

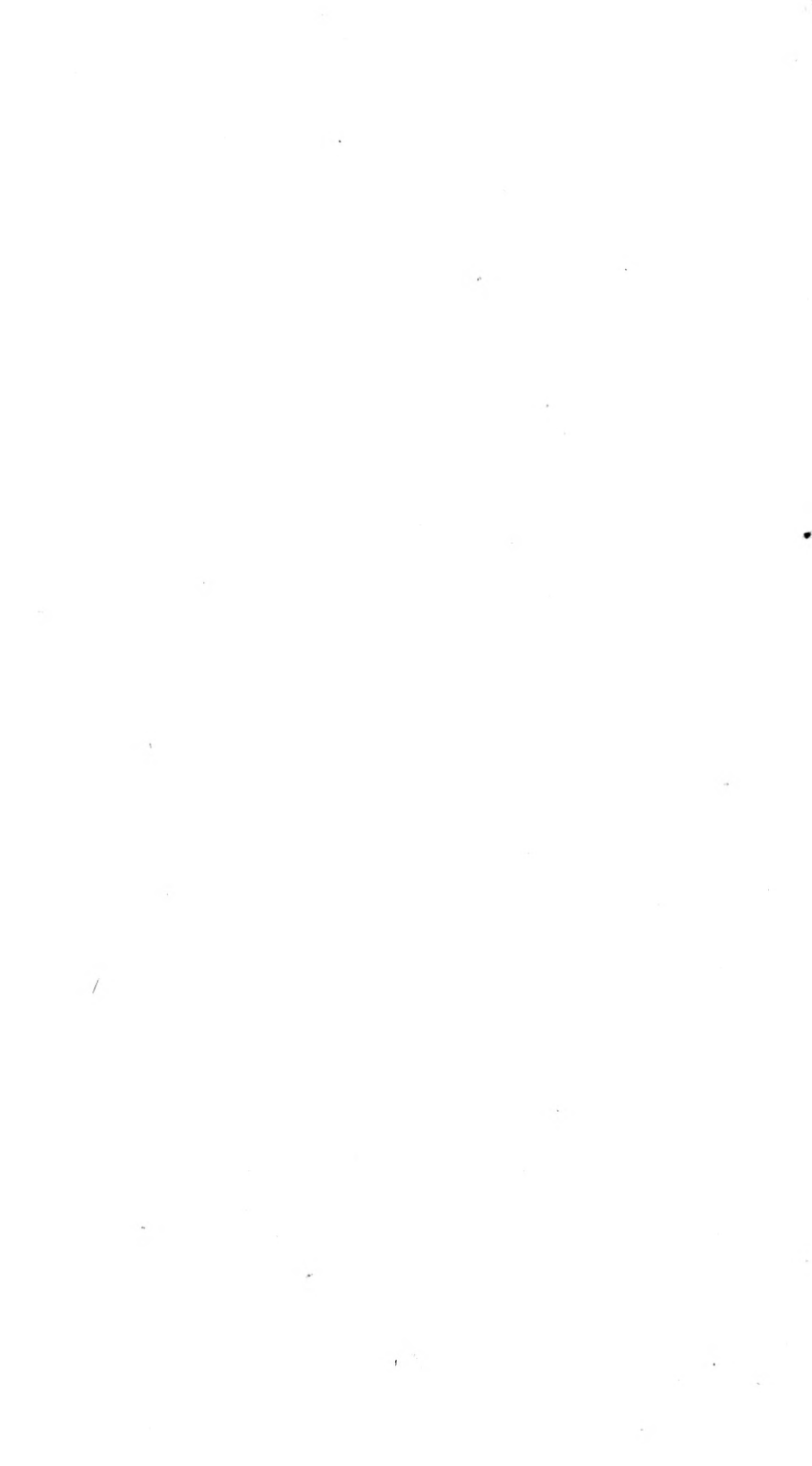
TWO
SERMONS,

PREACHED AT

THURLOW, IN SUFFOLK,

On those words, Rom. 6. 13,

“YIELD YOURSELVES TO GOD.”



TO THE MUCH-HONOURED
BARTHOLOMEW SOAME, Esq.

OF

THURLOW,

AND

SUSANNA, HIS PIOUS CONSORT.

My worthy Friends,

I HAVE at length yielded to your importunity, and do here offer these sermons to public view and your own, which were one day the last summer preached under your roof; attributing more to your pious design herein, than to my own reasons against it. I no farther insist upon the incongruity, having divers years ago published a small treatise of Self-dedication, now again to send abroad another on the same subject. For the way of tractation is here very different; this may fall into the hands of divers, who have never seen the other; and however, they who have read the other, have it in their choice whether they will trouble themselves with this or no. And though your purpose which you urged me with, of lodging one of these little books in each family of the hearers, might have been answered by so disposing of many a better book already extant; yet you having told me how greatly you observed them to be moved by these plain discourses, considering the peculiar advantage of reading what had been with some acceptance and relish heard before, (through that great vigour that accompanies the ordinance of preaching to an assembly, than doth usually the solitary first reading of the same thing,) I was not willing to run the hazard of incurring a guilt, by refusing a thing so much desired, and which, through God's blessing, might contribute something, though in never so low a degree, to the saving of men's souls. I could not indeed, as I told you, undertake to recollect every thing that was spoken, according to that latitude and freedom of expression wherewith it was fit to inculcate momentous things to a plain country-auditory. But I have omitted nothing I could call to mind; being little concerned that the more curious may take notice, with dislike, how much in a work of this kind I prefer plainness (though they may call it rudeness) of speech, before that which goes for wisdom of words, or the most laboured periods.

May you find an abundant blessing on your household, for the sake of the ark which you have so piously and kindly received. And whereas, by your means, the parts about you have a help for the spreading the knowledge of God among them, added to what they otherwise more stately enjoy; may the blessing of Heaven succeed all sincere endeavours of both sorts, to the more general introducing of the new man which is renewed in knowledge—"where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, but Christ is all, and in all:" to whose grace you are, with sincere affection, and great sense of your kindness, earnestly recommended by

Your much obliged,

Faithful Servant in Christ,

JOHN HOWE.

TWO SERMONS.

ROM. 6. 13.

Yield yourselves to God.

THESSE are but a few words, but I can speak to you of no greater or more important thing than I am to press upon you from them this day. We are above taught how absurd it is to continue in sin, whereto we are avowedly dead, (v. 1, 2.) as is signified by our baptism: together with our entrance into a new state of life, and that in both we are to be conformed unto the death and resurrection of Christ, (v. 3—5.) so that sin ought now no more to have a new dominion over us, than death can again have over him, v. 6—10. We are therefore exhorted so to account of ourselves and of our present state, that “we are dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord;” and thereupon never more to let sin govern us or reign over us, or yield to it, v. 11—13. *former part.* But what then? How are we otherwise to dispose of ourselves? If we may not yield ourselves to the service of sin, what are we then to do with ourselves? The text tells us, and the very reason of the thing shews it; *But yield yourselves to God, &c.* The subject to be discoursed of is an express precept, charging it upon us all as our unquestionable duty, to yield ourselves to God; which therefore it can only be our business in speaking to this text, to explain and apply.

