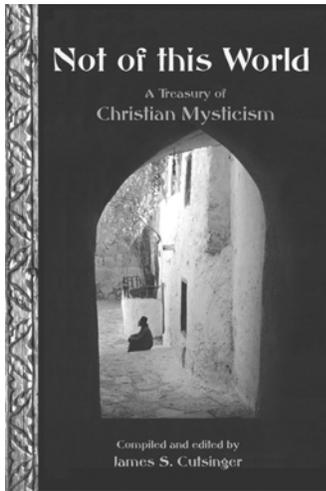


# Not of This World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism



*Not of this World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism*, edited by Prof. James Cutsinger, challenges the notion that Christianity is a purely devotional path. It is widely supposed—by seekers whose contemplative journeys have taken them to the East—that the “love of God” is alone the primary obligation and the highest goal in a Christian’s spiritual life, which thus leaves no scope for contemplation as an integral part of this spiritual life. *Not of this World* invites the reader to explore a deeper and often overlooked dimension of Christian mysticism in which the accent is placed on the acquisition of *gnosis* (knowledge) and in which *theosis* (deification) is presented as the goal of the spiritual journey.

*Not of this World* is a collection of short meditations on the contemplative life, drawn from a wide variety of Christian sources that range from the second to the twentieth centuries. Guided by writers whose backgrounds and experiences cross all sectarian divisions, the reader is invited to take part in a journey that follows the three classic stages of Purification, Illumination, and Union.

Unlike any previously published work, in drawing from nearly two thousand years of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant sources, *Not of this World* is the first primary source anthology of Christian mysticism that focuses on the acquisition of spiritual knowledge and “deification” as explicit goals of the Christian spiritual path. It is also in the unique position of being a work that will be at home on someone’s bedside table providing inspiration to ordinary believers, as it will be within the classroom as a valuable teaching tool.

## An Excerpt from the Foreword

“God’s Kingdom is certainly not of *this* world – the fallen world of corruption, competition, and death. But beneath the surface of *this*, the Gospel teaches that there is also a *that*: a world ‘so loved’ (John 3:16) by God that He has entered it fully in order to make it one with Himself... Beginning in the early years of the Church, the journey of those who were in search of that world, and who were prepared to dedicate themselves fully to the most fruitful of quests, was divided into three major stages: Purification, Illumination, and Union....The reader is invited to be a part of this journey. Taking the lead and giving their encouragement will be some of the wisest and most eloquent writers in the history of Christian spirituality, ranging from the second to the twentieth centuries and representing the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant perspectives.”

- James S. Cutsinger, from the Foreword



## Which readers will be interested in this work?

*Not of This World* will appeal to a variety of readers:

- ❖ **Practicing Christians** will find this single volume of writing contains some of the most inspiring voices in the history of Christian spirituality. It will provide practical instruction on how to enter more deeply into contemplative prayer as well as encouragement for those striving to come closer to God.
- ❖ **Spiritual seekers**, whose journeys in the past have taken them to the East for nourishment, will find that this profoundly beautiful book focuses on the often neglected dimensions of Christian *gnosis* (spiritual knowledge) and *theosis* (deification), demonstrating that Christianity has an ancient but still-living tradition of contemplative practice.
- ❖ As an ideal introduction to the vast subject of Christian spirituality and mysticism, **College and Seminary students** will find *Not of this World* of great use in courses on the history of Christianity and Comparative Mysticism because of its use of sources from nearly two thousand years of the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant traditions. Through its dozens of short excerpts from authors of different denominations and historical periods, this book offers much to readers able to perceive a mystical unity underlying all such differences.
- ❖ **Students of Comparative Religion and Mysticism** will find enlightening parallels between these writings and the teachings of such diverse traditions as Sufism, Taoism, Zen Buddhism, and Hinduism, particularly Vedanta.

## Additional publication information

*Not of This World* also contains a detailed index and a selection of recommendations for further study on various topics addressed by the book.

*Not of This World* has an expected publication date of Spring 2003 and a price of \$19.95.

## What is being said about *Not of this World*

“Increasingly as a composer, I want to 'hear' God, and tend to be wary of yet another book on mysticism in any Tradition. However, James Cutsinger in *Not of This World* allows the masters of the Christian Tradition to speak on their own terms, thus permitting us to 'hear' God through their unique perspective.”

