

wish you to see that there is a second Divine work needful on your heart before you can believe. The Spirit must convince you of Christ's righteousness. Flesh and blood cannot reveal Christ unto you, "but my Father which is in heaven." (Matth: 16.17) That God is a Sovereign God. He hath mercy upon whom He will have mercy. He is not at the bidding of unconverted men. He has nowhere promised to bring to Christ all whom He awakens. Oh! how plain that you are as far from salvation as any soul can be that is out of hell. And can you be easy when you are at such a distance from salvation? Can you go and sit down to a game of chance to while away the time between this and judgment? Can you go and laugh and be merry in your sins? How truly, then, did Solomon say: "The laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot" — a loud noise for a moment, then everlasting silence — a short blaze, and a dark eternity.

Some of you may be awakened by God, but unless you attain to a conviction of righteousness, your conviction of sin will be all in vain. Remember, anxiety for the soul does not save the soul. Sailors in shipwreck are very anxious. They cry much to God in prayers and tears; and yet, though they are anxious men, they are not saved men — the vessel goes to pieces, and all are drowned. Travellers in a wilderness may be very anxious, their hearts may die within them, yet that does not show that they are safe; they may perish in the burning sands. So you are much afraid of the wrath of God, and it may be God has, in mercy, stirred up these anxieties in your bosom, but you are not yet saved; unless you come to Christ all will

be in vain. Many are convinced who are not converted. Many are now in hell who were once as anxious to escape as you.

God only can give you this. The Spirit convinces of righteousness. It is not flesh and blood that can give you a sense of the preciousness of Christ. It is true, the Bible and preaching are the means through which God works this conviction. He always works through the Truth — never without the Truth. If you be truly awakened, I know how anxiously you will wait on these means; how you will search the Scriptures with tears, and lose no opportunity of hearing the Word preached. But still, the Bible and preaching are only means of themselves; they can only make natural impressions on your mind. God only can make supernatural impressions. Cry to God, then.

But remember, God is a sovereign God. Do not cry to Him to convert you, as if it were a debt He owed you. There is only one thing you can claim from God as a right, and that is a place in hell. If you think you have any claim on God you are deceiving yourself. You are not yet convinced of sin. Lie at the feet of God as a sovereign God — a God who owes you nothing but punishment. Lie at His feet as the God who alone can reveal Christ unto you. Cry night and day that He would reveal Christ unto you — that He would shine into your darkness, and give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. One glimpse of that face will give you peace. It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

(Extract from Sermon on John 16, 8-10)