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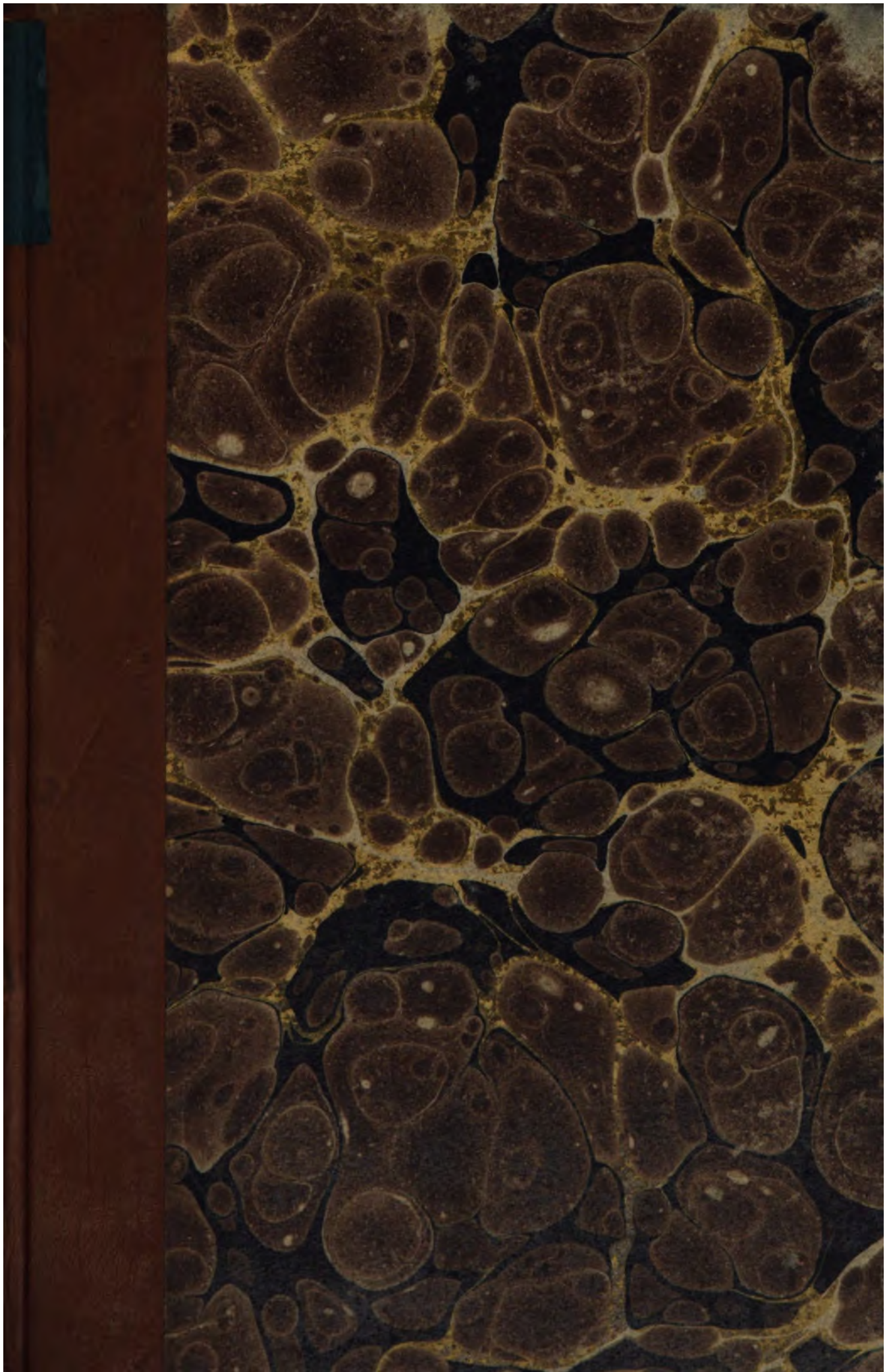
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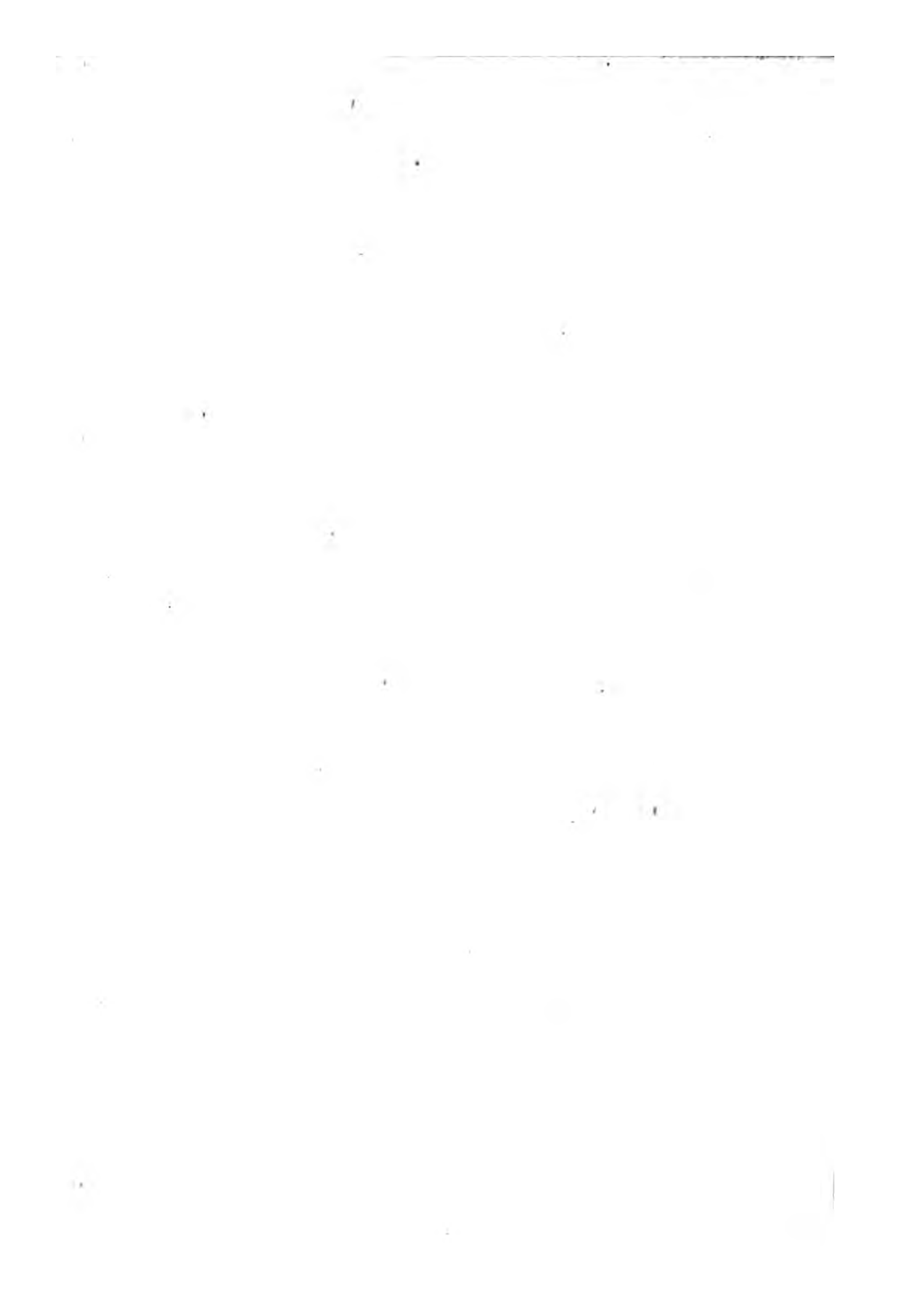


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THE
SAVIOUR KNOCKING
AT THE DOOR
OF
MAN'S HEART.

BY THE
REV. JOHANNES GOSSNER,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,
BY SAMUEL JACKSON, ESQ.

LONDON:
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PATERNOSTER ROW.

1847.

“ BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR, AND KNOCK : IF ANY
MAN HEAR MY VOICE, AND OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME
IN TO HIM, AND WILL SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME.”

Rev. iii. 20.



THE SAVIOUR AT THE DOOR.

THE Maker of the human heart has certainly left open a door to it, through which he can enter in, and impart himself. And although, by the fall of man, this door has been closed, yet he, who is able to make a way in the sea, and paths in deep waters, must also be able to find a means of approaching our hearts, of knocking at our door, and of causing us to hear his voice. And it is equally true, that the human heart must possess a consciousness of its Maker, and be able to hear his voice, and listen to his intimations.

We will not stop to confute those self-satisfied individuals, who exclude their imaginary Deity from themselves, the world, and mankind, and shut him up in heaven or elsewhere, so that he is not at liberty to shew himself at any one's door, or to touch any one's heart. For such characters we have no time to spare; for we really hear the knocking of our God, listen to his voice, and are sufficiently occupied in endeavouring to understand it. We are convinced, that God knows the way to every individual; and although the doors may be closed against him, he is

able to open them ; and though the hearts of men may be dead and cold towards him, yet he is able to arouse and quicken them by his voice ; so that the individual, coming to himself, enquires “ Who knocks at my door ? Whose voice is it, that I hear within me ? ”

Blessed art thou, who thus enquirest : for this is a sign that thou art already roused ; and a proof that thy ears are opened, and that thy heart is no longer stony !

Who that Great One is, that knocks, is told thee in Rev. i. “ I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty ; whose eyes are as a flame of fire ; the holy and the true, who has the keys of David, who openeth and no man shutteth, who shutteth and no man openeth ; the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God ; who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks ; who hath the sharp two-edged sword ; who was dead, and is alive again, who liveth for evermore.”

