

MR. BAXTER'S PREFACE

TO

MR. ALLEINE'S ARLAM.

TO ALL THE IGNORANT, CARNAL, AND UNGODLY, WHO ARE
LOVERS OF PLEASURE MORE THAN GOD, AND SEEK THIS
WORLD MORE THAN THE LIFE EVERLASTING, AND
LIVE AFTER THE FLESH, AND NOT AFTER
THE SPIRIT.

He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear.

MISERABLE SOUL!

THERE is that life, and light, and love, in every true believer, but especially in every faithful minister of Christ, which engageth them to long and labour for your salvation. Life is communicative and active; it maketh us sensible that faith is not a fantasy, nor true religion a stage-play, nor our hopes of our eternal happiness a dream. And as we desire nothing more for ourselves, than to have more of the holy life which we have, alas! in so small a measure; so what is it that we should more desire for others? With the eye of an infallible (though too weak) faith we see the heaven which you neglect, and the blessed souls in glory with Christ, whose companions you might be for ever: we see the multitude of souls in hell, who came thither by the same way that you are going in; who are shut out of the glorious presence of God, and are now among these devils that deceived them, remembering that they had their good things here; (Luke xvi. 25;) and how they spent the day of their visitation, and how light they once set by God, by Christ, by heaven, by mercy, whilst mercy was an earnest solicitor for their hearts. And with our bodily eyes we see at the same time abundance of poor sinners living about us, as if

there were no God, no Christ, no heaven, no hell, no judgment, no, nor death, to be expected; as if a man were but a master-beast, to rule the rest, and feed upon them, and perish with them. And if it were your own case, to see what souls do in heaven and hell, and at once see how unbelievably, carelessly, and senselessly, most men live on earth, as if there were no such difference in another world, would it not seem a pitiful sight to you? If you had once seen the five brethren of Dives on earth, eating, drinking, laughing, and merry; clothed, and faring daily with the best, and at the same time seen their brother's soul in hell, begging in vain for a little ease, and wishing in vain that one from the dead might go warn his brethren, that they come not to the place of torment, would it not seem to you a pitiful sight? Would not pity have made you think, 'Is there no way to open these gentlemen's eyes? No way to acquaint them what is become of their brother, and where Lazarus is, and whither they themselves are going; no one driveth or forceth them to hell, and will they go thither of themselves? And is there no way to stop them, or keep them back?' Did you but see yourselves what we see by faith, (believing God) and at once behold the saints in heaven, the lost despairing souls in hell, and the senseless, sensual sinners on earth, that yet will lay none of this to heart, sure it would make you wonder at the stupidity of mankind. Would you not say, O what a deceiver is the devil, that can thus lead on souls to their own damnation! O what a cheater is this transitory world, that can make men so forget the world where they must live for ever! O what an enemy is this flesh, that thus draweth down men's souls from God! O what a besotting thing is sin, that turneth a reasonable soul into worse than a beast! What a bedlam is this wicked world, when thousands are so busily labouring to undo themselves and others, and gratifying the devil, against the God and Saviour who would give them everlasting blessed life!

And as we have such a sight as this by faith to make us pity you, so have we so much taste of the goodness of God, the sweetness of his ways, and the happiness of believers, as must needs make us wish that you had but once tried the same delights, which would turn the pleasures of sin into detestation. God knoweth that we desire nothing

more for ourselves than the perfection and eternity of this holiness and happiness which we believe and taste. And should we not desire the same for you?

And being thus moved with necessary pity, we ask of God what he would have us to do for your salvation. And he hath told us in Scripture, that the preaching of his Gospel, to acquaint you plainly with the truth, and earnestly and frequently entreat you to turn from the flesh and world, to God by Jesus Christ, is the means with which his grace is ready to concur for your salvation, when obstinate resistance causeth the Holy Spirit to forsake the sinner, and leave him to himself, to follow his own counsels, lusts, and wills.

