

A Sure Guide to Heaven

Originally entitled:
(An Alarm to the Unconverted)

by
Joseph Alleine

Highlighted for teaching purposes...

by
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BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION:

Joseph Alleine was a Puritan pastor baptized in 1634 in Wiltshire, England.

He studied at the feet of John Owen & Thomas Goodwin in Oxford...

He was known for his warm disposition & passionately pious living

He was imprisoned for the gospel multiple times...

Joseph Alleine is recognized as a pillar & true model of "Puritan evangelism"

"More than one great evangelist has had his views moulded by the following pages. George Whitefield tells us Alleine's "Alarm" 'much benefited' him. Spurgeon records how when brought under the conviction of sin, it was to this old book that he turned..."
(p.11)

INTRODUCTION:

Q: Slay the sin, and save the soul of the sinner that reads these pages.

Without holiness you shall never see God. (Heb. 12:14)

Q: ***I am not baiting my hook with rhetoric, nor fishing for your applause, but for your souls. My work is not to please you but to save you; nor is my business with your fancies, but with your hearts. If I have not your hearts, I have nothing. If I were to please your ears, I would sing another song. If I were to preach myself, I would steer another course. I could then tell you a smoother tale I would make pillows for you and speak peace... But how much better are the wounds of a friend, than the fair speeches of the harlot, who flatters with her lips, till the dart strike through the liver..."***

Q: I know that if we succeed not with you, you are lost... you will perish forever. No conversion – no salvation! I must get your good will, or leave you miserable.

... I will show what conversion is... and is not:

I must show the ***necessity of conversion***

I must show the ***marks of conversion***

I will show the ***misery of the unconverted***

I will show the ***means of conversion***

I will close with the ***motives of conversion***

Q: ***The devil had made many counterfeits of conversion...***

I shall show you the nature of conversion, both what it is & what it is not.

1. Conversion is NOT the taking upon us the profession of Christianity

Q: ***Christianity is more than a name.***

See: 2 Tim. 2:19; Titus 1:16; Matt. 7:21-23

2. Conversion is not putting on the badge of Christ in baptism.

Q: ***Whatever men do, or pretend to, receive in baptism, if they are found afterwards to be grossly ignorant, or profane... without the power of godliness, they (still need to be) born again (see John 3:7), or else be shut out of the kingdom of God. They must have more to plead for themselves than their baptismal regeneration.***

Q: If you are not a holy, strict, and self-denying Christian, you cannot be saved.

See: Heb. 12:14; Matt. 15:14

3. Conversion does not lie in moral righteousness

4. Conversion does not exist in external conforming to rules of piety

Q: Men may have a form of godliness without the power.

See: **2 Tim. 3:5**

Q: Men may pray long (Matt.23:14), and fast often (Luke 18:12), and hear gladly (Mark 6:20), and be very active in service to God (Isa. 1:11), and yet be strangers to conversion.

5. Conversion is not the mere chaining up of corruptions by education, human laws, or the force of affliction.

Q: ***It is too common & easy to mistake education for grace.***

6. Conversion does not consist in illumination or conviction or in a superficial change or partial reformation.

Q: *It is one thing to have sin alarmed by convictions, and another to have it crucified by converting grace. Many, because they have been troubled in conscience for their sins, think well of their case, miserably mistaking conviction for conversion.*

Q: *There is a vast difference between being sanctified and civilized.*

Q: *While conscience holds the whip over them, many will pray, hear, read, and give up their delightful sins; but no sooner is the lion asleep than they are at their sins again. Who was more religious than the Jews when God's hand was upon them? Yet no sooner was the affliction over, than they forgot God (again).*

Q: *A man may pass thru various transmutations, from ignorance to knowledge, from profanity to civility, then to a form of religion, and all this time he is still carnal and unregenerate, his nature remains unchanged.*

READ:

2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you— unless, of course, you fail the test?

Q: *Study your own hearts; do not rest till God has made thorough work with you; for you must be new men, or else you are lost men.*

Chapter Two: THE NATURE OF CONVERSION

Q: I now guide you into the haven of truth. (2 Tim. 3:16)

Q: ***Conversion lies in the thorough change both of the heart & the life.***

1. The Author of conversion is the Spirit of God.

See 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3; Acts 5:31; John 3:5-6, etc.)

Q: ***So then, conversion is a work above men's power.***

2. The efficient cause of conversion is both internal & external.

a. The INTERNAL CAUSE is free GRACE ALONE!
See: Titus 3:5; James 1:18; Eph.1:4, etc.