— **Sir John Tavener**, composer and author

“Cutsinger has assembled a dazzling chorus of voices to explore the mysteries of Christian gnosis and deification. His selection is daring (where else can one find Boehme, Dante, and C.S. Lewis side-by-side?) and his taste superb. I can't think of a better collection to place in the hands of anyone seeking to explore the Christian mystical tradition.”

— **Philip Zaleski**, editor of *The Best Spiritual Writing* series

“At a time when the Christian tradition is under siege by the profane ideologies of modernity, and when Christian institutions themselves are torn by doubt and division, this anthology serves as an urgent reminder of that quintessential wisdom which cannot be compromised by the vicissitudes of time. From the days when the Master Himself walked the shores of Galilee down to our own time the Christian mystics have been living exemplars of a transformative and sapiential spirituality wherein both love and knowledge perform their mysterious alchemy on the soul. Professor Cutsinger is to be warmly commended for his judicious selection of mystical writings and for an arrangement which enhances their perennial themes. Here, in a single volume, may be found many Christian refractions of that ever-present Light which irradiates all integral traditions.”

— **Kenneth Oldmeadow**, La Trobe University, Bendigo, and author of *Traditionalism: Religion in the Light of the Perennial Philosophy*

“*Not of This World* is indeed a spiritual treasury garnered from near and far reaches of the Christian tradition, ancient, medieval, and modern, Eastern and Western, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant, with the special merit of integrating contemplative asceticism or mysticism and what might be called a metaphysical perspective into a living whole. The introduction to this splendid collection is in itself a little jewel. If there is a guiding principle in the selection it is the perennialist or traditionalist . . . orientation of the editor.”

— **Ralph Slotten**, Professor Emeritus, Dickinson College



“Beautifully crafted and skillfully structured, this vade mecum of spiritual insights and counsels will be treasured by all Christian readers who are drawn toward the inner dimension of their tradition.”

—**Patrick Laude**, Georgetown University, and author of *The Way of Poetry*

“There are many anthologies of Christian mysticism, but few that range so widely as this: from the first century to the twentieth, and embracing equally Western Christianity—both Catholic and Protestant—and the Christian East, even the Far East. The book is arranged in three broad sections taking the reader from purification, through illumination, to union with God. Each of these sections is further subdivided to explore the different experiences of the way to union with God, from severe austerity, through diaphanous understanding, to an experience of union that transcends unity.”

—**Andrew Louth**, University of Durham, and author of *Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*

“In this anthology, Dr. James Cutsinger has prepared a mystical feast of a very high order. An astutely chosen, brilliantly edited bouquet of spiritual writings, *Not of This World* will likely produce an extraordinary effect on the attentive reader, for this is an anthology unlike any other in my experience. More than a mere collection of "wise sayings" and mystical writings gathered in one place for the reader's convenience, this book is rather a catalogue to the curriculum of a higher School, a wardrobe to the land of true and everlasting knowledge, a hint of God's own breath in the inner ear. It does not ask to be read like an ordinary book, it calls the reader himself to be reader, text, book and truth in the experience of the 'joyful instant' of Christian gnosis. The last sentence of the book's final selection says it all and says it best: 'Reader, it is enough. But if thou still wouldst read, then be thyself the book, in thought, word, life and deed.'”

—**Vincent Rossi**, Director of Education for the American Exarchate of the Jerusalem Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church

Editor of

*Not of this World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism*

James S. Cutsinger

James S. Cutsinger is Professor of Theology and Religious Thought at the University of South Carolina and is an important contemporary author on spirituality, particularly within the Christian tradition. He is also emerging as one of the most widely recognized authorities on the Perennialist (Traditionalist) school of comparative religious thought. Professor Cutsinger currently serves as secretary to the Foundation for Traditional Studies and is the recipient of numerous teaching awards (he was honored in 1999 as a Michael J. Mungo University Teacher of the Year). He offers courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in Religious Studies at USC.

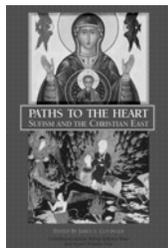


Professor Cutsinger is now working with World Wisdom on the long-term project of editing revised editions and anthologies of the works of Frithjof Schuon, the late philosopher, poet, and artist of whom Professor Cutsinger is one of the world's best known commentators.

