

SERMON XIII.

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.—EPH. v. 11.

THERE are two parts of the spiritual life—things to be done, and things to be avoided; in both the children of light must show their fidelity to God, in doing good and avoiding evil. Of the first we have spoken already in ver. 10, and have showed that it is not enough to do a few good things, to which all consent, but we must diligently search and find out what is acceptable and well-pleasing to God. I now come to the second branch of our duty, avoiding evil, ‘And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.’ Wherein take notice—

1. Of the object, or what is forbidden, ‘The unfruitful works of darkness.’

2. Our duty and carriage about it, in two things—

[1.] ‘Have no fellowship with them,’ have nothing to do with them.

[2.] ‘But rather reprove them;’ that is, by all means show that you utterly dislike that course of life.

Doct. That the children of light should live in a perfect abhorrence of, and stand at a great distance from, the unfruitful works of darkness.

1. I shall explain.

2. Prove this point.

I. For the explication; and there—(1.) The object; (2.) The acts of duty about it.

First, For the object. We have a general and unlimited expression, ‘The unfruitful works of darkness.’ But what they are we may collect from the context, ‘Uncleanness, fornication, evil concupiscence,’ &c.; and Rom. xiii. 12, 13, the apostle reckoneth up other things: ‘Let us cast off the works of darkness, &c., and let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.’ These and suchlike heathen practices are such as the apostle intendeth.

Now in this expression you may take notice of two things—(1.) They are called ‘works of darkness;’ (2.) They are said to be ‘unfruitful.’

1. They are called ‘works of darkness’ for these reasons—

[1.] Because they are done by men in their carnal estate, who are destitute of the Spirit of God, and all saving knowledge of his will. The corrupt estate of nature is called darkness, as the renewed estate is called light: 1 Peter ii. 9, ‘He hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.’ And chiefly because the one live in ignorance, and the other estate beginneth with the illumination of the Holy Spirit; and therefore these sins are called ‘works of darkness,’ because ignorance is the mother of them. Did men know the amiable nature of God, the purity of his holy law, the matchless love of Christ, the true worth of souls, the blessedness of eternal life, and the danger of perishing for ever, it would spoil the devil’s works, and he could not have

such a hand over them as usually he hath : 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance,' 1 Peter i. 14. Ignorance is the mother of profaneness; they neither know the terror nor the sweetness of the Lord, and therefore wallow in their impurities. Light is an awing thing; when once men come to the knowledge of the truth, they are ashamed of what they practised before. But how hard a matter is it to make men understand or regard anything while ignorant, and destitute of saving knowledge!

[2.] Because they are suggested by the temptations of the devil, who is the prince of darkness, and the ruler of the darkness of this world; and therefore called 'his lusts,' John viii. 44; 'his works,' 1 John iii. 8. He enticed the world of mankind from God, and still detaineth them by their slavery to their lusts. Did men know whose work they are a-doing they would sooner desist. The devil is the great architect of all wickedness, and the first mover of it; though carnal men do not what they do in love to him, but their own flesh, yet it is he sets them a-work, and cheateth them into rebellion against God, and abuseth the ignorance and error of their minds to draw them to these sins.

[3.] Because they cannot endure the light, but seek the veil and covert of secrecy. There is a threefold light—

(1.) Natural. They rebel against this light: Job xxiv. 13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof;' and ver. 17, 'For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terror of the shadow of death.' He meaneth by light there the light of the sun or of the day; and he instanceth in two sorts of sinners, the robber and murderer, who do their pranks mostly in the night; and the adulterer, who waiteth for the twilight; and he saith to both of them, 'the morning is to them as the shadow of death.' Their actions are so shameful and infamous that they dare not be seen in them. And the apostle telleth us, 1 Thes. v. 7, that 'they who are drunken are drunken in the night.' The greatest lovers and approvers of sin are ashamed to do it openly. There is not only a fear of danger, but a shame of doing actions so unworthy a man publicly. Till the conscience of right and wrong, honesty and dishonesty, be wholly extinct in their hearts, there is a natural bashfulness which maketh them shun the light of the day. They are conscious to themselves that sin is an abominable thing, and punishable in all civil societies. Though their endeavour to commit it secretly showeth their atheism, in that they seek to hide it from the eye of the world, and regard not the eye of God that is upon them, yet their affecting the veil of darkness and secrecy showeth this, that they have an apprehension that sin is evil.