I. We are to explain it. Whosoever shall charge upon others such a duty, not obvious, perhaps, at the first view, in the full extent of it, to every one’s understanding, may well expect to be asked, “But what do you mean by this precept? or what doth this yielding ourselves to God signify?” And here are two things to be opened to you.—How or under what notions we are to consider God and ourselves in this matter: and—What our yielding ourselves to him, so considered, must include.

First, How or under what notions are we to consider *God* and *ourselves* in this matter?

1. How are we to consider or look upon *God* in this affair?

You are to consider him both as he is in himself, and according to the relations he bears to you; whether before your yielding yourselves to him, or in and upon your so doing.

(1.) As he is in himself. You that have heard, or now read what I have said, and do write, here make a stand, and bethink yourselves a while. What! are you about yielding yourselves to God? Sure you ought to be thinking of it as soon as you hear his claim laid to you. But do you now know with whom you have to do? Too many have the name of God, that great and awful name, in their mouth or ear, and have no correspondent thought in their mind; it passes with them as a transient sound, as soon over as another, common word of no greater length, and leaves no impression. Perhaps there is less in their minds to answer it, than most other words which men use in common discourse. For they have usually distinct thoughts of the things they speak of; otherwise they would neither understand one another nor themselves, but might speak of a horse, and mean a sheep; or be thought to mean so. And it would no more move a man or impress his mind to hear or mention a jest, than a matter of life and death. But the holy and reverend name of God is often so slightly mentioned, as in common oaths, or in idle talk is so merely taken in vain, that if they were on the sudden stopped, and asked what they thought on, or had in their mind, when they mentioned that word, and were to make a true answer, they could not say they thought of any thing: as if the name of God, the *All!* were the name of *nothing!* Otherwise, had they thought what that great name signifies, either they had not mentioned it, or the mention of it had struck their hearts, and even overwhelmed their very souls! I could tell you what awe and observance hath been wont to be expressed in reference to that sacred name, among a people that were called by it; and surely the very sound of that name ought ever to shake all the powers of our souls, and presently form them to reverence and adoration. Shall we think it fit to play or trifle with it, as is the common wont? My friends, shall we now do so, when we are called upon to yield ourselves to God? Labour to hear and think, and act intelligently, and as those that have the understandings of men. And now especially in this solemn transaction, endeavour to render God great to yourselves: enlarge your minds, that as far as is possible and needful, they may take in the entire notion of him. As to what he is in himself, you must conceive of him as a *Spirit*, (John 4. 21.) as his own word, which can best tell us what he is, instructs us,

and so as a Being of far higher excellency than any thing you can see with your eyes, or touch with your hands, or than can come under the notice of any of your senses. You may easily apprehend *spiritual being* to be the source and spring of life and self-moving power. This world were all a dead unmoving lump, if there were no such thing as *spirit*; as your bodies when the soul is fled. You must conceive him to be an *eternal, self-subsisting Spirit*, not sprung up into being from another, as our souls are: but who, from the excellency of his own being, was necessarily of and from himself; comprehending originally and eternally in himself the fulness of all life and being. I would fain lead you here, as by the hand, a few plain and easy steps. You are sure that somewhat now is—of this you can be in no doubt; and next you may be as sure that somewhat hath, of itself, ever been: for if nothing at all now were, you can easily apprehend it impossible that any thing should ever be, or of itself now begin to be, and spring up out of nothing. Do but make this supposition in your own minds, and the matter will be as plain to you as any thing can be, that if nothing at all were now in being, nothing could ever come into being; wherefore you may be sure, that because there is somewhat now in being, there must have been somewhat or other always in being, that was eternally of itself. And then, to go a little farther, since you know there are many things in being that were not of themselves, you may be sure that what was always of itself, had in it a sufficiency of active power to produce other things; otherwise nothing that is not of itself could ever be; as you know that we were not of ourselves; and the case is the same as to whatsoever else our eyes behold.

You must conceive of God therefore as comprehending originally in his own being, which is most peculiar to himself, a power to produce all whatsoever being, excellency, and perfection, is to be found in all the whole creation: for there can be nothing which either is not, or arises not from, what was of itself. And therefore that he is an absolutely, universally, and infinitely perfect Being, and therefore that life, knowledge, wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, justice, truth, and all other conceivable excellencies whatsoever, do all in highest perfection belong, as necessary attributes, unchangeably and without possibility of diminution unto him. And all which his own word (agreeably to the plain reason of things)

doth in multitudes of places ascribe to him; as you that are acquainted with the Bible cannot but know. You must therefore conceive of him, as the All in All. So great, so excellent, so glorious a One he is, to whom you are to surrender and yield yourselves.

You are to conceive of him as most essentially One, for there can be but one All. And so his word teaches you to conceive. "Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. 6. 4. "We know there is no other God but one," &c. I Cor. 8. 4—6. Your thoughts therefore need not be divided within you, nor your minds hang in doubt, to whom you are to betake and yield yourselves: there is no place or pretence for halting between two opinions. He most righteously lays the sole claim to you, a just God and a Saviour, and there is none besides him, Isa. 45. 21. And so we are told often in that and the foregoing chapters. He whose far-discerning eye projects its beams every way, and ranges through all infinity, says he knows not any, *ch.* 44. 8.

Yet again you are to conceive of him as Three in One, and *that*, in your yielding yourselves to him; as the prescribed form, when this surrender is to be made in baptism, directs; which runs thus, *In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, Mat. 28. 19. You are not to be curious in your inquiries beyond what is written in this matter, how far the Subsistents in the Godhead are three, and in what sense one; they cannot be both in the same sense. But there is latitude enough to conceive how they may be distinct from each other, and yet agree in one nature: which in none of them depending upon will and pleasure, sets each of them infinitely above all created being; which for the divine pleasure only was and is created, Rev. 4. 11. And that we so far conceive of them as three, as to apprehend some things spoken of one, that are not to be affirmed of another of them, is so plain, of so great consequence, and the whole frame of practical religion so much depends thereon; and even this transaction of yielding up ourselves, (which must be introductive and fundamental to all the rest,) that it is by no means to be neglected in our daily course, and least of all in this solemn business, as will more appear anon. In the mean time, set this ever blessed, glorious God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before your eyes, as to whom (thus in himself considered) you are now to yield yourselves.

(2.) You must conceive of him according to the rela-

tions which he bears towards you, partly before your yielding yourselves to him, and partly in and upon your doing it. That is,

[1.] Before you do any such thing, you must conceive of him,

First, As your Creator, the Author of your being, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, all things are, Rom. 11. 36. He that made you demands you for himself. You are required to yield yourselves to him that gave you breath.

Secondly, As the continual Sustainer of your being; and who renews your life unto you every moment: in whom you live, and move, and have your being (Act. 17. 28.) continually; so that if he should withdraw his supports, you immediately drop into nothing. But these are things common to you with all other creatures; and signify therefore his antecedent right in you, before you have yielded yourselves, upon which you ought to do it, and cannot without great injustice to him decline doing it. There are other considerations also you ought to entertain concerning him in this your yielding yourselves to him, namely, of some things which are partly and in some sense before it, and which it supposes, but which partly also, and in a more special sense, would follow and be inferred by it.

