

## MYSTICS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

### HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

Without the Word of God no creature has being. God's Word is in all creation, visible and invisible. The Word is living, being, spirit, all ardent greening, all creativity. All creation is awakened, called, by the resounding melody, God's invocation of the Word. Now this is how the spirit is in the flesh – the Word is indivisible from God.

As the Creator loves all his creation, so creation loves the Creator. Creation, of course, was fashioned to be adorned, to be showered, to be gifted with the love of the Creator. The entire world has been embraced by this kiss.

In all that the earth issues forth from God, it is connected and bound to God. Nothing can be undertaken without God's bidding. It is just like the wife caring for her husband to do his bidding and desire. In just such a way creation feels drawn to the Creator as she responds to him in service. But the Creator, too, is bound to creation. He showers upon it greening refreshment, the vitality to bear fruit.

I compare the great love of Creator and creation to the same love and fidelity with which God binds woman and man together. This is so that together they might be creatively fruitful.

Creation is allowed in intimate love to speak to the Creator as to a lover.

The soul is a breath of the living spirit, that with excellent sensitivity, permeates the entire body, to give it life. Just so, the breath of the air makes the earth fruitful. Thus the air is the soul of the earth, moistening it, greening it,

The earth is at the same time mother; she is the mother of all that is natural, mother of all that is human. She is the mother of all, for contained in her are the seeds of all. The earth of humankind contains all moistness, all verdancy, all germinating power. It is in so many ways fruitful. All creation comes from it. Yet it forms not only the basic raw material for humankind, but also the substance of the incarnation of God's Son.

God has arranged all things in the world in consideration of everything else.

Holy persons draw to themselves all that is earthly.

Like billowing clouds, like the incessant gurgle of the brook, the longing of the soul can never be stilled. It is this longing with which holy persons seek their work from God.

The human person is the form and the fullness of all creation. In humankind God brings to fullness all his creation. God created humankind so that humankind might cultivate the earthly and thereby create the heavenly. Humankind should be the banner of divinity

## MECHTILD OF MAGDEBURG

You will ask me where God dwells. I will tell you, there is now lord in the whole world who lives in all his dwellings at once except God alone.

In heaven, or origin, before each soul and body therein gleamed the reflection of the Holy Trinity. From the mirror there shone the subline reflection of each person in the high majesty from which it had flowed forth. Each of us is a mirror of eternal contemplation, with a reflection that must surely be that of the living Son of God with all his works.

Fish cannot drown in water. Birds cannot sink in the air. Gold cannot perish in the refiner's fire. This God gives to all creatures: to develop and seek their own nature. How then can I withstand mine? I must to God, my Parent through nature, my Brother through humanity, my Spouse through love. God's am I forever.

The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw and knew I saw, all things in God and God in all things.

Do not disdain your body. For the soul is just as safe in its body as in the Kingdom of Heaven – though not so certain.

There is a time when both body and soul enter into such darkness that one loses light and consciousness and knows nothing more of God's intimacy.

Love the nothing, flee the self. Stand alone. Seek help from no one. Let your being be quiet, be free from the bondage of all things. Free those who are bound, give exhortation to the free. Care for the sick but dwell alone. When you drink the water of sorrow you shall kindle the fire of love with the match of perseverance. This is the way to dwell in the desert.

God says: Do not fear your death. For when that moment arrives, I will draw my breath and your soul will come to me like a needle to a magnet.

As the Godhead strikes the note, humanity sings. The Holy Spirit is the harpist and all the strings must sound which are strong in love.

God is not only fatherly, God is also mother who lifts her loved child from the ground to her knee. The Trinity is like a mother's cloak, wherein the child finds a home and lays its head on the maternal breast.

The Holy Spirit is a compassionate outpouring of the Creator and the Son. That is why when we on earth pour out compassion and mercy from the depths of our hearts and give to the poor and dedicate our bodies to the service of the broken, to that very extent do we resemble the Holy Spirit.

## MEISTER ECKHART

VIA POSITIVA; What is God? Isness. Where there is isness, there God is. Creation is the giving of isness from God. And that is why God becomes where any creature expresses God. Every creature is a word of God.

God finds rapture and joy in us.

All creatures flow outward but nonetheless remain within God. Being is God's circle and in this circle all creatures exist.

God is in everything, but God is nowhere as much as he is in the soul. There, where time never enters, where no image shines in, in the innermost and deepest aspect of the soul God creates the whole cosmos.

God is the newest thing there is, the youngest thing there is. God is the beginning, and if we are united with him, we become new again.

VIA NEGATIVA: Only God has isness. Therefore everything that is created is in itself nothing.