(2.) Light spiritual, the light of God's word: John iii. 20, 'For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.' The gospel hath not only a refreshing light to comfort the penitent, but a reprov'ing and discovering light to trouble the sinner; and therefore before men feel it they fear it, and are loath to have their guilt revived. An unsound heart shuns all means of searching and knowing itself, which shows that those practices wherein they allow themselves are deeds of darkness, stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret.

(3.) There is another light, and that may be called practical, or the light of a holy conversation: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.' The truly godly are an awe to the wicked; for in holy and diligent believers religion is exemplified. A christian is or should be a living image of God, and so a powerful conviction of the ungodly; and the more men know them, the greater excellency will they see, and the greater efficacy of conviction will they feel, and their own practices are more shamed and disgraced. Now these sins cannot endure this light that shineth into the consciences of them that commit them, out of the conversations of the godly; therefore they either stand aloof out of prejudice, and condemn them by hearsay and general rumour, or seek to obscure this light by contumelies and slanders: 1 Peter iv. 4, 'Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.' For men speak to disgrace that excellency which they will not imitate; they spend their time in satisfying their lusts, and are troubled that others will not do the like, but seek after another society.

[4.] Because these men are condemned to everlasting darkness; for if they live and die in these sins without repentance, they are unavoidably cast into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Therefore, as the way of the godly is compared to a growing light, so the way of the wicked to an increasing darkness: Prov. iv. 18, 19, 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble.' The morning light is always growing until it cometh to the mid-day and noon, when the sun is in its greatest strength and brightness, and the day in its perfection: so the righteous increase in grace more and more, and go from strength to strength, till they come to their perfect estate. Now on the contrary, 'the way of the wicked is as darkness.' As the evening twilight increaseth to midnight or the thickest darkness, so they go on from sin to sin till they have plunged themselves into everlasting destruction; for contraries must be explained in the same manner.

2. These are said to be unfruitful by a *μείωσις*, that is, damnable; as Heb. xiii. 17, 'That is unprofitable for you.' The meaning is, hurtful and pernicious; however, the expression is emphatical. These works produce not only no good fruit, but certainly bring forth evil fruit, and prove bitterness in the end. So the apostle saith, Rom. vi. 21, 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.' There is no solid fruit and benefit to be gotten by sin; it bringeth nothing but disgrace, shame, loss of time, strength and estate, and hereafter eternal death: Gal. vi. 8, 'For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' Which is to be heeded by us, that we may not be inveigled by its pleasant and deceitful baits. Sin promiseth much, but performeth nothing, and therefore is often called deceitful; as Eph. iv. 22, 'Deceitful lusts;' Heb. iii. 13, 'The deceitfulness of sin.' Sin smileth upon the soul with enticing blandishments. Satan told our first parents, 'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen. iii. 5; and still we promise ourselves something from sin, some contentment, some profit; for no man

would be wicked gratis, merely for his mind's sake, or without an aim at some further end. Mere evil, as evil, cannot be the object of choice; there is some fruit or benefit expected in all that we do, but sin will never make good its word to us.

[1.] It doth not answer expectation; the sinner looketh for more contentment and satisfaction than he doth enjoy: Eccles. v. 16, 'And what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?' It is a fruitless enterprise; so that very experience is enough to confute it; and that is one reason why objects of sin are loathed when we have our fill of them: 2 Sam. xiii. 15, 'And Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he loved her.' Men's eyes are opened, and when the lust is satisfied, it beginneth to be contemned; they see what horror of conscience they have brought upon themselves. Reason taketh the throne again when lust is satisfied, and scourgeth the soul with bitter remorse; the fruit is shameful.

