

Meditations
on
Exodus

By Karl Kohlhase, 2016

How the Darkness Rages

A Meditation on Exodus 1

How the Darkness rages
Against the Light
How it seeks to enslave
The inhabitants of Earth

O Pharaoh
May Jesus Christ unmask you
Then once you are unmasked
May He dethrone you

Lord Jesus
Light of the World
Open my blind eyes today
For I honestly do not know
What Pharaoh precisely is

Is he the Devil?
Is he corrupt societal influences?
Or is he my own stubborn egoic will?

Perhaps he is some unholy league
Between all three
Counterfeiting Your Holy Tri-Unity

I may not be sure
How to define this Pharaoh
But I am sure that he is real
And that he poses a real threat

I have felt his cruel taskmasters
Driving me to work, work, work

And for what?
Castles made of sand
Trophies for the trash heap
And a heart that was hollow

Under his slave drivers
My soul was seldom satisfied
Seldom happy
And never at rest

So many poor souls
Are enslaved this very day
Drug addicts
Sex addicts
Alcoholics
Workaholics

Bound in anger
Bound in grudges
Bound in fear

Bound in depression
In a deep dark hole
Without faith, hope, or love

And when the Divine Light
Tries to beget a new star
For their dark night sky
This Pharaoh seeks to smother it
Or cast it into the Nile

He went on his killing spree
Before the birth of Moses
He went on his killing spree
Before the birth of Christ
And with so many abortions in our own age
I wonder what he is nervous about now

O God of all light and hope
In Whom there is no darkness or despair
I praise You this day
For Your mysterious midwives
Called Shiphrah and Puah

For their starry names
Convey Brightness and Glittering
In a world full of darkness

Aah...
Those sparkling midwives give me hope
Though the darkness may rage
It will never extinguish
The infinite light of Christ

Today
Some bright new inspirations will be conceived
Today
Some souls will be born into the Kingdom
Today
Some will become spiritual adolescents
Today
Some will become fully grown mystics

God is delivering
His sons and daughters
From the dominion of darkness
And they will have their exodus
Out of the slavery of sin

Then may they shine
Through Jesus Christ
Like stars in the firmament forever

Amen

Drawn Out Of Water
A Meditation on Exodus 2

Moses
Drawn Out Of Water
How shall I speak of him?

Very carefully

I have great admiration
And a deep love for this spiritual giant
But I have to admit
That he frightens me

For he sometimes displayed
The temperament of Levi
With his veiled and violent legalism

Which makes sense
Since he wore Levi's genes

Both his father and mother
Were of that tribe
So Moses was predisposed
To give the binding Law

Now I love lawfulness
For without boundaries
Human civilization
Collapses into mayhem

But I also love that freedom
Which flows from the Spirit of Christ

Boundaries
And unbounded freedom
I love them both

And so does Moses
For the lawgiver
Is also the emancipator
If you have ears to hear

Just as the aquifer flows
Beneath the surface of the earth
The Spirit of Christ flows
Beneath the veil of Moses

Dear reader
You already have heard
The Sunday School sense
Of the Exodus account
So I will not bore you with that here

But if you want to drill down
Deep into the aquifer
It will not be easy

And if you are unwilling
To do the hard work of introspection
Then I suggest that you stop reading here

Are you baptized into Christ?
Then here is the liberating truth
You are Moses
Drawn out of the water
And on a deeper level
His story is yours

We all have been raised in Pharaoh's house
And there our egos waxed strong

There we learned to love
All that was contrary to Christ:
The applause of men
Trophies and accolades
Pampering and entertainment
And self-serving indulgences

And there we learned to despise
All that Christ loves:
The secret approval of God
Hiddenness and humility
Disciplined spiritual intensity
And the selfless service of others

And just as Moses
This high prince of Egypt
Was stripped bare in the desert
So must we
If we desire to know the freedom
Of which he writes in this mind-numbing parable

In the dryness of that desert
He who was Drawn Out Of Water
Learned to draw water for others

And not a single act of kindness
Goes unnoticed by God

So Moses was introduced to Reu-el
The Friend Of God
Who gave him wise counsel
And his daughter in marriage

But let the reader be advised
Before you proceed with this book...

If you are one who has a propensity
Towards strife and contention
(And I suspect we all do)
This Reu-el is a priest
Who knows how to minister to Midianites

And his daughter Zipporah is a bird
That will strip you of your flesh

Here is the mind of Moses
Which connects with the Mind of Christ

If you listen to the mystic Moses
With your unaided ears of flesh
You will beget Gershom
And remain "exiled"
From the interior reality

But if your ears are opened
By the liberating Spirit of Christ
You will beget another sense of Gershom
And find yourself "exiled"
Only from Pharaoh's exterior facade

Then you shall know the inner Truth
And the Truth shall make you free

The Pinnacle of Self-Emptying

A Meditation on Exodus 3

Moses was a man who had been emptied out
Emptied of all the luxuries
He once enjoyed in Egypt

His princely power and status
His opulent wealth and privileges
His easy access to worldly pleasures
His accolades, trophies, and the applause of men

In short, he was emptied of everything
That had once inflated
His sense of self-importance

He found himself in a desolate wilderness
A humble shepherd
Tending the flock of his priestly father-in-law
Whose name was Reu-el
The Friend of God
Whose name was also Jethro
He Who Overflows

In the wilderness
Moses was learning to pray
Becoming himself a "friend of God"
Yet his mind "overflowed"
With many distracting thoughts
Like noisy, wandering, unruly sheep

So he brought his flock to Mount Horeb
The Mountain of Desolation
The Pinnacle of Self-Emptying

There he shepherded
His overflowing and scattered thoughts
Up a narrowing summit
Of disciplined prayerful attention
Focusing like a laser
All of his mind
All of his heart
All of his soul
And all of his strength
Upon the Singularity
Who is Most High Over All

As he contemplated that Being
Veiled by thick dark clouds
He began to perceive a luminous mystery
An undying Self-Existent Flame
That blazed in the branches
Without depending upon them for fuel

A warmth was communicated to his heart
And a light to his mind
A flame that beckoned him
And called his name
Whose Presence was holy
Beyond compare

This Presence bid Moses
To remove his dirty sandals
Then Moses learned His mysterious name
I Am That I Am

And Moses was enkindled
With the Divine Compassion
For he remembered how his brethren
Were still bound in slavery to Pharaoh
That tyrant who knew nothing
Of this spiritual mountain
Or the One who sat as King at its pinnacle

O let His people go
Let them ascend the mount to praise Jesus Christ
The King of Otherworldly Ideals
The King of Self-Emptying Love
The King of Heart-Wrenching Compassion
The King of Gentleness
The King of Humble Servitude
The King of Righteousness
The King of Mercy
The King of Purity
The King of Peace
The King of Zion
The Pinnacle of Authentic Spirituality

Here the emptied Moses
Saw a glorious glimpse
Of the Eternally Self-Existent One

The Ancient of Days
Who subtly beckons men and women
Upward in all ages
Whose heart and mind ever blazes
With the light of Wisdom
And the heat of Radiant Love

Who gives Himself
And gives Himself
And gives Himself
To the last drop of blood

O let us leave the land of slavery
And all its oppressive darkness
Let us climb the holy mountain
And encounter the Refiner's Fire

Let us take off our dirty shoes
Before the glorious Master
Who stooped to wash
Our wandering feet

Forgetting all that is behind
Let us press on
In the upward call of God
Which is in Christ Jesus

Let us count all things as rubbish
Compared to the surpassing value
Of knowing Him

Let us take every thought captive
And make it obedient to the King of the Mountain
Who did nothing from selfishness or vain conceit
Who although He existed in the form of God
Did not regard equality with God
A thing to be grasped

But He emptied Himself
Taking the form of a servant
Being born in the likeness of men

And being found in human form
He humbled himself
And became obedient unto death
Even death on a cross

There Christ showed mankind
The true image of the invisible God
The eternally radiant flame
Of Pure Self-Emptying Love

O have you been to this Mountain?
Have you experienced this Flame?
Then go and make disciples
Tell all the world His Name

