

ALL HAVE SINNED

We cannot emphasize too strongly the tragedy of sin. It should be looked upon as a disease, which infects the soul, leading to eternal suffering. But many are either not aware that they have this dreadful disease, or, realizing it, they refuse to avail themselves of God's remedy for it.

In the third chapter of Romans we find these statements: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Verse 10) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Verse 23) Everyone who comes to a responsible age commits sin. There has been no person, save Jesus Christ, who has lived without sinning. As we have just read, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Often, we have been asked something like this: "Don't you think that if I am a good moral person, if I am a good neighbor, and if I am a law-abiding citizen; that I'm certain to go to heaven?" The same inquiry may be worded in many different ways, but the answer is always the same. No, simply being a good person is not enough. Why? Because ALL have sinned. Good qualities will not compensate for the sin we have committed. You can't be good enough to hide your sins. Only the blood of Jesus can do that.

The truthfulness of these things is emphasized further by these words: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John 1: 8) Listen also to verse 10: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." Some may feel they live above sin-that they do not, or cannot commit sin. John says this is self- deception and a contradiction of God's word.

If one does not recognize that he is a sinner, he will not seek forgiveness. The first step toward pardon is realization of guilt. Jesus told the following story to emphasize this fact. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalted himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:10-14) Both of these men were Israelites, members of God's family. They lived in the Jewish, not the Christian dispensation; but their contrasting attitudes illustrate the necessity of all men humbly admitting their guilt and turning to God's plan for forgiveness.

As the Apostle Paul reflected on the weakness of the flesh and the law of sin at work within he cried: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This was the desperation of guilt. But he knew the answer. He said, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word of God convicts of sin; it also tells of the forgiveness that is in Christ. Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. He came to seek and to save the lost.