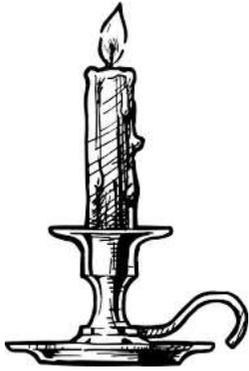


Wednesday, 27th January 2021



THE CANDLESTICK

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow (Ps. 51:7)

“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.”

This is the opening verse of a great Gospel hymn laying bare before the Saviour our need of Him to save us from our sin.

Despite all our modern sophistication, we need Him as much as ever! We know He has dealt eternally with the sin which previously separated us from Him through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, but sadly, we are all too aware of the shadow this world continues to cast over us. As Paul described, **Rom. 7:18** I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. **19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

He was lamenting his daily struggle. You and I might wonder how such a Godly saint as Paul was troubled in such a way for surely, he was one of the most righteous and holy people in the Scriptures! Not so, for he confessed, **Rom. 7:23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. **24** O wretched man that I am! ... I'm like a prisoner, he said, as if unable to break free ... And then he responds, **Rom. 7:25** I thank God ... **8:1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

No condemnation! That's what Charles Wesley wrote too, “No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!”. Previously, he recalled, “Long my imprisoned spirit lay, Fast bound in sin and nature's night” ... And then, when the Holy Spirit of God shone ‘the quickening ray’ of salvation, he recounts, “I woke, the dungeon flamed with light, My chains fell off, my heart was free”.

Do you remember when the Lord saved you, and He turned your life round from following the ways of the world, and you now follow Him? You are reading His Word, you are speaking to Him in prayer, you are fellowshiping with your brothers and sisters in the faith, you are trusting God day by day, and the Holy Spirit within you is keeping and guiding you. ... Another hymn says, “What have I to dread, what have I to fear? Leaning on the everlasting arms”.

It means we belong to the Lord, He has saved us, and we are His. We are confident our salvation has been a work of God's rich mercy and grace. We are *in* His everlasting arms, - as with the shepherd who lovingly picked up the straying sheep and brought it home. ... What, though, about after we have been brought home ‘into the safety and shelter of the fold’, and it is time to go out again ... for we cannot remain in the safety of the fold indefinitely. Such is life, the sheep *has* to leave the fold. The sheep *has* to go back onto the hills, and it has to stay out in the winds, and the rain, and the snow, and the burning sun. It has to live with the potential dangers of marauding animals. At any time, they could stumble into holes and crevices. They could again find themselves in predicaments which threaten their survival.

They belong to the shepherd though who has, on so many previous occasions, proved how good he is, and caring, and attentive, and loving. ... But this latest strife in which the sheep finds itself appears worse than anything which has happened before ... And you can imagine the sheep, on its own, precariously lost on the inhospitable hillside ... and the little sheep hears the sound of the shepherd in the distance.

The simple reason the sheep had become lost was it had inadvertently strayed off. It had not meant to. It was feeding on the grass, the clover, the vegetation ... and it had become so ‘taken’ with that next little piece of food in front ... and little by little it had wandered off until it did not know the way back.

Not until we reach Heaven will we stop our wandering because this world has so many attractions to entice us off-course. Many of those attractions, of themselves, are not necessarily wrong, or evil and yet, they can gradually take us away from the safety and intimacy of the close fellowship with our Good Shepherd.

We come out of the sheepfold, after having been freshly washed and cleaned. We are white and spotless, refined and restored by the Shepherd Who is devoted to His sheep. And so we remained in His presence, but when we went outside the fold, we began to be exposed to the external filth and dirt ... and you could begin to see the marks its prints were leaving. As long as you remained in the fold and close to the shepherd, you didn't have that dirt for He kept you clean ... But when you began to roam, and the further you strayed onto the hills, you picked up more of its muck and mud ... And the further you strayed, the dirtier you became.

What was it you needed? Like Paul, you needed again a fresh cleansing, as another hymn describes, “The cleansing wave I see, I see; I plunge, and O it cleanseth me! O praise the Lord, it cleanseth me! It cleanseth me, yes, cleanseth me”.

David prayed, Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation (Ps. 51:12). You are saved ... Yes, you may have wandered, but God still loves you and Christ died for you and as a believer in the Lord Jesus, your sins have been washed away. He has made you 'whiter than snow'. He looks upon you as if you had never sinned. You belong to Him and He belongs to you ... and yet, like Paul, we know we are nowhere near worthy! ... Why does God love *me*? Why did His Son die for *me*? Why is the Holy Spirit dwelling within *me*? ... "Unworthy am I of the grace that He gave ... This love I cannot understand ... But He made me worthy, and now by His grace, His mercy has made me His child".

Outside of Christ, I was lost ... but by His amazing grace, He found me, and the blood He shed for me on Calvary has washed and cleansed me from all my sin (I Jn. 1:7). I cannot say I understand why God should do such a thing except for the fact He loved the Church and gave Himself for her ... He loved me and gave Himself for me that he might sanctify and cleanse [*you and me*] with the washing of water by the word, That he might present [*us*] to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that [*we*] should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:26,27).

"No other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus" ... That is what He has done for us and is continuing to do for us, *Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow* (Ps. 51:7)

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.

*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 every stain;
To get this blest cleansing, I all things forego—
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

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.

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.

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

The blessing by faith, I receive from above;
Oh, 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.