Professor Cutsinger is a nationally known advocate of Socratic Teaching based on the classics. His consulting work has included curriculum development and design, contributions to great books seminars for professionals, and workshops in discussion-based pedagogy. He has also served as director of three National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars.

*Previous books by James S. Cutsinger*

*Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East*



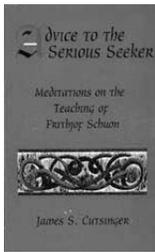
*Paths to the Heart (World Wisdom, 2002) examines the common elements of Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, and Orthodox Christianity. The essays presented in this work were originally given at the Paths to the Heart Conference, and represent the words of some of the greatest contemporary experts in their respective fields.*

“The peace of the world in the new century may depend in no small measure on the ability of the Islamic world and historically Christian countries to communicate with one another. Perhaps the best hope for deeper understanding between Christians and Muslims lies in the fact that the finest thinkers in both religions have drawn on a common pool of imagery—the language of the heart—as they try to describe what is ultimately beyond words: the human encounter with God.”

—Bruce Clark, *The Economist*



### *Advice to the Serious Seeker: Meditations on the Teaching of Frithjof Schuon*

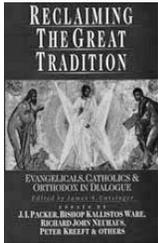


*Advice to the Serious Seeker is an introduction for scholars to the Perennialist school of comparative religious philosophy. At the same time it is a valuable guidebook for the general reader who is looking for intellectually serious but accessible answers to questions about the spiritual world.*

*“Advice to the Serious Seeker introduces the main tenants of Perennialist School of comparative religious philosophy through the teachings of its main contemporary expositor (Frithjof Schuon).”*

- **Book News Inc.**

### *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialogue*



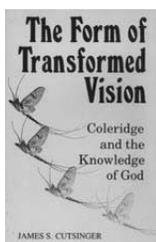
*Reclaiming the Great Traditions is a collection of essays that seeks to overcome the sectarian differences of the Christian traditions by focusing on such elemental truths as the Trinity and the divinity of Christ.*

*“Reclaiming the Great Tradition is an illustration of the need for a proper understanding of the content of the common faith and of the way to arrive at the practical oneness of this faith.*

*The core of the faith – that is the concern of this important volume.”*

- **Affirmation and Critique – A Journal of Christian Thought**

### *The Form of Transformed Vision: Coleridge and the Knowledge of God*



*The Form of Transformed Vision examines the work of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, with special regard to his work on God and the nature of the Divine.*

*“It is by some such standard that Professor Cutsinger would have us measure any disproportion we may feel between the meticulous, unhurried, superabundantly documented exegesis of Coleridge’s thought which constitutes the bulk of his book, and the propounding of its primary theological purpose. Enlightenment, that is to say the transformation of theory into vision, if and when it comes, will speak for itself.”*

- **Oren Barfield – from the Foreword**

## *Contributors of essays in Not of This World*

Some of the notable contributors to the over thirty essays contained in *Not of This World* are:

**St. Ignatius of Antioch** was, according to legend, the child that Christ took up in His arms, as described in Mark 9:35. He was appointed as Bishop of Antioch by the hand of St Peter himself. Under the persecution of the Emperor Trajan, he was martyred in the Flavian amphitheater sometime between 98-117 Ad.

**St. Augustine of Hippo** was one of the most prolific geniuses that the Church has ever known. He is admired for not only the volume of his work, but also the wide variety of subjects that he addressed. His chief work was *City of God*, begun in 413, which frames theology within the history of mankind and attempts to explain the actions of God in the world.

**St. Maximos the Confessor**, born in Constantinople in 580, was a high-ranking courtier in the Byzantine Court who became a monk late in life. He was the greatest defender of Orthodoxy against the Monothelite heresy. In defending his faith against both the Emperor of Byzantium and the Patriarch of Constantinople he was exiled and suffered having both his tongue cut out and his hand chopped off.

**St. Anselm**, Archbishop of Canterbury and Doctor of the church, was born in France in 1033. His chief works *Monologium* and *Proslogium* are often overshadowed by works of other great thinkers of the Church. However, his greatest philosophical achievement was his ontological argument for the existence of God. This argument has greatly influenced the writing of many philosophers and theologians throughout the ages.

