



## The Guest of The Soul

### Chapter 3 – THE GUEST OF THE SOUL

A friend of mine said recently, "I like the term, 'Holy Ghost,' for the word Ghost in the old Saxon was the same as the word for Guest." Whether that be so or not, it may certainly be said that the Holy Ghost is the Holy Guest. He has come into the world and visits every heart, seeking admittance as a guest. He may come to the soul unbidden, but He will not come in unbidden. He may be unwelcome. He may be refused admission and turned away. But He comes. He is in the world like Noah's dove, looking for an abiding-place. He comes as a Guest, but as an abiding one, if received. He forces Himself upon no one. He waits for the open door and the invitation.

He comes gently. He comes in love. He comes on a mission of infinite good will, of mercy and peace and helpfulness and joy. He is the Advocate of the Father and of the Son to us men. He represents and executes the redemptive plans and purposes of the Triune God. As my old teacher, Daniel Steele, wrote, "He is the Executive of the Godhead."

The Holy Ghost convicts of sin. Men cease to be self-complacent when He comes. Self-righteousness is seen to be a sheet too short to cover us; our moral and spiritual nakedness is exposed. Our pride is rebuked and we are ashamed. Our self-conceit vanishes and we are abashed. Our eyes are opened, and we see how self-deceived we have been – how un-Christlike in our tempers, how corrupt in our desires, how selfish in our ambitions, how puffed up in our vainglory, how slow to believe, how quick to excuse ourselves and justify our own ways; how far from God we have wandered, how unfit for Heaven we have become.

And He thus reveals us to ourselves in love that He may save us, as a wise and good physician shows us our disease in order to get our consent to be cured. But His supreme work of conviction is to convince us how hopelessly we miss the mark because we do not from the heart believe on and trust in Christ. This is the sin we do not recognize as sin until He convinces us of it: "Of sin, because they believe not on Me" (John xvi. 9).



The Holy Ghost convicts of righteousness. We no longer justify ourselves and condemn God. Our mouths are stopped. We see that God is true and righteous altogether, and in the presence of His holiness and righteousness, all our righteousness is seen to be as filthy rags. We can only cry, as did the leper, Unclean, I am unclean; oh, make me clean! "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!" (Luke v. 12). And then we see that Christ Jesus was "wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5); that He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness" (i Peter ii. 24); that He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (i Peter iii. 18); that God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21), that we might be able joyfully to sing:

O Love, thou bottomless abyss,  
My sins are swallowed up in thee  
Covered is my unrighteousness,  
Nor spot of guilt remains on me,  
While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries.

The Holy Ghost convicts of judgment; of judgment present, now – bound up with and accompanying our every act, word, thought, intent and motive, as our shadow accompanies our body; and of judgment to come – of judgment exact, final, irrevocable, from which there is no escape and no appeal. He convicts of judgment unto life: life full, complete, eternal; unto bliss: bliss overflowing, bliss ineffable, if we are found in Christ, approved of God; and of judgment unto banishment: banishment unto outer darkness, banishment eternal; judgment unto woe immeasurable, banishment into shame unutterable, the harvest of our pride, the reaping of our





sin, if we are found out of Christ, disapproved of God. The seed may be small, but the harvest great. From little seeds mighty trees and vast harvests do grow.

When the Holy Ghost becomes the Holy Guest He opens the eyes of our understanding to understand the Scriptures. Without His aid the Bible is just literature, and some of it is dry and hopelessly uninteresting and not understandable literature. But when He removes the scales from our eyes and illuminates its pages, it becomes most precious, a new and living Book, in which God speaks to men in love, in promise, in precept, in types and symbols, in warning, rebuke, entreaty and always in love, to save. It reveals God. It comforts, rebukes, inspires, convicts, converts, and rejoices the heart. It is "sharper than any two-edged sword," and proves itself to be "a discernor of the thoughts and intents [intentions and motives] of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12).

When the Holy Ghost becomes the Holy Guest in the yielded welcoming heart He dwells there ungrieved and with delight. "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride" (Isa. lxii. 5), so He rejoices over that soul, while the soul has sweet, ennobling, purifying fellowship and communion with its Lord. He illuminates that soul; purifies, sanctifies, empowers it; instructs it, comforts it, protects it, adjusts it to all circumstances and crosses, and fits it for effective service, patient suffering, and willing sacrifice.

Some time ago my dear friend and comrade of many years, Commissioner Sowton, who has since gone to Heaven, was passing through New York with his devoted wife. He had only recently got well settled in his appointment in Australia, a country he enjoyed, where he felt at home, and whose people he had come to admire and love, when orders came to farewell and proceed to England to a new appointment.

