



Meister Eckhart. "Sermon on the Coming of the Lord | sermo de adventu domini". Trans. Kathryn Starkey, Patric di Dio di Marco, Björn Buschbeck, Robert Forke, and Mae Lyons-Penner. *Global Medieval Sourcebook*. 2021. [sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/eckhart\\_sermon\\_coming\\_lord/](http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/eckhart_sermon_coming_lord/).

## Sermon on the Coming of the Lord | sermo de adventu domini

### Text Information

Author | Meister Eckhart

Language | Middle High German

Period | 13th Century

Genre | Devotional prose

Source | Bodleian Library MS. Laud Misc. 479

Collection | Prayer, Spirituality, and Life after Death: Global Medieval Perspectives

URL | [sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/eckhart\\_sermon\\_coming\\_lord/](http://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/eckhart_sermon_coming_lord/)

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Introduction by Patric di Dio di Marco.

### Introduction to the Text

Meister Eckhart was born around 1260 in Tambach (Thuringia) and died in Avignon in 1328 while awaiting a trial in which he was expected to defend himself before the papal commission against the teaching of heretical doctrines. This meant that Eckhart did not have to witness the condemnation of 28 sentences from his wide corpus of writings in the papal bull *In agro dominico* on March 27th, 1329.

Eckhart wrote in both Latin and vernacular German and was likely still a young man when he entered a Dominican monastery in the Erfurt region. Although the result of Eckhart's trial in Avignon caused problems for the reception of his teachings, his writing proved highly influential for generations to come, both inside the Dominican order and beyond.

### Introduction to the Source

The present sermon is transmitted in full in three manuscripts and appears in two further codices in fragmentary form. The present text is based on the fourth sermon transmitted in the collection *Paradisus anime intelligentis*, originally transmitted under the vernacular title *paradis der fornuftigen sele*. The *Paradisus anime intelligentis* is a thoughtfully-arranged collection of 64 sermons in Middle High German, half of which were written by Eckhart. All but one were written by Dominican preachers from the Erfurt region.

The compiler of the *Paradisus* remains unknown, but was probably a Dominican preacher from the region of Thuringia (in the center of what is now Germany). It was most likely compiled in the middle of the fourteenth century and may have been intended to commemorate the golden age of the Dominican monastery in Erfurt. The *Paradisus* is thus a unique object for scholarly analysis in that its collection of Eckhart texts can serve as evidence of early Eckhart reception. Three complete codices transmit the *Paradisus* collection. An edition, based on the Oxford codex, has been produced by Philipp Strauch. Recent comparative studies have demonstrated that the Eckhart sermons in the collection have often been slightly shortened and modified, possibly to fit better into the editorial agenda of the unknown compiler.

The *Paradisus* contains an index to the 64 sermons. Each entry includes a title, the name of the author to whom the sermon is attributed, and a concise summary of its content or main argument. The index entry for this sermon reads: "In that time, the angel Gabriel was sent by God. In this sermon Meister Eckhart the Elder proves, both with arguments and with similes, that God is born in the soul and that the soul is born in God."

The Latin verse that introduces the text is Luke 1:26-28. The sermon follows the form of a homily: after an introductory paragraph summarizing the main argument of the sermon, Eckhart explains in detail each part of the Biblical verse. The sermon deals with the birth of God in the innermost part of the soul, i.e. in man's reason.

### Further Reading

Flasch, Kurt. *Meister Eckhart: Philosopher of Christianity*. Translated by Anne Schindel and Aaron Vanides. Yale UP, 2015.  
Hackett, Jeremiah M. *A Companion to Meister Eckhart*. Brill, 2013.

McGinn, Bernhard. *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart: The Man from God Hid Nothing*. Crossroads, 2001.

Mojisch, Burkhard. *Meister Eckhart: Analogy, Univocity, and Unity*. Translated with a preface and an appendix by Orrin F. Summerell. B. R. Grüner, 2001.

