

VIRGINIA RAGUIN
College of the Holy Cross
Corpus Vitrearum USA

OLD IMAGERY FOR A NEW CENTURY

Nineteenth-century stained glass painters were a part of their times, times that saw a modern world capable of reclaiming the value of the past, but surpassing it through modern technology. These glass painters admired medieval art for its decorative brilliance, but for the image itself, the art of Europe from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries provided the most appropriate themes and figural models. Their reliance on the art of this era reflected the bias already evident in their patrons. The foundation of the great nineteenth-century public collections was the art of the Renaissance from the Lowlands, Germany, and Italy. Ludwig of Bavaria purchased the Boisserée brothers' collection of German and Lowlands paintings in 1826 as the core of what is now the Alte Pinakothek in Munich.

Before the photographic reproduction of works of art, the means of disseminating these models profoundly influenced their reception. The glass painters and their patrons may have seen works such as Rogier van der Weyden's *Three Kings* (or *St. Columba*) *Altarpiece* in Munich, but accessible images to jog the memory were prints made after these subjects [Fig. 1]. Engravings and lithographs, such as the series of prints that reproduced the Boisserée brothers' collection and which was published in 1822, were often the only visual references for a patron.¹ The purpose of such printing was didactic, even edifying, helping to transfer the cherished values of the past into the present. The Düsseldorf Society for the diffusion of 'good religious pictures' was typical in its systematic reproduction of a wide variety of prints based on paintings.²

St. Chad's Church in Shrewsbury, England typifies the process of renewal and adaptation. St. Chad's origins date to the thirteenth century but after the collapse of

its tower in 1788, the church was rebuilt in the Georgian style. A white interior, ceiling and cornice moldings with naturalistic foliage, and Corinthian columns terminating in capitals painted in gold, were in fashion in this era that remained deeply attached to the classicism of Christopher Wren (1632–1723). Originally glazed with simple clear quarry glass, the church received several leaded and painted windows executed in the 1840s by David Evans, a local glass painter. A three-part window over the altar [Fig. 2] reproduces Rubens' great triptych in the cathedral of Antwerp showing the *Descent from the Cross* flanked by the *Visitation* and *Presentation*. Innumerable book illustrations and inexpensive chromolithography testify to the popularity of the triptych [Fig. 3]. Rubens' painting was also used as the model for a window of the *Descent from the Cross* from the series installed by the Munich studio of Franz Mayer in 1901 for the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Portland, Maine [Fig. 4]. Mayer was responsible for the entire program.

Nineteenth-century artists inspired by the Renaissance and Baroque could also become universally recognized across denominations and media. In the United States, from about 1850 to 1897, Henry E. Sharp was the studio of choice for architects such as the eminent Richard Upjohn.³ Many of his commissions incorporated images of the Apostles based on the work of Friedrich Overbeck, spokesperson for the Nazarene movement of Catholic art in Bavaria. Created between 1842 and 1853 for a fresco cycle for the chapel of the Villa Torlonia in Castel Gandolfo, Overbeck's Apostles were reproduced in prints by Franz Keller. The images were widely distributed, particularly through the Düsseldorf Union for the Promotion of Good Religious Pictures.⁴ Sharp used the models in a number of

¹ *Boisserée Sammlung*: exh. cat., Clemen-Sels-Museum, Neuss, 1980. *Die Alt-, Nieder- und Ober-Deutscher Gemälde der Brüder Sulpiz und Melchior Boisserée und Johann Bertram lithographiert von Johann Nepomuk Strixner*, Stuttgart, 1821.

² *Düsseldorf Society for the Propagation of Good Religious Pictures*, London, 1873.

³ Sharp advertised in the New York City Directory in 1851 under the name Sharp and Steele, later as H.E. Sharp & Son, and H.E. Sharp, Son, & Colgate.

⁴ See *Religiöse Graphik aus der Zeit des Kölner Dombaues 1842–1880*, exh. cat., Cologne, Diözesanmuseum, ed. by W. Schulten,





1. Johann Nepomuk Strixner, *Presentation in the Temple*, 1822, lithograph, after Rogier van der Weyden, left wing of the *Columba Altarpiece*, 1455, Munich, Alte Pinakothek. Photo: courtesy British Museum Collection online, Galerie des Frères Boissérée, no.1860.0114.161

geographically dispersed churches: Church of the Good Shepherd, Hartford, and the Episcopal church, Wallingford [Figs 5, 6], both in Connecticut; Trinity Cathedral, Episcopal, Pittsburgh, 1869–1872; St. Matthew's German Lutheran Church, Charleston, South Carolina; and the First Universalist church in Providence, Rhode Island.

A Protestant nation, the United States was particularly attracted to allegorical imagery, such as William Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World* [Fig. 7]. Now in Keble

Cologne, 1980, esp. pp. 12–15, cat. nos. 60 and 61, and *Religiöse Graphik der Düsseldorfer Nazarener*, exh. cat. Düsseldorf Stadtwerke, ed. by L. Gierse, Düsseldorf, 1982, cat. nos. 36–55.



