

THE CHILDREN'S PORTION.

CHRIST THE SAVIOUR OF CHILDREN.

It is a great thing for children to have a Saviour. A mother was knitting under the porch of her house one autumn afternoon. Her boy was playing with other children on the village green. Beyond the green was the river, and on the opposite bank of it was a wood full of nuts and berries, and sweet-smelling leaves, and flowers, and many other things which children delight to gather. 'Let us cross to the wood,' said some of the bigger children. 'I shall cross too,' said the little boy, whose mother was knitting at the door. The ford was a little to the right, and just out of his mother's view. There were stepping stones all the way across. And the little nutting and berrying party got quite safely to the other side. But the clouds had been darkening over the sky since the morning. And now it began to rain. First it came in heavy drops, then there was a peal of thunder, then came down torrents of rain. The bigger children hurried back to the ford, and one by one got over safely. The little boy whose mother was knitting under the porch was last. The river had by this time risen. The stepping stones were beginning to be covered. The little man took one step, then a second, then he came to a stone over which the river was flowing swiftly, and his heart failed. He wrung his hands with fear, and cried with a piercing cry. The mother heard his cry and flew to the ford. She was too late. She could not reach her child. A broad black flood of water came thundering down between her boy and her. 'My child! my child!' she cried. 'Mother! mother! come for me,' cried the boy. All the village came down to the river-side—men and women, young and old; but no one would venture to cross. They looked and pitied; they looked and wrung their hands, but they gave no help. At that moment a young shepherd, leading his flock down from the mountains, entered the village, and saw the peril of the child. He left his sheep on the green, and took great strides to the river-brink. The roaring of the water over the stones was terrible, but he heeded not. He stepped boldly from stone to stone. In the centre, the flood had carried some of them away: he plunged into the stream. With strong arms he beat the water to the right and left. He pressed his feet against the currents, and swam right over to the boy. With one arm he clasped the child, with the other he once more grappled with the flood. There was the roaring of the stream beneath, and the raging of the storm above; but the brave shepherd, partly walking and partly swimming, brought the boy to the bank, and delivered him to his mother.

That was a boy who found a saviour. And what the brave young shepherd saved him from was death. But Christ was the real Saviour that day. It was He who sent the shepherd at the very nick of time. It was He who put the noble willingness into his heart to risk his life for the life of the child. It was He who made him brave and strong to battle with the flood. And every day, somewhere, in this or some