THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW
"LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

BY HOLMAN HUNT

During the latter part of the War and right after the War, in order to relieve tensions and pressures, I worked up a speech called, "Symbolism in Stained Glass." It covered interpretations of how various colors were made in glass and how various artists used glass to make stained glass windows. It was an interesting speech and well received. I was invited to give it to the women's section of the Washington Athletic Club, the Sunset Club, the Seattle Women's Writers Club and a good many women's organizations in various churches.

One time I spoke at Westminster Presbyterian Church at the invitation of Mrs. Black, who was Mrs. C. Davis Weyerhaeuser's mother. As we sat having a cup of tea afterwards, she mentioned the fact that the Church of Epiphany had been offered a very fine stained glass window which its vestry did not think it could accept because the dimensions were such that it could not be used in the Church of the Epiphany. She said it was an unusually fine stained glass window and the artist, Holman Hunt, had actually worked on it, together with his best students.

On further inquiry, I found that it was stored at the Nyson Glass Company at 719 - 24th North, Seattle, a company owned by Mr. R. E. Nyson. His telephone number at that time was East 3153.

I called on Mr. Nyson and found him to be an elderly man who had been a specialist in stained glass in the Seattle area for many years. He had a warehouse located not very far from the University of Washington and
when I talked to him he was exceedingly interested in the future of the Holman Hunt window, "Light of the World". He showed me the window and it certainly was very beautiful. It was about three feet ten inches wide and eight feet ten inches tall and had a total weight of about 400 pounds. Holman Hunt had used steel rods to give rigidity and stability to the window.

Mr. Nyson said, however, that the people who owned it had offered it to the Church of the Epiphany. I knew Reverend Christie quite well through my association in Seattle Rotary and he told me that his vestry had decided against it because of its unusual dimensions.

While researching the history of the window, I learned that Mrs. Harrop who lived near Manchester, England, had had the stained glass window made for their ancestral home, and is a copy of the Holman Hunt portrait painted in 1854. The painting was done because of the influence of John Ruskin, who continually urged English artists to get away from the Italian idea of the Christ, which usually shows the bloody hands of the cross. Ruskin's idea of the Christ was temperamentally and spiritually different, and the motif of the painting is the spiritual interpretation of Christ knocking at the closed door of understanding. The door's hinges are rusty and all is overgrown with weeds, signifying that understanding has become dead to the finer virtues. Above the head of Christ is the inscription "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men". Over the head is the golden crown, entwined with thorns. The figure is clad in a seamless robe. The beauty of the
face is remarkable. The right hand is knocking at the door while the left
is holding a lantern, signifying the diffusion of spiritual light.

The Holman Hunt painting, from which the window was copied, is
in Keble College in Oxford and I have seen it there on many occasions. The
original is about two feet tall by 18 inches wide and there is a story told that
Holman Hunt once went to Keble with some friends to show the original to
them and the caretaker at the door charged them six pence each to see the
painting. (I know I once paid six pence to see it; however, on several other
occasions I went in to see it and there was no one at the door.) This somewhat
angered Holman Hunt and he said he would not allow it to be sequestered
in this way and money made from it so he made a copy of it which is the same
size as the painting which the University of Puget Sound has and this is
located in St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Mr. and Mrs. Seymour of Tacoma
had a copy made of it and that is the one that is now in the Gail Day Chapel
on the campus of the University of Puget Sound.

Mrs. Harrop, who was an ardent admirer and disciple of Ruskin,
commissioned the firm of Poynter and Poynter to copy the painting in stained
glass, for the window in Sparth Hall where it held a place of honor on the
stair landing between the first and second floors near the West entrance.
In this spot the afternoon sun or the lowering moon had rays aslant the
window, thus bringing into effect the beautiful colors in the window.
From about 1916 to 1922, Sparth Hall was used as a school for the study of Ruskin, which included use of Mrs. Harrop's library and the priceless window. When the Hall was sold, Mrs. Harrop removed the window and sent it to her son, John, who had moved from England to Seattle in about 1900.

In 1930, the window was sold to Mr. Paul Henry and ultimately it came into the possession of the Mark Reed Family with the idea that it would be installed in a landing in the stairway of a new home to be purchased. However, a stark tragedy struck the Reed Family when their home burned and they were all lost in the fire. Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Reed of Simpson-Reed Company came to the campus of the University of Puget Sound and discussed the possibility of giving this window to the University. In the Reed fire, the documented papers were lost verifying the fact that Holman Hunt actually worked on the design and transferral of the original painting to the stained glass window. It is said that as the work progressed he became more and more interested in the various phases of color and the total design of the window.

When the window was given to the University, I talked to Mr. Nyson concerning its value and on December 16, 1947, Mr. Nyson wrote the following letter to me:
R. Franklin Thompson  
College of Puget Sound  
Tacoma 6, Wash.

