

Sometimes the metaphor must be changed, sometimes it must be laid down. Still it will remain true, that in its leading features the figure employed may help us to understand the workings of divine grace in connection with the mechanism of the human mind. Men must be co-workers with God. We may not fold our hands and sit helplessly for God to do *our* work; but must, in humble believing boldness, draw near to God that His almighty strength may work in and through our human weakness. And it is this which is meant when it is said that men, realizing their need, may come to the divine strength, and make their attachment, and so begin their life-work. And from that point they may proceed with their work, and have it all stimulated and influenced with the same power, so that (according to the beautiful formula) "all their works may be begun, continued, and ended" in God.

The gospel of the grace of God is a gospel of Helpful Grace, in which God furnishes the motive power which his child may use to shape and mould his character; to turn off its excrescences and roughnesses; and to bring up the beauties of its grain, and fit it for use and adornment in the great house of God. By it human perversity may be overcome; devilish ingenuity thwarted; man, working diligently, may use up the materials which God gives him to work upon in his life; and may do it so that himself shall live, and so that in his life and by his work he may be "to the praise of the glory of His grace." Is there not a wonderful dignity put upon men as the sons of God in such a gospel of Helpful Grace? That grace is shown us as not designed to supersede the exercise of the faculties we possess, but to assist and develop them. Thus, even in the matter of individual progress, the elaboration of our own character for eternity, we are called on to work out our own salvation, even while we tremblingly remember that we are doing it by a power divinely communicated.

Yet it is well to see how little we can do, even in doing all we can. Thus, as we have seen, the power itself is God's: the energy divine. *But the individual mechanism which we bring to place in connection with this energy, is also God's.* He made it; designed its parts for their separate uses, and combined them for their common purpose. The faculty of comparison and judgment, feeling, memory, will, are all his handiwork, and his free gift to man. If we can see the force of the argument that a sinful course must result in moral death and ruin; and that Christ has suffered in our stead to take away from us the consequences of our sin, and to rehabilitate us with the power of an endless life, it is because God has created in us this mental faculty. If this argument causes us to fear, and yet kindles a hope within us, and if, by-and-by, our hearts glow with love to God for His goodness in Christ, it is because our nature, as made by Him, was capable of being moved and swayed by divine arguments and appeals, enforced by the warmth and sympathy of the Divine Spirit. Man takes not from God's glory when, with his powers enfeebled and debased by sin, he draws nigh to the throne of grace, that he "may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." It should be no obstacle to the reception of the truths advanced, that there is a mystery in them still. Like the engine which sets the shaft in motion, divine grace is a power out of sight. We can see it only in its effects. In this respect it is, as our Lord taught, like the wind. We hear the sound; we see the motion of the trees, the ripple of the wave, and the boats with swelling sails careering through the deep. It is needless that we should know more. We know enough to utilize the mighty force, and that suffices. In many respects, perhaps in all, while under *grace*, we are still under *law*. Law reigns, even in the spiritual domain. Order obtains in the new creation no less than in the old. God's miracles of grace are the result of adequate forces, rightly employed. The outcome of merely human effort is often magnificent. Vast ranges of Alpine rocks are pierced with a diamond-point. A grand cathedral rises by one stone being placed on another according to a wise plan. The filaments of a field plant are woven into fabrics of wonderful strength and utility; and the finer threads of an insect's cocoon into a texture of glorious sheen, with radiant hues and forms