

DIFFERENT CONVERSIONS

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It is sweet to inspect the way in which the light of God approaches and enters the soul. Sometimes it is *gentle*, sometimes it is *full of force and rapidity*; sometimes it intimates a work more fully on the *heart*; and sometimes a work more on the *conscience or understanding*. But it is always God's work, that we know, though the *material* operated upon may be various, and the *mode of operation* various.

Look at Acts 8: 9, 10. The Eunuch was evidently in the hand of God where Philip met him--he was under the *drawings* of the Father (John 6: 44). And that his heart was deeply engaged is evident, because he forgot the common order, as I may say, of the world, when he bid Philip come up to him in his chariot. He waited for no introduction. The stranger was no stranger, since he referred to that subject which at that moment was everything to his heart. He was another Zaccheus, who forgot his place in society, and pressed through the crowd after Jesus.

Look at Saul. He was full of religious *zeal*--the zeal of an inquisitor. Look at Cornelius. He was full of religious *devotion*--gentle, benevolent, disposed (instead of persecuting others) to judge that all others were better than himself.

Here were different materials, and the mode of operation on them was different. The work was carried on in Saul's soul with characteristic force--that in Cornelius's with like gentleness and grace. But both of them equally needed Jesus. There was no life *in* either or *for* either, but through Jesus.

So the jailer and Lydia in Acts 16, Lydia was something of a female Cornelius. She was devout, and gentle, and gracious, and the Lord, by a very gentle operation, opened her heart. The jailer was a kind of Saul, at least in his apprenticeship; he was *beginning* to practise his hand in that work of persecution with which Saul had been *long* familiar. But as far as he had gone, he had learnt his art well, and the operation on him, like that on Saul of Tarsus, was in characteristic force. An earthquake accompanied the unlocking of the bars of his strong and iron heart, as "the still small voice" had done the business with Lydia's.

But again; neither the gentle Lydia nor the fiery jailer could do *without Jesus*. Till Lydia knew Jesus, Paul could *teach* her; but he did not *worship* with her, though she was a devout woman. (See vv. 13, 16).

May the souls of sinners be precious in our sight! and these witnesses of the grace of God, and of the power of the Spirit, be acceptable to our hearts.