

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Jas 5:19).

Prayer for the Straying (James 5:19–20)

While James did not specifically name prayer in these verses, the implication is there. If we pray for the afflicted and the sick, surely we must pray for the brother who wanders from the truth.

These verses deal with our ministry to a fellow believer who strays from the truth and gets into sin. The verb *err* means “to wander,” and suggests a gradual moving away from the will of God. The Old Testament term for this is “backsliding.” Sad to say, we see this tragedy occurring in our churches regularly. Sometimes a brother is “overtaken in a fault” (Gal. 6:1); but usually the sin is the result of slow, gradual spiritual decline.

Such a condition is, of course, very dangerous. It is dangerous to the offender because he may be disciplined by the Lord (Heb. 12). He also faces the danger of committing “sin unto death” (1 John 5:16–17). God disciplined the sinning members of the Corinthian church, even to the point of taking some of them to heaven (1 Cor. 11:30).

But this backsliding is also dangerous to the church. A wandering offender can influence others and lead them astray. “One sinner destroys much good” (Ecc. 9:18, NASB). This is why the spiritual members of the church must step in and help the man who has wandered away.

The *origin of this problem* is found in the statement “wander from the truth” (James 5:19). The *truth* means, of course, the Word of God. “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17). Unless the believer stays close to the truth, he will start to drift away. “For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it” (Heb. 2:1, NASB). Jesus warned Peter that Satan was at hand to tempt him, and Peter refused to believe the Word. He even argued with the Lord! When he should have been praying, Peter was sleeping. No wonder he denied three times.

The *outcome* of this wandering is “sin” and possible “death” (James 5:20). The sinner here is a believer, not an unbeliever; and sin in the life of a Christian is worse than sin in the life of an unbeliever. We expect unsaved people to sin, but God expects His children to obey His Word.

What are we to do when we see a fellow believer wandering from the truth? We should pray for him, to be sure; but we must also seek to help him. He needs to be “converted”—turned back into the right path again. Do believers need to be converted? Yes, they do! Jesus said to Peter, “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

It is important that we seek to win the lost, but it is also important to win the saved. If a brother has sinned against us, we should talk to him privately and seek to settle the matter. If he listens, then we have gained our brother (Matt. 18:15). That word *gained* means “won.” It is the same word translated “get gain” in James 4:13. It is important to win the saved as well as the lost.

If we are going to help an erring brother, we must have an attitude of love, for “love shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). Both James and Peter learned this principle from Proverbs 10:12—“Hate stirreth up strife: but love covereth all sins.”

This does not mean that love “sweeps the dirt under the carpet.” Where there is love, there must also be truth (“speaking the truth in love” says Paul in Eph. 4:15); and where there is truth, there is honest confession of sin and cleansing from God. Love not only helps the offender to face his sins and deal with them, but love also assures the offender that those sins, once forgiven, are remembered no more.

While the basic interpretation of these verses is as I have explained, the application can be made to the lost sinner. After all, if a straying brother needs to be restored, how much more does a lost sinner need to be brought to the Saviour. If the wandering believer loses his life, he at least goes to heaven; but the lost sinner is condemned to an eternal hell.

“Seeking the lost” is a common Bible picture of soul-winning. In [Luke 15](#), Jesus pictures the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son, all of whom needed to be found and brought back to where they belonged. Our Lord also compared winning souls to catching fish ([Mark 1:17](#)). Peter caught one fish individually with his hook ([Matt. 17:24–27](#)), but he also worked with his helpers and used the nets to catch many fish at one time. There is a place for both personal and collective evangelism.

[Proverbs 11:30](#) compares evangelism to hunting: “He that catcheth souls is wise” (literal translation). Sin is out to catch and kill ([James 1:13–15](#)), but we ought to be out to catch and make alive.

The soul winner is also an ambassador of peace ([2 Cor. 5:20](#)). God has not declared war on this world; He has declared peace! One day He will declare war, and judgment will fall.

Both [Zechariah 3:2](#) and [Jude 23](#) picture the soul winner as a fireman, pulling brands out of the burning. John Wesley applied [Zechariah 3:2](#) to himself, for when he was but a child, he was pulled from a burning house when it looked as though it was too late. Sometimes we must take risks of love to snatch people from the fires of judgment.

