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### THE LOST FOUND.

LUKE XV.

A lost sheep knows not whither it is going: it cannot track its way: it is bewildered and helpless. Nor is it sensible to *all* its danger. It has a sense of its danger. It may often be alarmed.—It is afraid, and it makes known its feelings by its cries. It is wretched. It gazes around it, and finds no help. It is in danger of perishing for hunger—or falling into some pit, or over some beetling precipice—or of being devoured by some beast of prey, of becoming the prey of the wolf, the lion, or the bear. And such is descriptive of our state by nature. We are astray, away from God. We are wandering in sin. We know not whither we are going. We may have some sense of our danger, but we know not the full amount of it. We see not the yawning pit which is ready to receive us: we see not the dangers which encompass us—the snares, the temptations, the evils which beset us.—The sinner is miserable: he is wretched. He has no solid peace—no abiding or satisfactory happiness. His soul has no resting place—no fold—no security, it is ill at ease even amid its enjoyments: it is disquieted and alarmed. Nor can he recover himself. The lost sheep cannot, of itself, find its way back to the fold: it would wander on till it perished. So the sinner cannot find his way back to happiness and to God. He would wander on for ever: he would still continue in sin, preferring the evil to the good, departing farther from the living God. His ignorance would lead him to wander: his very perverseness would lead him to wander: he would prefer the evil: he would not choose to return

to God: he would rather go on in his sins, till he be plunged into the pit of destruction. Meantime, the storm of divine wrath is ready to burst over his head. Just as the pitiless tempest may assail the sheep that has wandered from the fold, so the wrath of God is ready to overtake the sinner—And all the powers of darkness are seeking his destruction. Satan goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The old serpent, the devil, is ready to sting him—to inflict his venomous bite. Every temptation with which he is plied is an enemy of his soul, is like a beast of prey. Hell and destruction yawn before him; and how much danger is there that he may fall into the devouring abyss!

Or, our state is like that of the lost coin. A lost piece of money is of no use to its owner. It does not serve his purpose. It may be recovered, but while it is lost it is useless. So are we lost to our Creator, of no use. We do not fulfil the purposes for which we were created. Our soul is lost to God. It is no fitter for the purposes for which God made it, than a lost coin is fit for exchange or purchase. Those powers of reason with which God has endowed us are employed upon every object but that which they were created chiefly to contemplate and admire. They are seldom, if ever, turned upon God or things divine. They are conversant chiefly about meaner themes. They are exercised often about the most worthless objects. It is the description of the wicked that God is not in all their thoughts.—They can think about every thing but God: they studiously exclude him from their thoughts. Then, our affections are