

## WORKING AND WAITING.

WHEN the great mission of His life first dawned upon the mind of Jesus, He exclaimed to His astonished parents: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He seemed in eager haste to gird Himself for His work; and yet that impulse to work was followed by a long period of waiting. For the next eighteen years the Father's business was not active public work in the great world, but patient waiting in the workshop of Nazareth.

How eloquent is the interval of silence in the life of Jesus! How comfortable does it speak to those who are shut out from active work in the wider spheres of life! For many there seems to be no place for active service. They have to sit with folded hands, and often do they feel that life to them is an utter blank. They envy with a holy envy those to whom a larger work is given. They imagine that if their lives were otherwise ordered, they could be more useful. What a mistake! The Father's business is "exceeding broad," and the most retired and uneventful life becomes sublime when it is seen to be comprehended in God's great plan. To every child the All-Father assigns an appropriate work. The place which God appoints is the only one which we should desire to occupy; the work which God allots is the only one which we should desire to perform. The Father's business covers the whole of life.

To most, waiting is harder than working. Patience is a difficult virtue, and in this busy, overstrained age it is becoming somewhat scarce. Oft-times it is the best service that can be rendered. "For they also serve who only stand and wait." Away from the glare of the world in the privacy of home, waiting not in idleness, nor in disappointed pride, but in faithful performance of the small duties which come hour by hour, the soul's devotion to God is proved, its strength is nourished, and if a call comes to higher work it is not found wanting. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."—*Rev. J. M. Campbell.*

## HE WANTED A CHRISTIAN WIFE.

The late Judge James R. Curry, although raised under religious influence, became skeptical. He tells this interesting incident: I was what might be called a skeptic. Mr. Harrison, a noble, whole-souled man, whom I almost revered as a father, had a Christian wife, but was himself a confirmed deist, and soon found me out, and was not slow in endeavoring to instil into my mind his notions. He charged me, however, not to let his wife know that he was a deist, or that I was skeptical. I asked why, and he remarked, "If I was to marry a hundred times, I would marry only a pious woman." I said, "Why?" He replied, "If she is pious, it makes her a better wife, a better mother, a better mistress, a better neighbor. If she is poor, it enables her to bear adversity with patience and fortitude. If she is rich and prosperous, it lessens her desire for mere show. And when she comes to die, if she is in error, she is as well off as you and I; and if we are in error, she is a thousand times better off." I asked him if he knew of any other error attended with so many advantages. His reply was evasive, and soon after, I determined to examine the subject for myself. And I often look back at that conversation as one of the most important incidents of my life. To this conversation, I attribute my determination to read the Bible carefully, and examine the evidences of the Christian religion for myself.

## THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE.

There was no better man in all his neighborhood than was Mr. Joseph Harper, the father of the well-known publishers, Messrs. Harper and Brothers, of New York. But old Joe Harper was a great tobacco chewer. His love for the "weed" was known far and near, and nobody supposed he would ever give it up, as he was well advanced in years. One of his neighbors was a notorious drunkard. A friend took this neighbor to task one day for his habits, and entreated him to stop drinking. "Give up liquor?" said the man; "why, I could no more stop drinking than old Joe Harper

could give up tobacco." This conversation was reported to Mr. Harper. "He shall not get behind me with his rum; I will show him that old Joe Harper can give up tobacco." He thereupon threw the tobacco from his mouth, and never touched it again during his life.—*The Teacher.*

## COMBATS OF THE OCEAN.

AMONG the extraordinary spectacles sometimes witnessed by those who "go down to the sea in ships," none are more impressive than a combat for the supremacy between the monsters of the deep. The battles of the sword fish and the whale are described as Homeric in grandeur.

The sword fish go in schools, like whales, and the attacks are regular sea fights. When the two troops meet, as soon as the sword fish have betrayed their presence by a few bounds in the air, the whales draw together and close up the ranks. The sword fish always endeavors to take the whale in the flank, either because its cruel instinct has revealed to it the defect in the carcass—for there exists near the brachial fins of the whale a spot where wounds are mortal—or because the flank presents a wider surface to its blow.

The sword fish recoils to secure a greater impetus. If the movement escapes the keen eye of his adversary, the whale is lost, for it receives the blow of the enemy and dies instantly. But, if the whale perceives the sword fish at the instance of the rush, by a spontaneous bound, it springs clear of the water its entire length, and falls on its flank with a crash that resounds for many leagues, and whitens the sea with boiling foam. The gigantic animal has only its tail for the defence. It tries to strike its enemy, and finishes him with a single blow. But, if the active sword fish avoid the fatal tail, the battle becomes more terrible. The aggressor springs from the water in his turn, falls upon the whale, and attempts, not to pierce, but to saw it with the teeth that garnish its weapon. The sea is stained with blood; the fury of the whale is boundless. The sword fish harasses him, strikes him on every side, kills him, and flies to other victories.