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## Sermon on the Coming of the Lord | sermo de adventu domini

Item sermo de adventu domini

In illo tempore missus est angelus Gabriei a deo. ave gratia plena, dominus tecum. dise wort beschribit sente Lucas: 'in der zit wart gesant ein engil Gabriel von Gode'. in wilchir zit? in den seis manden du Johannes Baptista was in seiner müder libe. der mich fragite: warumme beiden wir, warumme vasten wir, warumme tun wir alle unse were, warumme sin wir getouft, warumme ist Got mensche worden, daz diz hoiste was? ich spreche, darumme daz Got geborin werde in der sele und di sele in Got geborin werde. dar umme ist alle di schrift ge schriben, darumme hait Got di werlnt geschaffin und alie englische nature daz Got geborin werde in der sele und di sele in Got geborin werde. allis kornes nature meinet weize und al metal meinet golt und alle geberunge meinet menschen darumme sprach ein Neister: 'so inyindit man kein dier, iz inhabe etwaz glichis dem menschin'. in der zit in deme da diz wort zu dem erstin inphangin wirt in minir fornuft, da ist ez so lutir und so cleinlich, da ist ez ein wair wort er ez gebildit wirdit in mime gedanke. Zu dem drittin wirdit ez gesprochin uzwendic mit deme munde, und also in ist ez nicht dan ein offinbarunge des innerin wortis. also wirdit daz ewige wort gesprochin innewendic in deme herzin der sele, in derne innirsten, in deme lutirsten. in dene heubite der sele, daz ist in vormuftikeit: da geschihit di gebort inne. der nicht dan einen ganzin won und eine hoffenunge hizu hette, der mochte gerne wizzin wi dise gebort geschihit und waz hi zu hilfit.

Sente Paulus sprichit: "in der udlide der zit samte Got sin-en son". sente Augustinus sprichit waz da si fullide der zit. "da numme zit inist, da ist fullide der zit' dan ist der tac fol also des tages numme in ist, daz ist ein notwar-heit. alle zit muiz da abe sin da sich dise gebort hebit, wan nicht in ist daz dise geburt also sere hindere also zit und creature. daz ist ein gewis warheit daz zit Got noch di sele fon nature nicht beruren inmac. mochte di sele fon zit herurt werdin, si inwere nicht sele, und mochte Got von zit berurt werdin, he in were nicht Got. were abir daz di zit di sele beraren mochte, so inmochte Got nummir in ir geborin werdin. da Got geboren sal werdin in der sele, da muiz alle zit abgewallin sin oder si muiz der zit intphallin sin mit willin oder mit begerunge.

Next: sermon on the coming of the Lord

"In that time the angel Gabriel was sent by God. Hail, full of grace, the Lord be with you."<sup>1</sup> St. Luke wrote these words: In that time an angel named Gabriel was sent by God. In what time? During the six months that John the Baptist was in his mother's womb. To whom who asks me why do we pray, why do we fast, why do we do all our works, why are we baptized, why did God become man, that this was the highest [act]? I say, so that God [may] be born in the soul and the soul [may] be born in God. To that end the whole scripture was written, to that end God created the world and all angelic natures: that God be born in the soul and the soul in God. The nature of every grain tends<sup>2</sup> to [become] wheat and all metal tends to [become] gold and all birth tends to [become] human. For this reason, a scholar<sup>3</sup> said: "Thus one finds no animal that doesn't have some similarity to humankind." At the time at which the word is first received in my reason,<sup>4</sup> it is so pure and so subtle, then it is a true word before it is formed in my thought. Thirdly, it is spoken externally with the mouth and as such it is nothing more than a revelation of the inner word. In the same way, the eternal word is spoken inwardly in the heart of the soul, in the innermost part and in the purest. In the head of the soul, that is, in reason: there the birth takes place. He who has had nothing but the whole pleasure and hope might like to know how this birth happens and what assists it.

