

## Christ Knocking at the Door of Sinner's Hearts

[John Flavel](#), 1628-1691

### SERMON I

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." [Revelation 3:20](#)

THIS day has our compassionate Redeemer opened unto us a door of liberty; liberty to us to preach, and liberty for you to hear the glad tidings of the gospel. This is a day few looked for: how often have I said in the years that are past, God has no more work for me to do, and I shall have no more strength and opportunities to work for God? And how often have you said in your hearts, we have sinned our ministers out of their pulpits, and our eyes shall no more behold those our teachers? But lo, beyond the thoughts of most hearts, a wide and (I hope) an effectual door is now opened in the midst of us. Oh! that it might be to us as the valley of Achor was to Israel, for a door of hope, [Hosea 2:15](#), that is not only making the troubles they meet with in that valley an inlet to their mercies, as ours have been to us; but giving them that valley pignoris nomine, as a pledge of greater mercies intended for them. Upon the first appearance of this mercy, my next thoughts were how to make the most fruitful improvement of it among you, lest we should twice stumble at the same stone, and sin ourselves back again into our old bondage.

In the contemplation of this matter, the Lord directed me to this scripture, wherein the same hand that opened to you the door of liberty, knocks importunately at the doors of your hearts for entrance into them, for union and communion with them. It will be sad indeed if he who has let you into all these mercies, should himself be shut out of your hearts: but if the Lord should help you to open your hearts now to Christ, I doubt not but this door of liberty will be kept open to you, however many the adversaries be that envy it, and will do their utmost to shut it up, [Ezekiel 39:29](#). The mercies you enjoy this day, are the fruits of Christ's intercession with the Father for one trial more: if we bring forth fruit, well; if not, "the ax lies at the root of the tree." Under this consideration I desire to preach, and even so the Lord help you to hear what shall be spoken from this precious scripture, Behold, I stand at the door, and knock, etc.

These words are a branch of that excellent epistle dictated by Christ, and sent by his servant John to the church of Laodicea, the most formal, hypocritical, and degenerate of all the seven churches; yet the great Physician will try his skill upon them, both by the rebukes of the rod, verse 19 and by the persuasive power of the word; verse 20, Behold I stand at the door, and knock, etc.

This text is Christ's wooing voice, full of heavenly rhetoric to win and gain the hearts of sinners to himself; wherein we have these two general parts.

1. Christ's suit for a sinner's heart.
2. The powerful arguments enforcing his suit.

FIRST, Christ's suit for a sinner's heart, wherein we have (1.) The solemn preface, ushering it in, behold: (2.) The suit itself. The preface is exceeding solemn: for beside the common use of this word, behold, in other places, to excite attention, or exaggerate and put weight into an affirmation; it stands here, as a judicious expositor notes, as a term of notification or public record, wherein Christ takes witnesses of the most gracious offer he was now about to make to their souls, and will have it stand as a testimony for or against their souls to all eternity, to cut off all excuses and pretenses for time to come.

2. The suit itself, wherein we have,

1. The Suitor, Jesus Christ.

2. His posture and action; I stand at the door and knock.

3. The suit itself, which is for opening, if any man open.

1. The suitor, Christ himself, I stand; I that have a right of sovereignty over you; I that have shed my invaluable blood to purchase you, and might justly condemn you upon the first denial or demur: behold I stand: this is the suitor.

2. His posture and action, I stand at the door, and knock; the word is in the preter tense, I have stood, but being here joined with another verb of the present tense, it is fitly translated, I stand, yet so as that it notes a Continual action. I have stood, and do still stand with unwearied patience; I once stood personally and bodily among you in the days of my flesh, and I still stand spiritually and representatively in my ambassadors at the door, that is the mind and conscience, the faculties and powers which are introductive into the whole soul.

The word door is here properly put to signify those introductive faculties of the soul, which are of a like use to it, as the door is to the house. This is the Redeemer's posture, his action is knocking, that is his powerful essay and gracious attempts to open the heart to give him admission. The word knock signifies a strong and powerful knock; he stands patiently, and knocks powerfully by the word outwardly, by the convictions, motions, impulses, strivings, and instigations of his Spirit inwardly.

3. The design and end of the suit; it is for opening, that is consenting, receiving, embracing, and hearty accepting of him by faith. [Acts 16:14](#). The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that is persuaded her soul to believe; implying, that the heart by nature is strongly barred and locked up against Christ, and that nothing but a power from him can open it.

