# **Christ's Voice to London**

# by William Dyer

(Preached in London during the time of the 'Great Plague' of 1665-1666. The 'Great Plague' was a massive outbreak of disease, which killed an estimated 100,000 people, 20% of London's population.)

"They provoked the Lord to anger by their wicked deeds—so a **plague** broke out among them!" Psalm 106:29

"Listen! The Lord is calling to the city—Hear the **rod** and the One who appointed it!" Micah 6:9

### The Epistle to the Reader

Courteous I hope these sermons will find as good acceptance with you, as the former; I confess this encouraged me, when I considered how my former treatises were received and embraced by the Lord's people in all parts of this kingdom, as appears by many thousands of them which have been printed and sold.

And though I have met with many discouragements from slanderers, who have bent their tongues like a bow, for lies, as if I had done that which was never in my thoughts, nor in my heart, much less in practice; and though they had as little cause to report it of me, as of any man—yet how confidently did some report, and others believe, those abominable lies, as if I had lost my first love, and was returning again to Egypt! Oh! what will prejudice and malice will not do? But why should I be troubled at this, seeing it was so with the holy apostle, who went through evil report as well as good?

I rejoice that the Lord has made me any way instrumental in doing good, and in that he has kept me close to himself, and this is my crown and rejoicing. Now, that the only wise God may keep you and me by his power through faith unto salvation, that we hereafter, him may glorify him here, and reign with him is the desire and prayer of who desires the good of your soul, William Dyer

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hears my voice, and opens the door—I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Revelation 3:20

The Holy Scriptures are the mysteries of God;

*Christ* is the mystery of the Scriptures;

grace is the mystery of Christ, <u>1 Timothy 3:16</u>.

The Lord Jesus is our life, and the way to life, 1 Corinthians 2:7. To know him savingly, believingly, and experimentally, is life eternal, John 17:3, "I am the way," says Christ, John 14:6.

The old and good way, <u>Jeremiah 6:16</u>.

The *new* and *living* way, <u>Hebrews 10:20</u>.

The *strait* and *narrow* way, <u>Matthew 7:24</u>.

And because poor sinners are by nature the children of wrath, and all gone out of the way, "having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts," Ephesians 4:18; and become "wretched and miserable, poor and blind, and naked," like the Laodiceans, spoken of in this chapter verse 10; therefore the Lord Jesus, who is full of love, full of grace, and full of pity to poor lost sinners, does graciously invite them to come to him, that he may "enrich them with gold, and clothe them with white clothing, and anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they may see," verse 18. And further, lo view his willingness and readiness to save souls: he tells us in the text, that he stands at the door and knocks, that "If any man hears my voice, and opens the door—I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me."

In these words you have three general parts.

1. God's gracious offer to man: "Behold I stand at the door and knock."

2. Man's duty in relation to God's gracious offer: "If any man hears my voice, and opens the door."

3. God's gracious promise in relation to man's duty: "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

These words being thus opened, there flows from them four points of doctrine:

Doctrine 1. There is a marvelous willingness in the heart of God and Christ, to save and receive poor lost sinners.

Doctrine 2. That the hearts of poor sinners are barred and bolted against the Lord Jesus.

Doctrine 3. That it is the duty and great concernment of all men-to hear God's voice, and to open the door.

Doctrine 4. That whoever will but hear Christ's voice, and open the door—he will come in to them, and sup with them, and they with him.

Neither time nor strength, beloved, will give me leave to handle all these doctrines separately; therefore I shall insist but upon one of them, which is the second, 'That the hearts of poor sinners are barred and bolted against the Lord Jesus.' In the prosecution of this point, I shall do two things:

### 1. OPEN it—that you may see it.

2. **Prove** it—that you may *believe* it.

First, In the opening of it, there are three things to be explained:

1. The bars.

2. The voice.

3. The doors.

1st, I will show you what the BARS are—which bolt the doors of sinners hearts against Christ.

1. The bar of ignorance.

2. The bar of unbelief.

3. The bar of self-conceitedness.

4. The bar of earthly-mindedness.

5. The bar of prejudice.

6. The bar of hardness of heart.

These, my beloved, are the cursed bars, which bar God and Christ and the Holy Spirit out of the heart.

