



THE
OLD STABLE.

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



THE OLD STABLE;
OR, THE
RAGGED SCHOOL BOY.



SOME Christian people hired an old stable not far from the city of London. They first had it

well cleaned, and some windows put in the sides, and all the walls made tidy. They then fitted it up with a few forms and stools, as they wished to hold in it a school for those poor boys who were not taught in any other place.

When the cold month of December came round, the boys went to the stable as they had done in the months of summer. But it was a sad sight to see them moving along with pale faces, their bodies half naked, and their feet chapped and bleeding. They were drawn to the spot, because they knew that there they would meet with teachers whose hearts were touched for their sorrows. They felt that there was some-

body in the wide world who pitied them. Besides it was a treat for them to sit in a clean room, though it had been once an old stable. Then, too, there was a fire to warm and comfort them. And where else could these poor ragged boys stand by a fireside when the weather was cold and frosty? Some of them were orphans; others had no friends, and got their living by begging, and even by stealing. Many had no home, and slept at night under sheds, or inside of a cart, or under the arch of a bridge, or in any place where they could lay their heads.

In this school was a very poor boy named James. He ran about the streets in the day time, to

earn a halfpenny if he could. But he took cold, and was soon laid aside ill, and near to death. When he was first visited by his teachers, he was lying on a bed of dirty straw. A large deal box stood in the middle of the floor, to serve as a table. There was only one chair, and that was old and broken. His mother was dirty and ragged. This was a sad state in which to find poor little James ; yet he was not unhappy. He told his teachers that he was dying, but that he hoped he was going to Jesus. He then asked them to read a chapter from the Bible to him, that he might learn more about the Saviour who died for him on the cross.

The next time James was seen, he was found much worse. As he lay on the straw he called to his side a brother and sister. He first said to his brother, "You must pray for a new heart;" and then speaking to his sister, he begged of her to go to school, where she would learn of Jesus and the way to heaven. Now fixing his eyes on his father and mother, who sat looking on their dying boy, he said, "Oh! mother, will you give up drinking, and go to God's house, and pray for a new heart? I want to meet you in heaven: do, mother." The teachers had often made the same request, but in vain; now tears fell fast upon her pale cheeks. The voice of her dying

child had touched even her hard heart.

When he was able again to speak he told his father that he would soon leave him, but he was going to his heavenly Father. "Will you give up swearing, father?" said he, "and read the Bible, and go to a place of worship, and ask God to give you a new heart?" The father could not answer, but stood wiping away the tears with the sleeve of his torn flannel coat; but the mother kissing her boy, cried, "He will, James; yes, he will." James had an aged grandmother, and to her he sent his last message: "Tell her to give up buying things on Sunday, and read the big Testament which

teachers gave her, and go to God's house."

The teachers now knelt by the dying boy, and prayed to the Lord on his behalf; and in one short hour afterwards the Saviour took home to himself this first ripe fruit of the pious labours in the old stable.

