Ettrick, May 21, 1727.

[ Sabbath before the Sacrament.]

THE DUTY OF YIELDING OURSELVES TO THE LORD.

SERMON XXXI.

2 CHRONICLES xxx. 8.

Now, be ye not stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever; and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

These words are an exhortation given upon the occasion of a public intimation made of a design to celebrate the sacrament of the pass-over at the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. The intimation is made to all Israel, even those of the ten tribes, who were not of Hezekiah's kingdom. Though they were of different kingdoms, and many other differences among them, yet these were not to hinder their communion in one sealing ordinance. In the words we have two things.

1. A blessed season of grace marked for them. Now, Hezekiah takes notice, and would have them take notice, of the opportunity put into their hand. Now, when the doors of the house of the Lord, long shut, are opened, chap. xxix. 3. When the temple service, long in disuse, is revived. It is like that of Paul, "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation."

2. Their duty in that blessed season of grace. It is, first, negative. Be not stiff-necked. Hebrew, harden not your neck. It is a metaphor taken from bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, who make great difficulty and resistance about taking it on. In a season of grace, God offers to lay his yoke on the neck of sinners, and now he is offering to lay it on yours. Do not resist nor shift it, make no difficulty about it; but take it on readily and easily.

They had an example of stiffness in their fathers, who had been ruined by it, so that the kingdom of Israel was now near to be extinguished. Therefore he would have them beware of following them.

Then comes next positive duty, which is threefold. First, yielding themselves to the Lord. Hebrew, give ye the hand to the Lord. Giving of the hand, in the language of the Holy Ghost, is opposed to stiff-neckedness, and denotes one's yielding himself up, as the be-
sieg'd to the besiegers, Jer. 1. 15. Or as a nation, Ezek. xvii. 18. or particular persons, 1 Chron. xxix. 24. yield and give up themselves to a king.

It is a natural sign confirming the yielding, and so is used for engaging to a thing yielded to. So the sense is, God is requiring you to yield yourselves to him. Do it then as by giving the hand. The next part of their duty is, to enter into his sanctuary. It is a kind invitation to God's house. The doors of it are opened. Come in then to that place which he hath chosen to put his name there, and have communion with him in his house. They are also to serve him. Serve him in his ordinances, serve him in your daily walk, that his wrath may be turned away.

**Doctrine I.**—In a season of grace, in which God is offering to lay his yoke on sinners, they should beware of being stiff-necked, or refusing to take it on. Let us inquire,

What is that yoke which the Lord is offering to lay on sinners. There is a twofold yoke which he hath for their necks. First, there is an iron yoke for the destruction of the impenitent. Thus God told the Israelites, “That because they would not serve him with joyfulness, and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore he would put a yoke of iron upon their neck, until he have destroyed them.” This is a yoke that is laid on the sinner, whether he will or not. There is no shifting of it. So this cannot be the yoke here intended. But secondly, there is a soft and easy yoke for the salvation and welfare of penitent sinners. “Take my yoke upon you, saith Jesus, and learn of me: For my yoke is easy.” This is not laid on against their will; and so those that struggle against it, and will not receive it, go without it. This is the yoke here meant. God as a judge, lays on the former, as a Saviour he offers to lay on the latter.

Now this is the yoke of kindly willing subjection to God in Christ, submitting ourselves to him. We must submit to him as our rightful Lord and ruler, “as the princes and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.” We must no more go without a yoke, but take on his yoke. It is twofold.

1. The yoke of subjection to the will of his commandments. He that made you is offering to rule and govern you, to give out commandments to you, to be obeyed. “Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.” It is your duty to submit, to take his will for your law. He must be obeyed, as well as believed. “For Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
2. The yoke of his providential will. He that made the world and you, claims the government of the world, and of you; that since you are his own, he may do with you, as to your lot, what he will. "Is it not lawful for me, says he, to do what I will with mine own?" He will not have you masters of your own process, or to carve for yourselves. He claims to dispose of you, as seems good to him. And you ought to take on this yoke, saying, *He shall choose our inheritance for us.*

Now, this obedience of the sinner to God is called a yoke,

1. Because coming under it, we are in a state of subjection as those under a yoke. The ox that hath never been under the yoke is untamed, and goes where he lists; so does the unsubdued sinner. "They say, with our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?" The sinner's own will is his law. But when he submits his neck to God's yoke, he yields to do and suffer what he will, saying, with Paul at his conversion, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"

2. Because it is laid on us for labour or work. Beasts for slaughter go without a yoke at their own ease and pleasure; but those that are for work must bear it. Those men who walk licentiously after their own lusts, if they repent not, will find that the case of cattle for slaughter will be theirs. "For, says the prophet, God will pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter." But the yoke is taken on for labour. Under it we are with David "to serve our generation by the will of God, and to work out our own salvation, with fear and trembling."