[2.] Therefore you are to consider the relations which he bears to you in your actually doing this. Principally, this fourfold consideration you should have of him in your yielding yourselves to him, namely, as your *Owner*, your *Teacher*, your *Ruler*, and your *Benefactor*, and all these with the addition of *Supreme*, it being impossible he should have a Superior; or that there should be any one above him in any of these. And he is in some sense all these to you before you can have yielded yourselves; (as may in great part be collected from what hath been already said;) but when you yield yourselves to him, he will be all these to you in a far higher, nobler, and more excellent sense; and you are to yield yourselves to him as such, or that in your so doing, he may actually become such to you.

First, As your *Owner*. The God whose you are, as the apostle speaks, Act. 27. 23. and whom, as it there follows, and is naturally consequent, you are to serve. You were his by a former right, as all things being made by him, are. But you are to yield yourselves to him, that you may be more peculiarly his, in a sense more excellent in itself, and more comfortable to you; as Exod. 19. 5. If you will-obey—you shall

be to me a peculiar treasure above all people, for all the earth is mine. Of such as fear him, the great God says, They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels, Mal. 3. 17. Your yielding yourselves adds nothing to his right in you; you therein only recognise and acknowledge the right he had in you before, but it adds to you a capacity and qualification, both by the tenor of his gospel-covenant, and in the nature of the thing, for such nobler uses as otherwise you cannot serve for: as the more contemptible lumber about a man's house may be as truly his, as the most precious things; but neither doth he intend, nor can such meaner things admit to be the ornaments, either of his person, or his house. The great God intends his devoted peculiar people to be to him a crown and a royal diadem, (Isa. 62. 3.) when he puts away the wicked of the earth like dross, Ps. 119. 119. In a great house there are not only vessels of silver and gold, but also of wood and of earth, 2 Tim. 2. 20. But it is only the purged and sanctified soul (which is also a self-devoted one) that shall be the vessel unto honour, being made meet for the master's use, and prepared to every good work, v. 21. Persons and things acquire a sacredness by being devoted to God. Persons especially, that can and do devote themselves, are highly enabled by it; he hereupon (beside their relative holiness) really more and more sanctifies and frames them for his own more immediate service and communion. Of such a people he tells us, that he hath formed them for himself, and they shall praise him; and to them he saith, (intending it manifestly in the more eminent sense,) Thou art mine, Isa. 43. 1, 7, 21. Such may with a modest and humble, but with a just confidence freely say, I am thine, save me, Ps. 119. 94. In yielding yourselves consider therefore first, that he is your Owner by an unquestionable former right, and let that effectually move you to do it with all your hearts. For will you not give him his own? When you account duty to your prince obliges you to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, will you not give God the things that are God's? And will you not know him for your Owner? The Ox knows his owner, Isa. 1. 3. Or will it satisfy you to be in no other kind his, than brutes and devils are, that either through an incapacity of nature cannot acknowledge him, or through a malignity of nature will not? O yield yourselves, with humble desire and expectation that he will vouchsafe otherwise to own you!

Secondly, As your Teacher; so indeed he also is to all men, though they never yield themselves to him. He that teaches

man knowledge, shall not he know? Ps. 94. 10. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives him understanding. Yea and inferior creatures, as they all owe their natures and peculiar instincts to him, may be said to have him for their Teacher too. But will it content you to be so only taught by him? There is another sort of teaching, which if you yield yourselves to him as your great Instructor, he will vouchsafe unto you. The things you know not, and which it is necessary you should know, he will teach you, that is, such things as are of real necessity to your true and final welfare, not which only serve to please your fancy, or gratify your curiosity: for his teaching respects an appointed, certain end, suitable to his wisdom and mercy, and to the calamity and danger of your state. The teaching requisite for perishing sinners, was, what they might do to be saved. And when we have cast about in our own thoughts never so much, we have no way to take but to yield ourselves to God, who will then be our most undeceiving Guide. To whom it belongs to save us at last, to him only it can belong to lead us in the way to that blessed end.

Many anxious inquiries and fervent disputes there have been, how one may be infallibly assured of the way to be saved. They are to be excused who think it not fit, but upon very plain grounds, to venture so great a concernment; or to run so great a hazard in a mere compliment to any man, or party of men. Confident expressions, as, My soul for your's, and such like, signify nothing with a cautious considering man, except that such as them care as little for his soul as their own. The papal infallibility some would have us trust to at a venture, and would make us think it rudeness to doubt it; when nobody stands upon good manners in endeavouring to escape a ruin; when a great part of their own communion trust not to it.* And some of them have written strongly against it.† The accurate stating and discussing of the controversy, how far or in what sense any such thing as infallible light may belong to the Christian church, are not fit for this place, nor for a discourse of this nature. It is enough now to say that this claim hereof to the pope or bishop of Rome, as such,—Cannot be proved, and—May be plainly disproved. *It cannot be proved.* For since no principles of common reason are pretended sufficient to prove it of any man, or of him more than another, it must be proved by supernatural revelation, if at all. But in

* The Gallican church, &c.

† Du Pin, &c.

the written word of God there is no such thing. Pretences from thence are too vain to be refuted or mentioned. And if any other revelation should be pretended, it will be a new, and as impossible a task to prove the divinity of that revelation, so as to infer upon the world an obligation to believe it. Nor is it necessary to insist upon this; because *it may be plainly disproved*; for the same thing cannot be both true and false. And it sufficiently disproves such a man's infallibility, or the impossibility of his erring, that it can be evidently proved he hath erred. As when he hath determined against the express word of Christ, forbidding them (to take one or two instances among many) to drink of the eucharistical cup, whom he hath commanded to drink of it; or (to mention a more important one) when believers in Christ, or lovers of him, are pronounced damned, who he hath said shall not perish, but have everlasting life, and the crown of righteousness: or when on the other hand pardon of sin and eternal life are pretended to be given to such, whom the evangelical law condemns to death.

When one to whom this privilege hath been asserted to belong, hath determined against another, to whom upon the same grounds it must equally belong. As it is well known in the Christian church, that pope might be alleged against pope, and one papal constitution against another. Not to insist on what might be shewn out of their own history, that the same pope hath, being so, changed his judgment in a point of doctrine, and left us to divine when he was the fallible, and when the infallible pope. And again,

When there have been determinations against the common uncorrupted senses of mankind, as that what their sight, and touch, and taste assures them is bread, is said to be the flesh of a human body. For if you cannot be sure of what both your own, and the sound senses of any other man would tell you, you can be sure of nothing at all: you cannot be sure you see one another, or hear me speaking to you; nor be sure when you heard the transforming words, "This is my body;" or much less that they were ever spoken, if you heard them not; or that that was bread and not a stone, or a piece of clay, that is pretended to be transubstantiated by them. The foundation of all certainty were upon these terms taken away from among men on earth; and upon the same common grounds upon which it is pretended you ought to believe that which is shewn or offered you to be the flesh of a man, and not bread any longer, you must believe or judge the quite contrary, that it is bread still, and not flesh, and consequently that he is far from being in-

fallible, but doth actually err, upon whose authority you are directed to believe otherwise.

