

# The Essential Writings Of Christian Mysticism

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this book introduces students to christian mysticism and modern critical responses to it christianity has a rich tradition of mystical theology that first emerged in the writings of the early church fathers and flourished during the middle ages today christian mysticism is increasingly recognised as an important christian heritage relevant to today s spiritual seekers the book sets out to provide students and other interested readers with access to the main theoretical approaches to christian mysticism including those propounded by william james steven katz bernard mcginn michael sells denys turner and caroline walker

bynum it also explores postmodern re readings of christian mysticism by authors such as jacques derrida jean luc marion and jean françois lyotard the book first introduces students to the main themes that underpin christian mysticism it then reflects on how modern critics have understood each of them demonstrating that stark delineation between the different theoretical approaches eventually collapses under the weight of the complex interaction between experience and knowledge that lies at the heart of christian mysticism in doing so the book presents a deliberate challenge to a strictly perennialist reading of christian mysticism anyone even remotely familiar with christian mysticism will know that renewed interest in christian mystical writers has created a huge array of scholarship with which students of mysticism need to familiarise themselves this book outlines the various modern theoretical approaches in a manner easily accessible to a reader with little or no previous knowledge of this area and offers a philosophical theological introduction to christian mystical writers beyond the patristic period important for the latin western tradition

investigations of mysticism often focus on the past while largely ignoring current developments this book contributes to a reversal of that trend with a rigorous examination of a wide selection of contemporary buddhist and christian authors the focus is on the intriguing intersections and subtle divergences now emerging in areas such as ineffability nonconceptuality paradox inverted agency unity and self dissolution the analysis combines the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics with a range of methodological approaches from discourse and thematic analysis to corpus linguistics wide ranging systematic and informative the book is invaluable to all of those interested in the phenomenon of mysticism within the modern world

ursula king s christian mystics offers a distinctive perspective on spirituality the author presents the christian mystical tradition through short biographies of its great figures biographies which are highly readable without oversimplifying the ideas of these great figures this is an outstanding entryway into the rich and deep world of christian mysticism recommended for readers of all backgrounds michael sells professor of comparative religions haverford college

the wiley blackwell companion to christian mysticism brings together a team of leading international scholars to explore the origins evolution and contemporary debates relating to christian mystics texts and the movements they inspired provides a comprehensive and engaging account of christian mysticism from its origins right up to the present day draws on the best of current scholarship by bringing together a collection of newly commissioned readings by leading scholars considers examples of mysticism in both eastern and western christianity offers a brilliant synthesis of the key figures and historical periods of mysticism its core themes such as heresy gender or aesthetics and its theoretical considerations including theological literary social scientific and philosophical approaches features chapters on current debates such as neuroscience and mystical experience and

inter religious dialogue

this book examines the relationship between transcendence and immanence within christian mystical and apophatic writings original essays from a range of leading established and emerging scholars in the field focus on the roles of language signs and images and consider how mystical theology might contribute to contemporary reflection on the word incarnate this collection of essays re examines works from such canonical figures as eckhart augustine plotinus pseudo dionysius nicolas of cusa teresa of avila john of the cross julian of norwich along with the philosophical thought of iris murdoch jacques lacan and martin heidegger and the contemporary phenomena of the emerging church presenting new readings of key ideas in mystical theology and renewed engagement with the visionary and the everyday the therapeutic and the transformative these essays question how we might think about what may lie between transcendence and immanence

mystical theology has developed through a range of meanings from the hidden dimensions of divine significance in the community's interpretation of its scriptures to the much later science of the soul's ascent into communion with god the thinkers and questions addressed in this book draws us into the heart of a complicated beautiful and often tantalisingly unfinished conversation continuing over centuries and often brushing allusively into parallel concerns in other religions raising fundamental matters of epistemology representation metaphysics and divine reality contributors approach the mystical from postmodern feminist sociological and historical perspectives through thinkers such as meister eckhart thomas aquinas catherine of siena ignatius of loyola william james evelyn underhill ernst troeltsch rudolf otto jacques derrida jean luc marion and jean louis chrétien medieval and early modern radical prophetic approaches are also explored this book includes new essays by sarah apetrei tina beattie raphel cadenhead oliver davies philip endean brian fitzgerald ann loades george pattison simon d podmore joel d s rasmussen and johannes zachhuber

