



John Ruusbroec: The Spiritual Espousals, The Sparkling Stones, and Other Works (Classics of Western Spirituality)

Jan Van Ruusbroec

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The fourteenth century in Europe has been called "the age of adversity." It was a time when medieval society was racked by the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, and peasant turmoil of the age, saw the decline of its mendicant orders, the "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy in Avignon, and the rise of wide-ranging heretical movements such as the Free Spirit heresy that disparaged the Church and its sacraments in favor of an immediate experience of God.

In this context John Ruusbroec (1293-1381) lived as a monk in the duchy of Brabant and produced a corpus of works on the spiritual life that has made him the most important Flemish mystic in an age of such greats as John Tauler, Julian of Norwich, and Birgitta of Sweden.

For the first time in English, four of Ruusbroec's most influential writings have been collected in one volume: The Spiritual Espousals, A Mirror of Eternal Blessedness, The Little Book of Clarification, and The Sparkling Stone. This new translation by James Wiseman offers a fresh, contemporary rendering of Ruusbroec's brilliant discourses that caused Abbot Cuthbert Butler to comment that "in all probability...there has been no greater contemplative; and certainly there has been no greater mystical writer."

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