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**The Religious Paintings of William Congdon  
and the Problem of Religious Art in Modernism**

This paper presents a review of William Congdon's religious paintings. The critical analysis takes into consideration the theory of several authors. Jacques Maritain's comments on Congdon's religious work are especially clarifying. He explains the difference between contemplative art, sacred art and religious art. Such ordering complements both the idea of contemplation in the Western artistic tradition and the notion of the artist as a kind of visionary, as a medium, that we find, for example, in Baudelaire. Two primary features of religious art stand out as a result of this analysis. Firstly, the concept of transparency, which regards the mediating character of the work, and secondly, the primacy of reception, regarding the function of the work in a religious context. In the final section the relevance of these notes on Congdon's work is examined. This demands further study, not only of the works conceived as objects, but of the creative process, on the one hand, and of its critical fortune, on the other.