

What can wash away sin? **The blood of Jesus.**

How clean did David pray to be made?
"Whiter than snow."

What did he ask God to create in him? **"A clean heart."**

What kind of a spirit did he want? **"A right spirit."**

What did he ask God to give him? **His Holy Spirit.**

What did he say he would then do? **Teach sinners the way to God.**

Words with Little People.

What makes the soul black? { Wrong thoughts.
 Wrong words.
 Wrong acts.

What makes the soul white? { True repentance.
 Confession of sin.
 Washing in Jesus's blood.

Question and Answer:

"What can wash away my sin?
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

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General Statement.

It was David's splendid precipitancy, his power of projecting himself into the heart of things, that made him, in God's providence, the foremost man of his day. When in his youth he devoted himself to song he became a peerless bard. His hardy bravery as a shepherd turned him into the most famous of warriors. These two talents together brought him to the king's notice, and thereafter (as counselor or suspect) he was the most notable of all Saul's subjects. Wherever he went in youthful strength he was superlative. When at length he mounted the throne he became easily the greatest conqueror of his century and his race. Even if no sacred associations clustered about his name, he would still be ranked with earth's greatest heroes—with Cyrus and Alexander, Caesar and Gustavus, Charlemagne and Napoleon—surpassing them all in that he did, without example and without tools ready to hand, that which they were able to accomplish by imitation and with many inherited opportunities. A more intensely human man never breathed air. When such a man flung himself into religious endeavors he became a foremost saint. When he sank in sin he sank deep; and impurity, treachery, murder, hypocrisy are added, one sin to another, with a celerity that shocks us, but which is characteristic of a whole soul when he ventures to live without God. David could be *good*—he was, most of his life; he could be *bad*—he was, more than once; but he never could be *indifferent*. And now, when a faithful prophet reveals his iniquity, his soul runs out in advance of the prophet's condemnations, he bewails his sin before the wide world, and pours out his deep-felt contrition in this pathetic psalm—a psalm which has uttered the penitent heart's language from David's day to ours.

Verse 1. Have mercy upon me. David had been about twenty years on the throne. Many a time had he uttered this prayer. When Saul pursued him, when the Philistines fought against him, when the Ten Tribes refused to accept him, in long nights of exile, in sharp and desperate struggles, David had often cried, "Have mercy upon me, O God;" but never with so much reason as now. He had found his worst enemy not in Saul, nor in the Philistine camp, nor on the Amalekite throne, but underneath his own vesture; he had been overpowered by himself. (1) *A man's evil heart is his worst foe.* **The multitude of thy tender mercies.** David, conscious of the multitude of his own transgressions, finds comfort in the multitude of God's "tender mercies;" and this last conveys the highest possible degree of compassion. (2) *Infinite love reaches the worst possible cases.*

2. Wash me thoroughly. Repeatedly wash me; as if one cleansing would not do. David knew that "the sword should never depart from his house;" he knew that his splendid reputation was blasted, and that he must be punished in the sight of all men; he knew that the child he so

greatly loved must die; but he prayed not for immunity from any of this punishment, but for purity of heart. (3) *The true penitent longs for purity.* (See "Thoughts for Young People.")

3. Transgressions . . . sin. Note the various words employed by the psalmist: 1. *Transgression*—a turning aside from the right path. 2. *Iniquity*—crookedness, a perversity of nature. 3. *Sin*—wrong against God. 4. *Evil*—that which is bad in itself. **Ever before me.** (4) *We have no right to forget or overlook any of our evil deeds.* (5) *We must realize our guilt before we can find salvation.*

4. Against thee, thee only. David had done the greatest possible wrong to a number of persons; but as he now stands before God the exceeding sinfulness of his sin crowds other facts into the background until that sin shall be pardoned. (6) *No man can hurt another without hurting God.* **Have I sinned.** David was the greatest of earthly monarchs; as God's anointed he stood in a peculiar sense for the holiest of religions; he was a man of clearer insight and greater mental grasp than any of his contemporaries; and that he should so foully sin was horrible. *I, he says; "I, who both ways, as king and prophet, should have been an*