And indeed the claimed infallibility is by this sufficiently disproved, that there is no imaginable way of proving it. For if there were any such thing, it must be by God's own immediate gift and vouchsaiement; how otherwise should a man be made infallible? And if so, it must be for an end worthy of a wise and merciful God; whereupon for the same reason for which he should have made such a man infallible, he should have made it infallibly certain to other men, that he hath made him so. Whereas there is no one point wherein his infallible determination can be pretended to be necessary, against which there is not more to be said than against the pretence itself of his infallibility; and for which there is not less to be said than can, with any colour, or without highest and most just contempt, be said for it. The most weighty thing that I have known alleged is, the great expediency of an infallible judge. But if we will think that a good way of arguing, that things are in fact so or so, because we can fancy it would be better if they were; we may as well prove that all mankind are sincere Christians, or there is no sin in the world, nor ever was, and a thousand things besides in the natural world, that never were or will be, because it appears to us it would be for the better. So much is the foolishness of man wiser than God.

Besides that *sanctity* must be judged as necessary to the final salvation and felicity of the souls of men as *orthodoxy*, or exemption from doctrinal error, by all, with whom either Christian religion, or common reason signifies any thing. For the same reason therefore for which it can be thought necessary God should have put it into the power of any man to make others not err, he should have put it equally into his power to make them holy, to renew and change their hearts and lives. But what man hath this power? And one would reasonably expect, if either were, that both powers should be lodged in the same man; which if they should pretend, who assert the other unto one man, their own histories might make them blush, unless they can think it more probable that he can and will effectually sanctify another, and make him holy, who is himself most infamously impure and unholy, than that he can secure another from erring in matters of doctrine, who cannot secure himself. But then it may be said, if such sure light and guidance is not to be found or had

from one man, it must be from some community or body of men in the Christian church. For can it be thought God should have taken care to settle a religion in the world, on purpose for the saving of men's souls, that yet affords no man any certainty of being saved by it?

I answer, yes, there is a certain, undeceiving light afforded by it to the whole body of sincere Christians, sufficient, and intended not to gratify a vain humour, but to save their souls, and which you can only, and may confidently expect by yielding yourselves to God as your Teacher. As it cannot agree with the absolute perfection of his nature to be himself deceived in any thing, it can, you may be sure, as little agree with it to deceive you, or let you mistake your way, in the things wherein he hath encouraged and induced you to commit and entrust yourselves to his conduct and guidance. Will he let a soul wander and be lost, that hath entirely given up itself to be led and taught by him? His word hath at once expressed to you his nature, and his good-will towards you, in this case. "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way," Ps. 25. 8. But what sinners? the next words tell you, the meek (self-resigned ones, humble, teachable learners) he will guide in judgment, or with judgment; (as that particle admits to be read;) he will guide them judiciously, and surely, so that your hearts need not misgive, or suspect, or doubt to follow; "The meek will he teach his way," v. 9. Who would not wish and be glad to have such a Teacher? You shall know (how express is his word!) if you follow on to know the Lord; for, his going forth is prepared as the morning, Hos. 6. 3. You do not need to devise in the morning how to create your own light, it is prepared and ready for you; the sun was made before you were, and it keeps its course, and so constantly will God's own light shine to you, without your contrivance or care, for any thing but to seek, receive it, and be guided by it. Know your advantage in having such a Teacher.

He will teach you *inwardly*; even your very hearts, and so as his instructions shall reach the centre, the inmost of your spirits. God, that made light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, &c. 2 Cor. 4. 6. And when that holy good man, had been solacing himself with highest pleasure in considering this, that God was his portion, so contentful and satisfying a one, that he cannot forbear saying, The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage,

(Ps. 16. 5, 6.) he presently adds, "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel;" as though he had said, "I should never else have thought of such a thing: it had never come into my mind to think of choosing God for my Portion. I should have done like the rest of the vain world, have followed shadows all my days. My reins also instruct me in the night season." He will so teach you, as to make you teach yourselves, put an abiding word into you, that shall talk with you when you sit in your houses, and walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, and whereby you shall be enabled to commune with your own hearts upon your beds while others sleep; and revolve or roll over in your minds, dictates of life. You will not need to say, Who shall ascend into heaven, (Deut. 30. 11, 12, &c.) to bring down Christ from above? or, Who shall descend into the deep, to bring Christ again from the dead? for the word will be nigh thee, not in thy mouth only, but in thine heart, &c. Rom. 10. 6—8. You will have in you an ingrafted word, (Jam. 1. 21.) and the law of your God will be in your heart, so as none of your steps shall slide, Ps. 57. 31. This is our Lord's own interpretation of divers words of the prophets, that in the days of the more general diffusion of holy, vital light, which was to be after his own appearance in the world, "They shall be all taught of God," John 6. 45. that is, so as to have their hearts inclined towards himself, and drawn to him, as the reference of these words to those of the foregoing verse shews. Wherein,

Lies your further advantage, That by him you shall be taught *effectually*. Other teaching doth but reach the ear, or only, at the most, beget some faint notions in the mind, that you are little the better for: his shall produce real fruit; He is the Lord your God who teaches you to profit; and who by gentle and unforcible, but by most prevailing insinuations, shall slide in upon your spirits, win them by light and love, and allure them to a compliance with what shall be in the end safe and happy for yourselves. He will instruct you, though not with a violent, yet with a strong hand, so as not to lose his kind design. Others teach you, and leave you what they found you; convinced perhaps, but not changed; unable to resist any ill inclination, or your disinclination to that which was good. Power will accompany his teaching; a conquering power, that will secretly constrain and captivate your hearts; and how pleasant a victory will that be to yourselves! O the peace and joy you will find springing up within you, when once you feel yourselves overcome! The most that a man

can say to you is, what the prophet Samuel once said, (so great, and so good a man,) "God forbid I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way," 1 Sam. 12. 23. He could only shew that way, and pray that God would do the rest; which implies God only can so teach it you, as to make you walk in it. I am not persuading you to slight human teaching; you will need it; and it is among the gifts which your glorious Redeemer, being ascended on high, (Ps. 68. 18.) hath given to men, namely, pastors and teachers, Eph. 4. 11. But understand their teaching to be only subordinate, and ministerial. Without, or against God, you are to call no man master or teacher upon earth. And thus far their teaching is to be regarded, as it agrees,

With what God doth inwardly teach you, by that common light which shines in every man's own bosom that with a sincere mind attends to it, and which is too little attended to. There are truths too commonly held in unrighteousness, seated generally in the minds and consciences of men; by which, though they have not another law, they are a law to themselves; (Rom. 2. 14.) and for the stifling and resisting whereof, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against them, *ch.* 1. 18. And from such truths they might infer others, and where God affords external helps, come to discern a sure ground whereupon to understand that what is contained besides in the frame of Christian doctrine is true; being enabled to judge of the evidences that prove the whole revelation thereof to be from God; and nothing being in itself more evident than that what he hath revealed is true. And withal God is graciously pleased to shine into minds that with upright aims set themselves to inquire out and understand his mind; and so farther light comes to be superadded to that which is common. Now take heed how you neglect what a man teaches you, agreeably to that inward light which is already (one way or other) in your own minds and consciences. Hither in some part, and in great part, we are to appeal in our teaching you. So the more early Christian teachers did; "Not handling" (say they) "the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," 2 Cor. 4. 2. In the most deeply fundamental things that concern your practice every day, we may appeal to yourselves, and your own consciences. If we say to you, Ought you not to live according to his will that gave you breath? should you not above all things fear and love,

and trust and obey him that made you and all things? Should you not do as you would be done unto? Should you not take more care for your immortal souls, than for your mortal flesh? You must every one say, "I believe in mine own conscience this is so." If I appeal to you in the very thing I am speaking of, should you not yield yourselves to God, whose creatures you are? I doubt not you will any of you say, "I think in my very conscience I should." We have you witnesses against yourselves, if you will not hear us in such things. And again, it being a matter very capable of plain proof, that those writings which we call the Holy Scriptures, were from God, our teaching ought so far to be regarded by you as,