Go back down to Egypt
With bags of seed to sow
And tell that stubborn Pharaoh
"Now let My people go"

An Authentic Prophet
A Meditation on Exodus 4

I have heard many people claim
That God has spoken to them
And that I ought to follow them
But I am extremely skeptical
And that by necessity

For the world is full of charlatans
Wolves in sheep's clothing
Who play at religion
For sordid gain

And then there are those
Who may be well-intended
But they are mere spiritual babes
Who think themselves to be wise
As they rail against legitimate mystics
Whose lofty perspectives they cannot yet comprehend

But this Moses...
I do believe
That God has spoken to him
For in his writings
I hear the oceanic depths
Of the indwelling Christ

Now Moses loved humility
For he saw that virtue shining in Christ
And his humility prevented him
From saying certain things about himself
In a direct manner

But there is nothing preventing me
From boasting about the graces of God
Which were lavished upon Moses
To authenticate his Christ-foreshadowing ministry

God gave to Moses
Three authenticating miracles
To prove the legitimacy
Of this incredible prophet

A staff that transformed into a snake
When he threw it down to the ground
A leprous infection that transformed into health
When he reached into his bosom
And water that transformed into blood
When he poured it out upon the earth

Should we take this literally?
Or should we take this figuratively?
As the abbot once told his novice
"We shall take this seriously"

With God all things are possible
But today I am far more interested
In exploring the figurative sense
Of these three meaningful signs

What will we find there?

Transformation
Transformation
And transformation

If a so-called "prophet"
Wants to convince me
That he has been communicating with God
Let him display a spiritually transformed life

Otherwise
I want nothing to do with him

Words are cheap
And magic tricks are for conmen
But authentic spiritual transformation
Is no cheap trick

And Moses was thoroughly transformed
In his encounters with the Divine

Through the help of the Holy Spirit
He buffeted his body
And made it his slave
Though it had once enslaved him
This bodily mastery then became
The staff of his spiritual authority

He could reach into his bosom
And sense how his heart was being purified
Though it had once been infected
By leprous intentions

And he noticed
How he no longer thirsted
For the waters of the Nile

For once he had tasted of the Sacrificial Love of Christ
Those old streams of thought that used to feed his ego
Became as blood to him

Yes, Moses knows the paths
Of transformation and spiritual mastery
And he knows the One
Through Whom these graces flow

So the awestruck prophet wrote
On every single page
About spiritual transformation
Through Jesus Christ

He hinted of the epic exodus
Out of sin and death
Made possible
By the Blood of the Lamb

Lord Jesus Christ
I praise You this day for Moses
Who wrote of You

For apart from his foreshadowing symbols
I would have no way of processing
The significance of Your Holy Cross

Nor would I understand
Apart from his allegories
The challenging nature of the spiritual journey
With its many interior battles
Requiring perseverance and hard work
Yoked with Your marvelous graces

So I intend to lean in and listen
To this legitimate prophet
Who knows the way to Your Holy Mountain
Because he has been there
And tasted for himself
Its delicious milk and honey

An Allegory

A Meditation on Exodus 5

Stretch your mind with me
Let us suppose
That the characters in this old story
Have some contemporary allegorical significance

Let Moses represent
Some holy and mysterious inspiration
Stirring in your subconscious depths
That doesn't know how to articulate itself

Let Aaron the Light Bearer represent
That interior lamp that begins to flicker
Communicating those inspirations
With words and symbols
Which your mind can begin to contemplate

Let the children of Israel represent
Your developing interior capacities
Who are becoming convinced
That these deep inspirations
Are coming from God Himself
And that He is actually interested
In helping you find spiritual freedom

And let Pharaoh represent
Your stubborn egoic will
In league with the darkness
Who has no interest in your spiritual development
Knowing that would lead to his demise

Now when a soul first hears
The liberating Gospel of Christ
This interior Pharaoh steps up his game
And tries to dissuade the soul
From entertaining these ridiculous thoughts

He disparages ideas about God and His Christ
About spiritual transformation
About prayer and meditation
About entering into the Divine Rest

"You are lazy! Very lazy!"
Pharaoh howls in the night
"There shall be no rest for the likes of you
You are my slave
And that is all you will ever be"

"Now get back to work
I need bricks
To build my self-glorifying monuments"

"I used to provide you with straw
But not anymore
I hereby double your workload
So you can forget about your spiritual fantasies"

And so as Christ taught us
The seed of the Gospel
Sometimes falls on unfruitful ground

Scorched by the sun
Eaten by the birds
Or choked by the weeds

But praise be to God
Sometimes that Seed falls on good soil
And bears fruitful crops

Some thirty
Some sixty
And some a hundred-fold

But the strongman must be bound
Before you can plunder his house
Yes, the ego must be broken
And he does not give up easily

So count the costs
Before you begin this building project
And count your troops
Before you enter this journey filled with battles

The transformative way of Christ
Will challenge you to your core
But if you persevere with great diligence
You will not be disappointed

For all who overcome
Shall find an unfathomable reward
At the end of their many trials

Listen To Moses

A Meditation on Exodus 6

Why should we listen to this Moses
Who by his own admission
Was uncircumcised of speech?

If you would like to know
The answer to this question
It will require your total concentration

Gather now, O Israel, who wrestles with God
The best of all you have seen and heard
The selected sons of Reuben and Simeon

Call to mind the shining examples you have seen
From Hanoch the dedicated
From Pallu the set apart
From Hezron the cloistered
And from Carmi the choice vineyard

Call to mind the inspired words you have heard
From Jemuel the dayspring of God
From Jamin His right hand
From Ohad the united
From Jachin the established
From Zohar the bright
And from Shaul the enquirer

But be mindful that Shaul
Is born of a lower state of mind

Then take these best examples
And these brightest inspirations
And offer them to Levi the connector
For with God's help he shall bind them
Into a constellated answer
To your question about Moses

See how Levi begets Kohath
The assembly of collective consciousness
And Kohath begets Amram
The pinnacle of that assembly
And Amram begets Moses and Aaron
The one drawn out of dark waters
And his shining prophetic lamp

Now Levi also had two other sons
But Moses was certainly not of their stock

He was not of Gershon the exiled
Begetter of Libni the whitewashed
And of Shimei the fame seeker

Nor was he of Merari the embittered
Begetter of Mahli the sickly
And of Mushi the overly sensitive

These may serve the Tabernacle
But will have the greater burdens
And will never touch the innermost things

No, Moses had to be
As any legitimate prophet must be
The herald of the Great Assembly
And of its Divine Pinnacle

So why should we listen to Moses?
Because he was the cutting edge of Consciousness
In his place and time

He took the best of the best
Of all he had seen and heard
He joined these together
Into a constellation of collective inspirations
And brought them all to a pinnacle in prayer

But he could not say that of himself
So he spoke with uncircumcised lips
To be gravely misunderstood
By those with uncircumcised ears

But Christ understood
The multi-veiled language of Moses
And so shall all
For whom Christ lifts the veils

Lord Jesus Christ
Please open the sealed Book
Lift all these veils
Part all these clouds
And help us to see more clearly
Through these mystical allegories

I can hear the literalists protest:
"We do not like your allegories!"
For they believe the Scriptures
Are strictly literal

How do I know what they're thinking?
Because I used to think that way myself

Now let us do some math
And see if the Author of this story
Intends for us to take everything
In a strictly literal sense

Moses was 80 when he spoke to Pharaoh
His father Amram lived 137 years
And Amram's father Kohath
Who moved to Egypt with the rest of Israel during the famine
He lived 123 years

Now even if these men
Begot children on their deathbeds
(Which is highly unlikely)
That only totals 350 years
For Israel's trial in Egypt

Yet Moses plainly tells us
That it was after 430 years
To the precise day
When Israel marched out of Egypt

I find it curious...
This 80 year discrepancy

Is it a mistake?
Or is there some hint
Of a deeper mystery here?