[2.] It is not valuable; the profit will not counterbalance the loss, nor the pleasure the pain: Mat. xvi. 26, 'What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Men hazard their souls, and it may be gain a little wealth; that is the worst bargain a man can make. Besides, this cometh with a curse, that within a little while eateth it out: Prov. x. 2, 'Treasures of wickedness profit nothing.' So it is in the eye of faith at least a fruitless enterprise to seek to grow rich by sin. Compare the pleasure and pain; the pleasure is a short contentment, that is gone as soon as it cometh, and when it is gone it is a thing of nothing, but the pain is eternal. But to speak of what is of present feeling; it raiseth a tempest and storm in the conscience, which is not easily allayed: Hosea viii. 7, 'For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.' The pleasure and fancy in sin is lost as soon as enjoyed, but the sting is not so soon gone. The crop doth answer the seed, and usually with increase. They that sow the wind can expect to reap nothing but the wind; yet they reap the whirlwind. A man that feels the gripes of a surfeit buyeth his pleasant meat at a dear rate; and what a sorry purchase doth he make that loseth his time and strength, and after all this expense gets nothing but horror of conscience and trouble of mind! Certainly men would not lie so long in sin if they would recollect themselves and consider, What have I gotten since I was the devil's bond-slave, but a blind mind, a troubled conscience, and a hard heart, and it may be shame and disgrace in the world? what a folly is it to pursue that which will bring me no profit! One beginneth to be awakened when once he cometh to say, Job xxxiii. 27, 'I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profiteth me not.' Whatsoever sin promiseth or sinners fancy, sin at length will be found to be an unprofitable course, yea, utterly destructive. What do men get by drinking, gaming, chambering and wantonness? what by all the lusts of youth, and the bold attempts of riper years, but an ill name and a worse conscience, a diseased body, and many times an entangled and maimed estate; a doubtful heart, and at length the mist of darkness is reserved for them for ever? Oh, that we could oftener put this question, Eccles. ii. 2, 'What doeth it?' what shall I gain by these vain delights and

sinful practices? We are often quarrelling with God; what profit is it to serve the Almighty? Mal. iii. 14, 'Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances?' Job xxi. 15, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?' surely it would make us stop in a way of sin if we did ask, What profit? If it be delightful to the sensual part, in the end it biteth like a serpent: Rom. ii. 9, 'Tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil.' As Elisha dealt with the Syrian army, he blinded them all the way, till he had brought them into the midst of Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 20, then he opened their eyes that they might see their danger; so Satan blindeth sinners till they come to destruction, and then conscience filleth them with horror and despairing fears, and the enchantment is dissolved, and they awake in flames and horror.

Secondly, The acts of our duty about it; and they are two—(1.) That we must have no fellowship with them; (2.) But reprove them rather.

1. That we must have no fellowship with them in evil. To understand that, we must consider how many ways we have fellowship with them.

[1.] If we do the same things that others do. He that committeth sin alone, and without example, is a sinner; but he that committeth sin after the example of others hath fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, joineth with others to promote the devil's kingdom in the world; therefore have no fellowship, give not a bad example to others, and follow it not if given by others; for by giving and taking evil example, there is a fellowship between sinners, and they drive on a common trade, whether they lay their heads together about it, yea or no; therefore we are not to have fellowship in sin, in whole or in part, in a greater or in a lesser measure. No; we are to turn from all sin with detestation: Isa. xxx. 22, 'Get ye hence;' Hosea xiv. 8, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' Yea, we must avoid the very 'appearance of evil,' 1 Thes. v. 22; for no sin, or anything like it, will become the children of light. Well, then, this is the principal sense; do not the same things; whosoever hath a hand in the sin will have a share in the punishment.

[2.] If we be accessory to the sins of others, which we may be many ways. I touched upon it, ver. 7; but we must not be so, for every agent is known to God, and cannot escape his discovery and punishment; not the secret contrivers and counsellors, as Jonadab to Amnon, Achitophel to Absalom, Jezebel to Ahab; not the actors and executioners, as the elders of Israel, and by their procurement the sons of Belial employed by Jezebel in the murder of Naboth; not the abettors and assistants, as Joab and Abiathar in Adonijah's treason; for God can search into the deepest secrets, and hath knowledge both of the offenders, and the quality and measure of their offence, and will render to every one accordingly. Therefore for a warning, let us see how we may have any fellowship in these things, which are so hateful to God, and do so ill become our renewed estate.

(1.) If we counsel, persuade, allure, or entice others to sin. These are Satan's decoys, who being ensnared themselves, draw others into the

net. Thus those that provoke others to drunkenness by inviting them to drink more than they would, or the necessities of nature call for, or by healthing engage them to it; besides, that the first occasion of it was a heathen drink-offering, which therefore the christians refused with the danger of their lives, as several have proved: *bibamus pro salute imperatoris*. The casuists condemn it, as it is *provocatio ad aequales calices*. And we read in the book of Esther, chap. i. 8, 'And the drinking was according to law, none did compel;' that is, that none should drink more or oftener than it pleased himself. So when men stir up lust in others by lascivious speeches, or persuade others to transgress, or blow the coal in strife or contention, or allure them to any evil: Prov. i. 10, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.' This was the devil's sin to tempt our first parents, Gen. iii.; and all tempters play the devil's part.