2. David Evans, *Visitation, Descent from the Cross, Presentation in Temple*, 1840's, Shrewsbury, England, St. Chad's Church of England, Photo: M.M. Raguin

College Oxford, the painting shows Christ holding a lantern and knocking at a darkened door.⁵ Used as the frontispiece in Henry Turner Bailey's *The Great Painters' Gospel*, it became a perennial favorite in stained glass. One of the first examples may be a window placed in January 1876 in St. Luke's Church (now St. Luke and the Epiphany, Episcopal), Philadelphia. The subject was featured on

⁵ C. WOOD, *The Pre-Raphaelites*, New York, 1981, color ill. p. 43. *The Light of the World* was completed in 1853 and exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1854. This early version was sold to Thomas Combe of Oxford, whose wife later gave it to Keble College. Later Hunt painted the larger version in St. Paul's. See also W.H. HUNT, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 2 vols, New York and London, 1905, illustrated with engravings by the Swan Electric Engraving Company. The engraving of *The Light of the World*, opp. p. 368, vol. 1, demonstrates not only the image's importance, but the continued intervention of the mechanical reproductive process in the dissemination of influence. The image was the frontispiece for H.T. BAILEY, *The Great Painters' Gospel, Pictures Representing Scenes and Incidents in the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ with Scriptural Quotations, References and Suggestions for Comparative Study*, Boston, 1900.



3. *Descent from the Cross*, c. 1890, lithograph in original frame, after Rubens, probably German, Private Collection. Photo: M.M. Raguin

the opening page of the 1876 catalogue of Cox & Sons, London, 'By permission of Messrs Pilgrim & Lefèvre, publishers of the engraving of Holman Hunt's *Light of the World* Messrs Cox & Sons are enabled to supply this subject in stained glass.'⁶ The site-list in the catalogue further described the window as a 'Large highly finished Stained Glass Renaissance W[indow] after Holman Hunt's *Light of the World* with figure life size.'⁷ The Gorham Company of New York advertised a *Light of the World* fashioned by Edward Peck Sperry in 1904.⁸ Sperry was a highly respected artist who had designed windows in the church of the Covenant, Boston, the *Bernard and Godfrey* window for Harvard University's Memorial Hall, and the *Ivanhoe* window at the University of Chicago.⁹

⁶ Cox & Sons. *Illustrated Catalogue of Designs for Stained Glass Windows for Churches and Domestic Use*, London, 1876, p. 1.

⁷ Ibidem p. 6.

⁸ S. HOUGH, 'Notes from the Archives: Gorham's Stained Glass', *Silver: The Magazine for Collectors*, March–April, 1989, pp. 18–21. Hough quotes extensively from the 1904 catalogue, *The Gorham Company, Makers of Memorials*, New York, mentioning Edward Peck Sperry as designer-in-chief of the Ecclesiastical Department. An image of Christ with the lantern, without the door, is labeled 'Dingee Memorial, signed E.P. Sperry '04' (p. 19).

⁹ Frank Dickinson Bartlett window, University of Chicago, Bartlett Memorial Gymnasium, 1904; E.R. and F. FRUE, *Chicago's Stained Glass*, Chicago, 1983, pp. 106–109. In 2001 the Gymnasium was



4. Franz Mayer Studio, *Descent from the Cross*, Munich, 1901, Portland (Maine), Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Photo: M.M. Raguin

To understand the climate in the nineteenth century concerning art, religion, and replication for the public, we may turn to the beginnings of our public institutions of art.¹⁰ The great halls of the Metropolitan Museum were once filled with plaster casts.¹¹ These goals of making the past relevant to the present were widely shared. Stanford University's Museum of Art was founded in 1894, three years after the University itself.¹² The museum rivaled in

converted to a dining hall and the window dismantled and put into storage. A. DUNCAN, *Tiffany Windows*, New York, 1980, color pl. 22.

¹⁰ See collection of essays *Das kunst- und kulturgeschichtliche Museum im 19 Jahrhundert*, ed. by B. Deneke, R. Kahsnitz, Munich, 1977 (Studien zur Kunst des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, 39), and C. DUNCAN, A. WALLACH, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, 34, 1980, pp. 448–469.

¹¹ By 1889 the museum had only three curators, one designated for casts and reproductions. The following year a special committee was appointed to enlarge the museum's cast collection. C. TOMKINS, *Merchants and Masterpieces: The Story of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1970, pp. 71, 79.

¹² The full legal title of the university is The Leland Stanford Junior University. C.M. OSBORNE, *Museum Builders in the West*.



5. Henry Sharp Studio, *Apostles John, Peter, Paul and James the Less*, 1868, Wallingford (Connecticut), St. Paul's Episcopal Church, chancel window. Photo: V. Raguin

size the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, both founded more than two decades earlier. Like other collectors of the time, the founders purchased copies of great masterworks. Jane Stanford had viewed Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* while visiting Dresden with her son Leland and in 1890 had it copied for the Stanford Museum and for the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Sacramento.¹³ She was not alone. Copies abounded, in stained glass as well as canvas, from modest Currier and Ives prints to lavish examples by the Tiffany Studios.¹⁴ Jane Stanford had previously acquired a copy of Raphael's *Madonna of the Chair* which was photographed by Eadweard Muybridge in the Stanfords' San Francisco

house in 1878.¹⁵ In 1905, the museum's lobby displayed copies of Renaissance and classical sculpture such as the head of Michelangelo's *David*, the head of the *Apollo Belvedere*, and numerous Greek models.