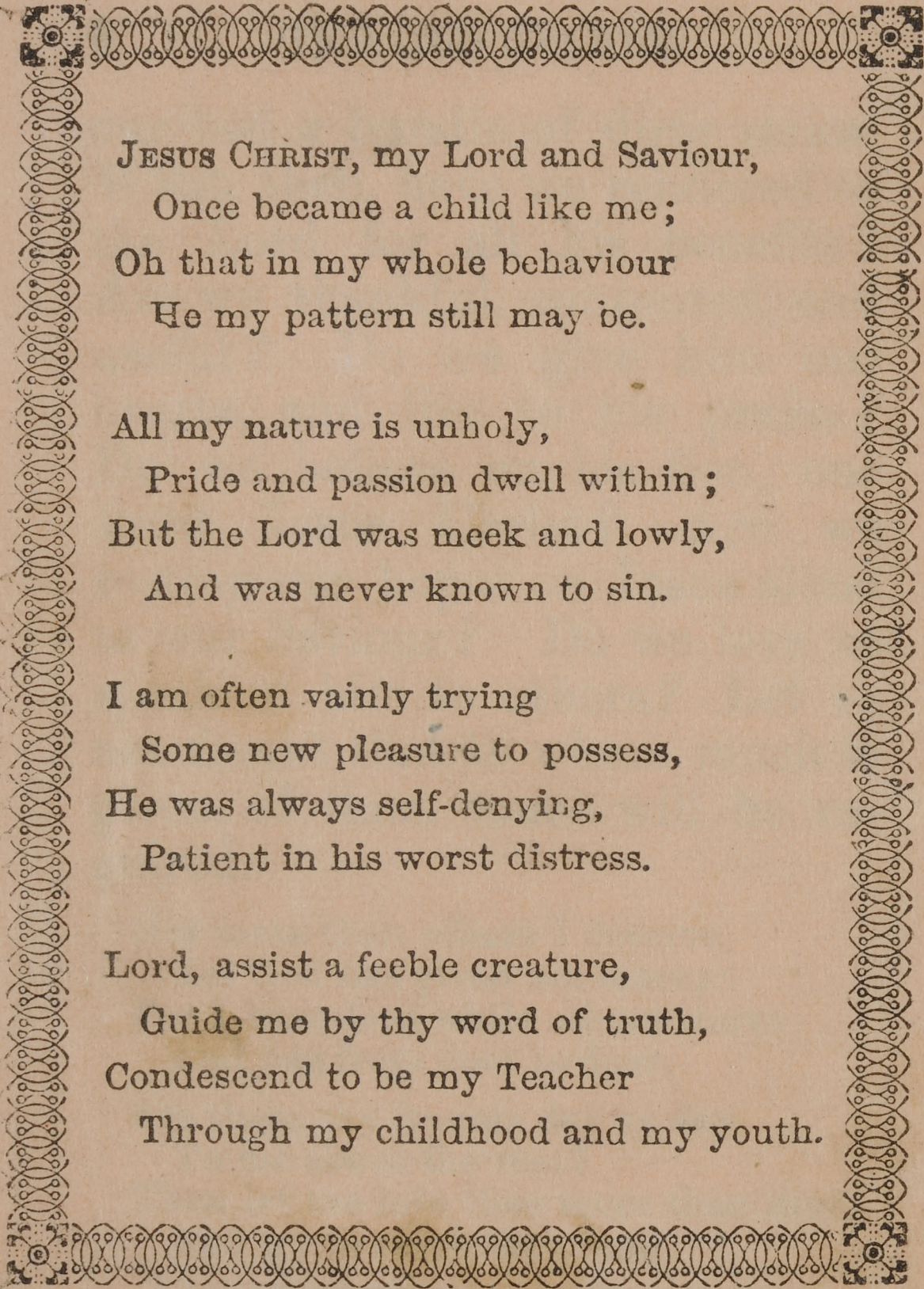
Whilst we praise God for his rich grace given to this poor ragged school boy, let us ask ourselves if we have, like him, yielded our hearts to Jesus. It may be that we have a happy home, pious friends, and every earthly comfort. We have ministers, and teachers, and Bibles, and books. Our place of instruction is not an old stable, nor

our bed a bundle of dirty straw. What, then, have we rendered to the Lord for all his benefits? Are we thankful, contented, and useful? Do we give him our hearts, and live to his praise? Do we believe on his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ? Are we resting our hopes on Jesus alone as our Saviour? Do we love to speak of him to others? Let us not forget that to whom much is given, of them much will be required.

Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God has given me more;
For I have food while others starve
And beg from door to door.

Are these thy favours day by day
To me above the rest?
Then let me love thee more than they,
And try to serve thee best.

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JESUS CHRIST, my Lord and Saviour,
Once became a child like me;
Oh that in my whole behaviour
He my pattern still may be.

All my nature is unholy,
Pride and passion dwell within;
But the Lord was meek and lowly,
And was never known to sin.

I am often vainly trying
Some new pleasure to possess,
He was always self-denying,
Patient in his worst distress.

Lord, assist a feeble creature,
Guide me by thy word of truth,
Condescend to be my Teacher
Through my childhood and my youth.