I shall begin first with the bar of **IGNORANCE**, and in that I shall show you these three things:

1. What ignorance is.

2. What sinners are ignorant of.

3. The mischievousness of this sin of ignorance.

First, What ignorance is. Ignorance is the lack of knowledge—or darkness of the understanding; for, said the apostle Paul, Ephesians 4:18, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of the blindness of their heart." Here you may see what ignorance is—the apostle calls it *darkness* and *blindness*. Likewise in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4, "But if our gospel be hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing. The god of this world has

blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." So *ignorance* is darkness of mind, blindness of heart, and lack of knowledge and spiritual understanding in the soul.

# Secondly, What are sinners ignorant of?

They are ignorant of God, they are ignorant of Christ, they are ignorant of the Spirit, they are ignorant of the Word, they are ignorant of their own misery, they are ignorant of the necessity of being born again, of being new creatures, of being converted, and turned from darkness to light, from death to life, and from the power of Satan to the living God! Such things as these, I say they are ignorant of this is that which keeps poor souls from going to Christ.

Oh, beloved, we have many of those among us who are ignorant. It was said of the priests, the sons of Eli, that they were sons of Belial, and knew not the Lord, <u>1 Sam. 18</u>. So in the prophecy of Jeremiah, (chapter 2:8.) it is said, "The priests did not ask, 'Where is the Lord?' Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols!" Just so, were the Pharisees were *blind leaders of the blind*, <u>Matthew 15:14</u>. Would to God there were no such among our priests this day!

May not that charge be drawn up against us now, as it was against Israel, "Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, *no knowledge of God* in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away. You stumble day and night, and the prophets stumble with you. *My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.* Because you have *rejected knowledge*, I also reject you as my priests; because you have *ignored the law* of your God, I also will ignore your children. The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful. They feed on the sins of my people and relish their wickedness. And it will be—Like people, like priests. I will punish both of them for their ways and repay them for their deeds!" <u>Hosea 4:1-9</u>. Thus men err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God! <u>Matthew 22:29</u>.

# Thirdly, the mischievousness of this sin of ignorance.

1. Ignorance is that which keeps men from knowing God.

2. Ignorance is that which keeps men from pleasing God.

3. Ignorance is that which keeps men from coming to God.

4. Ignorance hinders men from having a property in God.

5. Ignorance is that which hardens the heart against God.

Oh, cursed and mischievous ignorance! What sin is like unto this? This is that which darkens, which binds, and bars the doors of sinners' hearts against Christ! "Oh, that you had *known*," says our dear Lord, "the things that belong to your peace," Luke 19:42. But because they are "a people of no understanding, therefore he who made them will have no mercy on them, and he who formed them will show them no favor," Isaiah 27:11. Thus, my beloved, I have showed you what a wretched and miserable state such are in—who are thus ignorant.

The second bar which bolts and bars Christ out of the heart, is **UNBELIEF**.

1. Unbelief makes men give no credit to the report of the gospel.

2. Unbelief makes men refuse to yield that lovely and loyal subjection to Christ, as their Lord.

3. Where unbelief reigns, it keeps off the heart from confidently believing on Christ, for all the blessings that we may have in him—and so keeps out the love of our souls. Unbelief is that which clips the wings of his mercy, "So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief!" <u>Hebrews 3:19</u>. Unbelief is that which binds the hand of his power, <u>Matthew 13:58</u>. "And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief." Unbelief is that which lets the soul into perdition, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever does not believe in the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36. Rev. 21:8, "The unbelieving shall have their portion in the lake of fire, which is the second death." Unbelief is that which lets the soul death." Unbelief is that which hard end of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness!" Hebrews 3:12-13.

Oh, beloved, unbelief also is that which gives God the lie! "Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son!" <u>1 John 5:10</u>. They believe not his *promise*, they fear not his *threatenings*, nor do they hearken to the voice of his Word! Though he sets life and death before them, heaven and hell, bitter and sweet—yet they go on in the vain imaginations of their hearts, to add sin to sin, putting the evil day far away—and draw iniquity with the cords of vanity, and sin, as it were, with a cart-rope!

Oh, beloved, this is the state and condition of unbelievers, this is one of the bars which bolts Christ out of the heart! As all believers are in a state of salvation, so all unbelievers are in a state damnation, "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son!" <u>John 3:18</u>.

The third bar which bolts and bars Christ out of the heart, is **SELF-CONCEIT**.

First, A self-conceited man is one who supposes himself to be what he is not. Galatians 6:3, "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing—he deceives himself."

