

SELF-VINDICATION.

One evidence of estrangement from God and right is the tendency to self-vindication. When God interrogated Adam as to what he had done, after he had eaten the forbidden fruit, Adam said, "The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Thus the man was degraded by his sin. He did not at once acknowledge his sin, but sought to extenuate his guilt by saying that it was at the woman's instigation that he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. The woman, in her turn, blamed the serpent for beguiling her. Seeing that there is this tendency in the sinner to vindicate and clear himself if he can, and to palliate his guilt if he cannot, he is unwilling to acknowledge himself a sinner. The sick need a physician. But sinners are unwilling to admit that they are morally diseased and in danger of hell. Hence God says that the sinner must confess his sins. It is when the sinner looks the fact of his sinfulness in the face, and acknowledges himself a sinner, that he sees his utter helplessness, and the glorious remedy for his moral diseases, which God has graciously provided in the gospel. Sinner, when you are unwilling to admit your sinfulness you are resisting the Holy Spirit and injuring your soul. *As a sinner, look to Jesus as God's gift of love to you, and be drawn to God and away from sin, by the cords of love.*

It is because of this tendency to self-vindication that the Christian who has erred is unwilling to confess his fault. Even when he cannot vindicate his position he will not admit that he has done wrong. He will probably deceive himself by ignoring the point at issue, and by fastening on something which he fancies wrong in the manner in which he was dealt with because of his fault. If, O Christian, your fellow-believers have not manifested a truly Christian spirit in dealing with you for the wrong you have done to the cause of Jesus, this does not exculpate you. However you may have been treated (and you yourself, to some extent, may have provoked that treatment by your unreasonableness and obstinacy), it is your duty to confess your fault to God and to your brethren. However others may have acted, this is your duty. Perhaps you will say, I will confess my fault if my brethren, who have dealt wrongfully towards me, will confess theirs. Here again you are wrong. It is your duty to confess your fault whatever others do. Your being willing to do your duty when others do theirs will not satisfy God. And bear in mind that you never act more nobly than when you confess the evil you have committed.