



Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late Medieval England (Hardback)

By Jennifer Bryan

University of Pennsylvania Press, United States, 2007. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 231 x 157 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. You must see yourself. The exhortation was increasingly familiar to English men and women in the two centuries before the Reformation. They encountered it repeatedly in their devotional books, the popular guides to spiritual self-improvement that were reaching an ever-growing readership at the end of the Middle Ages. But what did it mean to see oneself? What was the nature of the self to be envisioned, and what eyes and mirrors were needed to see and know it properly? Looking Inward traces a complex network of answers to such questions, exploring how English readers between 1350 and 1550 learned to envision, examine, and change themselves in the mirrors of devotional literature. By all accounts, it was the most popular literature of the period. With literacy on the rise, an outpouring of translations and adaptations flowed across traditional boundaries between religious and lay, and between female and male, audiences. As forms of piety changed, as social categories became increasingly porous, and as the heart became an increasingly privileged and contested location, the growth of devotional reading created a crucial arena...

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