Secondly, A self-conceited man is one who glories in his works, and despises others, "To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'" Luke 18:9-12. But the tax collector, whom he despised, went away justified, "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:14

Thirdly, A self-conceited man is the farthest from heaven of any man! "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and harlots will get into the Kingdom of God before you do!" says our Savior to the self-conceited Pharisee, Matthew 21:31.

Fourthly, A self-conceited man lives the most secure-while in a state of sin and misery, "Those who hear the warnings of this curse should not congratulate themselves, thinking, 'I am safe, even though I am following the desires of my own stubborn heart.' This would lead to utter ruin!" <u>Deuteronomy 29:19</u>.

Fifthly, A self-conceited man is the hardest to be wrought upon, and convinced of the state and condition that he is truly in—of any man; because he thinks himself righteous and holy enough, and good and sound enough. Thus it was with the scribes and pharisees, who had such high thoughts of themselves, that they thought themselves to be the most holy people in the world! But mark what Christ says to them, Matthew 9:12. "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." So also it is said, John 7:48, "Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No!" Note, these rulers and Pharisees were very hard to be convinced, and brought to own the truth.

Sixthly, A self-conceited man is one who thinks that God is made up of nothing but mercy, and therefore lives in his sins, and pleases himself with the thought that God is nothing but mercy. He lies still in the ditch of sin, and cries, 'God help me!'—but never endeavors to come out. And though the Lord waits to be gracious—yet the Lord is a God of justice and judgment as well as of mercy. "For the Lord is a God of justice!" Isaiah 30:18.

Oh, this is the sad and miserable condition of a self-conceited man! This is that which keeps him from closing with Christ! This is that cursed bar which bolts the door of sinners hearts against Christ!

The fourth bar which bolts and bars Christ out of the heart, is **EARTHLY-MINDEDNESS**.

First, An earthly-minded man is one who minds the things of this world—more than he does Jesus Christ. This was the case of the rich young man in the gospel, who came to Christ, and asked him, saying, "What good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus bids him keep the commandments; he replied unto him, "All these I have kept from my youth up—what more do I lack?" Jesus says unto him, "If you will be perfect, sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven." But he being an earthly-minded man, would not embrace the counsel of Christ—but went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions, <u>Matthew 19:20—22</u>.

Secondly, An earthly-minded man, is one who will leave the work of God, to embrace this present world; this was Paul's lament over Demas, <u>2 Timothy 4:10</u>, "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." So also in <u>Phil. 2:21</u> he says, "Everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."

Thirdly, An earthly-minded man is one who will preach false doctrine, for the love of money, and filthy lucre's sake. <u>1 Timothy 6:10</u>, "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows!" Titus 1:10, 11, "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, who teach things they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." <u>2 Peter 2:15</u>, "They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness." Oh, beloved! I could wish that this were not so much practiced in this our day; but, alas! what shall I say? such is the earthly-mindedness of many of the ministers, that I may say of them, as the blessed apostle Paul of some in his day, <u>Philippians 3:19</u>, "Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things."

Fourthly, An earthly-minded man is one who trusts in his riches, and not in God. Proverbs 11:28, "He who trusts in his riches shall fall." Psalm 49:6, 7, "Those who trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Therefore, "If riches increase-do not set your heart upon them," Psalm 62:10. The blessed apostle Paul does charge those who are rich in this world, "That they trust not in uncertain riches—but in the living God, who gives all things richly to enjoy," 1 Timothy 6:17.

Thus you may see, my beloved, that whoever trusts in uncertain riches more than in God, is an earthly-minded man; it is that which bars men out of the kingdom of heaven. It is the word of Christ to his disciples, Mark 10:24, 25, "How hard is it for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is the word of Christ to his disciples, Mark 10:24, 25, "How hard is it for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of eaven. It is the word of Christ to his disciples, Mark 10:24, 25, "How hard is it for those which the trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." Oh, beloved, it is a snare, it is idolatry, Col. 3:5. And covetousness, which is idolatry, is the root of all evil, 1 Tim. 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil."

Thus earthly-mindedness, or covetousness, is another great sin which keeps souls from going to Christ for life and salvation, "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' Still another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'" Luke 14:18-20.

The fourth bar which bolts and bars Christ out of the heart, is **PREJUDICE**. Wicked and sinful men have a great prejudice against Christ; that is, against these three things of Christ.