Q: ***God finds nothing in a man to turn His heart, but enough to turn His stomach***

Q: You should be doing nothing but praising and admiring God where you are. How can you forget such grace, or pass it over with a slight mention? What but free grace could move God to love you?

b. The EXTERNAL CAUSE: is the merit & INTERCESSION of Jesus

Q: He intercedes for the elect that believe not (yet)
See: Eph. 1:3 & John 17:20

Q: ***The pains He suffered on the cross were our birth pains!***

Q: The foal does not more naturally run after its mother... than a believe to Jesus Christ.

3. The instrument of conversion is personal & real

a. The PERSONAL INSTRUMENT is the MINISTRY.

Q: ***Christ's ministries are sent to open men's eyes, and to turn them to God.***

See: 1 Cor. 4:15 & Acts 26:18

Q: ***Little do you know what you are doing when you persecute the messengers of the Lord. These it is whose business it is, under Christ, to save you.***

Q: ***These are the servants of the most high God that show unto you the way of salvation.***

See: Acts 16:17

Q: O sons of ingratitude, against whom do you sport yourselves? These are the instruments that God uses to convert and save sinners: and do you revile your physicians, and through your captains overboard?

b. The REAL INSTRUMENT is the WORD

Q: ***We are begotten by the Word of Truth***

- the Word... *converts the soul* (Ps. 19:7-8)
- *...makes us wise unto salvation* (2 Tim. 3:15)
- *...is the incorruptible seed by which we are born again* (1 Peter 1:23)
- *we are washed by the Word* (Eph. 5:26)
- *we are sanctified by the Word of truth* (Jn.17:17)
- *the Word generates faith & regenerates us* (Romans 10:17 & James 1:18)

Q: ***O Saints... how you should love the Word, for it is by this that you have been converted.***

Q: ***You that are unconverted, read the Word with diligence & flock to where it is powerfully preached.***

Q: ***Pray for the coming of the Spirit in the Word.***

Q: ***Come from your knees to the sermon, and come from the sermon to your knees. The sermon does not prosper (you) because it is not watered by prayers & tears, nor covered by meditation.***

4. The final cause or end of conversion is man's salvation & God's glory
See: 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 8:30; 1 Pt. 2:9; Col. 1:10

Q: ***Christian, do not forget the end of your calling. Let your light shine!***

See: Psalms 1:3 & Phil. 1:20)

5. The subject of conversion is the elect sinner

Q: Effectual calling runs parallel with eternal election
See: 2 Peter 1:10

READ: **Acts 3:19; Rom. 8:13; Acts 16:31...** *"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.' If you mortify the deeds of the body you shall live. "Believe and be saved."*

Q: ***What can be plainer? Do not stand still disputing about your election, but set to repenting & believing. Cry to God for converting grace.***

Q: They who will not feed on the plain food of the Word will be choked with the bones...

Q: ***Conversion affects the whole man... it is NOT the sowing on of a holiness patch.*** (2 Cor. 2:17)

- Conversion creates a new MIND:
 - God's glory now outweighs worldly interests
 - Turns men from darkness to light

- Conversion turns the bias of the will
 - Converts take more joy in serving the Lord

Q: Converts take not holiness as the stomach takes bad tasting medicine, which a man will take rather than die, but as the hungry man does his beloved food

- Conversion changes the direction of affections
 - *** ...from gold to grace
 - *** ...his joy comes from faithful obedience
 - *** ...his cares are now eternal vs. temporal
 - *** ...now he fears sinning above suffering
 - *** ... love is now love vs. lust & mere "like"

*** ...his sorrows are truly God-honoring now

*** ...he now hates sin vs. playing in it

Q: Caution... sudden & strong emotions of the affections are often found in hypocrites...

- Conversion of the BODILY MEMBERS

Q: These that before were the instruments of sin, are now become the holy utensils of Christ's living temple.

- Conversion changes the LIFE & BEHAVIOR

Q: ***Tho sin may still dwell in him (as a truly unwelcomed guest), yet it has no more dominion over him.***

- He now takes to heart both the smallest of sins and tiniest of duties.

Q: ***The sincere convert is not one man at church and another man at home. He is not a saint on his knees and a cheat on his job.***

Q: ***He does not pretend piety & neglect morality.***

Q: ***Here again you find the unsoundness of many who take themselves for good Christians. They are partial in the law (Malachi 2:9), and take up the cheap and easy duties of religion, but they do not go thru with the work. They are like a cake half-baked and half raw.***

6. The objects from which we turn in conversion are: Sin, Satan, the World, and our own Self-Righteousness

A. We turn from Sin:

Q: Sin is now the object of his indignation

Q: ***Sin now swells his sorrows.***

Q: ***When a man is savingly changed, he is deeply convinced not only of the danger but the defilement of sin.***

Q: The sound convert is heartily engaged against sin.

