

genii,' on an Assyrian seal, and the Assyrian words *karûbu* and *kurûbu* signify 'great' or 'powerful.' *Kurubu* was also the name of a bird.

The word *lahat* is found only here in the sense of 'flame' or 'flaming.' In Ex. vii. 11, it means 'enchantment,' and Lenormant has suggested that it should be identified with the Assyrian *littu*, 'a sword.' In an early Sumerian hymn to Anu, the God is made to say: 'I bear the sun of fifty faces, the weapon of my omnipotence. . . . I bear my rounded scimitar, the weapon which like a vampire devours the dead. . . . I bear the sword (*litti*) of battle, the net of the rebel land. . . . I bear the

arc which draws nigh to man, the bow of the deluge. . . . I bear the bow and the quiver, which overpower the house of the rebel land: I bear the deluge of battle, the weapon of fifty heads, which, like the huge serpent of seven heads, has a yoke on its seven heads, which, like the terrible serpent of the sea, [attacks] the foe in the face, the overthrower of mighty battle, strong over heaven and earth, the weapon of seven heads, whose light shines forth like day, which binds the mountain, the establisher of heaven and earth, which makes powerless the evil one, the weapon which [fills] the world with the terror of its brilliance.'

The Knocking Saviour.

REV. iii. 20.

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THE verse noted at the head of this paper is one of the great texts of the Book of the Revelation. It is redolent of the wondrously blended grace and majesty so characteristic of the sayings of the Lord Jesus. How many impressive sermons have been preached from this text! Its essential meaning has certainly not escaped the apprehension of the Christian Church. But I venture to think that the form of the figurative representation which here meets us has been almost universally misconceived, and that it is possible to shed new and interesting light on this important passage. Many years ago I was engaged in meditating on these words of Christ with the view of preparing an address for a week evening service. I had read Gossner's famous German tract, *Der anklopfende Heiland* ('The Knocking Saviour'), and viewed, not without emotion, a picture on its outside page of the Redeemer knocking at the heart of the sinner. I felt sure that it would be an easy task for me to expound the place satisfactorily, and to draw from it some edifying truths suitable for the occasion. But to my sore disappointment the more I studied the passage the more I was perplexed. The view of it to which I had been accustomed seemed to involve an intolerable mixture of metaphors. I was about to choose another text, when it occurred to me that in the one I was pondering with such ill success the

Lord Jesus makes no mention of the *heart* of man. Of course I remembered that He is to be received into the heart, and that He dwells there by faith. But the first question to be decided was, How is the figure which He here employs to be understood? What is its simple, original meaning? I asked myself, When we read of a person knocking at a door, why should we not think of the door of a house? How will it suit to think here of the door of a house? I perceived that it suited admirably, and that it was the only explanation that would with any congruity admit of the coming in and supping which Christ speaks of doing after that the door at which He was knocking should be opened. The whole significance of the picture in its beautiful Oriental style was at once apparent. We have the key to the interpretation in our Lord's own conduct. When He was on earth He entered into the houses of the publicans, and sat at meat with them there. Hence He was called their *friend*. We know, too, that it was held to be unlawful for a Jew to eat with an uncircumcised Gentile, or to keep company with him. And in the Christian Church it was forbidden to keep company or to eat with a brother who was leading a scandalous life (1 Cor. v. 11). The Apostle John counsels the elect lady and her children not to receive a false teacher into their house (2 John 10). To come into a man's

house and to sup with Him would be an expressive symbol of friendship and regard; and if there had previously been variance, it would be the sign and seal of complete reconciliation.

The Lord Jesus had a controversy with the Church in Laodicea. He and they were at variance. The letter to the angel of the Church in Laodicea gives a sad account of its low religious condition. So strong was the displeasure of the Lord against it that He declares, 'Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of My mouth.' (Literally, 'I am about to spew thee out of My mouth.') The use of 'I will' seems inconsistent with the offer of mercy which follows. But if we preserve the exact rendering, 'I am about to,' etc., as marking an impending danger, the appearance of contradiction is removed.) After testifying to the Laodiceans His great displeasure, and exposing their self-deception, and warning them of their dreadful peril, the Lord exhorts them to zeal and repentance. And then, in amazing condescending grace, He makes, in symbolic language, a proposal to one and all of them of peace and friendship. He describes Himself as suing for a cordial reconciliation and renewal of mutual love by presenting Himself at the door of their house, asking to be admitted into it, and offering to partake of a feast in token of the removal of alienation and enmity, and the re-establishment of perfect harmony and fellowship. Surely Christ's language, when taken in this its simple natural import, is beautifully significant, though, strange to say, I know no commentator or religious writer who has fairly unfolded this meaning, which one might suppose to be far from difficult to discover.

We might consider whether, as a matter of fact, the penitent offender whom Christ reconciles to Himself actually enjoys anything to correspond to that feasting in His company, of which mention is made. This trait in the picture is finely illustrated in Christian experience. For it is a fact,

abundantly attested in the Christian life, that there is no joy more thrilling, deep, and pure than that felt by the man who, sorely wounded by a sense of sin, and feeling his guilt to be an unendurable burden, goes in faith and penitence to the throne of grace, and asks and obtains restoration to the Lord's favour. Not only is misery relieved in the getting rid of a load of conscious guilt. Truly to apprehend God's mercy in Christ, to know and believe His love, this drives away darkness, dread, and distress, and is as life from the dead. The sight of redeeming and pardoning grace fills the soul with a transport of admiration and love and joy. And the deeper the perception of guilt has been, the more delightful is the appreciation of forgiving mercy, and the more exuberant is the flow of gushing gratitude which the sight of that mercy awakens. And whether it be a true Christian who is recovered from a lapse and restored to peace with God, or whether it be a sinner who is made for the first time to taste that the Lord is gracious, there is the same feasting with Jesus, the same blessedness in His communion.

They who are sensible of backsliding and delinquencies might well fear that the Lord who pardons them will yet treat them with reserve, and keep them away for a time from His intimate fellowship, and withhold from them, for a season at least, the joy of His salvation. But He professes Himself eager to admit them at once to the sweetest, closest, most delightful communion. If anyone will but let Him into his house, He will bring to it, as He did to that of Zaccheus, salvation without a single day's delay. It is a glorious experience to know the reality which underlies the figure of Christ thus entering our house and supping at our table. Other thoughts arise here, But enough has been said to show that the value of the precious saying we have been studying is not lessened by the new view that has been suggested of its imagery.