

# *The Path of Privation*



Meditations on St John of the Cross'  
*"The Ascent Of Mount Carmel"*

**written by Paul Buis**

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## Introduction

The **Path Of Privation** is a series of meditations on St John of the Cross' spiritual commentary **The Ascent Of Mount Carmel**. Each meditation begins with a related quote from scripture. Next, a poem stirs the heart with verse inspired by St. John of the Cross' writings in the chapter(s). Then the salient points of the chapter(s) are quoted to summarize St John of the Cross' teaching. Finally, a concluding prayer is provided to complete the meditation.

These meditations are meant to provide a structure for prayerful reflection to accompany the meditative reading of **The Ascent of Mount Carmel**. May you find the depth of St John of the Cross' teaching become real for you as you meditate with his spiritual wisdom and guidance.

# Book One

## First Meditation (I.1-3)

*“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a bushel, but on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”* (Mark 7.20-23)

### Privation

He rolls the stone of unbelief  
Away at conversion's first light;  
She slips inside like a grave thief,  
But meets the emptiness of night.

Into dank darkness, she descends;  
The stretch of silence is unstirred.  
Utility of senses ends:  
Her soul is stilled -- unseen; unheard.

Privation of perception clears  
The soul's smudges that distort light;  
The polished soul, like diamond mirrors  
The nuances of heaven's light.

Descend into the inner room;  
Privation is the empty tomb.

May the Angel of the Lord roll away the stone of unbelief in  
our hearts and prepare us to enter into the night of the senses.

## Second Meditation (I.4)

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through Him, and without Him nothing came to be. What came to be through Him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* (John 1.1-5)

### Contraries

The creature and Creator are  
As contrary as night and day.  
The path to the Immortal's far;  
Yet privation provides the way.

The fullness of her creaturehood  
Is nothingness before His throne;  
And all her mind has understood  
Is but a straw the wind has blown.

To know the pure and simple light  
Of God's wisdom, She must unlearn  
Her ways, and leave perception's sight --  
The simplified soul can discern.

She embraces simplicity  
Of soul to gain her liberty.

May the Creator grant us the grace to be liberated from the complicated ways of our hearts and minds so that we may be prepared to receive His wisdom in holy simplicity.

## Third Meditation (I.5)

*“He told them a parable also: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it upon an old garment; if he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.” (Luke 5.36)*

### A Change of Garments

Dressed in the world's finer clothes,  
Her heart is set on many things;  
Yet deep within her soul she knows  
The nakedness privation brings.

Her precious idol outerwear,  
Worn o'er attachment's lingerie,  
Must both be renounced and stripped bare --  
Ev'ry last thread taken away.

Her naked heart must be washed clean:  
Bathed in the scorch of heaven's light.  
A new garment, of the Unseen,  
Will clothe her in the cloak of night.

With fibers of wisdom and grace,  
Her cloak's finer than silk and lace.

May the Master Tailor clothe us in His new garment of  
wisdom and grace.

## Fourth Meditation (I.6-7)

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that*

*is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever.”* (1 John 2.15-17)

## **Appetites**

The spoiled children of her heart  
Beg their mother for more and more  
They cram more candy in the cart --  
How can their mother leave the store?

The appetites' whining won't cease;  
Mother must leave children behind.  
True detachment will bring release,  
Freedom of heart, and peace of mind.

She sets her heart on new treasure --  
The Kingdom's keys hid in the field:  
Steadfast faith, love without measure,  
And hope of a hundred-fold yield.

The appetites crave fool's gold;  
For glitter, liberty is sold.

May the Master liberate our hearts from all that keep us from Him.

