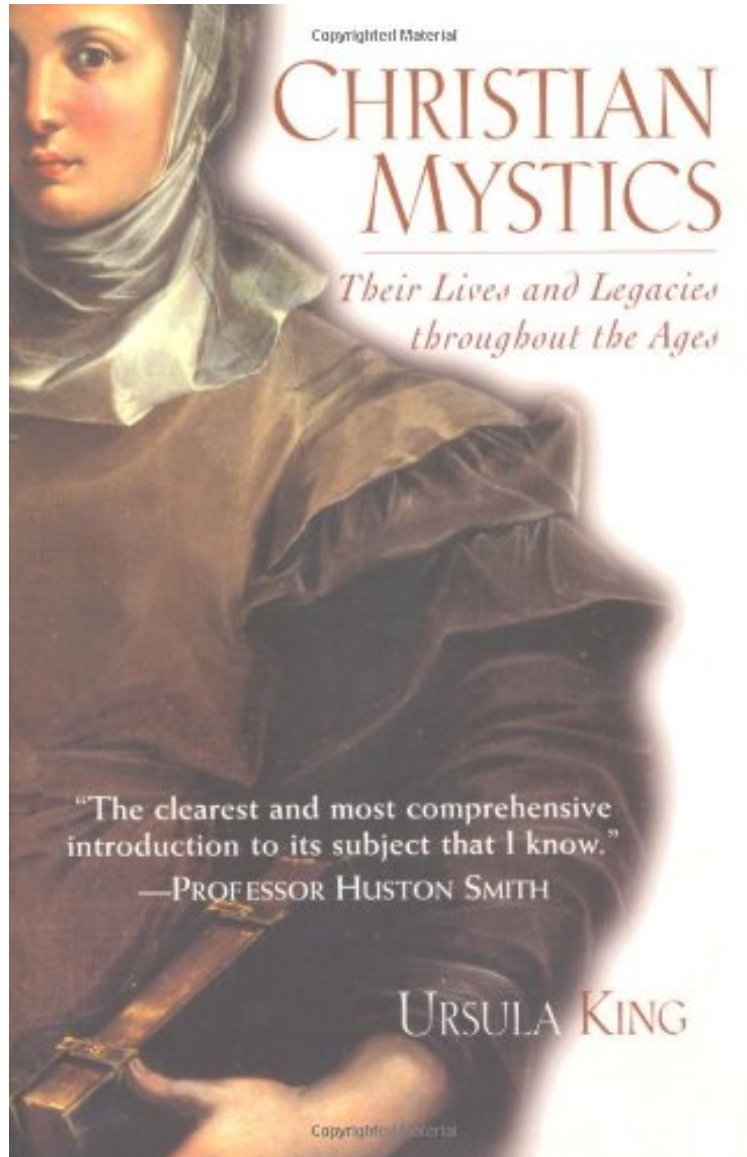


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Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages

Ursula King

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Ursula King : Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. God is joined to God's creation By Stephen P. Smith Technology offers the attraction for hot new inventions, and these can even seduce our nature into accepting change for changes's