Light of the World Window

Dear Friend:

In estimating the present monetary value of this window, several factors pertinent to its known history are worthy of recording, in the absence of those newspaper clippings and memoranda now misplaced or lost.

This window was executed in 1854 to 1856 in Leeds, England by special order of a Mr. John Harrop who succeeded for the first time in obtaining Mr. Holman Hunt's permission to reproduce in glass the subject and theme of Mr. Hunt's painting.

Permission was granted subject to and predicated upon changes and alterations which were to be incorporated and personally exercised by Mr. Hunt, whose interest increased as work progressed, and who increasingly personally contributed to design and supervision throughout the making of this window.

From 1856 to about 1920 this window graced and was exhibited in and was part of a school library, a home for the aged, and the home of the owner.

In 1920-1921, this window was brought to Seattle by Mrs. John Harrop, wife of the original owner, transferred as a gift to her son, Mr. John Harrop of Seattle, who called upon this writer to assist in the entry and clearance thru U.S. Customs.

In 1930 this window was sold to Mr. Paul Henry by this writer on behalf of Mr. Harrop for the sum of $1800.00, a value then admittedly less than one half actual worth.

Mr. Paul Henry's intention was to install this window as a memorial to following an expressed wish of Mr. Henry's father, Mr. L. C. Henry, in either St. Mark's Cathedral or in the L. C. Henry Art Museum in the University of Washington.
The untimely passing of both Mr. L. C. and Paul Henry plus the unfinished plans and condition of St. Mark's Cathedral contributed to the fortunate acquisition of this window by the College of Puget Sound, where it is to enrich, adorn and materially inspire reverent appreciation of the inherent teaching and living color which has traveled so much to find a fitting setting.

With the above condensed data and values, we should reconcile our present day availability or craftsmanship and materials such as are contained in this window in the light of replacement in any comparable quality in any reasonable foreseeable future, from, and of this basis, and best professional knowledge current valuation of this window can be placed in the range from $10,000 to $15,000. Please note that for tax purposes I believe one half of figures above stated could not be assumed to be out of line.

With best of the Season's wishes, I am

Very cordially yours,

S/ R. E. NYSON

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When I received the gift and the letter from Mr. Nyson, I took the letter to Mr. Norton Clapp, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees and a very good friend of the Reed Family. Mr. Clapp wrote a letter to Mr. William G. Reed on December 22, 1947, in which he stated that the gift of the stained glass window to the College had a gift value of $12,500. This was based on Mr. Nyson's recommendation as he was the authority for stained glass windows at that time.

The letter from Mr. Clapp to Mr. William G. Reed follows:

December 22, 1947

Dear Bill:

Last night I told Nor briefly about the finale in connection with her fine gift to the College of Puget Sound. She sug-
gested that I pass the information on to you, which, of course, I am happy to do.

Months ago I suggested to Nor that if she had no other plans, the College would be very happy to get the nice stained glass window "Light of the World" which I understand has been in the family for some time.

Last summer she did turn it over to the College of Puget Sound and it was a most welcome gift.

Thinking that it might be of some substantial advantage to Nor, taxwise, we have recently secured an appraisal of the window by Mr. Nyson who apparently is the only man qualified in this area to make such an appraisal. This letter of appraisal dated December 19 which I enclose herewith shows a fair value as of the date of gift of $12,500.

I hasten to get this to you hoping that it may be of some use to Nor this year for, as you know, a gift of this kind is deductible for income tax purposes to the extent of its fair value as of the date of gift.

I am sending this letter of appraisal up by hand as it is the only signed one there is and I don't like to depend too much on the mails during Christmas Week.

Cordially yours,

S/ NORTON CLAPP

Mr. William G. Reed
White Building
Seattle, Washington

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The University is very pleased to have this outstanding piece of art. When the Gail Day Chapel was moved from Jones Hall, the Holman Hunt painting which was given to the University by the Seymours was placed in a very strategic spot.
When we designed the Kilworth Chapel, consideration was given to placing the stained glass window in it by the architect and the Building Committee. However, because of its unusual size and because of the New England architectural design of the chapel, it was decided that it would be unwise to incorporate the window in the chapel.

Personally, I had always envisioned it in Jones Hall at the landing in the stairway, looking west. At Nebraska Wesleyan University, when I was a student there, there was a window (which was not nearly as fine in quality) at the head of the stairs in Old Main and it was a constant inspiration to the hundreds of students who passed through that building.

I am sure that one day there will be a very outstanding location for the Holman Hunt stained glass window, "Light of the World", for it carries a very subtle and potent influence in the lives of all who see it.

R. Franklin Thompson
June 14, 1978