A greater, more exalted, or more important personage could not be, than he who knocks. Yet even he stands without, and before the door ! But how comes he to stand without ? Who has closed the door against him ? Whence comes it, that he must

stand at the door and complain, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock?" The Creator at the creature's door—the Lord and Master at his servant's gate! Behold him, who is infinitely rich, and in whom all fulness dwells, standing like a beggar at the door of a poor and miserable mortal!—him, who by his word created all things, and formed the heavens and every heavenly mansion, standing at thy door, like a weary stranger, who seeks a lodging for the night, to rest his wearied limbs, to guard himself against the storm, and to hide himself from the horrors of the night. And yet He stands without. Who has shut the door against him? Who occupies thy heart to the exclusion of this Mighty One? How wicked must that occupant be, who hath cast out the owner and builder of thy dwelling, and suffers him to stand without! Is not sin, the enemy of Christ, this evil occupant? and oughtest thou longer to shelter this murderer? Ought thy Saviour to be cast out any longer, or still be suffered to stand before thy door?

Behold him standing there, with pierced hands and feet; behold the sacred wounds, the infliction of which he bore on the cross for thy sake! He knocks at thy door with the hand which still bears the mark of his love, for the sake of which he was nailed to the cross for thee, and hung for hours together suspended there—for the sake of which

his blood was shed and his life laid down. He stands with bare and wounded feet, like a poor pilgrim in cold and cheerless weather, waiting and languishing at thy closed door, till thy hard heart is softened, and melts by the glow of his love, and thou openest the door.

Thy God and Creator stands at thy door! Thou art his creature, his sinful creature, and yet his property; for he has made thee, and not thou thyself. What, shall in thee be fulfilled the words—“He was in the world,” (and knocked at thy door) “and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not,”—knew not him who made it? He came to his own—placed himself at the door of his own dwelling, which he had built for himself—knocked at the door of his own habitation, but his own did not open to him—did not suffer him to enter—received him not!

Were a father to stand at his children's door; a friend at the door of his friend, for years together, waiting and knocking, without their listening and opening to him—would that do them any credit? Would they not be ashamed of themselves? Could they manifest their depravity, wickedness, and inhuman cruelty more fully than by such treatment? Well, then, he who stands at thy door is not only like a father and a common friend, but he is the Lord who gave life and breath to all things, and

will for ever continue to do so. He is the friend, who laid down his life for thee, who bought thee with his blood. He is thy Saviour, who is willing to forgive all thy iniquities, to heal all thy diseases, to redeem thy life from destruction, and to crown thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy. He is the supremely rich, the superlatively fair and exalted bridegroom, who is seeking a poor and wretched bride, (just such an one as thy soul is) in order to bestow upon her the most valuable treasures—the unsearchable riches of God—the infinite blessings of eternity. He is the physician who is willing to heal thy diseased soul, and to render thee entirely and eternally whole and immortal; to cleanse thee by his blood from all unrighteousness; to wash thy garments white, and clothe thee with the white robes of the saints. He is the only and incomparable One, to whom all the prophets, and even the man who was greater than them all, paid homage. He it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire; who sanctifies us wholly, so that body, soul, and spirit are preserved blameless unto the great day of recompense, when he will manifest his glory, and take possession of and divide his everlasting and unfading kingdom with all his people, and with thee also, if thou wilt open to him. He is, further, the future judge of the living and the dead, who on the appointed day, shall come with great power and

glory, with flames of fire, to take vengeance of all who suffered him, their Lord, to stand at the door and knock, and do not now open to him. He who will eventually reveal himself in such an awful manner, before whom the mountains shall quake and the pillars of the earth and the heavens shall tremble, is now standing so lowly and humbly, so kind and invitingly, as mediator and reconciler, as Saviour and Redeemer, as friend and brother, at thy door, to make proposals to thee, to counsel thee, and to point out the way from the wrath to come, to everlasting life and the crown of glory, and by which thou mayest be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; yes, and to ratify to thee what he has done and suffered for thee, when he shed his blood and gave himself up for thee and thy sins, in order that he might freely and by grace bestow upon thee all that he has purchased and possesses in his boundless kingdom of glory.

Child of man, despise not this Mighty One, who thus stands knocking, and be not deaf to his voice. Look up, and consider who it is that is at thy door, who is calling to thee, and how long he has done so. Ah, he has stood there all thy life-time, and as long as thou hast had ears to hear and a heart to feel. But shall he always keep watch at the door, and always stand there knocking? How long must he still wait?

But in what manner does he knock? He tries, in a variety of ways, to obtain admittance into thy heart, and to be heard and received by thee. His knocks and calls are as manifold as all his other words and works. At one time, he knocks with the finger of his Spirit; at another, with the hammer of his word; and then again with the rod and the strokes of his chastisements and trials. The voice of that blood, which he shed for us, incessantly calls after us; the tears, which he wept for and concerning us, are constantly calling upon us, are ever knocking at our door, to induce us to open wide the gate for the friend who has loved us to such a degree. What a voice has his agony and bloody sweat on Calvary! What a hammer to knock at the door of our hearts is furnished by his crucifixion and death! Who is able to resist? Every one of his words, both in the Old Testament and the New, are so many instruments with which he smites the human heart. All the communications and inspirations of the Holy Spirit, who is appointed the world's preacher, to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment — all the movements and motions of this Spirit within, by which he seeks to awaken and convert the heart and point it to Jesus, are, as it were, the elevated finger of the Lord, who knocks at our door, and the voice of the friend, who seeks admittance. The powerful voice of conscience, that

inward incorruptible judge, which lets itself be silenced by kings and potentates as little as by a beggar, is not this the voice of the Lord, who stands as near to thy door as possible, and often knocks so loudly and with such blows of the hammer, as to make thy ears tingle and thy heart within thee quake? The instructions, admonitions, warnings, and reproofs of parents and teachers; the sermons and edifying books;—what else are they but voices from the Lord, who by their means knocks at our door, and seeks to prepare his way into our hearts? Yea, foes as well as friends are commonly instruments in the Lord's hand, by which he announces himself. Whatever befalls thee,—sufferings, afflictions, sickness, joyful or sorrowful, pleasant or unpleasant occurrences, which affect thy heart, inward and outward experiences, blessings and chastisements, prosperity and adversity, are they not all the Lord's messengers, strokes of the hammer directed by his hand, which are intended to announce that the Lord is standing at the door, to render thy heart accessible to him, to burst open thy door, and to procure him admission and reception at thy hands?

But where does he knock? At every door. There is certainly no human heart or soul before whose door he does not stand; where he does not, sooner or later; or else continually, knock and call, until it either opens to him, or else is hardened and becomes

obdurate against him. (The unwearied patience and love, with which he often knocks and calls so long, ought to induce and lead us to repentance, to devotedness to him, and to receive him gladly; but if we long despise his patience and lend a deaf ear to his voice, it may eventually terminate in hardness and obduracy.) He, the Redeemer, the Saviour of all men, whose will it is that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth;—He, the great shepherd of the sheep, the pastor and bishop of the whole human race, on whom it has been sacredly enjoined by the Father to lose none of the sheep which he has committed to his charge;—He who came into the world to seek them that were lost, to reclaim such as have gone astray, to justify the ungodly, to save sinners, to give sight to the blind, to purify the unclean, to quicken the dead;—He certainly stands at the door of all such wretched beings, and assuredly knocks at the heart of each, by whatever name he may be called. He who is faithful and true, certainly never omits, with regard to any soul, to do his Father's will, and to accomplish the work to which he is commissioned. He assuredly needs not to be reminded of here one and there one whom he has overlooked or forgotten. He never neglects nor forgets any. He knocks at the door of both high and low, the great and the little, the rich and the

poor, the learned and the illiterate, the saint and the sinner, the old and the young; nor is there any hour, any day in the year, any event, any situation in a man's life in which he, the faithful and unwearyed seeker of the lost, does not stand at the soul's door in the performance of his office, fulfilling his Father's will with filial joy and brotherly love. For his Father has sent him to his brethren, as Jacob sent Joseph, to see whether it be well with them. Assuredly, he neglects no opportunity, nor the proper moment in which he may get near thy heart, just at the right time and the most suitable for knocking; he understands the matter thoroughly; he knows how to make use of every situation and circumstance, and to make it the opportunity of knocking at thy heart, so that thou must be aware both of him and his knocking, "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps," and therefore certainly never suffers any favourable moment to be lost, in which he may remind, awaken, invite, and call upon thee, and be heard by thee.

Let us now seek him out at the various doors at which he is accustomed to stand and knock, and let us hear what he says to the heart; how his knocking sounds, and the strokes of his hammer are heard. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

In order to find this friend who thus announces himself, we see him first of all, and almost invariably

standing and knocking at the sinner's door, before, during, and after the act and perpetration of sin. It was on this account he was called the friend of publicans and sinners; for this cause his enemies said of him, that he received sinners; and when he knocked at the door of Zaccheus and invited him, they murmured and said, that he was again become the guest of one that was a sinner; by which they intended to say, that he was always standing at sinners' doors, and that whenever any of them opened to him he went in to them.

There are proofs enough that the Saviour stands at the sinner's door even during the commission of sin, and that he does not meanwhile withdraw from it, but continues there knocking, and loudly too, and just at that very time, with the hammer of his word, and powerfully speaks in the conscience, saying, "Thou art doing what is wrong, thou art a servant of sin, and he that sinneth is a child of the devil; thou must die, for the wages of sin is death; unless thou abstain, return, and repent, thou canst not enter into the kingdom of God; thou shalt not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on thee." The sinner would gladly be deaf to this voice, stop his ears, and seek his repose, but he cannot. Inward uneasiness, reproaches, remorse, and accusation pursue him during and after the commission of sin. He flees in vain from place to place; in vain

he plunges into one scene of dissipation after another; in vain he heaps sin upon sin, in order to quench the voice of conscience, and to avoid or escape its strokes. It follows him every where, accompanies him, and enters into every thing with him. The accusing, judging, condemning, and reproving voice keeps not silence, and forsakes him not; never lets him less alone than when he is alone, and that which is intended to drive away the remembrance of his sin, places it the most evidently before him; every thing reminds him of it, every thing testifies against him, every thing reproves him. He cannot enjoy any pleasure or delight untroubled or undisturbed; every thing that is sweet and pleasant is embittered to him by the inward knocking and accusation. What else is this than the faithful Shepherd seeking the faithless sheep, and following it with his love? What is it else than the God of grace and mercy, who desireth not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live? Yes, he it is who knocks so loudly at the door of conscience, at the sinner's heart, in order to leave him no rest in sin, and to render sin an evil and a bitter thing to him.

