it is one of My ways, which are unlike  
men’s ways), **as many as I love** (not, as  
Grotius, “meaning those whom T have determined  
only not to cast out and abjure;”  
but in its fullest and most blessed sense.  
Nor is the assertion addressed only to the  
better portion of the church, but to all,  
as a gracious call to repentance; as is  
evident from the words next following), **I  
rebuke and chasten** (the *rebuking*, the  
convincing of sin, producing conviction,  
is a portion of the Lord’s chastening: the  
latter may extend very much wider than  
the former, even to judgments and personal  
infliction, which, however they may subserve  
the purpose of *convicting*, are not,  
properly speaking, part of it. “*Rebuke*  
pertains to words, *chastisement* to stripes.”  
Ansbert); **be zealous then** (in thy habit  
of Christian life), **and repent** (begin that  
life of zeal by an act, decisive and effective,  
of change of purpose, Change of purpose  
must, in the fact, precede *zeal*, which is  
the effectual working in a man’s life of that  
change of purpose).

**20.] Behold, I  
stand at the door, and knock** (the reference  
to Sol. Song, v. 2, is too plain  
to be for a moment doubted: and if so,  
the interpretation must be grounded in  
that conjugal relation between Christ and  
the church,—Christ and the soul,—of  
which that mysterious book is expressive.  
This being granted, we may well say, that  
the vivid depiction of Christ *standing at  
the door* is introduced, to bring home to  
the lukewarm and careless church the truth  
of His constant presence, which she was  
so deeply forgetting. His *knocking* was  
taking place partly by the utterance of  
these very rebukes, partly by every interference  
in judgment and in mercy. Whenever  
His hand is heard, He is knocking  
the door. But it is not His hand only that  
may be heard: see below): **if any man  
hear my voice** (here we have more than  
the mere sound of his knock: He speaks.  
See Acts xii, 13 f., “*As Peter knocked  
at the door*”. . . “*when she knew Peter's  
voice.*”—In that case we must conceive  
Rhoda to have asked, “Who is there?”  
and Peter to have answered, It may  
not be uninstructive to fill up this connexion  
in a similar manner. “It is I,”  
is an answer the soul may often hear, if it  
will enquire the reason of an unexpected  
knock at the door of its slumbers; or we  
may compare Sol. Song, v. 2, *“It is the  
voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,  
Open to me”*), **and open the door** (literally,  
“shall have heard,” “shall have  
opened:” but it would he pedantry thus  
to render in our language. On the sense,  
see Sol. Song, v. 6.

Our verse is a  
striking and decisive testimony to the practical  
freedom of our will to receive or reject  
the heavenly Guest: without. the recognition  
of which, the love and tenderness of  
the saying become a hideous mockery.

We then open the door to Christ, when we  
admit Him, His voice, His commands, His  
example, to a share in our inner counsels  
and sources of action. To say that this  
can be done *without* His grace, is ignorance:  
to say it is done only by that grace  
irresistibly exerted, is far worse,—it is, to  
deprive His gracious pleadings of all meaning),  
**I will enter in to him, and I will sup  
with him, and he with me** (the imagery is  
taken from the usages of intimate hospitality.  
But whereas in these it would be  
merely the guest who would sup with the  
host who lets him in, here the guest becomes  
himself the host, because He is the bread  
of life, and the Giver of the great feast of  
fat things and of the great marriage supper  
[Matt. viii. 11, xxv. 1 ff.; Rev. xix. 7, 9].  
St. John is especially fond of reporting  
these sayings of reciprocity which our Lord  
uttered; compare John vi. 56 [x. 38], xiv.  
20, xv. 4, 5, xvii. 21, 26. This blessed admission  
of Christ into our hearts will lead  
to His becoming our guest, ever present  
with us and sharing in all our blessings—  
and, which is even more, to our being ever  
in close union with Him, partaking ever of  
His fulness, until we sit down at His table  
in His Kingdom).—**He that conquereth**  
(see above, ch. ii. 26, and ver. 12, for the