sake. And confronted with secular pretense and it is easy to miss the subtleness of mystical experience altogether. Ursula King's "The Christian Mystics" provides an account of this other activity that is possible to miss. The alternative activity cannot be dismissed easily seeing that King catalogues the life of numerous mystics, from early Christians (e.g., Clement of Alexandria, Origen) to those contemporary mystics (e.g., Simone Weil, Thomas Merton). King (page 15) writes: "All mysticism is characterized by a passion for unity. To the mystic, true Being and Ultimate Reality are One. This can be experienced as both impersonal and personal, as Ground of Being, Ultimate Source, Perfect Goodness, Eternal Wisdom, Divine Love, God, or the Godhead. This Reality contains, yet transcends, everything there is. It is the One whom all is lost and all is found." Mystics share the same experiences, and as these experiences are common they provide a level of validity that is not so easily ignored. I must comment here. God is not found separate from God's creation, God is with us. The dualism that finds God apart from our world, either coming from theists or atheists, does not find support coming from mystical experience. I need only point to King. The situation is reversed from dualistic constraints, it is mysticism that is open to scientific investigation of a kind proposed by Wallace in "The Taboo of Subjectivity". King (page 19) writes: "Of Great importance also is the concept of God who is not simply One, Ultimate Reality or the Absolute, but a personal Being who yet transcends all notions of personhood found among human beings by forming a community of persons with the mystery of the Trinity." King (page 80) writes of Hildegard of Bingen: "She describes her visions in terms of light, speaks of mystical rapture and prophecies, and expresses her passionate desire for God with great intensity. Her visions are marked by brilliant colors, her descriptions by apophatic negations." King (page 109) quotes Meister Eckhart: "The union of God with the soul is so great that it is scarcely to believe. And God is in himself so far above that no form of knowledge or desire can ever reach him... Desire is deep, immeasurably so. But nothing that the intellect can grasp and nothing that desire can desire is God. Where understanding and desire end, there is darkness and there God's radiance begins." King (pages 152-153) writes on St. Teresa of Avila: "For Teresa, mental prayer was the beginning of the path to new ways of understanding, to the tasting of deep mysteries of faith, which included the indwelling presence of the Trinity and of Jesus Christ in his humanity and divinity, as well as insights into sin and grace, the Church and the sacraments. Her visions were both spiritual and physical, and she eventually experienced the grace of perfect union with Christ so that she became inseparable from him 'as when a little stream enters the sea'." King (page 235) writes on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: "As a child he had experienced a deep sense of oneness with nature, later followed by mystical experiences linked to 'vast open spaces' of sea and desert, to the riches of fossil life and the vibrant energy of cosmic evolution. All these made him ecstatically perceive 'that through all of nature I was immersed in God.' For him Jesus 'comes to us clothed in the glory of the world.' "Trinity finds agreement with the Advaitic experience. King (page 241) writes: "Swami Abhishiktananda's experience included the belief that there is an Advaitic dimension, an experience of deep, underlying unity, in Christianity itself which must be recovered." On page (242): "He realized a profoundly personal synthesis of Hindu-Christian spirituality in his own life." King (page 247) writes: "Reading the stories of past Christian mystics, it is remarkable how often mystical experiences of union and communion occur through intimate contact with nature, with the haunting beauty of its myriad forms of life. Hildegard of Bingen saw God's fiery essence in the beautiful meadows and waters, the blossoms, fruits and breeze, but also the sun, moon and stars, whereas Francis of Assisi spoke to the animals and praised Brother Sun." King (page 248) writes on the basic message of all mystics: "Divine radiance, light and life suffuse all there is. It is for us to accept this, and just let be or, in the words of the Christian mystics, to conform our will to God's will." Disclosure: My agenda is declared in my profile. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies throughout the Ages By Doc Griffin This was an easy to read presentation of what can be a complex subject. The author provides sufficient insightful snippets about key figures throughout history to allow the reader to develop a context for both their mystical experiences, the recordings about their experiences and the periods in which they lived. This book can serve as an excellent starting point for someone interested in journeying more deeply into this truly rewarding area of study. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Gives the background and history of Christian mystics throughout the ... By Sunny Gives the background and history of Christian mystics throughout the centuries, with a summary of their main themes. I would have appreciated a few more quotes from the writings of each, however.

Introduces sixty men and women whose great devotion and mystical relation to God transformed the times in which they lived and continues to affect our search for spirituality today.

From Library Journal Mystics, those men and women who seek a deep and direct experience with the presence of God, are found across the religious spectrum. Their appeal transcends the boundaries of their own particular religious traditions. Think Francis of Assisi or Thomas Merton. Here, King (theology and religious studies, Univ. of Bristol, U.K.) introduces 60 Christian mystics, both male and female, in two- to five-page profiles. The author begins with the early mystics, such as Clement of Alexandria, and then moves to figures closer to our era, like Gerard Manley Hopkins, Evelyn Underhill, and Simone Weil (some readers may be surprised at these more contemporary examples). The brief, well-written introductions are informative while also leaving the reader with the desire to delve deeper.

Serving as both an introductory text and an excellent reference, this is recommended for various types of libraries. John Moryl, Yeshiva Univ. Lib., NY Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Defining a mystic as "a person who is deeply aware of the powerful presence of the divine Spirit: someone who seeks above all, the knowledge and love of God and who experiences to an extraordinary degree the profoundly personal encounter with the energy of divine life," King profiles 60 men and women across the centuries and the continents who unquestionably qualify for this unique distinction. Tracing Christian mysticism from its Greek and Jewish roots, the author introduces a diverse array of familiar and unfamiliar mystics, courageous individualists who commune with the divine along a variety of distinctive paths. Through their stories, the somewhat arcane--but always substantial--tradition of mystical theology is made manifest. This historically and spiritually rich narrative provides insight into a phenomenon that is currently enjoying a renaissance. REVWR Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved ...this book provides a much-needed panorama of Christian Mysticism through the ages. -- Ewert Cousins, Professor of Theology, Fordham University A comprehensive, lucid, and inspiring history of the most intriguing and influential aspect of Christian spirituality. -- Greg Tobin, former editor-in-chief of Book-of-the-Month Club, Inc., and author of The Wisdom of St. Patrick Its accessible prose will make it a favorite of general readers as well. -- Prof. Huston Smith, author of The World's Religions and Why Religion Matters The clearest and most comprehensive introduction to its subject that I know. -- Prof. Huston Smith, author of The World's Religions and Why Religion Matters The reader meets the great mystical teachers of the past and a glimpse of the new mysticism of the future. -- Ewert Cousins, Professor of Theology, Fordham University The reader meets the teachers of the past and is given a glimpse of the new mysticism of the future. -- Ewert Cousins, Professor of Theology, Fordham University This historically and spiritually rich narrative provides insight into a phenomenon that is currently enjoying a renaissance. -- Booklist 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 This may well be the single best introduction to a continuous and living mystical tradition. -- Beatrice Bruteau, author of Radical Optimism and The Easter Mysteries With verve, clarity and brevity Ursula King brings alive the Christian Mystics. -- Keith J. Egan, Professor of Theology, Saint Mary's College and Adjunct Professor of Theology, Notre Dame University