St. Paul says: "in the fullness of time God sent [forth] his son." St. Augustine explains what the fullness of time might be. "Where there is no more time, there is the fullness of time." Then the day is done when there is no more day. This is necessarily true. All time must be flown when this birth begins, because there is nothing that prevents this birth more than time and creation.<sup>5</sup> That is a certain truth that, by nature, time cannot touch either God or the soul. If the soul could be touched by time it would not be the soul. Could God be touched by time, he would not be God. Yet were it so that time could touch the soul, God could no more be born in it. Since God shall be born in the soul, all time must have fallen away or the soul must have fallen out of time by will or by desire.



Ein andir sin fon fullide der zit, der di kunst hette und di macht daz he di zit und allis daz in der zit in seis tusint jarin ie geschach und daz noch geschehin sal biz an daz ende, her widir gezihen kunde in ein gegiwertic nu, daz were fullide der zit. daz ist daz nu der ewekeit, da di sele in Gode alle dinc nuwe und frisch und gegiwertic bekennit und in der lust also di ich izunt gegiwertic habe. ich lais in einem buchilin der ez gronde konde, daz Got die werlint izunt machit also an deme ersten tage du her di werlint geschuf. hi ist Got riche und daz ist Godis riche. di sele in der Got sal geborin werden, der muiz di zit intphallin, und si muiz der zit intphallin und sal sich uf trakin und sal stein in eime inkaffine in disin richtum Godis. da ist wide one wide und breide one breide. da bekennit di sele alle dinc und bekennit si da follincumen.

Di meistere di da beschriben wi wit der himmil si: di minniste craft di in miner sele ist, di ist widir dan der wide himmil; ich geswige der fornufti keit: di ist wit one wide. in deme heubite der sele, in fornuftikeit, in der bin ich also nahe der stait ubir tusint mile geinsit meris also der stait da ich izunt inne stein. in dirre wide und in disme rich-tumme Godis da bekennit di sele, alda inphellit ir nicht und da ist si nichnis wartinde.

"Der engl wart gesant." di meistere sprechin daz der en-gile menige ist zal pobin zal. ir menige ist so groz daz si kein zal begrifen inmac. ir zal inmac joch nicht bedocht werdin. der undirscheit konde genemen one zal und one menige, deme werin hunderit also ein. werin hunderit per-sonen in der goheit, di undirscheit konde genemen one zal und one menige, der in bekente doch nicht dan ein. ez wonderin sich ungeleubege lude und etlichte ungelarte cristine lude und joch etliche phaffin wizzin da fon also wenic also ein stein: di nemen dri also dri kuwe oder dri steine. abir der undirscheit kan genemen in Gode one zal und one menige, der bekenit daz dri personen sin ein Got.

A second meaning of the fullness of time. Were there someone who had the skill and the power that he could retract into the here-and-now once again time and everything that ever hap-pened in time in six thousand years and that is yet to happen before the end of time, that [state] would be the fullness of time. That is the now of eternity, in which the soul recognizes all things new and fresh and present in God and in the pleasure that I am having in the here and now. I read in a little book—who could fathom that—that God makes the world in this moment as on the first day when he created the world. Here God is boun-tiful and that is God's kingdom.<sup>6</sup> Time must fall away from the soul in which God shall be born, and it [the soul] must fall away from time, and it shall raise itself up and stand gazing into God's bounty. Here there is wideness without width and broadness without breadth. Here the soul recognizes all things and recog-nizes them entirely.

To the scholars who describe how vast the heavens are: the low-est faculty<sup>7</sup> that is in my soul, it is wider than the wide heavens; I do not speak of reason [the intellect]: that is wide without width. In the head of the soul, in reason, there I am as close to a place over a thousand miles across the sea as I am to the place where I am standing now. In this wideness and in this abundance of God, there the soul understands, there nothing falls away from it, and there it is waiting for nothing.

