

## *Letters and Prayers*

### *Turn from Self to God*

You are not forgotten. God has engraven you on my heart. If you have not consented to the thoughts that have crossed your mind, do not be afflicted on account of them. The dwelling on these thoughts brings them again to life. Be on your guard against everything that entangles you in self. God is a father who bears with the innocent faults of his children, and wipes away the stains they have contracted. The greatest wrong you can do to God is to doubt his love. He regards the simplicity and purity of the intention. Do not afflict yourself because you do not at all times realize a sensible confidence in God and other consoling, happy states. Walk by faith and not by sight or positive perception of the good you crave. Let us be closely united and walk together; not according to the way we might choose, but according to the way God chooses for us. I love you tenderly.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

### *Avoid Melancholy*

I entreat you, give no place to despondency. ...Melancholy contracts and withers the heart, and renders it unfit to receive the impressions of grace. It magnifies and gives a false coloring to objects, and thus renders your burdens too heavy to bear. Your ill health and the little consolation you have from friends, help to nourish this state. If you would please God, be useful to others, and happy yourself, you must renounce this melancholy disposition. It is better to divert your mind with innocent recreations than to nourish melancholy. When I was a little child a nephew of my father's, a very godly man, who ended his days by martyrdom, said to me, It is better to cherish a desire to please God, than a fear of displeasing him. Let the desire to please God and honor him, by an exterior all sweet, all humble, all cordial and cheerful, arouse and animate your spirit. For this I pray.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *Abandon Yourself to God*

O, that you could realize, my dear friend, how much God loves you. He cherishes you as a mother her only son. He would have you yield readily to his will, as the branches of the tree are moved by the light breath of the wind. In proportion to your abandonment to God, he will take care of you. ...Let there be no longer any resistance in your mind, and your heart will soon mingle in the ocean of love; you will float easily, and be at rest.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *Constancy Amid Change*

Each change in your inward experience, or external condition, is a new test, by which to try your faith and love; and will be a help towards perfecting your soul, if you receive it with love and submission. Leave yourself, therefore, in the hands of Love. Love is always the same, although it causes you often to change your position. He who prefers one state to another, who loves abundance more than scarcity, when God orders otherwise, loves the gifts of God more than God himself. God loves you: let this thought equalize all states. Let him do with us as with the waves of the sea, and whether he takes us to his bosom, or casts us upon the sand, that is, leaves us to our own barrenness, all is well. For myself, I am pleased with all the Lord orders for me. I hold myself ready to suffer, not only imprisonment but death; perils everywhere - perils on the land - perils on the sea & among false brethren; all is good in Him, to whom I am united forever.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *How to Distinguish the Movements of God*

You enquire, how one who desires to follow the movements of Gods spirit, may distinguish those movements from the natural operations of the mind. There is not, at all times, a positive certainty... We must walk with God in entire abandonment and uncertainty at the risk of sometimes making mistakes which, in the infancy of experience, is unavoidable. A pure soul acts in simplicity and without certainty, being persuaded that what is good comes from God. When they bring you before magistrates and kings &c, it shall be given you in that hour what you shall speak. This method of divine leading - by the hour and by the moment - leaves the soul always free and unencumbered, and ready for the slightest breath of the Lord. ...I have an experience of many years that God often makes known his will only in the time of action.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *From Heart to Heart*

I perceive you are in doubt about the grace which passes from heart to heart. [Consider] the woman who touched our Lord, when he said: *ÒI perceive that virtue is gone out of me.* In a similar way, without words, one heart may communicate grace to another heart, as God imparts grace to the soul. But if the soul is not in a state to receive it, the grace of the interior is not communicated, as Christ says elsewhere, *If they are not children of peace, your peace will return to you again.* ...We find this still harmonious action in nature. The sun, the moon, and stars shine in silence. The voice of God is heard in the silence of the soul. The operation of grace is in silence, as it comes from God, and may it not reach and pass from soul to soul without the noise of words? O, that all Christians knew what it means to keep silence before the Lord!

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *God Alone*

Your frequent dwelling so much on your unworthiness, although it may have the appearance of humility, is only a refined self-love. True simplicity regards God alone; it has its eye fixed on him, and is not drawn towards self. ...Go where we will, if we remain in ourselves, we shall carry everywhere our sins and our distresses. If we would live in peace, we must lose sight of self, and rest in the infinite and unchangeable God. These self-returns have a tendency to establish the soul more and more in itself and hinder it from running back to its great original. But it is to this that God is calling you. You withhold from God the only thing he desires, the possession of your heart. ...Be more afraid of self than of the evil one. It is the spirit of Satan to exalt self above God, and this spirit is fostered by these continual returns you make upon your own doings and misdoings, which leaves no place in your mind for the occupation of God.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *Loneliness and God*

As the winter plunge still deeper the roots of the trees in the earth, so the wintry state of the soul plunges it deeper in humiliation. Remember the confidence of Job, Although he slay me, I will trust him. ...Let the earth be stripped of her foliage; let neither flowers nor fruit appear; yet God is, therefore, you may be happy. The mother loves to sacrifice herself for her child, and finds her life in what affords it happiness; thus die to self, in relation to God. When your weaknesses rise up before you, when you would weep over some error in judgment, or some unguarded expression, do as the little child, who having fallen into the mud, carries its hands to its mother, who cheerfully wipes them and consoles him after the fall. Can you not believe God loves you, as much as you love the little one enfolded in your arms? Does he not say, A mother may forget, yet I will never forget you!