In this hope we undertook the sacred ministry, and gave up ourselves to this great and most important work. In the great sense of our unworthiness, but yet in the sense of your souls' necessity, we were not such fools at our first setting out, as not to know it must be a life of labour, self-denial, and patience, and the devil would do his worst to hinder us, and that all sorts of his instruments would be ready to serve him against our labours, and against your souls. Christ our Captain saved by patient conquest, and so must we save ourselves and you: and so must you save yourselves under Christ, if ever you be saved. It was no strange thing to Paul that bonds and afflictions did every where abide him; nor did he account his life dear that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry committed to him by the Lord. (Acts xx. 23, 24.) It was no strange thing to him to be forbidden to preach to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, by such as were filling up the measure of their sins, and were under God's utmost wrath on earth. (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.) Devils and Pharisees, and most where they came, both high and low, were against the apostles' preaching of the Gospel, and yet they would not sacrilegiously and cruelly break their covenant with Christ, and perfidiously desert the souls of men, even as their Lord for the love of souls did call Peter Satan, that would have tempted him to save his life and flesh, instead of making it a sacrifice for our sins. (Matt. xvi. 33.)

What think you should move us to undertake a calling so contrary to our fleshly ease and interest? Do we not

know the way of ease and honour, of wealth and pleasure, as well as others? And have not we flesh as well as others? Could we not be content that the cup of reproach, and scorn, and slander, and poverty, and labours, might pass from us, if it were not for the will of God and your salvation? Why should we love to be the lowest, and trodden down by malignant pride, and counted as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, and represented to rulers whom we honour, as schismatics, disobedient, turbulent, unruly, by every church usurper whom we refuse to make a God of? Why give we not over this preaching of the Gospel at the will of Satan, that is for the everlasting suffering of your souls, under the pretence of making us suffer? Is not all this that you may be converted and saved? If we be herein besides ourselves, it is for you. Could the words of the ignorant or proud have persuaded us that either your wants and dangers are so inconsiderable, or your other supplies and helps sufficient, that our labours had been unnecessary to you, God knoweth we should have readily obeyed the silencing sort of pastors, and have betaken us to some other land, where our service had been more necessary. Let shame be the hypocrite's reward, who taketh not the saving of souls, and the pleasing of God, for a sufficient reward, without ecclesiastical dignities, preferments, or worldly wealth.

I have told you our motives; I have told you our business, and the terms of our undertaking. It is God and you, sinners, that next must tell us what our entertainment and success shall be. Shall it still be neglect, and unthankful contempt, and turning away your ears and heart, and saying, we have somewhat else to mind? Will you still be cheated by this deceiving world? and spend all your days in pampering your appetites, and providing for your flesh, that must lie rotting very shortly in a grave? Were you made for no better work than this? May not we bring you to some sober thoughts of your condition, not one hour seriously to think whither you are going? What! not one awakened look into the world where you must be for ever? Nor one heart-raising thought of everlasting glory? Not one heart-piercing thought of all your Saviour's love, nor one tear for all your sinful lives! O God forbid! Let not our labours be so de-

spised. Let not your God, your Saviour, and your souls, be set so light by. O let there be no profane person among you like Esau, who for one morsel sold his birthright.

Poor sinners! we talk not to you as on a stage in customary words, and because that talking thus was our trade. We are in as good earnest with you as if we saw you all murdering yourselves, and we are persuading you to save yourselves. Can any man be in jest with you who believeth God? Who by faith foreseeth whither you are going, and what you lose, and where the game of sin will end? It is little better to jest with you now in a pulpit or in private, than to stand jesting over your departing souls when at death you are breathing out your last.

Alas! with shame and grief we do confess, that we never speak to you of these things as their truth and weight deserve: not with the skill and wisdom, the affection and fervency, which beseemeth men engaged in the saving of poor souls. But yet you may perceive that we are in good sadness with you. (For God is so.) What else do we study for, labour for, suffer for, live for? Why else do we so much trouble ourselves, and trouble you with all this ado, and anger them that would have made us silent? For my own part, I will make my free confession to you to my shame, That I never grew cold, and dull, and pitiless to the souls of others, till I first grew too cold and careless of my own (unless when weakness or speculative studies cool me, which I must confess they often do). We never cease pitying you till we are growing too like you, and so have need of pity ourselves.