To go from sunny Australia to foggy London in mid-winter was not pleasant; to leave a field and work and people he loved for the administration of men's social work, where all would be new and strange, was not what he expected or would have chosen; but he told me that the text, "Even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3), kept whispering in his heart, and so with perfect



and glad resignation, and in great peace, he and Mrs. Sowton were on their way to their new home and tasks. As he told me this, his face was as serene as a summer's eve, and my own heart sensed the Divine calm that possessed him, and was refreshed and blessed. It was the indwelling Holy Guest who whispered those words to his heart and fitted him without murmuring into this providence of God, and made him so ready for service and so peaceful in sacrifice.

When the Holy Guest abides within, the soul does not shun the way of the Cross, nor seek great things for itself. It is content to serve in lowly as in lofty ways, in obscure and hidden places as in open and conspicuous places where waits applause. To wash a poor disciple's feet is as great a joy as to command an army, to follow as to lead, to serve as to rule – when the Holy Guest abides within the soul. Then the soul does not contend for or grasp and hold fast to place and power. It glories rather in fulfilling Paul's exhortation: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," and it studies Paul's description and illustration of that mind:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery [or a thing to be grasped after and held fast] to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation [emptied Himself, put off His glory and equality with God], and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross " (Phil. ii. 6-8).

And having thus glimpsed the mind, the character of Christ, the soul yields itself eagerly to the Holy Guest to be conformed to that mind. That is its ambition, its whole desire, its joy and exceeding great reward. To do the will of the Master, to please Him, to win souls for Him, to serve and suffer and sacrifice for Him and with Him, is its great business; but to be like Him, to live in His favour, in fellowship and friendship with Him, is its life, its great and solemn joy.

When a guest comes into my home – a guest high-minded, wise, large of soul, pure of heart, generous in impulse – he imparts to me something of his own nobility. Mean things look meaner, low things sink lower, base things seem baser to his presence, and whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise" (Phil.





iv. 8), these are the things upon which I would think and about which I would converse; these and these only are the worth-while things in his ennobling presence. But if this be so when a mere man, however upright and holy, comes in, how much more when God the Holy Ghost comes in!

Some people lay great stress upon the second coming of Christ as an incentive to fine and holy living, and I would not minimize this; but Jesus said: "At that day," when the Comforter has come in as the Holy Guest – "at that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20). In other words: when the Holy Guest abides within, the Father and the Son are there too; and what finer, more searching and sanctifying incentive to holy living can one have than this indwelling presence of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as Guest of the Soul?

Finally, the great work of this Holy Guest is to exalt Jesus; to glorify Him who humbled Himself unto the shameful and agonizing death of the cross; to make us to see Him in all His beauty; to knit our hearts to Him in faith and love and loyalty, conform us to His image and fit us for His work.

The Holy Ghost as Guest within us does not concentrate our attention upon His own Person and work, but upon Jesus and His work and sacrifice for us. He does not glorify Himself. He whispers continually of Christ and His example. He points us to Jesus. He would have us consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful" (Heb. iii. 1,2). He would have us "consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest "-when we are tired and harassed – lest we "be wearied and faint in" our "minds" (Heb. xii. 3), and feel our cross too heavy to bear. "Even Christ pleased not Himself," whispered He to my friend, who heard the sweet whisper and was content to follow and be as the Master.

When, after having been a Methodist pastor, I joined The Salvation Army, in the Training College I was set to black the boots of ignorant Cadets. I was tempted to feel it was a dangerous waste of my time, for which my Lord might hold me to account as He did the man who buried his talent, instead of putting it out at usury. Then the Holy Guest whispered to me of Jesus, and pointed



me to Him washing the weary and soiled feet of His lowly disciples; and as I saw Jesus I was content. Any service for Him and His lowly ones, instead of abasing, exalted me.

What we need evermore, in every place, at all times, in prosperity and adversity, in health and in sickness, in joy and sorrow, in sunshine and shadow, in wealth or grinding poverty, in comfort and distress, in the fellowship and love of friends and in desolation and loneliness, in victory and defeat, in liberty or in prison, in deliverance or temptation, in life and in death; what we need and shall ever need, is to see Jesus, and, seeing Him, to walk in His footsteps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, ... when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously (1 Peter ii. 22, 23).

And this the Holy Guest delighteth to help us to do as we watch and pray," as we "trust and obey." To those, and those only, who obey Jesus is this Holy Guest given (Acts v. 32), and when He is given it is that He may abide as Comforter, Counsellor, Helper, Friend.