

THE CHILDREN'S PORTION.

LIFE LESSONS.

People have fancied that we are born with hearts white as snow, and that they are blackened afterwards by evil example. But the Bible teaches us that we are born with evil hearts,—hearts filled with the seeds of corruption as the ground is with weed seeds. How soon we find it to be so! How easy it is for us to do wrong, how hard to do right! Whence spring infant tempers, infant falsehoods, infant disobediences? We trace this to our fallen nature inherited through our parents from Adam and Eve. *They* ate the sour grapes, and our teeth are set on edge. If a bowl of dye be crimson, whatever you draw out of it will be red—if a coat be black, each thread you pull from it will be black. So if our hearts are sinful, whatever issues from them will be more or less sinful. And by-and-bye, we are conscious that we sin—we are quite aware that this or that is contrary to God's law, and yet we do it; and these are *wilful sins*. Had we driven a nail into a wall for every such sin, what a sight that wall would be. But God has remembered them. They are in his book. One stone flung at the Queen would put you in prison—one theft from a shop would blast your character—and one sin is enough to ruin us. But we have hundreds to answer for. If we could recollect them and were sorry for them, they would seem a big load on our backs, pressing us down to the dust. We should be as frightened as Cain was with the blood of his brother upon him. And, indeed, you are afraid sometimes; and sometimes you are unhappy, and sometimes you are ashamed. Here you have three proofs that you have sins to be forgiven,—fear, trouble, shame. And think how these would overwhelm you, if you had to appear before God without any prospect of pardon.

But how can they be forgiven?—If sinners grieve over them? No. If they resolve to do them no more? No. If they fast and afflict themselves? No. If they pray to God? No. By trusting in God's mercy No. How, then? *Simply by taking Jesus for their Saviour!* "Your sins are forgiven for *his name's sake*," that is for Christ's sake. We frequently employ another's name. We ask for kindness, for help, for a favour, because a beloved relative has deserved it for us. It is said that as a poor beggar was going in to petition the king for his rebel son, in the passage he met the king's lovely child. He took him up in his arms and carried him in before the king, and then besought him to spare his son for that lovely child's sake, and the king was melted. So with Christ's name, it is mighty for us to plead; it can obtain instant and entire absolution for the vilest. For he is God's delight, and he has himself borne our punishment on the cross—the just for the unjust. He shed his precious blood on purpose that God might be able to say to each penitent soul. "I forgive you freely." We ought to have been on that cross; but he chose to be nailed to it in our stead. He was bruised and slain in our stead. He can bid you and me gaze at that awful scene, and declare to us that a way is opened to us there to GOD'S LOVE. Nay, it was God's