

THE LOST SHEEP RESTORED

*A sermon preached at
Salem Chapel, Landport, Portsmouth,
on Lord's Day morning, 15th August, 1841*

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Volume 2 - Sermon 10

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“My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.”

Jeremiah 50:6.

God the Father in His eternal appointments, God the Son in His mediatorial work, and God the Holy Ghost in His inward teachings, have drawn an eternal line of distinction between the whitewashed professor and the living soul. However the hypocrites in Zion may be mixed up in churches with the people of God; however they may profess to believe in the same doctrines, yet there is a boundary—never to be crossed—established between them by the hand of the triune Jehovah, a boundary line which not all the art or wisdom of men can ever break down. The child of God has that filial fear in his heart which the professor knows nothing of; he has that uprightness before God, that integrity, that simplicity and godly sincerity, that desire to be right, that fear to be wrong, that panting

of heart feelingly and experimentally to know “the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent,” (John 17:3) that longing to live day by day under the blessed Spirit’s teachings, that humility of soul and brokenness of heart, that tenderness of conscience, and those other fruits of the Spirit, which may indeed be counterfeited and imitated, but which never really exist save in those hearts which God has touched with His finger.

It therefore behoves all those whom God has been pleased to plant upon the walls of Zion as watchmen, in order to call the hours of light and darkness, and to proclaim when “the morning cometh, and also the night” (Isa. 21:11-12), to cry aloud and spare not betwixt the honest man and the thief. The faithful shepherds are called upon “to judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats” (Ezek. 34:17). Nor has there ever been a period when the prophets of the Lord were more urgently required to take forth the precious from the vile, and be thus manifested as God’s mouth (Jer. 15:19).

In the two verses that precede the text, and in the text itself taken in connection with them, we have a