

painted hypocrite, going about to establish my own righteousness."

Like his own Pilgrim, he had the burden on his back of his conscious unworthiness. How was he to be rid of it?

"One day, in a street in Bedford, as he was at work in his calling, he fell in with three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God." He was himself at that time "a brisk talker" about the matters of religion, and he joined these women. Their expressions were wholly unintelligible to him. "They were speaking of the wretchedness of their own hearts, of their unbelief, of their miserable state. They did condemn, slight, and abhor their own righteousness as filthy and insufficient to do them any good. They spoke of a new birth and of the work of God in their hearts, which comforted and strengthened them against the temptations of the devil."

The language of the poor women has lost its old meaning. They themselves, if they were alive, would not use it any longer. The conventional phrases of Evangelical Christianity ring untrue in a modern ear like a cracked bell. We have grown so accustomed to them as a cant, that we can hardly believe that they ever stood for sincere convictions. Yet these forms were once alive with the profoundest of all moral truths—a truth not of a narrow theology, but which lies at the very bottom of the well, at the fountain-head of human morality; namely, that a man who would work out his salvation must cast out self, though he rend his heart-strings in doing it; not love of self-indulgence only, but self-applause, self-confidence, self-conceit and vanity, desire or expectation of reward; self in all the subtle ingenuities with which it winds about the soul. In one dialect or another, he must recognize that