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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Light in Darkness	135
Abide in Christ, as your Sanctification	135
Christianity the Remedy for Socialism	136
The Greatness of the Littles	136
MISSIONARY—	
Uganda, Central Africa	137
BRITISH AND FOREIGN NEWS	137
HOME NEWS	139
CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE SOCIETY	141
EDITORIAL—	
Editorial Notes	142
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL—	
Absalom's Rebellion	144
CORRESPONDENCE	145
CHILDREN'S CORNER—	
Lady Temple's Grandchildren	145

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

The following piece of poetry, often republished, is generally attributed to John Milton, but was really written by Miss Lloyd, a Quakeress of Philadelphia.

I am old and blind ;
Men point to me, as smitten by God's frown,
Afflicted and deserted of my kind,
Yet I am not cast down.

I am weak, yet strong ;
I murmur not that I no longer see,
Poor, old, and helpless, I the more belong,
Father Supreme, to thee.

O Merciful one,
When men are farthest then Thou art most near—
When friends pass by, my weakness shun,
Thy chariot I hear.

Thy glorious face
Is leaning toward me, and its holy light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling-place,
And there is no more night.

On my bended knee
I recognize thy purpose clearly shown ;
My vision thou hast dimmed that I may see
Thyself, Thyself alone.

I have naught to fear,
This darkness is the shadow of Thy wing,
Beneath it I am almost sacred,
There can come no evil thing.

O, I seem to stand
Trembling, where foot of mortal ne'er hath been,
Wrapped in the radiance of Thy sinless land,
Which eye hath never seen.

Visions come and go,
Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng ;
From angel lips I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song.

It is nothing now,
When heaven is opening on my sightless eyes,
When airs from Paradise refresh my brow,
That earth in darkness lies.

In a purer clime
My being fills with rapture, waves of thought
Roll in upon my spirit, streams sublime
Break over me unsought.

Give me now my lyre,
I feel the stirrings of a gift divine ;
Within my bosom glows unearthly fire,
Lit by no skill of mine.

—Miss Lloyd.

ABIDE IN CHRIST, AS YOUR SANCTIFICATION.

'Of God are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness and SANCTIFICATION, and redemption.'—I COR. i. 30 (R. V. marg.).

'Paul, unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints ;'—thus the chapter opens in which we are taught that Christ is our sanctification. In the Old Testament, believers were called the righteous ; in the New Testament they are called saints, the holy one, sanctified in Christ Jesus. Holy is higher than righteous. Holy in God has reference to His inmost being ; righteous, to His dealings with His creatures. In man, righteousness is but a stepping-stone to holiness. It is in this he can approach most near to the perfection of God (comp. Matt. v. 48 : 1 Pet. i 16). In the Old Testament righteousness was found, while holiness was only typified ; in Jesus Christ, the Holy One, and in His people, His saints or holy ones, it is first realized,

As in scripture, and in our text, so in personal experience righteousness precedes holiness. When first the believer finds Christ as his righteousness, he has such joy in the new made discovery that the study of holiness hardly has a place. But as he grows, the desire for holiness makes itself felt, and he seeks to know what provision his God has made for supplying that need. A superficial acquaintance with God's plan leads to the view that while justification is God's work, by faith in Christ, sanctification is our work, to be performed under the influence of the gratitude we feel for the deliverance we have experienced, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit. But the earnest Christian soon finds how little gratitude can supply the power. When he thinks that more prayer will bring it, he finds that, indispensable as prayer is, it is not enough. Often the believer struggles hopelessly for years, until he listens to the teaching of the Spirit, as He glorifies Christ again, and reveals Christ, our sanctification, to be appropriated by faith alone.

Christ is made of God unto us sanctification. Holiness is the very nature of God, and that alone is holy which God takes possession of and fills with Himself. God's answer to the question, How sinful man could become holy ? is, 'Christ the Holy One of God.' In Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, God's holiness was revealed incarnate, and brought within reach of man. 'I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified in truth.' There is no other way of our becoming holy, but by becoming partakers of the holiness of Christ. And there is

no other way of this taking place than by our personal spiritual union with Him, so that through His Holy Spirit His holy life flows into us. Of God are ye in Christ, who is made unto us sanctification. Abiding by faith in Christ our sanctification is the simple secret of a holy life. The measure of sanctification will depend on the measure of abiding in Him ; as the soul learns wholly to abide in Christ, the promise is increasingly fulfilled : 'The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.'

To illustrate this relation between the measure of the abiding and the measure of sanctification experienced, let us think of the grafting a tree, that instructive symbol of our union to Jesus. The illustration is suggested by the Saviour's words, 'Make the tree good, and his fruit good.' I can graft a tree so that only a single branch bears good fruit, while many of the natural branches remain, and bear their old fruit,—a type of believers in whom a small part of the life is sanctified, but in whom, from ignorance or other reasons, the carnal life still in many respects has full dominion. I can graft a tree so that every branch is cut off, and the whole tree becomes renewed to bear good fruit ; and yet, unless I watch over the tendency of the stems to give sprouts, they may again rise and grow strong, and, robbing the new graft of the strength it needs, makes it weak. Such are Christians who, when apparently powerfully converted, forsake all to follow Christ, and yet after a time, through unwatchfulness, allow old habits to regain their power, and whose Christian life and fruit are but feeble. But if I want a tree wholly made good, I take it when young, and, cutting the stem clean off on the ground, I graft it just where it emerges from the soil. I watch over every bud which the old nature could possibly put forth, until the flow of sap from the old roots into the new stem is so complete, that the old life has, as it were, been entirely conquered and covered of the new. Here I have a tree entirely renewed,—emblem of the Christian who has learnt in entire consecration to surrender everything for Christ, and in a whole-hearted faith wholly to abide in Him.

If, in this last case, the old tree were a reasonable being, that could co-operate with the gardener, what would his language be to it? Would it not be this : 'Yield now thyself entirely to this new nature with which I have invested thee ; repress every tendency of the old nature to give buds or sprouts ; let all thy sap and all thy life-powers rise up into this graft from yonder beautiful tree, which I have put on thee ; so shalt thou bring forth sweet and much fruit.' And the language of the tree to the gardener would be : 'When thou graffest me, O spare not a single branch ; let everything of the old self, even the smallest bud, be destroyed, that I may no longer live in my own, but in that other life that was cut off and brought and put upon me, that I might be wholly new and good.' And, once again, could you afterwards ask the renewed tree, as it was bearing abundant fruit, what it could say of itself, its answer would be this : 'In me, that is, in my roots, there dwelleth no good thing. I am ever inclined to evil ; the sap I collect from the soil is in its nature corrupt, and ready to show itself in bearing evil fruit. But just where the sap rises into the sunshine to ripen into fruit, the wise gardener hath clothed me with new life, through