## **Fifth Meditation (I.8)**

*“And they came to Beth-saida. And some people brought to Him a blind man, and begged Him to touch him. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the village; and when He had spit on his eyes and laid His hands upon him, He asked him, ‘Do you see anything?’ And he looked up and*

*said, 'I see men; but they look like trees, walking.' Then again He laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and saw everything clearly. And He sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even enter the village."* (Mark 8.22-26)

## **Shades Of The Heart**

The darkened glasses of the heart,  
Distort the truth that is perceived;  
With cold judgment, it will impart  
Its own version of what's believed.

The appetites darken and blind,  
With filters of judgment and sin.  
The light of Truth is left behind --  
How can true conversion begin?  
Her blinded heart gropes on its way  
For wants it has perceived as need:  
Desire has led her astray;  
Only by grace can she be freed.

Her blinded heart falls in the ditch,  
Led by reason as light as pitch.

May the Master cure our hearts when they have been blinded  
by the desires of our appetites.

## **Sixth Meditation (I.9)**

*"A leper came to Him (and kneeling down) begged Him and said, 'If You wish, You can make me clean.' Moved with pity, He stretched out His hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do will it. Be made clean.' The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, He*



*dismissed him at once. Then He said to him, 'See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.'*" (Mark 1.40-42)

## **Cleansed**

Her burdened heart can barely budge:  
Bound by the twine of her desire;  
Set in her sin of slimy sludge;  
Gagged by the stench of her quagmire.

The beauty of a soul in grace,  
Freed from the burden of its sin,  
Yields light which darkness can't efface --  
Reflecting heaven from within.

Privation will soon purify  
The soul surrendered to the cross;  
What sin would smear and putrefy,  
The night transforms to gold from dross.

From depths of mire, she looks above:  
Forsaking desire; finding love.

May the Divine Physician cleanse our hearts with the healing  
power of His merciful love.

## **Seventh Meditation (I.10)**

*"And He told them this parable: 'There once was a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard, and when he came in search of fruit on it but found none, he said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit*

*on this fig tree but have found none. (So) cut it down. Why should it exhaust the soil?' He said to him in reply, 'Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it; it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.'"* (Luke 13.6-9)

## **Pruning**

So unkempt are the appetites,  
Like wild shoots on the fruit tree:  
Lush and fruitless -- proud parasites  
Sapping strength from humility.

The humble boughs, bent near the ground,  
Bear the tree's fruit abundantly.  
Though leaves be sparse, their strength is found  
In grace their roots tap constantly.

The Gardener, by way of night,  
Prunes wayward growth with ax and saw;  
The damage of insect and blight  
Are healed -- Mercy leaves nothing raw.

She yields her heart to Master's blade;  
Her wayward growth is pruned, not slayed.

May the Gardener prune our hearts with gentle patience and  
heal them completely in His mercy.

## **Eighth Meditation (I.11-12)**

*"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what*

*you would... And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Galatians 5.16-17,24-25)*

## **Repairing The Leaks**

There is a crack in the cistern  
Of her heart where love slowly leaks;  
The clay of her will can't discern  
The havoc that desire wreaks.

It takes just one small crack to turn  
A wealth of love, from a deep well,  
To an abandoned old cistern:  
A dried-out, cold, and empty shell.

Just as cracks are cleaned and repaired,  
Her wants must be held and curtailed.  
If left indulged, her heart's impaired;  
In ways of love, she will have failed.  
She strengthens resolve not to slack;  
To not forge on is to slip back.

May our wills unite with the Master's will to forge hearts  
readied to receive His love.

## **Ninth Meditation (I.13-15)**

*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us...So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the*

*things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4.7,16-18)*

## **Preparing The Vessel**

A study of His Word reveals  
The life and love of her One Lord.  
To learn His ways, she slakes and seals  
Her heart with a love of His Word.

She cleans her heart of its old stains --  
The lure to live her former ways;  
Emptied and readied, she remains:  
A vessel for His love and praise.

Her emptied heart, humbled and stilled,  
Is sealed with His peace in this night.  
From Springs within, she'll soon be filled;  
Love of her Lord has set things right.