I understand that John the Revelator
Did not look at Egypt
In a strictly literal way

For he saw the dead bodies
Of two prophets
Lying in the street of a city
Which is mystically called "Egypt"
And "Sodom"
Where also our Lord was crucified

Physically speaking
These are three very different places
But spiritually speaking
They are one and the same

Sodom and Egypt represent
A spiritually unenlightened state of consciousness
Contrary to the Mind of Christ

So those violent Pharisees
Calling for the death of Christ
Physically lived in Jerusalem
But spiritually lived in "Egypt"
If one can even call that living

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees!

Now when did the children of Israel
Start acting like Pharisees?

I would suspect
That it was about the time
When Simeon and Levi
Filled with so called "righteous indignation"
Slaughtered all the men of Shechem
For the disgracing of Dinah
Even after the one responsible man
Did his best to make amends

Make no mistake about it
Religious violence of this nature
Is an unenlightened state of mind
So Israel descended spiritually to "Egypt"
Long before they went there physically

Lord Jesus Christ
I praise You for Your radiant Love
For that is pure light
And the only homeland I long for

I pray this day
For all who are trapped
In the "Egypt" which we contemplate today
For that is the antithesis
Of Your Sacred Heart

I do not pray
For the demise of literal Egypt
For there are many there today
Enlightened by Your Love

But I do pray
For the annihilation of this other "Egypt"
Which is the same as "Sodom"
Where You also were crucified

O grant us a New Exodus
With the help of Your entire Assembly of Saints
Out of the darkness of violent hatred
Into the light of Your life-giving Love

Amen

An Extraordinary Day
A Meditation on Exodus 7

What an extraordinary day
When God said to a human being
"I shall make you as God to Pharaoh
And Aaron your brother as your prophet"

O my God
How can You say such a thing to a man?
What might that do to his ego?

But You did not say that to an egotist
You did not say that to Pharaoh
Who demanded to be worshipped as a god
You said that to the most humble man on earth
Whose ego was thoroughly crushed
And whose only aim
Was to glorify You

Lord Jesus Christ
True God from True God
Begotten, not made
Pinnacle of humility and selflessness
How You long for the day
When the meek shall inherit the earth

Still to this day
Egomaniacal madness
Dominates our poor planet
Plunging us into constant arguments
Bitter schisms
And increasingly perilous wars

O what will it take
To break the stubborn will
Of this egotistical tyrant called Pharaoh?

I see the waters of the Nile
Turning into blood
Not thousands of years ago
But today
And every day

For we all have tried to slake our thirst
At the rivers of Egypt
And for a little while
They seemed to satisfy

Until that gracious day came
When those waters became as blood to us
And began to stink
With nauseating putrescence

Lord Jesus
In our stubborn pride
We have tried many things
To substitute for Your Living Waters
But they have all eventually failed

Drugs
Alcohol
Sensuality
Worldly entertainments
Exorbitant wealth
Thrill seeking
Trophy seeking
Power trips
And the applause of men

Every one of these streams
Every tributary
Every pond
Every well
Eventually turns to blood

Addictions
Vices
Emptiness
Self-destructive tendencies
And unquenchable thirst

But these are just the beginnings of birth pangs
This stubborn Pharaoh will not give up easily
For the ego wants to live
Not to die

But the way of Christ
Is the way of the Cross
And the old self
Must die upon it

What a paradox
This life-giving death
It seems like folly
Until you come to the Table of Christ

For Jesus knows how
To turn water into wine
And wine into Eucharistic Blood

And all who drink of this Cup
Shall never die of thirst
For they shall discover the wellspring
Of everlasting life

Pharaoh's Hardened Heart
A Meditation on Exodus 8 to 11

Their drinking water turned to blood
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Frogs infested their homes
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Gnats gnawed upon their flesh
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Flies swarmed around their heads
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Pestilence killed their cattle
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Boils broke out on their skin
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Hail destroyed their first harvest
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Locusts consumed their second harvest
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Darkness covered their land
But Pharaoh hardened his heart

Death claimed all their firstborn
Then Pharaoh finally gave in

Lord Jesus Christ
This seems to be my story

In my youth I turned away from You
And in my stubborn pride
I tried to live my life
By my own terms

For a little while that seemed to work
But then it all started to unravel
As I sank deeper
And deeper
And deeper into trouble
And the emptiness became increasingly unbearable

After a while
I was no longer satisfied
By my old watering holes

Disgusting habits started to plague my house
Like so many foul frogs

My judgmental tendencies turned against me
Like nit-picking gnats

Unholy and unhappy thoughts
Buzzed around in my mind like flies

My carnal lifestyle started to stink
Like a pile of rotting carcasses

Temperamental outbursts disfigured my countenance
Like ugly boils upon my face

My icy heart trampled down my love
Like hail that spoiled the harvest

My appetites gnawed at my peace
Like locusts that stripped the land bare

My perspective became increasingly negative
As darkness filled my house

When I realized I was spiritually dying
My stubborn will finally surrendered

Why should I die of thirst
When Christ offers me living waters?

Why be tormented by gnats and flies
When Christ offers me tranquility of mind?

Why focus on the flesh which is death
When Christ gives me His Spirit which is life?

Why be disfigured by boiling anger
When Christ can clothe me with His joyful countenance?

Why should I spiritually starve
When Christ offers me His bountiful banquet?

Why should I stumble in the dark
When Christ shines with perpetual light?

Why should I let spiritual death enter my house
When Christ offers Himself as my Passover Lamb?

O Jesus, how foolish I was to ever harden my heart
To the subtle promptings of Your lovely voice

I willingly now come to You
With gratitude and love
For You are my life
My happiness
My peace
My light
And my salvation

Amen

The Eucharistic Lamb
A Meditation on Exodus 12

Here the Church huddles in the heart of Christ
Praying that the plague passes over us
Our door clearly marked with the blood of the Lamb
Our lintel and door posts with the sign of His cross

Here we partake of His saving supper
In awe of His Eucharistic Mystery
Where the unleavened bread becomes the Lamb's flesh
And the consecrated wine becomes His blood

Here we savor the bitter herbs
Which season the sacrificial feast
As we call to mind the sorrowful Passion
Of the Lamb Who was slain to atone for our sins
Having no blemish of His own

Here we are fed with Christ's Divine Nature
His Pure Selfless Love is our banquet
That life-giving food and transformative energy
Which strengthens us for our spiritual exodus

Here we are safe from the decimating plague
Which rages outside these protective walls
For within the peaceful heart of Jesus Christ
There is nothing but spiritual health and vibrancy

The deadly plague of hatred
Shall never enter this house
The pandemic of pride
Shall never enter this house
The cancer of discontentment
Shall never enter this house
The infection of ingratitude
Shall never enter this house

And the bread that He feeds us is pure
Free of the leaven of prejudice
Free of the leaven of selfishness
Free of the leaven of malice
Free of the leaven of insincerity

At the banqueting table of the Lamb
His Bride shall delight
In the pure unleavened bread
Of genuine selfless love
Flowing from the impeccable heart of the Bridegroom
Our Lord Jesus Christ

Now unto the Lamb
Seated upon His throne
Be all honor
Glory
Power
And dominion
Forever and ever
Amen

In The Time Of Budding Ears

A Meditation on Exodus 13

In the month of Abib
In the time of budding ears
On the fourteenth eve
When the moon shone full

The Lamb of God was slain
Annihilating the first-fruits of Pharaoh
With his systems of enslavement
And his egomaniacal oppression

Freed from the ego's blinding tyranny
New insights were conceived
Like the budding ears of a mystic
Like a firstborn opening the matrix

As tender babes they went out
But these were not ready for the battles of the mature
So God led them to Succoth
The first of 42 transitional encampments

With a pillar of cloud by day
Their intellects were led towards a mystic unknowing
And with a pillar of fire by night
Their hearts were led towards the burning love of Christ

Then in Etham they approached an obstacle
The Sea of Reeds hemmed them in
Unfathomable depths amidst reeds of papyrus
With none to open its sealed papyrus scrolls

So they cried out to the I Am to save them
Through one who was drawn out of water
The prophet of the Lamb who was slain
Who alone is worthy to open up the oceanic mysteries

