

It May Not Be.

It may not be our lot to wield
The sickle in the ripened field;
Not ours to hear, on summer eve,
The reaper's song among the sheaves.

Yet, where our duty's task is wrought
In union with God's great thought,
The near and future blend in one,
And whatsoever is willed, is done.

And ours the grateful service, whence
Come, day by day, the recompense;
The hope, the trust, the purpose stayed,
The fountain and the noon-day shade.

And were this life the utmost span,
The only end and aim of man,
Better the toil of fields like these
Than waking dreams and slothful ease.

But life, though falling like our grain,
Like that, revives and springs again;
And early called, how blest are they
Who wait in Heaven their harvest day!
—J. G. Whittier.

When Half of Life is Gone.

It comes to you suddenly one day,
In the mid-t of your planning, the
thought that half of your lifetime
is gone. It startles you. What a little
while it seems since that other time
when you were planning and dreaming
of the future! How long a lifetime
seemed then! How many things you
meant to do, how much you would
accomplish for yourself and others, in
the golden years lying between now
and the halfway place! Where have
the years gone to, and where are the
dreams that then you dreamed? Alas,
how few of them ever came true!

Then come thoughts of neglected
opportunities. If you had only been
a little wiser here, a little more far-
seeing there, some of the ships might
have come home treasure-laden, that
long ago went down on the rocks. If
you had only realized in those years
how rapidly they were going, how
much an hour, a moment counts up in
the long run of a lifetime, you would
have seen to it that none were wasted,
but each one would have yielded to
you some useful lesson, some elevating
thought, and so brought you nearer
day by day to the ideal of manhood
which was before you. Then the
needy you might have helped, the
heavy-hearted you might have cheered;
they pass in long procession before
you, and you seem to hear the sorrow-
ful words, "Inasmuch as ye did it not
unto the least of these, ye did it not
unto Me."

With the thought of vanished oppor-
tunities comes also the thought of
vanished friends. Ah! how many
starred with you then who have drift-
ed out of sight on the way, the busy,
noisy world coming between; and how
many more have slipped out of the
pushing, struggling, eager throng,
closed their eyes to its temptations
and their ears to its allurements and
with folded hands and peaceful brows
await for us to join them. If you
could only go back and walk the way
with them again, you would love them
better, you would hold them closer;
but alas for the remorselessness of
time! How much he takes, how little
he ever gives back! But that is not
all; there are brighter places.

There has been some work, bravely
and faithfully done, not always as
wisely, as perseveringly as might be,
but something which has helped an-
other in need; something which has
furthered you one step in the way you
intended to go. Not all the time has
been wasted, and here and there you
feel that you have approached a little
toward your ideal, even if it is still
very far off. Then there are sweet
and blessed recollections of times when
the heart swung open freely to the
ones you loved, when they entered in
and read for themselves all the trust
and deep devotion of your soul; and
though you were sometimes cold and
indifferent, sometimes careless and
unresponsive, they had been admitted
to this holy of holies, and knew what
was behind the veil. There are also
many memories of help which has
come along the dark places, of the
Everlasting Arms which have borne
you up in your weakness, and the
great Rock which has sheltered you
in the midst of storms.

No; after all, it is not regret and
remorse alone which come to you at
this sudden halt at the halfway place.
There is a subdued and tender gladness
"that is akin to pain" in this review
of the way you have just passed over.

Then you turn your back upon it
and face about to the future.
A little slower, a little more deliber-
ately you take up those plans again.
The years which are left you to work
are not so many by half as you had
then, but you are not discouraged.
You know now what an hour is worth.
You will waste no time in fruitless
experimenting, but be able "to act
tomorrow what you learn today." You
have worked enough.

"to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft,
Tricks of the tools' true play."

With a strong arm, a clear eye, and
a steadfast heart, much is possible in
the years that yet remain. And the
friends who still walk with you, you
will go out from this place and take
their hands in a tenderer, stronger
clasp; you will look into their faces
with a warmer interest, a deeper
affection written upon your own; you
will open the doors of your heart to
them oftener, and the holy communion
will be sweeter and more soul satisfy-
ing than anything you have ever
known.

The weak and halting, the hungry
and faint, who pass your way will find
a readier hand to help, since you have
remembered how short the time in
which to win the sweet commendation,
"Well done, good and faithful servant."
And so you may yet be able to say
with the poet:

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was
made:
Our times are in His hand,
Who saith: 'A whole I planned;
Youth shows but half, trust God, see
all, nor be afraid.'"
—Chris. Advocate.