This active night prepares her heart;  
Vessel and Springs aren't far apart.

May the peace of our One Lord seal and still our hearts,  
preparing them as we receive His Word.

# Book Two

## Tenth Meditation (II.1-3)

*“Then He said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see My hands, and bring your hand and put it into My side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.' Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.’” (John 20.27-29)*

### The Light of Faith

The light of faith is contrary  
To her instinctive reckoning:  
While logic ends at mystery,  
Faith finds the unknown beckoning.

The light of faith, when strong and pure,  
Will guide her way through mystery.  
The wisdom wrought will be obscure,  
Yet she will rest with certainty.

By light of faith, her soul is led,  
In ways of spirit yet unseen.  
In faith's light, old notions have fled,  
Like darkness scattered from the scene.

By faith, His truths will be revealed;  
Within her soul, they lay concealed.

May the light of faith scatter the darkness of our former notions of God, and prepare us to journey in the ways of the Spirit.

## Eleventh Meditation (II.4-5)

*“You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* (Matthew 5.48)

### Lighthouse Lens

The Creator dwells, by nature,  
In each soul to guide and sustain.  
To dwell with Him, she must be pure --  
Transparent as a window pane.

Her appetites are smudge and stain;  
Attachments are an oily smear:  
So long as one of these remain,  
Illumination is unclear.

Her soul is like a lighthouse glass:  
Having been cleansed and purified,  
When foggy nights have come to pass,  
His light, through her, is magnified.

His grace will purify and cleanse  
Her soul -- faith *is* the lighthouse lens.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit purify us of every  
imperfection so that our souls may be lenses of His  
illumination.

## Twelfth Meditation (II.6)

*“Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.”* (Hebrews 11.1)

*“For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.”* (Romans 8.24-25)

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails... So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”* (1 Corinthians 13.4-8,13)

### Cleansing The Faculties

The intellect, by faith alone,  
Will proceed through the active night.  
This darkening of mind will hone  
Faith's strength and purity of light.

The memory, emptied by hope,  
Will discard old notions it drags.  
Freed from the past, the soul can cope  
Through the night -- it no longer lags.

The will, through charity, lets go  
Of all the lesser loves it grips.  
God's will alone begins to flow --  
His love she only tastes in sips.

This night cleanses each faculty

Through faith, new hope, and charity.

May the Spirit grant us the grace to persevere through this active night so that He may instill and nurture the great virtues of faith, hope, and charity in the faculties our souls.

### **Thirteenth Meditation (II.7)**

*“And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull), they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when He had tasted it, He refused to drink.”* (Matthew 27.33-34)

*“And He said to all, 'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake, he will save it.’”* (Luke 9.23-24)

### **The Taste of Gall**

The sweetness of consolation,  
Is candy for the infant soul;  
The gall of Christ's desolation  
Upon the cross should be the goal.

The hallmark of self-indulgence --  
The sweet tooth -- contradicts the cross.  
Self-denial has consequence:  
The soul is purified from dross.

Denial of the self entails  
A constant struggle through the night.  
Though she stumbles, and often fails,  
She perseveres to do what's right.



Deny the self; cling to the cross:  
God is the gain in ev'ry loss.

May Christ Crucified be our model of self-denial and may He  
grant us the grace to endure the night.

### **Fourteenth Meditation (II.8-9)**

*“O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?' For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever. Amen.”* (Romans 11.33-34,36)

#### **The Divine Ray**

Just as the eclipsed sun would blind  
The human eye which dares to peer,  
The Divine Ray would blow the mind --  
Knowledge of God must be veiled here.

The human mind, weak and impure,  
With its senses, cannot perceive  
The Divine Ray which stays obscure --  
Only by faith can we believe.

She wraps her veil about her mind;  
Enclosing all her faculties.  
The night, at first, seems like she's blind;  
She'll come to learn its subtleties.