the cambridge companion to christian mysticism is a multi authored interdisciplinary guide to the study of christian mysticism with an emphasis on the 3rd through the 17th centuries written by leading authorities and younger scholars from a range of disciplines the volume both provides a clear introduction to the christian mystical life and articulates a bold new approach to the study of mysticism

this clear and comprehensive anthology culled from the vast corpus of christian mystical literature by the renowned theologian and historian bernard mcginn presents nearly one hundred selections from the writings of origen of alexandria in the third century to the work of twentieth century mystics such as thomas merton uniquely organized by subject rather than by author the essential writings of christian mysticism explores how human life is transformed through the search for direct contact with god part one examines the preparation for encountering god through biblical interpretation and prayer the second

part focuses on the mystics actual encounters with god and part three addresses the implications of the mystical life showing how mystics have been received over time and how they practice their faith through private contemplation and public actions in addition to his illuminating introduction bernard mcginn provides accessible headnotes for each section as well as numerous biographical sketches and a selected bibliography praise for the essential writings of christian mysticism no one is better equipped than bernard mcginn to provide a thorough and balanced guide to this vast literature this is an anthology which deserves to be read not only by those who study christian history and theology but by believers who long to deepen their own lives of prayer and service anglican theological review bernard mcginn a preeminent historian and interpreter of the christian mystical tradition has edited this fine collection of mystical writings organizing them thematically mcginn offers helpful introductions to each thematic section author and entry as well as a brief critical bibliography on mysticism published in the modern library classic series this is a great value christian century no one is better equipped than professor mcginn to provide a thorough and balanced guide to this vast literature a first class selection by a first class scholar rowan williams archbishop of canterbury this accessible anthology by the scholarly world s leading historian of the western christian mystical tradition easily outstrips all others in its comprehensiveness the aptness of its selection of texts and in the intelligent manner of its organization denys turner horace tracy pitkin professor of historical theology yale divinity school an immensely rich anthology assembled and introduced by our foremost student of mysticism both the scholar and the disciple will find god s plenty here barbara newman professor of english religion and classics john evans professor of latin northwestern university an unusually clear and insightful exposition of major texts selected by one of the greatest scholars in the field of christian mysticism based on his vast erudition and uniquely sensitive interpretation like his other books this one too is destined to become a classic professor moshe idel hebrew university jerusalem

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in this new work albert lachance presents a complete reframing of christianity as an experiential rather than dogmatic approach to the presence of christ it emphasizes the

idea of christ as the source and sustainer of the cosmos the earth the life community and global culture as such it takes a unitive approach with christianity understood as being in mystical union with global culture and with the ecological realities of the earth in the author's view christianity thus joins hands with buddhism hinduism and taoism in a unitive oneness with all that is consisting of twenty eight short chapters the modern christian mystic focuses on the presence of god permeating and organizing the beginning of existence in the form of consciousness giving birth to energy and then the material reality of the universe the author argues that just as st augustine introduced the pagan plato to christianity and a millennium later st thomas aquinas revitalized his faith with the pagan philosophy of aristotle so in the modern age the non theism of buddhism taoism and hinduism holds the key to a revived mystical practice the modern christian mystic posits a nurturing new world based on commonality rather than conflict in the world of spirit

