

OF COMING BOLDLY UNTO THE THRONE OF GRACE.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—HEB. IV. 16.

THESE words are a most comfortable conclusion drawn from what is premised in the former verse. Since we have an high priest, one who has reconciled us to God, and does intercede for [us]; such an high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; one who is so compassionate to us, and so ready to relieve us under all infirmities whatever; therefore let us come boldly.

To open the words a little. Here is an act or motion, with the manner, and term, and end of it.

Let us. This may denote, it is both our privilege and duty to come, and thus to come. We may do it, it is our privilege, our happiness. We ought to do it, it is our duty. We have not only leave to do thus, but it is enjoined us; the Lord has made that our duty, which is our happiness. Indeed, he enjoins us nothing but what tends to make us happy. Such a Lord we have, as requires nothing of us, but in order to our own happiness. This is true in all the instances of our duty, though it do not so plainly appear in some of them; but in this before us it is both true and evident; it is clearly our happiness, a most blessed privilege, to do that which he calls for.

Come. Let us make our addresses to him. Let us apply ourselves to the Lord in all the ways he has appointed, in all his ordinances, all acts of worship, and prayer particularly.

Boldly. Here is the manner of the address, *μετὰ παρρησίας*. A word frequently used, and denotes several things. Let us take notice of such as may be here pertinent. It signifies,

1. Liberty without restraint. You may be free, as those that are assuredly welcome. You may use freedom of speech. So used, Acts ii. 29, and iv. 13. You have liberty to speak your minds freely, to speak all your heart; to declare all your ails, and wants, and fears, and grievances. As others should not restrain and fetter you, in speaking to God, prescribing what things you should seek, what words use, and no other; so you need not restrain yourselves, but speak all that your condition requires, freely. It is your privilege to be free, Christ has made you welcome.

(2.) Security, without fearfulness. You need not fear that you shall be slighted, or repulsed, or disappointed, John xi. 54, *παρρησία*, as one secure. We may come openly, as those that have the greatest security, and not the least occasion to be fearful.

(3.) Authority. Without question whether this belong to us, whether we have warrant for it, so used, Heb. x. 19. As the high priest had authority (and he alone under the law) to enter into the holiest, so has every believer warrant now to do it; he has that which will bear him out in it, his warrant is the blood of Jesus. We may come with such authority as none can question; Christ hath authorised us to do it, he will bear us out in it.

(4.) Confidence, 'without doubting.' Such faith as assures us of acceptance and success, 1 John iii. 21, and v. 4. This includes all the former; we may come with confidence, as those who have security, liberty, authority to come. We may come, with all assurance that we shall obtain, &c. We have encouragement, sufficient ground from the premises to come in faith, with full assurance of faith; *μη διατρίβετε* (says Chrysostom *in loc.*), not doubting. So that, to come boldly, is to come as those that have security, liberty, authority; and which is the sum of all, to come in faith, with assurance to obtain what they come for.

To the throne of grace. That is the term of this notion. The Lord is represented as having two thrones: one a throne of judgment, where he shews his justice and severity; the other a throne of mercy, where he shews himself gracious and compassionate. It is a dreadful thing to appear before the throne of judgment. Sinners, when they are awakened, will think the weight of rocks and mountains more tolerable than this, Rev. vi. 15, 16, Dan. vii. 9, 10. But to be admitted to the throne of mercy is the most comfortable and happiest privilege that the children of men are here capable of, as will appear by a fuller account of it in the sequel. And this is the happiness in the text, *θρόνος χάριτος ἰσχύι, οὐ θρόνος κρίσεως*. Not where everlasting destruction will be awarded, 2 Thes. i., but where mercy and grace will be obtained. This follows,

That we may obtain mercy and find grace. This is the end why we are to come. The favour of God through Christ is sometimes called mercy, sometimes grace, indifferently. What difference there is betwixt them seems not to be real, but respective. Mercy respects misery in the object, as grace does unworthiness. Mercy is favour shewed to the miserable, and grace is favour to the unworthy, freely shewed to such as have no reason from themselves to expect it; nothing to deserve it, nothing to oblige the Lord, nothing to move him to vouchsafe it.

To help in time of need. A general term, indefinitely laid down, but is equivalent to an universal. All kind of relief, suitable to the necessities and various circumstances of every condition. Help, as to our wants, our weaknesses, our straits, our difficulties, our dangers, our temptations, our sin and guilt, our troubles and sufferings, outward and inward; help for all, and all that will be helpful, all that can be needful. And as relief in all, so the best relief, *εὐκαιρὸν βοήθειαν*; the best help, when it will be best, when it will be most opportune, most seasonable. Help, when it comes too soon, or when it comes too late, proves not helpful; but this shall come just in its season, just in the nick of opportunity, when it will be helpful to the best advantage. The people of Christ may come to the throne of grace, with assurance to find grace and mercy for such help as this; for relief in all cases, and that when it will be best of all.

Observations.

1. There is a throne of grace, which believers may come to.

2. They may come boldly, with confidence, to this throne; they have liberty to do so, they have security in doing it, they have authority to do it, and so may do it with confidence.

3. This is the way to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

I shall handle the first of these as the doctrine, and make use of the other by way of application.

To proceed with the former clearly and profitably, I will endeavour to shew what a throne of grace here imports and signifies; what it declares to us concerning the Lord, whom we may approach as upon such a throne. Now I do not find that a throne of grace is anywhere else mentioned in the New Testament; but that which is equivalent to it in the Old Testament very frequently. The apostle, speaking of the throne of grace, alludes to the mercy-seat in the tabernacle and temple. The Lord's throne of grace, and his mercy-seat, differ not in sense, but in sound. A *seat* and a *throne*, referred to God, are both one; and *grace* and *mercy* differ very little. The mercy-seat (as you may see, Exod. xxv. 17, 18, 21) was the golden cover of the ark; at each end of it was a cherub, and between the cherubims is the Lord said to sit, and so is represented as sitting, or residing on the mercy-seat as on a throne. This was the throne of grace under the law. And in allusion to this does the apostle speak of him as upon a throne of grace under the gospel.

So that by understanding what the mercy-seat signified concerning God, we may come to understand what the throne of grace imports concerning God, both what he is to himself and what he is to his people, what apprehensions of him we are led to when we are to come to the throne of grace.

1. Let us see what it declares the Lord to be in himself. His throne of grace signifies these severals—

(1.) That he is a God of glory, of a glorious majesty. Here was the most glorious and majestic appearance of God amongst his people of old. Upon the mercy-seat he appeared in glory. The ark, whereof this very mercy-seat was a part, the most rich and splendid part, is called his glory, Ps. lxxviii. 61. Here he vouchsafed his special presence, as upon his throne. When they were deprived of this by the Philistines, the glory was departed, 1 Sam. iv. 22. The cherubims, which were part of the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, are called 'cherubims of glory,' Heb. ix. 5. As it is a throne, it speaks him glorious, 1 Sam. ii. 8. Thrones are for persons of great glory on earth, and so is ascribed to him who is the most glorious majesty of the world. When the prophet represents him upon a throne, Isa. vi. 1, it is said, ver. 3, 'One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.' Thus we should approach the Lord, thus we should apprehend him when we come to the throne of grace; the notion of a throne obliges us to it.

(2.) That he is a God of dominion and sovereignty, that he rules and reigns and is supreme governor, Ps. xcix. 1, 2. He reigns, that appears by his throne. He sits between the cherubims. As so represented, the mercy-seat was his throne. Upon this account, greatness, supremacy is ascribed to him, ver. 2, and from hence Hezekiah declares his sovereignty over all kingdoms, 2 Kings xix. 15. Thou art placed upon the mercy-seat as a throne, &c. From the mercy-seat, as his throne, he gave law to his subjects (and legislation is the chief act of sovereignty); he appoints Moses to expect his laws from thence, Exod. xxv. 22; and accordingly, here he exercised his legislative power, Num. vii. 8, 9. The particular laws here enacted are in the chapter following.

And without reference to the type, a throne denotes sovereignty. Thrones

are for sovereign rulers, Job xxxvi. 7, 1 Sam. ii. 8; so it is applied to the Lord, who not only makes laws, but passes judgment, Ps. xciv. 7, 8. His throne is terrible to wicked men, a throne of justice; so it is a comfort and relief to his people, a throne of mercy, ver. 9. Very frequently in Scripture throne is used for sovereign government, Gen. xli. 40, 2 Sam. vii. 18, 16, and applied to God, Ps. ciii. 19.

Thus we should draw near to God with such apprehensions of him as sovereign Lord of the world, as King of kings and Lord of lords, supreme governor of all kingdoms, who has all creatures in heaven and earth under him as his subjects, gives law, passes judgment, does execution as he sees cause. The mention of a throne minds us of this.

(3.) That he is a God of power and might, of almighty power. When he is spoken of as upon his throne, the mercy-seat, he is called the Lord of hosts, one who has all the power in the world, 1 Sam. iv. 4, 2 Sam. vi. 2. And the ark, whereof the mercy-seat was a principal part, is called the strength of God, Ps. lxxviii. 61, and cxxxii. 8; because, as it was a testimony of his presence, so a symbol of his strength and power, ready to be engaged for his people. Hence the church, having addressed herself to the Lord, as upon the mercy-seat between the cherubims, Ps. lxxx. 1, adds, ver. 2, 'Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and save us.' The expression has reference to the form of the Israelites encamping about the ark (the throne of God) in their marches toward Canaan. They were disposed in four squadrons, under four principal standards. This of Ephraim, with Benjamin and Manasseh, encamped on the west behind the tabernacle. Judah, with other two tribes under his standard, encamped on the east, and had the front, Num. ii. 8, 18, x. 25. So that when the ark was taken up in order to a march, it was before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. In allusion to which they pray, 'Stir up thy strength,' i. e. the ark (with the mercy-seat on it, the throne of God in that representation) being a sign of God's power or strength engaged for them. It is like that prayer which they used when the ark set forward, Num. x. 85. Answerable to which is David's prayer at the removal of the ark, Ps. cxxxii. 8. Hence that petition, Ps. xx. 2, 'Send the help from the sanctuary,' which is all one as if he had said, Send the help from the mercy-seat, or from the throne of grace. Thus should we come to the throne of grace, with apprehensions of his almighty power.

(4.) That he is a God of holiness, Ps. xcix. 5. To worship at his foot-stool is to worship towards the mercy-seat, ver. 1, between the cherubims. That was a symbol of his special presence. There he resided as a God of holiness. And upon that account every part of the temple, yea, the hill where it was seated, was counted holy, ver. 9. But above all, that part where the mercy-seat was, that was the most holy place, or, as it is in Hebrew, the holiness of holinesses, Exod. xxvii. 23. The mercy-seat was the throne of his holiness, Ps. xlvii. 8; and giving oracles from thence, it is called the oracle of holiness, Ps. xxviii. 2.

So the throne of grace is the throne of holiness. Thus we should come to the throne of grace with apprehensions of the holiness of God, that he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, that he is holy in himself, and will be sanctified of all that draw near him.

(5.) That he is a God of wisdom, who sees and knows all things, to whom nothing is hid, or obscure, or difficult. From the mercy-seat he gave oracles; he made discoveries to his people of such things, which otherwise they could not come to the knowledge of. They were to inquire here of him for resolu-

tion in their most intricate doubts, and greatest difficulties, and weightiest undertakings, Ex. xxv. 22. Thus they were directed to do, and thus they were wont to do, when they were at a loss and wanted the conduct of divine wisdom, Judges xx. 27, 28, 1 Chron. xiii. 8. This was the oracle they consulted with, the oracle of God, 2 Sam. xvi. 23. Hence the place of the mercy-seat, from whence the Lord gave those divine discoveries of his wisdom and testifications of his will, is called the oracle, 1 Kings vi. 5, 16, 19. The word is *לְבִי* from *לָבַד*, to speak, because the Lord from hence gave divine answers when they inquired of him. Symmachus and Aquila read it *χρησματοστήριον*, as an oracle was called amongst the gentiles, the place from whence they expected divine answers. And with the apostle *χρησματοστόμος* is the answer of God, Rom. xi. 4. And as the place, so the answers of God are called oracles, Rom. iii. 2; oracles, *i. e.* divine revelations and directions proceeding from infinite wisdom, and so of the greatest certainty, truth, and authority. Such oracles did the Lord give from the mercy-seat, and so he declared himself to be the God of wisdom.

