

A Preparation For The Coming Of The LORD

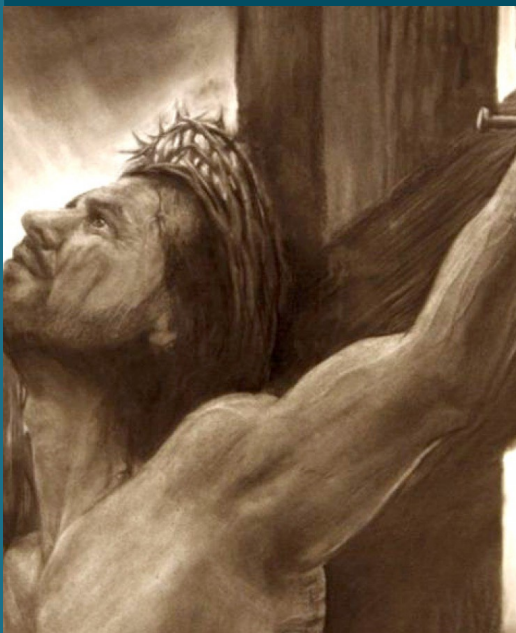
By: Ellen G White





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Sin is a hateful thing. It marred the moral beauty of a large number of the angels. It entered our world, and well-nigh obliterated the moral image of God in man. But in his great love God provided a way whereby man might regain the position from which he fell in yielding to the tempter. Christ came to stand at the head of humanity, to work out in our behalf a perfect character. Those who receive him are born again. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."



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Christ saw humanity, through the working of the mighty growth of sin, demoniacally possessed by the prince of the power of the air, and putting forth gigantic strength in exploits of evil. But he saw also that a mightier power was to meet and conquer Satan. "Now is the judgment of this world," he said; "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." He saw that if human beings believed in him, they would be given power against the host of fallen angels, whose name is legion. Christ strengthened his own soul by the thought that by the wonderful sacrifice which he was about to make, the prince of this world was to be cast out, and men and women placed where, through the grace of God, they would regain what they had lost.

What does the Lord require of his blood-bought heritage?—The sanctification of the whole being,—purity like the purity of Christ, perfect conformity to the will of God. My brethren and sisters, God requires this of us. Into the holy city there can enter nothing that defileth, or maketh a lie. God's word to us is, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and

have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." He "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

We can, we can, reveal the likeness of our divine Lord. We can know the science of spiritual life. We can honor our Maker. But do we do it? O, what an illustrious example we have in the life that Christ lived on this earth! He has shown us what we can accomplish through co-operation with divinity. We are to seek for the union of which he speaks when he says, "Abide in me, and I in you." This union is deeper, stronger, truer, than any other union, and is productive of all good. Those who are thus united to the Saviour are controlled by his will, and are moved by his love to suffer with those who suffer, to rejoice with those who rejoice, to feel a deep sympathy for every one in weakness, sorrow, or distress.

Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for his children. He wants our minds to be clear, our tempers sweet, our love abounding. Then the peace that passeth knowledge will flow from us to bless all with whom we come in contact. The atmosphere surrounding our souls will be refreshing.

But how few there are who are making determined efforts to reach this ideal. Satan is trying to keep the people of God dwarfed, feeble, un-Christlike. And too often he is successful. In our churches there are many who have not the spirit of the Master, many who act as if they were in the world merely to please themselves. They forget that the enemy is assailing all who profess to be children of God, trying to overcome them, so that they will disappoint and dishonor the Saviour. They forget that the purity and unselfishness that characterized the life of Christ must characterize their lives, else in the day of God they will be found wanting, and will hear from his lips the irrevocable sentence, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

I have been especially instructed in regard to the danger of drawing apart, and of evil speaking and contention. We need to bow before God in repentance because of our lack of love for one another, and for him who died for us. The gold of love and faith is not abundant among us. Many are holding on to the truth with but the tips of their fingers. The precious time that should be spent in speaking of the Saviour's power to save, is being spent by many in carrying evil reports. Unless they make a decided change, they will be found wanting. Unless they have an entire transformation of character, they will never enter heaven. A deep, thorough work needs to be done in the hearts of those who profess to be chil-

dren of God. Until they reveal the faith that works by love and purifies the soul, very little genuine work for God will be done in the world.

