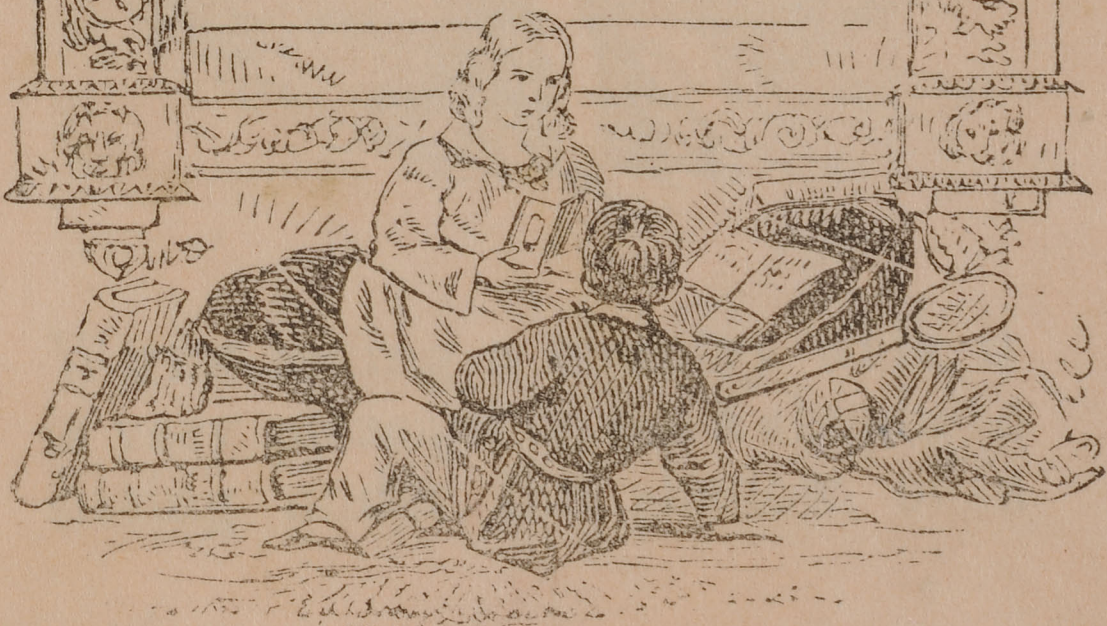


THE SHEPHERD
AND HIS
FLOCK.

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;
56, Paternoster-row; 164, Piccadilly,
LONDON.



THE SHEPHERD AND HIS FLOCK.



WHEN taking a country walk it is very pleasant to see a shepherd sitting under the shadow of a

tree, while his flock are feeding in the green meadow before him. It is hoped there are many kind shepherds in our land, though it is said those who keep sheep in some parts of the world are more tender with their flocks, and watch over them with greater care than we do. This you know is needed, as the helpless sheep may be attacked by the wild beasts, which are not found in our country.

Some years ago, a gentleman was travelling through a part of Greece, where many shepherds live. As he was on his journey he came to a place where he saw three men with their flocks. One had about six hundred sheep, another seven hundred

and a third seven hundred and fifty. These large flocks were spread all over the green valley, and were all mingled. But every shepherd knew his own sheep; and as he gave names to all, when the night came he called them together. Each flock then left the others, and followed their own shepherd, but a strange shepherd they would not follow. If called to come or go they obeyed him, for they knew his voice. When a sheep was going into a wrong place he called to it, and it came back at once. If the way was narrow or rough, he went before the sheep, and they quietly followed after him.

It was a very cold day when the gentleman saw these three

flocks. Some of the lambs were quite strong and full of play; but others were very young and feeble. The cold chilled them, and they could not walk. Each shepherd wore a kind of large cloak, tied round his neck, and also fastened about his waist, while the part round his bosom was full and loose. So he took up some of the little feeble lambs, and put them in the loose part of his robe—near the bosom. He did not quite wrap them up, but let their little heads appear, so that they could breathe well. But he kept them snug and warm. It was a pleasant sight to see a kind shepherd, with his bosom filled with lambs.

Among the large number of

sheep there were some old and feeble ones. They could not well get along the road when they returned home at night. A part of the way was steep and full of stones, and another part was miry and uneven. So the shepherds put their crooks just behind the sheep, to help them along. This was done very gently and kindly.

We are also told by other travellers, that a shepherd will take great care in finding nice green pastures to which he may lead his flocks. And should any robber or wild beast attack the sheep, the keeper will bravely defend them with his life.