Your Own Salvation.

Paul wrote to the Philippians,
"Work out your own salvation."
(Phil. ii. 12.) When they read that
perhaps some of them were tempted
to ask, What does he mean? If we
have salvation or if it is God's free
gift, why not rejoice in and enjoy it?
We can't improve it by working at it.
The exhortation seems paradoxical.
And the apparent paradox is not re-
lieved, but increased when the apostle
adds that we are to work "with fear
and trembling," because God works in
us, "both to will and to do."

These two verses (12 and 13) bring
before us a most important and practi-
cal lesson in regard to the nature of
the salvation which God has provided
and reveals. It is a divine work, it is
a finished work, and yet it signifies
our co-operation and is dependent on
our fidelity. We are to "work out"
because "God worketh in." And we
are to fear and tremble while we work,
because both the willing and the doing
are of God.

Dr. A. McLaren says: "What God
hath joined together let no man put
asunder. Here are joined together in
the compass of one practical exhorta-
tion, faith in a finished salvation and
yet work; God working all in me, and
yet I able and bound to work likewise;
God upholding and sustaining his child
to the very end, perfecting that which
concerns him, making his salvation
certain and sure, and yet the Christian
working with fear and trembling, lest
he should come short of the grace of
God."

Mr. David Brown says: "Because
it is God which worketh in us, both to
will and to do, we are to work out our
own salvation. The instinct of every
renewed soul realizes this fact, and his
every prayer expresses in one breath
both the divine source and the abso-
lutely voluntary character of all his
Christian conditions and activity.
How the two interact and blend into
one is a beautiful subject of thought,
but not to be fully apprehended here,
and possibly never."

"Our own salvation"—our own not
only because it is the salvation of our-
selves, but because we own and con-
trol it as we do nothing else. We
speak of our own homes, but they may
burn down to-morrow; of our own
children, but to-night God may take
them away and leave us childless. We
call life our own, but the Bible says
that it is a vapor, which appeareth for
a time and then passeth away. All
these claims of ownership are delusive.
But, if we believe in Christ, we have
his promise that we shall be saved.
We are as certain then of this one
possession as we are of the being of
God and of the truth of the gospel.
And because of this certainty we ought
to work—to "work out" that is
patiently and persistently. The Greek
word here has as its root the idea of
energy, of doing something thor-oughly,
systematically, promptly and with all
our might.

John McNeill says: "You have it,
therefore work it out. Here is a load
of bricks, a load of timber and some
slates. That is no: a house. No, but
there is the making of one, and you
can make the house out of it. The
Lord not only lays all the material
down at our doors, but he furnishes
the plan and the specifications, and
then says, Work them out."

Yes. God does for us all that we
can not do ourselves and then helps
us in our own part of the work, and
this is not that a house may be built
for him, but for ourselves. It is our own
salvation.

When we get to heaven we will not
feel then like paupers in a poor-house,
but like freemen in their own homes.
Though we will adore and praise God
for the riches of his grace, we will be
able to say I wanted to be here; I did

what I could to make my calling and
election sure. God invited, attracted
and aided, but he did not coerce and
compel me. He said, "Be thou faith-
ful unto death and I will give thee a
crown of life." I did try to be faithful;
I met the conditions and thus I won
the crown—my crown.—Herald and
Presbyter.

The Still Hour.

Martin Luther once said that he had
so much to do that he could not afford
to spend less than three hours alone
with God. Do you understand the
significance of such a statement? Ponder
it well if you do.

There are thousands of busy, rush-
ing Christians who complain that they
are so occupied in the struggle for a
livelihood that they have "no time"
for regular morning devotions, and
"no time" for many of the services of
the church. They have no time to be
alone with God. They know nothing
of the uplifting helpfulness of the
"still hour alone with God."

And yet those who daily find time
to be alone with God will assure you
that it is the sweetest and best part of
their day. The young Christian should
make it the fixed rule of his or her
life to find time for a still hour in
which to be alone with God every day
of the year.

Let this hour, if possible, be early
in the day, that the certain strength
and helpfulness to be derived from
this communion with God may carry
you through the trials and duties of
the day.

Then, too, one's concentrative
powers are stronger early in the day.
It will be easier to fix your thoughts
upon the theme you choose when both
mind and body are refreshed and alert.
It is not easy at all times to concen-
trate one's thoughts on holy subjects.
The human mind is a wandering,
vacant thing at best, and difficult to
keep in subjection. The power of the
world is mighty over it, and it is easier
to think of things earthly than of
things divine. But if you will to do it,
you can fix your thoughts upon God
for a little time every day of your
lives. You can have your "still hour,"
you can and will be alone with God
for at least a few minutes every day.