(2.) By commanding that which is evil. This is the sin of those that have power over others; as David commanded Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire from him, that he may be smitten and die, 2 Sam. xi. 15; and Joab obeyed this wicked direction, and so became guilty of innocent blood. So if parents or masters command their children or servants to do anything that is evil.

(3.) By consenting, though we be not the principal actors; as Ahab: 1 Kings xxi. 19, 'Hast thou killed, and taken possession?' Ahab is said to kill, though Jezebel laid the plot, and others executed it; yet Ahab consented, and took the benefit of it. Therefore 'Hast thou killed?'

(4.) By abetting, aiding, and assisting in the conveyance of the sin; as Jonadab assisted Amnon in getting an occasion to satisfy his lust on his sister Tamar, 2 Sam. xiii. 5. If you teach men the way, or contrive how to bring about their sin, you are accessory, and come into a fellowship of the guilt.

(5.) By applauding, approving, or praising the sin, which is the guise of flatterers: Rom. i. 32, 'They not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do it;' when men approve, applaud, and take delight in them that commit enormous practices. Yea, the prophet inveigheth against them 'that put evil for good, and good for evil; and darkness for light, and light for darkness,' Isa. v. 20; and this not so much out of error of mind, as flattery and deceit, which addeth a farther degree of wilfulness and perverseness to the sin. And to this head may be referred those that extenuate and lessen an evil to the hardening of others, that call drunkenness good-fellowship or taking a cheerful cup, gluttony good housekeeping, voluptuousness recreation or necessary refreshing, worldliness good husbandry, and revenge and duelling maintaining their honour; they honest the name of lust with love, or some other plausible term. Thus do we beguile and cheat our own souls and the souls of others by notions that countenance sin, and in effect it is but making traps for souls.

(6.) By carelessness to prevent the sin. Whether it arise out of the mere sloth of the flesh, as many have no great love to their own or others' souls, and merely for their own ease and quiet suffer them to go on in their soul-destroying wickedness; or whether it be for want of hatred of sin, as if it were not so dangerous; or neglect of the duties

of our office, as if you hold your peace and connive at them where God calleth you to speak against them, or neglect your duty as ministers and magistrates: 1 Sam. iii. 13, 'I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' So that a culpable omission may make us accessory to their sin.

2. The other duty is, 'But rather reprove them.' Now reprove we may by deed or word. The former is of chief respect in this place, for he speaketh of infidels, with whom they had not so much familiarity as to reprove them in word; and following their evil example, being the sin condemned, the opposite duty or reproof must be by contrary manners and conversation.

[1.] By deed, or the example of a holy life; as 'Noah condemned the world,' Heb. xi. 7. He might condemn them as a preacher of righteousness by his doctrine, but chiefly by preparing an ark with so much cost and diligence, and to show how necessary it was to use some means for their safety. So are we to condemn the lazy and unbelieving world by our diligence and seriousness in the heavenly life, and by our sobriety and watchfulness to reprove their indulgence to fleshly lusts and unclean practices by our christian walking.

[2.] By word, when it may be done with profit; as the apostle saith of the infidel, when he cometh into christian assemblies, 'he is condemned of all, and judged of all,' 1 Cor. xiv. 24; namely, as he heareth doctrines there contrary to his practice. But in ordinary converse we are to reprove these things also, and convince those that fall into them of the great evil they lie in: Lev. xix. 17, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him;' or, as it is in some translations, 'not bear sin for him.' Here are two arguments—First, You hate your brother, you have not that love to him, if you let his soul perish for want of your admonition. Secondly, You bear sin for him, contract guilt upon yourself, when by your means he might be reclaimed.