Now let us partake in the Eucharistic Meal
In loving memory of the Lamb who was slain
Whose sacrifice paid the price of redemption
And whose Spirit sets the captives free

O Jesus, Precious Lamb
You open the budding ears
Of Your mystic sons and daughters
On the fourteenth eve of Abib

When the moon of our exoteric understanding
Reaches the end of its waxing
May we courageously wane
Into the thick dark cloud of Your unspeakable Mystery

Open our minds
Open our hearts
Open the purifying baptismal sea
And bring us safely to the shores of a transformed life

Amen

On The Third Day
A Meditation on Exodus 14

On the first day they journeyed to Succoth
On the second to Etham
And on the third to Migdol by the sea

Now let us explore
The oceanic mysteries
Of the third day

On the third day
The new earth emerged
From the all-encompassing waters
Ready to bear its life-giving fruit

On the third day
The redeemed of the LORD
Purchased by the blood of the Lamb
Passed safely through the sea on dry ground

On the third day
The reluctant prophet
Came forth from the belly of a whale
To preach repentance to the people of Ninevah

On the third day
The crucified Son of God
Rose triumphant over the grave
As the Scriptures had foreshadowed

On the third day
All who would be baptized into Christ
Were cleansed of the old self
And clothed with the new

The Spirit of Christ motivated them
Like an Easterly wind full of power
To plunge deeply and directly
Into the murky mysteries of their subconscious depths

Let us sing unto the LORD
For He has triumphed victoriously
The horse and the rider
Are hurled into the sea!

O Jesus
Let them drown
Let all my old hurtful habits
Be flushed away completely

Those warring dualistic chariot wheels
That once churned away in my mind
May they be silenced forever
By the baptismal sea You have opened
That peace-bringing torrent of Kishon

May the blood and the water
Which flowed from Your wounded side
Obliterate all of my grudges
All of my anger
And all of my pride

Jesus save me
From that disgusting deluge
Which flows from the mouth of the dragon
Hide me safely in Your tower at Migdol
Lest the deceiving mouth
Of Baalzephon overtakes me

For You, O Christ
Are the truest Truth
Behind the final veil
And the Rock of my salvation

Amen

Miriam's Song

A Meditation on Exodus 15

I hear the sound of a new song
Rise up from a heart that is free
First Moses then Miriam singing
Their call and response by the sea

Moses the mystic is hinting
Of hidden foes conquered within
For Christ gives His prophet the power
To see and confront his own sin

While Miriam sings with the same words
Her meaning is missing the mark
For Miriam's name means embittered
And bitterness makes the mind dark

So God led the people to Marah
With water too bitter to drink
To teach them there how to avoid
All thoughts which are bitter to think

Then Moses perceived a great mystery
Which only the Christ could complete
A tree which would somehow bring healing
And make bitter waters turn sweet

O Jesus Your cross holds the answer
In You we can learn to forgive
When bitter thoughts turn to compassion
Then will our hearts truly live

Now bring us to Elim's oasis
With seventy trees and twelve springs
Where well-watered fruitful disciples
All teach how the Master's heart sings

O Jesus Your heart-song displaces
Those dirges which dried up the land
Our mourning is turned into dancing
Like Miriam with timbrel in hand

The Second Month of Waning

A Meditation on Exodus 16

On the full moon of the second month
We begin our second phase of waning
The first was the waning of our bitterness
The second is the waning of our thorniness

O Jesus You must increase
But I must decrease

So You bid me to leave Elim
That temporary oasis of refreshing spiritual consolations
To explore the Wilderness of Sin
That Place Which Speaks of Thorns

And every cell in my body grumbled
The whole congregation complained:
"We are dying of hunger in this wilderness of thorns!
How we miss the flesh-pots of Egypt!"

But our coarse carnal appetites
Need to be reigned in and refined
Before we can start to relish
The super-subtle delights of the Spirit of Christ

Since our lower nature
Produces many thorns and thistles
The sweet bread of a Christlike spirituality
Will only be tasted by the sweat of our brows

Our thorns need to be well examined
And one by one
They need to be removed

How many poor souls
Have been pricked by our thorns

And for every thorn poking outwardly
Another may be found poking inwardly
So to the extent we are cactus-like to others
We suffer to the same degree
In our self-made sarcophagus of nails

Ah! There's the root
Of our spiritual dissatisfaction

O who shall lead us beyond this Wilderness of Thorns?
Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Through Christ we learn to crucify our brutish violent tendencies
Through Christ we learn to control our anger
Through Christ we learn to examine our prickly defense mechanisms
Through Christ we learn to refrain from hurtful speech

And with every thorn removed
Another layer of callous
Is circumcised from our heavy hearts

O Jesus King of Love
Who wore the crown of thorns
How delightful is Your sweet manna
In You I start to taste
The Bread of Heaven

Like coriander seed
With a hint of honey
Not tasted with my tongue
But with my heart

Through disciplined spiritual exercises
In cooperation with Your graces
My interior capacities gradually develop

And I learn how to commune with You
In the Blessed Sacrament
And in the Scriptures
In discursive prayer
And in quiet contemplation

In the wilderness my resolve is tested
My motivations are purified
My pride is crushed
And my compassion is nurtured

In the wilderness I come to know myself
The good
The bad
And the ugly

And in sensing my own weakness
I learn to rely on Your strength
And discern Your mysterious indwelling
As You uphold my feeble frame

Jesus be my daily food
I am ever so hungry
For the Bread of Your Presence

Help me to feed this flame of Love
Which You have ignited within my heart
So that it always burns
And never dies

Amen

A Place Called Supports

A Meditation on Exodus 17

Beyond the Wilderness of Thorns
Let us pitch our tents a while
In a place called Supports

O how we will need to find supports
In the spiritual aridities of Rephidim
For no one can pass its trials alone
Without the sound of much grumbling

Here we languish from thirst
We pant like deer for the easy streams of Elim
But those spiritual consolations we enjoyed in the beginning
Have all run dry

So we grumble at God:
"Why do You hide Your face?
Are You even among us?
We are dying of thirst
Pining for the slightest hint
Of Your refreshing Presence"

Then Moses is instructed
To strike the rock of Horeb
And from our stony hearts
We sense a subtle stream

A few meager sips are granted
Just enough to survive
But no one is deeply satisfied
With the waters of Massah and Meribah

For the soul must learn
To stop testing and grumbling
Before it can appreciate
The perpetual streams of Christ
Which always flow with peaceful contentment

O but this lesson
Is not learned in a day
Nor is this ground gained
Without great struggles

So along comes Amalek
The Valley Dweller
Committed to blocking us
From those higher streams in Christ

How many valleys we must face
In our battles with Amalek

Low and disquieting thoughts
That lead to depression
Despair
Pessimism
Ingratitude
Boredom

Lethargy
Heaviness of heart
And a general lack
Of spiritual vibrancy and joy

But Christ beckons us
To rise up from our spiritual slumber
And climb His holy hill
To set our minds on things above
And lift our hearts in perpetual prayer

Here we find ourselves like Moses
Trying to keep our heavy arms
Lifted heavenward in prayer
In opposition to the gravitational pull
Of our lower nature's initial aversion
To the contemplative disciplines

When we keep these up
The higher songs prevail
But when we tire and slack
The doldrums of Amalek drag us downward

So what shall we do?
Who can pray without ceasing?

