

**DIVINE CONTEMPLATION
FOR ALL OR
THE SIMPLE ART OF
COMMUNING WITH GOD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649107551

Divine contemplation for all or the simple art of communing with God by Savinien Louismet

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

SAVINIEN LOUISMET

**DIVINE CONTEMPLATION
FOR ALL OR
THE SIMPLE ART OF
COMMUNING WITH GOD**

CANADIAN MESSENGER
LIBRARY

Section
Number

**DIVINE
CONTEMPLATION
FOR ALL**

OR

*THE SIMPLE ART OF
COMMUNING WITH GOD*

By

DOM SAVINIEN LOUISMET, O.S.B.

Author of "The Mystical Knowledge of God," etc., etc.

REGIS
BIBL. MAJ.
COLLEGE

(4)

LIBRARY
JESUIT PROVINCIAL'S RESIDENCE
TORONTO

LONDON:
BURNS OATES & WASHBOURNE, LTD
28 ORCHARD ST. W. & 8-10 PATERNOSTER ROW E.C.
1920

61882

~~H 13P
2188
L88~~

SV
5083
L88
1920

NIHIL OBSTAT :

F. THOMAS BERGH, O.S.B.
Censor deputatus

IMPRIMATUR :

EDM: CAN: SURMONT
Vic. gen.

Westmonasterii, die 28 Martii, 1920

PREFACE

THE notion of Divine Contemplation is not less in need of being elucidated and brought back to its legitimate, traditional, Catholic meaning than was that of the Mystical Life. It has suffered just as much at the hands of modern writers, by a host of whom it has been misunderstood, distorted, narrowed down and all but made a bug-bear; whilst in its true self Divine Contemplation is the grandest, noblest, sweetest, easiest thing in the world; in some measure, and under some form or other, obligatory on all; and as necessary to the Christian at every stage of his spiritual life as is the act of breathing to the physical well-being of every animal, wherever situated in the scale of life, and at whatever stage of its development.

In this new treatise I take Divine Contemplation in its widest meaning, as understood by St. Thomas in his *Summa Theologica, Secunda Secundæ, quæst. 179-182*, and by St. Francis of Sales in his treatise on *The Love of God, Book vi, ch. vi, last paragraph*, where he says: "In order to attain to contemplation it is usually necessary to hear the divine word, hold spiritual conferences with others like the anchorites of old, read devout books, pray, meditate, sing devout canticles, and entertain good thoughts. Holy contemplation being the end and purpose of all these exercises, they are comprised under the same heading, and such persons as practise

these are called contemplatives, as also this sort of occupation is called the contemplative life."

This new treatise will, therefore, deal with Contemplation in all its varieties of form, and at the same time all the preliminaries to contemplation, all the acts which lead up to it or accompany it; in short, all the acts whether of the mind or of the will, whether of the spirit only, or of the body with the spirit, which have God directly for their object; rudimentary contemplation and perfect contemplation, and between these extremes, all the degrees—that is to say the entire gamut—of divine contemplation.

It needs no demonstration—because it has in itself the force of an axiom—that every adult Christian, whatever his age, profession, condition, or natural endowment, should in some degree be a genuine contemplative: that is to say, should, within the limits of his own capacities, natural and supernatural, be a sincere and convinced adept in Divine Contemplation. When we consider his state of grace, and all that state means: namely, his vital union with Christ; the presence in him of the Holy Ghost; the grace of manifold prayer (*spiritum gratiæ et precum*) (*Zach. xii, 10*); the spiritual dower of the infused virtues, moral and theological, and of the seven gifts; and his having at hand all the treasury of the Sacraments, the Sacred Liturgy, the Holy Scriptures, the lives of the Saints and their writings; to say nothing of numberless actual graces showered upon him all day long: in face of all this, we feel justified in holding that a Christian is inexcusable if he be not in some degree a contemplative.

Why then are there so very few contemplatives even among professed Christians?

It is only too true that for some it is a case of downright indifference and tepidity: Christians though they be, at least in name, they simply do not care. *Flens dico!* With the Apostle (Philippians iii, 18), *I say it weeping:* God is the least and last of their concerns. But there are also those who do care, who would indeed like to become contemplatives in the measure and in the manner willed for them by their loving God, and, perhaps, some have even made an attempt towards this.

Now what is it that has prevented the latter from succeeding in their attempt at Divine Contemplation?

This: they have met with no encouragement. Or it has been put before them in a wrong way. Perhaps they have been positively dissuaded from Divine Contemplation as from something dangerous. Or, finally, they have been bewildered or disgusted by the works they have read on the subject.

Now it is principally for such persons that I venture to publish this treatise. It may be a great presumption on my part, but it is true that I have no other ambition than to help souls of good will to lay hold of, or to return to, the Catholic traditional notion of Divine Contemplation, and to teach them how to use it to good purpose in their spiritual life.

This doctrine that all men are called to Divine Contemplation is no novelty. It has been the constant and insistent teaching of the Catholic Church for the past nineteen centuries;

and it is so to this hour, if only men would receive it as they should and carry it out in their lives.

The first questions and answers in the *Catechism* are: "Who made you? God made me. Why did God make you? God made me to know Him, love Him and serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in the next." In these few words we have the whole philosophy of Christian life, its very essence, and also its proper division, all taught in a popular way by our Holy Mother the Church, to the little ones of the flock. We have here, in a nutshell, so to say, and shorn of technicalities, the whole concentrated doctrine of Christ about the mystical life. We are plainly told that this sort of life is lived between God and the individual soul; that it concerns the here and the hereafter; that so far as it concerns the present life our first business in it is "to know and love God"—that is to say, to have direct dealings with Him—and our next is "to serve Him" in acts of justice and charity to our fellow-men: the first thing being Divine Contemplation, the other being saintly action, as we have already explained at some length in a previous volume (*Cf. Mystical Life, ch. v*).

Now in this treatise, we are concerned with the first and principal part of the mystical life, namely Divine Contemplation or the knowledge of God united to the love of God. This is the sweet knowledge, the *Sapida Cognitio* of which the Saints speak in their works on the spiritual life. And they do but follow in the footsteps of Our Lord who proclaimed this truth: *Now*

this is eternal life, that they should know Thee (Father, who art) the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent (John xvii, 3).

This view, large and truly Catholic, of Divine Contemplation, at one stroke unceremoniously sweeps away, like a cobweb, the modern mistaken idea that Divine Contemplation is the exclusive privilege of an intellectual aristocracy ; as though the little ones of Christ did not count ; as though the dealings of God with them, and their dealings with God, were beneath notice and could be ignored ; or as though the dear and loving God were beyond the reach of these, the lowliest and humblest of the flock. Too long has this fatal mistake played havoc in the sphere of the spiritual life. It has restrained hundreds of thousands from loving intercourse with God. It has thwarted ever so many well-meant attempts towards union with Him. It is well, therefore, that the wide, generous, traditional doctrine of the Church on this momentous subject should be placed in the clearest possible light, and that this truth should be proclaimed with unflinching voice, even from the house-tops: **DIVINE CONTEMPLATION IS INDEED FOR THE MILLION.**

Therefore, in this new volume, I am going to try to be more and more simple, homely, direct, and unconventional. If, however, there should occur some passages difficult to understand, I would entreat my reader not to be discouraged nor to give up the attempt. These obscure passages should be read and re-read attentively, and if light does not dawn, they should simply be passed over. Later, when one has read the