Museums have changed, but in many ways the churches built by the patrons of this era remain time capsules preserving contemporary ideas concerning art, public service, and morality. Jane Stanford dedicated a University Chapel as a memorial to her husband. Following their joint theology, she constructed the church as a non-denominational homage to the moral principles of religion.¹⁶ 'We wish the simple religion of Jesus Christ and His beautiful life held up as an example worthy for all to imitate'.¹⁷ Christianity, as seen by the Stanfords, was based on the human endeavors of the person of Christ, and therefore was not exclusionary. The style and decoration of the

The Stanfords as Collectors and Patrons of Art 1870–1906, Stanford, 1986. For an early eyewitness report on Jane Stanford and the early years of the university, by its president, see D.S. JORDAN, 'Jane Lathrop Stanford', *Popular Science Monthly*, August, 1909, pp. 157–173.

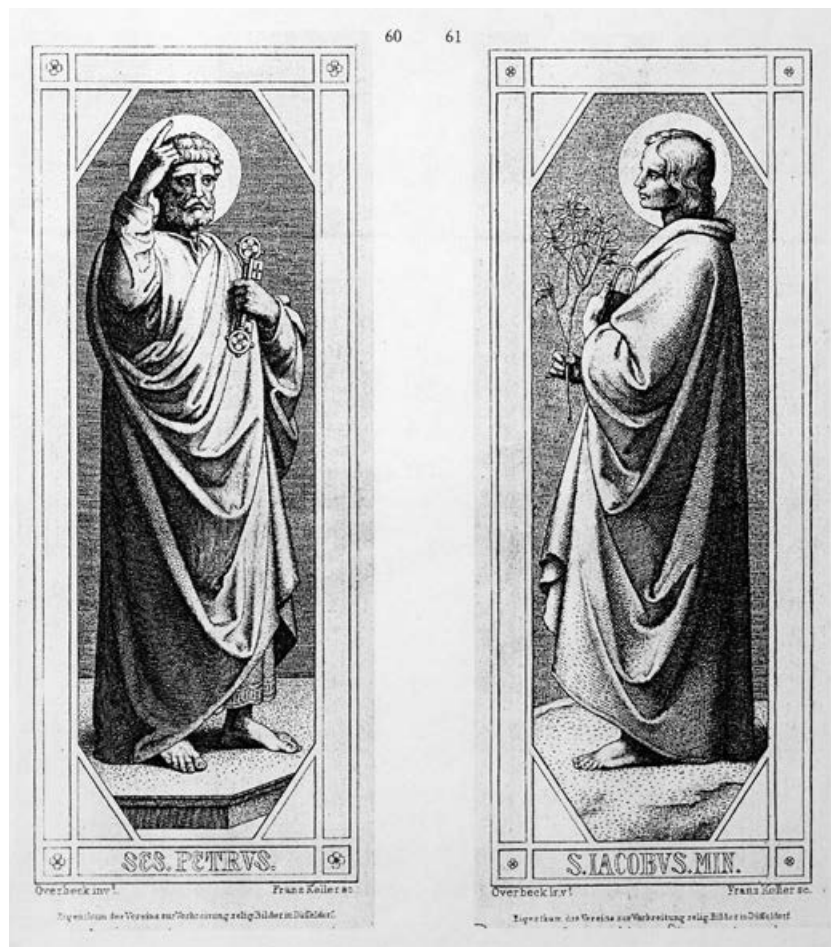
¹³ Feb. 13, 1889, Letter to George Pendelton, Envoy of the United States, from Hohenthal, Secretary to the King of Saxony, giving permission for the replica, and recommending Karl Bertling, a painter in Dresden. Archives Stanford University.

¹⁴ Trinity Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, Connecticut. Illustrated, *The Hartford Courant*, June 26, 1883, B4; A. DUNCAN, *Tiffany Windows*, p. 208 (as in note 9).

¹⁵ See C.M. OSBORNE, *Museum Builders*, p. 29, fig. 32, and pp. 37–44 (as in note 12).

¹⁶ G. STOCKHOLM, *Stanford Memorial Church: An Appreciative Guide for the Not-so-casual Viewer*, Stanford, 1980. Leland senior died in 1893; Jane Stanford was able to begin construction of the church in 1899. A good portion of the faculty, however, went on record suggesting that the center of the campus might be more fittingly used to house the University's library.

¹⁷ Letter to S. Goodenough, Secretary, California Universalist Convention, 15 March, 1896, Stanford University Archives.