B. We turn from Satan:

Q: ***Satan may sometimes catch his foot in a trap, but he will no longer be a willing captive.***

Q: He keeps his eye upon his enemy...

C. We turn from the World:

Q: ***O miserable man, what a deformed monster has sin made you! God made you 'little lower than the angels'; sin has made you little better than the devils... but converting grace puts all in order again...***

Q: For the true convert... Nothing else can make him content. He has written vanity and vexation upon all his worldly enjoyments, and loss and dung upon all human excellencies.

CHECK YOUR HEART...

Q: ***Pause a little and look within... Are you concerned that you pretend to be for Christ, but does not the world sway you? Do you not take more real delight and concern in the world than in Him? Do you not find yourself more at ease when the world is in your mind and you are surrounded with carnal delights, than when retired to prayer & meditation or attending upon God's Word & worship?***

D. We turn from our own Self-Righteousness:

Q: His life is hid in Christ, as the root of a tree spreads in the earth for stability & nourishment

Q: ***The voice of the convert is, with the martyr, 'None but Christ!'***

7. The object to which we turn in conversion is God the Father, God the Son, & God the Holy Spirit:

Q: ***A man is never truly sanctified until his heart is truly set upon God above all things.***

CONSIDER:

Q: ***Have you taken God for your happiness? Where does the desire of your heart lie? What is the source of your greatest satisfaction?
Look around you... If God were to give you your choice of all things, what would you ask for?***

TURNING-POINT:

Q: ***Here is the turning point. An unsound convert never takes up his rest in God; but converting grace does the work, and so cure the fatal misery of the fall, by turning the heart from its idol to the living God!***

A. We turn to Christ

Q: ***All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert. He loves not only the wages but the work of Christ, not only the benefits but the burden of Christ.***

By contrast.... ***The unsound convert takes Christ in pieces... He is all for the salvation of Christ, but is not for sanctification.***

False converts... ***will not accept the salvation of Christ as He intends it... they want salvation from suffering, but they do NOT desire to be saved FROM sinning.***

B. We turn to the ways/commands of Christ

Q: ***The heart that once rejected God's ways, and could not endure the strictness... now falls in love with them, and chooses them as its rule & guide forevermore.***

(1) Christian JUDGMENT becomes aligned with God

(2) Christian DESIRES love what God loves...

(3) Christian WILL is predominately for the ways of Christ

Q: ***The laws of Christ are the Christian's love***

(4) Christian DIRECTION is guided by obedience

Q: ***Here the hypocrite's rottenness is easily discovered. He desires holiness... only as a bridge to heaven, and asks earnestly what is the LEAST that will serve his needs... But the sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake.***

HEART CHECK:

Q: ***Is holiness your pursuit? If not, you fall short of sound conversion.***

Q: Be informed, that straight is the gate and narrow the path that leads to life – and only FEW find it!

Chapter Three: THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION

Q: ***The conversion herein described is not a high attainment of some advanced Christians, but every soul that is saved undergoes this change.***

See the necessity of conversion in 5 things:

1. **Without conversion your being is in vain.**

Q: ***Unconverted man is like a choice instrument out of tune.***

Q: An unconverted man cannot work the work of God because:

- (1) He has no skill in it
- (2) He has no strength for it. (His heart is weak)
- (3) He has not mind/want to do it
- (4) He is not equipped to do it in mind or materials

2. **Without conversion all of creation is in vain.**

3. **Without conversion your religion is in vain.**

4. **Without true conversion your hopes are in vain.**

a. All hope for comfort here is in vain...

Q: ***The conscience cannot be truly pacified until soundly purified.*** (Hebrews 10:22)

WARNING:

Q: ***Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded than all the troubles in the world:***

- ***Peace WITH sin***
- &
- ***Peace IN sin***

b. All hope of salvation hereafter is in vain...

Q: The unsanctified have hope only in this life, and therefore are of all men, most miserable.

Q: ***To hope we shall be saved though continuing unconverted is blasphemous... it is to hope that we shall prove God to be a liar.***

OBJECTION:

Skeptic says: *But we hope in Jesus Christ.. we put our whole trust in God, and therefore do not doubt that we shall be saved.*

RESPONSE:

This is not hope in Christ, but hope against Christ

To hope to see the kingdom of God without being born again, to hope to find eternal life in the broad way, is to hope Christ will prove to be a false prophet.