"The angel was sent." The scholars say that the multitude of angels is a number above numbers. Their multitude is so great that no number can encompass it. Their number cannot even be imagined. He who could conceive of difference without number, for him one hundred would be the same as one. If there were one hundred people in the Godhead, he who could comprehend difference without number would not recognize more than one. Many unbelievers and many unlearned Christians [alike] wonder about this and even a lot of clerics know as little about this as a stone: they think of three as three cows or three stones. But he who can comprehend difference in God without number and without quantity, he recognizes that three persons are one God.



Der engil ist auch so hoch. die besten meistere sprechin daz iclich engil habe eine ganze nature. glichir wi also ob ein meusche were daz alliz daz hette daz alle menschin ie gehattin und nu habin und ummir me gehabin sullin sn gewalt, wisheit und an allin dingin, daz were ein wonder, und so inwere he doch nicht dan ein mensche und were dan noch verre den engilin. Also hait igelich engil eine ganze nature und ist gesunderit von deme anderin also ein dier fon dem anderen, daz einir anderen nature ist. an dirre menige der engile ist Got riche, und der daz bekennit, der beken mit Godis riche. si bewisit Got riche, also ein herre bewisit wirdit fon der menige sinir rittere. darumme heizzit he in uns ein herre der here. alle dise menige der engile, wi hoch si sint, di habin ein midewirken und helfin da zu da Got geborin wirdit in der sele. daz ist si habin lust und freute und wonne in der geburt, si in wirkin nicht. da in ist kein werc, wan Got der wirkit di geburt alleine, mer di engile habin ein dinisthaft werc hizu. alliz daz dazu wirkit, daz ist eim dinisthaft werc.

Der engil was genant Gabriel. he teit auch swar, he hiz also wenic Gabriel also Cürrat. niman inkhan wizzin des engilis namen. da der engil genant ist, da inquam ni meister noch sin i zu. vil lichte ist he nennelich. di sele inhait auch keinen namen; also wenic aise man Gode eigenen namen vindin mac, also wenic mac man der sele eignen namen vindin, alleine da groze buche fon geschriben sin. abir da si ein uz lugin hait zu den werkin, da fone gibit man ir namen. ein zimmirman daz en ist sin name nicht, mer den namen nimet her fon dem werke des he ein meistir ist. den namen Gabriel den nam he von dem werke des he ein bode was, wan Gabriel spricht craft. in dirre geburt wirkit Got creftliche oder wirkit craft. waz meinit alle di craft der nature? daz si sich selbir wirkin wil. waz meinit alle di nature di da wirkit geberin? daz si sich selbir wikkim wil. di nature minez vader wolde wirkim in sinir nature einen vadur. du des nicht geschin mochte, du wolde si ein wirkin daz ime allig dingis glich were, du der craft gebrauch, du worchte si ein. So si glichiste mochte, daz waz ein son. da abir der craft noch me gebrichit oder ein andir ungevelle geschit, da wirkit si noch eime unglicheren menschen. abir in Gode ist volle craft, darumme wirkit her sin glich in seiner geburt. allis daz Got ist an gewalt und an worheit und an wisheit, daz gebirit he alzumale in di sele.

The angel is also lofty in this manner. The best scholars say that each angel has a nature of its own.<sup>8</sup> Just as if there were a human who had everything that mankind ever had, now has, and shall always have in power, wisdom and all things, that would be a wonder, and even then he would only be human and would still be far from the angels. Thus every angel has a complete nature and is distinguished from the other like one animal from another that belongs to a different species. In this multitude of angels God is rich, and he who comprehends that comprehends God's abundance. It demonstrates that God is abundant, just as a lord is represented by the number of his knights. Therefore he is named amongst us a lord of hosts. This whole multitude of angels, however lofty they are, contribute and help so that God may be born in the soul. That is, they have pleasure and joy and bliss in the birth, but they don't effect it. There is no agency<sup>9</sup> in it. God alone effects the birth, in sum the angels participate as servants. Everything that participates, that is an act of service.