A breeze of peace frees her from fear;  
Veiled in her faith, the Lord draws near.

May the Spirit guide us in the ways of unknowing, that our eyes may be opened to the Divine Ray through the veil of faith.

## **Fifteenth Meditation (II.10-11)**

*“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* (Romans 8.5-8)

### **Spilled Light**

The light of heaven sometimes spills  
Over and fills senses with awe;  
The vessel of the soul first fills,  
Before the flesh receives it raw.  
The glitter of vision and scent  
Enrapt the senses in wonder;  
The heart, enthralled in enjoyment,  
Can drag her spirit asunder.

Though scent and vision may abound,  
She keeps her focus deep within;  
With both feet planted on the ground,  
Humility shields her from sin.

From His light, her spirit receives;  
Her humble soul, by faith, believes.

May the Spirit grant us the gift of humility so that we may submit to His action without the interference of our senses.

## **Sixteenth Meditation (II.12-15)**

*“Be still before the Lord; wait for God.”* (Psalm 37.7)

### **Clearing The Debris**

At first, discursive imaging  
Helps her to focus on the Word;  
Like soil primed for a soaking,  
Her mind absorbs what it has heard.

In time, the soil saturates;  
The rain can't soak in as it did:  
It puddles and accumulates,  
Forming a lake clear and placid.

In cool waters, still and clear,  
The light of heaven enters deep;  
Her soul is stilled as God draws near,  
And her senses succumb to sleep.

With soul all stilled and heart set free,  
Her images become debris.

May the Lord of heaven permeate our minds in meditation  
and prepare us to receive the light of contemplation.

## **Seventeenth Meditation (II.16-17)**

*“Jacob left Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place, and stayed there that night, because*

*the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, 'I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done that of which I have spoken to you.'* Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it.' And he was afraid, and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'" (Genesis 28.10-17)

## **The Prism Radiates**

The light of heaven penetrates  
The crystal window, clear and clean;  
And through this prism radiates  
A spectrum of vision unseen.

The eye, within her spirit's realm,  
Receives this light with certitude;  
Humility stays at the helm --  
Guiding through grace with gratitude.

The zenith of the scenes within  
Imprint upon her memory;  
Like Jacob's "ladder to heaven",  
They yield insight to mystery.

The Spirit leads through dreams and scenes;  
She follows, humbly, through these means.

May the Light of the World shine through the windows of our  
souls and radiate His wisdom and love.

## **Eighteenth Meditation (II.18-20)**

*“The disciples approached him and said, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He said to them in reply, ‘Because knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven has been granted to you, but to them it has not been granted...This is why I speak to them in parables, because ‘they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.’ Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says: ‘You shall indeed hear but not understand you shall indeed look but never see...’But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear.”* (Matthew 13.10,11,13,14,16)

### **Believing By Receiving**

The visionary yearns for light;  
A spotlight in which he can shine:  
His secret pride forms a false plight  
In which his ego is the shrine.

The literalist seeks to hold  
The Word with his limited mind:  
He squeezes Truth as it is told;  
The fruit slips out, leaving the rind.

Distrusting of her own weakness,  
She prays, humbly, with open hands:  
The Lord rests on her soul's meekness --  
An altar laid without demands.

With humble truth, her soul receives  
The Truth -- in spirit, she believes.

May the Spirit grant us the grace of deep humility so that we  
may be able to receive His grace in a spirit of truth.

## **Nineteenth Meditation (II.21-22)**

*“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”* (Matthew 7.15)

### **Guided In Truth**

The diviner attempts to grasp  
The prophecy within his hand:  
Wind of Spirit slips through his clasp;  
Leaving him with a grain of sand.

In seeking Truth for self, instead,  
He summons the spirits unknown.  
How often is his heart misled!  
The flustered Lord leaves him alone.

She knows that God spoke but One Word:  
His Son in whom all Truth is known;  
Humbly, she tests all she has heard  
Submitting all before His throne.