We can manifest to you that it agrees with the Scriptures. And we are sure he will never teach you inwardly any thing contrary to what he hath there taught. Will the God of truth say and unsay the same thing? That were to overthrow the design of all his instructions, and to subvert the authority which he requires men to reverence. No *man* could expect to be regarded on such terms. And by this rule freely examine all that we teach you, as our Saviour directed the Jews to do, John 5. 39. And for the doing whereof, the apostle commended the Berean Christians, Acts 17. 11. And we have here the same advantage at length, though not so immediately, upon your consciences; which cannot but judge that whatsoever is found in that word which you confess to be divine, must be most certainly true. And if within such limits you take the help of men for your instruction; having yielded yourselves to God as your supreme and highest Teacher, you are upon safe terms. Only be sincere in listening to his dictates whether internal or external. Let not a prepossessed heart or vicious inclination be their interpreter: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," &c. John 7. 17.

Thirdly, You must consider God, in your yielding yourselves, as your sovereign Ruler. For to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; as by v. 16. Though teaching and ruling may be diversely conceived of, they cannot be separate in this case. The nobler and final part of God's teaching you, is teaching you your duty; what you are to practise and do. And so when he teaches you, he commands you too; and leaves it not arbitrary to you whether you will be directed by him or no. What is his by former right, and by after-consent, and self-resignation, shall it not be governed by him? if it be a subject

capable of laws and government, as such consent shews it to be? Your yielding yourselves to God is not a homage but a mockery, if you do it not with a resolution to receive the law from his mouth; and that whereinsöever he commands, you will to your uttermost obey. But in this and the other things that follow, my limits constrain me unto more brevity. Only let not this apprehension of God be frightful, yea let it be amiable to you, as in itself it is, and cannot but be to you, if you consider the loveliness of his government, the kind design of it, and how suitable it is to the kindest design; that it is a government first and principally over minds, purposely intended to reduce them to a holy and peaceful order, wherein it cannot but continue them, when that kingdom comes to be settled there; which stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and all the laws whereof are summed up in love; being such also as in the keeping whereof there is great reward,

Fourthly, You are to consider him, and accordingly to yield yourself to him as your greatest Benefactor, or rather as your best and supreme Good. Indeed you cannot sever his being your Ruler from his being your Benefactor, (more than his being your Teacher from his being your Ruler,) when the tendency and design of his government are understood. For it is a very principal part of our felicity to be under his government, and he doth you the greatest good by ruling you, when otherwise nothing is more evident than that you would run yourselves into the greatest of evil, and soon be most miserable creatures. You are now so far happy as you are subject to his government, and that which it aims at is to make you finally and completely happy. For it is the design of his government, not only to regulate your actions, but your inclinations, and principally towards himself. You have been alienated from the life of God, (Eph. 4. 18.) were become strangers to him, yea and enemies in your very minds; (Col. 1. 21.) for the carnal mind is enmity against God, Rom. 8. 7. The very business of his government is in the first place to alter the temper of your minds; for continuing carnal, they neither are subject to the law of God, uor can be, as the same place tells you. Therefore if his government take place in you, and you become subject, you become spiritual, the "law of the Spirit of life" having now the possession and the power of you. Nor was it possible he should ever be an effectual Benefactor to you, without being thus an over-powering Ruler; so do these things run into one another. To let you have your own will, and

follow your carnal inclination, and cherish and favour you in this course, were to gratify you to your ruin, and concur with you to your being for ever miserable: which you may see plainly if you will understand wherein your true felicity and blessedness must consist, or consider what was intimated concerning it, in the proposal of this head; that he is to be your Benefactor, in being to you himself your supreme and only satisfying Good. He never doth you good effectually and to purpose, till he overcome your carnal inclination. For while that remains, will you ever mind him? Can you love him, desire after him, or delight in him? The first and most fundamental law which he lays upon you is, that “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and might.” What will become of you if you cannot obey this law? This world will shortly be at an end, and you must, it is like, leave it sooner; you are undone, if your hearts be not beforehand so framed as that you can savour and take complacency in a better and higher Good. You will shortly have nothing left you but himself; you will be plucked away from your houses and lands and friends, and all your outward comforts; and now in what a case are you, if you can take no pleasure or satisfaction in God! You are therefore to yield up yourself to him in full union, as with your most grateful and delectable Good; with this sense possessing your soul, Whom have I in heaven but thee, or whom on earth can I desire besides thee? Ps. 73. 25.

And thus you are to look upon God in your yielding yourselves to him.—

You are to yield yourselves to his claim, as your rightful Owner.—To his instruction, as your undeceiving Teacher.—To his government, as your gracious, sovereign Ruler. And—To the enjoyment of him, as your best and most satisfying Good, or your self-communicating Benefactor.

(3.) But it also concerns you to have distinct and right thoughts of the state of your case, and how things are between him and the sons of men, that you may duly apply yourselves to him in so great a transaction. The gospel under which you live tells you, he treats with men in and by a Mediator, his own Son, who came down into this wretched world of ours, in great compassion to our miseries, and took our nature, was here on earth among us as an incarnate God: God manifested in the flesh. Because we were partakers of flesh and blood, he took part with us likewise of the same, and in that nature of ours died for us, to make way that we might yield ourselves to God,

and be accepted. No man now comes to the Father but by him, John 14. 6. He must be acknowledged with great reverence; and a most profound homage must be rendered to him. He that denieth the Son hath not the Father, 1 John 2. 23. And it being his pleasure to treat with us by his Son, and the case requiring that we apply ourselves to him, we are to take notice of him according to those capacities wherein Scripture represents him to us. And it represents him agreeably to those same notions according to which we have shewn we are to consider God the Father in this matter; so as that Christ being the Mediator between him and us, when we yield ourselves to him ultimately, and finally, under the notions that have been mentioned, we are first to yield ourselves to his Son, Christ Jesus our Redeemer, under the like notions. For,

[1.] Being to yield ourselves to God as our Owner, we must know, the Father hath given all things into the hands of the Son, (John 13. 3.) and that He is Lord of all; (Acts 10. 36.) which, in the first sense, signifies him to be, by the Father's constitution, the Owner of all things, even as he is the Redeemer. For, he therefore died and rose again, that he might be Lord of dead and living; (Rom. 14. 9.) that is, of both worlds; agreeably to what he himself speaks immediately upon his resurrection from the dead; All power is given to me both in heaven and earth, Mat. 28. 18.

