

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

as honest and commendable. This conceit cometh not from custom and positive law, for then it could not be so universal; but from the nature of the things themselves, or the law of nature written upon our hearts: Rom. ii. 14, 15, 'These having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts.' For what is universally received in all the world hath a foundation in nature. If there be no difference in the things themselves, it is no more to kill a man than to kill a fly, or to rob in the woods than to hunt a hare in the fields, for a man to lie with his father's wife than to make use of lawful marriage, to obey his sense than his reason, or to be ruled by his appetite than by his conscience. But these notions are horrid and uncouth to any that knoweth himself to be a man. Besides, plain experience showeth that we are all possessed with a desire of being, if not really, yet seemingly honest. The most wicked are offended if they be taken for such as they really are; all desire to cloak their wickedness with an appearance of probity and honesty. If this desire were not natural, it could not be so universal. This then plainly showeth we are sensible that honour is due to virtue, and blame to sin and vice; and therefore, though we are very partial in our own cause, yet we are conscious to ourselves that such filthiness as we affect and delight to live in is culpable and punishable in all civil societies; therefore we seek to hide our practices from the world as much as we can.

2. This apprehension is most sensibly betrayed by our affections of shame and fear. *Omne malum aut timore aut pudore perfundit*—Fear and shame followeth upon the doing of evil. We read that Adam and Eve, as soon as they sinned, they were both ashamed, Gen. iii. 7, and afraid, ver. 10. Indeed, you may reduce it to one affection, which is fear, for shame is a sort of fear. Fear, properly so taken, is a fear of torment; and shame is a fear of disgrace. The one respects punishment, and the other reproof.

For plainness' sake we will handle them distinctly.

[1.] For shame, which ariseth from the consciousness of a fault, and is a fear of blame. This showeth that nature hath blasted evil with some marks of her improbation and abhorrence. Certainly if we had no conscience of good and evil, we would as boldly avow our evil as our good; and if there were not some other reason that forbids it, we would rather endeavour to make vice creditable than virtue; for virtue cannot be exercised without difficulty, by reason of the conflicts we have with our sensual appetites and desires, which carry us out strongly to those delights and pleasures which vice yieldeth us. Yet virtue, though it be against corrupt nature, or the inclination of the flesh, hath such a power over our minds and consciences, that they give it this testimony, that sin breedeth shame and bashful inconfidence, which dampeth our mirth and cheerfulness, and goodness and honesty giveth serenity and peace, for 'the righteous is as bold as a lion.' The hypocrisy of the world attests the excellency of chastity, sobriety, and honesty; for how unclean, intemperate, and fraudulent soever men be, they are ashamed to be seen in their own colours; and so the wicked condemn themselves in those things which they allow and practise. Though the relics of natural conscience be not sufficient effectually to restrain men from evil, yet they make them ashamed of it; and though

they be not of such force as to rule our affections, yet this force and power they have upon our minds, that the vicious person is condemned in himself, and exposed to the contempt of others, if he cannot hide and conceal his disorders.

[2.] For fear. The apostle telleth us, Rom. i. 32, that men know *δικαίωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'the judgment of God,' and that 'they that do such things are worthy of death.' Men are sensible of good and evil, and the punishment God will execute upon evil. Experience showeth the terrors which all men feel when they have committed some wickedness. There is something within that frightens us more with apprehension of vengeance than the penalties constituted by human laws; for even mighty men and great potentates in the world have felt these terrors; as Caligula and others, who could easily promise themselves exemption from man's punishment, and need not fear the severity of human laws. And where sins were committed in secret, yet they were in great fear: Ps. xiv. 5; Ps. liii. 5, 'They were in great fear where no fear was;' that is, no outward cause of fear. The apostle telleth us we are subject to this fear all our lives, Heb. ii. 14; but we feel it most at death, when most serious: 1 Cor. xv. 56, 'The sting of death is sin.' Nature is not fond of these fears, but seeketh to repel them; for no man findeth any pleasure in being tormented by them. Yet they stick close by us, as a natural sentiment of the evil that is in sin. Men may dissemble them, but they cannot totally suppress them; they may divert them with vain pleasures, with business or company, for a while, but they return with more importunity and violence.