5. **Without conversion all that Christ has done & suffered will be (as to you) in vain.**

Q: Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hope, that Christ died for sinners; but I must tell you... ***Christ never died to save impenitent & unconverted sinners.***

Q: ***To save men IN their sins would be against the Word of God.*** (Rom. 10:6-8; Matt.18:3; Jn. 3:7, 8:8; Lk. 13:3)

Q: To think Christ will ever save you in this unconverted condition is to make the Savior become a sinner.

Q: ***Will you yet rest in your won presumptuous confidence, directly against (and in conflict with) God's Word?***

Saving men IN their sins would:

- (1) Go against God's trustworthiness
- (2) Go against the word of Christ
- (3) Go against the oath of Christ
- (4) Go against the honor of our King (2 Tim. 2:19; Titus 2:12; 1 Jn.3:3)
- (5) Go against His role as Savior (Matthew 1:21)

Q: ***There is no remedy but that you turn or burn.***

*** Think of yourself as Lot & read Genesis 19:15-17

Chapter Four: The MARKS of the UNCONVERTED

Q: Few will, in words, deny the necessity of the new birth; but they have a self-deluding confidence.... Consequently, like Nathan to David, we are forced to get close and personal... and tell him (the unconverted): "You are the man!"

Q: ***Man's deceitful heart is such a matchless cheat, and self-delusion so reigning and so fatal a disease, that I do not know which is the greater, the difficulty or the necessity of the "undeceiving work" that I am now upon. Alas! For the unconverted, they must be undeceived, or they will be undone!***

CLASSIC EXAMPLE:

See the church at Laodicea (READ: Revelation 3:17)
Proverbs 30:12

"There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness."

God's Word clarifies, calls out, & describes those who cannot & will not see eternal life & the kingdom of God. Alleine identifies those biblical characters & characteristics... Initially referring to the overt, obvious lists as those who wear their disqualification "on

their foreheads.” He then moves to identify and describe those whose unconverted condition is hidden in their hearts. The author expounds Ephesians 5:5-6, Revelation 21:8, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 for starters....

Q: ***There are then these several classes that, past all dispute, are unconverted; they carry their marks in their foreheads.***

1. **The UNCLEAN:** (a.k.a. “the goats”)
2. **The COVETOUS** (a.k.a. “idolaters”)
3. **DRUNKARDS**
4. **LIARS** (the children of the father of lies... John 8:44)
5. **SWEARERS**
6. **BACK-BITERS** (a.k.a. gossips)
7. **THEIVES**
8. **Those who NEGLECT the WORSHIP of GOD**
9. **Those who KEEP BAD COMPANY**
10. **SCOFFERS** (a.k.a. skeptics, atheists, & the-like...)

Q: *I imagine many will begin to bless themselves, and think all is well, because they cannot be reproached with these grosser evils. But I must tell you that there is another sort of unsanctified persons, who carry their mark not in their foreheads but more secretly & covertly (in their hearts). These frequently deceive themselves & others, and pass for good Christians... Many pass undiscovered until death and judgment bring everything to light. These self-deceivers seem to come even to heaven’s gate with confidence... and yet are turned away at last (Matt. 7:21-23).*

Q: ***Multitudes perish by the hand of these 12 hidden sins***

1. GROSS WILLFUL IGNORANCE

Q: This sin kills in the dark while its victims think they have good hearts

Q: They see nothing & suspect not the hand that destroys them...

Q: You shall find, whatever excuses you make for ignorance, that it is a soul-ruining evil. (Isa. 27:11; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Cor. 4:3)

2. SECRET WITHOLDINGS FROM CHRIST (a.k.a. unsundered)

3. EMPTY RITUALISTIC RELIGION

4. SINFUL MOTIVES

5. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (a.k.a. "good person"/ "good enough")

6. BEGRUDGING "OBEDIENCE" (a.k.a. spiritual manipulation)

7. CALCULATED "OBEDIENCE" (a.k.a. hell-haters vs. God-lovers)

8. WORLD-LOVERS (a.k.a. hypocrites of the heart)

Q: This is sure evidence of an unsanctified heart.

