

# The Teachers Monthly

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Ed. Close acquaintance, says an experienced English teacher, with the text, such as was more common in past generations than in this—whole chapters learnt by heart—brings a power of interpretation which often gives to quite simple-minded and uneducated people a wonderful understanding of the meaning of very difficult passages. The mind soaked in the very words of Scripture creates for itself an atmosphere which is favorable for the apprehension of it; long pondering over words draws out the hidden meaning.

## Working out Salvation

By Rev. Professor H. A. A. Kennedy, D. Sc.

Why does the apostle lay so strong an emphasis on the *personal* nature of this process:—"Work out *your own* salvation to the end, with fear and trembling; for it is God that *worketh in you*?" Because he knew how much his presence had meant for the Christians at Philippi. The feeling that he was there beside them to advise and direct and confirm, gave them confidence in their new endeavors. And, moreover, they craved a high place in his esteem. That was another stimulus to untiring moral effort.

How shall they fare in his absence? Here is his counsel: "No one can live the Christian life by proxy. You dare not make even your most trusted spiritual guide a crutch to lean upon. Each has his own discipline to face, in which no one else may share. No advance, towards God can be made for you by another. The race must be run by one and one, and not by two and two." The danger besetting the Philippians is prevalent in many a Chris-

tian career. At the outset you were helped to face Christ's claims by your parents, it may be, or your minister, or some valued friend. And such encouragement and sympathy can never be too highly prized. But it is only of real worth if it makes you independent of itself. The convalescent who is recovering from an injury to a limb has for a time to lean upon the arm of another, or a supporting staff. To take this position permanently would be to rob muscle and nerve of vigor and energy. In the last resort, the Christian course is a matter before your soul and Christ alone. No one else dare interfere. You must work out *your own* salvation.

Nor must the activity at any time flag. "To the end," says Paul to his readers. And the hint is of grave importance. There is truth, no doubt, in the great proverb, "The beginning is the half of the whole," and yet how many fair beginnings have come to nothing in the history of individuals. "They are for a season," said our Lord of those hearers whom He compared to the seed sown on rocky places, "they have no root in themselves." The disciple seems about to echo the Master. And as he reflects on the length of the road which must be traversed before the end is reached, he is constrained to add, "with fear and trembling."

There is nothing more remarkable in the New Testament epistles than their unwearying insistence upon a mood of self-restraint and grave soberness. Not for a moment must the Christian be jauntily confident of his perseverance. Temptation is an incalculable force. Sin is a serious business to deal with. They who know themselves will take it seriously. They will remember what it cost the