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"POWER TO LET." A PARABLE OF HELPFUL GRACE.

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The Gospel of the Grace of God is placed before men in three aspects. In the first of these it appears as Redemptive Grace: the grace of free favour which bought back men from the curse of a useless life, and from spiritual death and ruin, with the payment, so to speak, of the service and death of God's Son, incarnate for the purposes of human redemption. There is again the aspect of Sanctifying or Transforming Grace, by which the human spirit is changed into the image of Christ by the workings of the Spirit of the Lord, and thus is made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Between these, which may be regarded as the Alpha and the Omega of the Christian life, there is presented in the Scriptures another aspect of divine grace which covers all that lies between these points, and which shows the way in which Redeeming Grace becomes operative in the case of individual men, and prepares the way for its final manifestation as Transforming Grace. The term "grace" now becomes modified. Retaining the idea of free favour, it appears as that favour in action. Free grace still, it is now Helpful Grace, and so adapted to the conditions of our race as to be available whenever the demand for its exercise shall arise. It is "grace to help in time of need;" and it is obtained by the confident approach of the soul to God as the Giver of grace. That is the divine posture towards weak and needy men. The throne of majesty and moral perfection becomes a throne of grace. The bench of justice is a mercy-seat. By virtue of the atonement made to the law, free favour can be shown to sinners who seek it. By virtue of the price paid into Heaven's chancery, rich and sufficient assistance awaits the application of the needy and the weak. See, encouraged by the promises of God, a sinner coming to the throne of grace. It is a mercy-seat upon an ark. The ark contains the holy and unchanging law of God; but that is covered by the mercy-seat. That cover appears stained and spotted with the blood of the atoning Lamb of God; and, at the sight, the trembling soul is encouraged to a holy boldness.

"That rich atoning blood
Which sprinkled round I see,
Provides for those who come to God
An all-prevailing plea."

The Judge, looking upon the law, sees before Him the evidences of its perfect satisfaction. For a sinner drawing near to God through Christ, the law is mute. Demands are changed to dispensations: duty finds discharge: the debtor finds bounty awaiting him: the hitherto unfaithful and unprofitable servant finds grace to help him in his times of need.

Listen now to a Parable of Helpful Grace. Passing through the streets of the large manufacturing cities of England, placards frequently meet the eye, bearing