Now, we well know of whom this account may remind us.

is so much like what we read in the Bible that our thoughts are at once led to Jesus. Yes; he indeed is the "Good Shepherd"—the "Chief Shepherd"—the "Great Shepherd." "The sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." He "gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom." "His rod and his staff they comfort" or help the weary and aged among the flock. If you read the tenth chapter of the Gospel by St. John, the twenty-third Psalm,

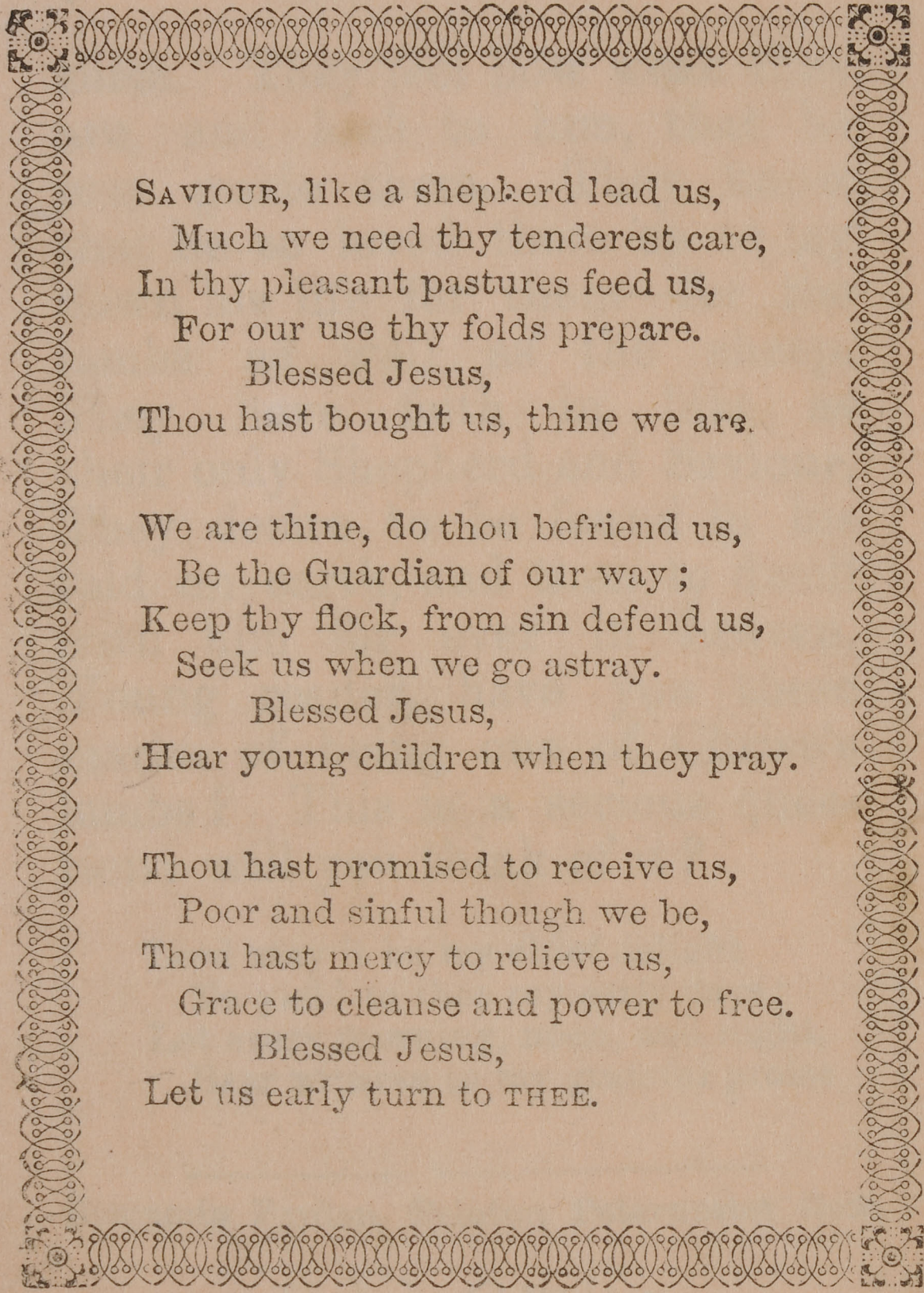
and a part of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, you will see how the Scriptures speak of our Lord Jesus Christ as a shepherd. You will also learn from other parts of the Bible how he "came to seek and to save those that are lost;" and that he "gave his life for the sheep." He so loved them as to die for them on the cross.

But who are his sheep? who are his lambs? We know that "all we like sheep have gone astray." Who then belong to Christ's "little flock"? What are the marks by which they are known? They are those who love the Shepherd, and who follow him. They keep near to him, that he may feed and protect

them. They feel how weak they are, and look to him, that he may guide them. They know that he so loved them as to lay down his life for them—for the lambs as well as the sheep. They have faith in him as their only Shepherd and Saviour. They desire to be found in his fold on earth, and then to dwell with him for ever in heaven. Young reader, have you these marks of being one of Christ's lambs? This is a serious question: will you think of it?

Lord may it be my chief delight
To yield to thee my early days;
Let every morning, noon, and night,
Bear witness to my grateful praise.

3478660



SAVIOUR, like a shepherd lead us,
Much we need thy tenderest care,
In thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use thy folds prepare.

Blessed Jesus,
Thou hast bought us, thine we are.

We are thine, do thou befriend us,
Be the Guardian of our way ;
Keep thy flock, from sin defend us,
Seek us when we go astray.

Blessed Jesus,
Hear young children when they pray.

Thou hast promised to receive us,
Poor and sinful though we be,
Thou hast mercy to relieve us,
Grace to cleanse and power to free.

Blessed Jesus,
Let us early turn to THEE.