
GOSPEL HUMILIATION

Ralph Erskine
(1686-1752)

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GOSPEL HUMILIATION

Ralph Erskine

Introduction

AFTER great convictions of sin, and great denunciations of judgments against Israel, in the preceding part of the chapter, the Lord here, in the close, remembers mercy in the midst of wrath, and ends all his sad and heavy words with a sweet *nevertheless*, (v 60). And, indeed, mercy must begin on God's side: "Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth; and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant." And what will be the effect of this, we see in verse 61, "Then shalt thou remember thy ways and be ashamed." It is worthy our observation, that when God says, "I will remember my covenant," then he adds, "Thou shalt remember thy sins." Hence it is evident, that never a good thought, never a penitent thought would have come into our hearts, had not some thoughts of peace and good-will come into God's heart. When he remembers his covenant of mercy for us, so as not to remember our sins against us, then we remember our sins against ourselves with shame.

And in the latter part of the verse he adds, "When thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger": that is, when the Gentile nations, some of them greater than thou art, and some lesser, both ancient and modern, shall be received into church-communion, and owned as members of the church of

God; "And I will give them to thee for daughters": they shall be my gift unto thee as daughters; they shall be nursed up and educated by that gospel, that word of the Lord that shall come forth from Zion, from the Jews; insomuch, that Jerusalem below may, in some sense, be called the mother; and Jerusalem, which is above, which is free, shall be acknowledged to be the mother of us all (Gal 4:26). "They shall be thy daughters, but not by thy covenant"; that is, thy covenant of duties, or which thou turnedst to a covenant of works: not by that old covenant, which was violated; but by that covenant, which promised to write the law in the heart, and to put the fear of God into the inward part. Now, when thou shalt receive them, and when Jews and Gentiles shall be united in Christ, the covenant-head, "Thou shalt be ashamed of thine own evil ways." Thou shalt blush to look a Gentile in the face, remembering how much worse than the Gentiles thou wast in the day of thy apostasy.

He farther signifies his gracious purpose, verse 62, "I will establish my covenant with thee." He had before said, "I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant," verse 60. This covenant is God's covenant: it is of his making with his Son Jesus Christ: "I have made a covenant with my chosen: and it is established in him unto us; and therefore may be said to be established with us. As if he had said, As I will establish it with him unto thee; so I will re-establish it in him, with thee. And then the effect of that re-establishment of it shall be, "Thou shalt know that I am the Lord"; that I am JEHOVAH, a God of power, and faithful to my promise. It had often been said in wrath, "You shall know that I am the Lord"; you shall know it to your cost: but here it is said in mercy, "You shall know that I am the Lord"; you shall know it to your comfort. And it is one of the most precious promises of the cove-

nant, “they shall all know the Lord”: by a justifying knowledge; so as to be delivered from the *rule* of sin, and from the punishment threatened in the law: by a sanctifying knowledge; so as to be delivered from the *rule* of sin, and to be fitted for gospel-service and obedience: by an evangelical knowledge; a knowledge of God in Christ, which is the beginning of eternal life; “This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent”: and likewise by a humbling knowledge; and here is the humbling effect of it described in the words of the text: “That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.”

Here you may observe both the nature of true humiliation, and the ground of it.

1. The nature and properties of true humiliation, “Thou shalt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame.”

2. The ground and spring of it, “When I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done”: when thou shalt so know the Lord, as to view him to be a reconciled God in Christ. He had before said, “I will remember my covenant,” and when he puts them in mind of the covenant, then they mind their sin and misery, their evil ways and are ashamed. And here, when the covenant is further opened, the humiliation is further enlarged also. Why, the clearer evidence that persons have of God’s being reconciled to them, the more grieved and ashamed will they be for offending him.

I shall farther explain the words, in discoursing upon the following doctrine.

OBSERVATION. “True gospel-humiliation is rooted in the believing knowledge and view of divine

reconciliation": or, "Then is a soul truly humbled, when it apprehends God as truly pacified, and well-pleased in Christ Jesus."

To this purpose are these and the like words of scripture, "They shall fear the Lord, and his goodness, in the latter days. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; the kingdom of grace reigning through the righteousness of Jesus, declaring God to be pacified in him, it is at hand, it is proclaimed in your ears. Repent, and in order to this, believe the gospel; the gospel of reconciliation. "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord." Why? "He will have mercy; he will abundantly pardon."