The Word, the Church, and reason guide;  
The Truth Himself will lead His bride.

May the Spirit of Truth guide us safely to the Word Himself  
in whom all truths are manifest.

## Twentieth Meditation (II.23-24)

*“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, 'Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches...Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast; his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters; in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.”* (Revelations 1.10-11a,12-16)

### Illuminated Intellect

The visions of the intellect  
Are perceived by her spirit's eye,  
When heaven's light spills to reflect  
In her soul as the Lord draws nigh.

The visions are sublime and clear;  
Locutions are etched on the wall;  
The rush of feelings sense He's near --  
Her passive soul receives His call.

Her soul is lifted, by His grace,  
Into the pure joy of His light;  
She is illumined in this place --  
A flash of lightning in the night.

The path grows steeper as she nears;  
With strong resolve, she perseveres.

May the Lord of Light illumine our souls and draw us to Himself.

## **Twenty-First Meditation (II.25-27)**

*“Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.”* (1 Corinthians 13.8-12)

### **The Light Of Truth**

Pure knowledge, too sublime to speak,  
Infused by rays of heaven's light,  
Reflects the Lord like Tabor's peak:  
His Presence pure; His Glory bright.

Bits of truth, like shards of stained glass,  
When deftly soldered by the mind,  
Can form a theory which could pass  
For truth -- still, this knowledge is blind.

Revelations and prophecies  
Are shards of truth common in prayer.  
She distrusts them as fallacies,  
And strives to sift them with great care.

The whole of Truth words cannot hold;  
In prayer, Truth is infused, not told.



May the Light of Truth illumine our minds and infuse our souls.

## **Twenty-Second Meditation (II.28-30)**

*“He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.’”* (Matthew 17.5)

### **Whispers Of The Breeze**

Successive words discourse within:  
Wisdom, reason, and self are heard.  
Is drivel, prone to error and sin,  
Loving silence before the Word?

Words which the Spirit has spoken  
Strengthen her soul with loving grace;  
Heal her heart, tepid and broken --  
Humbly, she remains in her place.

From her low place, she looks above:  
Her soul falls silent and serene;  
Her limpid heart, liquid with love,  
Listens to Him -- the Word Unseen.

With silent love, the soul can hear  
The breeze whisper when He draws near.

May the Spirit grant us the grace of silence and peace in our souls so that we may listen to the Word with silent love.

## Twenty-Third Meditation (II.31-32)

*“They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the scriptures?’” (Luke 24.35)*

### **Waiting In Silent Stillness**

Her humble soul, in silence, waits,  
Preparing to receive His Word:  
Her intellect's white noise abates;  
Her soul at prayer is stilled, not stirred.

At time unknown, His Word arrives;  
Her faithful silence welcomes Him.  
In loving peace, His presence thrives;  
His love overflows her soul's brim.

His wisdom, with power and might,  
Is etched upon her tablet soul:  
It penetrates like laser light;  
She humbly receives His Word whole.

In passive silence He is heard;  
Still souls welcome th'Incarnate Word.

May the Word be etched upon our souls as we abide in His  
presence with silent submission.

# Book Three

## Twenty-Fourth Meditation (III.1-2)

*“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God. And we speak about them not with words taught by human wisdom, but with words taught by the Spirit, describing spiritual realities in spiritual terms.”* (1 Corinthians 2.12-13)

### Washed Away

The memory is a wasteland --  
The mind's storehouse for the senses:  
Impressions written in the sand;  
Emotion-laden pretenses.

She struggles to set her heart free;  
To break apart the chains of past.  
A clear and present memory  
Responds to the Spirit at last!

His divine touch will wash away  
Her memory like surf on sand.  
Wisdom Itself will lead the way,  
With movements guided by His hand.

Divine Wisdom, with mystery,  
Will wash away her history.

May the Spirit wash away our memories to prepare the way  
for receiving divine Wisdom.