3. Because by it we are not only kept at work, but kept in order at our work. If any thing be wrong in the yoke, the work becomes disorderly. They who truly bear the yoke, are uniform and orderly in their obedience. "They have respect unto all God's commandments." They who take their religion by fits and starts, who are partial in the law, strict in some plain duties, loose in others, who serve God but by halves at best, discover themselves not to be truly come under the yoke.

4. Because of its uneasiness to the flesh. Though the service of God is a blessed state of freedom; yet to flesh and blood, it is a yoke, grating to our sensitive appetites, and crossing our corrupt wills. To the new nature indeed it is easy; but to the old corrupt nature most uneasy; and as long as there are any remains of it, there will be a pain in bearing it. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."
Lastly, Because it fixes subjection upon us. It is not left to us whether we will obey and bear or not. But we are under sacred bonds, that we must needs do it. And they are the very strongest bonds. What can bind more firmly than the authority of God? Every duty and dispensation toward us is bound on with a thus saith the Lord. Who then dare say against it? If God say stoop, who dare stand upright? Yet these bonds are sweet and agreeable to his willing people. They love the law of God, and to them his commandments are not grievous. Therefore I exhort you, be not stiff-necked but take on God's yoke.

Motives.—1. God is the party with whom we have to do. Whoever they are whom men will adventure to strive against, they should consider that they are not to take upon them to strive against God. For woe unto him that striveth with his Maker. His sovereignty should awe us into humble submission.

2. There will be nothing gained by stiff-neckedness to the yoke of God. "For who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?" The pastors of earth cannot make head against their Maker.—When the two are engaged it is easy to see who must either bow or break. The truth is, so doing we work against our own undoubted interest.

Lastly, God has waited long on you, but will not wait always. Many opportunities of grace he hath put into your hands, and many you have slighted. But beware of going on in that way, lest the reconciliation be broken up suddenly. "For he that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy."

Doctrine II.—Now, while a season of grace is afforded to sinners, it is their duty to fall in with it speedily, to give the hand and yield themselves to the Lord.—Now says the text, yield yourselves unto the Lord, &c. They had then a solemn season of grace and so have we now. Here we shall,

I. Show how sinners have a season of grace afforded them.

II. What is supposed in this gracious call to sinners, to give the hand and yield themselves to the Lord.

III. Show in a general and also particular manner, what it is to give the hand or yield ourselves to the Lord. We are,

I. To show how sinners have a season of grace afforded them, a now, in which they may yield themselves to the Lord.

1. By their being continued in life, and not cut off by death in their state of rebellion against God. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whether thou goest."
They who are gone out of the world in their sins, have now no more access to get them removed, no more season of grace, which is confined to this present life. At death the door is shut, and as the tree falls it must lie.

2. By the call of the gospel, its being sounded in their ears, as directed to them. "Unto you, O men, do I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Whatever low thoughts some entertain of the preaching of the gospel, it is God's appointed mean of salvation.

"For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The preaching of the gospel is to every one that hears it, God's message of peace and reconciliation; it is God's summons to sinners to yield, the execution whereof will be precisely marked in the court of heaven. And the voice of these turtles heard in the land makes a day of grace there; for the gospel is the grace of God that bringeth salvation.

3. By solemn sacramental occasions afforded to a people. This is the case in the text. These make a precious now, not to be slighted; lest the opportunity be lost, and the wind never again blow so fair to us for Immanuel's land. At ordinary occasions of the gospel, the blessed bargain is offered; but now the seal of heaven is also ready to confirm it. And many have had much comfort in a deathbed, from what they have enjoyed on such solemn occasions.

