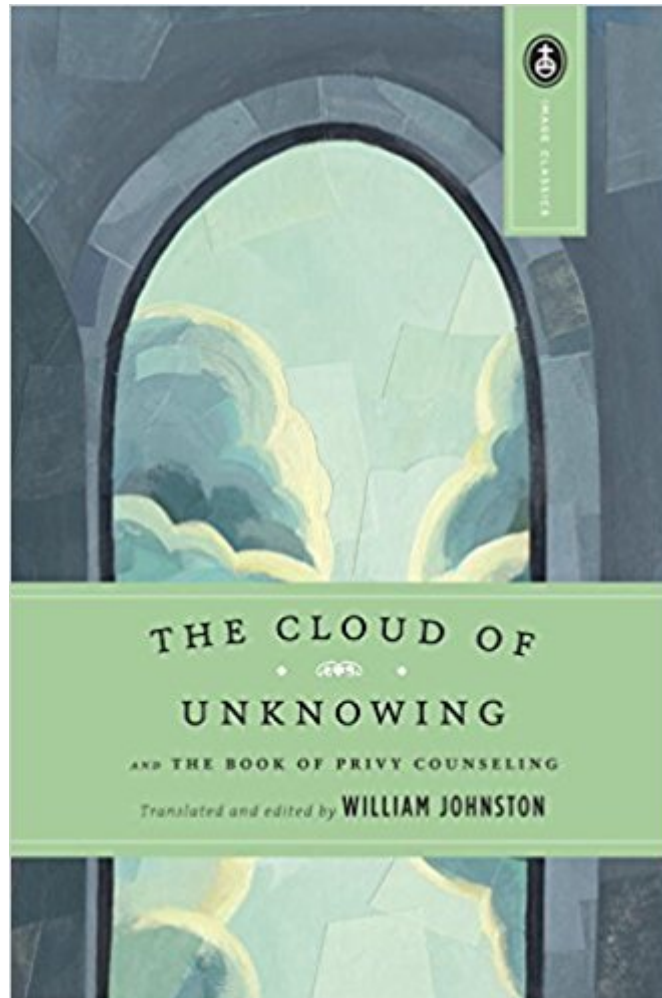




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The Cloud Of Unknowing: And The Book Of Privy Counseling



Synopsis

William Johnston--an authority on fourteenth century spirituality and specifically on the writings of this unknown author--provides a substantive and accessible introduction detailing what is known about the history of this text and its relevance throughout the ages. Also included here is the author's other principal work, *The Book of Privy Counseling*--a short and moving text on the way to enlightenment through a total loss of self and consciousness only of the divine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The theme of the writings: In short but instructive chapters, the mysterious Briton, who mastered the way of the mystics gave an admirable essay on Christian life and its development through contemplation. Prayer is in fact the core of Christian life, and the backbone of this marvelous work, where he explained conducting oneself with respect to examining and silencing the thoughts with humility. Love is the goal in which a faithful should abide through contemplation. His smaller work "the Book of Privy Counseling," is a more mature but moving treatise on attaining salvation by enlightenment through kenosis (self denial). What is left should only be consciousness of the presence of the Lord! Apophatic tradition of the Orientals: Eastern monastics started the root to mysticism, practicing the Macarian arrow prayer (K. Ware, in *Study of Spirituality* p176), carried to Europe as "The Jesus Prayer," through the Praktikos of Evagrius Pontikos. In chapter 38 of the *Cloud*, this holy English mystic speaks of a little prayer of one syllable Kyriya Elaison (Lord have mercy) that is powerful enough to pierce the heavens. Origen was the initiator of the Apophatic

concept (commentary on song of Songs), carrying over from Philo, based on roots that go all the way to Asaph, Ps 73:21-24. But, the crystallization of the whole theology took final shape in the writings of a Syrian monk of early six century of pseudonym Dionysius the Areopagite (who was probably a student or companion of Severus of Antioch), taking to himself the name of St. Paul's Athenian disciple. The wave of Mystical Milieu: During 14th and 15th century Europe, a pilgrimage to the unknown God started by Eckhart and his fellow Dominicans Susa and Tauler based on spiritual poverty.

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