Well no one can do it alone
And this is the lesson of Rephidim
That place where we find Supports

Here we learn
That no man stands alone
In the interconnected Body of Christ
We need the support of Aaron and Hur
To brace our sinking arms

Thanks be to God for our light bearers
Our friends clad in white linen
Holders of the higher frequencies
Who pray for us
Encourage us
Inspire us
Admonish us
And help us persevere to the end

All praise to the LORD Our Banner
Who inspires us ever upward
Through Jesus Christ
With His entire entourage of Saints

Amen

Overflowing Jethro
A Meditation on Exodus 18

Jethro
He Who Overflows
Priest and minister
To the contentious crowds of Midian

This Overflowing One
Is the father of Zipporah
That lovely bird of lofty perspective
Which is the mystic mind of Moses

This soaring bird gave birth to two sons for Moses:
First Gershom "The Stranger"
For his transcendent vision
Made him a stranger in a strange land
Then Eliezer the assurance of "God's Help"
For he knew that his uncanny spiritual insights
Could only come through Divine Assistance

But Moses had sent his wife and sons away
For the time had come
To rise above his busy intellect
In the transcendent mountain
Of contemplative silence

For according to Saint Bonaventure
Contemplation is the delightful overflow
Of our perspicacious meditations

There at the base of that holy hill
Jethro gave wise counsel to the struggling contemplative
Who was wearing himself out
By listening dawn to dusk
To the incessant controversies
Within his over-worked mind

From pesky and petty arguments
To weightier moral and theological conundrums
Those clanging bells interrupted the peaceful prayer of his heart
And drew him out of his contemplative tent

So the overflowing Jethro
Gave Moses his supportive counsel at Rephidim
That place of acquiring supports

My dear son, listen to me
And I will give you wise counsel
Put these controversies beneath you
So you can attend to what matters most

You shall be the head of a hierarchy
While your constellated insights shall hang like pomegranates
Around the hem of your robe

For this network of pomegranates
Pertains to the outer porch of God's House
But you must transcend those complex neuronal networks
And approach the thick dark cloud
Within the heart of the Holy of Holies

Now climb that fiery mountain
With undistracted intensity
Towards its mysterious pinnacle
The blazing Heart of Jesus Christ

O radiant flame of Crucified Love
O Pearl of highest value
O Treasure once buried in the field
O Divinest Essence beyond the inmost veil
Bring me through the Purgative
Bring me through the Illuminative
That I might know You in the Unitive
Where two hearts beat as one

Then my cup shall be full
And even overflowing
With gratitude
Praise
And love

Amen

The Mountain of Thorns
A Meditation on Exodus 19

On the third full moon
The time has arrived
For the third phase of our waning

So Moses brings us to Horeb
The Mountain of Desolation
Which is also called Sinai
The Mountain of Thorns

For the prickly mental patterns
Which we have examined in the Wilderness of Thorns
Now need to be utterly annihilated
By the all-consuming fire
Which blazes at the peak of this thorn-crowned Pinnacle

O Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ
Inflamed with Love Most High
Who may ascend Your Holy Mountain?

Surely all who embark upon this ascent
Will die of love of Love

And we shall say with Saint Paul
Who once was the violent Saul
"I have died
And it is no longer I who live
But Jesus Christ now lives in me"

May God bear us up on eagles' wings
To lift us higher and higher
Until we are caught up like Paul
Into the third heaven of Divine Contemplation

Beyond all worldly distractions
Beyond all sensual sensations
Beyond all verbal discourse
Beyond all interior dialogues
Beyond all words and images
Beyond all man-made concepts

There
In that stillness of body and mind
May our Spirit-assisted hearts contemplate
That Ultimate Reality
Which transcends the imperfections of our intellect
The limited capacity of our memory
The distorted fantasies of our imagination
And the beclouding biases of our will

Beyond the innermost veil
Which hangs upon these four pillars of mental cognition
The Source and Summit of our contemplation shines
Though invisible and cloaked with thick dark mystical clouds

Primary Being
Consciousness
And the Love which unceasingly flows
From Each to the Other
And towards all created beings
Which emerge from this Uncreated Primary Source

O Holy and Eternal Tri-Unity
Father
Son
And Holy Spirit
In You we live and move
And have our being

Finally, like the long-awaited fruit
Of this groaning cosmological vine
We are gradually being awakened to the reality
Of Your Trinitarian Love
Through Jesus Christ
The Eternally Begotten of the Father
And Ideal Image of the invisible God

O how beautiful to contemplate
The sublime mystery of Your sacred Name
For You are that I Am
Who was, and is, and is to come
Holy, Holy, Holy
Who is in all, through all, and over all

Hallelujah!

The Thick Dark Cloud
A Meditation on Exodus 20

Where am I?
And how did I get here?
This thick dark cloud disorients me

I thought I climbed a mountain to get here
But I am no higher than anyone else

I thought I left the congregation behind me
But we have never been more united

I can't even remember
Why we were once divided

Here I hover between two clouds:
Beneath my feet is a cloud of forgetting
And above my head a cloud of unknowing

Here concrete notions of black and white
Are atomized into cloudy shades of grey
By the super-nuancing Mind of Christ

Here my old divisive judgments are forgotten
And the tribe of Dan is replaced by Manasseh

Here all man-made theologies are dismantled
And discarded as inferior imagined idols

Here in this infused contemplation
My mental noise is silenced
Which finally allows my heart to hear
The subtle music of God

He is Love!
He is Love!
Beyond all the veils He is Love!

O may He inscribe His Commandments
On the twin tablets of my once-stoney heart
First let me love Him supremely
Then let me love my neighbor as myself

O what an exodus we can make
With the help of this true and living God
When we move in the direction
Of His holy and liberating inspirations

In the first three dawns
Called Purgative
We shall labor laboriously
In our rudimentary verbal prayers
To rid ourselves
Of all things contrary to the Most High Love
For these amount to idolatry

In the second three dawns
Called Illuminative
We shall labor laboriously
In our adolescent meditations
To expand our spiritual consciousness
That we may rightly hallow the Sacred Name
Who is the I Am That I Am

And on the seventh day
Called Unitive
We hope to enter
Through Divinely-infused contemplation
(Which is not laborious at all)
Into that Sabbath burial of the Old Self
Where all is laid to rest

Yes!
There remains a Sabbath Rest
For all who are in Christ Jesus
And blessed are they who strive to enter it

But let them enter by the ever-narrowing gate
For this Mountain has but one Pinnacle
Who is perfectly one
And whose name is One

And though He is invisible
The pure of heart shall see Him
And though He is inaudible
They shall clearly hear Him say:

"Be still
And know that I am God"

The Pinnacle Has Spoken

A Meditation on Exodus 21

The Pinnacle of the Mountain has spoken:

"He who loses his life for My sake
Shall find it
But he who seeks to save his life
Shall lose it"

So there they are
At the base of the Mountain
Begging that they may be excused
From any firsthand experience of the Divine Flame
Which is veiled by thick dark clouds
At the top of the thorn-crowned Mountain

Knowing it would be the death of their base selves
They cry out:

"O let not God speak directly to us
Let the mystic go up and die
Who can come back down and give us
The outwardly veiled rules of our secondhand religion"

They despised that high and spacious freedom in Christ
So Moses shackled them like slaves
To a laundry list of laws

For the outer sense of the Law was not written
For mountain climbing mystics
But for base murderers, thieves, and rebels

It was written
For reckless and unrefined brutes
Who run like bulls through a china shop
Goring the fragile, the childlike, and the innocent

Now what reasonable person would argue
That such a dangerous beast
Ought not to be harnessed?

But such is the nature
Of all who refuse to climb
The Mountain of Christic Union

Where souls learn to discipline their bodies
Converting every rebellious member
Into an obedient servant
Of the most beneficent spirituality

O Jesus
Redeemer of slaves
You loose every shackle
And break every bond

I pray for the eventual freedom
Of all who are being abused
By non-liberating religious ideologies

Some will pin a slave's ear to the doorpost
Or poke out one of his eyes
Or knock out one of his teeth

Others will fail to feed and clothe their maidservants
And deprive them of the Bridegroom's Union

Jesus draw us up the merging Mountain
Into Your intimate seventh-day-rest
That we may rejoice
In Your seventh-year-jubilee
When all willing slaves fly free
Like doves let loose from the fowler's snare

Amen

The Carrion Of Conflict
A Meditation on Exodus 22

What is that stench in my nostrils?
The smell of decadence and rotting flesh
Torn apart by wild beasts

Shall we swoop down on it
Like carrion-eating vultures?

"No!"
Says the Most High
"You shall leave that for the dogs..."