First, they have a prejudice against his **doctrine**. "Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it? From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him," John 6:60, 66. "The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching?" Mark 1:27. Sinners have a great prejudice against the doctrine and worship of Christ; they think it too pure, too spiritual, and too powerful for them to hear.

Secondly, they have a great prejudice against the ministers or ambassadors of Christ; they say of them as Ahab said of Micaiah, "I hate him, for he never prophecies good of me!" 1 Kings 22:8.

So in <u>1 Kings 18:17</u>. Ahab said unto Elijah, "Is it really you, you troublemaker of Israel?" So Jeremiah complains of this, saying, "I am mocked every day; everyone laughs at me, because the Word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day long," <u>Jeremiah 20:7, 8</u>. So in <u>Acts 24:5</u>. it is so of Paul, "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect." All this is according to the Word of our blessed Lord, <u>Matthew 10:22</u>, "And you shall be hated by all men, for my name's sake."

Thirdly, Sinners have a great prejudice against the members of Christ, and that for four reasons:

### 1. Because they are **poor**. <u>Luke 12:22</u>, <u>23</u>, 1 Corinthians 1:26, 30.

2. Because they are but few. Luke 12:32, Matthew 7:14. Deuteronomy 7:7, "For you were the fewest of all people." Revelation 3:4, "Yet there are a few in the church in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes with evil. They will walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

3. Because they are **unlearned** in the account of men. This is said of Christ, <u>John 7:15</u>, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" Also of Peter and John it is said, <u>Acts 4:13</u>, "And when they perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." "Have you been led astray, too?" the Pharisees mocked. "Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God's curse is on them!" John 7:47-49.

4. Because they will not **conform** to men's inventions. <u>Daniel 3:18</u>, "Be it known unto you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image that you have set up!" "Why do your disciples disobey our age-old tradition?" they demanded. "They ignore our tradition of ceremonial hand washing before they eat." Jesus replied, 'And why do you, by your traditions, violate the direct commandments of God?" <u>Matthew 15:2-3</u>. See also <u>Acts 5:28</u>, <u>29</u>, "Didn't we tell you never again to teach in this man's name?" he demanded. "Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!" But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than any human authority!" See also <u>Col. 2:21</u>, <u>22</u>, "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings." Oh, my dear brethren, this cursed prejudice is that which keeps sinners from receiving of the love of the truth—and a bar which bolts Christ out of the heart.

The sixth bar which bolts and bars Christ out of the heart, is HARDNESS OF HEART.

1. They are hardened against **God**. <u>Job 9:4</u>, "Who has hardened himself against God, and has prospered?"

Their hearts are hardened against his mercy—so that it does not draw them. Romans 2:4, 5, "Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed!"

3. Their hearts are hardened against his judgments—so that they do not tremble at them! As it is said, Exod. 8:32, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also." As it is also said, Jeremiah 5:22, "Should you not fear me?" declares the Lord. "Should you not fear

4. Their hearts are hardened against his **Word**, that it does not reform them. "A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy!" Proverbs 29:1. "You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you!" Proverbs 29:1. "You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you!" Proverbs 29:1. "You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you!" Proverbs 29:1. "You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you!" Proverbs 29:1. "You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you!" Proverbs 29:1. "We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord! We will do whatever we want. We will burn incense and pour out liquid offerings to the Queen of Heaven just as much as we like."

5. Their hearts are hardened against the **Spirit** of God—that He does not melt them. Genesis 6:3, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." As Stephen said to the Jews in Acts 7:51, "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

6. Their hearts are hardened against all the **means of grace**, or gracious invitations from the people of God, "Your ancestors refused to listen to this message. They stubbornly turned away and put their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing. They made their hearts as hard as stone, so they could not hear the instructions or the messages that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry!" Zech. 7:11, 12. "They are like the deaf adder, that has stopped its ears, that will not heed the tune of the charmer, however skillful the enchanter may be!" Psalm 58:4, 5. Oh, dear friends! this is another bar which bolts Christ out of the hearts of poor sinners.

Thus beloved, I have showed you what the bars are which bolt the doors of our hearts against Christ, that we do not hear his voice and open the door.

2dly, The second thing which is here to be explained, is—what this VOICE is, which sinners are to hear. It is the voice of Christ! He is speaking to poor sinners, to open the door of their hearts, that he may come in and sup with them.

There are **two sort of voices** by which Christ speaks to the soul—inward voices and outward voices.