But this is not all. In that representation of the Lord upon the mercy-seat was wrapped up the manifold wisdom of God in a mystery, those riches, those wonders of mercy which are now unfolded in the gospel, where he appears upon this throne of grace, and which the angels learn and are instructed in by the discoveries made thereof to the church, Eph. iii. 10. And while it was hid in a mystery, they were prying into it then, 1 Peter i. 12. They do *παγκύβηται*, stoop, bend their faces downward, as having an object before them which they earnestly desire to take special notice of. They shew the earnestness of their desire by their posture. And where is this to be seen? Why, in the posture of the cherubims' faces towards the mercy-seat (to which we may well suppose the apostle's expression has reference), Exod. xxv. 20. Towards the mercy-seat! There was Christ in a type; there was the marrow of the gospel, and the sum of the riches of divine wisdom and goodness in a mystery; and the faces of the cherubims were towards it, as Mary's face was towards the sepulchre when she looked for Christ there, John xx. 11, *παρέκλυψεν*; the same word which the apostle useth to express how the angels look into this gospel mystery.

It was then a mystery hidden and kept secret, while the mercy-seat was a representation of it, for there was no ark, no mercy-seat in the second temple, and in the first temple it was reserved in the most secret part of it; none was to see it but the high priest only, and he but once a year.

But now the throne of grace is openly exposed, all the people of Christ have access to it, for the temple is opened, and the ark, and so the mercy-seat, is seen, Rev. xi. 19. If the temple had been opened, yet there was a veil betwixt the holy place and the ark, which hindered the sight of the mercy-seat. But now the veil also is rent, Mat. xxvii. 51, so that we all with open face may behold the glory, both of the goodness and wisdom of God. There is no veil now before the throne of grace; Christ the mercy-seat (*ἰλαστήριον* the apostle calls him, Rom. iii. 34) is set forth openly, and in him all riches of grace and wisdom.

(6.) In fine, the mention of the throne of grace minds us of the wisdom of God, that we should draw near him as one that knows our state, yea, our hearts, and understands all the ways and means how to help us, and do us good; as one that knows all our doubts and fears, how to satisfy them; all our perplexities of spirit, how to unravel them; all our wants, how to supply them; all our weaknesses and distempers, how to cure them; all our corruptions, how to subdue them; all our afflictions and troubles, how to deliver us. He whose wisdom could find out a way to save and deliver us,

when his truth and justice was engaged to destroy us, his wisdom can never be nonplussed. And this is that depth which was held forth by the mercy-seat as in a type of mystery, but now by the throne of grace more clearly and conspicuously, which will appear with more evidence by the

2nd Head, What the throne of grace declares the Lord to be unto us. Take it in these particulars. It signifies and offers him to us, as the mercy-seat did of old (for that which the apostle alludes to, we shall still make use of to direct us all along).

(1.) As a God in Christ. Since sin entered into the world, God is not to be approached by the children of men, with any acceptance, with any success, with any hopes of either, but in and through Christ. Sin has made man miserable, his misery is his separation from God. He cannot be happy but by access to God again. There is no access to God for sinners but by a mediator. No other mediator could be sufficient, but such an one as was both God and man as to his natures, and both prophet, king, and priest by office. Such a mediator is Christ, and he only. The Lord upon the mercy-seat, and so upon the throne of grace, offers himself to us in Christ as such a mediator. The mercy-seat shews forth both natures and offices of Christ, and so represents to us God in Christ, as in an all-sufficient mediator. God is said to dwell or reside upon the mercy-seat, and the fulness of the God-head dwells in Christ, Col. ii. 9, John i. 14. The Word was made flesh, there is both his natures, and dwelt amongst us; *ἐσκήνωσε*, a word not much differing from the Hebrew word *שָׁכַנָה*, by which they express the glory of God appearing or dwelling on the mercy-seat. God dwelt there as in shadow, but in Christ bodily, substantially.

The Lord spake and declared his mind from the mercy-seat. He speaks to us by his Son, and by him gives divine revelations and directions. There is his prophetic office, Heb. i. 1. God sits on the mercy-seat, as a king on his throne. This, as the throne of grace, *θρόνος βασιλικός*, with Chrysostom. He rules his people by Christ, whom he has appointed king of his people: Ps. ii. 6, 'Yet have I set my king upon Zion, the hill of my holiness.' The holiness of that, and of the whole temple, was from the residence of God upon the mercy-seat: and this is spoken in reference to David's bringing the ark thither; and his residing there, is, with Theodoret, *θυνατῶς βασιλεύειν*, to reign potentially.

The throne of grace is 'the throne of God and of the Lamb,' Rev. xxii. 3. The throne of God alone is not to be approached by us; but the throne of God and the Lamb is the seat of mercy, the throne of grace. He not only gives law to his people, but makes provision for them, that their souls may have plenty, ver. 1 with Ezek. xlvii., and he protects his subjects too. As the wings of the cherubims (parts of the mercy-seat) overshadowed and covered the holy things, so does he cover and overshadow his holy ones.

His priestly office is likewise held forth by the mercy-seat. The very name of it denotes this. It is the propitiatory, and that speaks satisfaction, one chief act of his priesthood. And this satisfaction was made by his blood, which was typified by the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat, Lev. xvi. 14. As his intercession, the other act of his priesthood, was foreshadowed by the cloud of incense which was to cover the mercy-seat, ver. 18. That this was a figure of his intercession, we learn, Rev. viii. 4.

So that to come to the throne of grace, is to come to God in Christ, to apply ourselves to the Lord through the mediation of Christ. Otherwise there is a throne of God indeed, but none that sinners can or dare approach to, unless they will venture to rush upon a consuming fire. There is no throne of grace, but through Christ; no mercy-seat for us, but by his mediation.

The throne of God in Christ is the throne of God and the Lamb, so it is a throne of grace indeed. The throne of God alone is like his appearance on mount Sinai, Heb. xii. 18. There is no other throne for sinners without Christ but that of justice, shadowed out by the burning mount; all black and dark, all dreadful and terrible, as smoke, and storm, and fire, and death, can render it. If you will find a throne of grace, you must seek it in Christ; approach to God through him, and come, as ver. 24, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

(2.) As a God reconciled. It signifies that his justice is satisfied, his wrath appeased: not now incensed against his people, but well pleased and propitious. The name of the mercy-seat declares this. It is *ἱλαστήριον*, a propitiatory. So it is called by the Seventy in the Old Testament; and so it is called by the apostle in the New Testament, Heb. ix. 5. And Christ being that which was prefigured in the mercy-seat, he has this very name given him by the apostle, Rom. iii. 25. The word is *ἱλαστήριον*, it is rendered propitiation, because it is Christ by whom the Lord becomes propitious or reconciled. But how was this offered? By his blood, he made his soul an offering for sin, he offered up himself as a propitiatory sacrifice. His blood was shed for the satisfying of justice: and so the Lord became satisfied, well pleased, reconciled, propitious, through his blood.

And this was shadowed forth by the mercy-seat of old, as I intimated before from Lev. xvi. 14. The blood of the sin-offering was to be sprinkled upon the mercy-seat seven times, signifying, that by the blood of Christ the justice of God was fully and perfectly satisfied. And blood upon the mercy-seat denotes a meeting, a reconciliation of justice and mercy; justice will not now hinder, but that the Lord may be propitious to his people.

So that this is it which the throne of grace signifies to us, that the Lord through the blood of Christ is atoned, sin is expiated, wrath appeased, justice satisfied, mercy glorified, the sinner reconciled, and the Lord every way well pleased. The Lord's voice from the throne of grace is, I am appeased, I am satisfied, 'Fury is not in me;' I am at peace with you, I am reconciled.

(3.) As a God of forgiveness. As graciously pardoning the sins of his people. When he is represented to us upon the mercy-seat, he is set forth as a God that has found out a way to hide our sins out of his sight (which in Scripture phrase is to pardon them), for observe, in Exodus xxv., the tables of the law were in the ark, ver. 16, 21, and Heb. ix. And these are called the tables of the testimony, because they testify against those who do not keep the law, Deut. xxxi. 26, 28. It being evidence against transgressors, as those that are guilty, and so should be condemned and proceeded against, as those that break the laws of God, and will not demean themselves as his subjects. But now this dreadful testimony, that bears witness of our sin and guilt, it is put into the ark, and there covered by the mercy-seat, Exod. xxv. 21. By the Lord's gracious appointment, there is a mercy-seat upon it, to hide and cover it. There is a mercy-seat between him and the condemning law, between him and our guilt. So that in this posture, wherein the Lord would have himself represented to us, our sins are hid and covered out of his sight, *i.e.* pardoned. That of the psalmist, probably, has reference hereto, Ps. xxxii. 1, lxxv. 2. It is a blessed state to have sin covered, *i.e.* pardoned, so as they shall not appear for our condemnation; but a woful condition not to have them covered, Nehem. iv. 5.

Observe that expression: Ps. lxx. 3, 'As for our iniquities, thou shalt purge them away.' The כִּסָּה, the same which is rendered to cover in the fore-cited places. And hence that very word, which is translated the mercy-

seat, כַּפֶּרֶת, of very near affinity with our English word *covereth*. So that when the Lord is set forth to us as on the mercy-seat, or the throne of grace, mercy is between him and our sins, Christ is between him and our guilt (for the mercy-seat was Christ in a type) there is a mediator between him and the condemning law. He looks not upon the guilt of his people, and the accusation of the law, but through mercy, the mercy-seat is interposed; but through a mediator, Christ, the expiation of sin is interposed. This is next his eye; sin is at a further distance, it is removed out of his sight, hid in the ark, there covered. So, no matter of provocation being in his eye, no guilt exposed to his view; we are not bound over to punishment, not liable to condemnation, but fully pardoned. If he be of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, he shews, by representing himself on the throne of grace, that he has taken a course not to behold it, so as to condemn for it, but so as to pass it by, and pardon it. Thus comfortably did the Lord set forth himself, as on the mercy-seat of old, and on the throne of grace now. And the mention of a throne of grace minds us thus to draw near him as a God covering our guilt, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, removing them out of his sight.

(4.) As a God in covenant. The ark (whereof the mercy-seat was the chief and most significant part) is called the ark of the covenant, Num. x. 38, and Heb. ix. 4. And the apostle insinuates the reason why it is so called: in it was the tables of the covenant. This was the end and use of the ark, 1 Kings viii. 4. Now the mercy-seat being the golden lid or cover of the ark, it was to secure, it did preserve, the covenant, Exod. xxv. 2.

But this is not all. The mercy-seat (which signified Christ) being interposed betwixt the Lord above and the covenant within the ark, may signify that he was the mediator of the covenant; as he was indeed the mediator of the covenant of grace, both in the legal administration of it under the law, and in the new administration of it under the gospel. So he is called, Heb. ix. 15, a mediator; one by whose interposal, as the covenant was first made, so it shall stand firm and be made good, for all ends and purposes to which it was designed.

But how does he effect all this? By his death and blood, as the apostle shews, ver. 15 to 22. It was by virtue of his blood that the covenant is made, ratified, and accomplished. But what does this concern the mercy-seat? Why, the apostle has reference to the blood sprinkled upon the mercy-seat in the day of expiation, Lev. xvi. 14. This signified the blood of Christ, and it is called 'the blood of the Testament,' or covenant, Heb. ix. 20, 21, Heb. xii. 24; so that the mercy-seat, with this blood of sprinkling, signifies that the Lord, by virtue of the blood of Christ (the Mediator of the New Testament), is in covenant with his people, and will make good that gracious covenant in all the parts and articles, in all the promises and branches of it.

God is in covenant with his people through the mediation of Christ. This was signified by the mercy-seat. That was but a type, a shadow. The truth and reality which it shadowed out is expressed: Heb. viii. 1, The throne of the majesty in the heavens, Christ sitting there at the right hand of the Father: it is the throne of God and of the Lamb; it is the throne of grace. There Christ appears as Mediator of the covenant, as is declared, ver. 6. The administration of the covenant of grace under the law is called the first covenant, ver. 7. It was inferior to the administration of the covenant of grace under the gospel, this being more clear, more full, more free; and therefore this latter is called the better covenant, consisting of better promises. These are specified in the following verses: it promises more holi-

ness, ver. 10, clearer light, ver. 11, and full pardon, ver. 12. The sum of all, 'I will be to them a God.' This covenant, these promises, are through Christ yea and amen; through his mediation they stand firm, and shall be made good to the full. He undertakes to see all performed, and sits on the right hand of the throne of God for this purpose. There is the throne of grace, and, this it signifies. We may come to the throne of grace, we may apply ourselves to the Lord as a God in covenant. He has entered into covenant with his people, and has found out a way, notwithstanding their weakness and unsteadfastness, to secure the blessings of a gracious and everlasting covenant to them. If anything be objected against it, Christ is there ready to answer it, there to remove whatever may hinder it. The Lord's voice from the throne of grace is, I am thine, thy God, thy Father, thy portion, thy exceeding great reward. What I am in myself, I am to and for thee. I am God all-sufficient, and will be so to thee; my wisdom, power, goodness, truth, faithfulness, is all for thee, and shall be so for ever.