When, through the mercy of my Lord, the prospect of the world of souls, which I am going to, hath any powerful operation on myself, O then I could spend and be spent for others. No words are too earnest, no labour too great, no cost too dear; the frowns and wrath of malignant opposers of the preaching of Christ's Gospel are nothing to me. But when the world of spirits disappear, or my soul is clouded, and receiveth not the vital, illuminating influences of heaven, I grow cold, first to myself, then to others.

Come then, poor sinners, and help us, who are willing at any rate to be your helpers. As we first crave God's help, so we next crave yours. Help us, for we cannot save you against your wills, nor save you without your consent and

help ; God himself will not save you without you, and how shall we know that the devil is against us, and will do his worst to hinder us ; and so will all his ministers, by what names or titles soever dignified or distinguished ? But all this is nothing, if you will but take our parts yourselves ; I mean, if you will take Christ's part, and your own, and will not be against yourselves. Men and devils cannot either help or hinder us in saving you as you may do yourselves. If God and you be for us, who should be against us ?

And will you help us ? Give over striving against God and conscience ; give over fighting against Christ and his Spirit. Take part no more with the world and the flesh, which in your baptism you renounced. Set your hearts to the message which we bring you. Allow it your manlike, sober thoughts ; search the Scriptures, and see whether the things we speak be so or no. We offer you nothing but what we have resolvedly chosen ourselves, and that after the most serious deliberation that we can make. We have many a time looked round about us, to know what is the happiness of man ; and had we found better for ourselves, we had offered better to you. If the world would have served our turns, it should have served yours also, and we would not have troubled you with the talk of another world ; but it will not, I am sure it will not serve your turns to make you happy ; nor shall you long make that sorry, self-deceiving shift with it as now you do.

But if you will not think of these things, if you will not use the reason of men, alas, what can we do to save your souls ? O pity them, Lord, that they may pity themselves. Have mercy on them, that they may have some more mercy on themselves. Help them, that they may help themselves and us. If you still refuse, will not your loss be more than ours ? If we lose our labour (which to ourselves we shall not), if we lose our hopes of your salvation, what is this to your everlasting loss of salvation itself ? And what is our sufferings for your sakes, in comparison of your endless sufferings ?

But O, this is it that breaketh our hearts, that we leave you under more guilt than we found you ; and when we have laid out life and labour to save you, the impenitent souls must have their pains increased for their refusing of these calls. And that it will be part of your hell to think

for ever how madly you refused our counsel, and what pains, and cost, and patience, were used to have saved you, and all in vain. It will be so. It must needs be so. Christ saith, "It shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for the rejecters of his Gospel-calls. The nature of the thing, and the nature of justice, certainly tell you that it must be so.

O turn not our complaints to God against you! Turn us not from beseeching you to be reconciled to God, to tell him you will not be reconciled. Force us not to say, that we earnestly invited you to the heavenly feast, and you would not come. Force us not to hear this witness against you. Lord, we could have borne all our labour and sufferings for them much more easy, if they would but have yielded to thy grace. But it was they themselves that broke our hearts, that lost our labour, that made us preach and entreat in vain: it was easier to preach without maintenance than without success. It was they that were worse to us than all the persecutors in the world. How oft would we have gathered them, but they would not, but are un-gathered still? How many holy, faithful ministers have I known these eleven years last past who have lived in pining poverty and want, and hardly by charity got bread and clothing, and yet if they could but have truly said, 'Lord, the sermons which I preach privately, and in danger, have won many souls to thee,' it would have made all their burden easy. But I tell thee, senseless and impenitent sinner, thou that deniest God in thy heart, and thou that deniest them thy conversion, which was the end of all their labours, hast dealt much more cruelly with them than they that denied the Levites bread.

Poor sinners! I know that I am speaking all this to those that are dead in sin, but it is a death consisting with a natural life; which hath a capacity of spiritual life: or else I would no more speak to you than to a stone. And I know that you are blind in sin; but it is a blindness consisting with a reasonable faculty, which is capable of spiritual illumination: or else I would no more persuade you than I do a beast. And I know that you are in the fetters of your own lusts; your wills, your love, your hearts, are turned away from God, and strongly bewitched with the dreams and dalliances with the flesh and the world.