[2.] And for those other notions of God under which we have shewn we are to yield ourselves to him, as our Teacher, Ruler, and Benefactor, they correspond to that threefold office of Christ, of which you cannot but have heard much, namely, of Prophet, King, and Priest; so that we are to commit ourselves to him, when we yield ourselves to God, as a Teacher come forth from God, and who reveals him to us whom no man hath seen at any time; as one that must reign over us, and over the greatest on earth, (Luke 19. 14. and 27. Ps. 2. 6—10.) and by whom we are to be reconciled to God, and restored to the enjoyment of him, Rom. 5. 11. And because our blind minds and perverse hearts need light and grace from above, to direct and incline us hereto, therefore hath the Spirit of the Father and the Son a great work to do in us to this purpose. Whereupon we are to yield ourselves to that blessed Spirit also, as our Enlightener and Sanctifier; which our being directed to walk in the Spirit, (Gal. 5. 25.) and our being told that they that have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his, (Rom. 8. 9.) and, that as many as are the sons of God, are led by his Spirit, (v. 14.) do plainly shew.

You see then we are to yield ourselves to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which also our having those great names, named upon us in our baptism, (as we before told you,) doth import. And how necessary all this is, you will see, if,

2. We consider how we are to look upon *ourselves* in this transaction; that is,

(1.) We are to consider ourselves as God's creatures, being, as you have heard, to consider him as our Creator; and so we must reckon we owe ourselves to him, and do but yield him what we owe, and what was his before. For, how can you but be his, who of his mere pleasure hath raised you out of nothing?

(2.) We must remember we have been apostate creatures, such as had fallen, and revolted from him; and so our yielding ourselves to him, is a giving ourselves back to him, having injuriously withdrawn and withheld ourselves from him before. And because the injury was so great as we could never make any recompense for, therefore it was necessary such a Mediator should be appointed between God and us, for whose sake only we can expect to be accepted when we yield ourselves. So great a Majesty was not to be approached by offending creatures without so great a Days-man and Peace-maker.

(3.) We must consider ourselves as impure, and every way unfit for the divine presence, service, and converse, and who did therefore need the power of the Holy Ghost to be put forth upon us to make us fit; and that therefore our case required we should put ourselves into such hands for that purpose.

(4.) We are to consider ourselves as under the gospel, as sinners invited and called back to God; as such whose case is not desperate; or who need to abandon ourselves to ruin, though we have greatly offended, as if there were no hope. We are to consider ourselves with distinction from the condition of other fallen creatures. The angels that fell, and kept not their first station, have no gospel sent to them to invite them back, and persuade them again to yield themselves to God; you have. Into what a transport should this thought put you! how should it mollify you! oh what a yielding temper and disposition of spirit should it work in you towards this gracious call, and just challenge, which the great God now gives you, and makes unto you! Thus far then you see how you are to consider God and yourselves in this your yielding yourselves to him.

SECOND SERMON.—You are next to consider,

Secondly, What your yielding yourselves to God according to such considerations must include, or be accompanied with. For it is not reasonable to think you have no more to mind in this matter, than only what is contained in the bare abstract nature of such an act; but looking upon your case in its circumstances, and considering the state of things between God and you, it greatly concerns you to see to it, that the matter be suitably carried to this state of your case. Whereupon,

1. Your yielding yourselves to God must be accompanied with very deep and serious repentance. It is a most penitential surrender you are now to make of yourselves to him; for you are to remember that you are but now coming back out of a state of apostasy from your sovereign and most rightful Lord. Yea, though you are but renewing your surrender of yourselves, having done somewhat herein before, you are yet to consider this was your case; and perhaps some never have yet seriously thought of any such thing, but lived in this world hitherto as if you were your own, and there were no Lord over you: O then with what inward remorse, with what brokenness of heart, with what relentings and self-accusings should this thing now be done! you should come, smiting upon the thigh, and saying within yourselves, “What have I done? So long, Lord, have I lived in this world of thine, which thou madest, and not I, as if I might do in it, and with myself, what I pleased! I have usurped upon thy unquestionable right in me, have lived to myself, and not to thee; I am now convinced this was a very undutiful, unlawful way of living.” Let him hear you (as he once heard Ephraim, or shall do) bemoaning yourselves, and saying, “Turn me and I shall be turned: thou art the Lord my God, &c. Jer. 31. 18, 19. How can you think of yielding yourselves now at length to God, without being deeply sensible of your having deferred it so long, and that you have not done it sooner; and how great the iniquity was of your former course; and that you have all this while committed a continual robbery upon him that gave you breath? Will a man rob God? And if you say, Wherein have I robbed him? You have robbed him of yourself; a greater thing than of tithes and offerings: and this robbery was sacrilege. For every thing due and devoted to God, hath a sacredness upon it; and consider, were you not, upon his just claim, in your baptism devoted to him? How

should this startle you! you have constantly alienated from him a sacred thing! You have been in a continual contest with him about one of the highest rights of his sovereignty, yea and of his Godhead, for to that, nothing is more peculiar, than to be Lord of all. So that the controversy between him and you hath been, Who shall be God? You have refused him his own creature. How high a crime was this! Know then you have been a great transgressor, a grievous revolter, and now therefore yield yourself to him with a melting, broken heart, or you do nothing.

2. It must be done with great deliberation; not as the mere effect of a sudden fright. What is done in a rash haste, may be as soon undone. Leisurely consider, and take the whole compass of the case; weigh with yourselves the mentioned grounds upon which you are to yield yourselves, and the ends you are to do it for, that things may be set right between him and you, that you may return into your own natural place and station, that you may be again stated in that subordination to your sovereign Lord which fitly belongs to you; that he may have his right which he claims, and you the mercy which you need. Here is place for much consideration. And when Israel is complained of as less willing to acknowledge God for his Owner and Master, than the ox and ass were to acknowledge their's, all this is resolved into this, that the people did not consider, Isa. 1.

3. It must be done with judgment, which is the effect of such consideration. When all things have been well weighed that belong to this case, then let this formed judgment pass, "Lord, I ought to be thine, and no other's." Say to him hereupon, with a convinced judgment and conscience, "O God, I surrender myself, as now seeing none hath that right in me that thou hast." When the love of Christ becomes constraining upon souls, it is because they thus judge, that they ought no longer to live to themselves, but to him, &c. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. These things last mentioned will imply a rectified mind, which must be ingredient into this transaction, else it will be defective throughout.

4. It must be done with a fulness of consent; and herein it chiefly consists, when the soul says, "Lord, I am now most entirely willing to be thine." This is your yielding yourselves. And hereby the covenant is struck between God and you; which consists in the expressed consent of the parties covenanting in the matters about which the covenant is. This covenant is about the parties themselves who covenant, as the

conjugal covenant is, which resembles it; namely, that they shall be one another's. God hath expressed his consent in his word and gospel, making therein the first overture to you. When you rejoin your own consent, the thing is done: this being the sum of his covenant, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people," as in many places of Scripture it is gathered up. When therefore, as God hath openly testified his willingness to be their God who shall accept and take him to be so, you also are willing, and do consent too, you do now take hold on his covenant, matters are agreed between him and you; and you may take those words as spoken to you particularly; I have entered into covenant with thee, and thou art become mine, Ezek. 16. 8. But then you must take notice that this is to be done with a *full* consent, which that is said to be which determines you, though it be not absolutely perfect. No grace in any faculty is perfect in this life. But as in human affairs, that will is said to be *full*, which is the spring of answerable, following actions, so it is here. If a man have some inclination to this or that, and do it not, it goes for nothing; if he do it, his will is said to be full, though he have some remaining disinclination. You may be said to yield yourselves to God, with a full consent, when you live afterwards as one devoted to him.