6. Friedrich Overbeck, *Apostles Peter and James the Less*, 1842–1853, prints by Franz Keller, distributed through the Dusseldorf Union for the Promotion of Good Religious Pictures. Photo after: *Religiöse Graphik aus der Zeit des Kölner Dombaues 1842–1880*, exh. cat., Diocesan Museum, Cologne, 1980

building were profoundly eclectic, designed by Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, the successor firm of H.H. Richardson. A typological relationship resonates between the interior mosaics, most generally of Old Testament themes, and the major windows, which present scenes from the Life of Christ. Both the mosaicist, Maurizio Camerino of the Antonio Salvati studios, Venice, Italy, and Frederick Stymetz Lamb, director of the J. & R. Lamb Studio, New York, worked closely with Jane Stanford.¹⁸ All of the major windows replicate paintings by artists such as Ernst Deger, Anton Dietrich, Gustave Doré, Heinrich Hofmann, William Holman Hunt, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, and Bernard Plockhorst that had become standard ‘icons’ of Christian instruction.¹⁹ The glass program also reflects the

taste for reproductions of Renaissance paintings by Italian mosaicists at this time.²⁰

Reliance on these themes and imagery continued well into the twentieth century, even by the studios of the Second Gothic Revival, such as the Charles J. Connick Studio of Boston. Over 1,000 separate items in the studio’s library, often multiple volume works, such as encyclopedias and journal subscriptions, contained an abundance of great master reproductions.²¹ The major publications

¹⁸ For a cursory historical note on the studio see C. KENDALL, “102 Years Young”, *A Modicum of History from the J. & R. Lamb Studios*, *Stained Glass*, 54/2, 1959, pp. 19–26.

¹⁹ See also the images after Hofmann and Plockhorst in the catalogue *Suggestions in Religious Art from the Studio of Ford Bro. Glass Company*, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Chicago (n.d.). H. WEIS, “Those Old, Familiar Faces”, *Stained Glass*, 86/3 1991, pp. 204–207, 216–218, demonstrating the wide use of nineteenth-century and

Renaissance sources for opalescent, traditional European, and Second Gothic Revival styles. These references also permeated early film, for example D.W. Griffith’s monumental *Intolerance*, produced in 1916. Griffith cites the authority of J.J. Tissot’s *The Life of Our Savior Jesus Christ*, New York, 1899–1900.

²⁰ A. GONZALEZ-PALACIOS, S. RÖTTGEN, *The Art of Mosaics. Selections from the Gilbert Collection*, exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1992, for example the mosaic after Titian’s *Girl with Fruit* of 1830–1834 [L84.38.3 MM109, p. 189, no. 88] or Caravaggio’s *Entombment of Christ* of 1843 [L83.18.7 MM262, pp. 132–133, No. 41].

²¹ See C.J. CONNICK, ‘Books from a Glassman’s Library’, in *Adventures in Light and Color: An Introduction to the Stained Glass Craft*.



7. R.T. Giles and Co., *Light of the World*, Minneapolis (Minnesota), 1905, after William Holman Hunt, Salt Lake City, Utah, First Presbyterian Church. Photo: M.M. Raguin

on glass painting by authors such as Merson, Westlake, Drake, Delaporte and Houvet, Magne, Arnold and Saint are found.²² The iconographic references are even more impressive: numerous versions of the Bible, prayer books, missals, indexes to saints' lives, and church symbolism such as Anna Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*, Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, Adolphe Napoléon Didron's *Christian Iconography or the History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages* (London, 1863), William Caxton's *The Golden Lives of the Saints* (London, 1900) and Durandus' *The Symbolism*

New York, 1937, pp. 378–391. See also the records of the d'Ascenso studios in the Philadelphia Athenaeum, the Willet archives in the Corning Museum of Glass, and the Burnham archives in the Archives of American Art.

²² O. MERSON, *Les Vitraux*, Paris, 1895; N. WESTLAKE, *A History of Design in Painted Glass*, London, 1881–1894; M. DRAKE, *A History of English Glass-Painting with Some Remarks upon the Swiss Miniatures of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, London, 1912; Y. DELAPORTE, E. HOUVET, *Les Vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres*, 4 vols, Chartres, 1926; L. MAGNE, *Décor du verre*, Paris, 1913; H. ARNOLD, L. SAINT, *Stained Glass in England and France*, London, 1913.



8. J & R Lamb Studios, *The Finding of Boy Jesus in the Temple* (after Stanford University cartoon), 1908–1910, after William Holman Hunt, Orange (Texas), First Presbyterian Church, Photo: J & R Lamb

of Churches (translated by the prominent Ecclesiologists, Neale and Webb). Most revealing, however, are the nineteenth-century publications of collections of religious images similar to the kinds that formed the basis for the imagery produced by Lamb for Jane Stanford. Frederic Farrar's *Story of a Beautiful Life Illustrated* (London, 1900), and (anonymous) *The Light of the World or Our Savior in Art* (London, 1899), as well as the Old and New Testament collections after Tissot, were well used and marked by Connick.