(5.) As a God that will have communion with his people; as one who will admit dust and ashes to have fellowship with him. He offers there to meet them, to commune with them, to discover and communicate himself to them. He admits his servants to communion with him when he vouchsafes to meet them. And the mercy-seat was the place of meeting which the Lord appointed for Moses, Exod. xxx. 36. He will meet with him as we meet with a friend, whom we desire and delight to converse with. He would meet his servants there to discover himself to them. The LXX render it, 'I will be known to thee from thence.' He did make known himself as a man to his friend. There he did commune with them, Exod. xxv. 22. It is not the special privilege of some particular persons only to come to the mercy-seat as of old, but all the people of Christ may have access to the throne of grace. There we may meet with God; there he is willing to commune with us; there is he ready to reveal himself unto us, to cause his goodness to pass before us; there our fellowship may be with the Father and the Son. Offering himself to us on the throne of grace, he offers the greatest happiness; for communion with himself is the greatest happiness on earth or in heaven. There is a gradual difference, but the substance of it here and hereafter lies in communion with the Father and the Son.

And this gracious posture offers the continuance of this communion. He was represented of old as residing constantly on the mercy-seat, as dwelling between the cherubims; not as standing, for so a passenger may do, whose business is to be gone; nor as sitting, for so a stranger may do upon occasion; nor as sojourning, as one who turns but in for a night or for a few days; but as dwelling there. It was his resting-place, 2 Chron. vi. 41, Ps. cxxxii. 8, 14. This is true of the throne of grace, without limitation. The mercy-seat (the shadow of it) did not continue always, but this throne is for ever, Ps. xlv. 6, Heb. i. 8. It is spoken of the throne of Christ the mediator, through whom the throne of majesty in the heavens is a throne of grace, and so for ever; and so consequently offers this happy communion without intermission, without end, everlastingly.

(6.) As a God that hears prayer, and will answer the petitions and supplications of his people. The Lord gave answers from the mercy-seat; and this may be the reason why their posture of old in worshipping and praying was towards the mercy-seat, Ps. xxviii. 2. That was the place where the mercy-seat was. Called the oracle, because the Lord from the mercy-seat gave answers; and so it is rendered by some, 'the answering place'; so Ps. v. 7. The temple was not then built; but he means the tabernacle, and the mercy-seat in it, where the Lord hath declared himself present, ready to answer

those who worshipped him. And when Solomon had built the temple, and seeking the Lord to give audience to his people, it is for prayers directed towards that place, 2 Chron. vi. 20-26, &c. And the Lord promises to answer accordingly, chap. vii. 15, 'To the prayer of this place,' i. e. made in or towards it. Yea, when the temple was burnt and the ark lost, yet Daniel observed this posture still, Dan. vi. 10. For the place was destroyed, yet the promise was in force still.

When the Lord offers himself upon the throne of grace, he gives assurance that he will hear prayer, and give gracious answers. The *παρρησία*, the boldness or confidence in the text, has respect to this particular. Being upon a throne of grace, we are at liberty to present all our petitions, and we may present them with confidence that we shall have gracious answers. It is the confidence which the apostle speaks of, 1 John v. 14, 15. When he exhibits himself as upon a throne of grace, then is the season, the opportunity, to make our requests, and to have them granted. Those that will have their petitions to great persons succeed, observe the season which appears to be most favourable. And this is the season for us to make known all the desires of our souls unto God, such an opportunity as assuredly promises success.

When he is upon the throne of justice, then he is for passing sentence, and executing judgment according to his threatenings; but when he is upon the throne of grace, that is the season for granting petitions. His voice from the throne of grace is like Solomon to Bathsheba from his throne, 1 Kings ii. 20. Whatever our request be, if it be fit for him to give, if it be good for us to receive, he will not say us nay. That which is good for us is all that heart can desire. This is satisfaction to the utmost, unless we will question whether infinite wisdom know what is good for us.

The season for access to Ahasuerus was when the golden sceptre was held forth. Esther comes in to him then, and the answer is, Esth. v. 8, 'What is thy request? it shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom.' This seems a great offer, but it is nothing to what the Lord, in his gracious posture, signifies himself ready to grant: Rom. viii. 32, He will give us all things.

His being on the throne of grace is not in order to the executing his threatenings, but for the making good his gracious promises; and these are large and free, without restriction, larger than that of Ahasuerus. He promises all things to those who seek him. When he is on the throne of grace, he will deny nothing: his posture assures us that he will grant everything, which it becomes infinite graciousness to bestow, Mat. xxi. 22, John xv. 7, and xvi. 23, 24, Mat. vii. 7. When we address ourselves to the Lord on the throne of grace, it is but ask and have. We may come boldly with all confidence of this, since it is a throne of grace we come to.

(7.) As a God that is present with his people. It signifies he is a God with them. The Lord was set forth as residing on the mercy-seat; when that was with his people of old, it signified the Lord was with them. And so they bewailed the loss of the ark as the loss of God's presence, that being the symbol of it. When that was gone, the glory was departed. The signification of the mercy-seat was, *God with us*; as this was the name of Christ, of whom the mercy-seat was a type. The Lord speaks of himself as abiding there, and promises to shew himself there to give signs of his presence, Lev. xvi. 2, so when the tabernacle (wherein was this symbol of the divine presence) was with that people, the Lord is said to be with them, Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27, 'I will be their God,' i. e. a God with them; so it is represented, Rev. xxiv. 8; so the throne of grace signifies. The Lord is with his people, he is very near them; so near, as they may have access to him,

and so may be with him whenever they will. He is still to be found on the throne of grace, still present.

More particularly, this denotes,

[1.] An intimate presence. He is in the midst of his people. So he was while he was on the mercy-seat, so he will be while that remains, which this did but typify; while the throne of grace, while the mediation of Christ continues, who is king and priest for ever. How can he be more intimately present than by residing in the midst of his people? And thus he is represented. The tabernacle was in the midst of the camp, Num. ii. 17, and the ark was in the midst of the tabernacle, 2 Sam. vi. 17; and the cherubims being at each end of the mercy-seat, and the Lord between them, he is set forth in the mercy-seat as in the midst of the ark. And so the Lord shewed himself to be in the midst of Israel, Num. v. 8; and to walk in the midst of them (to be active), Deut. xxiii. 14. This shews the Lord will be intimate with his people, intimately present; even within them, in the midst of them.

[2.] A special, a gracious presence. He was not present here only as he is in the rest of the world, but in a more special way, as upon a mercy-seat, from which others were far removed, so as they could have no access to the propitiatory, no advantages by it. Thus, when he exhibits himself as on a throne of grace, he shews he is in the midst of his people in a gracious manner; present with them through Christ's mediation and interposal, that is a gracious, a special presence.

[3.] A glorious presence. As the mercy-seat upon which the Lord appears is a throne of grace, so is it a throne of glory: Jer. xvii. 12, and xiv. 21, 'Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory.' As if they had said, Suffer not the ark, the mercy-seat (whereon thou art set forth as gloriously enthroned), to be disgracefully used. The Lord residing there, as a glorious king on his throne, is said to be the glory of his people in the midst of them, Zech. ii. 5, as the presence of the sun is the glory of the firmament.

[4.] An all-sufficient presence. Sufficient to secure them from all things dreadful, and to supply them with all things desirable. This is the security of his people, Ps. xli. 5, 'God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.' The Lord upon the mercy-seat, and so upon the throne of grace, is in the midst of his people; this is their safety and establishment, therefore they shall not be moved.

It is all-sufficient also to help us to all things desirable. The waters, in Ezek. xlvii., issuing out of the temple, are described to be plentiful for their measure, ver. 2-5, and for their virtue to be quickening and healing, ver. 9, and fructifying, ver. 10. Those waters, Rev. xxii. 1, are said to proceed 'from the throne of God and the Lamb.' The throne of God in the temple was the mercy-seat; the throne of God and of the Lamb is the throne of grace. The influences which flow and stream from the presence of God with his people are quickening, healing, and fructifying influences; they stream forth in such plenty as is sufficient abundantly to refresh and satisfy them to the utmost. There is a 'river of pleasure,' Ps. xli. 4; 'in thy presence is fulness of joy,' Ps. xvi. 11.

[5.] A continuing presence. He is said to dwell on the mercy-seat. In reference thereto is his promise, 1 Kings vi. 13, 'I will dwell among the children of Israel.' The throne of grace denotes no less: Rev. vii. 15, 'He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.' Here he is, and here he abides. We need never suffer through his absence. Have recourse to him on the throne of grace, and we need never be at a loss. He is always here to be found, here he dwells; here we may find him whenever we

have occasion ; here he is always as a 'very present help in time of trouble,' as a very present supply in time of want, as a very present security in time of fear, as an all-sufficient portion ; one who is all in all to his people, and always present for his purpose.

[6.] As a God that will shew himself merciful and gracious to his people, that will deal mercifully and graciously with them. Now, when he thus represents himself, they may find grace and mercy. We need go no further for this than the text, and it is so plainly there held forth, that we must not pass it by. Since he is upon a throne of grace, we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need. Take the import hereof more distinctly in these particulars.

First, He is ready to shew mercy and grace. He is willing to shew himself gracious and merciful. When he shews himself on the mercy-seat, he shews he is ready for acts of mercy ; when he is upon the throne of grace, he declares that he is ready for acts of grace. His posture declares that he is now willing to let his people find that he is indeed merciful and gracious. When may grace be expected from him, when is he willing, ready for acts of grace, if not when he offers himself as upon a throne of grace, a seat of mercy ?

If he presented himself upon a judgment-seat, a tribunal of justice, we might conclude he was ready to do justice, willing to execute judgment ; the seat and posture would be a plain signification of it. And therefore when he presents himself upon a throne of grace, we may conclude he is ready for acts of grace, willing to shew mercy. This is a plain signification of it, and the Lord gives us no signs that are fallacious, that will deceive us. When he signifies anything to us, the sign will be answered with a reality, he will not delude us ; when he appears in a gracious posture (as he does upon a throne of grace), he is ready for acts of grace. He would not appear to be willing if he were not so really ; he would make no show of grace or mercy if he were not willing to act accordingly. If he was backward, and not inclined to acts of grace, he would not set forth himself in a gracious posture.

Secondly, He will certainly shew mercy and grace. His people shall surely find it so. There is not only some probability, but a certainty for it. It is not only probable that he may, or more likely that he will, than that he will not ; but it is certain that he will shew mercy, we may be sure of it. The apostle would have the people of Christ bold and confident herein, 'Let us come boldly,' &c., *i. e.* with confidence and assurance that we shall obtain mercy, &c. He is a God gracious and merciful in himself, essentially, infinitely so ; but he is at liberty when and how he will express his mercy and grace, till he obliges himself by declaring it ; but when he offers himself as on a throne of grace, he declares, and so obliges himself to express it now at this season, and shew it thus in this way. Now, if ever, will he shew that he is actually gracious ; in this way, in this posture coming to him, they shall surely have mercy. Grace and mercy is to be found, that is certain ; but it will never be found if not when he is on the throne of grace, therefore now, when he thus presents himself, we may be sure and confident of it. If we should fall short of his grace here, if his mercy should fail us now, if we should not find and obtain it at the throne of grace, if he should not vouchsafe it when he presents himself to us on that throne, the Lord would prove otherwise than he has declared himself to be ; we should not find him such a one as he has obliged himself to be found ; his throne would not prove what he calls it, it would not be what the Lord has said it is, a throne of grace.

Thirdly, He will shew this in all variety, in all acts of favour; both mercy and grace, as is express in the text. All the acts of divine love and goodness run in these two streams, mercy and grace; and these streams will meet upon us when we come to the throne of grace. There we shall meet with both, they both flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The throne of grace is the fountain, the spring-head wherein they issue, where they break out; there these sweet currents encompass those who have access to the Lord on this throne.

All that we can expect from infinite goodness is to free us from misery, and to make us happy. And here is both offered and ensured to us; both mercy to free us from misery, and grace to advance us to the height of happiness. Mercy will deliver us, but grace will exalt us; not only lift us out of the pit, but advance us to the throne; not only deliver us from the wrath to come, and then leave us in a middle state, but crown us too with glory. Mercy will not suffer us to be ruined, but grace will have a triumph for us. This assures us we shall not only obtain mercy to help us out of misery, but find grace to help us far above it.