### First, Christ speaks to us by INWARD voices:

1. Their voice of **conscience**. The Lord Jesus speaks to sinners by their consciences. It is said of the Jews, (<u>John 8:9</u>) they were convicted by their own consciences. So Paul says in <u>Romans 9:1</u>, "My conscience bears me witness." And of the Gentiles Paul says, (<u>Romans 2:15</u>) that "they did by nature the things contained in the law, their conscience also bearing them witness." And as Paul says, <u>2 Corinthians 1:12</u>,

"Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." Oh, friends! God preaches to you many times by your consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of consciences, which speaks to you secretly and powerfully, condemning and reproving you for iniquities. Oh! therefore, hear the voice of conscience

2. Christ speaks to us by the voice of his Spirit, as he did to the old world, Genesis 6:3, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." And as he did to the Jews, Acts 7:51, "You always resist the Holy Spirit! As your fathers did, so do you." So in John 16:8, Christ tells us, that the Spirit would convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Oh, the ever blessed God speaks to the world by his blessed Spirit, striving with them, convincing them, and reproving of them for their iniquities, that their souls may believe in him, and live with him to all eternity!

#### Secondly, Christ speaks to us by OUTWARD voices:

1. By the voice of his **Word**—which is the reading and preaching of the gospel; that is, the word of reconciliation. Oh, sinner! when you hear the Word—you hear the voice or Christ! Col. 1:5, "You have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel." "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the *Scriptures that testify about me*, yet you refuse to come to me to have life!" John 5:39-40. The voice of the Scriptures—is the voice of Christ! As Christ speaks to us by them here—so he will judge by them hereafter! <u>Romans 2:16</u>, "God will judge the secrets of men by Christ Jesus, according to my gospel." See John 12:48, where Christ says, "But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment, by the Word I have spoken."

2. Christ speaks to sinners by the voice of his **rod**—by afflictions, and tribulations, and judgments. "Listen! The Lord is calling to the city, Hear the rod and the One who appointed it!" Micah 6:9

3. Christ speaks to sinners by the voice of his servants. "Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant?" <u>Isaiah 50:10</u>. So in <u>2 Corinthians 5:20</u>, "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." So in Matthew 18, "He who hears you, hears me." Oh, sinner! Christ speaks to you by the voice of his servants, by his ministers and members, who beseech you, and entreat you to be reconciled, that you may have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

### Having thus briefly showed you what the voices are,

3rdly, I shall in the third place, show you what the DOOR is, that Christ stands and knocks at, which sinners are to open and let him in.

1. The first door which sinners should open unto Christ—is the door of their **thoughts**. We must open the door of our thoughts to him, that God may be in our thoughts, and Christ in our thoughts, and the Spirit of life and power in our thoughts, and eternity in our thoughts, heaven and judgment in our thoughts! "Keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart," <u>1 Chron. 29:18</u>. "How precious also are your thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them!" Psalm 139:17. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, your comforts delight my soul," Psalm 19:29. Oh! this is the first door of our hearts, which believers open to their beloved Lord.

2. The second door which sinners should open unto Christ—is the door of consideration. "Oh, that they were wise, and understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" <u>Deuteronomy 32:29</u>. "The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not consider!" <u>Isaiah 1:3</u>. "They furnish wine and lovely music at their grand parties—lyre and harp, tambourine and flute—but they never think about the Lord or notice what he is doing!" <u>Isaiah 5:12</u>.

But those who have opened this door to Christ—they consider their ways, "The upright considers his ways," Proverbs 21:29. "Listen to this; stop and consider God's wonders!" Job 37:14. "But be sure to fear the Lord and faithfully serve him. Consider all the wonderful things he has done for you!" 1 Samuel 12:24. "Therefore thus says the Lord Almighty, consider your ways," Haggai 1:5. Consideration is the second door of the heart.

3. The third door which sinners should open unto Christ—is the door of **love** and **affection**. "You must love the Lord your God with all your soul, and all your strength," Deuteronomy 6:5. "If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ—that person is cursed!" <u>1 Corinthians 16:22</u>. "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity," Ephesians 6:24. "Set your affections on things above, and not on things beneath," Col. 3:2</u>. This door of love and affection must be opened to Christ, that he may come into your hearts, and be your nearest and dearest, your joy and delight, that you may have reconciliation with the Father, union with the Son, and communion with the Holy Spirit. Affection is the third door of the heart.