But your wills are not forced to this captivity. Surely those wills may be changed by God's grace, when you clearly see sufficient reason for to change them; else I would as soon preach (were I capable) to devils and damned souls. Your case is not yet desperate, O make it not desperate! There is just the same hope of your salvation as there is of your conversion and perseverance, and no more. Without it there is no hope. And with it you are safe, and have no cause to doubt and fear. Heaven may be yet yours, if you will. Nothing but your own wills, refusing Christ and a holy life, can keep you out. And shalt thou do it? Shall hell be your own choice? And will you, I say, will you not be saved?

O think better what you do! God's terms are reasonable: his word and ways are good and equal; Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, and his commandments are not grievous to any, but so far as blindness and a bad and backward heart doth make them so. You have no true reason to be unwilling; God and conscience shall one day tell you and all the world, that you have no reason for it. You may as wisely pretend reason to cut your throats, to torment yourselves, as plead reason against a true conversion unto God. Were I persuading you not to kill yourselves, I would make no question but you would be persuaded. And yet must I be hopeless when I persuade you from everlasting misery, and not to prefer the world and flesh before your Saviour and your God, and before a sure everlasting joy? God forbid.

Reader, I take it for a great mercy of God, that before my head lieth down in the dust, and I go to give up my account unto my Judge, I have this opportunity once more earnestly to bespeak thee for thy own salvation. I beg it of thee as one that must shortly be called away, and speak to thee no more till we come unto our endless state, that thou wouldst but sometimes retire into thyself, and use the reason of a man, and look before thee whither thou art going, and look behind thee how thou hast lived, and what thou hast been doing in the world till now; and look within thee, what a case thy soul is in, and whether it be ready to enter upon eternity; and look above thee, what a heaven of glory thou dost neglect, and what God thou hast to be thine everlasting friend or enemy, as thou chooseth, and as thou livest; and

that thou art always in his sight. Yea, and look below thee, and think where they are that died unconverted. And when thou hast soberly thought of all these things, then do as God and true reason shall direct thee. And is this an unreasonable request? I appeal to God, and to all wise men, and to thine own conscience, when it shall be awakened. If I speak against thee, or if all this be not for thy good, or if it be not true and sure, then regard not what I say. If I speak not that message which God hath commanded his ministers to speak, then let it be refused as contemptuously as thou wilt. But if I do but in Christ's name and stead beseech thee to be reconciled to God, (2 Cor. v. 19, 20,) refuse it at thy peril. And if God's beseeching thee shall not prevail against thy sloth, lust, thy appetite, against the desires of the flesh, against the dust and shadows of the world, remember it when with fruitless cries and horror thou art beseeching him too late.

I know, poor sinner, that flesh is brutish, and lust and appetite have no reason. But I know that thou hast reason thyself, which was given thee to overrule them; and that he that will not be a man, cannot be a saint, nor a happy man. I know that thou livest in a tempting and a wicked world, where things or persons will be daily hindering thee. But I know that this is no more to a man that by faith seeth heaven and hell before him, than a grain of sand is to a kingdom, or a blast of wind to one that is fighting or flying for his life. (Luke xii. 4.) O man! that thou didst but know the difference between that which the devil and sin will give thee, if thou wilt sell thy soul and heaven, and that which God hath promised and sworn to give thee, if thou wilt heartily give up thyself to him. I know thou mayest possibly fall into company (at least among some sots and drunkards) that will tell thee, all this is but troublesome preciseness, and making more ado than needs. But I know withal what that man deserveth who will believe a fool before his Maker. (For he can be no better than a miserable fool that will contradict and revile the word of God, even the word of grace, that would save men's souls.)

And, alas, it is possible thou mayest hear some of the tribe of Levi (or rather of Cain,) deriding this serious godliness as mere hypocrisy, and fanaticism, and self-conceitment: as if you must be no better than the devil's slaves,

lest you be proud in thinking that you are better than they; that is, you must go with them to hell, lest in heaven ye be proud hypocrites for thinking yourselves happier than they.