The method we would lay down, for prosecuting this observation, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, shall be the following.

- I. We would speak a little of this humiliation.
- II. Of this reconciliation; or, of God's being pacified.
- III. Of the connection between them; or the influence which the view and knowledge of God's being pacified, hath upon this humiliation.
- IV. Make some application of the whole.

I. Humiliation

We will touch a little at that humiliation here before us. And, O Sirs, since we are here met about humiliation-work, let us look upon it as the subject-matter of a divine promise, "Thou shalt know that I am the Lord, that thou mayest remember and be confounded." If you had this view, then you would have the more hope of coming speed, and meeting with success. This view may help you to know, that you are not come to *do* some great work of yourself, as if God

were still standing upon terms with you, according to the old covenant of works; but that you are come to *get* all the humbling and healing grace that you need, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, which is a giving covenant.

But now, I shall mention four ingredients of this humiliation that is here promised, and that we are to look for, and pray for, to be brought forth out of the womb of the promise, namely, remembrance, confusion, shame, and silence.

1. The first ingredient is remembrance; "That thou mayest REMEMBER." The very first beginning of true repentance is, God's making a man thoughtful; "I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies." Hence we are called to consider our ways. We forget God, and forget our sins against him; but whenever God begins the good work, he makes the man to remember and call to mind his sins: as the prodigal, when he came to himself, considered matters. This remembrance, I think, includes illumination and conviction. The first part of the physic that God gives, is the eye-salve, that they may see; for, until their eyes be opened, they will not turn from darkness unto light (Acts 26:18). The first creature that ever God made in the primitive creation was *light*, and the first thing in the new creation is *spiritual light*. The sinner before repentance, is like a man sleeping in a dark pit, in the midst of a great many vipers, asps, and serpents, and venomous beasts: while he lies in the dark pit, they neither hurt him, nor is he afraid of them himself; but whenever a ray of light comes in at a hole or window, presently they fall upon him, and sting and torment him, and he sees himself to be surrounded with them. So here, before repentance, the sinner sleeps in the darkness of ignorance, atheism, error, and unbelief; but whenever a beam of spiritual

light breaks in upon the mind and conscience, by an effectual conviction and illumination, then sin revives, and the sinner finds himself encompassed, as it were, with living serpents, tainted and corrupted with the poison of asps, destroyed and defiled with all the trash of hell in his heart.

It is not a bare speculation, or notion of our sinful ways, that is imported here. We many times, by a bare notion of our sins and mercies, write them, as it were, upon the waters: they are no sooner thought, or spoke of, but they are forgot again; but it is a feeling remembrance, and an abiding remembrance: such as that the psalmist had, when he said, "My sin is ever before me": they haunt me like a ghost. The ghost of Uria is still before me, might he say; the thoughts of my murder and adultery never go out of my mind. Yea, it is a remembrance of sin, as against God; "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Psalm 51:4). This is the remembrance here also spoken of, "Thou shalt know that I am the Lord: and so thou shalt remember thine evil ways and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame." It is a remembrance of some sin or other, so as to bring in the remembrance of the rest, like that of the woman of Samaria, when Christ told her of her lewdness, she got, as in a map, a view of all that she ever did. Yea, it leads back to the fountain of sin in the nature; "Behold, I was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity" (Psalm 51:5).

2. Confusion is another ingredient of the humiliation here mentioned; "That thou mayest remember, and be CONFOUNDED." It is true, this confusion may be thought to be the same with the shame afterwards mentioned; but, I think they may be viewed as distinct. There is a confusion of heart, and a confusion of face. The last of these I take to be the shame with shame;

but the former, namely, confusion of heart, I think seems, especially here, to be intended; because it is joined with heart-remembrance of sin: "Thou shalt remember, and be confounded"; *i.e.*, Thou shalt have a heart-confounding remembrance of thy sin. And this confusion of heart, I think, takes in heart-contrition, or some degree of brokenness; heart-compunction, whereby the heart is pricked and pierced; heart-sorrow and anguish, and most of these ingredients of repentance and godly sorrow mentioned (II Cor 7:11), "For behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fear; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge." Yea, it seems to import the heart's being struck with astonishment at its own sinfulness, and with amazement at its own madness; like a man plunged into the deep, his senses are instantly confounded. O! when a man's thoughts are, by a spiritual remembrance, plunged into the depth of sin and wickedness, that he sees into his heart and ways, how he is confounded, so as he knows not what to think! His sins are beyond his understanding; "Who can understand his errors"? His very heart-sins do overflow his thoughts, and surpass his knowledge; "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it" (Jer 17:9)? The man is swallowed up in this great deep, "Thou shalt remember, and be confounded."