4. The fourth door which sinners should open unto Christ—is the door of **desire**—or else he will not come into our hearts, and sup with us. Oh, sinners! you must desire and thirst after Christ vehemently, and say, as the church does in the Song of Songs, "Make haste, my beloved, and be like to a roe or to a young deer upon the mountains of spices!"

Just so in <u>Revelation 22:20</u>, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" Just so with the Psalmist in <u>Psalm 73:25-26</u>, "Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth. My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever!" Just so with the church, <u>Isaiah 26:9</u>, "All night long I search for you; in the morning I earnestly seek for God. For the desire of my soul is to your name, and to the remembrance of you." Just so with Paul, "I desire to know nothing among you—except Jesus Christ, and him crucified," <u>1 Corinthians 2:2</u>. *Desire* is the fourth door of the heart which you must open to Christ, without which there is no supping with him, nor he with you.

5. The fifth door which sinners should open unto Christ—is the door of estimation; that is, to prize him, and to value him as more precious than all other things besides. So do believers, <u>1 Peter 2:7</u>, "Unto you therefore who believe—he is precious." And, with Paul, "count all things but dung and dirt to gain him!" And, also with Moses, "to esteem the reproach of Christ, as greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," <u>Hebrews 11:26</u>. Oh! these blessed souls that have opened this door to Christ, he is to them—all lovely, the chief among ten thousand; yes, he is better than rubies, "and all that you can desire are not to be compared unto him!" So it must be with you, poor souls—you must look upon Christ as most lovely, most precious, most desirable, and most glorious; thus he is to the Father, to the holy angels, and to the saints. This is the fifth door of the heart.

6. The sixth door which sinners should open unto Christ—is the door of a **godly life**, which sinners as well as saints must open to Christ, "But we are *citizens of heaven*, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior." Philippians 3:20, "For the grace of God that brings salvation, has appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," Titus 2:11, 12. "Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this—what holy and godly lives you should live!" 2 Peter 3:11. "Above all, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." Phil. 1:27. This is the sixth door of the heart, a godly life; this also must be opened to Christ, that he may come in, and sup with us, and we with him, that our souls may have fellowship and communion with him.

An thus I have briefly showed you, beloved, what the **doors** are, which must be opened to Christ. Now, having done with the *explanation*, I come to the **APPLICATION** of the point. And as I have opened it unto you—that you might see it; and proved it unto you—that you might see it; and proved it unto you—that you might see it; and proved it unto you—that you may receive it.

### Is it so, beloved, that the hearts of sinners are thus barred and bolted against the Lord Jesus?

Use 1. INFORMATION. See the sad and miserable condition of all unconverted people! They "are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked!" They are "without Christ, being strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. 2:12. Oh, sinners, who are graceless and Christless—this is your condition! And though this is sad—yet this is not all; for your hearts are barred and bolted against the Lord of life and glory. Oh, you who read this—how can

you but tremble to think that your heart should be thus barred and bolted against your best friend, Jesus Christ, with ignorance, with unbelief, self-conceitedness, earthly-mindedness, prejudice, and hardness of heart—and yet all this while open to sin, to Satan, and the world—which are cruel *enemies* to the soul. That I may hasten you out of this condition, if it be the will of God, as the angel did Lot out of Sodom, (Genesis 19) I shall turn my discourse into an exhortation.

# Use 2. EXHORTATION.

And first of all, Let me exhort you whose hearts are thus barred and bolted against Jesus Christ—to hear his voice, and open the door.

First, to hear his voice. "Listen! The Lord is calling to the city—Hear the rod and the One who appointed it!" Micah 6:9. Oh, sinners, Christ speaks to you by your consciences, by his Spirit, by his Word, by his rod, and by his servants. Oh, you men and women of this city, God has spoken to you by all these voices—but you have turned the deaf ear to Christ!

Oh, London, London! God *speaks* to you by his judgments, and because you would not *hear* the voice of his Word, he has made you to *feel* the stroke of his rod! Oh, great city! how has the *plague* broke in upon you, because of your abominations! "They provoked the Lord to anger by their wicked deeds—so a *plague* broke out among them!" <u>Psalm 106:29</u>. Oh, you of this city! how is the wrath of God kindled against you, that such multitudes of thousands have died within your borders, by this severe plague, God's immediate sword! London! how are your streets thinned, your widows increased, and your cemeteries filled, your inhabitants fled, your trade decayed! Oh! therefore lay to heart, you who are yet alive, all these things, and turn from your wicked ways, that the cry of your *prayers* may outcry the cry of your *sins*, and be like the city of Nineveh, who believed Jonah's message from God, who humbled themselves, and fasted, and cried mightily unto the Lord, "The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust!" <u>Jonah 3:5-6</u> Oh, let not the heathen outstrip professing Christians! Did Nineveh repent and turn from their wicked ways—and shall not London?