SECONDLY, The powerful arguments and motives used by Christ to obtain his suit, and get a grant from the sinner's heart; and they are drawn from two inestimable benefits accruing to the opening or believing soul, namely,

1. Union.

2. Communion with Christ.

1. Union; I will come in to him, that is, I will unite myself with the opening, believing soul; he shall be mystically one with me, and I with him.

2. Communion; I will sup with him, and he with me; that is, I will feast the believing soul with the delicacies of Heaven: such comforts, such joys, such pleasures, as none in the world but believers are capable of.

And, to set home all, these special benefits are proposed by Christ to all sorts of sinners, great and small, old and young; If any man hear my voice and open the door: So that no soul might be discouraged from believing, by the greatness or multitude of his sins, but the vilest of sinners may see free grace triumphing over all their unworthiness, upon their consent to take Christ according to the gracious offers of the gospel.

The words thus opened, afford many great and useful points of doctrine, comprehending in them the very sum and substance of the gospel. The first which arises from the solemn and remarkable preface, Behold, will be this,

DOCTRINE: 1. That every offer of Christ to the souls of sinners is recorded and witnessed with respect to the day of account and reckoning.

Here we shall inquire into three things.

1. Who are God's witnesses to all gospel offers.
2. What are the object-matters they witness to.
3. Why God records every offer of Christ, and takes a witness thereof.

The first Use

I. Who are God's witnesses to all the offers and offers made of Christ by the gospel, and they will be found to be more than a strict legal number; for,

1. His ministers, by whom he makes them, are all witnesses as well as officers of Christ to the people. [Acts 26:16](#). "I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness." Here you see ministers have a double office, to propose and offer Christ, and then to bear witness for or against those to whom he is thus offered: they are expressly called God's witnesses, [Revelation 11:6, 7](#). Their labors witness, their sufferings witness, their solemn appeals to God witness; yes, the very dust of their feet shaken off against the refusers of Christ, turns to a testimony against them, [Mark 6:11](#). Every groan and sigh, every drop of sweat, much more of blood, are placed in God's book of marginal notes by all their sermons and prayers, and will be produced and read in the great day against all the refusers and despisers of Christ.

2. The gospel itself, which is preached to you, is a testimony or witness for God, or against every one that hears it; [John 12:48](#). "He who rejects me, and receives not my words, has one that judges him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." And this is the sense of Christ's word, [Matthew 24:14](#). "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come." Ah, Lord, what a solemn record is here! every sermon you hear, yes, every reproof, persuasion, and conviction, is a

witness for God to cast and condemn every soul in judgment that complies not immediately with the calls of the gospel: so many sermons, so many witnesses.

3. Every man's conscience is a witness for God, that he has a fair offer once made him: the very consciences of the Heathens that never saw a Bible, that had no other preachers but the sun, moon, and stars, and other works of nature; yet of them the apostle says, [Romans 2:15](#). "That they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing them witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Certainly if such vigor and activity was put into the consciences of Heathens, who could only read the will of God by the dim moon-light of natural reason; how much more vigorous and active will conscience be in its accusing office against all that live under the bright beams of gospel-light? Their consciences will be swift witnesses, and will ring sad peals in their ears another day, [Ezekiel 2:5](#). "You shall know that there has been a prophet among you." This single witness is instead of a thousand witnesses for God.

4. The examples of all those that do believe and obey the gospel, are so many witnesses for God against the despisers and neglecters of the great salvation. Every mourning, trembling soul among you is a witness against all the dead-hearted, unbelieving, disobedient ones, that sit with them under the same ordinances. Hence it is said, [1 Corinthians 6:2](#). "Know you not that the saints shall judge the world?" They shall be assessors with Christ in the great day, and condemn the world for their examples, as Noah did the old world. Thus John, [Matthew 21:32](#) came unto you in the way of righteousness, and you believed him not, but the publicans and harlots believed him; and you when you had seen it, repented not afterwards that you might believe him, What shift do you make to quiet your consciences, and stifle your convictions, when you saw publicans, the worst of men, and harlots, the worst of women, repenting, believing, and hungering after Christ! their examples shall be your judges. These are God's witnesses.