Fourthly, He will do this affectionately. The mercy in the text speaks this also. Mercy is love shewed to the miserable; so mercy is love in the rise of it, and it is compassion in the workings of it towards a pitied object. When Christ would give an instance of such love as he requires, he does it in the Samaritan, Luke x., who had mercy on the spoiled and wounded man, ver. 37; and that is expressed by having compassion on him, ver. 33. There is both love and compassion in mercy, and these are the sum of all affectionateness; and this the Lord assures us of, by setting forth himself as on a throne of grace. We shall find mercy from him, and love and compassions, and so all affectionateness. Here is love offered to us, the love of God in Christ; a peculiar love, a transcendent love, such as passeth knowledge; the acts, expressions, embraces of such a love. Here is compassion insured to us, the compassions of God, which as far transcend those of the best and sweetest tempered men, (for the efficacy thereof, though there be no compassionateness therein), as the heavens are above the earth.

Here is tender love. For such is mercy, it is love which is compassionate, called 'tender mercy,' Ps. lxxix. 8, James v. 11; 'bowels of compassion,' Isa. lxiii. 15, Jer. xxxi. 20. The Lord presenting himself on a throne of grace, offers to meet us there with such affectionateness; without the weakness of affections in us, but with infinite more virtue and advantage. There we may find mercy, such mercy, and all the expressions which so great, so tender a mercy can afford. He that sits upon this throne is the God of love, the Father of mercies; whose being is goodness, whose nature and essence is mercy, whose bowels are compassion, and whose glory it is to shew mercy, and express love to such as have access to his throne. It is the glory of his throne that it is a mercy-seat.

Fifthly, He will do it freely. It is a throne of grace that we come to. It is grace that is offered, grace that we find there. And grace is free goodness, that which puts forth all acts and expressions freely; that which looks for no desert, overlooks all unworthiness; that which stays not till it be obliged, but engages itself, and will not be hindered by that which is most disobliging; that which moves, when it has nothing to move it but itself; this is grace. When the Lord is on the throne of grace, he gives, he does not owe; it is grace, not debt. These are opposite, Rom. iv. He gives, we do not purchase. There was a purchase, indeed, but we who have the possession had no hand in it. We have it freely; we have all for nothing; we have it for coming for, though we come without money and without price;

it costs us nothing but the acceptance, Isa. lv. 1. Upon these terms we may come and be welcome to the throne of grace; so we may come, and so freely. We may have all the riches of grace; we come not to a market where we must pay for what we have, but to a throne of grace; and it is the glory of him that sits on this throne, that all we have of him is free gift. All his acts are acts of grace; he gives, looking for nothing again; he knows that all we return will be as good as nothing; he will not be one jot the better for it all, either in point of glory or happiness. Not the least scruple, the least degree, can be added to either, by all that men or angels can return. Our sinfulness, unworthiness, weakness, nothingness, need be no discouragement; for we come to a throne of grace, a throne where grace rules and is sovereign, where grace is enthroned, and is, and will be, all and all; before which angels and saints should cast their crowns, and cry, *Grace, grace*; giving the glory of all they have received, of all they enjoy, unto that to which they owe it all, and from which they had it freely. *

Sixthly, He will do this royally, magnificently, as becomes him who sits on the throne. His throne speaks him a king, and he is a great king, Ps. xlvii. 27, and xcv. 3, and he will do for his people accordingly. When he exhibits himself upon a throne, he would have us with confidence expect from him what is correspondent to his greatness. He encourages us to look for great things from his hand, and much of them, in great quantity, 2 Sam. xxiv. 23. Since he sets forth himself on a throne, and is represented as a king, and would have us come to him as on his seat of majesty, he assures us he will give like a king; not so few, nor small things, as other persons, but such as are answerable to his greatness and magnificence. Those that have thrones, shew their greatness and magnificence by their gifts, presents, rewards; it is a disparagement to them not to act herein like themselves. Hiram gives to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 14, and the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings x. 10. The value of the gold alone is reckoned at four hundred and fifty thousand pounds in our accounts; a great sum, if gold was so much scarcer in those times than it is now, as is commonly thought. Such gifts are for enthroned persons. They give such things as others cannot, either for value or excellency, or greatness and quantity.

The Lord has a throne, and he will have us come to him there, as on his throne; this intimates he has a design to shew his greatness. He will have those that come to him here, expect what is answerable to his throne and dignity. This Chrysostom observes, *φιλοτιμία γὰρ πρᾶγμα ἰσὶ καὶ δαψνὰ βασιλῆα*. The Lord will shew his magnificence; he will give royally. The honour of his throne is concerned. We disparage him, if we be not confident to have that of him which will be answerable to such a majesty; that which none else can give, things of greater value, and those of greater quantity, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Grace, the least dram of it is of greater value than all the gold in the world; and glory, that is a kingdom, in comparison of which all the kingdoms of the earth are but mole-hills. But this is not all, 'No good thing will he withhold,' &c. He would have us expect from him no less than all that is good, no less than all that heart can desire; he assures us of no less than all this, Rom. viii. 32, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, Rev. xxi. 7, Mat. vi. 33. The Lord will deal royally with his people; we dishonour him if we do not expect it; it is the glory of his throne to do it. We may be confident he will do for us what becomes so great a king, when it is his design to shew his greatness, when he sets forth himself as upon his throne.

Seventhly. He will do it effectually; he will shew himself gracious and merciful, so that none shall hinder, all shall promote it. This is signified

also, in that he is represented as on a throne. That tells that all are his subjects, all are at his command; he can order anything, everything, to be the instruments of his grace, and make all things serve the designs of his mercy which he has for his people: for he has the throne, all are subject to him, at his beck, he can order all to do his pleasure.

Or if any would resist or hinder him in his acts of grace and mercy, he can crush them. As he is upon the throne, they are under his feet; and he can use them as his footstool, and trample on them, crush them as easily as we can crush the worms or snails that are under our feet, Zech. iv. 7. He can take a course that none shall so much as mutter against his gracious proceedings, or move a tongue in order to the hindrance thereof; Zech. ii. 13, 'Be silent before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.' By holy habitation, some understand the temple, and it was a shadow of heaven, the other habitation of his holiness. It is called his habitation, because he was there set forth on the mercy-seat as on a throne. When he is said to sit there, it signifies his presence; when he is said to rise up, it denotes his readiness to exercise his power and authority. The power and authority of him who sits on the throne, when exercised, is enough to strike all flesh, all the creatures in the world, mute; this makes all hush, they shall not so much as by a word give impediment to his gracious designs expressed in the promises foregoing.

And as it is enough to quash the opposition of enemies, so likewise to silence the unbelief of weaklings, as doubting that what they desire or stand in need of, is too much to be expected, or too hard to be accomplished. Is anything too much or difficult for him who sits upon the throne, and so has all things in his power? The throne is his, and so the kingdom, and glory, and power; what, then, can hinder him? What can resist him? He will do all his pleasure, all that his power and mercy will have done, and none can say unto him, What dost thou?

Thus I have opened to you the great import and pregnancy of this expression. I have stayed the longer on it, because I found it useful to clear up many passages in Scripture. And you will find it further useful practically in the application.

Use. Since there is a throne of grace for the people of Christ to come unto, let us come unto it; take this encouragement to make our addresses to him who thus exhibits himself to us. And so come to him, as we may find it to be a throne of grace to us; and that we may find it to be so, let us come in such a manner as the import of the expression, already opened, directs us. What direction it affords us, let me shew in some particulars. I shall touch upon several, but most insist on that which is plain in the text, and principally intended by the apostle.

1. Let us come with holiness of heart and life. The mercy-seat, and so the throne of grace on which the Lord offers himself, is a throne of holiness, as was shewed before. And this calls for holiness in those that come to it, Heb. x. 22, a place parallel to the text, they explain one another: 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' Hearts sprinkled, &c. The mercy-seat was a throne of grace by virtue of the blood of sprinkling. Those that come to the throne of grace, and would find it so to them, must, through the efficacy of that blood, get their hearts cleansed from whatever makes the conscience evil, *i. e.* not only from the guilt, but the pollution of sin. And to inward purity, that of the heart, should add outward holiness, that of the life. 'Their bodies washed with pure water,' *i. e.* their conversations cleansed from blots and stains of sin by

the Spirit of sanctification. The legal rite signified this. Aaron and his sons were to wash their bodies when they went into the tabernacle of meeting, Exod. xxx. 17, 18, 19, &c., 29. This was to signify the real holiness which we should labour for, that we may come to the throne of grace, that we may be capable of meeting with the Lord there. The Lord upon the mercy-seat, upon the throne of grace, shews himself to be a holy God, therefore we should approach him in holiness: 'Holiness becomes thy house for ever,' Ps. xciii. 5. Holiness becomes the presence of God; get it into a lively exercise when you draw near him. The Lord communed with Moses from between the cherubims; if you would do so, observe the Lord's method: 'Isa. i. 'Wash ye, make ye clean,' and then come, let us commune together. He appears here in his holiness, and will be sanctified of all that draw near him; therefore, sanctify yourselves, get mind and heart raised to a holy strain.

2. Let us come with fear and reverence. The Lord on the mercy-seat, and so on the throne of grace, appears in his glory. A glory that should make such worms as we, whose habitation is in the dust, and who are crushed before the moth, to fear before him, and approach with reverence. Those who are most holy, have most communion with God, are most after his own heart (as David was), owe him as much reverence and fear as any; and the nearer they are to God, the more will they count themselves obliged to shew this: Ps. v. 7, 'In thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.' Their worship towards the temple was with respect to the mercy-seat. It was upon the account of the Lord's residence there that their posture in worshiping was towards the temple, and this obliged them to fear: Ps. xcix. 1, 'The Lord reigneth, let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims, let the earth be moved.' It is fit that dust and ashes should tremble before the God of glory. How was the holy prophet struck with the sense of his own vileness, when he saw the Lord upon a throne, and the seraphims above it, Isa. vi. 2, 8. Though the Lord do not present himself there to our eyes, yet our faith may always have such a vision of God; yea, he is thus presented to our sense; we hear, though we do not see, that the Lord sits upon 'a throne, high and lifted up,' between the cherubims, yea, with thousands of seraphims about him. And will neither faith nor sense strike us with the trembling sense of our own vileness? The Lord expects it, and encourages us to it. He that dwells between the cherubims of glory, will dwell also in that heart that trembles at his word. He looks that we should tremble, not only when we see him, but when we hear of him, Isa. lvii. 15, 16: 'Wherefore,' as the apostle advises, Heb. xii. 28, 'let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.'

3. Let us come with sincerity. The Lord upon the mercy-seat shewed himself to be a God that knows all things, all secrets, and so the secrets of hearts. When they were concerned to know those secrets (as David was to know the inward inclinations of the men of Keilah), here they inquired, as is before shewed. He hereby declares that there is nothing secret to, nothing hid from, him, with whom we have to do. This obliges us to deal uprightly with him, and to come before him with sincere hearts.

The apostle, shewing how we should draw near to the throne of grace, requires this particularly: Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw nigh with a true heart,' &c. He loves truth in the inward parts, and hates the contrary, and knows whether it be there or no. It is madness to dissemble with him who knows all things, and hereby declares it; he 'searches the heart,' &c. It is madness to make a shew of the good that is not in us, or to go about to hide any evil that is in us. The apostle warns us of this, before he advises us to

come to the throne of grace : Heb. iv. 18, there is nothing good or evil, how secret soever we may think it, but is manifest in his sight. Whatever is covered, and shut up close from the eyes of others, is naked and open to him. He, with whom we have to do at the throne of grace, is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents, ver. 12 ; and, therefore, when we come to the throne of grace, let us be careful to bring nothing, no, not in the secrets of our minds and hearts, but, what we would have him to see. Let us bring no thought nor motion, no disposition nor inclination, no aim or end, no desire or intention, but what we would have exposed to the eye of him that sits on the throne. When we are before him, his eye penetrates the inwards of our minds and hearts as if they were a globe of crystal ; they are more transparent to him than crystal is to the sunbeams. Oh take care that the posture of our souls be upright before him, that it be not crooked and sinister ; but without carnal aims, worldly designs, selfish reflections ; that, though we cannot get rid of all iniquity, yet we may regard none in our heart ; that, though he see us far short of perfection, yet we may be sincere in his sight.

4. Let us come with subjection. When he is set forth as upon a throne, this signifies that he is sovereign, and we are subjects ; he is, though a gracious, yet an absolute sovereign, and we must come to him, as those who are wholly subjected to him, and resolved to shew ourselves absolutely subject, ready to be ordered by his wisdom, and ruled by his will, and subservient to his interest, and to have what we are, and what we have, and what we desire or hope for, disposed of as he thinks fit. His sovereignty and dominion calls for this, and his throne shews his dominion and sovereignty.