Oftentimes the sword fish has not time to avoid the fall of the whale, and contents itself with presenting its sharp saw to the flanks of the gigantic animal which is about to crush it. It then dies like Maccaus, smothered beneath the weight of the elephant of the ocean. Finally, the whale gives a few last bounds into the air, dragging its assassin in its flight, and perishes as it kills the monster of which it was the victim.

## 'IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE.'

"Mother, every night when I go to bed I say 'Now I lay me,' and do you know, mamma, though saying it so often, I never thought what it meant until Fanny Gray died. I asked nurse if Fanny died before she waked, and she said, 'Yes; she went to bed well and had a spasm in the night, and died before she knew anything at all.'" "Now, mamma," continued Rena, "I want you to tell me about 'Now I lay me,' so that when I say it I may think what it means."

"Well, Rena," said her mother, "I shall be glad to tell you. What does it mean when you say, 'Now I lay me down to sleep?'"

"Oh, that means, mother, that I am just going to lie down in my bed, to sleep till morning."

"Well, then, as you lie down to sleep what prayer do you offer God?"

"I pray the Lord my soul to keep. I want the Lord to take care of my soul while I am asleep, and take care of me all over, mother. But, mother, if I should die before I wake, would the Lord be taking care of me then? Now, it seems to me when Fanny died God did not take care of her that night and so she died." "Oh, no, Rena! God did take care of her. The little verse says, 'If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take,'" so you see God took little Fannie's soul to himself; and, when she awoke, she was in the arms of the blessed Jesus. Now, Rena, when you say, 'Now I lay me,' I want you to think in this way: Now I am going to bed and to sleep, and I want the Lord to take care of me. If I am not a good child, and do not pray to

God, ought I to ask him or expect him to take care of me? Let me lie down feeling that I am in the Lord's care, and if I should die before I wake, that still I am the Lord's child; and I pray that he may take my soul to dwell with him."

"O mother! I will try and remember. Why, I used to say it slow and clasp my hands, and shut my eyes, and yet I did not think about it. Thank you, mother, dear. Please hear me to-night, when I go to say my prayers."

Ah, little children, are there not a great many, who like Rena, say their prayers without thinking what they mean—mere words without any meaning in them? God cannot listen to such prayers. They are not for Him unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid.

Think of what I have written about little Rena when you say, "Now I lay me," to-night; and pray that God may watch over you, waking and sleeping.

## A NEGRO SCHOOL.

While a naval officer was inspecting one of the schools in the island of Barbados, containing two hundred negro boys and girls, a sign was made by one of the children, by holding up his hand, intimating that he wished to speak to the master.

On going up to the child, who was somewhat more than eight years of age, the master inquired what was the matter.

"Massa," he replied, with a look of horror and indignation, which the officer said he should never forget, and pointing to a little boy who sat beside him, "Massa, this boy does not believe in resurrection."

"This is very bad," said the master; "but do you, my little fellow," addressing the young informer, "believe in the resurrection yourself?"

"Yes, massa, I do."

"But can you prove it from the Bible?"

"Yes, massa. Jesus says, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live'; and in another place, 'Because I live ye shall live also.'"

The master added:

"Can you prove it from the Old Testament also?"

"Yes; for Job says: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at a latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' And David says in one of his Psalms: 'I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.'"

"But are you sure these passages are in the Bible? Here is a Bible, point them out to us."

The little fellow instantly found all the passages, and read them aloud.

## SWIMMING TO CHURCH.

A little girl, named Nyangandi, who lived near the Ogowe River, West Africa, one Saturday came in her little canoe with two bunches of plantains to sell to the missionary.

When she was going away Mrs. Batchelor said to her, "Now you must not forget that to-morrow will be Sunday, and you have already promised to come every time."

"Yes," she said, "I will surely come if I am alive."

And so she did, but no one knew how she got there, until at the close of the service she told the girls that in the night her canoe had been stolen, and none of her friends would lend her one; but she had promised to come to church, and so she felt she must. How did she come? Well, she swam! The current was swift, and the river fully a third of a mile wide; but by swimming diagonally she succeeded in crossing the river.

If this little heathen girl, who knew only a little about the gospel, could take so much pains to keep her word and God's holy day, how much more should favored children keep the fourth and ninth commandments?—*Ex.*

A LITTLE girl asked her mother, "What kind of a bear is a consecrated cross eyed bear?" The mother replied that she had never heard of such an animal. The child insisted that they sang about it at the Sunday-school. "No," said the mother; "it is, 'A consecrated cross I bear.'"