5. Your yielding yourselves to God must carry life in it, as the following words signify; "Yield yourselves to God, as those that are alive from the dead." It must be a vital act, and have vigour in it. You must be capable of making that true judgment of your case, as it is v. 11. "of reckoning truly that you are dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ." Do it as feeling life to spring in your souls towards God in your yielding yourselves to him. What! will you offer God a carcass? not the "living sacrifice," which you see is required, Rom. 12. 1. Beg earnestly for his own Spirit of life and power, that may enable you to offer up a living soul to the living God.

6. There must be faith in your yielding yourselves. For it is a committing, or intrusting yourselves to God, with the expectation of being saved, and made happy by him. So Scripture speaks of it, 2 Tim. 1. 12. I know whom I have believed, (or trusted,) and that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day. It is suitable to the gracious nature of God, to his excellent greatness, to his design, to the mediatorship of his Son, to his promise and gospel-covenant, and to your own necessities, and the exigency of your own

lost, undone state, that you so yield yourselves to him, as a poor creature ready to perish, expecting, not for your sake, but his own, to be accepted, and to find mercy with him. You do him the honour which he seeks, and which is most worthy of a God, the most excellent, and a self-sufficient Being, when you do thus. You answer the intendment of the whole gospel-constitution, which bears this inscription, *To the praise of the glory of his grace, &c.* It is honourable to him when you take his word, that they that believe in his Son, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. You herein set to your seal that he is true, and the more fully, and with the more significancy, when upon the credit of it you yield yourselves, with an assurance that he will not destroy nor reject a poor creature that yields to him, and casts itself upon his mercy.

7. Another ingredient into this yielding of yourselves must be love. As faith, in your yielding yourselves to God, aims at your own welfare and salvation; so love, in doing it, intends his service, and all the duty to him you are capable of doing him. You must be able to give this as the true reason of your act, and to resolve it into this principle; “I yield myself to God, because I love him, and from the unfeigned love I bear to him; to tell the world, if there were occasion, he hath captivated my heart with his excellencies and his love, and hereupon having nothing else, I tender myself to him, to tell himself, “Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee; and because I do, I present myself to thee; it is all I can do. I wish myself ten thousand times better for thy blessed sake; and if I had in me all the excellencies of many thousand angels, I were too mean a thing, and such as nothing but thy own goodness could count worthy thine acceptance; because I love thee, I covet to be near thee, I covet to be thine, I covet to lead my life with thee, to dwell in thy presence; far be it from me to be as without thee in the world as heretofore. I love thee, O Lord, my strength, because thine own perfections highly deserve it, and because thou hast heard my voice, and hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling, and I yield myself to thee, because I love thee. I make an offer of myself to be thy servant, thy servant, O Lord, thou hast loosed my bonds; and now I desire to bind myself in new ones to thee, that are never to be loosed.” And you can make no doubt but that it ought to be done therefore with dispositions and a temper suitable to the state you are now willing to come into, that of a devoted servant; namely,

8. With great reverence and humility. For, consider to whom you are tendering yourself; to the "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity;" to him that hath heaven for his throne, and earth for his footstool; and in comparison of whom all the inhabitants of the world are but as grasshoppers, and the nations of the earth as the drop of a bucket, and the dust of the balance, &c. Yea to him against whom you have sinned, and before whose pure eyes, you cannot, in yourself, but appear most offensively impure; so that you have reason to be ashamed and blush to lift up your eyes before him.

9. And yet it surely ought to be with great joy and gladness of heart, that he hath expressed himself willing to accept such as you, and that he hath made you willing to yield yourselves. The very thought should make your heart leap and spring within you, that he should ever have bespoken such as we are to yield ourselves to him, when he might have neglected us, and let us wander endlessly, without ever looking after us more. How should it gladden your hearts this day, to have such a message brought you from the great God, and which you find is written in his own word, to yield yourselves to him! Should not your hearts answer with wonder: "And blessed Lord! Art thou willing again to have to do with us, who left thee having no cause, and who returning can be of no use to thee!" O blessed be God that we may yield ourselves back unto him! that we are invited and encouraged to it. And you have cause to bless God, and rejoice, if this day you feel your heart willing to yield yourselves to him, and become his. Do you indeed find yourselves willing? You are willing in the day of his power, Ps. 110. 3. This is the day of his power upon your hearts. Many are called and refuse; he often stretches out his hands, and no man regards, Prov. 1. 24. Perhaps you have been called upon often before this day to do this same thing, and neglected it, had no heart to it; and he might have said to you, "Now will I never treat with you more; if you should call, I will not hear; if you stretch out your hands, I will not regard it, but laugh at your destruction, and mock when your fear cometh." But if now he is pleased to call once more, your hearts do answer; "Lord, here we are, we are now ready to surrender ourselves;" you may conclude he hath poured out his Spirit upon you. The Spirit of the Lord is now moving upon this assembly, this is indeed a joyful day, the day which he hath himself made, and you ought to rejoice and be glad in it, Ps. 118. When the people in David's days offered of their substance to God for the service

of his house, it is said, The people rejoiced for that they offered willingly: (1 Chron. 29. 9.) and David, we are told, blessed God before all the congregation—saying, Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power—But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. If you are this day willing to offer yourselves, how much is this a greater thing! and it comes of him, and it is of his own you are now giving him; for he had a most unquestionable right in you before.

10. You should do it with solemnity. For, have you ever had a business of greater importance to transact in all your days? If you were to dispose of an estate, or a child, would you not have all things be as express, and clear, as may be? and would not they insist to have it so, with whom you deal in any such affair? And is there not a solemnity belonging to all such transactions? especially if you were to dispose of yourself; as in the conjugal covenant? though that is to be but for this short uncertain time of life; so as that the relation you enter into to-day, may be by death dissolved and broken off again to-morrow: how much more explicit, clear, and solemn, should this your covenanting with God in Christ be, wherein you are to make over your soul to him, and for eternity? You are to become his, under the bond of an everlasting covenant. You are entering a relation never to be broken off. This God is to be your God for ever and ever, and upon the same terms you are to be his. Is your immortal soul of less account with you than the temporal concerns of a mortal child, that you are placing out but for a term of years that soon expires? yea or than a piece of ground, or a horse, or a sheep, about which how punctual and express are your bargains and contracts wont to be? Or are only the matters of your soul, and wherein you have to do with the great God, to be slightly managed, or to be huddled up in confusion, or to be slid over in silent intimations? It is true, that so express and solemn dealing in yielding and giving up yourselves to God, is not needful on his part, who understands sincerity without any expression of yours; but it is needful on your part, that a deep and lasting impression may be made upon your spirits; which if you be sincere, you will not only feel yourselves to need, but your own temper and inclination will prompt you to it; accounting you can never be under bonds strong and sure enough to him. You will not only apprehend necessity, but will relish and taste pleasure in any such transaction with the

blessed God, in avouching him to be your God, and yourself to be his. The more solemn it is, the more grateful it will be to you.