Court cases
Lawsuits
Lawyers and judges
Here comes the Sanhedrin
Circling around the corpse

How they love the smell
Of controversy
Conflict
Judgment
And retribution

How swiftly they swoop in
When the death sentence is pronounced

O but I sense a sweet smelling Rose
Who confronted these killers
And they all dropped their self-righteous stones

He bids us to be reconciled
With anyone we have wronged
And calls us to forgive repeatedly
Even seventy times seven

Through the veiled sense of Moses
One perceives the condemning Law
But through the unveiling Jesus Christ
One perceives the beauty of Grace and Truth

How lovely
How transcendent
How delicious to taste
Infinitely sweeter
Than the bitterness of begrudging anger

O Jesus
I dream of the day
When our courts become obsolete
And punitive justice is a distant memory
For our human efforts are flawed
And our corruptible nature is feeble

But until the last criminal is converted
Emerging from Your transformative chrysalis
We will need our courts and lawyers
Forged in the crucible of Moses

Who strove to protect widows and orphans
And sought for an end to usurious self-interest

For such is the character
Of all those who abide in Your tent
And dwell on Your holy mountain

Amen

The Three-Tiered Mountain

A Meditation on Exodus 23

O Mountaineer
Lift up your voice
But never as a false witness

Speak only of that Truth
Which you know by firsthand experience

Do you know
That there are three tiers to this Mountain
Each with its own commemorative feast?

First there is the nascent budding of the ear
Then you shall taste the First Fruits of spiritual adolescence
Finally there is the matured harvest
Of every delicious fruit in full bloom

It is from that pinnacle of spiritual development
That the mystic Moses admonishes us:

"If you encounter
Your enemy's ox or ass going astray
You shall certainly return it to him"

"And if you see
The ass of the one who hates you
Lying helpless underneath its burden
You shall surely help him
Even though a part of you would rather not"

O such lofty
And Christlike spiritual fruit
To love even one's unenlightened persecutor
And pay back good for harm

O delicious and wholesome bread
Perfect Integrity
Beyond old grudges
Beyond preferential judgments
Beyond all bribery
Beyond any hypocrisy
Utterly unselfish
Wholly unleavened

Moses has worked the Six
So his land now enjoys the Sevenfold Rest
And he graciously invites impoverished novices
To glean from his super-abundant harvest

And so shall all
Who partake in the bountiful Table of Christ
Who calls us up the three-tiered mountain
With its graduated ascent of six steps

Called the Amorites
The Hittites
The Perizzites
The Canaanites
The Hivites
And the Jebusites

O Jesus
Grant us gradual victory in these spiritual battles
But only little by little
For no man converts Jebus into Jerusalem
Without being deeply humbled in the process

For humility
Is the necessary root of compassion
And compassion
Is the stem which blossoms into love

And to abide within Your peaceful loving Heart
Is our Jerusalem Harvest
Our Zion
And our long-awaited Sabbath Rest

Amen

Examining The Mountain

A Meditation on Exodus 24

Now we approach to more closely examine
The three-tiered Mountain
With its triad of ascending vantage points

The Purgative Base
The Illuminative Middle
And the Unitive Peak

First let us consider
The visionary experience
Of these three spiritual stages

At the Purgative Base
We will mostly rely on secondhand accounts
From those mystic saints
Who have climbed up before us
For only the pure in heart see God

Their strange metaphors
And their glowing countenances
Intrigue and inspire us
To climb and see for ourselves
What they might have encountered

In the Illuminative Middle
Brief intellectual glimpses
Of God's feet are seen

With crystalline clarity
And unclouded sky
We perceive that He stands
Upon the sapphire sea of glass

But what seems like clear vision
Is somewhat illusory
For the imaginative meditators here
Are insufficiently mortified

So Moses pressed on
Into the thick dark cloud of infused contemplation
To die the mystic's forty-day-death

Here his heart came to know
In a unitive manner
The blazing and bewildering Pinnacle
Which transcends the most lucid intellect

Now let us consider
The funnel-like quality of the Mountain
Which sifts and narrows the numbers

At its base
Are the twelve tribes of Israel
Numbering in the thousands

At its middle
Are a few select souls
Three priests and seventy elders

At its Pinnacle
Is but one man called Moses
Communing with the Divine Transcendence

O Jesus
I believe it
Somehow Moses met You
In a pinnacle of prayer
Which transcended space and time

He saw his God Incarnate
In the peak of Perfect Love
Dying like a sacrificial lamb
To make his high prayer possible

He saw blood
Blood
Holy and redeeming blood

Blood for its base
Blood for its middle
And blood for its peak

Moses saw that every step of spiritual ascension
The entirety of this Holy Mountain
Is made possible by Christ
Through the blood of His eternal covenant

Gracious Jesus
Lord God
Lamb of God
You take away the sins of the world
Have mercy on us

Help all who are sprinkled by Your precious blood
To climb toward the summit of all virtues
That we may be increasingly united
With Your high and holy pattern
And utterly consumed
With the fire of Your Radiant Love

Amen

The Tabernacle Pattern
A Meditation on Exodus 25 to 31

Now let us turn
Our meditative sapphire
To inspect another facet
Of this mountain-like mystery

For the pattern shown to Moses
At the top of this three-tiered mountain
Is that of a portable Tabernacle
A movable House of Prayer
Arranged in three divisions

The Purgative Outer Court
With its penitential verbal prayers
The Illuminative Holy Place
With its meditative mental prayers
And the Unitive Holy of Holies
With its contemplative prayer of the heart

O what a building project
Envisioned on the mountaintop
A plan to transform human bodies
Into prayer-filled Temples of the Holy Spirit
Uniting them as one collective Body
Under the headship of Jesus Christ

Let all of God's people
Who are stirred in their hearts
Bring their freewill contributions
As each is enabled by grace

Some may bring gold
Others silver or bronze
But all will bring their share
Of the thorn-wood called Shittim

O what a mystery of Divine Grace!

From the gnarled
Twisted
Crooked
And thorn-covered branches
Of our corruptible human nature
God intends to make a Dwelling Place
In which His Presence may abide

Shittim wood speaks of thorns
Shittim wood speaks of scourging
Shittim wood speaks of piercing
So this is the redeemed material
Made golden by the Crucified

That which was crooked
Christ makes straight
That which was thorny
Christ planes smooth
That which was useless
Becomes sacred furniture
Even the gold-covered Ark
Made beautiful inside and out

In the hands of the master carpenter
Called Bezal-el, the Shadow of God
Shittim wood is transformed
Into the impeccable dwelling of the Most High

But Bezal-el was only a foreshadowing
Of Christ who is the Spiritual Substance
Of that which was
And is
And is to come

Yes, Jesus
You are the Eternal High Priest of Melchizedek's order
Wearing the invisible turban
With this inscription upon Your golden brow
HOLY TO THE LORD

And emanating from Your heart
We discern the ephod's breastplate
Gleaming translucently
With the foundational gemstones of the New Jerusalem
Dawning a rainbow of spiritual vibrancy and fruitfulness
Like a coat of many colors

You offered Your atoning sacrifice
At the altar of Your Cross
And the obstructing veil was torn in two
As Your lamblike blood poured out

So that those who were outwardly excluded
May make the spiritual progression inward
Which is also upward
And in another sense downward

O who can proclaim Your unfathomable mysteries?
Open my unworthy lips
And help me to speak more clearly

It seems to me
That the Outer Court
Pertains to the initial purgative phase
Of our spiritual progression
Made possible by the Blood of the Lamb

Here we learn to offer our bodies on the altar
As living sacrifices
Acceptable to God through Jesus Christ

For our basest carnal behaviors must be burnt up
And all of their ashes removed
Before we can proceed to the deeper things of God

Get your tent pegs of bronze
And set the outer pillars straight
Harness your old animal habits
With reigns pulled taught

And may your new works be as fine linen
Made white in the blood of the Lamb

Now approach the laver of cleansing
Made from the bronze mirrors of the ministering women
For these purifying waters of introspection
Flow out of our baptismal birthright