The angel was called Gabriel. Whatever he claimed, his name was Gabriel as little as he was Conrad. Nobody can know the name of the angel. The angel's name has never been attained by scholar nor understanding. Perhaps he is nameless. The soul too has no name; just as one cannot discover God's own name, so one cannot discover the soul's own name, even if large books have been written on this topic. But because it is oriented towards works, one names it according to this. A carpenter—that is not his name, the name rather derives from the work of which he is a master. Gabriel took his name from the work for which he was a messenger, as Gabriel signifies power. In this birth God acts powerfully or effects power. What does all the power of nature intend? It strives to become itself. What does all the nature that effects birth intend? It strives to become itself. The nature of my father wanted to produce a father according to his own nature. Because that wasn't possible, it wanted to bring about the thing that of all things was most similar to him. Because the power was lacking, it effected something as similar as possible, that was a son. But when the power is lacking even more, or another mishap intervenes, then it effects a more dissimilar person. But in God there is complete power, for that reason he creates his identical self<sup>10</sup> in his own birth. Everything that God is in force and in truth and in wisdom, he brings forth completely into the soul.



Sente Augustinus spricht: 'waz die sele minnit, deme wirdit si glich. minnet si irdische dinc, so wirdit si irdisch. minnit si Got, so mochte man fragin, wirdit si dam Got?' spreche ich daz, daz ludite ungelouplich den di zu krankin sin habin und ez nicht fornemen. mer sente Augustinus spricht: 'ich inspreche ez nicht, lner ich wise uch an di schrift, di da spricht: "ich habe gesprochen daz ir Gode sit".

Der etwas hette des richtummes da ich fore fon gesprochen habe, einen blic oder joch eine huffenunge oder eine zuforsicht, der forneme dit wol! ez inwart nie gebort so sippe noch so glich noch so ein alse di Sele Gode wirdit in dirre geburt. ist ez daz ez an ichte gehinderit wirdit daz si nicht allis dingis glich in wirdit, daz in ist Godis schult nicht. alse verre alse ir gebrechin intphallin, alse verre wirkit he si yme glich. daz der zimmerman nicht ein schone hus gewirkin ink an ize worwechtime huize, daz in ist sin schult nicht, ez gebrichit an deme hulze. also ist ez an gotiichime wirkine in di sele. mochte sich der minniste engil irbildin oder geborin werdin in der sele, da ingegin in were alle dise werlint nicht, wan in eime enigin funkeline dez engilis grunit, loubit und luchtit alliz daz in der werlinde ist. mer dise gebort wirkit Got selbir.

der engil inmac da kein werc gewirkin wan ein dinistaft werc. Ave daz ist 'one we'. wer da ist one creature, der ist one we und one helle, und di allir minnes creature ist und hait, di hait allir minnist we. ich spreche ettiswanne ein wort: di der werlint allir minnist hait, der hait ir allir meist, nimannis ist di werlint also eigin also der alle di werlint gelazin hait. v wizzit ir wo fone Got got ist? da fon ist Got got daz he one creature ist. he innante sich nicht in der zit. in der zit ist creature und sunde und tot. dise habin ein sippe sin in eime sinne, und wan di sele da der zit intphallin ist, darumme inist da noch we noch pine, joch ungemach wirdit ir da ein freude. allis daz ie bedacht mochte werdin fon lust, fon freude und fon wonne und fon minlichkeit, hebit man sii gegin der wonne di da ist im dirre geburt, daz inist nicht freude.

St. Augustine says: "The soul becomes identical to that which it loves.<sup>11</sup> If it loves an earthly thing, it becomes earthly. If it loves God, one may ask does it then become God?" If I should say that, it would sound unbelievable for those who are lacking sense and do not listen. Saint Augustine also says: "I do not say it, I rather point you to the scripture that says, 'I have said that you are Gods.'"<sup>12</sup>

Whoever might have some part of the abundance of which I have just spoken, a glimpse or even a hope or assurance, shall listen carefully to this! Never was a birth so akin or so identical or so unified as the soul was to God in this birth. If it is somehow prevented from becoming identical in all aspects, then this is not the fault of God. To the extent that it lacks flaws he creates it identical to himself. That the carpenter can't build an excellent house from worm-eaten wood, that is not his fault, it fails because of its wood. Thus it is with Godly acts upon the soul. If the lowest angel wanted to be depicted or born in the soul, this whole world would be nothing in comparison, because everything that is in the world flourishes, blossoms, and shines in one single glimmer of the angel. What is more, this birth is effected by God himself.