Lastly, By some inward motions felt within one's own soul, pressing them to comply and yield now at length. It is not to be thought, but that several feel something of this now and then. Now that is the Beloved by his Spirit putting in his hand by the hole of the lock. It is the secret whisper of the Spirit to the sinner to yield. It is a fair gale blowing to you for Immanuel's land.—And so a special season of grace. "When thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." We are now,

II. To inquire what is supposed in this gracious call to sinners, to give the hand, and yield themselves to the Lord.

1. It supposes that sinners are naturally in a state of rebellion against the Lord. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." He is their rightful sovereign, but they are alienated from him, and are like a fort keeping out against him; hence the gospel has much to do to bring them to yield. "For the weapons of our warfare are
not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong
holds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalt-
eth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity
every thought to the obedience of Christ." What else is your re-
fusing to comply with the will of God's commandments and of his
providence? All the mighty prejudices, and reasonings of the cor-
rupt mind against religion are so many strong walls by which they
defend themselves in their rebellion.

2. That though the Lord can break the sinner in pieces for his
rebellion, yet he would rather that the sinner yield. "Say unto
them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death
of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live:
turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house
of Israel?" In justice he might cut us off, because we have lifted
up the heel against him. By his power he can do it as easily as we
can break an earthen pitcher. A touch of his iron rod would dash
us in pieces; but mercy interposeth to try if the sinner will yield
himself. He needs us not. Though we were all broken to pieces,
he would be happy in himself; yet our yielding would be more plea-
sant to him.

3. That God's hand is stretched out to receive the sinner yielding
himself. He is willing to receive the worst of sinners yielding
themselves to him. "I have spread out my hands, says he, all the
day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that is not
good, after their own thoughts." He is now on a throne of grace,
offering you the covenant of his peace. He is ready to strike hands
with you; and there is nothing to hinder the closing of the bargain,
if you will but honestly strike hands with him.

4. That forced work will not be acceptable here.—He will have a
willing people that with the full consent of their own hearts shall
become his. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. He
does not say, He will force them to come in, but he would have sin-
ners from their own judgment and choice, yield themselves. Terror
indeed uses to begin the work, but love and good-will crowns it,
where it is right.

Lastly, That the sinner willingly yielding shall be kindly received
and accepted. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me,
saith Jesus, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast
cut." The sinner shall be received into the covenant, a marriage
covenant with our Maker; give the hand then, yield yourselves to
the Lord and it shall be a bargain, the best bargain you ever made,
or ever can make, a bargain for eternity, by which you shall be
made for ever happy. Nothing shall any more prevent the making
III. To shew in general and also in a particular manner, what it is to give the hand or yield ourselves to the Lord. Let us proceed.

I. Speak of the nature of it in general. It comprehends,

1. The work of conviction in receiving it. When the Spirit of the Lord lays siege to a soul, the first attack that is made on it, is by the fiery law convincing of sin and misery. When "the Spirit comes he will reprove the world of sin; of righteousness and of judgment." Many have the doctrine of the law urged upon them for their conviction; but will not yield, retaining still good thoughts of their own state and case. "When they hear the words of the curse, they bless themselves in their heart saying, We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." But elect souls are at length brought to yield, saying with Paul, "I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not co-vet." Then like the prodigal, they conclude themselves ruined perishing creatures; seeing themselves altogether vile in their na-ture, hearts, lips, and lives, and therefore concluded under the curse.

2. The work of illumination in the knowledge of Christ, in receiv-ing the discovery of a Saviour. "For 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." This impression is made by the gospel, on the soul suffering a divine siege. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is lib-erty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." In conviction there is a yield-ing to the light of the law, but if there is no more, the soul will at best flee from the Lord. But in gospel illumination the soul is drawn to yield to the Lord. Saith Jesus, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It sees in Christ a remedy for its wound, is persuaded of his ability and willingness to save, his all-fulness of merit and of spirit, his superlative excellency afford-ing a rest for the conscience and the heart.