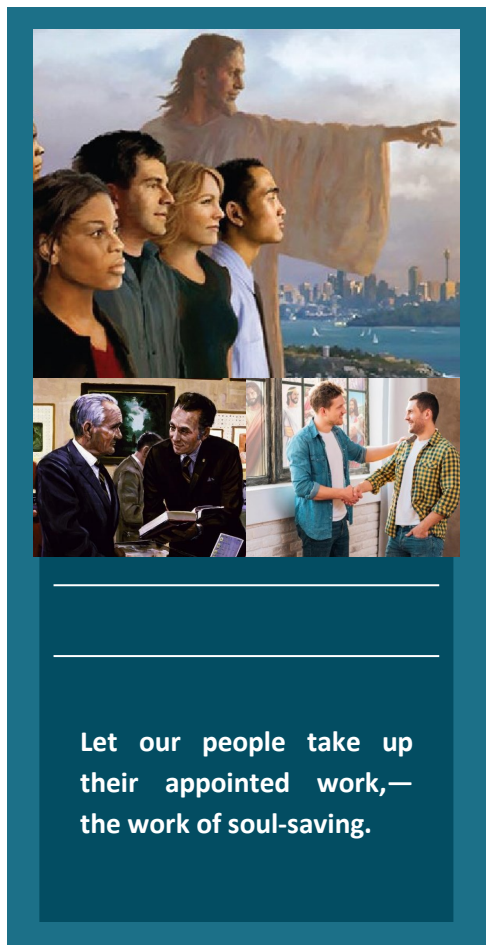
Let our people take up their appointed work,—the work of soul-saving. Let them not think that upon them has been laid the burden of watching and criticizing the work of others. Those who put their whole souls into the work that God gives them will have no time to criticize the efforts of their fellow workers, no time to weaken the hands of those who are straining every nerve and muscle to advance the work.

Let not any man or woman feel that he or she has been appointed to carry evil reports from church to church, and from conference to conference. I have been grieved beyond measure to see how easy it is for persons to spend precious time in this cruel work. The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages is now to be our burden. Those who spend their time in thinking and speaking evil are bringing to the foundation, material represented by hay, wood, and stubble, which will be consumed by the fires of the last days. They will one day see that their time has been spent in weakening churches, institutions, and conferences.

God hates all such work. He will call to account all who engage in it. Let those who fear God and believe his word put a guard on their lips. Let them be determined not to speak words that will injure the cause of God, or give a wrong representation of the work being done in any of his institutions. Let them be careful not to speak words that will be a temptation to some one else to withhold the confidence and the words of courage that ought to be given to those who are severely tried, and who, perhaps, work early and late to fulfil the many calls of duty, until it seems as if

mind and body would give way under the strain.

Words of suspicion and distrust, like the thistle-down carried by the wind, are scattered far and wide, and can never be recalled. Un-Christlike speech lies at the foundation of nine tenths of all the difficulties that exist in the church. Satan's agents are industriously trying to get professed Christians to speak unadvisedly. When they succeed, Satan exults, because God's followers have hurt their influence. We have no time, in these solemn moments, to contend with one another. Those who give way to evil-thinking and evil-speaking do not realize how much time they cause others to lose. God's servants have been called upon to settle difficulties between brother and brother, and time has been spent in this way that belonged to souls ready to perish,—time that ought to have been devoted to the fulfilling of the gospel



Let our people take up their appointed work,—the work of soul-saving.

My brother, my sister, be afraid to find fault, afraid to talk against your fellow workers. You have enlisted to fight against Satan's forces, and you have no time to fight against your fellow soldiers. The truly converted man has no inclination to think or talk of the faults of others. His lips are sanctified, and as God's witness he testifies that the grace of Christ has transformed his heart. He realizes that he can not afford to talk discouragement or unbelief. He can not afford to be harsh or faultfinding. He has not received orders to punish the erring and sinful by heaping abuse upon them.

Speak words of kindness, words of uplifting; for this is the fruit borne upon the Christian tree. Overcome all harshness. Eternity alone will reveal the harm that harsh words do to those who utter them, and to those who hear. Hold firmly to the One who has all power in heaven and earth, and although you often fail to reveal patience and calmness under provocation, by no means give up the struggle. Resolve again, this time more firmly, that you will be an example of Christian patience. Remember that those only will enter heaven who have overcome the temptation to think and speak evil.