3. This apprehension produceth different effects in the godly and wicked. We have an instance in the text. In the unconverted it produceth hypocrisy, in the converted shyness and abhorrence of sin. In the unconverted pagan Ephesians it produced hypocrisy; they did seek to hide what they would not avoid. Though the things were abominable, and had the marks of nature's dislike and improbation upon them, yet they committed them in secret; as many a man's heart reproacheth him, yet he goeth on still in his sins, and if he may commit them secretly, without being seen by others, they think themselves safe and secure, and for the present out of gunshot. But here is another sort of men intimated in the text; the apostle, and those like-minded with himself, all children of light, that abhor these deeds of darkness, are ashamed to mention what others are not ashamed to practise. Unbelievers have but a spark of conscience left, they know their practices are abominable, but they do them in secret. These are so far from committing these things, that they count it a shame to speak of them, or to hear them spoken of by others, it cannot be done without blushing. Children of light 'must avoid all appearance of evil,' 1 Thes. v. 22, and therefore will not mention these sins, though with a holy and honest purpose, to show their greater detestation, and lest they should awaken a gust in themselves and others, and revive some lusts. Certainly christians should show a modesty in their speech, and filthy things are better suppressed than mentioned. They that delight to speak filthily will do filthily. Briefly, the sense of the turpitude or evil of sin is in unbelievers but weak; it cannot restrain the practice, only it removeth it out of the sight of men; but in believers strong; it

doth not only restrain the practice, but even bridled their speech concerning other men's sins.

Use 1. To show us the evil of sin. Two things in the text discover that—

1. It is a deed of darkness. It is done in secret, it dareth not appear in the light; the very heathen confined it to privacy, and their closest recesses. The apostle telleth us, 'They that are drunken are drunken in the night,' 1 Thes. v. 7. They chose darkness and secrecy to cover their enormities. And our Lord telleth us, John iii. 10, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light.' It is meant of the light of knowledge; but withal the light of sense is the ground of the metaphor. See Job xxiv. 14, 15, 'The murderer, rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me.' Some principles of common honesty God hath left in corrupt nature, to restrain our headstrong inclination to evil, but it showeth also the nature of sin.

2. The other brand in the text is, it is shameful to speak of it, much more shameful to act it. If the mention of sin be so shameful a thing that it will scarce suit with the modesty of christian ears, what is it to wallow in this filthiness?

Use 2. It showeth how impudent and desperate in sin they are, and how much they have outgrown the heart of a man, and lost all feelings of conscience, that 'declare their sins as Sodom, and hide them not,' Isa. iii. 9; that have gotten a brazen forehead, and are impudent in sinning; as Absalom, that lay with his father's concubines on the top of the house, in the face of all Israel, 2 Sam. xvi. 22. That sin, for the matter, being incest, was very filthy, but not so great as for the impudence of the manner. The modesty of sinning gentiles shall rise in judgment, and condemn this shameless generation of christian sinners, who blush not to do deeds of darkness in the sight of the sun. The Lord complaineth, Zeph. iii. 5, 'They knew no shame;' and again, Jer. viii. 12, 'Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? They were not ashamed, neither could they blush.' These commit those sins openly which common honesty and the instinct of natural bashfulness would seek to cover. Men grow not to this impudence at first, but by several degrees they lose the apprehension of the evil of sin.

1. Satan suggesteth to us some sin, to which he findeth us by nature prone, and which he seeketh plausibly to insinuate as profitable and pleasant: James i. 14, 'Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;' 2 Peter ii. 20, 'If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning;' being entangled, are overcome.

2. This suggestion, if it be not presently resisted, breedeth in our minds a certain delectation. It is sweet in his mouth, and he hideth it under his tongue.

3. Delight moveth the lust or concupiscence, and draweth out and engageth our consent: Josh. vii. 21, 'When I saw among the spoils a

goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, then I coveted them, and took them.' The lust is stirred.

4. This impelleth and urgeth the will to action : James i. 15, 'And lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin.'

5. The act being finished, unless the sinner be corrected by God, or awakened by his Spirit, breedeth security : 'Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death,' James i. 15. If the sinner be corrected by God's providence, or convinced of it by his Spirit, the man is in a fair way of being recovered ; but if not, the reverence of God is lessened, men think there is no danger : Ps. x. 11, 'He said in his heart, God hath forgotten ; he hideth his face, he will never see it.' So ver. 13, 'The wicked contemn God ; he hath said in his heart, God will not require it.'

6. Security inviteth us to continue in the sin, as also to make no conscience of other sins : Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst ; the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.' A perverse will giveth way to lustings, and lustings make way for a custom, and a custom brings on a necessity.

7. This continuance and living in sin taketh away the sight and odiousness of it, and produceth hardness of heart and blindness of mind : Heb. iii. 13, 'Lest the heart be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.'