**St. Bernard of Clairvaux** was the founder of the Cistercian monastic order. Born of French nobility he entered the monastery at Citeaux at the age of 22. Within three years of his entry, he had founded a new abbey at Clairvaux. Even though he was regarded as one of the most influential men of his day, defeating the anti-pope in the great schism of 1130 and preaching the message of the Second Crusade, he remained throughout his life a monk and a mystic before all else. His greatest works include *De Gradibus Superbiae*, *De Amore Dei*, and *De Gratiâ et Libero Arbitrio*.

**St. Thomas Aquinas** is one of the most highly regarded Christian thinkers and writers of all time. Born in 1225 in Naples, he entered the Dominican order in 1242. A prolific author of over 60 works, his principle work, *Summa Theologica*, is seen by many as a manual of Christian doctrine, and a complete exposition of Christian theology and philosophy.

**Meister Johann Eckhart** is widely recognized to be the father of German Mysticism. Born in Hochheim in 1260, this Dominican preacher, theologian and mystic has been pronounced by some to be the greatest thinker before Luther. His discourses, directed to the intellect rather than to the will, are remarkable for their depth of mystic teachings and cover subjects including Divine essence, the relations between God and man, and the operations of the human soul.



**Dante Alighieri** in his most famous works *la Divina Commedia (The Divine Comedy)* offers one of the most chilling views of the afterlife ever given. Born in Florence in 1265, Dante began *The Divine Comedy* in 1307 which was completed just before his death in 1321. It was intended as an allegory of human life and is written in the form of visions of the world beyond the grave, with the object of converting a corrupt society to the path of righteousness. In it, guided by the poet Virgil, Dante passes through Hell, Purgatory and into Heaven.

**St. Gregory Palamas**, bishop of Thessalonkia, was born in Constantinople in about 1296. He was a foremost supporter of a form of contemplation known as Hesychasm (or Palamsim). He wrote that through spiritual discipline and contemplative prayer one could come to see the “uncreated light” of God. Although he was initially considered a heretic and was excommunicated from the Orthodox Church, he was later cleared of these charges and his position was declared orthodox in 1351.

**St. Seraphim of Sarov** was born in Kursk, Russia in 1759. He is considered one of the three greatest saints born of Mother Russia. After recovering from near fatal injuries resulting from a fall, the boy revealed that he had received a vision of the Virgin Mary, who assured him he would recover. Upon entering the monastic life at the age of 18, he began to live a hermetic lifestyle, believing that only through prayer and meditation in solitude could he come into greater proximity with God. It is said that he spent one thousand days and nights sitting on a stone slab in the wilderness to achieve this end.

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge** was a poet, philosopher and one of the founders of the Romantic movement. A life-long friend of William Wordsworth, they published a joint volume of their work, *Lyrical Ballads*, in 1798, which contained possibly his most famous work, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. In his younger years he earned a living as a Unitarian preacher, but his most famous work in the sphere of religion was as an apologist of Anglicanism.

**C.S Lewis**, fellow of Magdalene College Oxford, is best known for his fictional work and Christian apologetics, two disciplines that he saw as complementary. Born in Belfast in 1898, his most noted work, *Mere Christianity*, was based on a series of radio essays given at the height of World War II that were designed to provide comfort to the fearful and wounded people of war-torn England.

**Lilian Staveley** was the author of two works that reveal the spiritual insights of a mystically inclined contemplative soul: *The Golden Fountain* (World Wisdom edition, 1982), and an autobiography, *The Prodigal Returns* (1921), both written in complete anonymity from family and society in early twentieth century England.

**St. Nikolai Velimirovich**, Bishop of Belgrade, was born in Serbia in 1880, the ninth child of poor peasant farmers. When poor health prevented his entrance into the Serbian military academy, he instead entered the Seminary of St Sava in Belgrade. On being ordained in 1910, he began teaching at the seminary in Belgrade. After World War I he traveled extensively in America and Europe teaching, giving lectures and ministering to the poor. He was an outspoken opponent of the Nazi invasion of Serbia and was eventually sent to Dachau. At the end of the Second World War he fled the emerging Communist regime and spent the rest of his life in America teaching and lecturing. He died in 1956.