It may be they will tell you, that this talk of conversion is fitter for pagans and infidels to hear, than Christians and Protestants; because such men's big looks or coat may make the poison the more easily taken down. I will entreat thee but as before God to answer these following questions, or to get them answered, and then judge whether it be they or we that would deceive thee: and whether as men use to talk against learning that have none themselves, so such men prate not against conversion, and the Spirit of God, because they have no such thing themselves.

Quest. 1. I pray ask them whether it be a puritan or fanatic opinion that men must die? And what all the pomp, and wealth, and pleasure of the world will signify to a departing soul? Ask them, whether they will live on earth for ever, and their merry hours, and lordly looks, will have no end? And whether it be but the conceit of hypocrites and schismatics that their carcase must be rotting in a darksome grave.

Quest. 2. Ask them whether a man have not an immortal soul, and a longer life to live when this is ended? (Luke xii. 41.)

Quest. 3. Ask them whether reason require not every man to think more seriously of the place or state where he must be for ever, than of that where he must be for a little while, and from whence he is posting day and night? And whether it be not wiser to lay up our treasure where we must stay, than where we must not stay, but daily look to be called away, and never more to be seen on earth? (Matt. vi. 19, 20; 2 Cor. iv. 16—18; v. 1—3. 6—8.)

Quest. 4. Ask them whether God should not be loved with all our heart, and soul, and might? (Matt. xxii. 27.) And whether it be not the mark of an ungodly miscreant to be a lover of pleasure more than God. (2 Tim. iii. 4.) And a lover of this world above him? (1 John ii. 15, 16.) And whether we must not seek first God's kingdom, and his righteousness, (Matt. vi. 33,) and labour most for the meat that never perisheth. (John vi. 27.) And strive to enter in at the straight gate. (Luke xiii. 24.) And give all diligence to make our calling and election sure? (2 Peter i. 10.)

Quest. 5. Ask them whether without holiness any shall see God? (Heb. xii. 14; Matt. v. 8; Titus ii. 14.) And

whether the carnal mind is not enmity to God, and to be carnally minded is not death, and to be spiritually minded is life and peace? And whether if you live after the flesh you shall not die, and be condemned? And they shall live and be saved that walk after the Spirit? And whether any man be Christ's that hath not his Spirit? (Rom. viii. 1. 5—10.)

Quest. 6. Ask them whether any man have a treasure in heaven, whose heart is not there? (Matt. vi. 21.) And whether this be not the difference between the wicked and the godly, that the first do make their bellies their Gods, and mind earthly things, and are enemies to the cross of Christ, (though perhaps not his name;) and the latter have their conversation in heaven, and being risen with Christ, do seek and set their affections on things above, and not on things that are on earth, to which they are as dead, and their life is hid (or out of sight) with Christ in God, till Christ appear, and then they shall appear, (even openly to all the world,) with him in glory? (Phil. iii. 18—20; Col. iv. 1—5.)

Quest. 7. Ask them whether it be credible or suitable to God's word or working, that he that will not give them the fruits of the earth without their labour, nor feed and clothe them without themselves, will yet bring them to heaven without any care, desire or labour of their own? When he hath bid him care not for the one, and called for their greatest diligence for the other. (Matt. vi. 23. 25. 33; John vi. 27.) Yea, ask them whether these be not the two first articles of all faith and religion: 1. That God is: 2. That he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him? (Heb. xi. 6.)

Quest. 8. Ask them, yea, ask your eyes, your ears, your daily experience in the world, whether all or most that call themselves Christians, do in good sadness thus live to God in the Spirit, and mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, love him above all, and lay up treasure and heart in heaven; or rather, whether most be not lovers of the world, and lovers of pleasures more than God, and live not after the flesh, and mind not most the things of the flesh? I mention not now the drunkards, the fleshpleasing gentlemen, that live in pride, fulness, and idleness, and sport, and play away their precious time, nor the filthy fornicator, nor the merci-

less oppressors, nor the malignant haters of a godly life, nor the perjured and perfidious betrayers of men's souls and of the Gospel, or of their country's good, nor such other men of seared conscience whose misery none questioneth, but such as are blind and miserable. It is not those only I am speaking of, but the common, worldly, fleshly, and ungodly ones.