## Twenty-Fifth Meditation (III.3-5)

*“A great anxiety has God allotted, and a heavy yoke, to the sons of men; From the day one leaves his mother's womb to the day he returns to the mother of all the living, His thoughts, the fear in his heart, and his troubled forebodings till the day he dies --...Are of wrath and envy, trouble and dread, terror of death, fury and strife. Even when he lies on his bed to rest, his cares at night disturb his sleep. So short is his rest it seems like none, till in his dreams he struggles as he did by day, Terrified by what his mind's eye sees, like a fugitive being pursued; As he reaches safety, he wakes up astonished that there was nothing to fear...Fear of the Lord leaves nothing wanting; he who has it need seek no other support: The fear of God is a paradise of blessings; its canopy, all that is glorious.” (Sirach 40.1-2,5-7,26b-27)*

### The Trappings Of Memory

The memory is fraught with error:  
How can the mind on Truth be fixed,  
When pure perception is so rare,  
And lies with partial truths are mixed?

The memory is a back door;  
The devil's entrance to the heart.  
Impressions decay in this store,  
And grains of truth soon fall apart.

As long as memories remain:  
Her restlessness of heart won't cease;  
Her impulses she won't restrain;  
Her soul won't settle in His peace.

Closing her soul to memory,  
His peace will purge her history.

May the peace of Christ settle on our souls and purge the restlessness of our memories.

## **Twenty-Sixth Meditation (III.6)**

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”* (Romans 15.13)

### **Placid Peace**

The waters of the memory,  
Churn with emotional pretense.  
Decayed impressions, like debris,  
Are stirred like silt -- cloudy and dense.

By grace, He helps her to release  
And void all memories in scope.  
Her soul soon settles in His peace;  
The void opens new space for hope.

The waters: placid, clear, and still,  
Absorb the warmth of heaven's light;  
Her soul, now settled and tranquil,  
Finds peace and hope the fruit of night.

With winds, the waters seldom crease;  
Hope is the center of her peace.

May hope find a home in our memories when they have been purged and cleansed in His peace.

## Twenty-Seventh Meditation (III.7-12)

*“Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.”* (Colossians 2.18-20)

### Shadows Of Visions

How can the dim impression left  
Reflect the truth of heaven's light?  
Both words and image are bereft  
of means to hold its breadth and height.

If these impressions aren't denied,  
The heart feels favored by the light.  
These thoughts will soon engender pride,  
And undermine the soul's dim sight.

She clings to the humility  
He's formed in her right from the start  
A creature of fragility --  
She trusts in Him, not in her heart.

His light is infused at first touch;  
The thoughts that linger aren't worth much.

May the Spirit clear our memories of all notions that  
undermine the nature of Truth.

## Twenty-Eighth Meditation (III.13-15)

*“It is not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ (Jesus). Brothers, I for my part do not consider myself to have taken possession. Just one thing: forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead, I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus.”* (Phillipians 3.12-14)

### Hope Beckons

The passive soul, emptied and stilled,  
Receives the fullness of God's grace:  
With living hope and love it's filled --  
The bride and Bridegroom interlace.

Her memories of love ignite  
And fire love's longings once more;  
Her soul recalls His love's delight,  
And hope rings vibrant through her core.

This hope invites her Lord to dwell,  
And fill the void found in her soul:  
Indwelling of Emmanuel --  
God and the soul dwell as one whole!

For hope, her faculties make room;  
The bride's soul longs for her Bridegroom.

May the Bridegroom be drawn nearer to us by our hope that  
yearns for Him.

## Twenty-Ninth Meditation (III.16)

*“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.” (2 Peter 1.3-9)*

### Steads Of Passion

The four-fold passions of the will  
Are joy and hope, sorrow and fear.  
With strength, they pull the soul uphill;  
When bridled, pacified, and clear.

