

**COMFORTABLE WORDS FOR CHRIST'S
LOVERS: BEING THE VISIONS AND
VOICES VOUCHSAFED TO LADY
JULIAN, RECLUSE AT NORWICH IN 1373.
TRANSCRIBED AND EDITED FROM THE
RECENTLY DISCOVERED MANUSCRIPT**

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Comfortable words for Christ's lovers: being the visions and voices vouchsafed to Lady Julian, recluse at Norwich in 1373. Transcribed and edited from the recently discovered manuscript by Dundas Harford

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DUNDAS HARFORD

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RECLUSE AT NORWICH IN 1373

TRANSCRIBED AND EDITED
FROM THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED MANUSCRIPT
(Brit. Mus. Addit. 37,790)

BY THE
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EMMANUEE

N.B.—From the opposite table it will be readily possible to refer to the parallel passages in Miss Grace Warrack's Edition (based on the Sloane manuscripts, sometimes in the notes referred to as "B") or in Father Tyrrell's (based on the Paris manuscript, referred to as "P.")

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE MANUSCRIPT

i. A certain romantic interest attaches to the MS. from which this version is taken. It seems to have been seen by Francis Blomefield before the middle of the eighteenth century, and described in his "History of Norfolk," vol. iv. p. 81. By a curious mistake he gives the date in the introduction (see below p. 16) as "mccccxliij," for "mccccxiiij," thus giving the Lady Julian's age at that time as 100, instead of 71. This error has misled all later writers upon Lady Julian. The MS. was then lost to public notice till 1909, when it was bought by the British Museum at Lord Amherst's sale.

Lady Julian's Teachings

ii. Comparison with the Paris and Sloane MSS. (see Bibliography, page 14) shows the recovered version to be very much shorter than the type of text represented by them. In the opinion of the present Editor it is what might be called the "first edition" of the Revelations, and the longer form is the outcome of the twenty years' subsequent meditation, thought and experience, referred to in the 51st and in the last chapters of the later version. It has been suggested that it was *abbreviated* from them: it is here maintained that they were *expanded* from it.

II. THE AUTHOR

i. Of *external* or historical evidence for Lady Julian's life we have none that can be relied on. All that we know of her is drawn from her writings.

ii. From the *internal* evidence we learn that she was born about 1342;

Introduction

that she was a recluse, or anchoress, in a cell attached to the church of St Julian, Norwich ; that in the year 1373, during a serious sickness, from which she was not expected to recover, she had vouchsafed to her a series of visions, or revelations, which were afterwards written down and made public ; and that she was still living in 1413.

iii. It is a fascinating personality which is here revealed ; full of deep and rich feeling : marked by singular freshness and naïveté : strongly original and individual : sympathetic and brimming over with love : bold, even to rashness, in thought and expression, while professing loyal submission to Holy Church : candid about her own defects : humble as to her powers and attainments : full of humanity, while caught up to wonderful closeness to the Divine. Lady Julian deserves to rank high amongst the great mystics of the world.