Quest. 9. Ask them whether the name of a Christian will save any of these ungodly persons? And whether God will like men the better for lying, and calling themselves Christians, when they are none indeed? And whether they dare preach to the people that a Christian drunkard, or a Christian fornicator, or oppressor, or a Christian worldling needeth no conversion.

Quest. 10. Ask them whether they say not themselves that hypocrisy is a great aggravation of all other sins? And whether God hath not made the hypocrites and unbelievers to be the standards in hell? (Luke xxv. 51.) And whether seeking to abuse God by a mock religion, do make such false Christians better than poor heathens and infidels, or much worse? And whether he be not an hypocrite that professeth to be a Christian, and a servant of God, when he is none, nor will be? And whether he that knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, shall not have the sorest stripes or punishment? (Luke x. 47.)

Quest. 11. Ask them whether in their baptism (which is their christenings as a covenant,) they did not renounce the flesh, the world and the devil, and vow and deliver up themselves to God their Father, their Saviour, and their Sanctifier? And whether all or most men perform this vow? And whether a perjured covenant-breaker against God, is fitter for salvation than one that never was baptized?

Quest. 12. Ask them whether the holy nature of God, be not so contrary to sin, as that it is blasphemy to say that he will bring to heaven, and into the bosom of his eternal delights, any unholy, unrenewed soul? (1 Pet. i. 15, 16.)

Quest. 13. Ask them why it was that Christ came into the world? Whether it was not to save his people from their sins; (Matt. i. 21;) and to destroy the works of the devil; (1 John iii. 8;) and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; (Titus ii. 11;) and to bring

him home straying souls to God ; (Luke xv ;) and to be the way to the Father ? (John xiii. 6.) And whether Christ will save that soul that is not converted by him, and saved from his sins ? Or whether it be the dead image only of a crucified Jesus that is all their Saviour while they will have no more of him ?

Quest. 14. Ask them why they believe, and were baptized into the Holy Ghost ? And whether a man can enter into the kingdom of heaven that is not born of the Spirit as well as of water ; (John iii. 3. 5, 6 ;) and that is not converted, and begins not the world as it were anew, in a teachable, tractable newness of life, like a little child ? (Matt. xviii. 3.) And whether it be not a certain truth, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.)

Quest. 15. Ask them why Christ gave the world so many warnings of the damnableness of the Pharisees' hypocrisy, if hypocritical Christians may be saved ? And what were these Pharisees ? They were the masters of the Jewish church : the rabbies that must have high places, high titles, and ceremonies, formal garments, and must be revered of all. That gave God lip-service without the heart, and made void his commands, and worshipped him in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and strictly titheth the mint and cummin, while lovely mercy and justice were past by ? Who worshipped God with an abundance of ceremonies, and build the tombs, and garnish the sepulchres of the saints, while they killed and persecuted those that did imitate them, and hated the living saints, and honoured the dead. They were the bitterest enemies and murderers of Christ on pretence that he was a blasphemer, and a seditious enemy to Cæsar and the common peace, and one that spake against the temple. They were the greatest enemies of the apostles, and silencers of those that preached Christ's Gospel, and persecuted them that called upon his name. And had these no need of conversion because they could say, God is our Father, (when the devil was their father, John viii. 44,) and they were Abraham's seed. And are not hypocritical Christians, drunken Christians, fornicating Christians, carnal, worldly, infidel Christians, (the contradiction is your own) persecuting Christians, false-named,

hypocritical Christians ; as bad, yea, worse, as they abuse a more excellent profession ? (Matt. xv. 7, 8 ; xxiii ; xxii. 18 ; vi. 2, &c. ; Luke xii. 1.)

Quest. 16. Doth not the holy state of heaven require holiness in all that shall possess it ? Can an unholy soul there see, and love, and praise, and delight, in God for ever, and in the holy society and employment of the saints ? (Rev. xxi. 27.) Is he not more like a Mahometan than a Christian, that looketh for a sensual and unholy heaven ?