Perhaps you think that all is now well, and that God is pleased with you, because the plague is abating. I say, blessed be God for this! But "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. Whatever a man sows—that he shall reap!" Galatians 6:7. To whomever God bestows great mercies, if they abound in great wickedness, He will inflict great punishments upon them! Alas! beloved, the plague abates—but your sins increase! There is no turning from sin—and turning to God! There is no reformation and amendment of life among you! If this is so—then God is not done afflicting of you!

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways—then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land!" <u>2 Chron. 7:14</u>. But if you remain: as profane as before, as superstitious as before, as carnal as before, as lukewarm as before, as hard-hearted and as cruel as before, as proud and vain as before, as worldly as before; I say, if it be thus with you, God is not yet done with London—but has other judgments to pour out upon you, though he causes the plague to cease. (Editor's note: In September of 1966, the 'Great Fire of London' gutted the city, and consumed 13,200 houses. The social and economic problems created by this disaster were over helming.)

See how God dealt with the Jews in this case, "I brought hunger to every city and famine to every town. But still you would not return to me," says the Lord. "I kept the rain from falling when your crops needed it the most. I sent rain on one town but withheld it from another. Rain fell on one field, while another field withered away. People staggered from town to town looking for water, but there was never enough. But still you would not return to me!" says the Lord. "I struck your farms and vineyards with blight and mildew. Locusts devoured all your fig and olive trees. But still you would not return to me!" says the Lord. "I sent plagues on you like the plagues I sent on Egypt long ago. I killed your young men in war and led all your horses away. The stench of death filled the air! But still you would not return to me!" says the Lord. "Amos 4:6-10. Therefore, my dear brethren, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, and for your soul's sake, hear his voice, that you may be prosperous on earth—and glorious in heaven.

2ndly, Let me exhort you, and oh that I could prevail with you, to persuade you of this city to three things:

1. That you would thoroughly turn from your evil ways, and amend your doings—that God may relent of the evil, which otherwise he may bring upon you. Oh, see what the Lord says, <u>Jeremiah 26:3</u>, "Perhaps they will listen and turn from their evil ways. Then I will change my mind about the disaster I am ready to pour out on them because of their sins!" See verse 13. "Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the Lord your God. Then the Lord will relent and not bring the disaster he disaster I am ready to pour out on them because of their sins!" See verse 13. "Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the Lord your God. Then the Lord will relent and not bring the disaster he disaster he may bring upon you." Also mark what the Lord speaks by the prophet, <u>Jeremiah 7:3</u>, "This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place." (ver.5.) "if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings,"

Oh, beloved the Lord our God is willing to hear, willing to heal, and willing to forgive. Great cities are places which are usually guilty of great sins, great provocations, and great abominations; and for this cause God has destroyed and overthrown many cities, as the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, <u>Genesis 19:24</u>, "Then the Lord rained down fire and burning sulfur from the sky on Sodom and Gomorrah!" Just so were Jerusalem and other cities were destroyed by God for their sins and wickedness, 2 Chron. 25:16, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel!" <u>Jeremiah 12:12-13</u>, "On all the bare hilltops, destroying armies can be seen. The sword of the Lord devours people from one end of the nation to the other. No one will escape! My people have planted wheat—but are harvesting thorns. They have worn themselves out—but it has done them no good. They will harvest a crop of shame because of the fierce anger of the Lord."

Now see what the apostle Peter says to this, 2 Peter 2:6, "God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an *example* of what will happen to ungodly people!" O London! repent, that it may not be so with you. O! rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord, who is willing to receive you, that so his judgments may be diverted, your former mercies restored, and his blessing poured down upon you!