We must be ordered by his wisdom, not our own ; when our wisdom agrees not with his, we must account it folly, and not follow its dictates, how specious soever ; his will must be our will, it must be a law to us, as it is in itself ; and, when it crosses our will, we must yield to it, comply with it, as holy, and just, and good ; it must be observed as good, and perfect, and acceptable, even when it lies thwart to our wills and inclinations.

We must be ready to do whatever he would have us do. None of his commands should be grievous ; we should have respect to them all, else we may be ashamed to profess ourselves his subjects, or approach his throne, Ps. cxix. 6 ; willing to forsake whatever he would have us to abandon, even every false way, Ps. cxix. 104 ; every way of sin, how pleasant or advantageous soever it seem ; willing to resist whatever he would have us oppose ; not only temptations from without, but our own humours, appetites, passions, inclinations, so far as they please not him ; willing to part with what he would have us to lose, though it be endeared relations and enjoyments, Luke xiv. 33 ; willing to suffer what he would have us endure, though it be that which flesh and blood thinks grievous.

If he be our sovereign, his interest must be sovereign ; we must make our own and all stoop to it ; we must own none, but what will serve it, and all that we have must be at the service of it ; we must look upon ourselves and enjoyments as not our own, but his, and to be employed for him, when, and as he calls for it ; even all, when no less will serve to uphold his interest ; we must submit our desires and hopes to him, when we come to his throne ; be willing to be denied in what he thinks best to deny us, and to be delayed in what he thinks fit to defer us. The throne we are to come to, minds us that we are to come resolved for such subjection.

5. Let us come with love and affectionateness. As it is a throne, it calls for subjection ; as it is a throne of grace, it calls for love, and all the affections that depend thereon. The Lord offering himself to us on the throne of grace, is presented to us as the most amiable object, and in the most

delightful and desirable posture ; when should we draw near him with all affectionateness, but when he holds forth all affectionateness to us ? and this he does, in a most rich and ample manner, on the throne of grace. When should we come to him with inflamed love, with ardent desires, with greatest delight and rejoicing, but when he displays the riches of his grace and mercies, and opens to us the treasures of his love, as he does on this throne ?

(1.) When he appears on the throne of grace, then love is on the throne ; mercy and grace appear in their sovereignty and exaltation, they are set forth all in their glory ; and does not this call for, and oblige us to, the highest love, the most raised affection ? Will some little love, some small degree of affection, be a suitable answer to such an obliging appearance ? will a poor, cool affection be fit for us to meet him with, when he is ready to meet us with the riches and greatness of an enthroned love ? Shall we leave so much reason for sorrow and shame, to supply the defect of better affections ? Shall not his love, when it is represented to us as on a throne, in its greatest power, constrain us to love him, and love him more and more, every time we draw near him ? Shall we not delight to be in a gracious presence, a presence which is gloriously gracious ? Such is the presence on the throne of grace : there grace appears in its glory, and all the royalty and magnificence of the King of kings. Another throne we may dread ; but this sure should be our delight and joy when we draw near it. Shall not our desires be excited and drawn out when the riches of grace and mercy offer themselves freely to those that are desirous ; when the throne of God declares that he will give like a king to those that desire it ? Oh, why does covetousness run so low and feed on mud, when here it might be entertained at a throne, and satisfied with royal riches ?

(2.) Here all streams of goodness meet us ; both mercy and grace, both compassion and love. And does not this call for all acts, all expressions of affection, when we draw near ?

(3.) Here love resides ; here grace reigns ; here mercy keeps the throne. And this should keep up our affection ; we should not be off and on, up and down. Decays and declinings should be hateful to us. Delight should be constant : love still sparkling, desire always upon the wing, when we come to the throne of grace, while we may find the Lord there ; and he is never off, his people may find him ever upon his throne.

6. Let us come in faith, come believing that we shall have access, acceptance, and success ; come with confidence of this, as those who may be bold to expect it ; as those who have all freedom and liberty to come, without any restraint, who have security to do it, and need not fear it ; who have warrant to do it, and need make no question of it.

This is plain and open in the text. It is that which the apostle expressly requires in these words. Let us come boldly with confidence, with such a faith as prevails against fears, doubts, suspicions, jealousies, and rises up to full assurance. And he calls for it afterwards in that parallel place, Heb. x. 19, 20, 22, where his expressions refer to the mercy-seat, the throne of grace in a type, and, which I have shewed all along, helps us to understand what it signifies to us. ' Having boldness,' *παρρησιας*, the same word which we have in the text ; ' into the holiest,' that was the place of the mercy-seat, the most holy part of the sanctuary ; ' by the blood,' the high priest might not approach the mercy-seat without blood, which signified the blood of Jesus, ver. 20 ; ' through the veil : ' the way to the mercy-seat was through a veil, which parted the holy and most holy place. The apostle shews there is now a way for us, we may now come to the throne of grace shadowed out by these expressions. And how we may and ought to come,

he tells us, ver. 22, in full assurance of faith, *ἐν πληροπορίᾳ πίστεως*. There is nothing to stop or retard us, we may come with full sail; there is nothing to discourage us, we may come without any distrust or doubting, with all assurance, a fulness of it. We have sufficient encouragement for such a faith, such an exercise of it.

Now this being the duty of the text, I shall insist on it the more; taking in here the usefulness of the other observations which the words afford, that I may not stay too long upon this subject.

Since it is a throne of grace we come to, here is great encouragement to come in faith, with an emboldened faith, a faith encouraged unto confidence. More distinctly, let me shew, 1, in what particulars we have this encouragement for faith and confidence; 2, how all discouragements may be hereby removed; and 3, what positive supports are hereby offered to our faith.

1. For the first; we may come in faith to the throne of grace in all cases that require help or relief. Whosoever we need help, whatever the need be, grace and mercy is to be found for help, without limitation. Particularly,

(1.) In sense of guilt. When sin troubles the soul, stings the conscience, disquiets the heart, makes us fear it will rise up before the Lord against us, that it is set in the light of his conscience, and that he will judge us for it, the throne of grace gives assurance this shall not be. When he offers himself to us upon a throne of grace, he makes it evident he is not willing to judge his people for their sins; he has no design to arraign, or condemn, or punish them for past transgressions. If he intended this, he would shew himself upon another throne; not his mercy, but his judgment-seat. The throne of grace is his mercy-seat, and that, I shewed you, signified that sin was covered, hid from his sight; so that he would not see it, nor take notice of it as a judge. The mercy-seat (signifying Christ) was betwixt the Lord and the condemning law, which bears witness of our sin and guilt. That was hid in the ark and covered, which shewed the Lord on the mercy-seat, and so on the throne of grace (shadowed out thereby) has found out a way through Christ to cover our sins, *i. e.* to pardon them, Ps. lxxxv. 1-3.

Oh, but though sin be covered, so as he will not take notice of it, to condemn me for it hereafter, yet he may deal severely with me for it here; I may feel the effects of his wrath in grievous afflictions, I tremble at the apprehension of that.

But when sin is covered and forgiven, the wrathful effects of it cease, as the psalmist shews; when their sin was forgiven, their captivity was brought back, vers. 1, 2, and all wrath taken away. Though he may chastise whom he pardons, yet not as a judge, to satisfy law and justice, but as a father, out of love and grace. The throne of grace ensures this; no afflictions for sin come from thence, but such as, whatever they seem to be, will really prove to be acts of grace, *i. e.* of love and mercy, not of enmity or penal wrath. Believers may be hereby assured their pardon will be both free and full: free, because it is of grace; and full, because from grace in its exaltation, when it has the throne.

(2.) In wants and necessities this assures us of supply. We come to the throne of grace for all we want, whether it concern soul or body, and be confident we shall have it; and confident because it is a throne of grace we come to. For he that sits upon the throne can supply all our wants. The throne signifies he has all things in his power, and at his disposing. There is no doubt but this great King can supply the poorest body, the poorest soul that belongs to him. And that he is ready to do it, we may be sure, because it is a throne of grace where he offers himself, and to which we are

invited. This declares him gracious, ready to supply our necessities, and that freely, Rev. vii. 15, 16; by hunger and thirst, all wants whatever are signified. Here is assurance that all wants shall be supplied, and the ground of it expressed, ver. 16. The throne of God, through the Lamb in the midst of it, becomes a throne of grace; hence flow all supplies to the people of Christ, in heaven and on earth. They shall not hunger, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, he feeds them; they shall not thirst, he leads them to living fountains. Here is a free, a full, a lasting and continuing supply, as from a fountain that runs freely, that affords not drops or draughts, but streams, many streams, and that continually. It is not a vessel or a cistern, but a fountain, a spring; a spring that is never dry, a living fountain; till this fail, we can never want supplies.

Obj. Oh, but do not we see many of those in want who come before this throne?

Ans. You may see many things that they have not, but nothing that they want. They that have all that is good for them, though there be many things which they have not, yet properly they want nothing. Want is something to be complained of; but none in reason can complain because he is without that which is not good for him; he wants it not, unless it may be said he wants a calamity, that which would be bad for him; that is such a want of which none but a madman would have a supply. The people of Christ may have all that they want, because they may have all that is good; the throne of grace makes them sure of this. There the Lord sets forth himself as infinitely gracious, and so ready to make good all that he has graciously promised, and he has promised all that is good, Ps. xxxiv. 9, 10, and lxxiv. 11.

Obj. But I cannot think but such a thing which I have not would be good for me.

Ans. The question here is, Whether the Lord or thyself can best judge what is good for thee? yet methinks this should be no question.

(8.) In weakness, inward or outward, public or personal. Hence we are encouraged to expect strength and assistance; hence it comes, even from the mercy-seat, from the throne of grace: Ps. xx. 2, 'Send thee help from the sanctuary.' Why from the sanctuary, but because the Lord presented himself there as upon the mercy-seat? The sanctuary was in Zion, the mercy-seat was in the sanctuary, the Lord was in the mercy-seat, he would have himself set forth as residing there. Herein they pray, and pray in faith, for help and strength.

Thou wantest strength to subdue corruption, to resist temptation, to overcome the world, to master self, to bear the cross, to perform hard duties, to improve ordinances and gracious opportunities, to walk exemplarily, to live serviceably, to persevere thus doing. Alas! says the soul, sensible of its own weaknesses, where shall I have strength for all this? Where? why at the throne. If he that sits on the throne will strengthen and assist thee, nothing will be too hard for thee, Phil. iv. 18. And he is ready to do it, for he that has all power, as being upon the throne, is all gracious, as being upon the throne of grace.

Then as to the public, where shall there be help, when all seems running to ruin, when the interest of Christ seems sinking in all countries round about us, where it is not sunk already; when it is sinking in the midst of us? What help can stay it, or be any support to it, when we see it pushed headlong? What strength can raise it, when it seems so low, so like to be buried, beyond hopes of a resurrection; when all that look

about them, and have a due sense of such concerns, find their hearts failing them for fear, and for 'looking after those things that are coming on the earth,' Luke xxi. 26; when they say with trembling hearts, By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? What help or strength shall secure the gospel, and the interest of Christ (which depends on it) to these parts of the world, ready to be over-run with antichristian darkness and violence? What hope in such circumstances that seem hopeless? Why, this: the Lord reigns, he has the throne still; there is help and strength enough there. Oh, but what is that to those who have utterly disobliterated him, who have forfeited the gospel, as much as any that ever lost it? Why, the Lord here shews himself gracious, and who knows but the unworthiest may find him so? As it is a throne of power, so a throne of grace we come to; and grace acts freely, and may appear for the relief of those who have no reason from themselves to look for any such thing. If the throne of grace were duly plied by those who have interest there, there might be hope concerning this thing; there, and there only, is help to be found in such a time of need. There is no need so great, but help for it may be had at this throne; none so unworthy but may meet with it freely, for it is a throne of grace.

(4.) In fears and dangers, here you may have security, Ps. xxvii. 5, Ps. xxxi. 20. The secret of the tabernacle was the holy of holies, the place of the mercy-seat. And this is called the secret of his presence, because he exhibited his presence on the mercy-seat. Thus David was confident to be secured, as if he had been hid with God, as if he had been covered with the wings of the cherubims, which overshadowed the mercy-seat, and so made it the secret of the divine presence. To come to the throne of grace is the way to get into the secret of the Lord's presence. For any to assault you there will be to offer violence to the throne of God; he that sits upon the throne will never endure it. If you take sanctuary here, you are safe. You are invited to come, to fly to it in time of danger. He that offers his own throne for a sanctuary will not suffer it to be violated. He that touches you there touches the apple of his eye, for it is the secret of his face. So the words signify which are translated the secret of his presence, Ps. xxxi. 20, סֵתֶר פָּנָי, the secret or covering of thy countenance. What will become of those who will venture to strike at the face of God? How safe are they that are hid under this covering, who are secured in the secret of his countenance! This is the security which the throne of grace offers you. The horns of the altar were nothing to such a sanctuary. Joab was plucked from thence, but none can reach you here. It is the throne of God, he can secure you; and a throne of grace, he will do it. It was the ground of that confidence, Ps. xxvii.