8. This induration and excecation, this blindness and hardness of heart, is at first partial, concerning this or that sin ; but at length general, concerning all sin ; and this begetteth that horrid impudence that men are past all shame. When by the terrible judgment of God they are let alone after their first transgression, they repeat their sins, and still the delusions of the flesh increase upon them. Therefore it is good to stop betimes, lest with swine we begin to take pleasure to wallow in this mire and filth.

Doct. 2. That it is the folly and madness of sinners, that know the filthiness of sin, to commit it secretly, and think themselves secure if they may escape the eye of man.

I shall prove it—

First, From the evil of secret sins ; although to be a bold and open sinner is in some respects more heinous than to be a secret and private sinner, because of the dishonour to God, the scandal of others, and impudence in the sinner himself. Dishonour to God : 2 Sam. xii. 14, 'Thou hast given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.' The scandal of others. When a fire is kindled by our negligence, if it be kept at home and within doors, the loss is only our own ; but if the sparks fly abroad, and consume the dwellings of others, our private fault becometh a public loss and detriment. So Mat. xviii. 7, 'Woe unto the world because of offences.' So the impudence of the sinner himself : Jer. iii. 3, 'Thou hast a whore's forehead ; thou refuseth to be ashamed.' A common strumpet, that hath wholly forfeited her credit, is ashamed of nothing.

Yet in other respects secret sins have the aggravations which other sins have not.

1. Because they are more against knowledge and conviction. Men are conscious to themselves that they do evil, and therefore seek a veil and covering. They would sin, but they would not have the world know of it. Now to sin with a consciousness that we do sin is a dreadful evil; for that is a sin that hath presumption in it, and presumption leaves no small guilt: Ps. xix. 13, 'Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.' Every sin, the more we understand the law, and know our duty, the more it hath of a culpable transgression; for this is knowingly and seeingly to run against God. Those that live in secret wickedness, envy, pride, sensuality, and would fain keep it close, they smother checks of conscience, and plainly rebel against the light, and so are self-condemned in those practices which they secretly allow and commit.

2. This secret sinning, and with security, hath atheism annexed to it. Atheism is either a denial of God or a contempt of God.

[1.] A denial of God, which directly, deliberately, and formally cannot be done by any reasonable creature; but by denying his providence, we do in effect deny his being. This kind of atheism striketh at the root of all piety and obedience: Ps. lxxiii. 11, 'How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?' Ps. xciv. 7, 'They say, The Lord shall not see, nor doth the God of Jacob regard it;' Job xxii. 13, 'And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?' Those that live in secret sin, they do in effect deny that God doth exercise a providence and government in the world, that he doth not mind the affairs of men, or regard what is done by them; for all their care is to hide themselves from men, which is in effect to deny that God is God. Their security and hypocrisy speaketh it: Zeph. i. 12, 'I will punish the men that are settled on their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' Men do not believe a particular inspection, because they cannot conceive how it should be, considering the distance between him and us.

[2.] A contempt of God. If they do not deny his being and providence, yet they slight his judgment; for this doing evil in secret puts far more respect upon men than upon God, whilst through the prevalency of palliated atheism they only fear men, seek to hide their sins from men, but little reckon of the all-seeing eye of God, are careless of that: Jer. ii. 26, 'The thief is ashamed when he is found;' that is, surprised by man in his theft. Now you are atheistical hypocrites when you look so much to men and so little to God. If man be once feared more than God, you will not care how much you displease God, so you do not offend man; and so you are stabbing your obedience to the very heart. But how preposterous is this! Can man damn thee? Can man fill thy conscience with terrors? Can man bid thee to depart into everlasting burnings? Why then art thou afraid of man, and not of God? Thou canst be envious in secret, declaim against God's children in secret, neglect duties in secret, be sensual in secret. O wicked wretch! art thou afraid man should know it, and not afraid God should know it? What! afraid of the

eye of man, and not afraid of the great God? Thou wouldst not have a child see thee to do what God seeth thee do. This is a plain setting man above God. They seek no more than to be hid from the sight of the world.

3. The more secret any wickedness is, the more studious and premeditated; the more of deliberation there is in a sin, the greater is the sin. As David plotted first to bring about and then to hide his uncleanness from the world, 2 Sam. xi. 8; he sendeth for Uriah from the army, maketh him drunk, plotteth his murder. These sins are committed with craft and subtlety. So Job xxiv. 15, 'The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, and saith, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth his face.' They commit sin with resolution and forethought, and are plotting how to go about it without discovery, and so are industrious to espy their advantages. So Josh. vii. 11, 'They have stolen, and dissembled also, and even put it among their own stuff;' Acts v. 9, 'How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of God?' In secret sins there is much premeditation, craft, and dissimulation used.