It often happens also that sin brings injury and disgrace to the sinner, and renders him unhappy and miserable, both inwardly and outwardly. By this means the heart becomes more sad; the qualms

of conscience, the accusations and reproaches of the inward witness become louder, more painful, and more intolerable. The man's distress increases, and alarm and terror at the future, and the thoughts of judgment, death, and hell, fill his heart. The sinner is ashamed of himself before God, trembles at the idea of eternity, when every thing that is done in darkness and in secret will be brought to light—where every thread of unrighteousness, however finely spun, will be made visible in the solar light of eternal truth and righteousness. The sinner already feels uncomfortable in the company of good, pious, and holy men, because he is conscious, in their presence, of being too unworthy, impure, and reprobate, and is always obliged to hear and carry about with him the sentence of condemnation from his own inward judgment-seat. What is all this, even when still more and worse than this, but Jesus, the friend of sinners, who, with so many strokes of the hammer, knocks at the poor man's heart, in order to drive away sin, scare the sinner from the path of sin, render sin odious to him, make him clearly see its consequences and fruits, and show him the pit of destruction open before him, into which he must necessarily fall, if he continues to serve sin? All this is intended to incite him to repentance and conversion. With every stroke on his heart, he certainly hears, at the same time, the

voice within, exclaiming, "Repent, and be converted, forsake the path of sin, return and seek for mercy, turn thou unto me!"

And when the sinner listens to this voice and opens the door—when, with a broken and a contrite heart, he enquires, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What shall I do to be saved?" the sinner's friend, who has so long stood at the door, and so frequently knocked, will answer the sinner, and speak words into his soul, which will at once translate him out of his inward hell into an inward heaven. He will roll away the stone from his heart, which almost crushed it, and with a love and kindness of which the sinner had previously no idea, cause his voice to be heard within, exclaiming, "Be of good cheer, my son; thy sins are forgiven thee. I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions as a cloud, and as a thick cloud thy sins. Go, and sin no more."

He will bear his divine testimony in the sinner's heart respecting the former, assure him of his favour, and cause him to feel completely happy. The latter, which he enjoins upon him, that is, to sin no more, he will not only render possible, but even light and pleasant to him, by giving him all the needful strength and courage for it, and suffering him not to want any good thing; that is, he will first of all, like the good Samaritan, pour the gentle, soothing, and healing oil of forgiving grace and

absolution, and then the strengthening, invigorating wine of his holy and sanctifying Spirit into the wounds of the torn and stricken heart, and will not afterwards leave the man to his fate and go away, but take him upon his shoulders and carry him to the inn, to the flock of his believing people, and will there entirely heal and restore him, and pay and provide every thing for him. He will spare nothing, but employ every means, until he is made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. It is for this cause he knocks so continually and so loudly at every sinner's door.

But if, after having obtained mercy and forgiveness of sins, thou hast again fallen from grace, hast again lost Christ, and art either sunk back again under the control and yoke of the Law, or into the slavish service of sin, and into the power of Satan, after having been liberated by grace, and thus become faithless, a despiser of mercy, a covenant-breaker, a perjured person, and a reprobate; if thou hast, in this manner, again cast out thy Saviour, who had already entered into thy heart and taken up his abode there, and on the contrary, hast again made room in thy heart for sin, Satan, and the world, and hast thus made the habitation of the Holy Spirit a workshop of the devil, and the temple of God a den of thieves; if like the sow that was washed, thou again wallowest in the mire, and returnest like a

dog to thy vomit; when thou thus crucifiest Christ afresh, — thinkest thou that the friend of sinners will still remember thee, still look after thee, and let himself be seen and heard at thy door? Certainly he will; and more than that, he never left thee, but followed thee every where in all thy aberrations, like the good Shepherd who leaves his ninety-nine sheep on the mountains, and follows the hundreth, which was lost, until he finds it. Oh! he certainly never turned away from thee, though thou hast turned away from him; he has ever stood knocking at thy door, and ever spoken to thy heart; but thou hast not only refused to listen to his voice, but hast despised it, hast sought to escape from it, hast turned thy back upon him, stopped thine ears, barred the door, hardened thine heart, and done him much despite: yet still he continued faithful and constant at thy door, and stands there still; even to this day, to this very hour, he is standing before thy rebellious heart;—“for he hath received gifts, even for the rebellious.” Hence it is that he is ever knocking at thy heart, and saying to thy faithless soul, “Return, thou backslider. Stand still, listen to my voice. Why dost thou flee from him who has mercy on thee? Why dost thou forsake thy good Shepherd? What have I done to thee? Why hast thou cast me out of thy heart, turned thy back upon me, and art running into the jaws of the murderous

wolves? Why dost thou shun life and seek death? All day long do I stretch out my hands after thee, O rebellious heart! O that thou knewest, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! how often would I have gathered thee in my arms, and carried thee in my bosom, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but thou wouldst not! Why wilt thou die—why perish—why be a prey to death and hell? Return, thou backslider. To-day, to-day, if thou hearest my voice, harden not thy heart any longer; return to my arms, I will no longer call thy sins to mind, nor impute to thee thy transgressions.”

Now if thou hearest this voice of the compassionate love of thy Saviour, and openest thy door; if, with the prodigal son, thou sayest, I will arise and return to the arms of my Father, my Saviour, before I perish with hunger in the service of sin; I will confess that I have sinned, and am not worthy to be called a child of God, a disciple of Jesus; O that he would graciously permit me to be even a door-keeper in his house! If with these sentiments thou really seekest the Father's bosom, the Saviour's arms, forgiveness, favour, and acceptance, the Father then will run to meet thee, the good Shepherd take thee on his shoulders and bring thee home; — a joyful festival at thy return will then be celebrated by the whole household of God; all heaven will

rejoice, and thou wilt obtain, through grace, more than thou hast lost by sin.

Perhaps thou hast not thus fallen away from God, nor wholly refused obedience to him ; but thy dissipated heart has nevertheless often turned away from him, and troubles itself about many things ; attaches itself first to one object and then to another ; seeks, in a variety of ways, to make its escape ; and thou art in danger of going astray in a thousand different ways—here the adversary tempts, there some specious appearance allures, and in a short time thy heart would be entirely turned away from the Lord, and thou would'st be lost in the multiplicity of the things which surround thee and ensnare thy heart. How does thy Saviour feel meanwhile ? As a hen whose brood is in danger. O, how he extends the wings of his mercy and his faithfulness ! How he draws near thy unstable and restless heart ! How solemnly and urgently he knocks ! How loudly and audibly he calls, that thou mayest hasten under his wings and escape the danger ! His knocking, and his voice, if I may be permitted to interpret them, say unto thee, “ Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things,—thy attention is too much distracted—one thing is needful ! Sit at my feet ; abide in me and I in thee ; that is the good part which shall never be taken from thee. What would it profit thee to gain the whole world,

and at the same time injure or lose thy own soul? What can the whole world avail thee? He that gathereth not with me scattereth. He that does not renounce every thing, and even forsake and deny himself, cannot be my disciple, can have no part in me or my kingdom."

Now, if thou hearest this voice and openest the door; if thou returnest to thy heart, tearest thy affections away from every thing else but him, and that which leads to him; if thou dismisest thy foolish cares, pleasures, and dissipations, when thou hearest what thy Lord and friend at the door says to thee, what he whispers to thy heart when thou watchest and prayest and seekest to abide in him, he will then enter in to thee, make thee conscious of his presence, again impart his grace to thee in renewed measure; and will grant unto thee growth and increase like a branch which abideth in the vine. Then shalt thou flourish and thrive as a tree planted by the rivers of water, and shalt be rooted and grounded in him. Thy soul shall live.

There is no want of those who are willing to pass for Christians, who have either never known nor entered upon the right way, or else have forsaken it, and are travelling securely and thoughtlessly on the great high-way and broad road, as if it were the beaten path to heaven. They are conformed to the world, the refined and fashionable, if not the gross

and vulgar world; but "the world passeth away, with the lust thereof," both gross and refined. Such refined religionists only seek to please men, suffer refined sensuality to rule, and let themselves be driven about by desires which, in their deceived eyes, appear to be reputable and innocent, permitted and admissible, but which proceed from the flesh, and only furnish food for refined sensuality; and which, to say the least, leave the spirit empty, impoverished, and unsatisfied. They do not dare derisively and boldly to gainsay the multitude, the majority, the vain world. They form a foot-path near the broad road, which runs however in the same direction, and leads to the same end. They are much too weak and inexperienced to swim against the stream, and therefore take an oblique course; they are afraid to cast themselves into the middle of the river, but plunge in at the side, or into some arm of the principal stream, where it is much more difficult to swim; but they deny themselves (after their fashion) in order not to be left behind, not to excite attention, not to appear unkind, and not to incur censure. It is thus they suffer themselves to be bewitched by the artful language of the serpent.

O ye wanderers on this broad and self-made road, do ye not hear the friend who follows you with fidelity and affection, even upon this path, which he

so utterly abhors? Do you not see him standing at the door of your deceived hearts? He cannot leave it; he is never weary of knocking. He often knocks powerfully, and smites upon your hearts with his mighty arm. Do you not hear how he has called to you, till he is almost weary, in order to make himself intelligible to you, who, amidst the noise of the great world and the roaring of the broad and rapid stream, cannot easily hear him? Do you not perceive how he elevates his voice and exclaims:—
“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. I am the door; he that seeks another is a murderer and a thief, as regards his own soul and that of others, whom he carries away with him. He that entereth in through me, he that follows me, shall find life. Strait is the gate and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way, which leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.” Except you cut off the offending foot, which would walk the broad road, and pluck out the eyes, which look back upon Sodom and Egypt—at the fashionable world and its applause, and tread in the footsteps of Christ; unless you take upon you the cross—the reproach of Christ; and if you seek to please men, preferring to offend your Saviour and be unkind to him, rather than

appear unamiable in the eyes of the world, which lieth in the wicked one, you cannot enter into his kingdom, nor be his disciples.