in the western christian tradition the mystic was seen as having direct access to god and therefore great authority in this study dr jantzen discusses how men of power defined and controlled who should count as a mystic and thus who would have power women were pointedly excluded this makes her book of special interest to those in gender studies and medieval history its main argument however is philosophical because the mystical has gone through many social constructions the modern philosophical assumption that mysticism is essentially about intense subjective experiences is misguided this view is historically inaccurate and perpetuates the same gendered struggle for authority which characterises the history of western christendom this book is the first on the subject to take issues of gender seriously and to use these as a point of entry for a deconstructive approach to christian mysticism

is the christian mystical tradition a relic of another time shaped by celibates for celibates unable to engage meaningfully with people of our time who embrace their corporeality and sexuality as crucial aspects of their journey towards union with god this book reflects in serious theological depth and detail on the spiritual and sexual journeys of gay men of mature and committed christian faith employing the christian mystical tradition as the lens and the interlocutor in this process this study examines the major themes and stages of the mystical tradition as outlined by evelyn underhill but also including more recent work by ruth burrows thomas merton and constance fitzgerald using methods of qualitative research it then considers the texts of in depth interviews conducted with men most of whom are theologians or spiritual leaders with a deep catholic faith and all of whom are openly self affirmingly gay finally it employs ricoeur's hermeneutical theory to engage in a creative theological conversation between the traditional mystical stages and themes and these men's lives as described in their interviews this is a unique study that brings together ancient spirituality with contemporary lived religion as such it will be of interest to scholars of religious studies theology christian mysticism and spirituality and queer studies it will be of particular interest to those teach spiritual direction and to all who seek new ways to engage with the spiritual lives of lgbtiq people

mysticism in an ancient and important aspect of the christian faith yet it is highly misunderstood due to obscure language and concepts not to mention occasionally eccentric personalities the mystics can be difficult to approach once you peel back the layers of insider language however one begins to see a highly relatable group of people who were first and foremost concerned with tending to a personal and loving relationship with god tending the garden provides the reader with a basic definition of and clarity around several terms and practices of christian mysticism as well as analyzing the lives and writings of important christian mystics jennifer wojciechowski proposes some ways in which we as modern people living in an industrialized and disenchanted society can benefit from knowing christian mystical history and engaging in spiritual practices related to christian mysticism the book s aim is to demystify the mystics by making them understandable and relatable to modern believers in this era of disenchantment and religious decline tending the garden will introduce christians to a rich and vibrant history of mystical prayer and relationship with god in order to spark curiosity and inspire a deeper spiritual life the book will serve as an accessible introduction to and thematic historical overview of christian mysticism

christian mysticism is unique in its view of jesus death and resurrection as the very cause and exemplar of the mystical life in all its purity jesus saving death on the cross exemplifies the mystical letting go of everything consoling tangible and finite in order to surrender totally to the mystery of the father s unconditional love in this introduction to christian mysticism reverend harvey egan s j presents four christian mystics as paradigms of the classical tradition st ignatius of loyola st teresa of avila st john of the cross and the unknown author of the cloud of unknowing from this foundation he moves to two contemporary figures thomas merton and pierre teilhard de chardin each of whom reflects a contemporary transposition of the two mystical traditions the apophatic which emphasizes the radical difference between god and creatures and the kataphatic which emphasizes the similarity between god and creatures

in mystical theology and contemporary spiritual practice several leading scholars explore key themes within the christian mystical tradition contemporary and historical the overall aim of the book is to demonstrate the relevance of mystical theology to contemporary spiritual practice attention is given to the works of baron von hugel vladimir lossky margery kempe ludwig wittgenstein thomas merton and francisco de osuna as well as to a wide range of spiritual practices including pilgrimage spiritual direction contemplative prayer and the quotidian spirituality of the new monasticism christian mystical theology is shown to be a living tradition which has vibrant and creative new expressions in contemporary spiritual practice it is argued that mystical theology affirms something both ordinary and extraordinary which is fundamental to the christian experience of prayer

this brief accessibly written volume introduces key figures texts and themes of the mystical tradition and shows how and why the mystics can speak to the church today