II. Next let us consider what are the object matter unto which they give their testimony, and that will be found two-fold, according to the two-fold event the gospel has upon them that hear it: of both which the apostle gives this account, [2 Corinthians 2:16](#). "Unto some we are the savor of life unto life, and unto others the savor of death unto death." Accordingly a double record is made.

1. Of the obedience and faith of some, which record will be produced to their joy and comfort in the day of the Lord; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe; because our testimony among you was believed in that day. Ministers are instruments of espousing souls to Christ, and witnesses to those espousals and contracts made between him and them, [2 Corinthians 11:2](#). Both these offices are exceeding grateful and pleasant to every faithful minister.

2. A record is made, and witness taken of all the refusals, disobedience and slights of Christ by others. Thus Moses will be the accuser of the Jews, [John 5:45](#). "Do not think I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust." This is the saddest part of a minister's work; the fore-thoughts of it are more afflictive than all our labors and sufferings. There is a three-fold record made in this case: (1.) Of the time men have enjoyed

under the means of salvation; how many years they have sat barren and dead-hearted under the labors of God's faithful ministers; [Luke 13:7](#). "Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none." Behold, the same term of notification with that in the text, applied to the time of God's patience towards them. And again, [Jeremiah 25:3](#). "From the thirteenth year of Josiah, even unto this day, (that is, the three and twentieth year) the word of the Lord has come unto me, and I have spoken unto you rising early, and speaking, but you have not hearkened." O consider, all the years and days you have spent under the gospel, are upon your doomsday book. (2.) Records are also made of all the instruments that ever God employed for the conversion and salvation of your souls. So many ministers, whether fixed or transient, as have spent their labors upon you, are upon the book of your account. [Jeremiah 25:4](#). "The Lord has sent unto you all his servants, the prophets, rising early, and sending them; but you have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear." They have wasted their lungs, dropped their compassionate tears, and burnt down one after another, as candles to direct you to Christ and salvation, but all in vain. (3.) Every call, persuasion and argument, used by them to espouse you to Christ, is likewise upon the book of account. [Proverbs 1:24, 25](#). "Because I have called and you refused, "I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but you have set at nothing all my counsels, and would none of my reproof." These calls and counsels are of too great value with God (though of none with you) to be lost and left out of your account.

III. We shall, in the last place, inquire into the grounds and reasons of these judicial procedures of God, why he will have every man's obedience and disobedience registered, and witnessed for or against him, under gospel administrations; and there are two weighty reasons thereof.

1. That wherever the end of the gospel is attained in the conversion of any soul, that soul, and all that were instrumentally employed about the salvation of it, may have the proper reward and comfort in the great day, [2 Corinthians 1:14](#). "As also you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as you also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." This will be matter of joy unspeakable, both to you that shall receive, and to them that shall give such a comfortable testimony for you. O the joyful congratulations that will be in that day between laborious, faithful ministers, and their believing, obedient hearers! Lord, this was the blessed instrument of my happy illumination and conversion; though I might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers; for by the blessing of your Spirit upon this man's ministry, my soul was begotten to Christ. And, on the other side; Lord, these are the souls for whom I travailed, as in birth, until Christ was formed in them. It is a glorious thing to say, as the prophet, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."

Nay, those that were but collaterally useful to help on the work of God begun by others, must not lose their reward in that day. [John 4:36](#). "And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together."

2. Records are now made, and witnesses taken, that thereby the judicial sentence of Jesus Christ in the last day may be made clear and perspicuous to all the world; that every mouth may be stopped, and no plea, or apology left in the mouth of any condemned sinner. For Christ, in that day comes, [Jude 15](#) to convince all that are ungodly; to convince by demonstration, that all that are Christless now, may be found speechless then, [Matthew 22:12](#). Hence it is said, [Psalm](#)

[1:5](#) That the wicked shall not stand, or rise up in judgment. And no wonder, when so many full testimonies, and unexceptionable witnesses shall come point blank against them, the ministers that preached, the word they preached, their own consciences, and the examples of all believers will be produced against them.

## INFERENCES

1st Inference. The undoubted certainty of a day of judgment is hence evinced. To what purpose else are records made, and witnesses taken, but with respect to an audit-day? This is a truth sealed upon the conscience of the very heathens, [Romans 2:15](#) Their consciences bear witness. But in vain are all these records made, unless there be a day to produce and plead them; and of that day the prophet Daniel speaks, [Daniel 7:10](#). "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." And again, [Revelation 20:12](#). "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the book, according to their works."

