

The Fall of Mr Hall

by John Wesley

John Wesley confronts Mr. Hall about his fall from a holy and humble life, and calls him to repentance and return to God.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5

Topics: "Repentance", "Spiritual Decline"

Description

John Wesley addresses the tragic fall of Mr. Hall, reflecting on his once holy life and the gradual decline that followed his decision to marry contrary to God's will. Wesley recounts how Hall's reliance on his own understanding led to a series of poor choices, culminating in a rejection of spiritual guidance and a departure from the faith. The sermon serves as a warning against the deceitfulness of sin and the importance of humility and accountability in one's spiritual journey. Wesley urges Hall to repent and return to God, emphasizing the urgency of his situation and the need for divine intervention. The message is a poignant reminder of the consequences of straying from God's path and the hope for redemption through sincere repentance.

Transcript

Being not convinced that I had yet delivered my own soul with regard to that unhappy man, on Tuesday 22 Dec, I wrote once more to Mr. Hall as follows: London, Dec. 22, 1747 Dear Brother, 1. When you was at Oxford with me, fourteen or fifteen years ago, you was holy and unblameable in all manner of conversation. I greatly rejoiced in the grace of God which was given unto you, which was often a blessing to my own soul. Yet even then you had frequently starts of thought which were not of God, though they at first appeared so to be.

But you was humble and teachable, you was easily convinced, and those imaginations vanished away. 2. More than twelve years ago you told me, God had revealed it you that you should marry my youngest sister. I was much surprised, being well assured that you was 'able to receive' our Lord's 'saying' (so you had continually testified) and to be an 'eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake'. But you vehemently affirmed the thing was of God: you was certain it was his will. God had made it plain to you that you must marry, and that she was the very person.

You asked and gained her consent, and fixed the circumstances relating thereto. 3. Hence I date your fall. Here were several faults in one. You leaned altogether to your own understanding, not consulting either me, who was then the guide of your soul, or the parents of your intended wife, till you had settled the

whole affair. And while you followed the voice of nature, you said it was the voice of God. 4. In a few days you had a counter-revelation, that you was not to marry her but her sister.

This last error was far worse than the first. But you was now quite above conviction. So, in spite of her poor astonished parent, of her brothers, of all your vows and promises, you shortly after jilted the younger and married the elder sister. The other, who had honoured you as an angel from heaven and still loved you much too well (for you had stole her heart from the God of her youth), refused to be comforted. She fell into a lingering illness, which terminated in her death.

And doth not her blood still cry unto God from the earth? Surely it is upon your head. 5. Till this time you was a pattern of lowliness, meekness, seriousness, and continual advertence to the presence of God. And above all, of self-denial in every kind and of suffering all things with joyfulness. But there was now a worm at the root of the gourd. Yet it did not presently wither away, but for two years or more after your marriage, you behaved nearly the same as before. Then anger and surliness began to appear, particularly toward your wife.

But it was not long before you was sensible of this, and you seemed to have conquered it. 6. You went up to London ten years ago. After this you began to speak on any head, not with your usual diffidence and self-abasement, but with a kind of confidence in your own judgment and an air of self-sufficiency. A natural consequence was the treating with more sharpness and contempt those who opposed either your judgment or practice. 7. You came to live at London. You then for a season appeared to gain ground again.

You acted in concert with my brother and me, heard our advice and sometimes followed it. But this continued only till you contracted a fresh acquaintance with some of the brethren of Fetter Lane. Thenceforward you was quite shut up to us; we had no manner of influence over you; you was more and more prejudiced against us and would receive nothing which we said. 8. About six years ago you removed to Salisbury and began a society there. For a year or two you went with them to the church and Sacrament, and simply preached faith working by love.

God was with you, and they increased both in number and in the knowledge and love of God. About four years since you broke off all friendship with us: you would not so much as make use of our hymns, either in public or private, but laid them quite aside and took the German hymnbook in their stead. You would not willingly suffer any of your people to read anything which we wrote. You angrily caught one of my sermons out of your servant's hand, saying you would have no such books read in your house.

In much the same manner you spoke to Mrs. Whitemarsh, when you found her reading one of the Appeals. So that, as far as in you lay, you fixed a great gulf between us and you (which remains to this day, notwithstanding a few steps lately made towards a reunion). About the same time you left off going to church, as well as to the Sacrament. Your followers very soon trod in your steps, and, not content with neglecting the ordinances of God, they began, after your example, to despise them and all that continued to use them, speaking with equal contempt of the public service, of private prayer, of baptism, and of the Lord's Supper.

From this time also you began to espouse and teach many uncommon opinions: as, 'that there is no resurrection of the body; that there is no general judgment to come; and that there is no hell, no worm that never dieth, no fire that never shall be quenched'. 9. Your seriousness and advertence to the presence of God now declined daily. You could talk on anything or nothing, just as others did. You could break a jest,

or laugh at it heartily. And as for fasting, abstinence, and self-denial, you, with the Moravians, 'trampled it under foot'.

You began also, very frequently, to kiss the women of the society. In the following paragraphs I recited to him the things he had done with regard to more than one, or two, or three women, concluding thus:

And now you know not that you have done anything amiss! You can eat and drink and be merry! You are every day engaged with variety of company and frequent the coffee-houses! Alas, my brother, what is this? How are you above measure hardened by the deceitfulness of sin! Do you remember the story of Santon Barsisa? I pray God your last end may not be like his! O how have you grieved the Spirit of God! Return to him with weeping, fasting, and mourning. You are in the very belly of hell, only the pit hath not yet shut its mouth upon you. Arise, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God! Perhaps he may yet be found. Because he still bears with me, I cannot despair for you. But you have not a moment to lose. May God this instant strike you to the heart, that you may feel his wrath abiding on you and have no rest in your bones by reason of your sin, till all your iniquities are done away!

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