How wholesome
And how healing
Are these introspective prayers

Search me O God and know my heart
Examine me and know my thoughts
See if there be any hurtful way in me
And lead me in the everlasting pattern

Such is the prayer
Of those who enter within
Beyond the five pillars of our exterior senses
Which once looked only outward

We looked outwardly for specks in our brother's eye
So we could ignore the log in our own
Like whitewashed Pharisees
Who had buried the key of knowledge
Then forgot just where to dig

But Christ turned our gaze inward
To clean the inside of the cup
And the veil on five pillars was opened

Every veil is lifted in Jesus Christ
When we gaze intently into His law of liberty
As into a mirror
Through which we might come to see ourselves
With all of our many layers

Not only our grievous faults
But also our glorious potential in Christ

From your crown to your collar bone
Frame your face with a rectangular room
From your collar bone to your sternum
Frame your heart with a perfect adjoining cube

Now imagine yourself merging
With the Eternally Idyllic Psyche
The golden mind and heart of Jesus Christ
And you will perceive the pattern
Which Moses was shown on the mountaintop
The rectangular Holy Place
And the Holiest of Holy cubes

Know this
That your body is a movable Tabernacle
At a scale of one to thirty-three-and-a-third
Which is the age of the crucified Christ

Your mind is intended
To be fed with the inspirations of the Master
O may the Bread of His Presence
Always be on your table
As you meditate day and night
Upon His Words and Ways

Then your Holy Place shall be illuminated
With the immaterial lights of His seven-lamped menorah
Like the almond eyes of the Cherubim
Which see from every angle

May you be filled with Divine Wisdom
Insight
Perspective
Knowledge
Understanding
Discretion
And Discernment

But you must go beyond
The illumination of your mind
For knowledge can puff you up
But love is always edifying

Know that your heart is intended
To be united with the Holy of Holies
A dwelling place for the Divine Love of Christ

O may His commandments be inscribed
On the twin tablets of your deepest conscience
Sprinkled clean by the blood of the Lamb

Then your once-stoney heart
Shall become flesh again
And glow with perpetual warmth
Like the altar of sweet smelling incense

O holy and living Flame
All consuming Fire
Encountered by Moses at the peak of his contemplation

O Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ
Blazing Pinnacle of the thorn-crowned mountain

How our altar of incense glows warm
As we approach Your unitive cloud

May we unite with You in the stillness
Beyond the wing-flapping commotion
Of those Cherubic four pillars of mental prayer:

The memory
The intellect
The imagination
And the will

That we may hear
Through Divinely-infused Contemplation
Your super-subtle voice
Whispering peaceful and loving intentions in our hearts
As we commune between the wings of the Cherubim

Amen

Be Careful How You Hear
A Meditation on Exodus 32

There is a mystic climbing the mountain
Then there are base ones at its base

Dear reader
Make your decision
Which do you aspire to be?

On the far left of the base
You could be a hedonist
Sitting down to eat and drink
And rising up to play

On the far right of the base
You could be a Levitical Pharisee
Eager to slay "those sinners" with the sword

Either way
You can have some form of religion
That will suit your tastes
A golden calf made from your golden earrings
Just the way you like it

But if you aspire to be a mystic
Who ascends the mountain of Jesus Christ
You will be required to pulverize your idols
Beating them down
Fine as dust

But you cannot beat them down
Before you become aware that you have them
Hiding in the saddlebags of Rachel

For Rachel represents the meditative mind
Who acquires imaginative notions of God
Through her always-evolving theological reflections

Now God Himself does not change
But the mind's capacity to think of Him does

The spiritual babe
Cannot perceive God
As the adolescent does
Nor can the adolescent as the mystic adult

So at each transitional stage
Of the soul's theological development
Juvenile notions of God
Which were certainly less than God
Must be dismantled and discarded

These golden calves cannot compare
To that unfiltered radiant Beauty
Which hides behind the inmost veil
Transcending all images
All concepts
All words
And every theological speculation

Let the ones who have ears to hear
Hear what the Scriptures are saying
But be careful how you hear them

For hedonists, pharisees, and mystics
All read the same Words
But not all perceive the same God

If you read about the Tabernacle
And think about exterior buildings
There you are
On the outside
Wishing you could be on the inside

But if you read about the Tabernacle
And perceive the transformational heart and mind of Christ
There you are
On the inside
Wishing for nothing more

Face To Face

A Meditation on Exodus 33 to 34

Face to face communion
In a Tabernacle
Not made by human hands

A hidden face
Becomes a shining face
When a veiled face
Becomes an unveiled face

LORD
Infinite I Am
Show us Your invisible glory!

Hide us in the cleft of this Rock
In the lance-pierced side of Your Son
That mysterious vantage point
From which retrospective contemplatives
May ponder Your eternal radiance
Shining full in the face of Jesus Christ
Who is the very image
Of the Most High Love

O Jesus
Transcendent Pinnacle
Your face shines brighter than the sun

Though my eyes have never seen You
My heart perceives Your warming radiance
And sees how Your luminescent Love
Brightens my once-gloomy countenance

O Jeshua
Let me be like Joshua
That I may perpetually abide
In Your immaterial Dwelling Place

Through the entirety of every day and night
Let Your Love live in me
And let me live in Your Love
For there is no houseguest nor house
More welcomed or more welcoming

I know now
With unveiled face
That every manmade temple
Is temporal
But the Mind/Heart Pattern of Jesus Christ
Beyond every human finger print
Shines forever without dimming

Shine
O Shining One
And may our hearts perceive it
Then may our faces show it
From glory to greater glory
From brightness to greater brightness
And from likeness to greater likeness

Amen

To Work Or To Rest
A Meditation on Exodus 35

Now dear reader
Whom I have never met
How can I give you spiritual direction?

I don't know what day it is for you
So I cannot tell you
Whether you should work
Or whether you should rest

Have you completed the work of the first day
Separating the light from the darkness?

Have you completed the work of the second day
Separating that which is high from that which is low?

Have you completed the work of the third day
Rising from the purifying waters to cultivate spiritual fruitfulness?

Have you completed the work of the fourth day
Acquiring luminaries for your benighted mind?

Have you completed the work of the fifth day
Acquiring eyes in your psychological depths and heights?

Have you completed the work of the sixth day
Subduing your bestial tendencies so you can radiate the image of the Crucified?

If your answer is yes
Than by all means
Enter fully into His Sabbath Rest
The tomb of cessation
The womb of infused contemplation

Do not lift a finger
To light a single lamp in your house
For that would be the death of your blissful prayer of union

Here God Himself inflames the soul with Perfect Love
In absolute stillness and silence
Without the slightest effort

But if you are like me
You probably have some distance to go
As you strive for that pinnacle of perfection
Which shines in Jesus Christ

For His Mind/Heart Pattern
Is the ideal archetype of the Tabernacle
Which means we have work to do
A mountain to climb
And a House of Prayer to build

So let all who are moved in their hearts
Bring their freewill offerings
For this immense building project
Founded upon Christ our Cornerstone

But let each builder be careful
About how he or she builds
For that fiery Dayspring
Which will test the quality of our workmanship
Is an intensely burning gaze
Ready to burn up
Many centuries' accumulation
Of wood, hay, and stubble

For not all religious workers
Have come with silver and gold
Refined seven times in the refiner's furnace

So their works must be burned up in time
Their imperfect influences must be erased
But they themselves shall be saved
May our Father forgive them
For they knew not what they were doing

And may God forgive me
If my own works don't pass the test of time
I do the best I can
With the little I have
Being mostly ignorant
In comparison to His oceanic infinitude

O Jesus
Raise up a new generation of contemplatives
Who may continue
The tap-tap-tapping of Bezal-el
Upon the light tree of hammered gold

For some of our old theological paradigms
Seem as inadequate as old wine skins
As You constantly pour forth Your new wine

Only give us the wisdom
To cling to all that is golden from the ancients
For the scribes of Your Kingdom
Bring forth from their treasuries
Both things old and new

Help us as we proceed
To deeply ponder Your sacred mysteries
Conveyed to us through the super-pregnant symbols
Of this nomadic Tabernacle

And may the thoughts of our minds
And the meditations of our hearts
Be acceptable in Your sight

Amen

A House Made Of Prayer

A Meditation on Exodus 36

Come now
It is time to get to work
Let us build this sacred structure
Not with our hands
But with our minds and hearts
Prayerfully reaching
For the idyllic pattern of Jesus Christ

This is a house of prayer
So it is made from the energetic substance of prayer

Of spiritual sighs and aspirations
Of Scriptural meditations
Of introspective thoughts and reflections
Of purified motives and intentions
Of love and thankfulness
Of watchful awareness
Of peaceful contentedness
Of receptivity and willingness

Is your heart stirred today
To freely offer these spiritual materials
For the building of this spiritual house?