Believe it, friends, these are no devised fables, but most awful and infallible truths; according to the saving effects the gospel now has, it will be a time of refreshing to our souls, [Acts 3:19](#) to all others a day of terror, wrath, and amazement, [2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8](#). "The day in which the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2d Inference What a spur is here to ministerial diligence and faithfulness? It is an awful work that is under our hands; the effects of the gospel which we preach, will be the savor of life or death to them that hear us. If the Lord prosper it in our hands, we shall be witnesses for you, it will be an addition to our glory in Heaven; [Daniel 12:3](#). "They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever." But if we be ignorant, lazy, men-pleasers, our people will come in as swift witnesses against us, and their blood will be required at our hands; it will be an intolerable aggravation to our misery in Hell, to have any that sat under our ministry thus upbraiding us! O cruel man! you saw my soul in danger, and never deals faithfully and plainly with me; the same time and breath that was spent in idle and worldly discourse, might have been instrumental to have saved me from this place of torment. Let ministers consider themselves as witnesses for God, and their people as witnesses for or against them; and under that consideration, so study, preach and pray, that they may with Paul take God to record, that they are free from the blood of all men; no sort of men upon earth have more spurs to diligence and faithfulness than we have.

3d Inference What a pill is this to purge formality out of all that hear us; Every Sabbath, every sermon, is recorded in Heaven for or against your souls; at whatever rate you attend to the word, all that you hear is set down in the book of your account: think not you shall return as you came, the word will have its effect and end, it shall not return in vain, [Isaiah 55:11](#) but shall accomplish the end for which it is sent. The decrees of Heaven are executed by the gospel, some souls shall be quickened, and others shall be slain by the word of God's mouth. The gospel is a river of the waters of life, which quickens and refreshes every thing that lives; but the miry and marshy places shall not be healed. How weighty therefore is that caution of our Lord, [Luke 8:18](#). Take



heed how you hear! When you come under an ordinance, you are sowing seed for eternity, which will spring up in the world to come. Preaching and hearing may be considered two ways, physically or morally; in the former respect, these acts are quickly over and pass away. I shall by and by have done preaching, and you hearing; this sermon will be ended in a little time, but the consequences thereof will abide forever! Therefore, for the Lord's sake, away with formality; no more drowsy eyes or wandering thoughts. Oh, when you come to attend upon the ministry of the gospel, that such thoughts as these might prepare your minds! The word I am going to hear will quicken or kill, save or damn my soul; if I sit dead under it, and return barren from it, I shall wish one day that I had never seen the face of that minister, nor heard his voice that preached it.

4th Inference What a dreadful condition are all those in that are real and professed enemies to the gospel, and them that preach it! That instead of embracing and obeying the message of the gospel, reject and despise it; instead of opening their hearts to receive it, open their blasphemous mouths against it, to deride it, and hiss it (if it were possible) out of the world. Ah! what a book of remembrance is written for such men? I fear there never was an age, since Christianity blessed this nation, that was more deeply drenched in the guilt of this sin than the present age. How are the messengers of the gospel slighted and rejected? What have we done to deserve it? Is not our case this day much like that of the prophet? "Shall evil be recompensed for good? For they have dug a pit for my soul; remember that I stood before you to speak good for them, and to turn away your wrath from them," [Jeremiah 18:20](#). What brutish madness has possessed the souls of these men? But alas! it is not so much they, as Satan acting in them; he is a jealous prince, the gospel alarms him, his subjects are in danger of revolting from him: no wonder therefore he makes an outcry at the liberty of the gospel, as is used to be made when an enemy invades a kingdom. In this case Christ directs his ministers to shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against them, [Mark 6:11](#). The signification and meaning whereof is this, that look as you shake off the dust of your feet, even so Jesus Christ will shake of those men that despise the gospel, and abuse his messengers.

5th Inference Hence it likewise follows, That the case of the Pagan world will be easier in the day of judgment, than theirs that live and die unregenerate and disobedient under the gospel of Christ. There are more witnesses prepared, and records filled against the day of your account, than can possibly be against them; they have abused but one talent, the light of nature; but we thousands, even as many thousands as we have had opportunities and calls under the gospel. Upon this account Christ says, "Whoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, shake off the dust of your feet. Truly, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city," [Matthew 10:14, 15](#).