“These are hard sayings; who can hear them?” is your reply. He that believes in his Saviour, who is the Truth and the Life. They only seem hard; they are not really so. Whoso follows and believes in him, finds all that he says and enjoins, easy. Yes, my friend, if thou turn thine ear inwards, where thy Saviour speaks: if thou no longer listen to the serpent language of the world, but to thy warning friend who knocks at thy heart, the faithful and true Witness, whose word shall remain though all the world pass away, with its specious glories and deceptive lusts; if thou throw thyself into his arms who holds them out to receive thee, he will teach thee how to swim against the stream, guide thee smoothly and kindly on the narrow way, and accompany thee at every step, until thou reach the bosom of the Father and of eternal love. Is not this thy mark? Well, then, walk in the path which leads thither. But how canst thou say, thou art desirous of going to God in heaven, when thou keepest equal pace with the world, which hasteneth to destruction? Consider the difference in the ways and the end of both. How does the Lord reward, and in what way the world? Where and with whom dost thou wish at length to be? In the land of eternal peace

and heavenly joy,—or in the region of eternal darkness and the shadow of death, where wailing and gnashing of teeth shall never terminate? We reach the former by going against the stream—the latter, by being carried along with it. We enter the former, leading, by the Lord's hand, on the narrow way;—the latter, in company with the multitude, the fashionable world, on the broad way. Come, then, give thy hand and heart to the Saviour; he will lead thee against the stream towards heaven. Cleave unto him, and look no more about thee, not even with a glance. Remember Lot's wife! Can a single look be wrong, thought she; there is no need to regard the matter so seriously. She looked back, and stood transfixed, a pillar of salt; and probably would be still standing there, if the elements and the all-destroying tooth of time had not consumed it. If thou dost not wish to become also a pillar of salt, hasten and save thyself; flee out of the Sodom of this world, without deigning to cast another look at it.

Now, though in following the Saviour on his narrow path, thou art often obliged to walk in the dark, and canst scarcely any longer see or find the way, because it is so narrow; though the sun may have gone down, and scarcely a star be visible in thy clouded sky; though darkness and shadows surround thee on every side, and thou findest none

who is able to tell thee where to set thy foot, and which way to take and choose, yet he will certainly never leave thee, who, like a faithful guide, has promised to be with us, even to the end of the way. Assuredly, he knocks at thy door; he comes to thee, even as he came to the disciples upon the billows of the stormy sea, at the dead of night, when they were in distress, and the waves covered their little vessel, and threatened to swallow it up with them. He already stands before thee, and whispers to thy darkened and affrighted soul, "Fear not, I am with thee! I will guide thee with mine eye, and shew thee the way in which thou shouldest go. I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Now, if thou hearest his knocking and openest the door, that is, seekest light from him alone in thy darkness, sufferest no other star to guide thee than the light of his word, bendest the knee to him alone, and entrest that the eyes of thy understanding may be enlightened, as Paul did, (Ephes. i. 18.) the sun of righteousness will certainly rise upon thee with renewed splendour; for it stands at thy door; its rays already break through its chinks; only rise up, and its clear, genial, reviving light shall powerfully penetrate thy inmost soul, illumine all thy darkness, and render all the way wherein thou should'st walk, clear and practicable. Thou shalt joyfully exclaim,

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” For “light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.”

In the days of barrenness and desolation, when no heavenly dew nor rain refreshes thy fainting heart;—when all is burnt up by the scorching heat of affliction and temptation;—when, as in a dry and sandy desert, thou pursuest thy way, languishing with thirst and hunger for the bread and the water of life, and canst no where find a spring or a dew-drop, nor any thing to refresh and strengthen thee, so that thy tongue cleaves to the roof of thy mouth, and all thy bones are dried up;—when thou art unable to derive any consolation from men or from books, and when every thing wherewith thou triest to quench thy thirst, only renders thee still more wretched, exhausted, and faint—where is then thy friend? He cannot be far off. He is with thee in trouble; it is he that hath led thee into this desert, in order to show thee that he can give streams of water in the desert and brooks in the wilderness. He, then, knocks and says to thee:—“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that thus guides thee and stands at thy door, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, for it shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting

life. Come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Here is, therefore, a fountain, which can quench all thirst, even in the wilderness of this life. O, if thou openest to him,—hearest him,—believest and obeyest his voice;—if thou puttest thy mouth to this fountain, and thirstest only after him and after the water which he alone can give thee;—if thou dost not hew out to thyself broken cisterns, nor seekest to quench thy thirst at another's reservoir; how easy will it then be for him to refresh and strengthen thee, and give thee to drink abundantly from the rich blessings of his house! The supper, the friend who invites thee to it, and has already prepared it for thee, is standing waiting at thy door. The fountain is at hand, it springs up in thy heart, its waters beat against thy door and seek to rush in, even as an overflowing stream inundates and irrigates every thing. Truly, there is no excuse for us, if we faint or die of thirst: the fountain is at the door, and is accessible to all, free and open to all, even to the poorest and the most miserable; and over it is seen the inscription, "He that is athirst, let him come and take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

Alas, all the injury, weakness, and indecision; all the sickly, vacillating, and declining state of man,

arises only from his not hearing nor opening to him who stands at the door and knocks. What should we not find with him? How much should we receive from him, if we opened to him and entered into ourselves with him! Is there not every thing with him at our door? Is not every thing placed as near to us as possible in him? Does not every assistance, comfort, and blessing; all power, riches, glory, the fulness of God; all wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, knock with his finger at our door? Does not, when we open to him, every thing enter in to us with him? Yea, more, even abundantly more, than we can ask or think.

Rise up, therefore, O soul, throw the doors wide open; the table stands ready covered both for the eye and the mouth; all is now ready: only admit him, and thou wilt be able exultingly to exclaim, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He leadeth me into green pastures, and by the still waters. He anointeth my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Such is the language of one who could say, "I have set the Lord always before me; for he is (no longer at the door, but on my side) at my right hand." (Ps. xvi. 8.)

He that is sore vexed with manifold temptations; who is fully conscious of his weakness, and is subject to many infirmities (as they are called) or faults and unfaithfulnesses, but strives against them, yet

always falls again, and is at length almost on the point of desponding, and sinking into doubt and discouragement;—think ye, that such a one is forgotten by that heart, which is faithfulness and parental kindness itself;—by that friend, on whose hands are inscribed the names of all those for whom he died, and he died for all;—can He neglect such a poor, struggling, and desponding soul? No. Though he can do all things, yet this he cannot do. He stands as near to the weak, the disconsolate, and the desponding, as a mother to her sick child, which is near death. Even as she is unable to leave the dear little weak and sickly infant, to depart from the sick-bed of her helpless child, but stands there, as if nailed to the spot;—so does thy Divine friend, poor trembling heart, stand immoveably at thy door, and knocks without ceasing. O that thou wouldst listen to him, and not to thy desponding thoughts; to him, and not to thy doubts; for he incessantly calls unto thee, saying, “Fear not!—do not despond!—only believe! Look unto me, I will help thee, I will redeem thee with the right-hand of my righteousness. Let my righteousness, my grace be sufficient for thee. My strength is mighty in the weak. Rely not on the bruised reed of thine own will, but lean upon me, the rock of salvation.”

And when thou hearest the voice of this friend, openest thy door to him, placest all thy confidence

in him, layest hold of his proffered hand, castest thyself into his arms, expectest with undoubted confidence all needful grace and help from him, acknowledgest that all self-confidence and self-assistance is unavailing, and is only a broken reed, and no longer leanest thereon nor supportest thyself therewith; when thou fervently and zealously prayest,—“Lord, why go I mourning all the day, because of mine enemies? Send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill and to thy tabernacle. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the help of my countenance and my God.” When thou prayest, believest, and openest thine heart in this manner, He who stands at the door and hears thy prayer, and sees what thou needest, will certainly not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but raise up and establish the former, and again blow upon the latter;—will breathe new life into thee, give fire from his own hearth to kindle in thee the flame of his love, to confirm thy heart by his grace and mercy, and to place thy feet upon a rock, and establish thy goings, so that thou mayest exult and say, “I can do all things though Christ, who strengtheneth me. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeem-

eth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy.”