3. The next ingredient is SHAME, such as is mentioned here, and Ezra 9:6, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face unto thee; for our iniquities are increased over our heads: Lord, our trespass is grown up unto the heavens." The poor penitent publican is the reverse of the proud Pharisee; he is ashamed to look up to heaven. Sin brings shame one way or

another; but is best when it brings in a holy shame before God. One may be ashamed of sin, as it brings him to open ignominy before men; but the truly humbled soul is ashamed of sin before God, and that on many accounts. Sin makes him guilty. Adam never blushed for shame, until he was guilty of eating the forbidden fruit, and perceived himself naked. Sin makes him ungrateful, and so he is ashamed that he hath requited evil for good: "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?" He is ashamed, because sin makes him naked; he sees he is naked, as Adam and Eve saw themselves to be, after they had eaten the forbidden fruit. Sin divests us of our garment of righteousness and holiness; and hence the gospel offers the righteousness of Christ as white raiment, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear (Rev 3:18). The humbled soul sees itself naked, and therefore is ashamed. Sin makes him a beast, and therefore he is ashamed: "So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee." The dog returning to his vomit, and the swine to his wallowing in the mire, is not so loathsome as the soul is to itself, when under a view of sin: "Truth, Lord, I am a dog." Sin makes him a fool, and therefore, he is ashamed. He views himself as a fool and a madman, that hath been mad on idols; and is not this ground of shame? Sin makes him a slave; and that is matter of shame. Alas! that I should have been a slave to Satan, and a captive to divers lusts! Yea, sin makes him a devil; and he sees himself to be an incarnate devil; and therefore blushes that he should be reckoned even among the children of men, let be the children of God; and how can he look up to God, while he sees his nature to be not only earthly, but hellish, not only sensual, but devilish (James 3:15). He sees his sin to be not only greater than the sin of heathens, who never had the gospel, but greater than the sin of

devils. They never sinned against the blood of Christ, as I have done. In a word, he is ashamed because his sin brought shame and disgrace to the eternal Son of God, the God of glory, who, as he endured the cross, and despised the shame; so our sin brought him to it; yea, our continued sin put him to open shame (Heb 6:6). Ah! the shame that the penitent rubs upon himself for sin! I read of Diodorus, a logician, that he fell down dead for shame that he could not resolve an argument that was propounded to him. Oh! if we were apprehensive of the horridness of our sin how might we blush to death for shame before God!

4. The next ingredient is SILENCE; "And never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame." This holy silence before God, imports a not opening the mouth in opposition to God; not daring to quarrel with his dispensations, but owning that God only hath a right to speak against us; and that he will be justified when he speaks, and clear when he judgeth (Psalm 51:4). It imports a not opening his mouth in complaint of him, or reflections on him, whatever be his dispensations: "Why should a living man complain? a man for the punishment of his iniquity"? It imports a silent submission to the will of God, saying, with the psalmist, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it" (Psalm 39:2). It imports a silent taking with the charge of sin and guilt justifying God and condemning ourselves; "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom 3:19). It imports a conviction of former pride, in opening of the mouth against God; a not opening it any more says, that this was the former practice. Men naturally justify and vindicate themselves by covering themselves with the fig-leaves of some silly excuse. Hence errors in principle are called but a free way of thinking; errors in practice are de-

nominated freedom of action; drunkenness is termed but good fellowship; swearing declared but a piece of bravery; whoredom looked upon to be but a trick of youth; malice and revenge styled but just resentment: thus the mouth of the whole world is open against God in the justification of sin; but when once humiliation takes place, the mouth is shut. Finally, it imports a constant, habitual, self-condemnation, and silent taking with sin all the days of our life: for so the word runs, "Thou shalt never open thy mouth any more." The humbled soul's constant principle and habitual practice is never to open its mouth, but still to be silent before God.

II. The Spring of This Humiliation

The second thing proposed was, To speak of that which is the spring and ground of this humiliation: or, when it is that a sinner is brought to it; namely, when God is pacified towards him for all that he hath done; or when he is at peace with him. Now, I shall condescend upon six properties of this peace which are also included in the text.

