

**THE LOST ONE; OR,
THE SOUL
RUINED BY SIN**

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The lost one; or, The soul ruined by sin by William Tatlock

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WILLIAM TATLOCK

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THE LOST ONE.

WHEN the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world, clothed in human flesh, he declared that the great object of his appearing amongst men was, that he might seek and save that which was LOST.

The condition of man through sin was so wretched in the eye of the Son of God, so different from what it would have been, had he pursued his true interest from the first ; and his prospects as regards the awful eternity to which this life is but a short introduction, were so appallingly, so inevitably terrible, that the only word by which the Saviour could describe the condition of man, was expressive of everything forlorn and wretched, everything that forbade hope, and implied the most intolerable misery :—he was LOST. Lost as to moral rectitude ; lost as to the favour of

them, that before their reception of Christ, they "*were dead in trespasses and sins,*" Eph. ii. 2.

From this we learn that man's spiritual condition before God has not only undergone a change, but that that change is more serious and more fatal in its character, than any other which could have passed upon him. *He is dead.* He cannot answer any end of his creation; he has no knowledge, no power to move or act: he is a mass of corruption, mingling with the polluted earth, in which every faculty of his soul is completely buried.

These are some of the characteristics of a man who is naturally dead, or in other words, lost to all the purposes of life on earth. See how plainly these marks of a state of death appear in the soul.

1. As one spiritually dead, the soul has no knowledge of God.

By this I mean, not that man in his natural state is incapable of knowing anything *intellectually* of God, but that all right knowledge of God is lost. No sooner did Adam eat of the forbidden tree, than he ceased to know God as a Friend, and sought to hide himself from the divine presence in guilty fear. Oneness between

God and man was destroyed by sin, and the offender was naturally led to seek refuge from the wrath of the Offended in increasing distance, and decreasing knowledge. It was only the arm of omnipotent grace that kept Adam from falling at once into all the dark depths of sin, and sorrow, and despair. But wherever the same Almighty grace is not exerted in behalf of a sinner, there we see the truth of our position, that man has lost the true knowledge of God. Ever since the fall, the sinful cry of the depraved heart towards God has been this: "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," Job xxi. 14. It is not to man we owe it, that the knowledge of God lingered in any measure among some families of the earth. It was by frequent communications of his will from heaven, and by the continued operations of his Holy Spirit upon the hearts of a few, that any knowledge of God was preserved among mankind. But for this, the change from light to darkness would have been as sudden and complete in the soul of man at the fall, as was the change from darkness to light, when Jehovah illumined the new-made world with the early outburst of his splendour.

God is unchangeably the same: power, and

wisdom, and love, combined in infinite perfection, are his. From the beginning of the creation, these attributes have been employed unceasingly by Jehovah, for the best good of man: yet it is true that man has lost the knowledge of his holy and beneficent Maker. He knows not the Being who is thus blessing him with this exuberance of goodness. The soul has been, and is, employed in philosophical research, in mechanical contrivance, in splendid speculation; but at the same time, "the world by wisdom knew not God," 1 Cor. i. 21. Such is the character of every natural heart, until enlightened by the heaven-imparted knowledge of God in Christ.

As if to demonstrate the completeness of this spiritual ignorance in the soul, God incarnate "came into the world,"—the world that was made by him,—“and the world knew him not,” John i. 10.

Again, the Holy Ghost, speaking by St. Paul, says, "They are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to cor-

ruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the *creature* more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. i. 20—25.

As a consequence of this ignorance of God himself, the soul is lost as to all true knowledge of the things of God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. He is not only ignorant of the things of God, that is, of true religion, but he *cannot know* them, except by the direct and peculiar teaching of the Holy Ghost; because he is *dead in sin*.

Hence, by the unconverted soul, real religion is looked upon as enthusiasm, and the consistent disciple of Jesus is regarded as a fanatic, and all earnest alarm about hell and damnation, is viewed only as the disturbed excitement of a weak mind. It was so even when Christ was on earth: men were so blind, so dead, that they despised and rejected him, and regarded his religion as a despicable superstition. It is so now. Experimental religion is not understood by the natural heart, and it is hated.

My dear Reader, have you never perused the volume of truth? have you not read in it the account of man's sin, ingratitude, and hatred of God? of the matchless love of a dying Saviour, bleeding under the cruelty of man and the curse of God for your sins? And are you still living in sin? is your heart still unrenewed? are you still labouring under the load of unpardoned guilt? Are you looking upon conversion and holiness as the mere fancies of a few? and are you cultivating your natural love of indulgence in sin, and indifference to vital religion? How is this? Shall I tell you? It is because you are *dead*. Your soul is sealed in the slumbers of spiritual insensibility.—*It is lost.*

How awful is this state, both in itself and in its consequences! God is not known, and therefore cannot be honoured. God is not known, and therefore he cannot be loved and obeyed. What is the consequence? It is nothing less than **EVERLASTING DAMNATION!** Dear Reader, do you not shudder at the thought!

2. But this leads me to notice in the next place, that the soul has no power to move in the ways of God; the *will* has become corrupt, it is dead, and therefore cannot *act* for God. How