When without are fightings and within are fears ; when thy sins, evil inclinations, the conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, render life a burden to thee ; when with or without this, inward distress, poverty or sickness, misfortunes or persecutions, the hatred of mankind, injustice, injury, or loss of property or reputation, of friends, parents or children, or whatever cross and suffering it may be, which is laid upon thy shoulders, and presses thee down to the ground ; when such-like reproofs and trials, which wound thy feet like thorns at every step, and seek to make the way of the Lord too narrow, rough, and thorny for thee ; when the gate is too strait, and following the Saviour too difficult ; his yoke too oppressive, his burden too heavy, so that thou art almost ready to succumb under it, retrace thy steps, and return to the world ; and when, possibly, others of thy brethren are in similar circumstances, and languish under the same burdens, so that, weary and heavy-laden, you totter forward on your pilgrimage, and none can aid the other—assuredly no one feels your distress more, no one sympathizes more with, and is nearer you, than He whose eyes traverse the world, who has numbered the very hairs of your head ; the only true and faithful friend in time of need ; for the very affliction which assails thy taber-

nacle, is only his knocker, his finger, by which he announces himself. The cross is a proof that he himself is at the door. All your sufferings, all your inward and outward distress, is nothing but his knocking; and if you listen aright, when all is silent within you, when you do not stop and deafen your ears by the noise of your lamentations, you will hear his voice, saying unto you, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. He that will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten "

Now, whoever hears his voice, opens to him the door, and, instead of murmuring and desponding, seizes the offered refreshing, actually approaches with confidence the inviting Saviour, nor flees with all his burdens and his fatigue to any one else than to him who exclaims at the door, "Come all ye to me!"—who so apprehends these words as said unto him;—who thinks, "Since he invites all, he has called and invited me; I therefore may also come, and I shall be refreshed, strengthened, comforted, and revived;" whoever is willing to receive of him a humble heart, which regards itself unworthy of the suffering, and begs of him a meek and quiet spirit, which mildly

and gently lets every trouble fall upon it,—whoever patiently takes up every cross, and receives it from the Saviour's hand, will certainly find his yoke easy and his burden light. He himself will help to bear it; he will refresh, strengthen, and tranquilize; he will be with us in trouble; and hence it is, that he stands and knocks so incessantly at the door of our hearts. The afflictions we feel are the pledge to us that he himself is near the door, and has refreshment and invigoration in readiness; for he smites only to heal. He seeks to render our hard hearts soft, tender, and susceptible; to beat down that which is proud and haughty, till it becomes humble and little. He seeks to render those who are self-satisfied and are full, hungry, poor, susceptible, and anxious for his grace and help. For this, nothing is so suitable as the hammer of the cross, inward and outward distress and tribulation. We are still too obdurate, confined, shut up, and too full for our heavenly friend, so that he cannot impart to us his heavenly, refreshing, and superabundant consolations, as he gladly would. He then sends pain, want, need, suffering, vexation, burden, and fatigue, for the purpose of softening us, and making us susceptible of his consolation. As soon as ever one or more of these things assail and enter in to thee, be sure that he is following them, and that he already stands at the door. They are his finger, his hammer, his

knocking, and his voice. A well-exercised soldier of Christ perceives it immediately, and knows what he has to expect. No sooner does he find himself weary and heavy-laden, or in any wise inwardly or outwardly oppressed and burdened, than he thinks, "Now is my Saviour at the door; he now desires to enter and refresh me;—his harbinger, forerunner, and messenger, the cross and suffering, is already here, and knocks at my door;" and such a one then calls unto him, saying, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why standest thou without? If thy cross is with me, thou must also turn in to me. Without thee I cannot bear thy cross. I must have thee, and thee alone."

He that thus opens his door, thus invites him, thus bids him welcome, will certainly experience his entrance in to him, with all its attendant blessings. He cannot suffer such a heart to languish. Can a mother bear to see her child sinking beneath a burden? and though *she* might, yet *He* cannot. He takes it from us and bears it himself.

There are individuals, whom the Lord leaves without sufferings and particular trials, or else they are not to be impelled to him by sufferings, but become careless, and forget that they were purged from their old sins. They give no diligence to make their calling and election sure, but become blind as regards themselves; trees are they, twice dead—

clouds without water, and heed it not. They pray, sing, read, and hear, attend divine service and devotional exercises, but without feeling, and remain unblest, unedified, and unaffected. They go away as they came, and continue as before; nothing moves or touches them; neither words of severity nor mildness; neither a powerful nor an affectionate address; neither the threatenings nor the promises of God, awaken them. Every sermon, exhortation, warning, and reproof is powerless, weak, and ineffectual with regard to them; yet still they consider themselves as pious, righteous, zealous, and better than others, because they think they know and do all that a zealous Christian ought to do, or because they imagine they do not need it, and are well able to do without all the usual means of grace.

This is an evil, yea, the very worst state into which an individual can fall. But where is the Lord, whose eyes are as a flame of fire? He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, holds the seven stars in his hand, and overlooks, least of all, the Laodiceans, the lukewarm. He generally knocks and calls the loudest at their door:—"Thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then,

because thou art lukewarm, I will spue thee out of my mouth ;” like lukewarm water, which cannot be held long in the mouth without producing vomiting.

It is thus the Lord knocks at the door of the lukewarm, in order to arouse and awaken them. But he has not cast them off, nor given them up. He would gladly enter in, even to them, and once more quicken them in particular, and sup with them. It is for this reason he still knocks at the door of their hearts, and that so loudly. He threatens to cast them from him, in order to preserve them from such a fate. He points out to them their poverty, nakedness, blindness, and wretchedness, in order to make them rich, to restore their sight, and to render them beautiful and glorious. His patience is adorable, his love and mercy indescribable. He cannot conceal it that the lukewarm are abhorrent to him, and he tells them so to their face. One would think he would refuse them any further grace and hope, as they well deserve, and immediately reject and cast them off ;—by no means : previously, every thing must be attempted, every remedy tried, in order not to destroy but to save. “ I counsel thee,” says the friend of sinners, “ I counsel (not command) thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and thy poverty be removed ; white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint

thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." What love! what counsel! How kind and gracious towards such wretched characters! But how can a poor, blind, lukewarm, miserable creature, buy?—buy purified gold?—buy such white raiment, and such eyesalve? It really seems impossible. But the Lord does not mock the needy. "Buy of me," says he. From him it is easy to buy, even without money. (Isaiah lv. 2.) A believing reception is the only current money in the kingdom of God, with which every thing can be bought, and the kingdom of heaven itself be taken by violence. When the merchant stands at the door, and offers his wares so cheap, brings them so near the individual's heart, it cannot be difficult or impossible, even for those that are lukewarm, to enrich themselves with this gold, to procure this beauteous attire, and this precious eyesalve. Truly, no one that is lukewarm, poor, wretched, or blind; no naked beggar can excuse himself for not being rich, splendidly clothed, enlightened, and his eyes anointed to see God. All these things stand at his door; the Lord desires to pour them into his lap. He has only to take, lay hold of, and receive all that he requires. The Saviour is also so much in earnest as to the impartation of the things he offers, that he sends before him the most terrible threatenings, and says, as it were, "If thou art unwilling to receive gold, and raiment, and eye-

salve from me; if thou refusest to be healed, enriched, clothed, and enlightened; and voluntarily and obstinately continuest in thy lukewarmness, blindness, and nakedness, I will cast thee from me." The former is much more congenial to the Saviour; the latter he does unwillingly, and threatens in order that he may awaken and animate, that the lukewarm may be saved, and not rejected.

Now, when he counsels and offers such glorious things to the lukewarm, what will he advise and give the zealous, who ask these things of him? O consider, that he stands at the door of every petitioner with these heavenly blessings; with the pure gold of love and grace; with the glorious attire of the white raiment of the saints, full of righteousness; with the most precious eyesalve of the Holy Spirit, who teaches us to look into the deep things of God. It is with such treasures he stands at the door, knocks, intreats, and threatens, in order to urge mankind to buy of him gratuitously. O, all ye that feel yourselves lukewarm, naked, blind, and miserable, and are inwardly reproached on that account, know that this is the Saviour,—this is his knocking, his voice,—these are his words, which he spake to the Laodiceans,—these are the strokes of his hammer upon your hearts. But he, who thus reproves you, has also advice to give you, counsel which is precious and worthy of all acceptation. He that thus cen-

sures you, and places so vividly before you your lukewarmness your shameful nakedness and blindness, so that you every moment fear lest you should be cast away by him,—even *He* has golden words in his mouth for you; he will not cast you from him, if you will suffer yourselves to be advised; on the contrary, he will give you gold to make you rich, and not uncover your shame and nakedness, but cover it with white raiment. He will not mock at your blindness, but restore you to sight. For this purpose he has eyesalve, raiment, and gold with him, in order to give you every thing, and deliver you out of every distress. It is for this only he knocks so loudly and continually at the door of your hearts.

Once more, consider it, ye lukewarm, ye poor, ye naked, ye blind, and miserable! Remember, that the fire to warm you, the light at which you may kindle your extinguished torches, the gold by which your poverty may be turned into wealth, the garment to cover all the shame of your nakedness, is at the door. The Saviour is ready, standing before your hearts, either to reject you, or to animate you; to cast you into outer darkness, or to translate you into everlasting light; to put you to shame, in all your nakedness, before the whole world and all heaven, or to cover you with the garments of salvation, and to crown you with glory and honour. Listen

then to his knocking. Obey his voice, whilst he still calls you. For a time is coming, when he will no longer knock, no longer call, but really cast out and put to shame all who do not open to him, receive his counsel, nor listen to his voice, but obstinately continue in their nakedness and blindness.

“I am not altogether lukewarm,” sayest thou; “nor do I appear to myself to be entirely blind, and naked, and wretched, and miserable, like the Laodiceans.” But yet thou lackest something, and that too of great importance. I will tell thee what it is. Thou art no longer what thou wast in the youth of thy faith, and in the blissful days of thy forgiveness and adoption. Thou art gone backward; thy zeal has diminished, thy heart is grown cold, so that the bridegroom has departed from thee; for thy thoughts of him are no longer so fervent, so animated, so constant; thy joy in him is no more so cordial; thy desire after him and communion with him is no longer so ardent; thy prayer, thy intercourse with him, is more forced and servile than filial. Thou art become more indifferent, cold, and estranged from thy Saviour. Only confess to thyself, that other objects almost entirely occupy thy heart, and that thy Saviour finds no room in the inn: scarcely is there a stable or a manger left him, a little corner in thy heart. It is also hard and difficult for thee to abide in him, to withdraw thyself from other

things, and to keep thy heart and thy thoughts fixed upon him. It is a labour to thee, which thou art no longer able to undertake. O, it is now very different with thee from what it was in former times! How fervent, cordial, and ardent was then thy love to him! His company was then thy heaven, from which thou wast unable to separate thyself. How easy and sweet was every thing to thee, which thou wast compelled for his sake to bear, to be deprived of, to do, and to risk! How unceasingly did thy heart long after a still more intimate fellowship and union with him! How did thy soul thirst, that he might be formed within thee;—that the image of his love, humility, and meekness,—that Jesus himself might live and dwell in thee! But now, all this has ceased; thou art now quite a different individual,—but, alas! not a better one. The glow is extinguished, thy fervour is vanished, thy love has grown cold.