1. It is a well-grounded peace; peace upon the ground of an atonement; for so the word pacified seems plainly to import: I am pacified and fully appeased with the blood of the covenant that I have established unto thee in Christ. "I have found a ransom; I have set forth Christ to be the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom 3:25,26). He hath made peace through the blood of his cross (Col 1:20). The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, who

gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God." Hence,

2. It is a divine peace; "I am pacified, saith the Lord God." It is a peace of God's contrivance, a peace of God's revealing, a peace of God's making; it is a peace that God glories in; "I am pacified." O good news, to hear of a pacified God.

3. It is a present peace; "I AM pacified"; though I was offended, yet now "I am pacified." I was displeased by sin, but I am well-pleased in Christ. "I am pacified"; for the sacrifice is offered. It is true, this was said in our text before ever Christ died, and before he appeared in our nature; but Christ having engaged to do it, it was as good as done; and therefore he then said, "I am pacified": and therefore much more may we believe that now God is saying, "I am pacified."

4. It is a particular peace; "I am pacified towards THEE." It is true, it is a general peace that is published through Christ, according to the song of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men"; but particularly published in Zion, even to all sinners of Zion, and to every sinner in particular, who hears the gospel. If you know the joyful sound, you may know it is God saying, "I am pacified towards THEE"; and I have given a commission to all my ambassadors to preach the gospel of peace to THEE; "Go preach the gospel to every creature," to every sinner of mankind, declaring that "I am pacified towards HIM." "To YOU is the word of this salvation sent." To thee, man; to thee, woman: to every individual, whether young or old. Alas! what think you of your sinning against this God, who says, "I am pacified towards thee"? Will not this break your heart for your enmity, when he is expressing such love to you, saying, "I am pacified towards thee"?

5. It is a wonderful and surprising peace, with a *non obstante*; “NOTWITHSTANDING all that thou hast done”; or, “FOR all that thou hast done.” “Thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst” (Jer 3:5). Thou mayst remember, but I am not to remember it: “Thy sins and thine iniquities will I remember no more. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them”; but imputing the righteousness of Christ unto them. I have got payment for all that thou hast done; therefore, “I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done.” Not one of thy sins, greater or less, but are answered for. The price of redemption is paid to the full.

6. It is a proclaimed peace, a spoken of and published peace; and who speaks it? It is said, “The Lord will speak peace to his people”: and here it is a peace and reconciliation spoken with a “Thus saith the Lord God”; “When I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done, SAITH THE LORD God.” Thus saith the Lord God to thee, “For all that thou hast done, and NOTWITHSTANDING all that thou hast done, I am pacified towards thee.”

Here is a sure footing and firm ground for thy faith; it is the word gone out of the mouth of the Lord; the God that cannot repent, that cannot revoke his word, and that can never unsay what he hath said: “The word of the Lord endureth forever”; and upon this word thou mayst build thy faith, confidence, and hope. O sinner, it is the word of that JEHOVAH, who can give a being to what he says; it is a word of pardon and peace, for thee, guilty sinner. O! wilt thou accept of the free indemnity proclaimed by the great God over the red cross of the blood of Christ, and over the market-cross of this everlasting gospel?

III. The Influence of Christ's Peace upon the Sinner's Humiliation

The third thing was, To shew the influence that this hath upon the former; or, the influence that the view and knowledge of this peace and reconciliation, through Christ, proclaimed to the sinner, hath upon the sinner's humiliation; for, the connection between the two is evident from the particle WHEN, "That thou mayst remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, WHEN I am pacified: or, when thou shalt so far know the Lord, as in the verse preceding, as to see and apprehend that I am pacified towards thee, for all that thou hast done." This is the main-spring of true repentance and humiliation. Hence, in our Lesser Catechism, repentance, or returning from sin to God, with grief and hatred of sin, is said to proceed from a true sense of sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. Now, if thou art sensible that thou art truly a sinner, then, O listen to the news of mercy in God through Christ; the apprehension thereof will tend to humble thee: and here is mercy proclaimed, "I am pacified towards thee."

Now, the influence that the knowledge and view of God's being pacified in Christ hath upon gospel humiliation, may be opened in these following particulars.

1. The gospel-news of God's being pacified in Christ, is the vehicle of the Spirit of God; "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith" (Gal 3:2). The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit. If by the hearing of the gospel of peace and reconciliation the Spirit comes, then gospel-humiliation must come that way; for he is the Spirit of grace and supplication, repentance and humiliation.