"The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Christ will be to his people all that these words express if they will heed the invitation to come to him. He will be to them life and power, strength and efficiency, wisdom and holiness. God calls upon us to live the Christ-life, to reveal this life to the world. When we do this, prejudice will vanish, and difficulties will adjust themselves. We shall gather about the great Missionary, our hearts filled with gratitude and love.

My brethren and sisters, instead of spending your time looking for and talking of the shortcomings of others, give yourselves to the work that Christ did when in this world. How untiringly he labored! In the temple and the synagogues, in the streets of the cities, in the market-place and the workshop, by the seaside and among the hills, he preached the gospel and healed the sick. His life was one of unselfish service, and it is to be our lesson book. The work that he began we are to carry forward.

Brethren and sisters, how much work have you done for God during the past year? Do you think that it is those men only who have been ordained as gospel ministers that are to work for the uplifting of humanity?—No, no! Every one who

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names the name of Christ is expected by God to engage in this work. The hands of ordination may not have been laid upon you, but you are none the less God's messengers. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, if you know his saving power, you can no more keep from telling this to some one else than you can keep the wind from blowing. You will have a word in season for him that is weary. You will guide the feet of the straying back to the fold. Your efforts to help others will be untiring, because God's Spirit is working in you.

Have you told those with whom you have come in contact what banner you are serving under? Have they been able to see, by the Christlikeness of your words and acts, that you are a true follower of

Jesus? O that our hearts may be deeply impressed with the importance of living holy lives, that the world may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of him. Christian worth does not depend upon brilliant talents, lofty birth, wonderful powers, but on a clean heart,—a heart which, purified and refined, reflects the image of divinity. It is the presence of him who gave his life for us that makes the soul beautiful. It is not eloquent speakers that are needed so much as humble, earnest workers,—men and women who have a childlike trust in God. It is the men of prayer that are men of power. They will be enabled to lead sinners to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

My brethren and sisters, do not allow trifling things to absorb your time and attention. Keep your mind on the glorious themes of the Word of God. A study of these themes will give you a strength that will carry you through the trials and difficulties of the last days, and bring you to where you will walk with Christ in white, because you are worthy. In the Word of God, studied and obeyed, we possess a spiritual guide and instructor by which the worst forms of evil in ourselves may be brought under the discipline of his law. If the teachings of this Word were made the controlling influence in our lives, if mind and heart were brought under its restraining power, the evils that now exist in churches and in families would find no place. Upon converted households the purest blessings would descend, and from these households an influence would go forth that would make God's people a power on the side of truth.

But there are many in our churches who know little of the meaning of the truth for this time. They have not searched for the truth with humble, contrite hearts. I appeal to the members of our churches not to disregard the fulfilling of the signs of the times, which say so plainly that the end is near. O, how many who have not cared for the salvation of their souls will soon make the bitter lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!"

O, that we would remember that it is court week with us, and that our cases are pending! Now is the time to watch and pray, to put away all self-indulgence, all pride, all selfishness. The precious moments that are now by many worse than wasted should be spent in meditation

and prayer. Many of those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God are following inclination instead of duty. As they are now, they are unworthy of eternal life. To these careless, indifferent ones, I would say, Your vain thoughts, your unkind words, your selfish acts, are recorded in the book of heaven. The angels that were present at Belshazzar's idolatrous revelry stand beside you as you dishonor your Redeemer.

Sadly they turn away, grieved that you should thus crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hand from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the muni-

The Lord Our Righteousness. They will see the head once crowned with thorns crowned with a diadem of glory.

In that day the redeemed will shine forth in the glory of the Father and his Son. The angels of heaven, touching their golden harps, will welcome the King, and those who are the trophies of his victory, —those who have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. A song of triumph will peal forth, filling all heaven. Christ has conquered. He enters the heavenly courts accompanied by his

redeemed ones, the witnesses that his mission of suffering and self-sacrifice has not been in vain.



tions of rocks.... Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."

On Christ's coronation day he will not acknowledge as his any who bear spot or wrinkle or any such thing. But to his faithful ones he will give crowns of immortal glory. Those who would not that he should reign over them will see him surrounded by the army of the redeemed, each of whom bears the sign,

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