Jesus compared evangelism to sowing and reaping ([John 4:34–38](#)) and Paul used the same illustration ([1 Cor. 3:6–9](#)). There are seasons of sowing and seasons of reaping; and many people are needed for the work. We are “laborers together with God” ([1 Cor. 3:9](#)). Both the sower and the reaper will receive their rewards, for there is no competition in the Lord’s fields.

Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible Commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (Jas 5:19).

James closes by stating exactly why he has written this letter. The principle he states is the one he is following. Some of his readers had indeed wandered *from the truth*, as we have seen from the problems in the church. This phrase is used for serious departures from the faith (*cf* Is. 9:16), not an occasional slip into sin. If it happens to a believer, *someone should bring them back*, as the 'spiritual' are supposed to do in Gal. 6:1. Rather than condemnation, restoration is the goal. And that is what James hopes will happen.

Such restoration has a wonderful result. It is not just that *a sinner* is turned *from the error of his way* and so there is less sin in the world, but that the person is also saved from death, meaning eternal death (1 Jn. 5:16–17; Jude 22–23), although physical death could, of course, also result (Acts 5:1–11). *A multitude of sins* are covered over. Pr. 10:12, quoted in 1 Pet. 4:8, says that 'love covers over all wrongs' or 'love covers a multitude of sins'. By 'cover' these authors presumably mean 'atone for', since a frequent OT image is that of the blood of an offering 'covering' sin. The opposite of love is hatred which spreads rumours and stirs up strife. For James love acts through bringing the person as gently as possible back to repentance. That repentance will be accepted by God, who will forgive the sins. Then the forgiven person can continue on the right way, rejoicing in their tests, for they know that their reward is coming.

Hughes, R. B., Laney, J. C., & Hughes, R. B. (2001). *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*.

James 5:19–20 The Essence of the Letter

The essence of James's letter is a call to action (works) that allows truth to triumph over sin and error. This is the essence of everything he wrote. The individual under consideration (5:19, "anyone among you") is a Christian who has strayed from the truth. By turning that one back to God, the ultimate discipline of death (1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16) would be avoided. The multitude of sins covered were those that had been committed and those that would never happen because of a person's repentance. Through genuine repentance, forgiveness is appropriated and sins are hidden from the sight of God (cf. Ps. 32:1; 1 Pet. 4:8).

Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* : Complete and Unabridged in One Volume (Romans 11).

II. Another thing which qualified this doctrine of the rejection of the Jews was that though they were cast off and unchurched, yet the Gentiles were taken in (v. 11 endash 14), which he applies by way of caution to the Gentiles, v. 17 endash 22.

1. The rejection of the Jews made room for the reception of the Gentiles. The Jews' leavings were a feast for the poor Gentiles (v. 11): "*Have they stumbled that they should fall? Had God no other end in forsaking and rejecting them than their destruction?*" He startles at this, rejecting the thought with abhorrence, as usually he does when any thing is suggested which seems to reflect upon the wisdom, or righteousness, or goodness of God: *God forbid! no, through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles.* Not but that salvation might have come to the Gentiles if they had stood; but by the divine appointment it was so ordered that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles upon the Jews' refusal of it. Thus in the parable (Mt. 22:8, 9), *Those that were first bidden were not worthy-Go ye therefore into the highways, Lu. 14:21.* And so it was in the history (Acts 13:46): *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but, seeing you put it from you, lo, we turn to the Gentiles; so Acts 18:6.* God will have a church in the world, will have the wedding furnished with guests; and, if one will not come, another will, or why was the offer made? The Jews had the refusal, and so the tender came to the Gentiles. See how Infinite Wisdom brings light out of darkness, good out of evil, meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong. To the same purport he says (v. 12), *The fall of them was the riches of the world,* that is, it hastened the gospel so much the sooner into the Gentile world. The gospel is the greatest riches of the place where it is; it is better than thousands of gold and silver. Or, The riches of the Gentiles was the multitude of converts among them. True believers are God's jewels. To the same purport (v. 15): *The casting away of them is the reconciling of the world.* God's displeasure towards them made way for his favour towards the Gentiles. God was in Christ *reconciling the world, 2 Co. 5:19.* And therefore he took occasion from the unbelief of the Jews openly to disavow and disown them, though they had been his peculiar favourites, to show that in dispensing his favours he would now no longer act in such a way of peculiarity and restriction, but that in every nation he that feared God and wrought righteousness should be accepted of him, Acts 10:34, 35.

