

## SUCCESSFUL SIN.

Rarely do we hear of a more impressive and sobering climax to a successfully executed crime than that which occurred the other day in the case of a nightwatchman of a National Bank in Philadelphia. The man had had a criminal record, having served prison terms for theft and even for murder, but in some unaccountable way he had secured employment in the Bank. He was given \$13,000 in currency and cheques after banking hours, to transfer as deposits, and he disappeared a few hours later with the loot in a suitcase. He took a taxicab and told the driver to take him to a certain address. Before they arrived the man had died in the cab from heart failure.

It may be said to have been a case of successful sin. The man secured an honorable position, in spite of his life of crime. He betrayed his trust, appropriating property that belonged to others. He carried out his plans to get away with this and he held his loot, unmolested, until his death, only his death came sooner than he expected. He passed out of this world into the next, from time into eternity, with his fully matured and successfully executed sin upon him, and with no one hindering him in this life.

It is not a pleasant picture. Yet it may be worth while to face it squarely, realizing that it illustrates, in a sensational way, the case of every one who goes through this life and passes out into the next bearing the burden and responsibility of his own sin. That there are countless numbers of such, not only among criminals, but also among the most moral, respectable and respected of citizens, is an undeniable fact.

God in His Word has done everything in His power to show us the meaning of what might be called "successful sin." With unerring and unsparing faithfulness the Bible describes the real condition, in the sight of God, of the best of men who are attempting to live in their own righteousness, and who may be living unblemished lives in the sight of the world. They may be loving fathers, faithful husbands, law-abiding citizens, owing no man anything, meeting their financial and social obligations promptly, even going beyond this and dispensing benevolences generously. Yet even such would admit that they are not sinless, and the Word of God brings all men into the classification of sinners, as it declares that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

It is not that God does not give full valuation to morality and high ethical standards when these characterize men's lives. But from the standpoint of God's own righteousness and holiness man is not only God-condemned, he is self-condemned. He cannot stand before the bar of God's judgment and say, "I am without sin." And only a perfect, sinless record could entitle a man to eternal fellowship with God. So from this standpoint we find the Scripture saying: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

There are two great facts from which man, therefore, cannot get away. He cannot, by his own efforts for righteousness,

get away from sin. And he cannot get away from God. That was one of the first things the first sinning man tried to do, and he found he could not. As God sought out Adam in the Garden of Eden, after his sin, and asked him, "Where art thou?" Adam answered, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid. . . and I hid myself."

And yet sin can seem to be remarkably successful, and it can seem so for a long time. The Psalmist, as a man of God, confesses:

I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . .

They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. . . they have more than heart could wish.

The Psalmist contrasts his own hard times and affliction with this, but finally he says:

When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;

Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedest them down to destruction.

How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!

A long lifetime of "successful sin," if one carries this with him into eternity, will not seem any longer than that defaulting bank employee's taxicab ride with his plunder when he passed from life into death.

But over against all this—which would be a picture too black and hopeless to contemplate, if it were the only message in the Bible—shines out the brightness of the Gospel, which is the great theme of God's Word from beginning to end. While making inescapably clear the enormity and hopelessness of man's sin, God makes equally clear the more than sufficient antidote in the death and resurrection of His only Son as man's Saviour. No one need go into eternity carrying his sins with him. For "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And again: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Sel. by E. J. Lee, Can. Free Methodist.

## PREVAILING PRAYER

S. B. Shaw

"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." I. Cor. 4:15.

God's children often have burdens of prayer for many things temporal and spiritual, but soul travail means, or should mean, a spiritual birth. "When Zion travaileth, she shall bring forth."

So few in these last days know anything about prevailing prayer for lost souls. We have many good evangelists that can teach young Christians, but very few fathers and mothers in the church who

know of people saved through their soul travail.

The greater vision we have of God and of a lost world, the more deeply we will feel for perishing humanity. People weep when their friends are sick and dying. We have known many to weep over the loss of property; why should we not weep more over the greatest of calamities? We have known a few typical saints that could not speak of the failure of friends without weeping. When they mention the condition of a lost world, tears would fill their eyes; when they spoke of the desolation of Zion, they wept and prayed. When our hearts are broken with grief over the condition of a lost world, and the desolation of Zion, we will weep and cry to God for help. "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth?" Luke 7:8.

Personally, we have never received much in prayer until we got desperate. When I first realized my lost condition, I broke down and wept and prayed until I was saved. When I realized my need of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I could not rest day nor night until, with strong crying and tears, I prayed through for complete deliverance from the power of sin, until I realized the cleansing blood. And now the Lord is helping me to love my neighbor as myself, and pray for them with as much earnestness and emotion as we did for our own salvation, and to weep over the desolation of Zion and the lack of unity and fellowship among Christians.—The Way of Faith.

## SELECTIONS

The law of God is the only infallible test of character. I had not known sin except the law had said THOU SHALT NOT kill, steal, cheat, lie, swear, covet or be proud. The lustful look was adultery, the hateful feeling, murder. I tried to be good but failed when the test came. I was led to see the depravity of my heart, and was convinced that God only could purify my moral nature. "Ye must be born again;" "turn ye for why will ye die," was the voice of the Spirit to me. I began to realize that I must purify my life and forsake my wicked ways. I turned to Him and He had mercy and did forgive, and gave me the spirit of adoption. And this was possible only through the great sacrifice offered on Calvary, once for all. It was for "whosoever" and that included me. Now I am glad I listened and turned.—T. B. in Canadian Free Methodist.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

Temple, N. B.

Dear Brother Trafton:

Enclosed find renewal to the Highway. We are glad today that we know about the Highway of Holiness, and that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. I am glad there are those who are preaching an indeed freedom from all sin. I am glad that I am saved and kept each day.

Your brother in Him,

ABRAHAM CRONKHITE