The will holds the reigns of these steeds  
Directing them, with care and skill,  
To charity in words and deeds;  
To serve the Lord and seek His will.

She knows that vigilance is key:  
Unbridled passions rear and bolt,  
Dragging the soul relentlessly;  
Jarring the Lord's peace with a jolt.



The harnessed power of passion  
By grace can live “Your will be done”.

May the Lord's Will become our will as we strive to channel  
the passions of our heart for love of Him.

### **Thirtieth Meditation (III.17-19)**

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also...No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*  
(Matthew 6.19-21,24)

### **Joy's Freedom**

The joys found in creatures and things  
Are riches of the heart which dull  
The luster of life the Lord brings --  
The One in Whom all joy is full.

The will can only serve one lord;  
The riches of the heart will fight  
For dominance -- idols adored  
Will cloud the rays of heaven's light.

From lukewarm love to blatant greed,  
The soul is conquered by degree.  
For love to reign, there is one need:  
To humbly serve with love that's free.

She strives for a heart clear and free;  
His joy is rich in poverty.

May the freedom of joy be found in our hearts' singular  
devotion to our Lord and His will.

### **Thirty-First Meditation (III.20)**

*“There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs.”* (1 Timothy 6.6-10)

#### **The Joy of Detachment**

Possession is a heavy mist  
Which leaves the heart all dank and cold:  
It grasps each thing with a tight fist;  
The heart's, in turn, held and controlled.

Detachment dawns, with Truth's own light,  
To clear the cold dense mist and free  
Her heart from cares and clear her sight --  
Establishing tranquility.

Detached from both creatures and things,  
Her heart is freed of their demands.  
With joy that true liberty brings,  
She holds them both with open hands.

The joy of heaven's clear and free  
Of all that binds true liberty.

May the Spirit guide us in the truth of detachment so that our  
joy may be complete and truly free.

### **Thirty-Second Meditation (III.21-23)**

*“Now if out of joy in their beauty they thought them gods, let them know how far more excellent is the Lord than these; for the original source of beauty fashioned them. Or if they were struck by their might and energy, let them from these things realize how much more powerful is he who made them. For from the greatness and the beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen.”* (Wisdom 13.3-5)

#### **The Truth About Beauty**

The attributes of the physique  
And talents are riches that blind;  
The lowered eyes will not critique,  
And curbed desires will not bind.

All beauty has its source in God,  
And we are stewards of God's gifts;  
Human esteem is vainly flawed,  
And pride engenders jealous rifts.

She strives to see each soul's beauty --  
The Lord's presence imbued within;  
Her view reflects reality,  
And curbs a vain perception's sin.

Each person is a sacred place  
Wherein the Spirit dwells by grace.

May the Lord open our eyes to the true beauty of each soul we meet.

### **Thirty-Third Meditation (III.24-26)**

*“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6.22-23)*

#### **Re-channeled Joy**

Delights of touch, of sight, and sound  
Entice the soul along the way;  
This appetite, indulged, is bound  
To leave the soul in disarray.

The senses are born of the flesh;  
By nature they oppose the soul.  
Within the will, these cannot mesh --  
Only one can retain control.

She recollects her senses' joy  
With praise for the Creator's skill.  
This joy, itself, will not destroy  
If it is channeled to His will.

Re-channeled joy of senses flows  
Through charity -- her soul's repose.

May the Spirit grant us the grace to empty ourselves of our sensory appetites so that there may be room to receive Him more fully in contemplation.

## Thirty-Fourth Meditation (III.27-29)

*“Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* (Matthew 6.1-4)

### Pure Charity

Conditions placed on charity  
Decay its fruits like a disease:  
The actions of the Pharisee,  
Before our God -- how can they please?

Expecting praise and thanks is pride;  
Ensuing judgments interfere:  
The good intentions soon subside,  
And ministry can't persevere.

She strives to wash her neighbor's feet,  
With love for her Lord dwelling there.  
Her ministry becomes complete --  
She channels His love with great care.