Ah, what a fearful aggravation does it put upon our sin and misery, that we are not only accountable for all the light we had, but for all that we might have had in the gospel-day! Capernaum was lifted up to Heaven in the enjoyment of means and precious opportunities, [Matthew 11:23](#) and had an answerable downfall into the depth of misery from that height of mercy; as the higher any one is lifted up upon a rack, the more terrible is the jerk he receives by the fall.

6th Inference Lastly, Hence it appears, That the day of judgment must certainly take up a vast space of time: For if God will bring everything into judgment, [Ecclesiastes 12:14](#) not only sinful actions, but words, [Matthew 12:36](#) not only words, but heart-secrets, [Romans 2:16](#). If all the records and registers now made, shall then be opened and read; all the witnesses for or against every man examined and heard; judge then what a vast space of time will that great day take up. Some divines are of opinion it may last as long as the world has lasted; but this is sure, things will not be huddled up, nor shuffled over in haste: you have taken your time for sinning, and God will take his time for judging.

Consider the multitudes, multitudes without number, that are to be judged in that day, even all the posterity of Adam, which are as the sand upon the sea-shore; that not only so many persons, but all that they have done, must come into judgment, even the very thoughts of their hearts, which never came to the knowledge of men: their consciences to be interrogated, all other witnesses fully heard and examined: how great a day must this day of the Lord then be?

#### The second Use

But the main use of this point will be for exhortation, that seeing all the offers of Christ are recorded, and witnessed, with respect to a day of account, every one of you would therefore immediately embrace the present gracious tender of Christ in the gospel, as ever you expect to be acquitted and cleared in that great day: take heed of denials, nay of delays and demurs. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" [Hebrews 2:2, 3](#). The question is put, but no answer made; How shall we escape? The wisdom of men and angels cannot tell how. To enforce this exhortation, I shall present you with ten weighty considerations upon the matter, which the Lord follow home, by the blessing of his spirit upon all your hearts.

1. Consider how invaluable a mercy it is that you are yet within the reach of offered grace. The mercies that stand in offer before you this day, were never set before the angels that fell; no mediator was ever appointed for them. O astonishing mercy! that those vessels of gold should be cast into everlasting fire, and such clay vessels as we are, thus put into a capacity of greater happiness than ever they fell from; nay, the mercy that stands before you is not only denied to the angels that fell, but to the greatest part of your fellow-creatures of the same rank and dignity with you: "He shows his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel, he has not dealt so with any other nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them: Praise you the Lord," [Psalm 147:19, 20](#). A mercy deservedly celebrated with a joyful Hallelujah. What vast tracts are there in the habitable world, where the name of Christ is unknown! it is your special mercy to be born in a land of bibles and ministers, where it is as difficult for you to avoid and shun the light, as it is for others to behold and enjoy it.

2. Consider the nature, weight, and worth of the mercies which are this day freely offered you. Certainly they are mercies of the first rank, the most ponderous, precious, and necessary among all the mercies of God. Christ the first-born of mercies, and in him pardon, peace, and eternal salvation are set before you: it were astonishing to see a starving man refusing offered bread, or a



condemned man a gracious pardon. Lord! what a composition of sloth and stupidity are we, that we should need so many entreaties to be happy.

3. Consider who it is that makes these gracious offers of pardon, peace, and salvation, to you; even that God whom you have so deeply wronged, whose laws you have violated, whose mercies you have spurned, and whose wrath you have justly incensed. His patience groans under the burden of your daily provocations; he loses nothing if you be damned, and receives no benefit if you be saved; yet the first motions of mercy and salvation to you freely arise out of his grace and good pleasure. God entreats you to be reconciled, [2 Corinthians 5:20](#). The blessed Lord Jesus, whose blood your sins have shed, now freely offers that blood for your reconciliation, justification, and salvation, if you will but sincerely accept him before it be too late.

4. Reflect seriously upon your own vileness, to whom such gracious offers of peace and mercy are made. Your sins have set you at as great a distance from the hopes and expectations of pardon, as any sinner in the world. Consider man, what you have been, what you have done, and what vast heaps of guilt you have contracted by a life of sin: and yet that unto you pardon and peace should be offered in Christ after such a life of rebellion, how astonishing is the mercy! the Lord is contented to pass by all your former rebellions, your deep-dyed transgressions, and to sign an act of oblivion for all that is past, if now at last your heart relent for sin, and your will bow in obedience to the great commands and calls of the gospel, [Isaiah 55:2](#), etc. and 1:18.