1 John 2:15 = *"If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*

Q: *Such a power of deceit is there in this sin that many times, when everybody else can see the man's worldliness & covetousness, he cannot see it himself, but has so many excuses (and rationale)... for his eagerness for the world that he blinds his own eyes & perishes in self-deceit.*

Q: *How many professing Christians are there with whom the world has more of their hearts & affections than Christ, 'who mind earthly things'?*

Q: *Yet ask these people, and they will tell you confidently that they prize Christ above all...*

Q: *People may be, and often are, kept away from Christ as effectually by the inordinate love of lawful comforts, as by the most unlawful (and sin-stained) pursuits.*

*** Read Hebrews 12:1-2 slowly & prayerfully...

9. UNFORGIVENESS

10. PRIDE

Q: When men love the praise of men more than the praise of God

11. FLESHLY PLEASURE-LOVERS

Q: *A flesh-pleasing life cannot be pleasing to God.*

Q: *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh and are careful to keep it under as their enemy.*

(See: Gal. 5:24; 1 Cor. 9:25-27)

12: PRESUMPTIOUS CONFIDENCE (a.k.a. "luke-warmness")

Chapter FIVE: The MISERIES of the UNCONVERTED

Q: *I find it sad by experience that such a spirit of sloth and slumber possesses the unsanctified that, though they are convinced that they are yet unconverted, often they carelessly sit still. Through the love of sensual pleasure, or the hurry of*

worldly business, or the noise and clamor of earthly cares and lusts and affections, the voice of conscience is drowned, and people go no farther than some cold wishes and general purposes of repenting and amending.

It is therefore of high necessity that I not only convince them that they are unconverted, but that I also endeavor to bring them to a sense of the fearful misery of this state...

Q: What tongue can tell the heirs of hell sufficiently of their misery... This cannot fully be done.

- 1. The infinite God is engaged against you.**
- 2. The whole creation of God is against you.**
- 3. Satan has full power over you.**

Q: You are fast in the paw of that roaring lion who is greedy to devour you...

Q: This is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. (See: Ephesians 2:2)

- 4. The guilt of ALL your sins weighs... upon you.**
- 5. Your raging lusts miserably enslave you.**
- 6. The heated furnaces of hell haunt you.**
- 7. God's Law effectively curses you.**
- 8. Even the Gospel declares you damnable.**

Q: *Before you read these directions, I advise you, yea, I charge you before God & His holy angels, that you resolve to follow them; and call for His assistance...*

Q: Hear then O sinner, to be converted & saved, take this counsel:

1. Accept the IMPOSSIBILITY of “UNCONVERTED SALVATION”

2. Work & PRAY to SEE, SENSE, & FEEL YOUR SINS completely

Q: Only those who see themselves as dead will come to Christ for life.

3. Ask God to BREAK YOUR HEART over your LOSTNESS

Again... the church at Laodicea serves as a great “bad example” here...

4. Accept your TOTAL DEPRAVITY & inability to save yourself

5. Henceforth, RENOUNCE/GIVE-UP ALL YOUR SINS

Q: Your sins must die or you must die for them

Q: If you will part with your sins, God will give you His Christ!

6. Make CHRIST YOUR TREASURE & LAY DOWN your IDOLS

7. Accept (w/ life v. lips) CHRIST as BOTH LORD and SAVIOR

8. Present your LIFE a LIVING SACRIFICE to Him (Rom. 12:1-3)

9. Accept & Embrace the complete AUTHORITY of God’s WORD

10. **Commit to CONSISTENT INTIMACY with God**
11. **Live with BIBLICAL URGENCY** (for your own salvation & others)
12. **Live in & Love IMMERSION in God's WORD**
13. **Seek, Sense, & Surrender to the Holy Spirit's work in you**
14. **PRAY FERVENTLY... WITHOUT CEASING**
15. **Forsake EVIL COMPANY... & SINFUL ENVIRONMENTS**
 - Q: *You will never be turned from sin till you decline and forego the temptations of sin.*
 - Q: *If you will be nibbling at the bait, and playing at the brink, and tampering with the snare, your soul will surely be taken.*
16. **PRAY & FAST regularly... ask God to break & fill your heart**

Chapter Seven: The MOTIVES to CONVERSION

JESUS!

1. **The God that made you most graciously invites you**
2. **The doors of heaven are thrown open to you**
3. **God will give you unspeakable privileges in this life**

CONCLUSION:

Q: *And now, beloved, let me know your mind. What do you intend to do? will you go on and die, or will you turn & lay hold of eternal life?*

How long will you linger in Sodom?

Do you not see how Satan cheats & deceives you by tempting you to delay?

If you are not now resolved, while the Lord is touching & inviting you, much less likely are you to be later...

What if God should, this night, require your soul?