3. The work of humiliation, in becoming pliable to the divine proposal in the gospel; leading them trembling and astonished to say with Paul, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" The iron sinew in the sinner's neck is broken, the heart of stone is taken away, and the soul is made willing in a day of power. Thus the sinner is brought down from his towering heights; the outer door of the mind and the inner door of the will, are both cast open to the
Lord Christ; the soul yields to the summons, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

4. The work of faith in the sinner's believing on, and so closing with Christ, as his Saviour from sin and wrath, renouncing all others. This is precisely the chief thing meant by giving the hand to the Lord.—For faith is, in scripture style, the hand of the soul. —Hence it is said, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name." And as the Lord in the gospel, holds out his hand to the sinner, Isaiah lxv. 2. So the sinner by believing gives him his hand. 

5. The work of repentance from dead works, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, Col. ii. 11. Faith and repentance are inseparable. That faith which produceth not repentance, even true evangelical repentance, is but dead faith. "And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." If you continue to yield yourselves to your lusts, you have not yielded to the Lord, Romans vi. 13, 14. He that yields to the Lord, renounces his former lovers and his other lords, saying, "O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name."

Lastly, The work of entire resignation; in the believer's wholly devoting and yielding up himself to the Lord. Says the apostle, "they first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God." Whatever way the man disposed of himself before, he now lays himself and his all at the Lord's feet, without reserve. He surrenders himself to the Lord without limitation. We shall now,

II. Explain the nature of this giving of ourselves to the Lord more particularly. And,

I. Let us enquire what it is, that the soul giving the hand or yielding itself to the Lord, doth yield up to him. If you will give the hand to the Lord, you must then,
1. Yield your souls, or inner man to the Lord. If he be thy Lord, he must be the Lord of thy soul in all the faculties thereof, and the kingdom of God must be within thee. "Thou shalt love, saith Jesus, the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." And you must yield your mind and conscience to the Lord, to be taught, instructed, and directed by his word and Spirit only. Men must no longer be lords of your conscience, by your taking the judgment of the carnal world for your rule in matters of sin and duty, Eph. ii. 2; or by taking up principles in religion on mere human testimony or authority. But you must hear him as the great Teacher. "And call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for one is your Master even Christ." And you must believe what he says, because he says it; in opposition to your own or others' corrupt reasonings. Making our reason the rule of faith, is subversive of divine faith: and makes the assent, knowledge, or opinion not divine faith, because not raised on divine testimony, but on the testimony of reason.

You must also yield your will to him, that his will may henceforth be thine. Saying, "Father thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." If thou wilt have a will of thine own still, and not submit it in all things to the Lord, thou dost not yield to, but rebel against the Lord. If the motions of a will contrary to the Lord's arise in thee, thou must deny and cross them and submit thy will to him. You must in like manner yield your heart and affections to him. "My son, saith he, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." If you yield him the hand without the heart, you yield not yourselves. Your heart is in a thousand pieces, your affections scattered among the creatures. Your heart must be united, your affections gathered in as the rays of the sun in the burning glass, and all point to and centre in Christ. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in all the earth that I desire beside thee." He must be the object of your love and desire, your chief joy and delight, and have the throne in your heart, all lying at his footstool.

2. Yield your bodies, or outward man to the Lord. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The Lord hath redeemed the body as well as the soul, and by the tenor of the covenant, he is as to believers, their God, not of their souls only, but of their persons, soul and body. Now as he is for it, it must be for him. For the body
is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. It ought then to be con-
secrated to him as a living sacrifice, and be employed and spent in
his service; our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
Whatever way it can be serviceable to him, it should be.

3. Yield up all your lusts and idols to him, as traitors which you
can no more harbour; saying, what have we any more to do with idols.
"Repent, says God; and turn yourselves from all your transgres-
sions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Let there be no secret
morsel reserved, as you would not quit your part in Christ. A day
of yielding to the Lord, is a day in which a bill of divorce is put in
the hand of all idols. And if there be any bosom lust, let it be
yielded up by head mark as the signal competitor for the heart.

4. Yield all your lawful enjoyments to him, so as to be at his dis-
posal, and never to break with him for them or any of them. Jesus
said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother,
and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own
life also, he cannot be my disciple." Yield your relations to the
Lord that they may be his with your consent, to be continued or
taken from you when he will; your substance in the world to be dis-
posed of as he sees good; your credit and reputation, to let him
have it, if he sees meet to make a stepping-stone of it for his own
glory: your liberty, ease and conveniences of life; yea, and your
life itself, to be for his service, and if he will for a sacrifice.

