

the words "Power to Let," and referring to places where this offered power is to be obtained. Such a place is probably a block of plain buildings divided into rooms and workshops of various size and circumstance. But whatever these rooms may differ in, they are all alike in one thing. Running across near the ceiling is a slender iron shaft to which one or more wheels are attached. Shaft and wheels are constantly revolving, and in one direction. Moved by some hidden force, the shaft continues to turn, with its attached wheels, from early morning till "the night cometh when no man can work." This is the "power" referred to. Obtaining, by payment, a right to use it, the workman may come in boldly, bringing with him some lesser mechanism which is more peculiarly his own. It may be a lathe, or it may be a loom. It may be a sewing-machine, or an apparatus for cutting and stamping metal. Whatever it is, it is brought into the place of power, silent and inoperative. All its parts are adapted to the performance of the desired work, yet the unaided strength of the workman can move the mechanism but slowly and ineffectively.

But now watch the man as he proceeds to make use of the power to which he has obtained a right. Taking a belt which hangs idly by his machine, he lifts it in his hands, and circles with it the revolving wheel attached to the revolving shaft. And straightway all is changed. The power of the shaft is communicated to the personal mechanism, and, lo! it is all in motion. Wheels revolve, cogs are interlocked, vertical and horizontal movements reciprocally interchange, and, as if instinct with a new and mighty force, the lathe or the loom or the press stands ready to fulfil its function.

What is the secret of the change? *Instrumentally*, it is in the belt which has laid hold of the mystic power of the revolving shaft: but, looking behind means and instruments for the moving force, we find it in the fact that, somewhere, out of the sight and out of the reach of the man who seeks to use it, altogether uncontrolled by him, there is a mighty engine generating and dispensing a subtle and mysterious force which, setting huge wheels in motion, communicates motive power to the shafts which run through all parts of the building, and which revolve in every room. May we not say, humbly learning of Him who is the Great Teacher of all others, that *the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man who brings the little machinery of his own life and nature into a receptive connection with the mighty power of God, that he may have help in time of need?* For such is Divine grace as it appears in the gospel. It offers and provides assistance for human weakness in regard to the necessities of the Christian life. Men who realize these needs, and who recognize the source of strength, may draw near to God, and, using the privilege He gives, may believingly attach themselves to the Divine power, and begin their life-work. That work is well stated by the Apostle Paul. He says, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Thus to live is the work set before every one who hears the gospel. The union of the divine and the human is clearly shown. Man is to serve God; but to do it acceptably, he must have Divine grace or power. Such is the force of the parable just related. The engine, mighty as it is, will not do the work of the man by itself. He must bring to the work of his life the mechanism and powers of his life, whatever they are. They may be great or small. Many and varied faculties may make up the human machinery, or they may be few and simple. And these faculties may be operated by a more or less powerful human volition. But that motive power, at its best, is inadequate to the work. The will of man is enfeebled and corrupted. It needs stimulating and strengthening. And herein lies the necessary defect of the parable. It falls short of the fulness of divine grace. Could we represent the revolving shaft drawing near to the man as the man drew near to it—could we picture it reaching down to him as he reached up, and extending a mighty hand to help his feeble fingers, as he strove to make his attachment—could we show the love which induced the invitations, and the royal liberality of the terms, the picture might be more complete. But as every parable fails to show all points, even so must this.