

Sovereign Grace.

WHAT drew Saul of Tarsus to the Lord Jesus Christ? The persecutor was transformed into a preacher of the faith he had tried to destroy! The Grace of God made all the difference (1 Cor. 15. 10). The Lord Himself met him on the road to Damascus. John the Baptist is marked out quite distinctly: "He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1. 15). Surely the experiences of these two much-used servants of God were quite contrasted, but it was the same grace that saved them. Listen to that dying thief, who has just been blaspheming: now he cries "Lord, remember me," Does "grace" require many hours? A disease may be some period in incubation, and natural birth may have its appointed times, but who can stop the sovereign grace of God in suddenly saving a sinner? Hear the words of the jailer who had but a brief season before beaten the saints of God, as he pleads in anguish of soul, "What must I do to be saved?" And he is saved. No prison doors can hinder God, no midnight hour find Him sleeping. One is brought to Christ through trials, as it is written, "In their affliction they will seek Me early" (Hos. 5. 15). Another is claimed in early life by Him Who said, "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore" (Matt. 28. 18). Verily that which has been bound in the covenant of grace shall, in this sense, be effectually bound on earth, and the one loosed above shall in the fullness of time be loosed here from his fetters of sin. The Lord of Glory did not say in vain, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me" (John 6. 37). Scythian and Barbarian must yield to Him. The Samaritan woman is claimed by Him Who "must needs go through Samaria," and the Ethiopian eunuch must have a message from one sent to run to his chariot. There will be no empty seat at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. "Compel to come in" conquers the hedges, and all the self-will of a wayward sinner. I know how Saul of Tarsus was snatched as a brand from the burning, I do not know how Barnabas was quickened from above. But it matters not. A striking manifest crisis may be the history of one, and the Lord's blessing on loving parental prayer and devoted service in early life the quieter experience of another, but there is the same mighty and sovereign grace, the same glorious and eternal salvation through the same precious blood of Christ. We are not dealing with a human philosophy: "it is the Spirit That quickens." We may not understand "when" or "how" or "why," but we rejoice in the Lamb's Book of Life, and in the blood of the new covenant poured out for many, and in the fact that our beloved Lord shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And, therefore, we will praise, and therefore we will trust, and therefore we will preach.

Election never kept one soul from Christ, but it brought many to Him. Tell me of one soul in hell because of election. You cannot. But I can speak of many in heaven because of election. Can you find me one soul there apart from election? You cannot. Then what have you to say against this princely display of God's love?