

Working

To many people, work is something to be avoided. To others, work is a necessary evil to provide shelter and food. But to the fortunate few, work is a joy as it gives the exact portions of hobby and exercise to cheer both mind and body. Speaking of the work He was given to do, Jesus said, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work"* (John 4:34). When we look to God and His Son as our examples, we find that they work continuously. In the beginning, God called the creation of the universe work (Genesis 2:2-3). As Israel turned away from God, He still worked to help them (Hosea 11:3-4). And long before we knew Him, God sent His Son to die for us (Ephesians 2:4-5).

The Jews argued about what constituted work as they debated obedience to the Law. They forgot the mercy and grace demanded by God as they placed restrictions on what was acceptable to them on the Sabbath. Jesus reminded them of the continual work of God since Adam's sin, *"My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working"* (John 5:17). There is no end to the work done by The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. If they were not working continuously, the universe would end *"And He (Jesus) is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power**. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"* (Hebrews 1:3).

We cannot know how much time we have to work for Christ and lay up our treasures for eternity. But Jesus knew He had just over three years to demonstrate His relationship to the Father and the power that allowed Him to create everything that exists (Colossians 1:15-17). During that time, there were planned opportunities for Jesus to show that He is the Christ. One event is recorded in John 9. The disciples asked a question about what caused a man to be blind from birth. Their assumptions were based on misunderstandings of the time. *"And His disciples asked Him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?'"* (John 9:2). Jesus answered, *"It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him"* (John 9:3). Without going into the details of the son not being guilty or punished for the sins of the parents as in (Ezekiel 18:20) or that the unborn could not sin, Jesus said, *"We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work."* (John 9:3-4). Jesus had to work within a limited amount of time. We all have work to do before our life here ends.

A lady named Anna Louisa Walker Coghill (1836-1907) wrote a hymn that is Number 592 in our current book, "Work, for the Night Is Coming." The lyrics admonish one to work through the various times and portions of the day while there is light *"for the night is coming when man's work is done."* The second verse encourages, *"Work through the sunny noon filling the brightest hours with labor: Rest comes sure and soon."* The following phrase refers to laying up treasure in Heaven (Matthew 6:20-21), *"Give every flying minute something to keep in store."* Then the reason for working persistently is given, *"For the night is coming when man works no more."* In the third verse, the evening hours are discussed. Work, *"Under the sunset skies while their bright tints are glowing,"* *"For daylight flies and the last beam fades, fades away to shine no more."* Then a final reminder that when darkness settles in, man cannot work; this life is over.

Another hymn, Number 590, "We'll Work Till Jesus Comes," by Mrs. Elizabeth Mills (1805- 1829), expresses our desire for the rest that will come when Jesus returns and time ends. The hymn asks, "When will the moment come When I shall lay my armor by And dwell in peace at home?" The chorus repeats our conviction to continue the work Christ gives us to do until He comes, "And we'll be gathered home." The second verse groans that the Earth does not provide joy, peace, or shelter. This world is a wilderness and not our home. The third verse reminds us of Jesus' call to flee to Him for rest, comfort, and the eventual entrance to His heavenly home. The final verse summarizes our response to the Gospel call, at once, coming to the Savior and no longer walking in the world's ways. Our attention has turned to following Jesus (John 14:6) through death to the eternal home prepared by Him (John 14: 1-3).

Have you heard Jesus calling you to obey Him and enjoy the blessings that only He can supply?