

SPIRITUAL SUCCESS OR FAILURE

By Joseph H. Smith

"If ye do these things ye shall never fall," II Peter 1:10.

The falls in Scripture were falls of men at their strong points. You would have thought they would have been their weak points. Moses, the meekest man, fell in a fit of anger. Peter, embodiment of power and courage, took a sword and meant to cut the servant's head off, but only got his ear; and yet he trembled and quaked in cowardice. Of the weak, Paul writes: "God is able to make them stand." If we go on depending on our strong points, we will go down as Peter did, but "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

You and I need never have any anger; we need never have any resentment of anyone; we need never have any falls. When persons in their minds want to do what circumstances do not give them a chance to do, they have done it before God. That is actual sin. That is a fall. If there is something within any of us that says, "We would just like to give them their due," that is the same as doing it. "Ye shall never fall."

How earnestly we sought salvation and sanctification! You and I must seek preservation just as earnestly. We are not kept spiritual simply by the grace of God acting independently of ourselves—not any more than we were saved by ourselves or sanctified by ourselves. In the Epistle of Jude you will find a splendid thought in this connection: "Unto him that is able to keep you from falling."

Just as there is no sanctification without consecration, just as there is no justification without repentance there is no preservation without perseverance. Besides inbred sin, there are inward acts of sin that may not have much as yet of an outward expression, but that are really falls, but "ye shall never fall"—inwardly or outwardly—if this recipe is adopted.

"If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful." There are, out in California, trees that have not borne any oranges for two or three seasons. They are digging them up and using them for firewood. Do you get the hint? Friends, Jesus did not save you just to make you good, but saved you to make you good for something. Holiness is not finally consummated in our cleansing. "He redeemed us with his precious blood from all iniquity" (negative), "and purified unto himself (positive) a peculiar people, zealous of good works." I say, brother or sister, he has not saved us simply to make us good, simply to make us happy; but he has saved us and made us clean in order that we might be zealous in good works. Harken to Paul, "Being made free from sin . . . you have your fruit unto holiness." That means spiritual success—the fruitage of the Spirit in yourself; but it doesn't only mean that, it means fruitage of the saving and sanctifying of other souls.

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE FAMILY

By John E. McGraw

Ephesians 3: 13-21

In the study of this prayer, let us not allow its fathomless depths to obscure from our vision and faith the unsearchable riches which are the common heritage of all the seed royal

of the great household of faith. Our first privilege is:

The Right to Our Father's Name

"Of whom the whole family . . . is named."

Membership in this family is limited to those who are truly born from above. Because such are the son of God, they have a right to bear the Father's name. When a child is born he receives a "given name"; but he inherits his father's surname. So likewise, when a soul is born from above, he partakes of his heavenly Father's name, and also His nature. Infinite possibilities lay ahead, and for the realization of these the Apostle prays. Our inheritance includes:

The Benefits of Our Father's Riches

"Grant you according to his riches in glory."

God delights to bestow rich graces upon His children, and to give His Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him. The measure of this request is, "According to His riches in glory." How great are these? What are the number of His solar systems? How enduring are His possessions, and what are the reserves of His creative power? Well may we sing:

"My Father is rich in houses and lands

He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands;

Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold, His coffers are full, He has riches untold."

However, all this wealth was insufficient for our redemption. But according to the riches of His love, He gave His only begotten Son to die a ransom for sinners. Hence we are redeemed not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.

"He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32. The riches that God would make known to the saints is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory," Colossians 1:26-28. Preliminary to the realization of this is:—

The Endurment of the Father's Spirit

"Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

These words reveal a weakness in the inner man that we must consider.

It is not merely an infantile weakness such as nourishment and growth could overcome.

Likewise it is not a lack of enlightenment, establishment or enlargement, although elements of all these are involved.

Neither is this particular weakness removed by the measure of the gift and power of the Spirit which is received in regeneration; but a distinct, deeper and subsequent operation of His power is required.

The "cause" for Paul's prayer was a tendency of some to "faint" at tribulation. This reveals a fear, or lack of spiritual fortitude of the inner man; and is an unhealthy, diseased, carnal condition. Hence this spiritual weakness is that caused by the presence of inbred sin.

Now we will turn to the mighty strengthening of the Spirit.

This is not an outward endowment or coming upon one to empower for service or to work miracles or to impart special gifts. It is primarily an inner endowment. That is, Paul is here emphasizing the inner working of the Spirit, "In the inner man." He prayed that the Colossians might be, "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

God does not want His children to be

poverty-stricken, feeble, or carnal; but to abundantly partake of His riches, power and holiness. All this is granted in the Spirit's strengthening; for it issues in:

The Indwelling of the Father's Son

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

According to Isaiah (57-15) God has three dwelling places. The I am that I am, "inhabiteth eternity." He dwells in "the high and holy place," with him also that is of a "contrite and humble spirit."

The human heart seems to be the greatest thing God ever made and His favorite abode. Because it was fashioned to be the dwelling place of Deity it is futile to try to fill or satisfy it with material things or temporal possessions. We can never truly be content with anything short of the fullness of God.

Strange as it may seem, it is yet true that after one is born from above there remains within an element or principle that is enmity against God; that is not, and indeed cannot be subject to His law. This antagonism resists the Holy Spirit and causes the doublemindedness that makes one unstable in all his ways. It occupies a place within that, by creative and redemptive rights, belongs to Christ. It is imperative, therefore, that this enemy be expelled before He can completely possess and rule the heart.

When Christ returns to set up His millennial reign, He will send His angels to gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity. When He comes to take complete possession of the heart, He sends the Almighty Holy Spirit to cast out the old man of sin and purify the heart; to renovate, renew, restore, heal, strengthen and beautify it; to make it a fit dwelling place for its rightful Sovereign. Thus enthroned, Christ exerciseth control over the will and satisfies every longing desire of the affections. Like justification and the new birth, this fullness of Christ is received and maintained "by faith." The next phrase concerns:

The Blessedness of the Father's Love

The "perfect love" which "casteth out fear" is not merely negative. Several positive elements are set forth such as:

Establishment

"Rooted and grounded in love." This keeps us from being tossed and driven by every wind of doctrine; from being moved by afflictions; and from being swept away by persecutions.

Enablement

"May be able." When we are strengthened by the Spirit, indwelt by Christ, and rooted in love, we will be able, not only to overcome the enemy, but also to understand and accomplish God's purpose in our life.

Enlightenment

"Comprehend . . . and know the love of God." Although we can never fully understand the infinite and eternal love of God, we may have the consciousness of its presence in our hearts.

Enlargement

"Breadth, length, depth, height." What room for enlargement! What possibilities of expanding symmetrically and ever finding new fields, new continents, new worlds, new universes of God's riches, grace, power and glory to explore and possess! "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him," Psalm 103:17. The last petition comprehends:

The Overflowing of the Father's Fulness

"Filled with all the fullness of God."

Enlarged capacities make possible enlarged

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