

with a little more care, a little more forethought, a little more intelligence, the world might be such a brighter and happier place. So men have always thought; so have they prophesied one to another. Human society could not exist without its ideals, its hopes of a better time, its efforts to promote human progress. But ideals are not realised, and hopes still are floating phantoms, and efforts have not accomplished all that they promised. Why, we ask, is this? There is but one answer: human nature is corrupt and does not of itself love that which is good. It needs restoration, reparation, deliverance. The world sitteth in darkness, and knows not its darkness save by the light of God.

And this light is seen as something which cleaves the darkness. God, once grasped by faith, is made clearer by experience. Every time that we look into our own hearts, or think over our own lives, we find new testimonies to the power of evil and the power of God alike. Life may be pleasant to the young and thoughtless; but as years go on reflection is forced upon us by the sense of failure and dissatisfaction with self, which comes, sometimes at least, to all. Life, after all, we find is grim and stern; and round us work severe and relentless forces. We may have a lofty purpose, a high sense of duty; we may be free from the temptations of the lower forms of selfishness, and of the grosser sins. Still we are not what we dreamed we should be, and we have not done what we expected to have done. Instead of the buoyancy of youth is the enduring spirit which says, "Well, I must make the best of it." Whence comes it that this is all? Subtle influences weave themselves around us; there were forces, within and without, which we could neither explain nor resist. The world used us for its purposes, excited our desires, refused to gratify them, and left us tantalised and enslaved in some part of our being. Yet ever to

the eye of faith, behind and beyond this disenchantment, rises clearer and brighter the sense of the presence of a Heavenly Kingdom. Earth's failures exhibit Heaven's realities: our own weakness reveals God's strength. Evil, it is everywhere; but God can deliver. It is worth while to feel the first of these truths deeply, depressingly, that we feel the tranquillising power of the second.

"*But deliver us from evil.*" It is a climax; first we pray for victory over our own nature, then for victory over the world. God explains to us our individual temptations by giving us an increasing power of detachment from the actual appearance of things, and a clearer perception of the Divine order which underlies them here, and will be the abiding reality hereafter. The meaning of that deliverance was made clear in the Atonement. The life of Christ revealed the possibilities of the regenerate nature, and set forth the beauty of the Heavenly Kingdom, which was to have its beginning here on this earth. "The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil." He bade His disciples "Be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world." Of the fruits of that conquest He made them sharers by His atoning death. In His Cross we see the great deliverance which God prepared for His people. "Deliver us from evil;" it is indeed the most comprehensive of our petitions, embracing the spirit of what has gone before, and bringing all into close relation to ourselves. Faith can be explained and justified by our own experience. The survey of ourselves and others shows us the power of sin, yet reveals also the longing for righteousness. Humbled by the sense of frailty, longing for what we cannot obtain, we commit ourselves to God, and in His strength feel that we too may be strong. Do we wish to know how, or how far, God will accept us? The Cross of Christ tells us of His mercy and justice, alike boundless, and alike extended to our individual