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *The Prayer of Love*

God alone can render you happy. Give yourself wholly to him, never more to take yourself back. Love him with all your heart. Retire often within the closet of your heart to commune with God. Do not pray to him in a constrained and formal manner, but all simple and natural. God loves better the affectionate language of the heart, than the cold and discursive thoughts of the intellect. The prayer of love softens the heart.

Jeanne-Marie Guyon

## *His Voice is Heard in Silence*

In order to be taught by the holy spirit, and to receive from him the knowledge of divine things, we must carefully listen to his voice, our attention must be close and recollected, and therefore we must piously retire and withdraw from all these objects and exercises that are apt to distract and divert us. Now as a scholar, if when his master is speaking and using endeavors to instruct him, he should suffer his attention to be broken and scattered by carelessness, by playing, and unseasonably talking with his comrades, or otherwise, cannot hear the voice of his teacher, nor be benefited by him; so neither can we hear the voice of the holy spirit, nor receive any profit from his loving care to instruct us, as long as our minds are distracted, and our attention diverted by the cares and concerns of the world, by the tumults of our unruly passions, by inordinately pleasing our sensuality, and indulging ourselves the liberty of speculating vainly. His gentle voice is heard only in silence and recollection, when the mind is serious and undisturbed, our passions hushed, and the world secluded.

G. Monro, Vicar of Letterkenney in Ireland

## *Pray Without Ceasing*

I am persuaded that it would be vastly advantageous for the youth if they were taught frequently to place themselves in the divine presence, and there silently adore their creator, redeemer, and sanctifier. For hereby they would become habitually recollected, devotion would be their element, and they should know by experience, what our blessed saviour and his great Apostle meant, when they enjoin us to pray without ceasing.

G. Monro

## *Devotion is the Work of the Heart*

It is transacted in the inward man; the principle of it its divine love, and its very nature is nothing else but the different motions and appearances of this pure flame in the soul, either disposing it to an absolute surrender of itself to God, or humbling it under a deep sense of its own unworthiness, or exerting in it mightily and vehement desires, or, in fine, making it to dissolve in praise and thanksgiving therefore, though one says or pronounces ever so many good words, yet if there be no correspondent motions in the inward man, he cannot be truly said to pray; his words in this case are but as shells without the kernels; and his voice as sounding brass. ...Devotion is the key that unlocks the heavenly treasures, sets open the fountain of living waters, and conveys abundance of the unsearchable riches of Christ into the soul.

G. Monro

## *On Dissipation of Mind*

If your will never concur to your straying, you never will stray and it will be the truth to day of you, your contemplation has never decayed. Every time you perceive your straying, let it fall, without combating it; and, return gently to the side of God without any struggle of mind.

Francois Fenelon

## *The Most Powerful Prayer*

Nay, one thing I know more; that the prayer which is the most forcible, transcends and far exceeds all power of words. For St Paul, speaking to us of the most effectual kind of prayer, calls it sighs and groans, that cannot be expressed. Nothing cries so loud in the ears of God as the sighing of a contrite, earnest heart. It requires not the voice, but the mind; not the stretching of the hands, but the intention of the heart; not any outward shape or carriage of the body, but the inward behavior of the understanding. How then can it slacken your worldly business and occasions, to mix them with sighs and groans, which are the most effectual kind of prayer?

John Hale

## *Three Kinds of Silence*

There are three kinds of silence; the first is of words, the second of desires, and the third of thoughts. The first is excellent; the second is more excellent; and the third is most excellent. In the first, that is, of words, virtue is acquired. In the second, namely, of desires, quietness is attained. In the third, of thoughts, internal recollection is gained. By not speaking, not desiring, and not thinking, one arrives at the true and perfect mystical silence, wherein God speaks with the soul, communicates himself to it, and in the abyss of its own depth teaches it the most perfect and exalted wisdom.

Michael Molinos

## *Happy is the Man whom the Truth does Teach by Itself*

Not by dark figures and words that quickly vanish, but as it is in itself. O God, who is the truth, make me one with you in everlasting love. It is often tedious to me to read and to hear many things: in you is all I would have and can desire. Let all the doctors hold their peace, let all the creatures be silent in your sight.

Thomas a Kempis/Gerard Grote

## *On the Operations of the Spirit of God*

We must make every creature keep silence; we must ourselves be silent, that in this profound silence of the whole soul, we may hearken to that ineffable voice of the spouse. We must listen with an attentive ear, for it is a still small voice, which is not heard, but by those who hear nothing else. O how seldom is it that the soul keeps itself silent enough for God to speak! The smallest murmur of our vain desires, or of a self-love attentive to self, confounds all the words of the divine spirit. We perceive very well that he speaks, and that he demands something; but we know not what he says, and we are often very glad not to guess it. The least reserve, the least regard to self, the smallest apprehension of hearing too clearly that God demands what we are unwilling to give, disturbs the internal speaking.

Francois Fenelon

## *All Men have Only One Life*

Mankind is like a tree with many branches, for all men have only one life. Although each branch differs somewhat from the others, yet all have the same vital sap, and so it is with every fellow creature, whether he be Jew or Christian, Turk or heathen. Truly there is only one God, who sustains us all, and when your eyes are opened to see Him, then you will also see all men as your brothers, whether they be Christians or Jews, Turks or heathen. Surely you don't think that God is only the Christians God? No, the heathen too live in God; whoever does right is pleasing and dear to him.

Jacob Behmen?