2. The use that the apostle makes of this doctrine concerning the substitution of the Gentiles in the room of the Jews.

(1.) As a kinsman to the Jews, here is a word of excitement and exhortation to them, to stir them up to receive and embrace the gospel-offer. This God intended in his favour to the Gentiles, to provoke the Jews to jealousy (v. 11), and Paul endeavours to enforce it accordingly (v. 14): *If by any means I might provoke to emulation those who are my flesh.* "Shall the despised Gentiles run away with all the comforts and privileges of the gospel, and shall not we repent of our refusal, and now at last put in for a share? Shall not we believe and obey, and be pardoned and saved, as well as the Gentiles?" See an instance of such an emulation in Esau, Gen. 28:6 endash 9. There is a commendable emulation in the affairs of our souls: why should not we be as holy and happy as any of our neighbours? In this emulation there needs no suspicion, undermining or countermining; for the church has room enough, and the new covenant grace and comfort enough, for us all. The blessings are not lessened by the multitudes of the sharers.—*And might save some of them.* See what was Paul's business, to save souls; and yet the utmost he promises himself is but to save some. Though he was such a powerful preacher, spoke and wrote with such

evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, yet of the many he dealt with he could but save some. Ministers must think their pains well bestowed if they can but be instrumental to save some.

(2.) As an apostle to the Gentiles, here is a word of caution for them: "*I speak to you Gentiles*. You believing Romans, you hear what riches of salvation are come to you by the fall of the Jews, but take heed lest you do any thing to forfeit it." Paul takes this, as other occasions, to apply his discourse to the Gentiles, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, appointed for the service of their faith, to plant and water churches in the Gentile nations. This was the purport of his extraordinary mission, [Acts 22:21](#), *I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles*; compare [Acts 9:15](#). It was likewise the intention of his ordination, [Gal. 2:9](#). Compare [Acts 13:2](#). It ought to be our great and special care to do good to those that are under our charge: we must particularly mind that which is our own work. It was an instance of God's great love to the poor Gentiles that he appointed Paul, who in gifts and graces excelled all the apostles, to be the apostle of the Gentiles. The Gentile world was a wider province; and the work to be done in it required a very able, skilful, zealous, courageous workman: such a one was Paul. God calls those to special work whom he either sees or makes fit for it.—*I magnify my office*. There were those that vilified it, and him because of it. It was because he was the apostle of the Gentiles that the Jews were so outrageous against him ([Acts 22:21](#), 22), and yet he thought never the worse of it, though it set him up as the butt of all the Jewish rage and malice. It is a sign of true love to Jesus Christ to reckon that service and work for him truly honourable which the world looks upon with scorn, as mean and contemptible. The office of the ministry is an office to be *magnified*. Ministers are ambassadors for Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and for their work's sake are to be esteemed highly in love.—*My office; teun diakonian mou—my ministry*, my service, not my lordship and dominion. It was not the dignity and power, but the duty and work, of an apostle, that Paul was so much in love with. Now two things he exhorts the Gentiles to, with reference to the rejected Jews:—

[1.] To have a respect for the Jews, notwithstanding, and to desire their conversion. This is intimated in the prospect he gives them of the advantage that would accrue to the church by their conversion, [v. 12, 15](#). It would be as life from the dead; and therefore they must not insult and triumph over those poor Jews, but rather pity them, and desire their welfare, and long for the receiving of them in again.

[2.] To take heed to themselves, lest they should stumble and fall, as they Jews had done, [v. 17](#) endash 22. Here observe,

First, The privilege which the Gentiles had by being taken into the church. They were grafted in ([v. 17](#)), as a branch of a wild olive into a good olive, which is contrary to the way and custom of the husbandman, who grafts the good olive into the bad; but those that God grafts into the church he finds wild and barren, and good for nothing. Men graft to mend the tree; but God grafts to mend the branch. 1. The church of God is an olive-tree, flourishing and fruitful as an olive ([Ps. 52:8](#); [Hos. 14:6](#)), the fruit useful for the honour both of God and man, [Jdg. 9:9](#). 2. Those that are out of the church are as wild olive-trees, not only useless, but what they do produce is sour and unsavoury: *Wild by nature*, [v. 24](#). This was the state of the poor Gentiles, that wanted church privileges, and in respect of real sanctification; and it is the natural state of every one of us, to be wild by nature. 3. Conversion is the grafting in of wild branches into the good olive. We must be cut off from the old stock, and be brought into union with a new root. 4. Those that are grafted into the good olive-tree partake of the root and fatness of the olive. It is applicable to a saving union with Christ; all that are by a lively faith grafted into Christ partake of him as the branches of the root—receive from his fulness. But it is here spoken of a visible