2. It is by the view of God's being pacified that faith comes; "Faith comes by hearing" (Rom 10:17). Faith comes by hearing this good news: and then it purifies the heart, and works by love. Who ever had faith, but by the revelation of the grace and mercy of God in Christ? And who ever had this faith of mercy, but was melted and humbled thereby?

3. It is by this view of God's being pacified, that hope is begotten: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope" (I Peter 1:3); the hope of life, the hope of glory: and then, "He who hath that hope, purifieth himself"; and the more of this purification, the more is the soul humbled and ashamed for sin.

4. It is by the view of God's being pacified in Christ that life comes into the soul; and hence the gospel of peace is called the ministration of life (II Cor 3:7), in opposition to the law, that is the ministration of death. Hence let a man preach the law as a covenant of life, upon doing, promising one heaven, if he do so and so: or let him preach it as a covenant of death, for not doing, and so threaten hell and damnation with all the art and rhetoric of the world; yet never shall he be able to raise one soul to a lively hope; or bring one soul from death to life by it. No; it is impossible. It may preach them dead, but never alive. It is the news and view of God's being pacified, that quickens the soul; and then it remembers, and is confounded and ashamed of its sins.

5. It is the view of God's being pacified, or the revelation of the grace of God in Christ, that brings in liberty, true liberty; "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor 3:17). Every legalist is in chains and fetters; but so much of the knowledge of peace with God, as any have, so much liberty and freedom;

freedom from soul-fetters; freedom of heart to mourn for sin, and turn from it: O! does mercy vent to the like of me? Then the bonds are loosed, and the heart dissolved.

6. The view of God's being pacified begets love; for his love kindles ours, and so kills the enmity; "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). The great God, manifesting his great love to the hard-hearted sinner, makes his heart to break; and so the love of God in Christ constrains it, and makes it ashamed of its enmity, and confounded for its rebellion against such bowels of mercy.

7. The view of God's being pacified brings in joy and health to the soul; and then, the joy of the Lord being our strength, we are able, with tears of joy, to fall down before the Lord our Maker: and having the conscience healed by the pacifying blood of Christ, then the soul is ready to say, O! let me sin no more; let me never open my mouth any more against God.

8. The view of God's being pacified, or the revelation of the grace of God reigning through the righteousness of Christ, is the channel of the power of God; "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation; for therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith" (Rom 1:16,17). And this being the channel of divine power, it is this power of God that brings down the pride of the heart, and humbles the soul under the mighty hand of God (II Cor 10:4,5). Thus God's being pacified in Christ hath a moral and a physical influence upon humiliation: a moral and argumentative influence; Oh! shall I not be ashamed and confounded for my ingratitude against such love and grace manifested towards me? And also, a physical, powerful, and operative influence; for thus the Lord draws the soul with cords of love, or melts down the hard and icy heart with the fire of his

infinite love. So much for this head, viz., the influence that a view of God's being pacified, through Christ, hath upon the sinner's humiliation.

IV. Application

The fourth thing proposed was the application. Is it so, as has been said, that true gospel humiliation is rooted in the believing knowledge of divine reconciliation, hence see,

1. What are the grounds of God's controversy, and of his being angry with the visible church, and of his not being pacified toward them. I mention these two from the text and context here.

(a) When that church or land does not know that the Lord is God: when they are ignorant of him, and of his being Lord; Lord of all in general, and Lord of his church in a special way: when he is not owned and acknowledged as Lord of the vineyard, but is denied in his Sovereignty and Supremacy over his church, and affronted in his Headship; hence it is said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." When Christ is affronted openly in his supreme Deity, and in his supreme Headship, this cannot but be a great ground of controversy.

(b) When that church or people do not believe in him, as a God pacified and reconciled in Christ; do not take him up as he is revealed in his word: believe not that he is pacified in Christ, but go about to pacify him themselves, and establish a righteousness of their own; contriving some other way of pacifying God, than God hath revealed: thinking to please God by their moral virtues and legal performances; and so going off from the gospel.

2. Hence see what are the fruits and evidences of God's anger and controversy with a church or land,

and of his not being pacified; and, consequently, of their want of knowledge of the Lord as a pacified God in Christ.