But what will the Saviour say to this? Has he left thy abode and given thee up? Will he know nothing more of thee? O, no; do not think so wrongfully of Him, who is supremely good! This thou hast certainly deserved; but he does not deal with us according to our deserts, nor reward us according to our doings. No. He is still standing at thy door. He remains faithful, even to the end, and to the very last. He continues warm when all are cold towards him. He cannot cease to love,

because he is eternal love. He still knocks at thy door, although he feels nothing but coldness in thy heart. He knocks loudly and powerfully; dost thou not hear him? "Ah," he says to thy soul, "I know thy works,—what thou art now doing, and what thou hast formerly done!—how loving once, and now how cold! I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else, unless thou art again in earnest, redoublest thy prayers, and becomest zealous and fervent in spirit, 'I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.' "

What earnestness! What heavy strokes on thy frozen heart! Love complains that it is not loved. What an honour! It seeks to be loved by thee, and is jealous of thy heart. "Remember," it says, "how precious was once thy love; how exalted thy soul in my fervent and ardent love! and now, how deeply fallen! how great and grievous the fall!" But who heeds it? Many thousands of awakened individuals live on securely and boldly, though devoid of their former love, boasting of divine grace and the certainty of their salvation, singing and rejoicing as if they could not possibly fail of it. Devoid of love to the Saviour, they feel no want of love. Having once tasted the first love, although they have again

lost and left it, they think they find in it a pledge and assurance of their eternal salvation. They even harden themselves with the senseless assertion, that a man cannot fall from grace, nor lose his first love; although Christ himself says to this Laodicean pastor, "Thou hast left thy first love."

But when thou feelest that the Saviour is standing before thy soul with this complaint, and lamenting over the coldness of thy heart and the want of thy first love, regard it as a proof of the great grace and faithfulness of thy Saviour, who is not willing that thou shouldst perish in thy coldness and want of love, but again become cordial and ardent towards him. He that reproves thee, loves thee, and seeks to be beloved by thee; he who exhibits thy poverty and want of love to thy view, will again help thee to obtain love, and again grant thee the first love. Hence he gives thee good counsel, saying, "Repent, and do the first works;" by which he means, "begin afresh, act as at first." From whence did thy first love take its rise? Who shed it abroad in thy heart? Was it not at the feet of Jesus, where much, where every thing, was forgiven thee? Thy heart was there suddenly filled with love, thankfulness, and fervour towards him who had forgiven thee all. How didst thou find forgiveness? When humbled, and praying continually, sighing for mercy, and ever seeking thy Redeemer's face. And he

turned towards thee, forgave thee much, and thou lovedst much. Do, therefore, the first works. Come again in this manner, the Saviour means to say ; come again to me thus humbled, contrite, believingly and confidingly, then will I forgive thee all, and again grant thee the first love. I will not be wanting, (is his meaning,) I will again receive and accept thee, gladly forgive thee, and bestow my favours upon thee as abundantly as at first. Only come as thou didst then ; do unto me as at first ; bring again such a broken and contrite heart. Open thy door as wide as at that time ; I will then bless thee, and again impart the first love to thy heart.

Ask not, therefore, Whence shall I obtain the first love ?—what shall I do to procure it ? For it stands already at thy door ; it knocks at thy dwelling ; it offers itself to thee. Is not he who knocks, who calls, who complains, who preaches repentance to thee, who counsels thee to do the first works, who complains of thy want of love,—is not he love itself, the source of love, the giver of love ? Does he not bring it to thy door ? Does not love speak to thee in him, and offer itself to thee, ever calling to thee and saying, “ Open unto me, let me enter, and I will sup with thee, and the first love shall be the first course and the chief dish at this meal ; ” for when love spreads the feast, she can only feed her guests with love, with the first love. O fortunate mortal ! Thou

knowest not how near love is to thee, how rich and how blessed thou canst again be in love. But also how wretched, how unhappy, if thou closest thy heart against the knockings of love, and wilt not accept the invitation she is willing to give thee to her feast. For, lo! love is also greatly in earnest, and utters appalling menaces if despised. She says, "Except thou repent, I will remove thy candlestick out of its place." Love seeks to urge herself upon thee, as it were, with violence, but with the violence of love. She threatens thee with destruction, in order to preserve thee from it, and to incite thee to love again, as thou didst in the beginning. But will he, who so earnestly desires to be loved by thee, to be loved with the first love, refuse again to bestow that first love upon thee, and to shed it abroad in thy heart, seeing he well knows that thou canst find it no where out of him? O, put confidence in love, only open to her, and she will enter into and replenish thy whole being: it is for this purpose she knocks so constantly and loudly at the door of thy heart.

There are some amongst the pious, who have not sincerely, wholly, and heartily turned unto the Lord, who have not "passed ('pressed through,' *Germ.*) from death unto life," but satisfy themselves with the mere appearance, with outward works and mechanical exercises, so that they may be more fitly termed machines than living beings in the kingdom

of God. They are only put in motion from without, and operate only outwardly. They want the life of faith, the fire of love, the unction of the Spirit, the ardour and fervour of prayer, the clear and melting voice of Christ on the cross and his bleeding wounds; they are destitute of the burning heart of the disciples, the faithfulness of a truly pardoned and saved sinner. They have the form of godliness, but deny its power. They exist more in an outward turmoil than in an inward life. Their activity is more mechanical than spiritual. They possess more Pharisaic stiffness than heartfelt godliness. Their prayers are words, heartless and spiritless formularies; more a sermonizing and eloquent address to a God out of them, — more a matter of the brain, than a cordial intercourse with the living, friendly, and inwardly-abiding Saviour.

If, dear reader, thou art one of this sort; if this be thy state, what thinkest thou of him, who has the seven spirits of God, and whose eyes are as a flame of fire? What will he do to thee, how act with thee? Thou art not indifferent to him; for he has respect unto all; for all are his, and he is unwilling to lose any of them. Yes, he has an eye upon thee; and not only so, but he stands at thy door and knocks; he calls also into thine ear and heart, as one having authority, who can call the dead from their graves, and quicken them. Listen, he is speaking to thee: “ ‘ I

know thy works,' how busy and active thou art; but all thy activity, all thy efforts and labours are only like empty shells without the kernel. 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.' There is in thee no life from God, no Spirit. Thou art impelled, like a machine, by the wooden springs of self-love and self-seeking. Be watchful, awake; be converted, and let the Spirit of life arouse and animate thee; 'for I have not found thy works perfect before God.' Thy works are too light; they are not done in God, from God, and with God;—thy labours are worthless. 'Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard;'—that we must become new creatures in Christ; that we must possess, not only the appearance, but the essence and power of godliness; not only the form of sound words and the pure gospel, but must also shew it forth in demonstration of the Spirit and with power. "Hold fast, therefore, and repent. But, if thou wilt not watch (not awake from thy deadly slumber and uneasy dreams,) 'I will come on thee as a thief,' and awaken thee as unpleasantly as unexpectedly; 'and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' I will suddenly fall upon thee; since, with all thy restless, distracting, heartless activity, thou thinkest not of me; and therefore, with all the appearance of working and labouring for me in the kingdom of God, thou hast forgotten me, and art working without me,

and not for me nor with me, but only to thyself and from thyself."

Dost thou hear that, thou busily occupied Martha? Perceivest thou the voice of the Saviour? This may well be called knocking loudly. This ought in reality to awaken thee. Thy working and striving without and out of him; from thyself, thy own strength and reason; seeing that thou dost not "abide in him as the branch abideth in the vine," is already denounced by the Saviour as a doing nothing, and thyself as a withered branch without fruit, which will be cut down and cast into the fire. And now, when speaking from heaven, he clearly tells us, that a man may have a great name in the kingdom of God, and yet be a dead man. Thou mayest appear to be a very lively and useful instrument; and yet in the eyes of the Saviour be unfit and worthless. Thy works may be applauded and trumpeted forth by half the world, and yet kick the beam in the Saviour's balance. Thou hast a name, art highly spoken of, thy labours are praised, but that is all. He, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, finds nothing in thee but death and dead works.

Oh, this ought to serve as an appeal to us all to try our hearts and our works, whether we have only the name or the life, whether we are working God's works or our own. We ought therefore in all reason to pray, "Lord, make us apprehensive with regard

to our sincerity ; whether our souls cleave to thee, whether our religion is a reality or a mere appearance." And if we find that the Saviour's knockings and accusations have reference to us, we ought to remain no longer in this lifeless and formal state. He is willing to help us out of it : he offers us his hand ; he does not stand and knock at our doors in order to bury those who are only Christians in name, but as an awakener from the dead, to re-animate them, to breathe a new spirit into them, to change their lifeless speaking, working, and striving, into a spiritual, vital, powerful, and blessed acting ; their mere outward praying, singing, church-going, hearing, reading, and speechifying, into an inward, heartfelt, believing, fervent, heart-and-mind-exalting, edifying and soul-invigorating christianity. He desires to drive away death, and to call forth life ; to give the reality to the mere name, the kernel to the shell, a soul to the body. It is for this reason he continues to knock so loudly at the door of thy heart. We must really be brought to be able to say, " Now I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live, is by the faith of the son of God." (Gal. ii. 20.)

Let us listen only once more to the knocking of the Saviour. When the end of all created things passes before thy soul ; when sickness, death, judgment, and hell, terrify thee ; when fear and alarm at

a gloomy futurity weigh thee down ; when thy heart weeps in thy body, because it feels itself surrounded by the darkness and horrors of death, destitute of all help and comfort, and infinitely far from all joy and delight,—whither shall thy heart turn ? Inwards to the Saviour, who has the keys of death and the grave, who died for thee and lives again, and eternally animates all things. But where wilt thou find him ? He stands at the door, he knocks, and speaks in triumphant language to thy timid soul. Listen only and believe ; have thine ear to the door, and thou wilt hear him exclaiming—“ I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me dieth not, nor shall come into condemnation. I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one snatch them out of my hand, nor out of my Father’s ; neither death nor the devil, neither the grave nor hell, neither time nor eternity.”