church-membership, from which the Jews were as branches broken off; and so the Gentiles were grafted in, *autois*—among those that continued, or in the room of those that were broken off. The Gentiles, being grafted into the church, partake of the same privileges that the Jews did, *the root and fatness*. The olive-tree is the visible church (called so [Jer. 11:16](#)); the root of this tree was Abraham, not the root of communication, so Christ only is the root, but the root of administration, he being the first with whom the covenant was so solemnly made. Now the believing Gentiles partake of this root: *he also is a son of Abraham* ([Lu. 19:9](#)), *the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles* ([Gal. 3:14](#)), the same fatness of the olive-tree, the same for substance, special protection, lively oracles, means of salvation, a standing ministry, instituted ordinances; and, among the rest, the visible church-membership of their infant seed, which was part of the fatness of the olive-tree that the Jews had, and cannot be imagined to be denied to the Gentiles.

Secondly, A caution not to abuse these privileges. 1. "Be not proud ([v. 18](#)): *Boast not against the branches*. Do not therefore trample upon the Jews as a reprobate people, nor insult over those that are broken off, much less over those that do continue." Grace is given, not to make us proud, but to make us thankful. The law of faith excludes all boasting either of ourselves or against others. "Do not say ([v. 19](#)): *They were broken off that I might be grafted in*; that is, do not think that thou didst merit more at the hand of God than they, or didst stand higher in his favour." "But remember, *thou bearest not the root, but the root thee*. Though thou art grafted in, thou art still but a branch borne by the root; nay, and an engrafted branch, brought into the good olive *contrary to nature* ([v. 24](#)), not free-born, but by an act of grace enfranchised and naturalized. Abraham, the root of the Jewish church, is not beholden to thee; but thou art greatly obliged to him, as the trustee of the covenant and the father of many nations. Therefore, *if thou boast*, know (this word must be supplied to clear the sense) *thou bearest not the root but the root thee*." 2. "Be not secure ([v. 20](#)): *Be not high-minded, but fear*. Be not too confident of your own strength and standing." A holy fear is an excellent preservative against high-mindedness: happy is the man that thus feareth always. We need not fear but God will be true to his word; all the danger is lest we be false to ours. *Let us therefore fear*, [Heb. 4:1](#). The church of Rome now boasts of a patent of perpetual preservation; but the apostle here, in his epistle to that church when she was in her infancy and integrity, enters an express caveat against that boast, and all claims of that kind.—*Fear* what? "Why fear lest thou commit a forfeiture as they have done, lest thou lose the privileges thou now enjoyest, as they have lost theirs." The evils that befall others should be warnings to us. *Go* (saith God to Jerusalem [Jer. 7:12](#)), and *see what I did to Shiloh*; so now, let all the churches of God go and see what he did to Jerusalem, and what is become of the day of their visitation, that we may hear and fear, and take heed of Jerusalem's sin. The patent which churches have of their privileges is not for a certain term, nor entailed upon them and their heirs; but it runs as long as they carry themselves well, and no longer. Consider, (1.) "How they were broken off. It was not undeservedly, by an act of absolute sovereignty and prerogative, but *because of unbelief*." It seems, then, it is possible for churches that have long stood by faith to fall into such a state of infidelity as may be their ruin. Their unbelief did not only provoke God to cut them off, but they did by this cut themselves off; it was not only the meritorious, but the formal cause of their separation. "Now, thou art liable to the same infirmity and corruption that they fell by." Further observe, They were *natural branches* ([v. 21](#)), not only interested in Abraham's covenant, but descending from Abraham's loins, and so born upon the premises, and thence had a kind of tenant-right: yet, when they sunk into unbelief, God did not spare them. Prescription, long usage, the faithfulness of their ancestors, would not secure them. It was in vain