4. Many times it involveth us the more in sin; and so by seeking to cover one sin, we run into many. As Adam, to hide his sin, casts an imputation upon God obliquely: Gen. iii. 12, 'The woman which thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree.' When Sarah had secretly laughed at God's promise of giving a child, she presently covereth it with a gross lie, Gen. xviii. 15. When David had committed adultery with Uriah's wife, he laboureth to cloak it over with a fouler sin, the contriving of her husband's death. Any sin committed weakens the heart, and leaveth it the more unable to withstand a second assault; as a castle is more easily taken when a breach is once made. And sins are usually fastened one to another, like the links of a chain, so that one draweth on all the rest; and God is provoked to withdraw his restraining grace, and permit men to fill up the measure of their iniquities. It is a fearful thing when sin hath got a tie upon a man, as it hath when we have secretly done some evil from which we cannot acquit ourselves but with some loss or shame; then we usually heap up sin upon sin to preserve our credit. There is no remedy; they are got into the devil's snare, and one sin must help them out of the other. Eudosia, wife to Theodosius junior, having received of the emperor her husband an apple of incredible bigness and beauty, gave it to one Paulinus a learned man, whom she esteemed for his parts. He not knowing from whom the empress had it, presents it as rare and extraordinary to the emperor, who sending for his wife, asketh her what was become of the apple; she, fearing her husband's displeasure, answered she had eaten it; afterward she sweareth it, and confirmeth it with oaths and imprecations. Upon this the jealous husband killeth Paulinus, and hateth his faithful wife. If she had told the truth at first, she had not fallen into the sin of perjury; but giving way to a little, she is drawn into a greater sin; her innocent friend loseth his life, she her husband's favour ever afterward.

5. Secret sins indulged often bring great mischiefs and inconveniences upon the actors of them. I shall instance only in those two mentioned in Job, chap. xxiv. 14, 15. The murderer and the adulterer.

[1.] For murder secretly plotted, it afterward cometh to light strangely. For the psalmist telleth us, 'God maketh inquisition for blood,' Ps. ix. 12. It is never carried so secretly but it cometh to light, and involveth the actors in a thousand miseries. Murders lie not long unrevenged, especially the slaughters of God's servants. But instances are so frequent, I should never make an end if I should mention them. God will hear the cry of blood. Cain gets Abel secretly into the field, and killeth him; but God saith, 'Thy brother's blood crieth to me,' Gen. iv. 10.

[2.] For adultery. Unlawful lusts usually end very tragically, as we may see in the examples of the first world, Sodom, Sichein, Israel with the Moabitish women in the desert, the war between Israel and Benjamin for violating the Levite's concubine; Samson; David, the sword departed not from his house; not to mention common stories. Whoredom is not a light sin, as carnal men take it to be; sad judgments attend it, be it committed never so secretly. This is the first argument.

Secondly, It is folly and madness, because God loveth to discover it. Our Lord telleth us, Luke xii. 2, that 'there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hid that shall not be known,' either here or hereafter.

1. Here God discovereth secret sins, and bringeth them to light, as he found out Achan in his sacrilege. So we are bidden to remember Lot's wife, Luke xvii. 32. Her sin was a sin committed by stealth; she would steal a glance, and look back to Sodom: Gen. xix. 26, 'She looked back from behind him, and she was turned into a pillar of salt.' Therefore let no man sin secretly. God can find us out in our secret sins. As we should make conscience of not sinning openly, so of not sinning by stealth, though the sin be acted in never so hidden and close a manner. So Num. xxxii. 23, 'Be sure that your sin will find you out.' If they hide it from the eye of the world, they think they shall never hear of their sin more: Isa. xxix. 15, 'They say, Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?' God seeth and knoweth all our secret counsels and designs; and in time they are discovered, to our shame and confusion. Gehazi was found out: 2 Kings v. 26, 'Went not my spirit with thee?' meaning his prophetic spirit. Ananias and Sapphira were found out by the spirit of discovery that was in the apostles, Acts v. God delighteth to discover impenitent and false-dealing hypocrites, that carry their wickedness secretly: Prov. xxvi. 26, 'Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be discovered before the congregation.' The Lord loveth to take off their disguise.

2. At the great day of account, and last judgment: Ps. l. 21, 'I will set thy sins in order before thee;' and 1 Cor. iv. 5, 'He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart;' that is, every man's intentions and purposes. Then all will be laid open before men and angels.