(a) When they are not brought to remembrance of their sin; for, when God is pacified, then they remember. Here is an evidence of God's continued anger with a church; when they do not remember their sin; are not remembering their apostasy; are not remembering that they and their fathers have sinned, and will not remember the same; will not be put in remembrance; will not remember their covenant-breaking and perjury; will not remember the dishonours they have done to God. When God remembers mercy to a people, then they remember their sin: When he forgets their sins, then they remember them: But, when they forget their sins, God remembers them.

(b) When they are not brought to confusion of heart for their sins; when it is not a remembering so as to be confounded. If they barely remember, without confusion, it is as good as no remembering: when they remember, and think nothing of their sin; when they remember their sin, and yet do not remember against whom they have sinned; nor remember the heinousness of their sin, nor the aggravations thereof, nor the danger thereof, and the wrath their sins deserve, so as to be touched to the heart, and affected before God, or confounded.

(c) When they are not brought to shame or confusion of face, as well as confusion of heart: when, instead of remembering their sin with shame, they sin without shame, are not ashamed of their sin; but declare their sin as Sodom, and are bold in their sinning; hardening their face against shame and blushing. When people are become shameless in their sinning, shameless in their apostasy, shameless in their defection, shameless notwithstanding all their corruptions;

yea, shameless in going on in their sin, notwithstanding all the convictions offered.

(d) When they are not brought to silence, so as not to open their mouth against God, and in their own vindication: when they open their mouth, and say, they are innocent, then the controversy remains; "Thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me: behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned" (Jer 2:35), when they stand up in their own vindication with open mouth; instead of opening their mouth in confessing of their sin, and in justifying of the Lord: when they will not openly and judicially confess their sin; when they do not confess freely, nor confess full, nor confess nationally, or as a church, that they have sinned; but rather open their mouth in justifying themselves, and condemning these that aim and endeavour at confessing or witnessing against their sin.

3. Is it so, that a soul is then truly humbled, when it apprehends God as truly pacified, and well-pleased in Christ Jesus? Hence see then, the miserable case of secure sinners, that know not God in Christ. They do not remember their sin against God. They sin without shame; and they have their mouth open against God, vindicating themselves, and justifying themselves. They glory in their shame; they see not their sinfulness.

4. Hence see what is the cause of so little humiliation. Because there is so little faith of the gospel of peace; unbelief, in not knowing and remembering that God is a pacified God in Christ, is the main cause of it; therefore they do not remember their sin. They do not believe that God is at peace with them; therefore they are at war with God. Perhaps they think and fancy that he is at peace with them; but if they had the faith of it, it is impossible they could be at peace with sin.

5. Hence see the matchlessness of the grace and mercy of God, that he should proclaim peace with rebels, and declare himself pacified towards them, for all that they have done: and, that he should send forth ambassadors, to publish peace in his name, and commit to them the word of reconciliation, to pray you in his name to be reconciled to God, because he hath made Christ to be sin for us, a sacrifice for us, through which he is pacified.

6. Hence see the necessity of preaching the gospel of peace: otherwise no true repentance, no gospel-humiliation. People will never remember their sins, and be ashamed for them, until they hear, and know, that God is pacified toward them, for all that they have done. Gospel-doctrine is a heart-humbling and heart-softening doctrine: but, such is the hardening nature of legal-doctrine, that, let a man preach life to the doer of the law, and death to the transgressor of it never so much, it will only tend to harden the man's heart against God, and to foster his rebellion and rage against God; for, "the law worketh wrath." Never will a sinner remember his sins, and blush or be ashamed, until he understand that God insists not upon the doing covenant with him, or upon the threatening covenant, denouncing wrath from Sinai: but, when God declares himself pacified, and when the sinner hears the doctrine of free remission, pardon to guilty sinners, and peace to rebel sinners; then will he remember his sins, and be ashamed; What! is there mercy, peace, and pardon for me! Then the soul melts.

7. Hence see what is the leading sin of the day and generation wherein we live; what is Scotland's chief sin, and the root of all our sin and rebellion, namely, unbelief and rejecting of the gospel of peace; not believing this report, That God is pacified in Christ. Nothing provokes him to wrath so much, as the slight-

ing and despising of his mercy. Why does not Scotland remember their sins? Why are they not ashamed of their sins? Why will they not confess their sins with shame and confusion of face? Why will they not humble themselves? Even because they do not believe in Christ, or that God is pacified in Christ. We have forgotten our God, and our resting-place, do not know and believe in him as a pacified God. Nothing kindles his anger so much as the slighting of his love. Why does he appear in arms against us, but because we refuse the peace which he proclaims? Why is he arming Popish powers against us, and appearing in fury, but because we reject his favour? He may justly let us taste the bitterness of war, because we distaste the sweetness of peace; the peace that he proclaims through Christ.