An inventory of such works in glass would extend into the many thousands. Just a few examples may hint at the variety of sources and of execution. Gustave Doré's engraving published in 1877 formed the basis of Tiffany Studios' *Christ Leaving the Praetorium* (Kemper Memorial) of 1888 in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Milwaukee, Minnesota.²³ J & R Lamb used Holman Hunt's *Finding of the Boy Jesus in the Temple* (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery) of 1860 for a window installed 1908–1910 in the First Presbyterian Church, Orange, Texas [Fig. 8]. Heinrich Hofmann's version of the theme proved even more

²³ A. DUNCAN, *Tiffany Windows*, pp. 21–22, fig. 7 (as in note 9).



9. R.T. Giles and Co., *Boy Jesus in the Temple*, Minneapolis (Minnesota), 1905, after Heinrich Hofmann, Salt Lake City (Utah), First Presbyterian Church, Photo: M.M. Raguin

popular. Following the widespread distribution of the image for Sunday School room inspiration, books for youth, Catholic Holy Name Society banners, and even postcards advocating Evangelical Protestant revival meetings, it was one of the most easily recognized depictions of the youthful Christ. R.T. Giles and Co. of Minneapolis produced a window for the First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1905 [Fig. 9]. Bernard Plockhorst's illustrations were almost as popular as Hofmann's. The *Flight into Egypt*, used in the Stanford University ensemble, was reprised in the First Presbyterian Church, Orange, Texas, by the J & R Lamb Studios [Figs. 10, 11].

The conflux of patron, artist, and shared views of past models operated even for the most prestigious commission. The long-admired west window of Trinity Church in Boston designed by John La Farge exemplifies this issue [Fig. 12]. In 1893 Samuel Bing, visiting America to survey for France the state of the arts at the World's Columbian Exposition, observed that 'all marveled at the large stained-glass window whose astonishing brilliance surpassed in its magic, anything of its kind created in modern times'.²⁴ La Farge had been awarded the commission in 1880. His original multilevel design included

²⁴ This is one of the rare instances when Bing referred to a specific installation. S. BING, *La Culture artistique en Amérique*. transl. by B. Eisler as 'Artistic America', in *Artistic America, Tiffany Glass and Art Nouveau*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1970 [1895], p. 132.



10. J & R Lamb Studios, *Flight into Egypt* (after Stanford University cartoon), 1908–1910, after Bernard Plockhorst, Orange (Texas), First Presbyterian Church, Photo: J & R Lamb

two narrow Gothic arches that housed figures. His pencil notes next to the image, 'Perhaps better empty without figures', suggests that he wanted them removed.²⁵ Phillips Brooks, Trinity's charismatic rector, presumably did not. Biographers of the artist have assumed that Brooks suggested the sculpture of the Christ of Amiens as the basis for the window. La Farge then replaced the multilevel design and set the *Beau Dieu* image of Christ in the central lancet and sections of an arcade at the sides. Whether it was Brooks or La Farge who initiated the use of the image is less important than the fact that an accepted model was known to both patron and artist, one of the near universal references for its late nineteenth-century audience. Its status reflects the context of the era's canon of great works of art, communicated through photograph, engraving, and literary description.

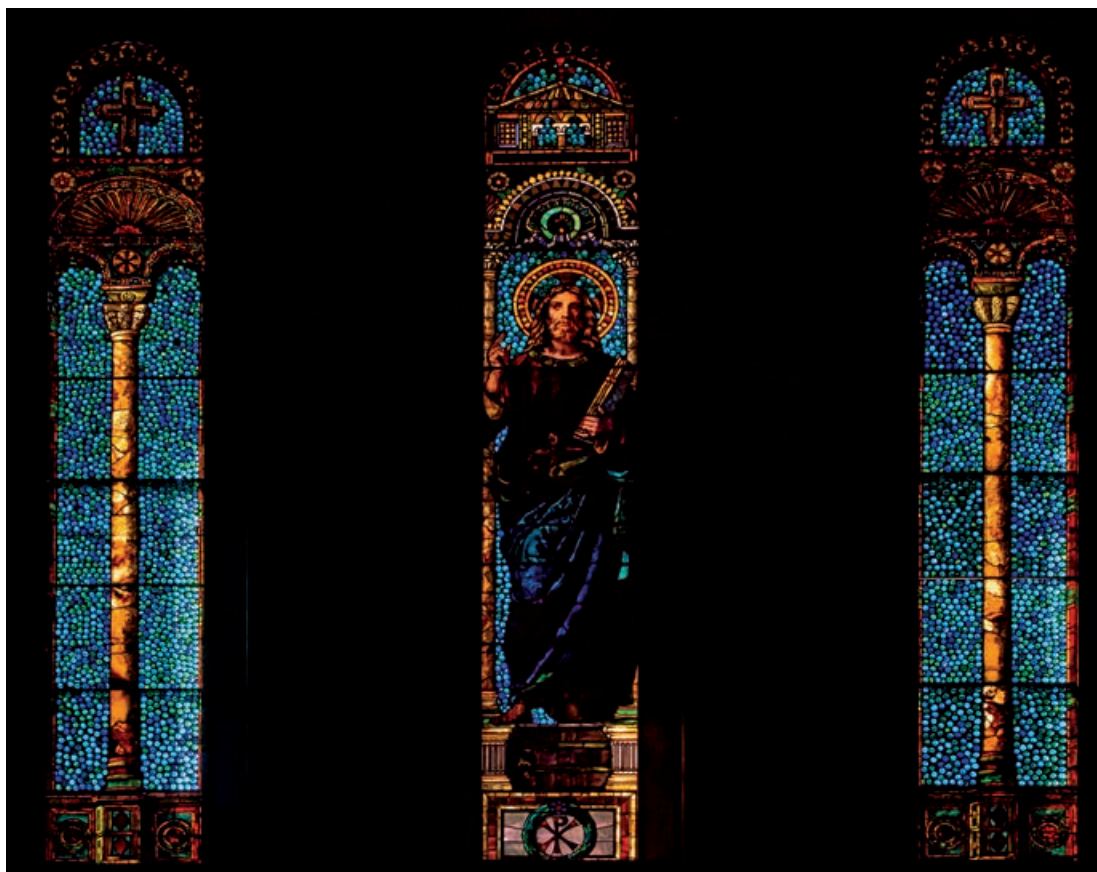
²⁵ Sketch for West Windows of Nave, Trinity Church, Boston 1883, Private collection, Henry La Farge in *John La Farge*, exh. cat. The Carnegie Museum of Art and the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, New York, 1987, pp. 208–210, figs. 153–154.



