

CONVERTING FROM ERROR

James 5: 19-20

From the beginning of this epistle to the end, James has set forth the manner in which a believing brother or sister is converted "from the error of his way" to the truth of Christ the Way: by the truth of Christ Jesus set forth in the gospel (James 1: 17, 18, 21.), by prayer (James 5: 16) and by patiently waiting on God to do the work effectually in the heart (James 5: 8.)

We have an example between Peter and the Lord Jesus himself (Luke 22: 31, 32). Christ Jesus is the Righteous Man the Master. Simon Peter was a believer erring from the truth. First, we should always use the glorious promises of Christ to restore our erring brother. Christ is the Word, the Truth of God. Christ the Way both told Peter he alone would save him and Christ made himself known to Peter. We should always point our erring brother to Christ through the word of the gospel. Secondly, James says pray for the erring brother. The Lord said, "Simon, I have prayed for thee." We should cast ourselves upon the mercy of God in prayer to make his word effectual in the hearts of brethren who err. Thirdly, James says wait on the Lord. The Lord Jesus could have spoken and turned Peter from his error immediately, but the Master waited, in order to teach Peter his need for Christ. He said, "and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." By not merely saving Peter from the death of his error immediately, which would have covered a multitude of sins in Peter alone, the Lord taught Peter through the trial so that later as Peter encountered other erring brethren he could remember how the Lord dealt with him and could deal with them in the same merciful way. Through the manner the Lord used, not only were a multitude of Peter's sins covered but Peter was used of God to turn others to Christ in whom the multitude of their sins were covered. This is why we should always patiently wait on the Lord to work correction through the trial by his power and not our own. It is good to read the lesson Peter learned in I Peter 5: 1-11. Note how similar Peter's instruction is to that which James has taught us throughout this epistle. When we behold an erring brother it is as much a trial of faith in the unerring brother as it is for the erring brother. But the Lord strengthens both, so that through experiencing the power and wisdom of God's sufficient grace, we learn how best to strengthen one another.