The angel can perform no act but an act of service. 'Ave' means 'without suffering.' Whoever is without creation is free of suffering and from hell, and he who is and has the least creation, suffers least. I said once these words: whoever has least of the world has most of it. No one possesses the world as much as he who has detached<sup>13</sup> from it. Do you know why God is God? God is God because he is without creation. He never named himself in time. In time is creation and sin and death. In one sense these are related,<sup>14</sup> and because the soul has then fallen away from time, for this reason there is then no suffering or pain, even misery there becomes joy for it [the soul]. If one weighed all that could ever be imagined of pleasure, joy, delight, and loveliness, it would be as nothing against the delight that is in this birth.



'Gnaden vol', daz minuiste werc der gnadin ist hohir dan alle engile in der nature. sente Augustinus spricht daz ein gnadinwerc daz Got wirkit, alse daz her einen sundere bekerit und zu eime gudin menschin machit, daz ist grozir dan daz Got eine nuwe werlint geschuffe. also licht ist Gode himmil und erde umme zu kerine alse mir ist ein aphil umane zu kerne in minir hant. da gnade inne ist in der sele, daz ist so lutir und ist Gode so glich und so sippe, und gnade ist one werc, alse in der geburt, da ich fore von gesprochin habe, kein werc inist. gnade inwirkit kein werc. sente Johannes ingeteit nikeyn zeichin. daz werc das der engil in Gode hait, daz ist so hoch daz mi kein meistir noch sin darzn mochte cumen daz si daz werc begrifin mochten. abir von dem werke vellit ein spon, alse da ein spon abe vellit von eime huis, den man abehauwit. eyn blichin daz ist da da der engil mit sime nidersten den himmil berurit. da son grunit und bluwit und lebit alliz daz in dirre werlinde ist.

Ich spreche ettiswanne von zwein burnen. alleine ez wonderliche lude, wir müzin sprechin noch unsime sinne. eyn burne da di gnade uz inspringit, ist da der vader uz gebirit sinen eyn geborin son; in deme selbin inspringit di gnade, und alda geit di gnade uz deme selbin burnen. eyn andir burne ist da di creature uz Gode vlinz: der ist so verre von deme burnen da di gnade uz intspringit, alse der himmil ist von der erdin. gnade inwirkit nicht. da diz fuir ist in sinir nature, da inschaditis noch inburnit nicht. di hitze des fures di burnit. joch da di hitze ist in der nature des furis, da inburnit si nicht und ist unschedelich, joch da di hitze ist in deme fure, da ist si der rechtein nature des furis also verre alse der himmil ist von der erdin. gnade inwirkit kein werc. si ist zu zart da zu. were ist ir also verre alse der himmil ist von der erdin. eyn in sin und eyn ane haftin und ein mit Gode daz ist gnade, und da ist Got mide, wan daz volgit dar noch.

'Got muit dir'. da geschihit di geburt. ez emdarf nimanen unmoglich dunkin hizu zu cumene. waz schadit mir daz, wi swere ez ist, sint he ez wirkit? alle sine gebot sint mir licht zu haldine. he heize mich joch alliz daz he wolle, des inachte ich nichtis nicht, daz ist mir alliz cleine, ob he mir sine gnade da zu gibit. z sprechin etliche si inhaben is nicht, so spreche ich: daz ist mir leit. e begeris du ez abir? 'nein'. daz ist mir noch leidir. enmac man ez nicht gehabin, so habe man doch eine begerunge darzu. David spricht: 'ich habe begerit einir begerunge zu dinir gerechtigkeit.' daz wir Godis also begeren daz her in uns geborin werdin wolle, des helf uns etc.