No one rises to the loftiest heights
of spiritual exaltation without this
"still hour." No great blessings or
victories come to those who are never
alone with God.

Meditate upon God, that your actual
work for Him may be under His
guidance. It is only through medita-
tion upon Him that God seems real
and actual to us. When Samuel
Rutherford, that staunch old Scottish
Christian, was in jail for preaching
what he felt to be the true faith, he
said that he thought of Jesus until
every stone in his prison cell shone
like a ruby! He knew what it is to
be alone with God.

And we may have, if we will, this
same keen, sweet realization of God's
actual presence in the "still hours" of
our lives. He will come so near to us
that our hearts will thrill with joy.
We shall have an uplifting conscious-
ness of His presence that will make us
strong and radiantly happy in Him.
But this joy will never come to those
who have no "still hour" in their lives.
—The Christian Endeavor World.

The Bible a Personal Message from God.

This too often is overlooked. But
it is true. God caused the Bible to be
written and put together for each one
of us, as truly as if no other human
being had been expected to live and
receive the benefit of it. It is His
communication to us not only as mem-
bers of society, or of churches, but as
individuals. It is the utterance of His
heart and His mind to ours. It is a
divine message, a sacred letter, to each
of us personally.

Realize this, and the Bible will have
a new meaning for you. It will seem
no longer like the proclamation of a
remote authority, which you are bidden
to heed and warned that you can
neglect only at your peril. It will
throb with individuality, affection,
pertinence, and power as you read its
pages. Its adaptation to your private,
perhaps undeclared, perhaps even
half-unconscious, needs will astonish
and delight you. Realize that your
heavenly Father is addressing you
directly in it, and His words take a
new tone. His truth assumes a more
vivid significance.

Strange to say, this adaptation to
the individual becomes ever more im-
pressive. It is not a passing fact. Oth-
ers may claim to experience it, and
you do not doubt them. Yet you feel
that in a real, solemn, precious sense
the Bible is your book, your message
from God, your inspiration and help.
The intimate, personal quality, the
sense of being understood and appre-
ciated, of having the nooks and corners
of the inmost and most diligently

guarded life illumined by a knowledge
and love which are neither intrusive
nor startling, but soothing and uplift-
ing—this, which is the fruit of the
reverent, sympathetic, prayerful study
of the Bible, is a wonderful comfort
and an even more wonderful inspiration
to righteous living.—The Congregation-
alist.

The Discipline of Difficulties.

The man who is frightened away
from any pursuit in life by the difficul-
ties which present themselves will
never acquire sinew and strength of
character. Difficulties call into play
and develop that which is strongest
and best in our nature. They give
 zest to life's pursuits. The hunter
who is about to start on the chase
would not thank you to lay down the
game at his feet. It is the chase, with
its uncertainty, and difficulty, and ex-
citement, which even more than the
capture quickens his pulses and thrills
his frame. It is so in the higher walks
of life. The life of the student, the
explorer, the inventor, would be a
tame and nerveless thing if there were
no hindrances to be surmounted and
no difficulties to be overcome. Our
mental faculties are quickened and
strengthened by wrestling with intel-
lectual difficulties; conscience becomes
more keen and discriminating as it
deals with perplexing moral problems;
the will is roused to strenuous energy,
both of resistance and of achievement,
by encounter with opposing forces;
the whole nature is roused to utmost
endeavor by the stimulus of difficulty,
and acquires a higher development
than would otherwise be possible.

There is no other way in which we can
become spiritual athletes. The glory
with which God would crown our man-
hood is that which springs from our
deliberate choice of goodness and our
quest of it, not because it seemed easy
of attainment and offered pleasure,
but because it was good and seemed
worthy of any struggle to secure it.
For this God endowed us with freedom,
and suffers us to be tempted. In the
struggle to attain we may fall far short
of our endeavor, but the effort will
bring us to a higher plane of life and
strengthen our nature in its highest
faculties.—Baptist Union.

Lonely Laborers.

Many Christians have to endure the
solitude of unnoticed labor. They are
serving God in a way which is exceed-
ingly useful, but not at all noticeable.
How very sweet to many workers are
those little corners of the newspapers
and magazines which describe their
labors and success, yet some who are
doing what God will think a great
deal more of at the last, never saw
their names in print. Yonder beloved
brother is plodding away in a country
village; nobody knows anything about
him, but he is bringing souls to God.
Unknown to fame, the angels are ac-
quainted with him, and a few precious
ones whom he has led to Jesus know
him well.