8. Hence see an evidence of true gospel-humiliation. When is a person truly humbled for sin? Even when the mercy of God melts him, when the love of God in Christ shames him for his enmity; when the view of God's being at peace, makes him at war with himself; when, in view of God's grace, he is confounded at his own ingratitude: when he begins to fear the Lord and his goodness; when he loves much, because much is forgiven him: when the grace of God, that appears to him teaches him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; when the news of God's being pacified towards him, for all that he hath done, melts him more than all the flames of Sinai could; when his mouth is stopped from speaking ill against God, because God's mouth is open in speaking peace to him; when the view of peace and pardon and the sense of God's kindness to him, confounds him for his unkindness to God.

9. Hence see what is the proper work of a humiliation-day, namely, to remember your sin, and be

ashamed. O that Scotland would remember their sin; that king and parliament would remember their sin; ministers and judicatories would remember their sin, and be ashamed. Let every one of us remember our sin, and all that we have done. Remember the sin of your heart and nature; the sin of your youth, and follies of your non-age: remember the sin of your riper age; remember the sin that hath accompanied your calling: ye that inordinately desire to be rich, how you lie, and cheat, and swear, and break the Sabbath: remember the sin of your holy things, of your reading, praying, hearing, communicating; remember the sins of omission and commission you are guilty of: remember, and be confounded; remember, and be ashamed, and be silent, and never open your mouth, because of your shame.

10. Hence see, how, and in what way, you may come to this right remembrance and due humiliation for sins. Why, the great and leading duty, in order to this humiliation, is a look to a pacified God. If you would be brought to holy shame and confusion of face for your sin; then, O know and believe that God is pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done; that there is mercy in God toward thee.

QUESTION. How shall I know that God is pacified toward me? For I thought rather to have heard that God was angry at me for my sin: since he is angry with the wicked every day, and hath revealed his wrath against sinners.

ANSWER. Yea, in the law his wrath is revealed; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them"; and the law-threatening shall be executed upon you, if gospel-grace be not received: and, as you may know the wrath of God is what you are liable to; because it is revealed in the law; so, you may know the mercy of God is what

you may obtain, because it is revealed in the gospel; and it is to you that this mercy is given in the gospel dispensation. To you the door of hope is open. God hath commanded us to go and preach the gospel to every creature: and what is this gospel of peace? Even that God is pacified in Christ towards thee, for all that thou hast done.

OBJECTION. But God hath no purpose or design of mercy toward *all*; and therefore, how can I apply this gospel-offer to myself?

ANSWER. God hath not made his secret purpose the rule of thy faith, but his word: and you may and shall know his merciful purpose, if once you take his word, and believe his word, saying, "I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done."

"But, say you, I am a monster of sin; I am an old sinner, a hardened and stout-hearted sinner." Well, but hear his word, saying, in Christ, "I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done." Alas! but I have done evil as I could. Nay, but says he, "I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done."

OBJECTION. "Oh! but I have done dishonour to God; I have done affronts to Christ; I have done despite to the Spirit; I have done injury to my neighbour; and I have done many villainies that you know nothing of." Well, but what of all that? Says God, Behold, I am pacified in Christ; and "I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God."

"Alas!" say you, "but I have done more wickedness than ever any sinner before me did; and if you knew what I have done, you would neither think nor say that there is peace in God's mind toward me."

ANSWER. Why, little matter what I think or say; but, O hear what God says; he is saying, "I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done"; you cannot think it; but my thoughts are not your thoughts; for,

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”

“Why, Sir,” say you, “if that be the case, that God is, in Christ, pacified towards me, for all that I have done, and thought, and spoken against him; this is such astonishing doctrine, and such astonishing grace in God, manifested toward me, that I am confounded at the thoughts of this marvelous grace; and I am confounded at the thoughts of my woeful wickedness against such a gracious God.” Are you so? Confounded may you be, in God’s great name, and ashamed to the dust! This is the great thing that God would have you brought to, by making known his covenant of grace to you, even “That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.”