11. Bernard Plockhorst, *Flight into Egypt*. Photo after: H.T. Bailey, *The Great Painters' Gospel*, Boston (Massachusetts), 1900



13. *Beau Dieu* of Amiens, frontispiece, Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ as Represented in Art*, 1900



12. John la Farge, *Christ Preaching*, 1883, after *Beau Dieu* of Amiens, Boston, Trinity Church. Photo: J. Howe

In Boston these judgments were propagated through a passionate and cultivated set that included the patrons of the windows at Harvard and Trinity Church. One of the chief figures in this intersection of art, culture and religion was Charles Eliot Norton, from 1874 through 1899 first professor of the history of art at Harvard.²⁶ In 1855 he had begun a long and productive friendship with John Ruskin, the extraordinarily prolific writer on Romantic painting, architecture, and religious feeling.²⁷ Ruskin did not create the importance of the Amiens Christ, but he made it an ineluctable part of any cultivated Christian's artistic awareness. His *Bible of Amiens* describes the sculpture as the true keystone of both art and faith. Ruskin hearkens back to another authority, citing Viollet-le-Duc's analysis of the *Beau Dieu* of Amiens.²⁸ Few have come close to the eloquence of Ruskin's description of the sculpture, the center of the portal, the center of the building, and the center of religion itself. A small indication of the impact of these thoughts twenty years later is seen upon opening Frederic W. Farrar's popular book *The Life of Christ as Represented in Art*. Its frontispiece [Fig. 13] is the Christ of Amiens and Farrar's description within the text repeats Ruskin's evaluation.²⁹ La Farge assimilated the form and power of the sculpture and communicated it to an audience already receptive to the issues behind the selection of model.³⁰

In 1888, La Farge's *Beau Dieu* was followed by the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* [Fig. 14] a memorial

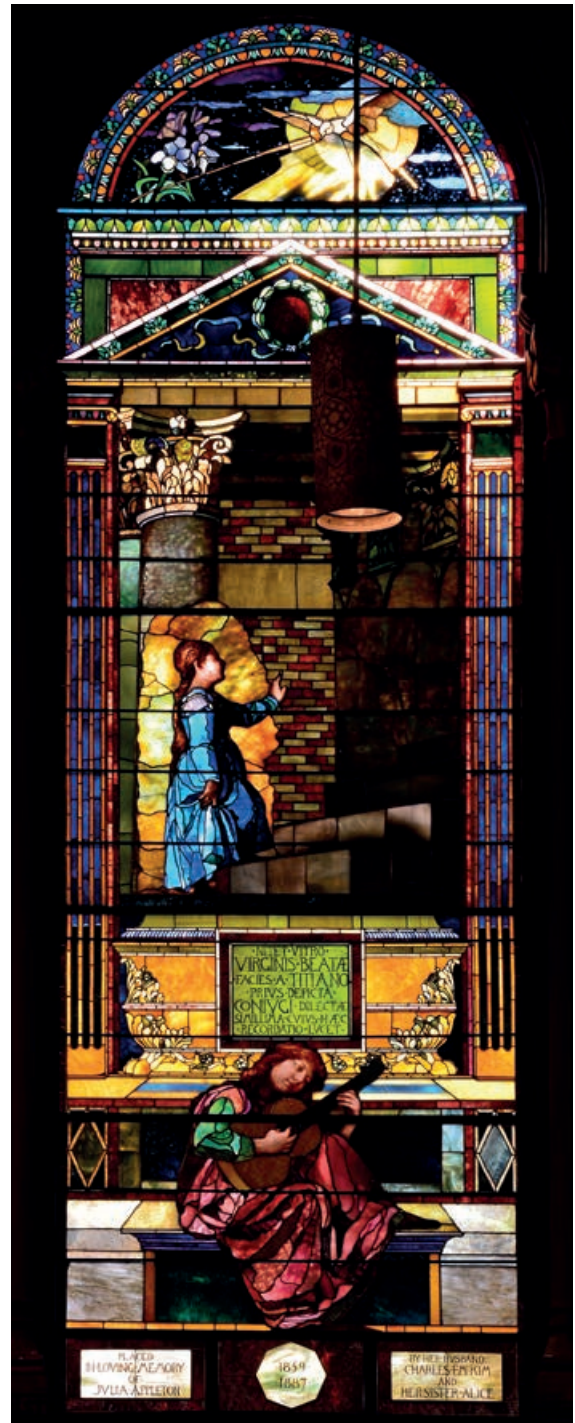
²⁶ For Eliot's influence see K. MCCLINTOCK, 'The Classroom and the Courtyard: Medievalism in American Highbrow Culture', in E.B. SMITH et al., *Medieval Art in America: Patterns of Collecting 1800–1940*, exh. cat., Palmer Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1996, pp. 41–54; M. GREEN, *The Problem of Boston: Some Readings in Cultural History*, New York, 1966, pp. 122–141.

