

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Newsletter

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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### The Works of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit

In at least 15 countries of the world there is a national holiday called “Labour Day”. For those in Canada, this holiday has been celebrated on the first Monday in September since the year 1872 when there was a parade staged in support of the Toronto Typographical Union's strike for a 58-hour workweek. Today it is a day when there is the celebration of the economic and social achievements of workers, and I think of it as a day to recall the workings of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit, and of that which they have achieved or given by grace to humanity. Then in addition, the dignity of human work.

#### The Working of God

It is interesting that the first manifestation of God is that of a worker, for we read: “In the beginning God created” (Gen. 1:1), and then: “And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested . . . from all His work” (Gen. 2:2). Sadly, sin entered the world and God could never rest with a sphere of His working distorted by sin. Consequently, He began to work again. Yet, it is not really accurate to say: “He began to work again” for the work of purification for sins (Heb. 1:3) had begun in eternity past. It was before earth was ever made, or angelic voice rang through the portals of glory. There was a “conference” of divine persons in which:

- a) We were “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world”. (Eph.1:4)
- b) “Eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” (Titus 1:2)
- c) “The precious blood of Christ . . . Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.” (1 Pet. 1:19, 20)

Then in due course earth was created and man was made, thus being the first earthly steps to the fulfillment of the divine purposes.

Evidently God began His work again for the Lord said: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn. 5:17). In the reading of the scriptures it is observed there are a number of references to specific things which are called “the works of God”, such as:

- a) The sovereign power of God over creation and nations, for David wrote: “Come and see the works of God: [he is] terrible [in his] doing toward the children of men”. (Psa. 66:5)
- b) When God spoke to Israel and reminded them of His works and the reason for them: “That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments”. (Psa. 78:7)
- c) In the development of a baby while yet in the womb when Solomon wrote: “As thou knowest not what [is] the way of the spirit, [nor] how the bones [do grow] in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all”. (Ecc. 11:5)
- d) When Job had made his declarations and God answers, He says: “Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God”. (Job 37:14)

- e) On the day of Pentecost when the gospel was being preached, Peter said: “Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God”. (Acts 2:11)
- f) The people came to our Lord and said: “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? (Jn. 6:28). His answer was: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn. 6:29). The expression “work of God” denotes “the works required and approved by God” (J.H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 248).
- g) Concerning the man blind from birth, the Lord said: “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him”. (Jn. 9:3)

There are at least two intriguing expressions used of the workings of God in Isaiah. The prophet will write: “The Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act” (Isa. 28:21). Again he writes: “Behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder” (Isa. 29:14). The strange work was that God, who loved his people with an everlasting love, was against them in judgment. His marvelous work was that He would make the wise to become fools.

Since the discipling of Israel, whom He loved was His strange work (Isa. 28:21), how much stranger was it when He forsook His beloved Son? This was so out of character for God and is a mystery we cannot enter into. It was not natural for the covenanting Jehovah, who never left Israel abandoned, now to forsake His beloved Son: the One He called: “My Servant. . . in whom my soul delighteth” (Isa. 42:1) and “My beloved Son” (Matt. 3:17). God had spoken to Him, and about Him at His baptism and transfiguration, but not here. Not even an angel came to strengthen Him as in Gethsemane. Heaven was absolutely silent. These were wonders which cause deep astonishment.

### [The Working Of Christ](#)

Since the first manifestation of God is that of Him working, it is to be expected that one of the gospel records should have the Lord presented as such. It is my understanding that there is insufficient evidence to state that Mark was written first. It is often assumed such to be the case, but it is on a faulty foundation. It is often said that Mark is the gospel where the Lord is presented as the Servant of Jehovah. This is based on the argument that the Greek word “eutheos”, translated “anon”, “immediately”, “forthwith”, and “as soon as”, are found in 40 verses of the book. On this point there must be carefulness for the word does not always refer to the subjective attitude of the Lord. Indeed, only in two passages does it refer to such, ch. 1:21; 8:10. It refers to the:

- a) Activity of Satan (Mk. 4:15)
- b) Activity of the chief priests (Mk. 15:1)
- c) Activity of Judas (Mk. 14:45)
- d) Activity of the people (Mk. 9:15)

The fact is that if we read John’s gospel, the Lord refers to His working more often than Mark ever does. For instance:

- a) “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (Jn. 4:34)
- b) “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn. 5:17)
- c) “I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do” (Jn. 17:4)

A cursory reading of Mark will present the Lord in His activity, being the only gospel which tells that: “They could not so much as eat bread” (Mk. 3:20).

There can be no doubt that the greatest work the Lord ever did was when He experienced the “travail of His soul” (Isa. 53:11). During that time when He was being made “sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21), He was doing a work that not only none other could ever do, but the depths of it, none other could ever fathom.

