Victory in the Temple"—"My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The Tracery

In the quartrefoil at the apex of the window is St. Michael, the Archangel, with the legend of divine fortitude: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." The rest of the rich tracery and upper lancets is taken up with interceding and adoring angelic forms. Gabriel and Raphael and other archangels may be recognized by their traditional bearings.

The Small Lancets

In each upreaching perpendicular lancet are five noble heroes of Christian history. On the south, St. Genevieve, the defendress of Paris against the Huns; St. Theodore; St. Alban, the proto-martyr of Britain; St. Martin of Tours; and King Arthur. On the north, St. Joan of Arc; St. Louis of the Crusades; St. Edmund the Martyr; St. George; and King Alfred. All these are distinguished by their characteristic colors and bearings and are entitled by lettering.

Dominant Color

It is misleading to describe the window by subject alone for its great appeal is through its deep-toned, pure color, which has for its dominant note a true blue, the traditional color for heavenly love, constancy, and loyalty, with red for divine passion, gold for achievement, white for purity, peace, and serenity, and green for youth and victory.

The window stands as a symbol, and all figures are treated as symbols rather than as pictorial representations. Each is eloquent in traditional colors and robes, as well as in character and attitude. All unite in forming a jewelled pattern in silver and gold and pure color, "to sing a great harmony in the blessed light of day."