jason baxter an expert educator and storyteller explains that the mystical tradition offers a more robust understanding of god than our current shallow conceptions featuring engagement with primary sources and suitable for use in a variety of courses this book argues that the mystics have much to say to contemporary christians searching for authentic modes of spirituality

the first portrait of spiritual luminary thomas keating s remarkable evolution in the last decades of his life into a fully realized modern day christian mystic in the first four decades of his life as a trappist monk thomas keating created a comprehensive unified psychospiritual pathway leading from healing to holiness and from contemporary psychological wellness to classic mystical sanctity and beatitude as one of the key innovators of the meditative practice of centering prayer he fashioned a powerful on ramp to the christian contemplative tradition yet as beloved author and keating disciple cynthia bourgeault shows that was not the end of keating s story his evolution as a spiritual thinker and mystic continued in ways few have explored in depth in this unique blend of biography personal experience and close reading of his late works bourgeault illuminates keating s remarkable spiritual development from the late 1980s until his death in 2018 she explores keating s increasing engagement with nondual spiritual practice his contributions to interspiritual dialogue the evolution of his early teaching on the movement from false self to true self to that from true self to no self his final dark night of the spirit and passage through death new evidence that he never left christianity but carried it with him to new places these profound final stages of keating s spiritual journey demonstrate how readers might find their own way as modern mystics fundamentally at home and at peace in the universe

in christian mysticism william ralph inge presents a nuanced exploration of the intersection between christianity and mysticism delving into the profound insights of mystics throughout history the text employs a thoughtful and analytical literary style merging scholarly rigor with poetic nuance inge elaborates on the historical and theological context of christian mysticism tracing its evolution from the early church to contemporary practices while drawing upon a diverse array of sources including scripture historical texts and mystical writings this work not only illuminates the spiritual dimensions of mysticism but also challenges readers to consider its relevance in the modern world william ralph inge an esteemed theologian and scholar was influential in the early 20th century as both a writer and a cleric his extensive academic background including his tenure as the dean of st paul s cathedral profoundly shaped his perspectives on spirituality and faith inge s deep commitment to understanding the mystical tradition was informed by both his anglican faith and his engagement with contemporary philosophy and psychology allowing him to bridge ancient wisdom with modern inquiry christian mysticism is highly recommended for theologians scholars and seekers alike inge s articulate prose invites readers into a realm of profound reflection and spirituality challenging them to explore not only the lives of the mystics but also their own spiritual paths this book is essential for

anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of the mystical dimensions of christianity in this enriched edition we have carefully created added value for your reading experience a succinct introduction situates the work s timeless appeal and themes the synopsis outlines the central plot highlighting key developments without spoiling critical twists a detailed historical context immerses you in the era s events and influences that shaped the writing a thorough analysis dissects symbols motifs and character arcs to unearth underlying meanings reflection questions prompt you to engage personally with the work s messages connecting them to modern life hand picked memorable quotes shine a spotlight on moments of literary brilliance interactive footnotes clarify unusual references historical allusions and archaic phrases for an effortless more informed read

exploration of the interface between mystical theology and continental philosophy is a defining feature of the current intellectual and even devotional climate but to what extent and in what depth are these disciplines actually speaking to one another or even speaking about the same phenomena this book draws together original contributions by leading and emerging international scholars delineating emerging debates in this growing and dynamic field of research and spanning mystical and philosophical traditions from the ancient to the medieval modern and contemporary at the heart of which lies meister eckhart perhaps the single most influential christian mystic for modern times the book is organised around significant historical and contemporary figures who speak across the intersections of philosophy and theology offering new insights into key interlocutors such as pseudo dionysius augustine isaac luria eckhart hegel heidegger marion kierkegaard deleuze laruelle and Žižek designed both to contribute to current trends in mystical theology and philosophy and elicit dialogue and debate from further afield this book speaks within an emerging space exploring the retrieval of the mystical within a post secular context

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