

How near Christ comes to sinners

"That I may ... be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Philippians 3:8, 9).

The righteousness which is of the law, that is, our own righteousness, is on the principle of doing something in order to live. The mere statement of the case is sufficient to show its impossibility; for life must necessarily precede action. A dead body does not do something in order that it may live, but it must be given life in order that it may do something.

Peter did not tell the dead Dorcas to do some more charitable work, to sew some more garments, in order that she might live, but in the name of

Jesus he restored her to life in order that she might pursue her good works. The man that does those things shall live in them, but he must first live before he can do them.

Therefore the righteousness which is of the law is but an empty dream. Christ gives life, even the eternal and righteous life of God, which works righteousness in the soul that it has quickened. "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

We read, "The word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (Deut. 30:14), that is, the word of faith, which we preach. Is Christ so near as that? Indeed He is; for He Himself says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3:20). It is not alone to the good that He is near, but He is "not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).

We cannot reach out our hand without finding Him. Christ is in [near] the heart even of wicked people, waiting for them to recognize the fact that already exists, and will in all their ways

acknowledge Him. Then He will dwell in their hearts "by faith." He will then direct them in all their ways. In nothing is the love of Christ more fully shown than in His dwelling with sinful men, and enduring all their hatefulness, in order that by His patience He may win them from their evil ways." [1]

Note:

1. Waggoner on Romans, pp. 164-166.