(5.) In troubles and calamities this is the surest way to deliverance. In the great calamity and desolation of the church, lamented Ps. lxxx., she applies herself to the Lord as dwelling on the mercy-seat, ver. 1, 2. So did Hezekiah, when he and all the people of God were in great distress, ready to be overcome and ruined by Sennacherib: 2 Kings xix. 15, 'Thou residest on the mercy-seat,' &c. The throne of grace is now our mercy-seat, there we may be sure to find deliverance, *ἐυκαιρον βοήθειαν*, 'relief in season;' deliverance whenever it will be, as soon as ever it is seasonable. Oh but we may stay long first, have not many done so? You shall stay no longer for it than yourselves desire, for you will not desire it till it be good; and it will not be good till it be seasonable. If it come too soon, it is as bad as if it come too late. It is never good, never desirable, but when it is in season; and when it will be seasonable, the throne of grace in the text assures you of it. Whenever deliverance will be a mercy, whenever it will be an act of

grace, you shall have it assuredly ; and it is madness to wish it before. The text bids you be confident of it ; anything that is mercy, you may find ; whatever will be an act of grace, you may obtain. You may be sure of it, because it is a throne of grace you come to, Ps. lvii. 1, lxiii. 4.

I might add many other particulars. In straits and perplexities you may have direction here, as from an oracle ; in grievances you may have ease and support : what sweeter and stronger support than the throne of grace ? In desertion and despondency, you may have comfort ; it is from this throne the Lord will shew himself so gracious as to wipe all tears from his people's eyes, Rev. vii. 17. In distance and estrangement from God, by coming to his throne you get near him, Ps. xci. 1.

2. The next thing propounded is to shew how all discouragements to faith may be hereby removed. And indeed there is scarce anything that tends to discourage faith, or to puzzle it with doubts and fears, or to weaken it in its actings and exercise, but may be hereby dispelled. There is no objection that unbelief can make, or a distrustful heart suggest, but may be taken off by eyeing God as represented on the throne of grace, and viewing those perfections and excellencies which he holds forth to us in this posture. To instance in some particulars.

(1.) The difficulty of what we need, of what we would have, sometimes puzzles faith. So it did not only, 2 Kings vii. 19, but in Moses, otherwise strong in faith : Num. xi. 21, 'The people are six hundred thousand footmen ; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole month.' So it did in Martha : John xi. 39, 'By this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.' As though time might prescribe to the Lord, or as if the grave would not deliver up one so long detained, at the word of Christ's power. Faith often staggers here. How can such a danger, such a calamity, be prevented ? How shall antichristianism, coming in upon these parts of the world as a mighty flood, be stopped, when all things in view threaten, all seem to conspire to make way for it, and no means visible to divert it ? How can such an evil, hanging over person or family, be repelled ? How can such a loss be made up, such a relation, such a comfort ? How can such a lust be subdued, which I have been struggling so long with to so little purpose ; that which is rooted in my temper and constitution, and has revived so often when I have looked on it as subdued and suppressed ? What escape out of such a strait, when no way visible to escape, no passage, no chink, to let out of it ? How shall the gospel, our liberties, comforts, be secured to us, when no wisdom, no power of man, appears for the effecting of it ?

Yea, but consider, the Lord appears here as a God almighty. So he did on the mercy-seat, so he does on the throne of grace, as before. And is anything too hard for God ? Is anything too difficult for him that sits on the throne, to whom those things that seem utterly impossible to us are things of greatest ease ? 'Is the Lord's hand shortened ?' So he answers Moses, Num. xi. 23.

What does the throne here mentioned signify ?

[1.] He rules and reigns over the world. All creatures, from the highest to the lowest, are absolutely subject to him. He can order all the creatures in the lower world, whatever is on the earth, or in the sea, or in the air ; yea, the stars in the firmament, and all the angels in heaven, to do whatever he pleases. He can bring them in altogether for the help of his servants, will force the meanest of them rather than fail. If all the hosts of the lower world were not sufficient, he has innumerable legions of angels, many and many myriads of them at his beck. They are about his throne, and stand

there as the attendants of this great King, ready to receive his orders, and to execute them in the behalf of his people, the weakest of them, the little ones, Mat. xviii. 10. What cannot he do for you, whose throne declares that he can raise all the powers of the world to do his pleasure?

[2.] But there is no need of all this. Since he has the throne, he can empower any one thing to do for you whatever you need; since he has the throne, he has the power, all power is at his disposing. He is the God, the king of power. Since the kingdom is his (which a throne signifies), the power is his, 1 Chron. xxix. 11, Mat. vi. 18, Rev. v. 18. All creatures ascribe all power to him that is on the throne. And he that has dispersed this power unto several creatures, he can unite it all in one; or as much of it in any one as will be enough for your relief, whatever your case be. He can convey power into any ordinance to comfort, quicken, or strengthen you; so as you may prevail against any lust, resist any temptation, bear any cross whatsoever. He can enable any creature to supply any want, make up any loss or breach, even such as you are apt to think can never be repaired. He can empower any instrument, how crooked, or weak, or broken, or insufficient soever it seem, to do that for you which you see no means or instruments able to do. He has the throne, the power is his; he can dispose of it as he pleases; he can convey so much of it into anything as will serve your turn, and answer your need, whatever it be.

[3.] If there were no creature, no instrument in the world to help, yet would you not be at a loss in time of need; for he that is on the throne could do it alone. He can do all that ever you need, without any means or instruments. His bare word is sufficient, all-sufficient, for it, whatever it be, how great, how difficult, how impossible soever it seem. Such a power there is even in the word of the great King, Ps. xlv. 4. There needs no more to deliver you, to deliver his people anywhere, how deep soever plunged; but only the command of him that sits on the throne. If the gospel, the interests of Christ, in these parts of the world, and the dear concerns of our souls, and the souls of posterity, were all as dry bones, in a more forlorn and hopeless condition than they are, he could make all live with a word. He that is our king, that sits upon the throne, can command life into that which seems as far from living as a dry bone. While he keeps the throne, it is a senseless heart that fails through distrust of power, even when all visible power and help fails.

(2.) Some may say, The Lord is able enough; I do not doubt of his power; but is he willing to help, to strengthen, to deliver me from inward or outward dangers? Here faith is often at a stand: Mat. viii. 2, 'If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' The leper did not question Christ's power to cleanse him, but his willingness. Many who believe his power, yet question his will. Here it usually sticks: Is he willing?

Why, yes. The Lord upon the mercy-seat appeared as a God of mercy. And what is mercy, but a willingness, a readiness to pity and help. When will the Lord shew mercy, if not here, if not now, when he exhibits himself as on the mercy-seat? When the Lord offers himself on a throne of grace, this gives assurance that grace is then to be found. He bids us now come with confidence to find grace; and when he bids us be confident, can there be any doubt that he will fail us? Will he let those whom he bids trust in him for this thing be ashamed and miss of it? An ingenuous man will not do so, much less the gracious God. Upon this throne he appears gracious in a solemn, a glorious manner. He will not frustrate the expectation that such an appearance, such a manifestation of himself, raises. It is not for his honour to defeat those hopes that himself hereby excites and encour-

ages in such a manner. It would be a blot, a great disparagement to this throne, if it should not prove what himself styles it. His throne is a pledge that he is willing. You have a pledge no less considerable than the throne of God to assure you that you shall find him gracious ; and to be gracious, is to be freely willing.

(3.) It is true, you may say, the Lord is gracious and merciful, and so he may be willing to help and pity others, and freely so ; but how does it appear that he is willing to do it for me ? Faith is here often at a stand.

Why, consider the Lord on the mercy-seat, and so on the throne of grace, is a God under promise, as I shewed before. And promises are for particular application ; they speak the Lord willing to do this, and the other ; and, in a word, whatever thou needest, whatsoever is good to thee ; they offer all the great and precious things which are the contents of these great and precious promises to thee in particular.

To go no further, the words of the text, though propounded in form of an exhortation, yet they are indeed a promise virtually, and so to all effects and purposes, as many other expressions are in Scripture, so that a great part of Scripture are promises in effect, though not so taken notice of. This here may be resolved (as there is good ground to resolve it) into this form : Those that come to the throne of grace shall find mercy, &c. And then, you see, it is a most gracious promise ; and to whom is it made ? To the people of Christ that are in need ; and so it belongs to thee if thou pertain to Christ, and art in need. If it be a time of need with thee, either as to inward or outward state, here is mercy and grace for thee in particular ; thou hast a promise of it, which thou mayest apply particularly to thyself.

(4.) Oh, but though I may apply this or that promise, yet there are many promises that I think are not fit or proper, or intended for me. Many seem particular to some eminent saints, and divers of them were made upon special occasions, which restrains them from me ; and, which concerns the matter before us, those in particular which were made to Moses and his successors, touching the Lord's meeting them, and communing with them from the mercy-seat. And this in the text, it is for those that can come with confidence and assurance.

In answer to this, consider : the Lord upon the mercy-seat, or the throne of grace, appears a God in covenant, as I shewed in the application. Now, all the promises are but several articles of that covenant. He that is in covenant with God is included in all the articles of it ; every promise belongs to him, so far as his condition makes him capable, and requires it. The Lord upon the throne of grace is a God to us in Christ. Now, in Christ all the promises are *yea* and *amen*. He being the mediator of this covenant, and all the promises being ratified and confirmed by his blood, they are *yea* and *amen* in him ; and that constantly ; not *yea* to his people formerly and *nay* to his people now, but *yea* always. And they are all so in Christ, 2 Cor. i. 20, true and firm. The covenant is as a cluster of grapes, the several promises are as particular grapes in that cluster, Christ is as the branch or stalk that holds them all. He that lays hold on Christ hath the stalk in his hand, and so holds the whole cluster, and every particular grape. If Christ be thine, thou hast laid hold on the covenant ; the whole cluster of promises is in thine hand.

The Lord here offers grace and mercy ; he is upon the throne for this purpose. It is therefore called a throne of grace. Now, he who has grace and mercy offered has all the promises made over to him ; for mercy and grace is the sum of them all ; all that they contain or hold forth is mercy or grace.

And as for promises made upon special occasion, we find the Holy Ghost applying them to others afterward, upon occasions far differing from those upon which they were first made, *e. g.* that promise, Josh. i. 5, 'I will not fail thee nor forsake thee.' It was made to Joshua in particular, and upon a special occasion, when he was going to conquer Canaan, and to get possession of another land. And yet this the Holy Ghost applies to the faithful in common, and that as a motive to be contented with their present condition and enjoyments; an occasion very different, if not opposite, to that which was its first rise, Heb. xiii. 5.

If we be not in the same circumstances with Moses, when the Lord made those promises to him, there may be some circumstantial difference as to the performing of them to us, but the substance of them will be made good to his people in all ages. Though he will not speak to his servants now, and commune with them now in an audible voice, as he did with Moses from the mercy-seat, yet he will meet his people at the throne of grace, and admit them to communion with him, and give them divine answers in a way suitable to gospel times; and for this may these promises now be made use of.

(5.) Oh, but I fear I want the condition of the promise, and then what encouragement can there be for me to apply the promise for this? I intend no encouragement but for believers; for it is faith that the text leads me to encourage; and where there is faith, here is great encouragement, though there be great weaknesses and defects as to other qualifications. For when the high priest appeared before the Lord, presenting himself upon the mercy-seat, what was he required to bring into the most holy place? Why, only incense and the blood of sprinkling, Lev. xvi. 12-14. These signified the intercession and satisfaction of Christ. Now, these are already prepared to thy hand, and held forth to thee by the throne of grace; for by virtue hereof it is a throne of grace. If, therefore, faith lay hold on these, that will give thee access to the mercy-seat, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; to the covenant of promise, and to all the promises of the covenant; and to him who is upon the throne of grace, as a God in covenant.

(6.) Oh, but if I have faith, it is very weak; so weak as I know not whether it be alive in me; I doubt whether it have a being there. And it is a strong faith that the text calls for, such as is strengthened into confidence, and rises up to assurance. Those that are to come are such as can come boldly.

