

THE DARK GUEST



O LORD,

Bend my hands and cut them off,
for I have often struck thee with
a wayward will,
when these fingers should embrace thee by faith.
I am not yet weaned from all created glory,
honour, wisdom, and esteem of others,
for I have a secret motive to eye my name
in all I do.
Let me not only speak the word sin, but see
the thing itself.
Give me to view a discovered sinfulness,
to know that though my sins are crucified
they are never wholly mortified.
Hatred, malice, ill-will,
vain-glory that hungers for and hunts after
man's approval and applause,
all are crucified, forgiven,
but they rise again in my sinful heart.

O my crucified but never wholly mortified
sinfulness!
O my life-long damage and daily shame!
O my indwelling and besetting sins!
O the tormenting slavery of a sinful heart!
Destroy, O God, the dark guest within
whose hidden presence makes my life a hell.
Yet thou hast not left me here without grace;
The cross still stands and meets my needs
in the deepest straits of the soul.
I thank thee that my remembrance of it
is like David's sight of Goliath's sword
which preached forth thy deliverance.
The memory of my great sins, my many
temptations, my falls,
bring afresh into my mind the remembrance
of thy great help, of thy support from heaven,
of the great grace that saved such a wretch
as I am.
There is no treasure so wonderful
as that continuous experience of thy grace
toward me which alone can subdue
the risings of sin within:
Give me more of it.