'Full of grace'. The lowest act of grace is higher than all the angels in their nature. St. Augustine says that an act of grace that God carries out, such as converting a sinner and making him a good person, that is greater than if God created a new world. Heaven and earth is so easy for God to turn as it is for me to turn an apple in my hand. Where grace is in the soul, it is so pure and so similar and akin to God and grace is unworked just as there is no work in the birth of which I have previously spoken. Grace performs no work. St. John never performed a sign. The work that the angel has in God is so lofty that no scholar or intellect<sup>15</sup> could achieve an understanding of the work. But a splinter falls from the work, just as a splinter falls from a beam that a man cuts down. There is a flash where the angel touches heaven with its lowest part. From this everything that is in this world flowers and blossoms and lives.

I spoke once of two fountains. Even though it sounds strange, we have to speak according to our understanding. There is one fountain from which grace springs, this is where the father gives birth to his son incarnate; grace springs from the same one, and precisely there grace flows from the same fountain. There is another fountain where the creation flows out of God: this one is as far from the fountain where grace springs from as heaven is from the earth. Grace does not perform work. Where there is fire in its nature, it does not damage or burn. The heat of the fire burns. Even there where the heat is in the nature of the fire it doesn't burn and is harmless, even where the heat is in the fire, there it is as far from the real nature of the fire as the heaven is from the earth. Grace performs no work. For it is too subtle for that. Work is thus as far from it as heaven is from the earth. Being in and attached to and one with God: that is grace, and God is there, because that is the consequence.

'God is with you.' There the birth takes place. No one must think it impossible to come here. What harm does it do to me, however difficult it is, since he effects it? All his commandments are easy for me to adhere to. Let him command anything he wants of me, I do not consider it anything at all, it is all easily bearable if he grants me his grace. Many say that they do not have it [grace], then I say: that pains me. But do you want it? 'No.' That pains me even more. If one cannot have it, one should still desire it. David says: "I have desired a desire for your justice." Help us to so desire God that he will be born within us, etc.



## Critical Notes

- 1 Luke 1:26 and 28. Latin quote that Eckhart uses to introduce his sermon and then translates in the following sentence in his exegesis.
- 2 Middle High German "meinet" in this context implies the notion of directional intention.
- 3 Translates Middle High German "Meister," which can refer more broadly to a scholarly authority rather than being exclusively reserved for those, like Eckhart, who held a certain professorial position at the University in Paris.
- 4 Alternatively, the intellect. Eckhart refers here to the faculty of the soul.
- 5 The term creature here refers not to the act of creation, but to its result; all that is created must be abandoned to allow for the birth to take place.
- 6 The Middle High German wordplay on "riche," which Eckhart uses here first as a predicative attribute for God ("powerfulness") and then as a genitive noun, cannot be repeated stylistically in English.
- 7 Middle High German craft refers here to the faculties of the soul.
- 8 The Middle High German text writes "eine ganze nature," which literally translates as "a whole nature." What is outlined here, however, is the thought that the angels each have their own singular nature. This theological thought explains why not all angels have been condemned as a punishment for Lucifer's rebellion against God, while Adam and Eve's sin resulted in humanity's collective fall from grace; in contrast to the angels, human individuals do not have a nature of their own.
- 9 The negated term "werc," literally "work, deed, achievement," means here that the angels do not have the power to effect the birth for God is the sole agent.
- 10 Literally someone who equals him, i.e. his son. In Christianity, God father and son are identical.
- 11 Eckhart uses her the verb "minnen", a derivation of the noun "minne," i.e. the notion of love that is prevalent in courtly poetry.
- 12 Psalm 82:6.
- 13 The Middle High German reads "gelazin," a derivation of "gelazzenheit," which is best translated as detachment; a central concept in Meister Eckhart.
- 14 "ein sippe sin" includes the noun for family, thus underlining that the relation between the mentioned terms is stronger than simply having something in common or sharing certain features.
- 15 Translates "sin," referring here to the human faculty of thought.