²⁷ Ruskin is probably best known today as the author of *The Stones of Venice*, 3 vols, London, 1851–1853, and *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, London, 1849.

²⁸ E. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française*, Paris, 1869, vol. 3, pp. 216–218. The article is on the subject "Christ" where the sculpture at Amiens is illustrated in full and in a detail of the head. The author compares the head to Greek statuary, describing the High Gothic image as the supreme accomplishment of the type from the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries.

²⁹ Esp. 488: 'Mr. Ruskin selects as the noblest ideal of Christ known to him a sculptured figure of the thirteenth century on the west front of Amiens Cathedral. ...Into this figure the artist has put a world of true and noble thought. Christ is standing at the central point of all History, and of all Revelation: the Christ, or Prophesied Messiah of all Past, the King and Redeemer of Future Time...'

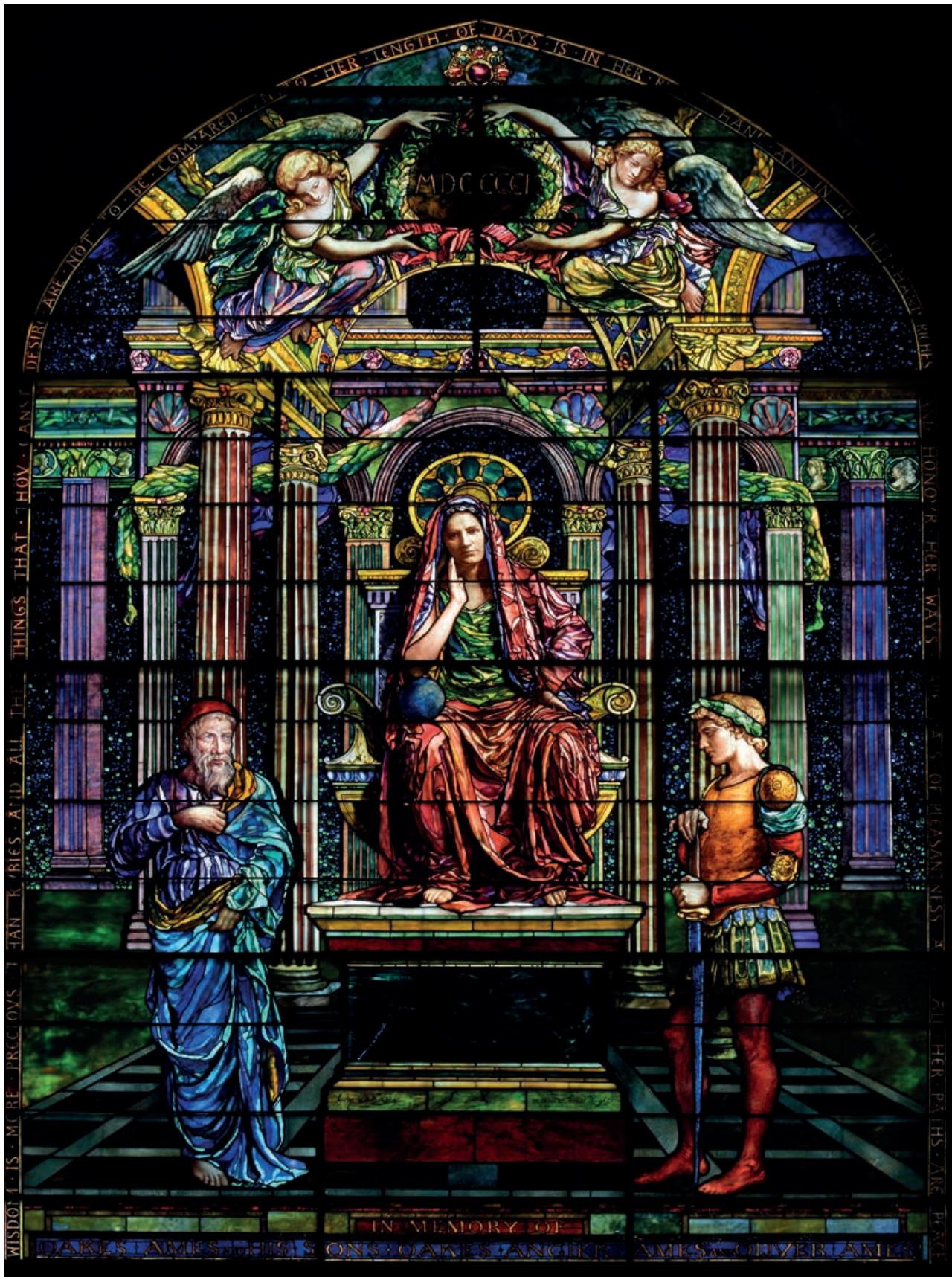
³⁰ See, for a discussion of La Farge's complex sources and deliberate references to Palma Vecchio, Raphael, Giotto, Giovanni Pisano, and Cimabue, H.B. WEINBERG, 'La Farge's Eclectic Idealism in Three New York City Churches', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 10, 1975, pp. 199–228.