5. Consider how many offers of mercy you have already refused, and that every refusal is recorded against you: how long have you tried, and even tried the patience of God already, and that this may be the last overture of grace that ever God will make to your souls. Certainly there is an offer that will be the last offer, a striving of the Spirit which will be his last striving; and after that no more offers without you, no more motions or strivings within you for evermore. The treaty is then ended, and your last neglect or rejection of Christ recorded against the day of your account; and what if this should prove to be that last tender of grace which must conclude the treaty between Christ and you! What undone wretches must you then be, with whom so gracious a treaty breaks off upon such dreadful terms.

6. Consider well the reasonable, mild, and gracious nature of the gospel-terms, on which life and pardon are offered to you, [Acts 20:21](#). The gospel requires nothing of you but repentance and faith. Can you think it hard when a prince pardons a rebel, to require him to fall upon his knees, and stretch forth a willing and thankful hand to receive his pardon? Your repentance and faith are much of the same nature. Here is no legal satisfaction required at your hands, no reparation of the injured law by your doings or sufferings, but a hearty sorrow for sins committed, sincere purposes and endeavors after new obedience, and a hearty, thankful acceptance of Christ your Savior; and for your encouragement herein, his Spirit stands ready to furnish you with powers and abilities; "Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," [Proverbs 1:23](#). And [Isaiah 26:12](#). "Lord, you have wrought all our works in us."

7. Again, Consider how your way to Christ, by repentance and faith, is beaten before you, by thousands of sinners for your encouragement. You are not the first that ever adventured your

souls in this path multitudes are gone before you, and that under as much guilt, fear, and discouragement as you that come after can pretend unto; and not a man among them repulsed or discouraged: here they have found rest and peace to their weary souls, [Hebrews 4:3](#). [Acts 13:39](#). Here the greatest of sinners have been set forth for an example to you that should afterwards believe on his name, [1 Timothy 1:16](#). You see if you will not, others will joyfully accept the offers of Christ; what discouragements have you that they had not? Or what greater encouragements had they which God has not given you this day? therefore they shall be your judges.

8. Consider the great hazard of these precious seasons you now enjoy. Opportunity is the golden spot of time, but it is tempus labile, a very slippery and uncertain thing: great and manifold are the hazards and contingencies attending it. Your life is immediately uncertain, your breath continually going in your nostrils; and that which is every moment going, will be gone at last. The gospel is as uncertain as your life; God has made no such settlement of it, but that he may at pleasure remove it, and will certainly do so if we thus trifle under it; it is but a candlestick, though a golden one, [Revelation 2:5](#) and that you all know is a moveable thing; and not only your life, and the means of your eternal life, I mean the gospel, are uncertain things; but even the motions and strivings of the Spirit with your souls are as uncertain as either. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," [Philippians 2:12](#), [13](#). That God now works with you is matter of great encouragement to your work: but that he works at his own pleasure, as a free arbitrary agent, who can cease when he pleases, and never give but one knock at your hearts more, should make you work with fear and trembling.

9. Think what a fearful aggravation it will be both of your sin and misery, to perish in the sight and presence of an offered remedy; to sink into Hell between the out-stretched arms of a compassionate Redeemer, that would have gathered you, but you would not.

Heathens, yes devils will upbraid you in Hell for such unaccountable folly and desperate madness; heathens will say, Alas, we had but the dim moon-light of nature, which did indeed discover sin, but not Christ the remedy. Ah, had your preachers and your bibles been sent among us, how gladly would we have embraced them! surely says God to Ezekiel, "had I sent you to them, they would have hearkened unto you," [Ezekiel 3:5](#), [6](#). [Matthew 11:21](#). The very devils will upbraid you; O if God had sent a Mediator in our nature, we had never rejected him as you have done; but he took not on him the nature of angels.

10. Lastly, How clear as well as sure, will your condemnation be in the great day, against whom such a cloud of witnesses will appear! O how manifest will the righteousness of God be! men and angels shall applaud the sentence, and your own consciences shall acknowledge the equity of it. You that are Christless now, will be speechless then, [Matthew 22:11](#). "Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men," 2 Corinthians 5:11 as one that trembles to think of being summoned as a witness against any of your souls. O that I might be your rejoicing, and you mine in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.