II. The reasons of the point.

1. Because there should be a broad and sensible difference between the children of light and the children of darkness. Certainly God's aim was to distinguish and set apart a peculiar people from the riff-raff of mankind, and that not only by his decree and purpose within himself, but by some sensible and manifest difference, that should be visible and conspicuous to the world; and this not only by his own dispensations of favour and respect to the one, and not unto the other: Ps. iv. 3, 'But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself;' but by their carriage and conversation: 1 John iii. 10, 'In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest;' 1 John v. 19, 'But we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' God would have us to show to whom we do belong; and therefore it doth not become the children of God to border too near upon the wicked. If the difference be not sensibly kept up, they dishonour their Father, and so the two seeds are not manifested; but it is a nice and difficult case to distinguish them, and you perplex the cause, and make it doubtful whom we shall reckon to the one or the

other sort. Surely it is a grief to the Holy Spirit that you are so like the devil and his children, and yet profess a nearness to God. Christ hath done his part to difference you from the world, and you will not declare the difference, and make it manifest. You harden the world, and they will think that to distinguish between the seeds is factious singularity, not regular zeal; and hold up their ways with the greater pretence, as justified by you. If you be proud, covetous, envious, voluptuous, backbiting, wanton, where is the difference? When God hath made a difference, you unmake it again, and confound all by walking according to the course of the world; it is a confusion of what God hath separated. God made the difference when none was, by the power of his grace, and you must keep up the difference.

2. This difference is discovered by those actions that are proper to either state; for actions are agreeable to their principle, and in actions must this difference be expressed, or how is it visible? Both show forth the influence of an unseen power, both the children of God and the children of the devil, the children of light and the children of darkness. The powers are unseen, both God and Satan; and the principles are unseen, unless they discover themselves in operations suitable: Rom. viii. 5, 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.' The devil driveth on his instruments furiously to act wickedness, and God would not have us flatter ourselves with an imaginary respect to him, but hath put the trial of our love upon some visible demonstration: 1 John v. 3, 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.' Our Saviour says, John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.' And therefore the children of light must live in a perfect abhorrence of, and keep at a distance from, the works of darkness. Every root beareth proper fruit; we do not expect grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles; but from a good tree we expect good fruit. A good tree cannot bear ill fruit, as a kindly and ordinary production: Mat. vii. 16-18, 'Ye shall know them by their fruit. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' It is there spoken of the fruits of doctrine, but it is true also of the fruits of grace in the hearts of believers; for grace is nothing but Christ's heavenly doctrine imprinted on our hearts and minds, and there it bringeth forth fruit like itself.

3. This distinction is to be kept up on the part of the godly, and so conspicuously held forth, that they may either convince or convert the wicked. God intended that the conversations of his people should be a living instruction; as in many places: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;' that is, holiness must so shine forth that the world may be convinced or converted to God. God is glorified by either, chiefly in their conversion; or if not so, in their conviction: their condemnation is justified, and it maketh the justice of his punishment

more clear and evident: Phil. ii. 15, 16, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.' All God's children are lights. God is the Father of lights; Christ is the great light that came into the world; ministers are lights by office, as they dispense God's word publicly. All christians are lights by their general calling, and they are to hold forth the word of life too; that is, in their profession and practice they must discover the way to life revealed in the gospel. Some will fall in love with it, which is matter of joy to us; others will be reprov'd and convinc'd by it, which is matter of glory to God, not only in their final doom, but as their mouths are stopped, and they cannot easily bespatter religion, when they see the splendour and lovely beauty of it in your conversations. Well, then, if we have such a charge upon us, and it be such a blessed work to bring about the salvation of others, we ought to keep at a great distance from the works of darkness; for if our deeds be like theirs, how do we convert or convince them? Those that do not desire to do good to others are not children of light, and they that blemish their conversations with the pollutions of the world do not behave themselves as children of light. When the sun and moon are eclipsed, and lose their light, it sets the world on wondering; and it is observed of all when godly men miscarry. See another place, 1 Peter ii. 12, 'Having your conversations honest among the gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.'

4. The children of God are fitted and prepared for this, to abstain from sin. If wicked men be afraid or ashamed to do these things in the light of the sun, and they cannot easily overcome the wrestlings of conscience, how can the children of God do these things, who have the light of grace? If conscience give back when we are tempted to foul sins, how much more will the new nature give back with great abhorrence? 1 John iii. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' He cannot bring his heart to it. That may be justly expected from men, which their principles sufficiently prompt them unto. It is true there is such a weakness in God's children that they need to be exhorted, and yet such an aversion from sin that it may be justly expected they should have no fellowship with the works of darkness. There is flesh in us as well as Spirit, and christians may act from either principle; but the Spirit is in predominancy, or else we are not true christians. Therefore it may reasonably be expected that the motions and operations of the flesh should be overruled and suppressed. There is indeed too much advantage for Satan to work upon by our carnality and averseness from God, our nearness to this world, and strangeness to the world to come; but being enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, there is more to check these temptations.