2. That you would dearly love, and highly prize the precious saints of the most high God which are among you. These are they of whom the world is not worthy, <u>Hebrews 11:38</u>. God prizes them as his jewels and treasures, <u>Mal. 3:17</u>, <u>Exod. 19:5</u>. God calls them the dearly beloved of his soul, <u>Jeremiah 12:7</u>. "They are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," <u>1 Peter 2:9</u>. Oh! therefore "God allowed no man to do them wrong; yes, he reproved kings for their sakes!" <u>Psalm 105:14</u>. Oh, beloved, nations, and cities, and kings, are blessed for their sakes. See <u>Genesis 12:2</u>, <u>3</u>. "And you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you." O London! in this you are happy; yes, more happy than any one city upon the face of the earth, because you have within your borders—more righteous, more saints, more true believers, who are still sighing and mourning for your sins, praying for your peace, and seeking and desiring your eternal good.

3. And lastly, Let me exhort you to open the door and let Christ in, into your thoughts, into your minds, into your affections, into your desires, into your estimations, and into your conversations.

Oh, beloved, keep Christ out no longer—but let him into your hearts and souls, that he may make you rich—rich in faith, rich in knowledge, rich in assurances, rich in privileges, rich in experience, and rich in good works.

Oh, therefore, let not sin be let in—and Christ shut out. Oh, let Jesus Christ into your hearts—for if you shut the door against Christ—he will shut the door against you.

First, the door of mercy.

Secondly, the door of acceptance.

Thirdly, the door of salvation.

First, the door of **MERCY** will be shut against you. Such whom Christ calls to, and they will not hear him—they shall call to him, but Christ will not hear them. "I called you so often, but you wouldn't come. I reached out to you, but you paid no attention. You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered. So I will laugh when you are in trouble! I will mock you when disaster overtakes you—when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone, and anguish and distress overwhelm you. When they cry for help, I will not answer. Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me. For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the Lord. They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them." <u>Proverbs 1:24-30</u>

"My eye shall not spare, neither shall I have pity; and though they cry in my ears with a loud voice—yet will I not hear them!" <u>Ezekiel 8:18</u>. "Therefore, this is what the Lord says: I am going to bring calamity upon them, and they will not escape. Though they beg for mercy, I will not listen to their cries!" Jeremiah 11:11. "Then they will cry out to the Lord, but he will not answer them. At that time he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done!" Micah 3:4. Thus, my beloved, you see how the door of God's mercy will be shut against you—if you shut the door of your hearts against Christ.

Secondly, the door of **ACCEPTANCE** will be shut against you, if you shut the door of your hearts against Christ, "So this is what the Lord says to his people: You love to wander far from me and do not restrain yourselves. Therefore, I will no longer accept you as my people. Now I will remember all your wickedness and will punish you for your sins!" <u>Jeremiah 14:10</u>, <u>12</u>. "There is no use offering me sweet frankincense from Sheba. Keep your fragrant calamus imported from distant lands! I will not accept your burnt offerings. Your sacrifices have no pleasing aroma for me!" <u>Jeremiah 6:20</u>, "I hate all your show and pretense— the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies. I will not accept your burnt offerings and grain offerings. I won't even notice all your choice peace offerings. Away with your noisy hymns of praise! I will not listen to the music of your harps!" <u>Amos 5:21-23</u>. Oh! beloved, those who will not accept of Christ—shall not be accepted in Christ, "who has made us accepted in the beloved," <u>Ephesians 1:6</u>.

Thirdly, the door of **SALVATION** will be shut against you—if you shut the door of your hearts against Christ, "He who made you—will not save you; and he that formed you—will show you no favor." But as you have refused to open the door of your hearts to your hearts against Christ, "He who made you—will not save you; and he that formed you—will show you no favor." But as you have refused to open the door of your hearts to your hearts against Christ, "He who made you—will not save you; and he that formed you—will show you no favor." But as you have refused to open the door of your hearts to your hearts to your hearts against Christ, "He who made you—will not save you; and he that formed you—will show you no favor." But as you have refused to open the door of your hearts against Christ, "He who made you—will not save you; and he that formed you—will show you no favor." But as you have refused to open the door of your hearts against Christ, "He who made you—will not save you; and he that formed you—will show you no favor." But as you have refused to open the door of your hearts against Christ, "He who made you—will save the master of the house has locked the door, it will be too late. You will stand outside knocking and pleading, `Lord, open the door for us!' But he will reply, `I don't know you or where you come from.' Then you will say, `But we ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' And he will reply, `I tell you, I don't know you or where you come from.' Get away from me, all you who do evil!' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for you will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God—but you will be thrown out!" Luke 13:25-28.

Consider what has been said, and may the Lord give you understanding in all these things.