Use 1. It teacheth us to make conscience of secret sins, whether they be sins of omission or sins of commission, or of a mixed nature, when a thing is done which for the matter is good, but a defect in the manner or end.

1. Sins of omission. Such was that Num. xxxii. 23, a shrinking

from their duty, or not taking lot and share with the rest of God's people. Many please themselves with the presumption of a good state before God if they do no hurt, and break not out into outrageous wickedness. Oh, but yet your condition may be dangerous if you live in the omission of any necessary known duty. You are not troubled about it for the present, yet in time it will make sad work in your souls: James iv. 17, 'To him that knows to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' Men have, it may be, long lived in a course of neglecting communion with God, and conscience hath been silent, but then it rageth. Mat. vi. 6, your Father seeth what you do, or not do, in secret, and accordingly will reward or punish you.

2. Sins of commission. Let us 'renounce the hidden things of dishonesty,' 2 Cor. iv. 2. Let no man think all is well because what he doth is concealed from men; or allow himself in any secret known sin. No; when you have the advantage of secrecy, you should keep up a constant reverence of God and his all-seeing eye: Gen. xxxix. 9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Many times secrecy and solitariness are most obnoxious to the foulest temptations; but God is there, and that should be enough to us. The young man in the Proverbs was enticed, because it was in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, Prov. vii. 9, 10. Therefore such occasions should be avoided; or if we be cast upon them, let us be the more careful and watchful.

3. Of a mixed nature, when there is not an omission of the duty, but of the sincerity. This may be seen in prayer: Rom. viii. 27, 'He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit.' In covenanting with God: Deut. v. 29, 'Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me!' In our whole obedience: Prov. xvi. 2, 'All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits;' Phil. ii. 12, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' We should consider with what heart we come into God's presence.

Use 2. Exhortation, to press you to three duties—

1. Take more care to get your sins pardoned than hidden: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'He that hideth his sin shall not prosper; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy.' We seek to hide our sins from the world, from ourselves, and from God.

2. Study more to approve yourselves to God than to be concealed from men. Godly simplicity and sincerity will be our comfort: 2 Cor. i. 12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world;' Rom. ii. 29, 'He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

3. Humble yourselves, not only for open, but secret sins: Ps. xix. 12, 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults.' Hezekiah 'humbled himself for the pride of his heart,' 2 Chron. xxxii. 26; David for unworthy thoughts of providence. Secret filthiness is odious to God.

Helps. 1. A due sense of God's attributes; as—

[1.] His omniscience: Ps. cxxxix. 2, 'He knoweth our thoughts afar off.' The perfection of his nature showeth it. If he did not know all

things, he were not God; something would be done in the world exempted from his providence. But it is not so: 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'The Lord searcheth all hearts.'

[2.] His omnipresence. God is in all things, and through all things, and above all things: Eph. iv. 6, 'Who is above all, and through all, and in you all;' Acts xvii. 28, 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.'

[3.] He is our judge. How shall God judge what he knoweth not?

2. The various ways he hath to discover secret sins.

[1.] The ministry of angels: Ecces. v. 6, 'Neither say thou before the angel, It was an error;' 1 Tim. v. 21, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things;' 1 Cor. xi. 10, 'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head, because of the angels.'

[2.] Sharp afflictions: Gen. xlii. 21, 'And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother;' 1 Kings viii. 47, 'If they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned.'

[3.] Breaking out of sin: Ps. xxxvi. 2, 'Till his iniquity be found hateful;' 2 Tim. iii. 9, 'Their folly shall be manifest unto all men.'

[4.] Sometimes terrors of conscience: Mat. xxvii. 4, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood.' We vomit up our own shame.

SERMON XV.

But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.—Eph. v. 13.

In this verse the apostle opposeth the light of christianity to those deeds of darkness which were committed among the heathen. *Ἀντικείμενα παραλληλούμενα μάλιστα φαίνονται*—Opposites do illustrate one another. How secretly soever the things were done by them, yet the light that shineth from the word of God and the lives of christians doth condemn them, and dart conviction into the consciences of them that commit them, and also discover to others that God's people are in a better way. Christianity discovereth heathen practices not only to be mean and low, but filthy and base; as light is the direct means to discover what the darkness hath hid: 'But all things that are reprov'd,' &c.

In the text we have—

1. An assertion, 'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.'

2. The proof of it, 'For whatsoever doth make manifest is light.'

1. An assertion or proposition, where two things are to be considered—

[1.] Something supposed; that the doctrine of christianity is the