God is a being beyond all being; God is beingless being. Truly God is a hidden God.

God is not found in the soul by adding anything, but by a process of subtraction.

We become a pure nothing by an unknowing knowledge which is emptiness and solitude and desert and darkness, and remaining still.

The more you seek God, the less you will find God. If you do not seek God, you will find God. God does not ask anything else of you except that you let yourself go, and let God be God in you.

VIA CREATIVA; In my flowing out I entered creation. In my Breakthrough I re-entered God. Only those who have dared to let go can dare to re-enter.

In this breakthrough I discover that God and I are one. Just as God breaks through me, so do I break through God in return.

The Word of God is always "in the beginning." And this means that it is always in the process of being born and is always already born.

We must learn to break through things if we are to grasp God through them.

It is good for a person to receive God into himself or herself and I call this receptivity the work of a virgin. But it is better when God becomes fruitful within a person. For becoming fruitful as a result of a gift is the only gratitude for the gift

And what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace and I am not also full of grace? What good is it to me for the Creator to give birth to her Son if I do not also give birth to him in my own time and culture? This, then, is the fullness of time: when the Son of God is begotten in us.

From all eternity God lies on a maternity bed giving birth. The essence of God is birthing.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: In God action and being are one.

However great one's suffering is, if it comes through God, God suffers it first.

Those who follow compassion find life for themselves, justice for their neighbor, and glory for God.

The highest work of God is compassion. You may call God love; you may call God goodness. But the best name for God is compassion.

Humanity in the poorest and most despised human being is just as complete as in the Pope and the Emperor. Also, humanity is dearer to me than the human being I carry about in myself.

Love will never be anywhere except where equality and unity are.

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The path of life I have spoken is beautiful and pleasant and joyful and familiar.

Let whoever has found this way seek no other and you shall find that God who is whole and entire will possess you whole and entire.

#### JULIAN OF NORWICH

I saw that God is everything that is good and energizing. God is our clothing that wraps, clasps, and encloses us so as to never leave us.

God does not despise creation, nor does God disdain to serve us in the simplest function that belongs to our bodies in nature because God loves the soul and the soul is made in the image of God.

We have the power to ask of our Love reverently all that we desire. For our natural desire is to have God and the good desire of God is to have us. We can never stop this desire or longing until we have our Lover in the fullness of joy. Then we can no more desire.

God said: "It is necessary that sin should exist. But all will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of thing will be well."

"I can make all things well. I know how to make all things well. I know how to make all things well. I desire to make all things well. I will make all things well. And you will see with your own eyes that every kind of thing will be well."

I understood "I can" as referring to the Father; "I know how to" to the Son; "I desire to" to the Spirit. And when God says, "I will" I understand the unity of the Trinity. "You will see with your own eyes" refers to the oneing within the Trinity of all persons who will be liberated. God wants us to be enclosed in these words restfully and peacefully.

The fullness of joy is to behold God in everything.

God showed me that we should not feel guilty because of sin for sin is valuable.

True thanking is a true understanding of who we really are. With reverence and awe we turn ourselves around toward the working that our good Lord incites us to do, enjoying and thanking with our real selves. True thanking is to enjoy God.

We will all enter our Lord fully aware of and full possessing God. This will last forever. We will truly see, fully feel, spiritually hear, delectably breathe in, and sweetly drink God.

God feels great delight to be our Father and God feels great delight to be our Mother and God feels great delight to be our Spouse and our soul the loved Wife. Christ feels great delight that he is our Brother and Jesus feels great delight he is our Liberator.

In spite of all our feelings of sorrow or well-being, God wants us to understand and know by faith that we are more truly in heaven than on earth.

Our soul is Trinitarian like to the uncreated Trinity. It is known and loved from without beginning and in its creation oned to the Creator.

We can never know God until we know clearly our own soul.

Nature and Grace are in harmony with each other. For Grace is God as Nature is God. God is two in manner of working and one in love. Neither Nature nor Grace works without the other. They may never be separated.

I understand that all the blessed children who come out of God by Nature will be returned into God by Grace.

Just as God courteously forgives our sin after we change our ways, so also does God want us to forgive our sin instead of falling into a false meekness that is really a foul blindness and weakness due to fear.

Glad and happy and sweet to our souls is the joyful, loving face of our Lord. For he always fixes his eyes upon us who live in love-longing; and he wants our soul to smile at him in return for his favors. Thus, I hope that with his grace he has led and evermore shall join the Outer Face with the Inner Face and make us all one with him and each of us one with another in true lasting joy that is Jesus.