5. The inconveniencies are great that will follow if God's children should have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; our pretended communion with God will be interrupted: 1 John i. 6, 7, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the

light, we have fellowship one with another.' The name of God is dishonoured, 2 Sam. xii. 14; the world is hardened and justified, Ezek. xvi. 52; religion is slandered. The wicked labour to cover this light with clouds of disgrace and detraction: 1 Peter ii. 12, 'That whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God.' They will be glad to find an occasion from your miscarriage. Your own peace is lost: Ps. li. 8-12, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.'

Use. Is to press the two duties in the text.

1. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness;' that is, do not join or partake in the sins of the carnal world, though they seem to be authorised by vulgar and common practice. To this end remember—

[1.] You must not do as others do, but do as God requireth. You must live by rule, not by example. Doth the law of God, by which you must be judged, allow of any sin? They are children of darkness and disobedience that 'walk according to the course of this world,' Eph. ii. 2. The Israel of God are those that walk according to rule: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the whole Israel of God.'

[2.] Love God, and love his law, and love his people, and the infection is prevented. Love God: Ps. cxvii. 10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' Love his law: Ps. cxix. 165, 'Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' Love his people: 1 John ii. 10, 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him;' that is, so far as you love him as a brother, as one that is obedient to God; otherwise the sins of a godly man may be a strong temptation to us. Therefore your love to his people must come from the two former, from a sincere love to God and his law, and then it is a help to you.

[3.] We must eschew all unnecessary and voluntary friendship and familiarity with wicked men: Ps. xxvi. 4, 'I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers;' Prov. xii. 11, 'He that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.' There are two reasons of this caution. First, To prevent infection, lest you be drawn to walk in their ways; he that walketh in the sun is insensibly tanned: Prov. xxii. 24, 25, 'Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.' Agrippa by converse with Caligula the heathen emperor learned his manners; and as Caligula affected divine honour, so did Agrippa, for which God smote him that he died, as Josephus tells us. Therefore we should be as little as we can in scandalous and tempting company; if you presume to touch pitch, you cannot escape defilement. Secondly, The other reason is, that they may not be hardened in an evil course, and kept from being ashamed: 2 Thes. iii. 14, 'And have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.'

[4.] Your happiness lieth in communion with God, and communion with God we cannot have if we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness: 1 John i. 6, 7, 'If we say that we have fellowship

with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' God hath not promised communion to such as walk in darkness, for light and darkness have no communion one with another: 2 Cor. vi. 14, 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?'

2. 'But rather reprove them,' by deed and word.

[1.] By deed, spoken of before; as David convinced Saul: 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 'And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil;' and 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26. You have a spirit and an excellency which they have not, though the seduced world will not easily own it.

[2.] By word. It is a duty the world cannot bear, but we must perform it: Prov. xv. 12, 'A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him; neither will he go unto the wise.' But every scorn and reproach must not deter us. Indeed, when it doth exclude some better benefit, and provoke to persecute, we may forbear: Mat. vii. 6, 'Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again, and rend you;' but do it to your relations.

SERMON XIV.

For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.—EPH. v. 12.

THESE words are rendered as a reason why they should 'have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.' By 'works of darkness' he meaneth sins committed in paganism and their unconverted estate. The heathens did many things which for their filthiness were unworthy of christian ears; and that may be the reason why he himself doth not particularly and expressly mention these sins.

The practices of the unconverted heathen are set forth by a double brand—(1.) They are done of them in secret; (2.) It is a shame to speak of them, there is such a turpitude and filthiness in them.

So that in these words may be observed—(1.) Something concerning the sense and apprehension that men have of sin; (2.) Something concerning secret sins.

For the first I shall observe—

Doct. That all sense of right and wrong, good and evil, is not wholly extinguished in the heart of man; for here the unbelieving gentiles, though they did abominable things, yet they did them in secret, which showeth some relics of natural conscience and shame in them.

1. Naturally we apprehend a difference between virtue and vice, good and evil; for we apprehend the one as culpable and evil, and the other