



Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

(Psalm 51:7)

"Whiter than Snow" was written by an Irish immigrant named James Nicholson, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was published in 1872. The primary tune for the piece was composed by William G. Fischer. The Psalm verse upon which its allusions are based is one of my favorites, and I never forego the opportunity to discuss the beauty of its meaning in detail; but I will do so in the course of the devotion.

Kind David wrote the Psalm following his grave sin with Bathsheba of murder and adultery. He was ordained and chosen by God, yet he sinned egregiously and could only appeal to the Throne of God's Grace for absolution. Christians can, and do, sin. The Laws of God were not nullified at the coming of Christ; but the penalty was paid by Christ for us. We are expected to love God, and our fellow man, enough that our inordinate desires to sin (disobey the commandments of God) will be restrained. *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* (1 John 2:1-2) I might add, where there is no guilt, there would be no need for an Advocate.

Whiter than Snow

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;
I want Thee forever to live in my soul.
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

**Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

Lord Jesus, let nothing unholy remain,
Apply Thine own blood and extract ev'ry stain;
To get this blest cleansing, I all things forego—

Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

Lord Jesus, look down from Thy throne in the skies,
And help me to make a complete sacrifice.

I give up myself, and whatever I know,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,
I wait, blessèd Lord, at Thy crucified feet.
By faith, for my cleansing, I see Thy blood flow,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

Lord Jesus, Thou seest I patiently wait,
Come now, and within me a new heart create;
To those who have sought Thee, Thou never saidst No,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

The blessing by faith, I receive from above;
O glory! my soul is made perfect in love;
My prayer has prevailed, and this moment I know,
The blood is applied, I am whiter than snow.

Refrain

It is one thing to be healed of a physical malady, but yet another to be healed in both body and soul. We may be in top physical condition, and an Olympic champion athlete, but if our spirit is diseased with sin, we are half dead already. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, one returned to express his humble and great gratitude. to this leper, and not the other nine, Jesus said, ***Go thy way. thy faith hath made thee whole.*** That meant - body AND soul were healed - the disease of leprosy and the disease of sin.

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole; I want Thee forever to live in my soul. Break down every idol, cast out every foe; Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. If Christ comes into our hearts, He will clean it of the accumulated filth of sin. He will ABIDE in our hearts, and there is no room for the devil where Jesus reigns. Snow is a blindingly white compound of frozen water crystals. Nothing seems whiter to our eyes; but there is something whiter! In order for ice crystals to coalesce in the in the upper atmosphere, a dust or pollen particle is essential around which the crystals can coalesce. So at the center of every snowflake, regardless its brilliant appearance, is a speck of impurity. But the blood of Christ washes away every speck and kernel of impurity so that the believer is made whiter than snow - not by his own good works, but by the imputed righteousness of Christ.

Lord Jesus, let nothing unholy remain, Apply Thine own blood and extract ev'ry stain; To get this blest cleansing, I all things forego— Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. The sinner must come to Christ without reservation. There is no time to first see about personal business, or to bury the dead (the dead sinners will bury themselves), but come to Christ without excuse. We are then to reject sin (disobedience to the Commandments of God) and live on the higher plane of faith and righteous endeavor. We must allow no earthly, or material, object to eclipse our relationship to Christ who is our Sun.

We may frequently lack sufficient faith to step out and serve God in the manner

that the Holy Spirit leads us. We are frail and weak children, but we have a Father who is All Powerful. Lean upon Him and not upon our own understanding.

Lord Jesus, look down from Thy throne in the skies, And help me to make a complete sacrifice. I give up myself, and whatever I know, Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. All that we KNEW before we came to Christ was what sinners treasure, but now our likes and desires change in Him. Following the notable event on the mountain on which Jesus was transfigured, Jesus and His disciples were approached by a man whose son was possessed of a devil that constantly tore at the boy. He begged Christ to cast out the demon. *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, *Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.* (Mark 9:23-24) Jesus cast out the demon. When our faith fails, we must appeal to God for a refreshing shower of it. We not only offer all that we possess to God when we are converted, but our very souls and bodies as well.

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat, I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet. By faith, for my cleansing, I see Thy blood flow, Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Love compels us to the foot of the cross - nothing else can do so! Those faithful and loving women had greater courage than all other of the disciples, except John who also stood watch there. John was the disciple of love, and he braved the power of Rome and of the Sanhedrin to remain at the cross throughout the passion of Christ. The women, too, would not leave until the body had been taken down and carried to the Garden Tomb. They were not half-way Christians.

Lord Jesus, Thou seest I patiently wait, Come now, and within me a new heart create; To those who have sought Thee, Thou never saidst No, Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Jesus never said No to any who come to Him believing: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* (John 6:37) There is no safety in the world, but the Ark of Christ stands surety for every sinner who enters therein. Jesus makes all things new - even our hearts. *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: 20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.* (Ezek 11:19-20) To the antinomians among us, this also means that we obey the Commandments of God!

The blessing by faith, I receive from above; O glory! my soul is made perfect in love; My prayer has prevailed, and this moment I know, The blood is applied, I am whiter than snow. Our righteousness as well is made perfect in love. Love is the whole thing put together. All who belong to Christ, KNOW that they belong to Christ without doubt! Even the faith that this verse makes reference to comes from above. It is given by grace.

So far, we have only discussed that washing by the blood of Christ that makes us 'whiter than snow,' but how do we come by that bath? Remember the David's Psalm *wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* That was the way the verse ended, but look at the first part: *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.*

Is our appearance of righteousness the most important thing? Not at all - it is what is on the INSIDE of our hearts! When we come to Christ confessing our sins and begging forgiveness, our repentance is a purge. Hyssop was a herb used by the ancients (and still so in the Far East) as a laxative to clean the alimentary canal. We are first granted forgiveness of our sins repented of, and then we are made whole in the outward washing. We are cleaned INSIDE first, and the outward appearance will reflect the inward grace.

Have you known this dual cleansing, reader?