When thou believest this voice, and openest the door, then vital truth and eternal life, which stood at thy door, enter in to thee, and tread death and judgment, the devil and hell, under thy feet ; bring thee life and blessedness, strength to overcome, and triumphant joy ; make all thy foes thy footstool, give thee immortality, translate thee into heavenly places, render thee immutably and unfadingly blest, and crown thee with eternal glory.

HENCE, it is evident that the sole and irremissible condition of salvation is, that we open the door to the Saviour. "But how can I?" sayest thou. "Can he, must he not himself open every door? Did he not open Lydia's heart? Has he not the key of David, with which he opens every lock; and when he opens none can shut, and when he shuts none can open? Why does he not open my heart himself, since he is able to do it?" Certainly he can do it, and he alone has the key to every heart, even to thine also; and what his key can effect, that it also does. But there is a bolt in thy heart, which thou thyself must draw back. A lock hangs inwardly before thy door, which thou must open, or give him the key to it. He might burst open the door, but he will not do that. He will not conquer thy heart by violence, but by love and patience; he will not compel, but beseechingly invite thee. He wishes to make thee a child and a friend, not a servant and a slave. Friendship and adoption are not compulsory things, they must be born after having been conceived by love. His entrance to thee must be of grace, not of law and necessity. Thou must receive him, he will not force himself upon thee.

I assert, that he will certainly do all in his power (and he can do much, he can do every thing) to open thy door. He seeks to move and incite thee, to render thee inclined towards him; he waits for thee,

until his patience and love at length weary thee ; and, overcome, softened, and transported with his kindness and forbearance, thou canst withstand him no longer. He knows that thou wilt sooner be weary of resisting and barring the door, than he of knocking, waiting, and calling to thee to open it. This is his key to open thine and every closed door. It is his unspeakable, unwearied, patience and love, with which he watches, waits, and knocks, day by day, at our door, until we yield and open to him. In consequence of his long and incessant knocking, the opposing bolts within at length give way. He often, and in many cases, knocks so loudly, and with such strokes of the hammer, as to be clearly felt, as to be heard in the inmost parts of the soul, so that the heart trembles and is terrified, because it perceives that it is the Lord's strong and powerful hand, the mighty finger of God, the hammer that breaks the rock in pieces. It is then that the soul surrenders, that the heart is rendered soft and tender, and yields to the pressure of his love ; it is overcome, it can no longer resist, can bolt the door no more. The ardent desire of his love for the soul at length awakes in the soul an ardent desire after him. For he does not cease ; he shakes and knocks at the closed and bolted heart, until the bolts give way, spring open, and fall off,—nay, until a desire and longing after him arises in the heart ;—until the soul exclaims, “ Come in,

thou blessed of the Lord ; why standest thou without ? My soul thirsteth for thee, my heart longeth for thee."

So gently and kindly, so earnestly and importunately, does he deal with the heart—he who could burst open every door, or lift them off the hinges and carry them away like Samson. But he is unwilling to do this. Thy heart, and every thing which has been given thee, as his free gift, he wishes to be presented to him again, as thy free gift. Hence it is that he stands, day and night, at thy door, and knocks and calls like a lover, saying, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my undefiled ; for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night." Because he knocks and waits day and night at the door, the soul at length understands him, and says, "It is the voice of my beloved!" and she arises and opens to him.

But thou sayest, "My heart is too firmly closed, too hard, and the door too strongly bolted, and barred as with seven bolts ;—who can open it ? I gladly would, but cannot. I am too strongly bound, too firmly imprisoned within brazen doors and iron bars." Poor blinded heart ! Does not he stand at thy door, who hath the keys to open every lock, and who is therefore able to open thine ? Does not he knock and call at thy door, who breaks the gates of brass, and cuts the bars of iron in sunder ? (Psalm cvii. 16.) Is

he not both able and willing to loosen all thy bonds and bars? When he says, "Open unto me!" it is as if he had said, "Let me open, permit me to set thy heart at liberty; give me thy heart, thy will." And when thou sayest to him, "Lord, I gladly would, but cannot. Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief!" when he sees that thou art in earnest, that thou no longer lovest the bars, but wouldest gladly let them go; if thou wert able—this is already as much as if thou hadst opened to him, and presented to him the key that he might open the door himself. And he will not delay doing so, he who is able to go through every obstacle.

If thou turnest not away from him, nor rejectest him; if thou art satisfied with him; if thou dost not voluntarily entertain other lords and guests behind the door in thy heart; if thou wouldest gladly be rid of these strange masters and free from their bondage; if thou longest for deliverance, stretchest out thine arms to thy deliverer, and from the bottom of thy soul ejaculatest, "O that salvation were come out of Zion! O that I were brought out of prison, and released from Egyptian bondage! O that I were no longer a slave of Satan, a servant of sin, a prisoner to my lusts and inclinations! O that I had a better master, who would make me free from the law of sin and death! O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me?" If such are thy feelings, and the beat-

ings of thy heart, when such a knocking is heard both from within and without, the bolts are then drawn back, and the waiting friend has only to put in his key, to turn the handle, and the door opens of itself, the gates are lifted up, the heart stands free and open, a plain path is made for the Beloved, and he can enter thy heart unhindered. How will he hasten, who had so long stood knocking and calling at thy door! How will he rejoice, even as the woman who found her piece of silver; as the shepherd on recovering his sheep; as the father at the return of his prodigal son!

The Lord himself gives us to understand what is meant by opening to him: "If any man hear my voice, and open the door," are his words. The hearing precedes the doing; the believing attention to the word, the confiding reception of the word, opens both door and gate, procures him entrance into the heart. His word, his voice, is the harbinger, forerunner, the preparer of the way, the breaker through, the path-maker. His word is the master key, and can enter, if I may so speak, at the key-hole; and when his word once dwells within thee, it will accomplish that whereunto he sends it. It will open to him.

Let me speak still more plainly. In John xiv. 21, and 23, the Saviour himself tells thee what opens the heart to him. He says, "He that hath my com-

mandments and keepeth them, to him will I manifest myself. He that loveth me will keep my word, and I and my Father will come and make our abode with him." Here we are clearly told, that loving him,—that is, keeping his word and commandment, (for with him this is always one and the same thing,) is to get Christ into our hearts, and the Father with him. Who would not hazard every thing to obtain such guests and inmates as these, who will certainly pay a high rent, and assuredly not dwell with us at our own cost, nor remain a farthing in our debt?

"But," sayest thou, "this is a hard, difficult, and impracticable condition. Who can keep his commandments without first possessing him? Is this to be understood literally?" Certainly; for who dares to add or take away any thing from it? Who dares to change or counterfeit the Lord's word? Unless thou keep his word and commandment, he will not and cannot come to thee. "But how shall I do this? since without him I can do nothing. Am I not weak, sinful, sick, imprisoned, and fettered?" Yes, such is thy case. But does he not stand at thy door, knock at thy heart, and speak to thy soul? He, with whom thou canst do all things? Shouldest thou not be able to attain to him, who thus approaches thee, whose finger knocks at thy heart, whose voice is heard in thy inmost soul? Look!—to love him and keep his word and commandments, takes for granted that his

word is heard, and thou hearest it ; that it is believed, and believingly apprehended and received—and this thou must do and art able to do ; for he who speaks to thee will assuredly enable thee to believe and receive it, if thou only wilt, and dost not oppose it. To love him, means, first of all, nothing but to long after him, to hunger after and desire him. He that acts thus, apprehends, gladly receives, and holds fast his word. No word or commandment of the Beloved is difficult to a loving soul ; since his words and commands are just so many promises and blessings, and require of us no more than the preventing *grace* which they grant and impart to us. For his first word and command to thee is, that thou must believe on his name, who saves sinners ; and in his gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. He that hears and keeps this commandment first, will also be able to keep all his other words and commandments ; for he that believeth on him hath forgiveness of sins and eternal life ; in him dwells the power of God ; in his heart love is shed abroad ;—and what is difficult or impossible to love ?—for love is the fulfilling of the law. We must therefore only begin at the proper place ; we must not put in the key inverted, nor put the cart before the horse. Keep, first of all, the first command ; that is, obtain the forgiveness of thy sins through faith in his name, and thou hast already opened the

door to him. He then enters, and gives thee a new heart, without locks and bolts; a heart into which he has free admission, where he sups and dwells, as in his own palace.

Therefore, let every one turn his ear to the door of his heart, at which Jesus stands, knocks, and lets his voice be heard; for it is said,—“Whosoever will not hear him, shall perish; he that despiseth him, despiseth him that sent him.” Certainly, had the Saviour never knocked at thy door, hadst thou never heard him, thou wouldst have an excuse. For they who shew no traces of his ever having knocked at their door, moved and awakened their hearts, and who have never heard his voice, cannot be judged, but must be left until he thus makes himself known to them. But it is hard to believe that the Saviour will ever forget, overlook, or pass by any one; or that there should be one door or one heart at which he does not announce himself. He loves us and all mankind too dearly; he has done and suffered too much for all, to permit one individual to go on, during his whole life, without at least touching him, and making him conscious that he is present with him. He knocks indeed, at different times and periods, with different persons; to some he comes at the third hour; to others at the sixth or ninth; and to some even at the eleventh hour. Therefore, where he has not yet knocked, there he may still come,

and will do so ; judge not in such a case, but knock at thine own breast, for how many of the Saviour's knockings have already passed unheeded, in consequence of the tumult of thy desires and inclinations ! How often has thy Saviour been sent away, how long has he been compelled to wait, how often to return and knock and call again at thy door ! Therefore, unless thou amend, a heavier judgment will fall upon thee, than upon those who have never heard his voice and his knocking.

