

THE WRITINGS OF JULIAN OF NORWICH

A VISION SHOWED TO A DEVOUT WOMAN AND A REVELATION OF LOVE

V7-PDF23287 | 2016-03-10 | 36 Pages | Size 1,320 KB

Julian of Norwich (ca. 1343&"ca. 1416), a contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, and John Wyclif, is the earliest woman writer of English we know about. Although she described herself as &a simple creature unlettered,& Julian is now widely recognized as one of the great speculative theologians of the Middle Ages, whose thinking about God as love has made a permanent contribution to the tradition of Christian belief. Despite her recent popularity, however, Julian is usually read only in translation and often in extracts rather than as a whole. This book presents a much-needed new edition of Julian&s writings in Middle English, one that makes possible the serious reading and study of her thought not just for students and scholars of Middle English but also for those with little or no previous experience with the language. & Separate texts of both Julian&s works, *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman* and *A Revelation of Love*, with modern punctuation and paragraphing and partly regularized spelling. & A second, analytic edition of *A Vision* printed underneath the text of *A Revelation* to show what was left out, changed, or added as Julian expanded the earlier work into the later one. & Facing-page explanatory notes, with translations of difficult words and phrases, cross-references to other parts of the text, and citations of biblical and other sources. & A thoroughly accessible introduction to Julian&s life and writings. & An appendix of medieval and early modern records relating to Julian and her writings. & An analytic bibliography of editions, translations, scholarly studies, and other works. The most distinctive feature of this volume is the editors& approach to the manuscripts. Middle English editions habitually retain original spellings of their base manuscript intact and only emend that manuscript when its readings make no sense. At once more interventionist and more speculative, this edition synthesizes readings from all the surviving manuscripts, with careful justification of each choice involved in this process. For readers who are not concerned with textual matters, the result will be a more readable and satisfying text. For Middle English scholars, the edition is intended both as a hypothesis and as a challenge to the assumptions the field brings to the business of editing.

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