Do so then. Fall before his throne; prostrate yourself at his footstool; and having chosen your fit season, when nothing may interrupt you; and having shut up yourself with him, pour out your soul to him; tell him you are now come on purpose, to offer yourselves to him as his own. O that you would not let this night pass without doing so! Tell him you have too long neglected him, and forgotten to whom you belonged; humbly beseech him for his pardon, and that he will now accept of you, for your Redeemer's sake, as being through his grace resolved never to live so great a stranger to him, or be such a wanderer from him more. And when you have done so, remember the time; let it be with you a noted memorable day, as you would be sure to keep the day in memory when you became such a one's servant or tenant, or your marriage-day. Renew this your agreement with God often, but forget it never. Perhaps some may say, "But what needs all this?" were we not once devoted and given up to God in baptism? and is not that sufficient? To what purpose should we do again a thing that hath once been so solemnly done?

But here I desire you to consider, Are you never to become the Lord's by your own choice? Are you always to be Christians, only by another's christianity, not by your own? And again, Have you not broken your baptismal vow? have you not forgot it for the most part ever since? I am afraid too many never think of any such matter at all, that ever they were devoted to God by others, but only upon such an occasion as this, to make it an excuse that they may never do such a thing themselves. And consider, were these Christian Romans on whom the apostle presses this duty never baptized, think you? Read over the foregoing part of the chapter, wherein you find him putting them in mind that they had been baptized into Christ's death, and buried with him in baptism, and that therefore this was to be an argument to them why they should yield themselves to God; not why they should not. Wherefore our way is now plain and open to what we have further to do, namely,

II. To apply this practical doctrine, and press the precept further upon you, which hath been opened to you, and pressed by parts in some measure already, in our insisting on the several heads, which you have seen do belong to it; and are one way or other comprehended in it. Which will therefore

make this latter part of our work the shorter, and capable of being dispatched in the fewer words ; and with blessed effect, if the Spirit of the living God shall vouchsafe to co-operate, and deal with your hearts and mine. Shall we then all agree upon this thing ? Shall we unite in one resolution, " We will be the Lord's." Shall every one say in his own heart, " For my part, I will, and so will I, and so will I ?" Come now, one and all. This is no unlawful confederacy, it is a blessed combination ! Come then, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, not to be forgotten, Jer. 50. 5. With whatsoever after-solemnity you may renew this obligation and bond of God upon your souls, as I hope you will do it, every one apart, in your closets, or in any corner, and you cannot do it too fully, or too often ; yet let us now all resolve the thing ; and this assembly make a joint-surrender, and oblation of itself to the great God our sovereign rightful Lord, through our blessed Redeemer and Mediator, by the eternal Spirit, (which I hope is breathing and at work among us,) as one living sacrifice, as all of us, alive from the dead, to be for ever sacred to him ! O blessed assembly ! O happy act and deed ! With how grateful and well-pleasing an odour will the kindness and dutifulness of this offering ascend, and be received above ! God will accept, heaven will rejoice, angels will concur, and gladly fall in with us. We hereby adjoin ourselves in relation, and in heart and spirit, " to the general assembly, to the church of the first-born ones written in heaven, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," and within a little while shall be actually among them. Is it possible there should be now among us any dissenting vote ? Consider,

1. It is a plain and unquestionable thing you are pressed unto : a thing that admits of no dispute, and against which you have nothing to say, and about which you cannot but be already convinced. And it is a matter full of danger, and upon which tremendous consequences depend, to go on in any practice, or in any neglect, against a conviction of judgment and conscience. For your own heart and conscience must condemn you if you consider, and it betrays you if you consider not. How fearful a thing is it for a man to carry his own doom in his own bosom ! to go up and down the world with a self-condemning heart, if it be awake, and which if it be not, yet cannot sleep always, and must awake with the greater terror at length. And in so plain a case it is most cer-

tainly God's deputy, and speaks his mind; If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, &c. 1 John 3. 20.

2. It is that therefore the refusal whereof none of you would avow. Who among us can have the confidence to stand forth and say, I will be none of the Lord's? Would any man be content to go with this written upon his forehead from day to day? And doth not that signify such a refusal to be a shameful thing? That must needs be an ill temper of mind which one would be ashamed any one should know.

3. And it is a mean thing to dissemble, to be willing to be thought, and counted what we are not, or to do what in truth we do not.

4. And considering what inspection we are under, it is a vain thing. For do we not know that "eyes which are as a flame of fire," behold us, and pierce into our very souls? Do we not know "all things in us are naked and manifest to him with whom we have to do?" (Heb. 4. 12.) and that he discerns it, if there be any heart among us that is not sincere in this thing?

5. Consider that this is the very design of the gospel you live under. What doth it signify or intend, but to recal apostate creatures back again to God? What is the Christian religion you profess, but a state of devotedness to God, under the conduct and through the mediation of Christ? You frustrate the gospel, and make your religion a nullity and an empty name, till you do this.

6. And how will you lift up your heads at last in the great day? and before this God the Judge of all? You cannot now plead ignorance. If perhaps any among you have not been formerly so expressly called, and urged to this yielding yourselves to God: now you are: and from his own plain word it is charged upon you. Will not this be remembered hereafter? What will you say when the great God whose creature you are, speaks to you with the voice of thunder, and bids you gird up your loins, and give him an answer? "Were you not on such a day, in such a place, demanded and claimed in my name? Were you not told, were you not convinced, you ought to yield yourselves to me? and yet you did it not. Are you prepared to contest with your Maker? Where is your right, where is your power, to stand against me in this contest?"

7. But if you sincerely yield yourselves, the main controversy is at end between the great God and you. All your former sins are pardoned and done away at once. Those glad tidings you have often heard that import nothing but "glory to

God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men," plainly shew that the Great God whom you had offended, hath no design to destroy you, but only to make you yield, and give him back his own. Though you have formerly lived a wandering life, and been as a vagabond on the earth from your true Owner, it will be all forgotten. How readily was the returning prodigal received! and so will you. How quiet rest will you have this night, when upon such terms there is a reconciliation between God and you! You have given him his own, and he is pleased, and most of all for this, that he hath you now to save you. You were his to destroy before, now you are his to save. He could easily destroy you against your will, but it is only with your will, he having made you willing, that he must save you. And his bidding you yield, implies his willingness to do so. O how much of gospel is there in this invitation to you to yield yourselves to God! consider it as the voice of grace. Will he that bids a poor wretch yield itself, reject or destroy when it doth so?

8. And how happily may you now live the rest of your days in this world. You will live under his care, for will he not take care of his own, those that are of his own house? An infidel would. You are now of his family, under his immediate government, and under his continual blessing. And were you now to give an account where you have been to-day, and what you have been doing: if you say, you have been engaged this day in a solemn treaty with the Lord of heaven and earth, about yielding yourselves to him; and it be further asked, "Well, and what was the issue? Have you agreed?" Must you, any of you, be obliged by the truth of the case to say, "No;" astonishing answer! What! hast thou been treating with the great God, the God of thy life, and not agreed? What, man! did he demand of thee any unreasonable thing? "Only to yield myself." Why that was in all the world the most reasonable thing. Wretched creature, whither now wilt thou go? What wilt thou do with thyself? Where wilt thou lay thy hated head? But if you can say, "Blessed be God, I gladly agreed to the proposal: He gave me the grace not to deny him:" then may it be said this was a good day's work, and you will have cause to bless God for this day as long as you have a day to live.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