14. John La Farge, *Presentation of the Virgin*, 1888, after Titian, Boston, Trinity Church, south nave. Photo: M.M. Raguin

to Julia Appleton McKim dedicated by her husband, Charles Follen McKim, and her sister Alice.³¹ McKim was a partner of McKim, Mead, and White, the architects of the Boston Public Library. He selected the artist and also

³¹ The window was installed in 1888 and is inscribed 'PLACED IN LOVING MEMORY OF JULIA APPLETON / 1859–1887 / BY HER HUSBAND CHARLES F MCKIM AND HER SISTER ALICE'.



15. John La Farge, fabricated by Thomas Wright, *Wisdom Enthroned*, Oakes Ames Memorial, 1901, North Easton (Massachusetts), Unity Church. Photo: M.M. Raguin

appears to have selected the image to commemorate his wife's death at age twenty-eight. The central image refers to the painting by Titian, 1535–1538 now in the Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice. The Latin text of the inscription cites this source and alludes, as well, to the concept of light: 'Shines in glass the distinct and well-known face of the Blessed Virgin as first painted by Titian, and most resembling the beloved wife in whose memory this record shines'.³² The Renaissance painting is a huge canvas showing a long stairway, framed at the bottom by a crowd of onlookers and at the top by the High Priest and two assistants. The painting was highly regarded and numerous reproductions in print form circulated from the seventeenth century onwards. Only the segment showing the isolated figure of the Virgin on the stairs is transferred to the window composition. The figure is framed within the compositional design as if it were a relic from the past. At the bottom of the frame, set on another spatial plane and seeming to reflect on the image above, a seated figure plays a lute.³³ Both patron and artist were united by a common culture, aware of Italian Renaissance models, exemplified by McKim's work on Boston's library and for the Walker Art Building at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, for which McKim commissioned La Farge to execute a lunette on the theme of *Athens*.³⁴

More subtle references abound, for example the memorial to Oakes Ames, *Wisdom Enthroned* [Fig. 15] of

1901. Evoking a Renaissance 'sacra conversazione', among a standing group of saints and the divine presence, the composition evokes paintings such as Veneziano's fifteenth-century *St. Lucy Altarpiece* that La Farge must have known from his visits to the Uffizi in 1894. A watercolor sketch for the window does not include inscription bands, although the composition strongly suggests that the text ultimately incorporated around the side of the window was intended from the beginning.³⁵ 'Wisdom is more precious than rubies and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace' (Proverbs 3: 15–17).

La Farge mentioned in a letter that he patterned the older figure after Donatello's *St. Mark* from Orsanmichele, Florence.³⁶ The young warrior crowned with laurel also evokes Renaissance prototypes, as exemplified by images of St. Michael in popular Luca della Robbia ceramic plaques. La Farge also juxtaposed the traditional symbols of contemplative life, the bearded philosopher, and active life, the youthful soldier. La Farge, and even his lesser-endowed colleagues, were not replicating to cut corners. They were engaged in a continuation of themes for a new patronage aware of historic cultures. Whether closely-modeled copy or evocative reference, these windows were part of the deeply eclectic culture of the nineteenth century.

³² NITET VITRO VIRGINIS BEATAE FACES A TITIANO PRIVS DEPICTA CONIVCI DILECTA SIMILLIMA CVIVS HAEC RECORDATIO LVCET.

³³ The cartoon for the *Suonatore* (Luteplayer) is now in the collection of the Worcester Art Museum, 1907.4. See *Half a Century of American Art*, exh. cat. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 1940, p. 29, pl. VIII. The painting had been exhibited in 1890 with the title 'Child Playing upon a Guitar, Italian Motive'.

³⁴ H.B. WEINBERG, in *John La Farge* (as in note 25), p. 187, fig. 140.

³⁵ Los Angeles County Museum of Art 33.11.5, Gift of Miss Bella Mabury. The sketch measures 17 13/16 by 11 13/16 inches and was once in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Harrison.

³⁶ H.B. WEINBERG, *The Decorative Works of John La Farge*, New York, 1977, p. 406. La Farge worked from a photographic reproduction and was articulate about his wanting his audience to recognize the source.