When our Lord was on the cross there were three hours of daylight and three hours of darkness:

- a) The daylight removed all denials:
  - i) That it was Jesus of Nazareth who was nailed to the cross.
  - ii) That He was nailed to the cross, both pre the darkness and after it.
- b) The darkness:
  - i) Indicated the character of God in the administration of justice. (cp. Ex. 20)
  - ii) Prefigured the day of the Lord in judgment. (Amos 8:9)

- iii) Displayed the judgment of God on the Egyptians. (Ex. 10:21)
- iv) Is the dwelling place of God. (Ex. 20:21)

During the hours of light the Lord suffered at the hands of man, suffered for His own righteousness, but bore nothing of the penalty for sins. In the hours of darkness He suffered at the hands of man, suffered for man's unrighteousness, and bore the full penalty for man's sins.

This was a work too sacred for man to look upon. Man is distorted and the gruesome has a strange attraction for him. If there is an accident there is a slowing down for man to have a look. Psalm 88:6 puts it so starkly: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps" and Lamentations 2:3: "He hath led me, and brought me into darkness".

The question that must be faced is: "Was this righteous? Was it fair for an innocent person to be punished for the guilty?" For example: if in a family of two children there was one child who was perfectly obedient and the other was as disobedient as could be. Supposing the disobedient child, when disobeying the parent, broke a beautiful vase. Would it be right to punish the obedient one? The answer is "no". Then how can it be righteous for God to punish Christ when He had done nothing worthy of chastisement, and I who deserved it was let go free? The answer is found in that Christ offered Himself to be the offering and sacrifice. He was not compelled, but of his own volition He offered Himself to suffer for my wrongs. That was a work beyond all comprehension.

### [The Working Of The Holy Spirit](#)

If one were to pursue the books, etc., on the Godhead, it would be observed that there are many on our Lord, somewhat less on God the Father, and even less on the Holy Spirit. There are some groups of saints who make much of the Holy Spirit, but they are in the minority. The renitence of speaking about Him is based on, I suggest, a misinterpretation of the scriptures, in particular when our Lord said: "He shall not speak of Himself" (Jn. 16:13). Yet an observing of the scriptures, which are the work of the Spirit, we discover that in the Old Testament He is referred to three times (Psa. 51:11; Isa. 63:10, 11), and in the New Testament He is called "the Holy Spirit" four times, and the Holy Ghost eighty-nine times. This does not consider the times He is simply referred to as "the Spirit". That which the passage teaches is that He will only communicate that which has been given to Him, to communicate in the same way as our Lord only communicated, that which He was given to speak.

There can be no doubt that He was, in a major way, associated with the Lord as the following scriptures make plain:

- a) When it came to His incarnation it was by the power of the Spirit. We read: "She was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18); again: "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:20); "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Lk. 1:35).
- b) When it was time for His induction into service, we read that at His baptism: "The Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him" (Matt. 3:16); and concerning the Holy Spirit John adds: "It abode upon Him" (Jn. 1:32). This last clause is particularly interesting because Isaiah prophesied saying: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2-3). Again he writes: "I have put my Spirit upon Him" (Isa. 42:1).
- c) After His baptism Luke tells us: "Being full of the Holy Ghost . . . He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Lk. 4:1). Luke will further tell us: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts 10:38).
- d) Concerning His death we read: "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14).
- e) His resurrection was by the Spirit. Paul writes: "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Peter wrote the same truth when he wrote: "Christ hath once suffered for sins . . . quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18).
- f) Paul writes that He was "justified in the Spirit" (1 Tim. 3:16), that is, all that He stated Himself to be was authenticated by His ascension and glorification.

In observing the wording of the scriptures we read that:

- a) He Leads (Matt 4:1)
- b) He drives (Mk. 1:12)
- c) He speaks (Matt. 10:20)
- d) He teaches (Lk. 12:12)
- e) He bears witness (1 Jn. 4:2)
- f) He reveals (1 Cor. 2:10)
- g) He searches (1 Cor. 2:10)
- h) He intercedes (Rom. 8:26)
- i) He comforts (Jn. 16:7)
- j) He foretells (1 Tim. 4:1)
- k) He testifies beforehand (1 Pet. 1:11)
- l) He reproves (Jn. 16:8)

### [In Summary](#)

As we consider “Labour Day” and the accomplishments of man, may we ever remember the “travail” of the Lord and the accomplishments of Divine Persons.

... Rowan Jennings

***To God be the glory!***

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e-mail: [scripturaltruths1@shaw.ca](mailto:scripturaltruths1@shaw.ca)

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