Perhaps yonder sister has a class in
the Sunday school; nothing striking in
her or in her class; nobody thinks of
her as a remarkable worker; she is a
flower that blooms almost unseen, but
she is none the less fragrant.

There is a Bible woman; she is men-
tioned in the report as making so
many visits a week, but nobody dis-
covers all she is doing for the poor and
needy, and how many are saved in the
Lord through her instrumentality.
Hundreds of God's dear servants are
serving Him without the encourage-
ment of man's approving eye, yet they
are not alone; the Father is with them.

Never mind where you work; never mind
how about how you work; never mind
who sees, if God approves. If he
smiles, be content. We can not
always be sure when we are most use-
ful. It is not the acreage you sow, it
is the multiplication which God gives
the seed which makes up the harvest.
—Evangelical Messenger.

Always Yours.

A well-meaning but rather depress-
ing old lady had been watching her
niece, as she went about her house-
hold duties, singing softly to herself.
The girl's fair face was luminous with
happiness; it shone from every glance
of her eye and sounded in the tones of
her fresh young voice. And after
many sighs the old lady said, "I'm
glad you're so happy, dear, but be sure
it won't last. Joy is about the fleet-
ingest thing there is."

There is so much of this gloomy
philosophy in the world that it is worth
while to take a stand against it.
Nothing lasts like joy. Ambition dies,
and strength becomes weakness, but
still joy endures. Looking back over
a half-century or more to a day of
pure and perfect happiness, the heart
grows warm, and present discomforts
have no power to quench that joy
which would be old were it not im-
mortal.

Writing to one whose dearest earthly
friend had just died, Phillips Brooks
said, "God never takes away what he
has once given. You have her still."
And this truth applies to many things
besides our great bereavements. Some-
times we have seen a teasing boy hold
some gift toward a younger child, and
then snatch it away just as the little
fingers were closing over it. God does
not bestow his blessings in that way.
If your joy is a thing of the soul rather
than of the senses, it is yours eternal-
ly. Of this highest happiness which
is God's best gift, it may always be
said, "Your joy no man taketh from
you."

Is it too Late?

It may be too late, quite too late, to
set right mischief once done, to avert
consequences, to stop the working of
the evil that we have set in motion.
But it is not too late, it is never too
late, to come back to God. If you
can't be what you might have been,
yet you can still be something that
Christ will love and value—a humble,
penitent soul. If you cannot serve
God as you might have done—nay, if
you have done harm that you can
never undo—yet you can still give
Him what He values more than all
service—a will surrendered to His
Will. If it is too late for everything
else, it is never too late to join the
service of Christ.—Bishop Temple

Removing Moles.

One who has tried it repeatedly says
that moles may be removed by the
following method: Seat the patient in
a clear, strong sunlight. With a power-
ful sunglass bring the concentrated
rays of the sun to bear on the excres-
cence five or ten minutes. In three or
four weeks the mole will scab off, and
a new skin come on. If the mole
should not be entirely removed by the
first application, repeat. No scar will
be left.—New York Medical Journal.

Random Readings.

The quality of church membership
counts more in heaven and has more
influence among men than the quantity.
And yet astonishing to say, the
premium is usually put upon numbers.
We often hear of increase of numbers
but rarely about increase of grace.—
Christian Witness.

Like flakes of snow that fall unper-
ceived upon the earth, the seemingly
unimportant events of life succeed one
another. As the snow gathers together,
so are our habits formed. No single
flake that is added to the pile produces
a sensible change; no single action
creates, however it may exhibit, a
man's character.—Jeremy Taylor.

Successful At Last.

"I was a sufferer from neurgia in
my side, and headaches. I followed
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severe cold last winter, which resulted
in my becoming totally deaf in one ear
and partially so in the other. After
trying various remedies, and consulting
several doctors, without obtaining any
relief, I was advised to try Dr. Thomas'
Electric Oil. I warmed the Oil and
poured a little of it into my ear and
before one half the bottle was used my
hearing was completely restored. I
have heard of other cases of deafness
being cured by the use of this medicine."

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She was so extremely nervous that her
limbs would fairly shake and tremble.
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and finally she grew so weak that we were
much alarmed about her health. I gave
her many remedies, but they did not seem
to do her any good."

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