Lastly, Yield your lot and your all to him; saying, he shall choose
our inheritance for us. Close your own eyes, and let the Lord hence-
forth lead you; hold up your own hands and let him cut and carve
for you.—Be no more choosers for yourselves, but resign yourselves
to him, what way to carry you through the world home, through
good and bad report, adversity or prosperity. Give him the choice
of your comforts, and of your crosses and afflictions. Your lawful
desires must be laid at his feet. Let us now,

II. Shew in what sort and manner the soul should give the hand
or yield itself to the Lord.

1. Yield yourselves to the Lord in a marriage covenant. "Be-
hold, says he, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are
killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage." The Lord
Jesus Christ, your Maker, is offering himself to you for a husband.
"And I will betroth thee, saith he, unto me for ever; yea I will
betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lov-
ing kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in
faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord." The gospel preached
unto you is the proposal of the match with your souls, and you are
pressed in his name to accept. The Bridegroom is the heir of all
things. His hand is put out to you this day; now give him your hand and yield yourselves, and it is a bargain.

Now you must yield yourselves to him wholly. Servants give work for wages. Suitors give token to further love. But married persons give themselves wholly to one another. Give yourselves to be for him. "Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The import of this is expressed in these words, For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. As if he had said, He is the sum of my life, the centre of my heart, affections, and actions. You must yield yourselves to him only. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." A married state is a state of rest. "Naomi said to Ruth, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee. The soul out of Christ is in a restless state. Heart and eyes rambling up and down among the creatures, seeking and looking for a proper match. But when once it yieldeth itself to Christ, it rests in him and closeth its eyes as now matched and at the end of its desires; saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in all the earth whom I desire besides thee." And no wonder, for Christ says to the soul, "Thou shalt not be for another man; so will I also be for thee."—And,

You must yield yourselves to him for ever. "He will be the strength of your heart and your portion for ever." There is an awfully solemn clause in earthly marriages, namely, Till God shall separate you by death. Here death stands up on the one hand of the bride, while the husband stands on the other, warning her, that it will come between him and her at length. But the heavenly marriage is for ever. No death, divorce, nor second marriage. As Christ takes the soul, so the soul yields itself to Christ for ever and ever.

2. Yield yourselves as subjects to a conqueror.—"The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Christ appears in the gospel sitting on a white horse, with his bow in his hand and a crown on his head, going forth conquering and to conquer. He is shooting arrows of the law and arrows of love among you. If you find the force of the former they will gall you, if of the latter you must yield as conquered. And,

Yield to him as your king and sovereign Lord, casting open the gates of your souls to him, that have been shut against him before. Give up with all other lords, that formerly have had dominion over
you, and enter into allegiance to him, Isaiah xxvi. 13. You must break with your former lusts and look no more after them.

You must yield to him at discretion. Many will not yield to Christ, but by capitulation. They must have such and such terms of him, if they yield; some right eye, or right hand lust must be spared; Christ's cross must not be laid on their tender shoulders. But you must yield at discretion, or you really yield not at all to him. Put a blank in his hand, or else you give him not the hand, saying, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do. And lay your accounts with the worst, that a popish and malignant sword, fire or rope shall not separate between Christ and you.

3. Yield yourselves as filial servants to a fatherly Master. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels: and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." There are two kinds of persons who make wrong work of yielding to the Lord. First, those who yield themselves as sons, not servants. They will take the inheritance, but will not bear his yoke. They will pretend to believe, and under the pretence of faith and free grace take liberty to themselves in sin. But such faith is dead and will never save you, James ii. 17.

Second, Those who yield themselves as mere servants. They will serve the Lord on condition salvation may be their wages. And many make such bargains with Christ at communions which he will never approve. Our Lord is seeking no such servants among you, but sends them away to the law their proper master, Matth. xix. 16, 17. All his are filial servants. "Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son then an heir of God through Christ." They are, you see, first saved by faith and get a right to the inheritance by free grace, and strength in him for work; and then they are set to work, in a way of gratitude to their Father.