He, therefore, who perceives in his heart an emotion, affection, or incitement, which *he was* unable or unwilling to cause himself, which arises or continues not of his own, but even against his will ; he who feels within him a secret desire and longing for salvation, let him not resist or suppress it ; for it is, in truth, Jesus Christ himself who stands at the door and knocks, and by this means awakens in the man this longing, or produces that emotion or affection in the heart, and thus announces that he is present. It is the voice of the Beloved, who says, " Open unto me, my friend ! " Whoever hears this, must not withdraw his attention from the gentle knocking, but wait patiently for the Lord ; surrender the fortress to the Lord, and present him with the keys ; must bring his own will as an offering, even as on the surrender of a town or fortress, the keys are presented and given up to the con-

queror. Resign thyself to him without opposition or reserve. For that individual alone opens the door of his heart to him who no longer opposes him, who unconditionally gives himself up to him, and says, with the entire volition of his will, "Here am I, do with me according to thy word; do with me what pleases thee, both in time and eternity!" It is thus the door is thrown open, and the gates lift up their heads, that the King of glory may enter in and keep the feast.

The meaning of the words, "I will sup with him, and he with me," still deserves our particular consideration. For the reference here is not to that outward supper, which he instituted to shew forth his death, and for the mutual participation of all the members of his ecclesiastical body; he here speaks of a supper, of which he intends to partake inwardly in the heart, with thy heart alone and in particular. "I will enter in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." The latter clause especially must not be overlooked. Here a fellowship, an intimacy, and mutual communication of two persons is the chief point; for it is said, "I with him, and he with me." No third person is to be present, or know any thing about it; only he and I, and I and he. Where is the pen that can describe, or the tongue which can express, what then takes place? He who has not himself enjoyed and tasted that the Lord is good

will never comprehend it, however much may be said of it.

We will only remark thus much. When thou openest unto him, and he enters in to thee, he does not begin with requirements, like Moses, nor by imposing burdens ; but he, first of all, brings with him and bestows that which feeds, refreshes, strengthens and quenches thirst. A singular guest ! who, after having stood so long at the door, waiting, knocking, and asking for admittance, on being admitted, does not require to be waited upon and entertained, but brings and gives the feast, and entertains his host. No one can believe this, except he who experiences it. All suppose they must give to him and entertain him, and are at the same time well aware that they have nothing to set before such a guest. Hence it is that for so long a time they give no ear to his knocking ; hence it is that they close their hearts against him so long. O, if all men knew what he is, what he brings and gives to the soul, how gladly would they open to him ! But they are afraid of him who knocks without, as if he were a creditor, who only comes to demand the payment of what is owing to him ; and as if he were an insulted foe, who comes only to avenge himself ; as if he were a master ready to capture and bind a runaway slave ; as if he were an injured husband, coming to take his adulterous and faithless wife in the fury of his jealousy, with blows,

to the house of correction, to be punished there; and as if he were an executioner, about to give a criminal his deserts. It is thus Reason regards the matter, before she receives light from above. But in opposition to this, the Saviour says, "Not so; I come to sup with thee; I bring every thing with me; I will first give and communicate, that you may be abundantly satisfied, and have more than enough."

He has not been pleased to tell us wherein the supper consists; what enjoyments, what food he places before the soul;---and who will venture to describe that which is indescribable?---to utter that which is unutterable?---to measure what is infinite? All his acts are indescribable, unutterable, and infinite, like himself. He, therefore, who would gladly be minutely informed what kind of a supper it is, must obtain the experience of it himself. Open unto him; so shalt thou soon enjoy and taste how precious, how excellent it is; and wilt then no longer desire to have a description of it, because thou wilt soon find that it is inexpressible. Thou shalt be satisfied with the fatness of his house, and shalt drink of the river of his pleasures; for with him is the fountain of life. (Psalm xxxvi. 8, 9.)

It is, however, beyond a doubt, that the best dish at this supper is himself. He gives himself as his people's food and their most essential enjoyment,

and they long only after him. Their language is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." But first of all, the royal robe, the wedding garment, is presented, which the king himself wove and prepared for his bride and his nuptial guests, and without which, no one may sup with the king. Then, the new and divine nature, the spirit of life, the adoption, the pledge of the heavenly inheritance, the seal of God, is imparted to and bestowed upon the elect. There, streams of love, and peace which passeth all understanding, are shed abroad in the heart; there the soul is so sacredly assured of the warmest love, intimacy, and fellowship of the bridegroom, that she is able to exclaim, "My beloved is mine, and I am his; I hold him and will not let him go." Then is fulfilled what is written in Isaiah xl. 29, "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. The youths may faint and be weary, and the young men may utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord--(they that partake of this supper)--shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings, as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." If Elijah could go in the strength of one meal for forty days together, what power must a soul receive in whom the Saviour dwells, or who sits at his table? who enjoys the

bread of heaven from his hand, and drinks the strong wine from his cup, which he himself pours out?

Alas! that there are so few, who suffer the Lord Jesus to come so near them, and open their hearts to him, so that he can be unto, and bestow upon them what he gladly would be and give to each! There are only a few, who enjoy this inward feast; as for the rest, it is a mere form of words, respecting which they care but little. For having no experience of it, and being unable to form any idea of it, they explain it in such a superficial manner, that the whole feast is reduced to water, and often to lukewarm water; so that not a crumb of the bread of life, nor a drop of this invigorating wine remains. It has no more effect upon them, even at the best, than a florid painting of a supper can effect. But the Saviour did not come into the world, did not suffer and die, and does not stand and knock so long at our door, in order to feed us with the sound of mere words, or to paint a supper on the wall. His words are spirit and life; the food he gives, is invigorating food, and it communicates more to the mind than the letter can convey. From him who promises me a supper, and invites me to his table, I expect real food, refreshment, nourishment, sufficiency, and invigoration for my inward life; the appeasing and satisfying of all the necessities of my spirit, and of my hunger and thirst after spiritual

power, light, life, and blessedness. The greater, the richer, the nobler the individual is, who invites me to his table, the more I expect from his table; from the greatest individual, that which is greatest; from the richest, that which is the most precious; from the best and the noblest, that which is the best, the most gratifying and satisfying. What, therefore, may we not expect from him, whose name is above every name? He with whom the Saviour sups in a particular and inward manner, certainly receives more in the Spirit, for his inner man, than the greatest sensualist at the most luxurious table can possibly enjoy. The soul is fed and refreshed *in a heavenly manner*: not with feelings and emotions; no, for these pass away; but with strengthening food: she is endued with power from on high, and pervaded by such a fulness of spirit, unction, peace, and divine light and life, that, as Paul says, (Ephes. iii. 16,) she is strengthened according to the riches of his glory, by his Spirit's might in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in her heart by faith, and that being rooted and grounded in love, she may be filled with all the fulness of God. The stem of the vine pours its sap into the branches, that they may yield fruit.

But why does the Saviour add—"and he with me?" "I will come to him, and sup with him, and he with me." What can we give him? What food,

what enjoyment will he find in our hearts, if we open the door to him? What does he get by us? O, very much! To him we are excellent food, the nourishment of his body; for it is his meat and drink to do his Father's will, and to finish the work he gave him to do. When he saves a sinner, or finds one that was lost, it is to him a supper, an incomparable feast; it is a refreshment to his heart, which languishes after souls, the nourishment of his love, the appeasing of his hunger; it is to him a princely pleasure; it affords him greater joy to have found us, and to be able to do us good, than we feel in being accepted and entertained by him. The joy, the satisfaction, and the feast is therefore mutual. He cannot be happy (so to speak) without us. He loses much, if he cannot impart to us all his blessedness and glory, and when we refuse his salvation. How did he feel on gaining over the sinful woman at Jacob's well, and in having, by her means, kindled a fire in Samaria. What was his answer, when the disciples brought him food? "Oh!" said he, "leave me alone with your fare; I have had a much better supper; I am already satisfied. I have had meat to eat of which you know nothing. You come too late with your provision." The believing and converted woman, the repenting and believing Samaritans, whom he already regarded as a field white for the harvest, were to him the most splendid feast, the

most delightful supper, so that he no longer wished for any bodily and earthly nourishment. In this manner mayest thou, dear reader, become his food and his refreshment, and prepare him a feast, in his ardent hunger and thirst after souls, and after the salvation of the unconverted.

We ought, and are permitted to keep this *inward* feast with him, and provide it for him every day, and even every hour. Hence he has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the world. A daily guest expects to dine and sup daily with his host. He that hath once tasted of it, will hunger not only once a quarter after it, as the *generality* of Christians after the outward participation of the Lord's supper, but will always hunger after him, even as he continually desires us; for we may eat and drink of him, of his love, continually, on every occasion, and every where. When once it has become our bodily food to do the will of the Father, we can always boldly invite the Saviour to be our guest, as often as it is the joy and delight of our hearts to do or to suffer his holy will. He certainly will not refuse, but always eat with us. This food is sweeter to him than honey or the honey-comb; and far more pleasing than our own efforts, or the following of our own impulse.

He who is unacquainted with this inward feast, and has not learnt to keep it daily with Christ, will

not find much nutriment and blessing in the outward and sacramental feast, of which he at stated times partakes. All who go so seldom to the Lord's table, and live, during the interval, without the inward feast and spiritual food; who feed merely upon themselves, or even upon sin, which they seek at stated periods to get rid of, by a week's preparation and the reception of the Sacrament—these are the very people, who will eventually seek to aid their cause by saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us, for we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and partaken of thy supper." But he will answer them without flattery, and say, "I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." (Luke xiii. 25, 26.)

But let us turn away from such a state, and turn, with our whole souls, to him who stands at our door and knocks, and offers us his supper. Let us reflect upon what has been said above—consider him waiting at our door, to enter in to our hearts—how much it concerns him to be our guest and host, to sup with us and we with him—that he is able to pour into our lap and impart to us all that he is and has—that he may be entirely ours, and we entirely his. O Lord, let this be the case with us all! May every door at which thou knockest be opened to thee, and every heart be offered to thee! Here is mine: take and keep it eternally! Amen.

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