Mercy's grace is drawn from above,  
By little acts done with great love.

May the Master, meek and humble of heart, guide us in the practice of love.

## Thirty-Fifth Meditation (III.30-33)

*“But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way...If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing...Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.”* (1 Corinthians 12.30 – 1 Corinthians 13.1-2,8-10)

### His Gifts Outpoured

The miracles and prophesies,  
Worked through His servants for our needs,  
Can become sideshow prodigies --  
Undermining our faith with deeds.

Spirit and soul, as one, must flow  
At the appointed time and place:  
To do God's will for love, not show;  
To bless our neighbor with His grace.

She strives, as steward of His gifts,  
To serve Him faithfully, with care,  
With love, her neighbor's heart she lifts,  
To Him for whom these gifts we share.

His gifts, when exercised with love,  
Lift souls to Him -- wings of the Dove.

May the power of the Spirit guide us meticulously in the  
stewardship of His gifts.

## Thirty-Sixth Meditation (III.34-37)

*“He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities -- all things were created through Him and for Him.”* (Colossians 1.15-16)

### Stirring The Soul

The images of paint and stone  
Are gateways to spirit beyond:  
They lift the soul to God alone,  
Via the Saint whose form is donned.

The images themselves are dust:  
Plaster and pigment pressed to shape,  
Treasure subject to moth and rust --  
Garments of dust and cobweb drape.

She strives to find the Saint's own form --  
The spirit of the life he chose.  
Faith and devotion, full and warm,  
Can lift the soul with joy that flows.

The Saint, which images portray,  
Stirs the soul more than words convey.

May the images of our Lord and His Saints inspire us with  
joy and uplift our souls.

## **Thirty-Seventh Meditation (III.38-40)**

*“And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.”* (Matthew 14.23)

### **A Call To Listen**

The setting of the place of prayer  
Should support recollection's goal:  
To minimize distraction there;  
To aid in centering the soul.

Some prayer corners, cluttered and loud,  
Resemble a collector's wares:  
The images, richly endowed,  
Distract her senses and her prayers.

She seeks the Lord in solitude;  
In sheer silence Love is best heard.  
Attentiveness, with gratitude,  
Prepares her to receive The Word.

She listens with an earnest ear:  
Her heart's open; her mind is clear.

May the Lord lead us to a quiet place and pray with us in solitude.

## **Thirty-Eighth Meditation (III.41-44)**

*“Then he told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary.”* (Luke 18.1)



*“But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”* (Matthew 6.6-8)

## **Where Does The Wind Rest?**

The heart tied to method or place  
Has not yet reached fullness of trust  
In God from whom her soul begs grace --  
Eternal One questioned by dust.

The Lord prefers to simply dwell  
Within the pure and humble soul.  
God is with her -- Emmanuel --  
To hold His love remains her role.

With trusting faith and heart set free,  
She recollects her joy with prayer.  
Her soul dwells with Eternity --  
The joy of Life's fullness flows there.

The Spirit is not tied to place;  
The Wind blows freely by His grace.

May the Spirit free our hearts to receive Him within ourselves  
regardless of our surroundings.

## **Thirty-Ninth Meditation (III.45)**

*“When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I*

*decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2.1-5)*

## **Words Of Fire**

The preacher's message won't be heard  
Without the power of Spirit;  
Despite the beauty of his word,  
The stopped-up ears cannot hear it.

The Spirit, with power of fire,  
Enkindles his heart and his speech.  
His message will stir and inspire  
The souls of those his words can reach.

She recollects her heart and mind,  
To listen with her heart entire.  
The preacher and soul are aligned  
To transmit Spirit's words of fire.

The Spirit enkindles the soul  
Which opens to receive Him whole.

May the Spirit enflame the hearts and speech of those who  
preach and open the ear of those who can hear.

## References

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