Use. 1. Of conviction and humiliation, in respect of the sad bias which man's nature has got. The very call to yield ourselves, even this fixes upon us a black brand of rebelliousness against God, and backwardness to good. It stigmatizes us as a parcel of apostates, wilful headstrong fools, naturally running headlong to their own destruction in a course of opposition to God. Mourn over this, you that have not yielded yourselves to the Lord. See and be humbled for the rebellion of your nature and the rebellions of your lives. Look to your own picture and drop tears over your state and case. "How canst thou say, I am not polluted. Thou art like a wild
ass used to the wilderness, that smiteth up the wind at her pleasure.” Some of you have sometimes seemed to yield: but ye deceived yourselves and others, and have gone back with the dog to the vomit, and have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds. Mourn over this also you that have yielded yourselves to the Lord. Look back to the state of rebellion in which you formerly were. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” Look over the remains of the backwardness of your nature yet with you, and what sad work it has made in your life, thwarting with the will of God’s commandments and providences as if you had not yielded yourself to the Lord. And to help forward your humiliation, consider how long the Lord has waited upon you patiently, while he might have broke you in pieces at every time you refused to yield to him. And let his goodness lead you to repentance.

Consider also how you have fought against your own interest; refusing to yield to the Lord you have in effect courted your own destruction by that means.—“For he that sinneth against me, saith the Saviour, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.” And you have stood in the way of your own mercy.

Use 2. Of exhortation. Come then sinners, yield yourselves to the Lord.

Motives.—1. You must yield yourself to one or other, for you are not self-sufficient. If you yield not to the Lord, you will yield to a vain world, deceitful lusts, and so to the devouring lion. Therefore if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve.

2. The Lord hath the best right to you. You were the Lord’s originally by creation. You have yielded yourselves to his enemy Satan and cast off the yoke of subjection to God. But you never had a right to dispose of yourself to another than him. Therefore return him his own.

3. Consider what the Lord has yielded for you. The Father yielded his own Son to the death for sinners, Rom. viii. 32. Jesus Christ yielded his life for us though enemies, Rom. v. 8. The Holy Ghost hath yielded himself to strive with you for your yielding. Gen. vi. 3. And hath been many times resisted, grieved, and vexed by you; and yet continues to strive with you. Every wound that Christ got for us, is a mouth crying aloud to you to yield yourselves.

4. The Saviour is very desirous of your yielding.—My son, says he, give me thine heart. Nothing you can do, can be so acceptable to him. He values it as a king doth his crown, Song iii. 11. 0! if he
should come down in person and propose your yielding to him, would you refuse? But our Master is a king and courts his bride by proxy. Matt. xxii. 4. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be reconciled to God."

5. He is not seeking your yielding yourselves for nothing. Yield yourselves to him and he will give himself to you. Hosea iii. 3. "He will take your wants upon him, and give you of his fulness."

6. You must yield or die, bow or break. "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

7. Yield, and all your former rebellions shall be forgiven, and you shall be restored to the Lord's favour. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Thus pardoned you shall enjoy all the privileges of his subjects.

Lastly, Yield, or the Lord will have war with you for ever. And how will you be able to make head against him? How will you bear his coming? 2 Thess. i. 7, 9.

What prevents you that you will not yield? Some will not, because if they yield to the Lord, they must forego their lusts, which they know not how to live without. And hence their love to these fixes an enmity to God, and an aversion to his yoke in them.—The spring of this is unacquaintedness with Christ and never seeing sin in its own colours. Assure yourselves the Lord bids you part with nothing for him, without offering you far better in its stead. And a discovery of Christ in his glory would determine the matter, Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

Some think it is too soon for them to yield, for they are yet but young, they may yield time enough long after this. I shall yield to you, if there is none in the kirk-yard as young as you. Does death ask any person's age? Are you sure you shall live to be old? The longer you live without yielding, the more Satan's interest will be strengthened in you, and is it not strong enough already. And must the bloom and vigour be for sin and Satan, and only the withering age for God. Some fear that they will not be able to keep with God, but Satan will have them back again. But yield, throwing yourselves into God's covenant of free grace; it will keep you. "He will put his fear in your hearts and you shall not depart from him." Wherefore, I summon you to yield; and yield now presently and freely; it is dangerous to delay: "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Amen.