The apostle does not say that none may come before this throne but those that can come with assurance and confidence. But the design of this expression is to shew that all the people of Christ, even the poorest weaklings, such whose faith is weakest, have encouragement to come boldly. Here is enough in this representation to strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees, to put spirits and strength into a fainting, a languishing faith; enough to quash its fears, satisfy its doubts, scatter all jealousies, and support it in its tremblings. So that here is no reason at all to stay away, because you are weak; but the rather to come, that you may be strong in faith; for the throne of grace offers grace and mercy, is a ground of assured hope that you may obtain mercy, &c. Now, what is the property, the office of mercy, but to pity weaknesses and relieve them? And what does grace import, but that the Lord upon this throne will do it freely? If it were not so, grace were no grace; it would be a throne of something else, not of grace. Both grace and mercy are for help, says the text, and for help in time of need; and so they are most for those who are in most need. And those who are weakest are in most need; and therefore weaklings have as much encouragement as any to come boldly. Mercy and grace is as much designed

for thee as (if not more for thee than) any, and offered here to answer all thy needs, supply defects, strengthen thee in weaknesses, and out of weaknesses to make thee strong.

(7.) Oh but I have more to discourage me than mere weakness! I have sinned, I have disobliged the Lord who sits upon the throne, and have dealt too unfaithfully in the covenant.

I suppose thou dost not allow thyself in any evil way, in any known sin; thou bewailest thy proneness to sin; thou watchest and resistest, and strivest against it. If this be thy case, here wants not encouragement; sin in such circumstances does not disoblige the Lord, so as he will not remember his covenant. Remember what I said in the opening of the point in hand. The Lord is upon the mercy-seat; and consequently, as upon the throne of grace, is a God reconciled, a God pardoning sin, covering it out of his sight. Christ, the covering, the mercy-seat, is interposed betwixt him and the condemning, the accusing law, to hide sin and guilt from his eye. As he is upon the throne of grace, he 'sees no iniquity in Jacob,' &c; he will not take notice of it so as to be disobliged. The Lamb is said to be 'in the midst of the throne,' Rev. v. 6, and vii. 17. It is through him that it is a throne of grace, and it is that Lamb that takes away the sin; so that coming to the throne of grace, there you may see the Lamb in the midst of it, and so may conclude sin taken away. It is gone, it cannot disannul the covenant. You may see that in the throne of grace, which declares the Lord has taken a course to make the covenant everlasting; though it be made with sinners, the mediation and interposal of Christ, who is in the midst of the throne, will secure it.

(8.) But the Lord is long ere he perform his promise. I want help, and it comes not. I cry unto him for it, and he answers not. He delays; my soul fails in waiting for him.

Ans. There may be mistakes here. Either he performs his promise and answers your desires, and you observe it not, or else it is not best for you that he should do it yet. The throne of grace holds forth ground of assurance that you shall have help as soon as you can reasonably desire it (and what would you have more?). You cannot reasonably desire it but when it will be best for you; it will not be best for you but when it is seasonable, and when it is seasonable you are here assured of it. This is expressly in the text; coming to the throne you shall obtain mercy, and find grace for seasonable help, *ἵς ἱκανον βοηθειαν*, for help when it is seasonable. It is not good till then, and so till then you cannot in reason desire it. As soon as the finding of it will be a mercy, as soon as the obtaining of it will be an act of grace (and before, it cannot be in season, it is not to be desired). 'He that shall come will come, and will not tarry;' he will not stay one jot longer. His posture upon the mercy-seat (to which the throne of grace answers) signifies all speed and celerity, when the wisdom of him who charges the angels with folly can see fit and good for you. He was upon the mercy-seat as his chariot; there he was presented as sitting between the cherubims. The word *Cherub* is most probably derived from *Rechab*, a chariot. That of the psalmist refers to this representation: Ps. lxxxvi. 17, 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand, thousands of angels multiplied.' The two cherubims upon the mercy-seat were an emblem of these two myriads. 'The Lord is among them; as in Sinai, so in the holy place.' These signified his special presence in both. Here he sets forth himself as on a throne, or in a chariot. It is called the 'chariot of the cherubims,' 1 Chron. xxviii. 18. The Lord will be as quick and speedy in bringing help to his people when it is good and seasonable and desirable, as if he

came in a chariot drawn with cherubims, Ps. xviii. 10 ; and this chariot is swifter than the wings of the wind. So he came for David's deliverance ; so he will come for yours when it is seasonable. You cannot desire it sooner, unless you would have it before it be good, before it is to be desired.

8. The last thing propounded is to shew what positive supports are hereby offered to our faith. Having set before you how our eyeing the Lord as on the mercy-seat, as on the throne of grace, serves to remove all discouragements that faith may meet with, I shall now let you see positively how the Lord, thus represented to us, affords all encouragement that is requisite to strengthen and support our faith in all addresses.

The Lord here shews himself both able and willing to be unto his people whatever they can desire, and to do for them whatever they need. And where the Lord declares himself both able and willing, there faith hath all the encouragement that it can possibly have to strengthen and embolden it. The Lord is not hindered or disabled by any of those defects which may disable others from helping us, for he appears here as always present, as unconceivably wise and infinitely powerful.

(1.) This may persuade us, assure us of his presence. I shewed you in the explication how the Lord in the mercy-seat, and consequently on the throne of grace, offers his presence to his people, and what a presence it is that is here exhibited in divers particulars. Let me but add one text wherein we have them all together, Ezek. xliii. 7.

[1.] Here is an intimate presence. He will be not near them or with them only, but in them, in the midst of them.

[2.] A special presence. He will be in them, not only as he is in the rest of the world, but in a more peculiar manner, with a gracious presence, such as the mercy-seat held forth there and the throne of grace now ; present in a way of mercy, in a gracious manner.

[3.] A glorious presence. He will be with them as on his throne, where he appears in his glory and majesty. See ver. 5.

[4.] An all-sufficient presence. To secure them from what they fear, and give what they desire. 'My holy name shall they no more defile.' His presence shall keep them from sinning against him ; and that which keeps us from sin secures us from all that is dreadful, for there is nothing dreadful but sin and the effects of it. There will be no more effects of sin when they no more defile his name ; and so far as they are kept from sin, so far the way is open for all good things, all we can desire, for it is sin only that stops the way and withholds good things from us.

[5.] A continuing presence. It is not, I will come to them, I will visit them, I will stay with them for a while, but 'I will dwell with them.' That denotes a settled, a constant abode. And 'dwell with them for ever.' Thus will the Lord be present with his people when the place of his throne is amongst them. Such a presence the throne of grace imports. It is true, the Lord's throne is said to be in heaven, because his glory in a peculiar manner appears there. But throne is a figurative expression, and denotes his reign or empire ; and so, wherever the Lord reigns and rules, there is his throne, Ps. ciii. 19, 'His kingdom ruleth over all.' He rules everywhere. His throne is where his kingdom is, and that is, as over all, so within his people : Luke xvii. 21, 'The kingdom of God is within you.' There is an intimate presence. And as his throne is everywhere, so it is everywhere a throne of grace to his people ; and so, wherever they are, they have his gracious presence. And though he appear most glorious in heaven, yet wherever he is, wherever his throne is, he is glorious ; so that, being in the midst of his people, he is the glory in the midst of them. It is a glorious presence.

And it will afford help in need ; all help that is needful, and that is as much as we need desire ; help in season, and that is as good as we can wish. So far it is an all-sufficient presence, and it will continue while his grace continues, and that is for ever. It will be a throne of grace while his grace and mercy endures, and this endures for ever.

So that upon the whole, there is not the least occasion of distrust or doubt that we shall suffer by reason of his distance from us, that he will fail us any moment by reason of his absence, since the throne of grace insures his presence with his people, and such a presence as is most desirable.

(2.) This may persuade us of his wisdom ; for from the mercy-seat did the Lord manifest his infinite wisdom by giving them a resolution of their greatest difficulties, such as were too hard for any created understanding. Here they asked counsel of the Lord, and he answered them according to the judgment of *Urim* : Num. xxvii. 21, ' Before the Lord,' i. e. with their faces towards him, as presenting himself on the mercy-seat ; for when they were to ask counsel, the priest, putting on the breast-plate of *Urim* and *Thummim*, set his face towards the mercy-seat, and the Lord from thence gave him answers, either by an audible voice or by secret inspiration, which answers when the priest had declared to the people, the stones and letters in the breast-plate shined (as is conceived) with some extraordinary lustre and brightness. and thereby the people had assurance that the answer was from the Lord. And the priest being herein a type of Christ, who carries his people in his heart before the Lord, as the priest did the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast. To the brightness shining in the breast-plate that expression of the apostle may have reference : 2 Cor. iv. 6, ' God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' However, in this representation of the Lord upon a throne of grace, the light of the glorious knowledge of God does appear shining in the face of Christ, with a brighter and more conspicuous lustre. Here we may see with open face, without any veil interposed, without any shadow of obscure types, that *αὐτοῦ ἀκρίβεια σοφίας*, as the apostle calls it, Eph. iii. 10, that admirable variety of infinitely wise contrivances and dispensations for the saving of Jew and gentile, the depths of which the angels cannot sound, though they do their endeavour, diving into it with earnest desire of fuller discoveries, and great admiration of what they see.

Here he shews men and angels that his wisdom has found out a way to reconcile justice and mercy, through the mediation and interposal of Christ, the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne. Here we have a view of that wisdom which could find out a way to shew mercy to sinners, when his justice had condemned them, and was obliged to do severe execution upon them. All the wisdom of men and angels could never have found out an expedient for this difficulty ; they had been to seek (as we had been lost) eternally, if anything but infinite wisdom had been put upon this discovery. And is he not able, in point of wisdom, to do anything, to do everything for us ; to find out ways and means to relieve us in any case or exigent whatsoever, whose wisdom could find out a way to do that which was too hard for the wisdom of angels to discern how it could be done ?

(3.) This may persuade us of his power. Faith may hence grow confident that he is not disabled, cannot fail his people, for want of power. For he appears on the throne as one that has all power, which I made clear to you before. Let me but add one expression, frequently used in Scripture, and very pregnant for this purpose. The Lord's appearing from the mercy-seat, for the help of his people, is expressed by shining : Ps. lxxx. 1, ' Thou that

dwellest on the mercy-seat, shine forth.' The greatest works that ever the Lord did for his people are thus set forth. It is deliverance from the captivity that they pray for here in these terms. And their deliverance out of Egypt is thus expressed: Deut. xxxiii. 2, 'The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran,' &c. And the same expression is used with respect (as is probably conceived) to the great work of redemption by Christ, Ps. l. 2. The words in the original run thus: From Sion, from the perfection of beauty, the Lord will shine. As the Lord shined from the mercy-seat, which was seated in mount Sion, and where the Lord most perfectly manifested his beauty or glory, so in Sion the true light, the Messiah, appeared, and from thence diffused the true light of the gospel through the world. All the Lord's most signal works are thus set forth by shining. And the Lord upon the throne of grace is represented as shining; for there he appears in the greatness and exaltation of his grace and mercy; and the lustre of these appearing is his shining forth, his manifesting himself on the throne of grace, where the glory of his throne, the beams of his majesty, are mercy and grace; this is shining forth. And by this expression, faith may discover how able he is, who sits upon the throne, to do whatever we stand in need of. Hence it appears he can do all things for the help of his people, easily, instantly, irresistibly, and advantageously. He is able to do anything, everything, for our relief.

[1.] Easily. Without any toil or trouble. It costs him no more pains to do all you need or can desire, than it costs the sun to shine forth. He can supply all wants, resolve all doubts, subdue all corruptions, secure from all calamities, those which most threaten us, as easily as the sun can shine. He can as easily scatter all your doubts, fears, dangers, lusts, as the sun can scatter the thinnest cloud; it is no more to him than shining forth.

He can as easily do all you can think or desire, as you can turn an eye, or move a hand, or speak a word; for with as much ease does the sun dart forth his light and beams; and it is no more for the Lord to put forth his power, than to shine forth. If that which you desire would put the Lord to any pains, or toil, or trouble, you might doubt whether it would be done; but here is the encouragement of faith, the Lord can do all with the greatest ease; let him but shine forth, and it is done.