Then pray with me...

O God, make me a Tabernacle
Of Your wisdom
Of Your love
And of every virtue which shines in Your Son

But today there is one virtue
That I want to extol above all others
For I am drawn to its crimson color
Which is masterfully woven
Into the tapestries of Your Tabernacle
Commingled with blue, and purple, and fine-twined linen

O Sacrificial Love of Christ
Every red thread of this house
Speaks eloquently of Your mystery
Through the dye of the dying Towla Worm

Towla red
Towla red
Every scarlet Scripture
Is dyed with Towla red

At the end of her life
The pregnant Towla Worm climbs a tree
Affixes herself to the wood
Gives birth to her offspring
Covers them with her protective blood-red dye
Then she dies on the crimson-stained tree
So that her children might live

Now can you hear as David heard
In every Towla-dyed fiber of this tent
Christ praying from the Tree of our redemption?

My God
My God

Why have You forsaken Me?
For I am more like a Towla Worm than a man
They have pierced My hands and feet
And divided My garments among them

Dear soul
Do you now see
How contemplating the slightest thread of this house
Can make your menorah shine bright
And your altar of incense glow warm?

Lord Jesus Christ
How we love You
How beautiful it is to be here
In this contemplative tent
Pondering Your sacred mysteries
Which are hidden in every detail
Of this translucent dwelling place

You have brought us to Your banqueting table
And Your banner over us is love!

Such wholesome bread
Such food for thought
Is placed upon our table
In this Bethlehem-born House of Bread

And the more we meditate
On these inexhaustible inspirations
The more we shall perceive
The lights and perfections of Your Christic design
Like Urim
And Thummim

O contemplative soul
Consider your God Incarnate
Whose flesh was bloodied from head to toe
Like a ram's hide dyed red

Deeply ponder His deeply piercing lacerations
Which penetrated the three layers of His flesh
With increasingly redemptive value

Contemplate the fourth and outermost covering
That other-worldly Tachash skin
Which is Christ's resurrection body
And ours
Arising from the mystery of Reumah

See how your own inner wounds
Are healed by contemplating His stripes
How all that was once torn apart
Is lovingly sewn back together in Him

See how your heart and mind
Are rejoined in holy matrimony
With a necklace of fifty golden clasps
And tongues of Pentecostal fire

O who can speak of these mysteries
May the holy Seraphim touch my unworthy lips
With one of the burning embers
From the incense altar glowing warm

For I would like to say more
If God will allow it

Let me tell about the boards of this tabernacle
Each a miniaturized ark
At a scale of one to thirty three and a third
Which is the age of the Crucified Christ
Who helps us cross over the flood waters of death

Let me tell how His outstretched arms
Spans the three cubits
To join one board to the other
In His super-connected Universal Body

Let me tell of Him
Who was pierced for our transgressions
Whose five principle wounds
Hold the house together

See the four nail-like rods
Which pierced His hands and feet
As through rings of gold
And the fifth like a soldier's lance
Passing through His sacred side
To compenetrates the hearts of all who are crucified in Christ

Let me tell of the forty two silvery moons
That enticed me away from the Divine Source of Love
And the forty two silver bases
That beckoned me back
To the Zion-hearted Cornerstone of Christic Union

Lord Jesus Christ
How long these mysteries have been veiled
Please draw back the curtains
On these secrets and countless others
As we contemplate Your beauty
In this beautiful house of contemplation
With its impenetrable walls of transparent gold

Amen

Furnishing The House
A Meditation on Exodus 37

O Jesus
How dare I even think
Of touching these sacred objects
Since I am no priest of the Tabernacle

Or am I?

I know that You are the ultimate and eternal High Priest
In the order of Melchizedek
So if You live in me
And I live in You
I should hope to have intimate access through You
To the holy furnishings of Your House

O how vast and immeasurable
Is Your mysterious Dwelling Place
The collective mind and heart
Of all Your saints and angels
Throughout all time and space
And beyond all time and space

An endless supply of soul-nourishing inspirations
Is set upon their Communal Table

All that is true
Honest
Just
Pure
Lovely
Virtuous
And praiseworthy
Is offered to feed the minds of the meditative

Such wholesome food for thought is found
In the Eucharistic Bread of Christ
Who is the Incarnate Word of the Father

All of the hidden treasures
Of wisdom and knowledge
Are found in Him
And gradually revealed
Through the long arc of time

Through the agency of angels
Prophets
Apostles
And mystic saints
Of the past
Of the present
And of the future

O how many menorahs must shine
In this collective Body of Christ
Like the luminescent stars of the whole constellated Universe

Dear Jesus
Lift and illuminate our minds
With Your high and holy inspirations
And help us to attend our own lamps daily
With fresh oil
And seven trimmed wicks

Help us to shine brighter with Your wisdom
Your spiritual understanding
And every immaterial light
Which radiates from Your infinite perspective

O most holy Anointed One
We would like to buy some eye salve from You
To cure our benighted blindness
And oil to keep our lamps burning bright
Whatever the cost may be

For we would like to be prepared
To hear the voice of our Bridegroom
Calling Your beloved in the dark night
To join You in the innermost tent of Mystic Union
Where two hearts beat as one
In the perfection of Divine Love

My God
Let me approach You in the thick dark cloud
This mind-transcending Prayer of the Heart
This Divinely Infused Contemplation
Rising like incense from innumerable hearts glowing warm

O Highest King of Love
How lovely is Your dwelling place
And how happy are all hearts
Which unite to form Your fitting Throne

How beautiful
Is the sound of Your subtle voice
Whispering between the wings of the Cherubim

O sublime Music
Of impeccable artistry
Born of the Virgin's golden womb
May the whole universe learn to resonate
With Your unending song

Amen

The Final Three Chapters
A Meditation on Exodus 38 to 40

At last we have come
To the final three chapters
Of our spiritual exodus

So let us consider these three:
The altar of burnt offering
The garments of the High Priest
And the glorious indwelling of God

On the altar
We place our old animal appetites
Our old bestial habits
Our old works of the flesh
Begging God
To burn them up entirely

Our anger
Our pride
Our lust
Our greed
Our envy
Our over-indulgence
Our slothfulness
Our anxiety
Our fear
Our judgmental attitudes
And every other low and bestial tendency

O let us be stripped
Of these old rags
And let our bodies be washed
In the purifying baptismal waters of Christ
That cleansing laver which completes the outer court

Let us be restored
To our Edenic condition
Like little children again
Naked and unashamed

But Christ does not leave us naked
He clothes us anew
In His own High Priestly garments

With His robe of righteousness
His apron of humble servitude
His crown of pure and peaceful wisdom
And His breastplate of selfless love

O what a gracious exchange!
We offer Him our rags
While He offers us His own Divine Nature

And when the house is completed
We shall say with the prophet Isaiah:
"Arise
Shine
For your light has come
And the glory of the Lord has risen upon us!"

Gracious Lord Jesus
I lay my all upon the altar
Of Your transformational cross

Through Your dying
Let my old self die
And through Your rising
Let my new self arise

Let the old me
Die a little daily
So I may decrease
And You may increase

For You
Not I
Are the idyllic pattern of the Tabernacle
The mystic dwelling place
Of the indwelling God

O how the Divine Radiance
Shines full in Your face, Lord Jesus

With all that is within me
I long to be more like You
And Your resurrection power
Can make it so

Amen