to plead, though they insisted much upon it, that they were Abraham's seed, [Mt. 3:9](#); [Jn. 8:33](#). It is true they were the husbandmen to whom the vineyard was first let out; but, when they forfeited it, it was justly taken from them, [Mt. 21:41](#), 43. This is called here *severity*, [v. 22](#). God laid righteousness to the line and judgment to the plummet, and dealt with them according to their sins. Severity is a word that sounds harshly; and I do not remember that it is any where else in scripture ascribed to God; and it is here applied to the unchurching of the Jews. God is most severe towards those that have been in profession nearest to him, if they rebel against him, [Amos 3:2](#). Patience and privileges abused turn to the greatest wrath. Of all judgments, spiritual judgments are the sorest; for of these he is here speaking, [v. 8](#). (2.) "How thou standest, thou that art engrafted in." He speaks to the Gentile churches in general, though perhaps tacitly reflecting on some particular person, who might have expressed some such pride and triumph in the Jews' rejection. "Consider then," [1.] "By what means thou standest: *By faith*, which is a depending grace, and fetches in strength from heaven. Thou dost not stand in any strength of thy own, of which thou mightest be confident: thou art no more than the free grace of God makes thee, and his grace is his own, which he gives or withholds at pleasure. That which ruined them was unbelief, and by faith thou standest; therefore thou hast no faster hold than they had, thou standest on no firmer foundation than they did." [2.] "On what terms ([v. 22](#)): *Towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness*, that is, continue in a dependence upon and compliance with the free grace of God, the want of which it was that ruined the Jews—if thou be careful to keep up thine interest in the divine favour, by being continually careful to please God and fearful of offending him." The sum of our duty, the condition of our happiness, is to keep ourselves in the love of God. *Fear the Lord and his goodness.* [Hos. 3:5](#).

III. Another thing that qualified this doctrine of the Jews' rejection is that, though for the present they are cast off, yet the rejection is not final; but, when the fulness of time is come, they will be taken in again. They are not cast off for ever, but mercy is remembered in the midst of wrath. Let us observe,

1. How this conversion of the Jews is here described. (1.) It is said to be their fulness ([v. 12](#)), that is, the addition of them to the church, the filling up again of that place which became vacant by their rejection. This would be the enriching of the world (that is, the church in the world) with a great deal of light and strength and beauty. (2.) It is called the receiving of them. The conversion of a soul is the receiving of that soul, so the conversion of a nation. They shall be received into favour, into the church, into the love of Christ, whose arms are stretched out for the receiving of all those that will come to him. And this will be as *life from the dead*—so strange and surprising, and yet withal so welcome and acceptable. The conversion of the Jews will bring great joy to the church. See [Lu. 15:32](#), *He was dead, and is alive; and therefore it was meet we should make merry and be glad*. (3.) It is called the *grafting of them in again* ([v. 23](#)), into the church, from which they had been broken off. That which is grafted in receives sap and virtue from the root; so does a soul that is truly grafted into the church receive life, and strength, and grace from Christ the quickening root. They shall be *grafted into their own olive-tree* ([v. 24](#)); that is, into the church of which they had formerly been the most eminent and conspicuous members, to retrieve those privileges of visible church-membership which they had so long enjoyed, but have now sinned away and forfeited by their unbelief. (4.) It is called the *saving of all Israel*, [v. 26](#). True conversion may well be called salvation; it is salvation begun. See [Acts 2:47](#). The adding of them to the church is the saving of them: *tous souzomenous*, in the present tense, *are saved*. When conversion-work goes on, salvation-work goes on.