Quest. 17. What is the difference between the church and the world ? Is not the church a holy society of regenerate souls ? Yea, the church visible is only those that in baptism vow holiness, and profess it. Look those hypocrites in the face, and see whether they do not blush when they repeat in the creed, ' I believe in the Holy Ghost. I believe in the holy catholic church, and the communion of saints,' who shall have the ' forgiveness sins, and life everlasting.' Ask them whether they mean holy adulterers, holy worldlings, holy perjured persons ? Ask them whether they mean a communion of saints in a tavern, in a playhouse, in a gaming-house, in a whorehouse, or a jesting, canting, stageplay communion ? If the church be holy, be holy if you will be of the church : if it be a communion of saints, make it not a communion of swine, and make not saints and their communion seem odious either for their infirmities, or their crossness to your carnal interests or conceits.

Quest. 18. Ask them whether there be a heaven and a hell or not ? If not, why are they pretended Christians ? If there be, will God send one man to heaven, and another to hell, to so vast, so amazing a difference of states, if there be no great difference between them here ? If holiness no more differenced Christians from others, than hearing a sermon, or saying over a prayer doth difference one from an infidel, where were the justice of God in saving some, and damning others ? And what were Christianity better than the religion of Antonine, Plato, Socrates, Seneca, Cicero, Plutarch, if not much worse ? Go into London streets, and when you have talked with living, prudent men ; then go to the painter's-shop and see a comely picture ; and to the looking-glass, and see the appearance of each passenger in a glass ; and to the perriwig-shops and set a wooden-head

with a perriwig upon the bulk, and you have seen something like the difference of a holy soul, and of a dead and dressed formal hypocrite. (Psal. xxiii. 27.)

Quest. 19. Ask them whether kings, and all men, make not a great difference between man and man; the loyal and perfidious, the obedient and disobedient? And whether they difference not themselves between a friend and foe; one that loveth them, and one that robbeth, beateth, or would kill them? And shall not the most holy God make more difference between the righteous and the wicked? (Mal. iii. 17, 18.)

Quest. 20. But if they are dead in every point, save carnal interests, ask them why they are preachers or priests? And if conversion and holiness be a needless thing, what life they themselves are of? And why the country must be troubled with them, and pay them tithes, and give them reverence? When these twenty questions are well answered, conclude that you may be saved without conversion.

But if, poor soul, thou art fully convinced, and askest what should I do to be converted? The Lord make thee willing, and save thee from hypocrisy, and I will quickly tell thee in a few words.

1. Give not over sober thinking of these things till thy heart be changed. (Psal. cxix. 59.)

2. Come to Christ, and take him for thy Saviour, thy Teacher, thy King, and he will pardon all that is past, and save thee. (John i. 12; iii. 16; v. 40; 1 John v. 11, 12.)

3. Believe God's love, and the pardon of sin, and the everlasting joys of heaven, that thou mayest feel that all the pleasure of the world and flesh are dung in comparison of the heavenly delight of faith, and hope, and holy love, and peace of conscience, and sincere obedience.

4. Sin no more wilfully, but forbear that which thou mayest forbear. (Isa. lv. 7.)

5. Away from temptations, occasion of sin and evil company, and be a companion of the humble, holy, heavenly and sincere. (Psal. cxix. 115. 63.)

6. Wait on God's Spirit in the diligent, constant use of his own means. Read, hear, meditate, pray; pray hard for that grace that must convert thee. Wait thus, and thou shalt not wait in vain. (Psal. xxv; xxxvii. 34; lxix. 6.)

Pity, O Lord, and persuade the souls; let not Christ's

blood, his doctrine, his example, his Spirit be lost unto them, and they lost for ever. Let not heaven be as no heaven to them, while they dream and dote on the shadows in this world. And O save this land from the greater destruction than all our late plagues, and flames, and divisions, which our sins and thy threatenings makes us fear. O Lord, in thee have we trusted, let us never be confounded.

R. BAXTER.

END OF THE THIRTEENTH VOLUME.