



Painters of Faith : The Spiritual Landscape in Nineteenth-Century America

Jr. Gene Edward Veith



From the beginning, American culture was steeped in the language of theology. The arts, in particular, were inextricably linked with religion. As author Gene Edward Veith shows in *Painters of Faith*, belief in the spiritual power of art provided the basis for America's first major artistic movement, the Hudson River School. The personal faith of Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Jasper Cropsey, Frederic Church, and the other Hudson River School painters inspired their transcendent landscapes. In this fascinating and beautifully illustrated work, Veith explores that faith and the crucial role it played in their artistic creations. Aesthetics, he shows, could not be separated from theology. In reconstructing the worldview of the artists as well as of much of the American public in the nineteenth century, Veith delves into the writings of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the American Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards to find the roots of a Protestant aesthetic. While Protestantism is not ordinarily associated with a strong artistic tradition, Veith reveals how Protestant Christianity in nineteenth-century America was indeed a catalyst for the arts. In fact, the clergy were among the most ardent promoters of the arts in the new republic, and theological journals continually carried on discussions about art. The Hudson River School artists, in particular, expressed ambitious themes, employing narrative, symbolism, and allegory to convey moral and spiritual truths. Complete with forty-two full-color illustrations, *Painters of Faith* is an in-depth examination of the artistic and theological context in which these painters worked--and a gripping look at the cultural development of early America.

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