[2.] Instantly. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as soon as the light diffuses itself through the air: Mat. xxiv. 27, 'As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.' The lightning is so quick in its motion, that it is in the east and west at once, and in a moment. So quickly can the Lord do all you can desire; he can make the outgoings of his power like the goings forth of the light; let him but shine forth, and it is done. Those lusts that you have been wrestling and tugging with for many years, he can subdue in a moment. Those doubts, obscurities, perplexities that have puzzled you so long, and through which your understandings cannot make their way, he can clear up in a moment. Those clouds of antichristian darkness that are gathering thick about us, he can quickly scatter; let him but shine forth, and they will vanish. If what you need or desire would cost the Lord any expense, or time, or prove tedious to him, you might doubt whether it would be done; but he can do all with as quick a motion as that of the light, all in an instant.

[8.] Irresistibly. Nothing can stop him or give him any impediment. Men and devils can no more obstruct what his power is engaged in, than you can hinder the sun from rising with your hand, or stop it from going forth in its strength and lustre when it is risen. If the Lord could be hindered, faith might be at a stand. But here is the encouragement of faith, he can do

what you would have him, irresistibly, and break through all impediments, as the light passes through the clear air, without the least stop or stay.

[4.] Advantageously. Without any loss or prejudice to himself; nay, with advantage as to his own glory. The sun loses nothing by shining forth; nay, the more it shines, the more does it display its beauty and glory. The Lord loses nothing by employing his power for his people; nay, the more he puts it forth, the more glorious he appears. When the sun goes forth in its full strength, it goes forth in the brightness of its glory; so when the Lord puts forth the greatness of his power for his people, he shines forth in the brightness of his glory. If the Lord suffered any loss, or prejudice, or disadvantage, by doing for you what you stand in need of, you might doubt that it would not be done; but this is faith's encouragement, the Lord gains glory by employing his power for you; the more he doth, the more his glory shines forth. His appearing for you from between the cherubims is a shining forth.

So you see that faith may here discern that the Lord is able, and thus able, to do whatever you need or desire. And that is one of the two principal supports and encouragements that faith has in all its actings. Now if we may be assured that he is willing too, then faith has all the encouragement that we can wish. And herein, in the

Second place, we may be persuaded that he is willing likewise. When faith can have assurance that the Lord is not only able, but willing to help in time of need, to give all relief that is needful, then there is no place left for the least distrustful fears or doubts. Faith, by these two supports, may raise itself up to the height of confidence; and so may come boldly to the throne of grace, without any question or scruple, but that whatever is needful or desirable will be obtained, will be granted by him who sits upon the throne.

If the Lord be both able and willing to vouchsafe it, there is nothing imaginable can hinder it. Now the Lord, as offering himself to us on the throne of grace, appears willing; and faith has from hence sufficient ground to conclude he is so. I shall endeavour to discover this, both positively and comparatively. That this shews him positively willing, I have hinted something before; but now take it more fully and distinctly in these particulars.

1. He appears to be willing when he appears on the throne of grace. His manifesting himself there is a glorious appearance of his willingness. And will he appear to be what he is not? He is far from being like deceitful men; he will not delude us with vain shows, such as have no reality answering them. He would never seem willing, if he were not so indeed. All that the psalmist desired for the support of his faith was 'a token for good,' Ps. lxxxvi. 17. Here is a token for good; the throne of grace is a sign, a glorious signification, that he is willing to do us all the good, to give us all the help we stand in need of.

2. He bids us be confident when we come to the throne of grace; he would have us come boldly. Now he would not bid us do this if we had no ground for it; he would not encourage us unto a rash and groundless confidence. But we have no ground for it to come with boldness and confidence, if he be not willing to let us have what we come for. Would he bid us be confident of help from him, if he were not willing to let us have it? He will not so abuse poor creatures; he is infinitely further from it than the best of men. An honest, ingenuous man would never bid us be confident in him, come boldly to him, for that which he has no mind, no will to do, which he never means to do for us. And can we think the Lord would do it? He raises our confidence by offering himself on a throne of grace; and will he dash that which himself raises, and make that ashamed which himself encourageth? Will he bid us come boldly, and then send us away disap-

pointed? What would you think of a man like yourselves that should serve you so? Such unworthy thoughts you must have of him who sits on the throne, if this do not persuade you of his willingness. However men may serve us, those that trust in the Lord shall not be ashamed, never disappointed, Prov. x. 25. But they would be disappointed, and sent away with shame from the throne of grace, if they should not find the Lord willing to do that which he encourages them to trust him for.

8. His honour is engaged. It is the glory of his throne, that it is a throne of grace. It would not be a throne of grace, nor would he that sits on it be gracious, if he were not willing to do his people good, to help them when it is good, when needful. So that you have the throne of God, the glory of him who thus represents himself, engaged for his willingness. What greater engagement can you wish, or possibly have, than the throne of God? Can you have any security more considerable than heaven or earth? Can you have anything greater for your assurance herein than the throne of God, the glory of the Most High? This you have here in the text, and what need you more? What greater security can you have, since the Lord engages his own throne? If a man should engage his whole estate that he would be willing to help you, you would not doubt but he would be willing to do it. And will you doubt of the Lord's willingness when his throne is engaged for it?

4. He appears here as a God of mercy and grace, as I shewed you in the explication, and it is express in the text. And to be a God of grace and mercy, is to be a God willing to do good freely, willing to help in time of need. He is essentially merciful and gracious, and so essentially willing to do his people good. It is his nature, and here he displays it; it shines forth from the throne of grace. Now may faith say, Though I have deserved that the Lord should deny me, yet he cannot deny himself; though he has just reason to cast me off, yet he cannot lay aside his own nature and goodness; and that inclines him to be willing, freely willing.

5. He appears here in a willing posture. He is here upon the throne of grace, upon the mercy-seat: and why represented in such a posture, but to signify he is ready for acts of grace and mercy? We may now find grace, and obtain mercy. And what is mercy, but a willingness to pity and relieve? And what is grace, but a willingness to do it freely, a free willingness? That which is the *mercy-seat* in the Old Testament, is the *throne of grace* in the New Testament. And this throne is established for ever, he is willing, and freely willing for ever, to do his people good, to help and relieve in need. The golden sceptre will be always held forth, while the Lord is on this throne; and as the throne, so the sceptre is an everlasting sceptre. The Lord shews himself always willing that his people should have access to him; yet never willing that they should go out of his presence sad and dejected, as though they could not obtain mercy, &c. This throne is established in mercy, Isa. xvi. 5. That of Solomon may be applied to it, Prov. xx. 28, 'His throne is upholden by mercy.' The Lord would have no throne, no kingdom amongst his people, were it not upheld by mercy, were he not willing to pity and help. You may as well doubt whether the Lord will still have a mercy-seat, whether he will still have a throne or no; as doubt whether he be willing to help in time of need. You may as well say that now there is no mercy-seat, no throne of grace, *i. e.* that Christ is not in heaven, that you have no mediator there, that the Lamb is not in the midst of the throne; as that the Lord is unwilling to hear and help.

6. He here shews that he has given us Christ, and thereby assures us that he cannot be unwilling to give us anything. The Lord had not set forth himself to us on the throne of grace, but that he had set forth Christ

to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25. We have now no *ἱλαστήριον*, no mercy-seat but Christ. That under the law was but a shadow of him. Christ was then hid in that shadow, but now set forth. Now not typified as to be given hereafter, but actually exhibited as given already. He has actually shed his blood for this purpose, that through his mediation the Lord might be propitious, merciful, willing to relieve us under all our guilt, and help in all our needs. It is through the Lamb in the midst of the throne, the Lamb slain, that the throne of God is to us a throne of grace. It is so through him who was slain, who was given for this end. Now he that was willing to give us Christ (as the throne of grace manifests he has already given him), assures us hereby, that he is freely willing to give all, Rom. viii. 32.

7. He appears here under obligations to be willing. The Lord on the throne of grace represents himself to us as a God under promise, a God in covenant, as I shewed in opening the point. Now what are the promises, but declarations what the Lord is willing to do for his people; gracious expressions of his willingness to do us all the good we need or can desire? Let me add, that the Hebrew doctors express a proselyte's or convert's entering into covenant with God, by being gathered under the wings of the divine presence. And the Lord's appearing on the mercy-seat, shadowed with the wings of the cherubims, they called peculiarly *שכינה*, the divine presence. To enter into covenant with God, is to be gathered under these wings. To which some conceive that expression of Christ has reference, Mat. xxiii. he would have 'gathered them under his wings,' i. e. he would have brought them into the new covenant. The Lord upon the mercy-seat, and so on the throne of grace, appears as a God in covenant. Now what are the contents of this covenant but sure mercies, Acts xiii. 34; mercies insured to believers through Christ; acts of grace and favour made sure by an everlasting covenant? The Lord hereby shews himself obliged to be everlastingly willing to help in time of need. He is as surely willing, as he is sure to be true and faithful, as he is sure to be like himself, as he is sure not to deal falsely in the covenant.

8. He appears here as having removed all impediments that might hinder him from being willing. For what can hinder, but either incensed justice, or the condemning law, or the provokings of sin? But the Lord, as offering himself on the throne of grace, shews that he has taken a course that none of these shall be any impediment to him.

Not incensed justice, for the Lord here shews himself upon the propitiatory. He is now propitious, as one reconciled, and that shews that wrath is appeased and justice satisfied.

Not the accusing law: for the mercy-seat is betwixt the Lord and the condemning law; the accusations of the law are all silenced through the mediation of Christ, the pleadings of the law will not be heard or admitted at this throne.

Not the provokings of sin: for here sin is covered. This is a throne for pardons and free forgivenesses.

So that nothing is left to hinder him from being willing. And if the Lord appears willing, bids us be confident of it, shews himself in a willing posture, and his promise, his honour, his throne, his Son, engage him, and there be nothing to hinder him, what remains, but that believers should be confident of his readiness, his willingness, to hear and help, to pity and relieve, and give them all their heart's desire? What remains, but to 'come boldly,' &c.

Thus it is manifest positively that the Lord is willing. Let me shew it comparatively also, but very briefly.

1. He shews himself more willing than he did of old under the law ; yet then his people found him ready to help, relieve, supply. He shews it now more openly on the throne of grace ; whereas in the mercy-seat it was but held forth obscurely, as in a shadow, a typical and mysterious representation : now there [is] no veil interposed, now we may with open face behold the Lord's good-will towards men, shining in the face of Christ. This he shews continually on the throne of grace, to which all may have access every moment ; whereas the people were admitted to the mercy-seat, only in the high priest, and that but once a year. The blood and incense, without which the mercy-seat was not to be approached, did but shadow forth the sufferings and intercession of Christ, and these are now not prefigured, but really exhibited. The throne of grace is now said to be the throne of God and of the Lamb ; of the Lamb slain and already sacrificed, so he has made satisfaction ; of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, there making intercession. So that, though he appeared willing before, yet now he manifests it in a way which gives much more assurance to faith ; he shews it clearly, fully, effectually, continually.

2. He is more willing to help us, than we are to help one another, than those amongst us that are most so. The throne of grace shews us mercy and grace upon the throne ; there this willingness appears in the highest exaltation and glory, and so sets forth the Lord to be as much more willing than we, to afford relief, as he is higher than we. As his other thoughts are not as ours, so his thoughts of grace and mercy, for the relief and supply of his people, and the ways wherein he is willing to help us, are far above ours, even as the heavens are high above the earth, Isa. lv. 9. Even as his highest throne is above his footstool, Heb. viii. 1. Who more willing to relieve a child in want or distress, than an affectionate father ? yet that willingness comes short of his : Luke xi. 13, ' If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children ; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,' so Mat. vii. 11. The gift of the Spirit is the sum of all good things ; it comprises spiritual light, life, strength, treasures, comforts. And the Lord is much more willing to give all these, than any Father to supply his child.

3. He is more willing to send help, than we to have it. This is unquestionable in many cases, and those that are of most consequence to us, such as concern our souls. He that will do most for our relief, is most willing to help us ; but hereby it appears that he has done more this way for us than we will do for ourselves. When we are loath to quit our own ease, to cross our own humours and inclinations, for the advantage and relief of our souls, he spared not his own Son for our sakes. It cost him more to relieve us in our lost condition, than ten thousand worlds are worth. At such a rate was he willing to appear for our help, when our state was otherwise helpless and desperate. This the throne of grace sets before us. There we may see Jesus, who by his blood has procured us access to it, and there sits on the right hand of the throne, making intercession for us. Which of us are willing to part with that for the interest of our own souls, which is as dear to us as the Son of God was to the eternal Father ? His giving his Son for us is a clear demonstration he is more willing to help us than we ourselves.

Nay, further, we are not willing to have relief till he makes us so ; and he that makes us so is more so himself. He encourages us, he invites us in the text, to come to the throne, that we may find grace to help. He uses means to make us willing. A plain evidence that he is more willing than we ; more willing that we should have help, than we are to have it.