2. What it is grounded upon, and what reason we have to look for it.

(1.) Because of the holiness of the first-fruits and the root, [v. 16](#). Some by the first-fruits understand those of the Jews that were already converted to the faith of Christ and received into the church, who were as the first-fruits dedicated to God, as earnest of a more plentiful and sanctified harvest. A good beginning promises a good ending. Why may we not suppose that others may be savingly wrought upon as well as those who are already brought in? Others by the first-fruits understand the same with the root, namely, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from whom the Jews descended, and with whom, as the prime trustees, the covenant was deposited: and so they were the root of the Jews, not only as a people, but as a church. Now, if they were holy, which is not meant so much of inherent as of federal holiness—if they were in the church and in the covenant—then we have reason to conclude that God hath a kindness for the *lump*—the body of that people; and for the *branches*—the particular members of it. The Jews are in a sense a holy nation ([Ex. 19:6](#)), being descended from holy parents. Now it cannot be imagined that such a holy nation should be totally and finally cast off. This proves that the seed of believers, as such, are within the pale of the visible church, and within the verge of the covenant, till they do, by their unbelief, throw themselves out; for, *if the root be holy, so are the branches*. Though real qualifications are not propagated, yet relative privileges are. Though a wise man does not beget a wise man, yet a free man begets a free man. Though grace does not run in the blood, yet external privileges do (till they are forfeited), even to a thousand generations. Look how they will answer it another day that cut off the entail, by turning the seed of the faithful out of the church, and so not allowing the blessing of Abraham to come upon the Gentiles. The Jewish branches are reckoned holy, because the root was so. This is expressed more plainly ([v. 28](#)): *They are beloved for the fathers' sakes*. In this love to the fathers the first foundation of their church-state was laid ([Deu. 4:37](#)): *Because he loved they fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them*. And the same love would revive their privileges, for still the ancient loving-kindness is remembered; they are *beloved for the fathers' sakes*. It is God's usual method of grace. Kindness to the children for the father's sake is therefore called the *kindness of God*, [2 Sa. 9:3, 7](#). Though, as concerning the gospel (namely, in the present dispensation of it), they are enemies to it *for your sakes*, that is, for the sake of the Gentiles, against whom they have such an antipathy; yet, when God's time shall come, this will wear off, and God's love to their fathers will be remembered. See a promise that points at this, [Lev. 26:42](#). The iniquity of the fathers is visited but to the third and fourth generation; but there is mercy kept for thousands. Many fare the better for the sake of their godly ancestors. It is upon this account that the church is called their own *olive-tree*. Long it had been their own peculiar, which is some encouragement to us to hope that there may be room for them in it again, for old acquaintance-sake. That which hath been may be again. Though particular persons and generations wear off in unbelief, yet there having been a national church-membership, though for the present suspended, we may expect that it will be revived.

(2.) Because of the power of God ([v. 23](#)): *God is able to graft them in again*. The conversion of souls is a work of almighty power; and when they seem most hardened, and blinded, and obstinate, our comfort is that God is able to work a change, able to graft those in that have been long cast out and withered. When the house is kept by the strong man armed, with all his force, yet God is stronger than he, and is able to dispossess him. The condition of their restoration is faith: *If they abide not still in unbelief*. So that nothing is to be done but to remove that unbelief that is the great obstacle; and God is able to take that away, though nothing less than an almighty power will do it, the same power that raised up Christ from the dead, [Eph. 1:19](#), 29. Otherwise, can these dry bones live?

(3.) Because of the grace of God manifested to the Gentiles. Those that have themselves experienced the grace of God, preventing, distinguishing grace, may thence take encouragement to hope well concerning others. This is his argument (v. 24): "If thou wast grafted into a good olive, that was wild by nature, much more shall these that were the natural branches, and may therefore be presumed somewhat nearer to the divine acceptance." This is a suggestion very proper to check the insolence of those Gentile Christians that looked with disdain and triumph upon the condition of the rejected Jews, and trampled upon them; as if he had said, "Their condition, bad as it is, is not so bad as yours was before your conversion; and therefore why may it not be made as good as yours is?" This is his argument (v. 30, 31): *As you in times past have not*, etc. It is good for those that have found mercy with God to be often thinking what they were in time past, and how they obtained that mercy. This would help to soften our censures of those that still continue in unbelief, and quicken our prayers for them. He argues further from the occasion of the Gentiles' call, that is, the unbelief of the Jews; thence it took rise: *"You have obtained mercy through their unbelief; much more shall they obtain mercy through your mercy. If the putting out of their candle was the lighting of yours, by that power of God which brings good out of evil, much more shall the continued light of your candle, when God's time shall come, be a means of lighting theirs again."* *"That through your mercy they might obtain mercy, that is, that they may be beholden to you, as you have been to them."* He takes it for granted that the believing Gentiles would do their utmost endeavour to work upon the Jews—that, when God had persuaded Japhet, Japhet would be labouring to persuade Shem. True grace hates monopolies. Those that have found mercy themselves should endeavour that through their mercy others also may obtain mercy.