

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## THE SINNER'S WELCOME

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28*

The working of the SPIRIT in the sons of men is a mystery which cannot be influenced, delayed, or fully understood by those in whom HE is pleased to work and surely not at all by those in whom HE does not. It is certain that such a work as this is quite necessary in order for any of the sons of Adam's race, to come to the LORD. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Mat 11:27)

This is exactly what the LORD said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) and again "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. (John 6:44)

The wonderful revelation that is proclaimed to the world in the Gospel is that HE does indeed perform this gracious work and the objects of HIS drawing are sinful men. As HE told the Pharisees, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Mar 2:17)

Now it is surely true that in one respect we can say that all men without exception are "sinners" since the scripture does say, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23) Yet it would be a misunderstanding of what the LORD said, to consider that HE was speaking to the Pharisees of everyone who has committed sin. There is a distinction between those who have sinned and those who are properly designated as "sinners" in this scripture. Joseph Hart penned a hymn in which he clearly defined this difference.

To understand these things aright, This grand distinction should be known:

Though all are sinners in God's sight, There are but few so in their own.

To such as these our Lord was sent; They're only sinners who repent.

What comfort can a Saviour bring To those who never felt their woe?

A sinner is a sacred thing; The Holy Ghost has made him so.

New life from him we must receive, Before for sin we rightly grieve. #89 Gadsby's Hymns

In the natural realm, a man may have a dread disease that is ravaging his body and may go to his grave without ever being aware of that which is killing him. He, as well, might be given a proper diagnosis of his disease, but then, may refuse the treatment necessary for its cure and thus perish. He, also, might have a deadly disease but seek out physicians and spend his living on those which do not have the expertise needed to resolve his problem and thus perish as well.

The work of the SPIRIT of GOD in those whom the LORD described as "they that are sick" is to first bring them to the awareness of that disease which, left unchecked, will indeed destroy them. Not only does HE cause them to recognize their "disease", but HE is faithful to deliver them into the hands of the GREAT PHYSICIAN who is not only able to heal all of their diseases, but is willing to do so. In addition HE causes them to desire this PHYSICIAN's aid and to wait upon HIM with great desire, hoping that HE will cleanse them from the filthiness of flesh and spirit which they are caused to hate and seek deliverance from. This is what Paul spoke of when he said, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 7:24-25) So as Hart said, "a sinner is a sacred thing, the HOLY GHOST hath made him so." HE convinces men of their abject wickedness before GOD and also their complete inability to deliver themselves from their dilemma.

When the LORD said, *“come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden”*, HE is speaking directly to those who have *“need of a PHYSICIAN”*. It can be rightly pointed out that HE speaks this as a command to those whom HE is pleased to call, in the same fashion in which HE commanded Lazarus to come forth from the tomb. There was no decision or activity of Lazarus’ free will involved in his resurrection, but rather a mighty display of the power of HIM who is LIFE itself. Such a glorious truth which the LORD, again, states saying, *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.”* (John 6:37) *“My sheep hear my voice, -----and they follow me.”* (John 10:27)

At the same time we see HIM speak these words with the tender wooing of ONE who leaves the ninety and nine and goes in search of that one whom HE loves which is lost. I believe we see an illustration of HIS tender care of HIS own when HE stood upon the sea shore as the disciples labored in fishing. *“Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.”* (John 21:12-13)

I am comforted greatly each time that I read this account, knowing that HE can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities and has compassion on sinners in the time of their need. HE gave forth a sincere invitation to those whom HE loved with an everlasting love saying *“Come and dine”*. This is in great measure the exact sentiment HE expressed as HE said, *“Come unto me, all ye that labor.”* Surely here is a great welcome spread before those who are in distress. Will HE turn away any who thus come, knowing they need a PHYSICIAN and believing that HE is the ONE who heals those who call upon HIM?

Is HE not as that father who saw his prodigal son a great way off and ran to him, embracing HIM and rejoicing that he who was lost has returned? *“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”* (Luke 15:10) *“The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.”* (Psa 145:18-19)

So we can rejoice that the LORD invites HIS children to gather around HIS table, to sit with HIM and enjoy HIS presence as HE is pleased to gather with them. *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* (Mat 18:20) Is this not a welcome place for sinners? It is here that HIS righteousness alone is put on display and those who have need of a PHYSICIAN can surely see HIM who healeth all their diseases, as we remember HIS death until HE comes again.

HE invites HIS children to bring their troubles before HIM. *“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”* (1Pet 5:7) *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* (Heb 4:15-16)

This world holds forth no welcome to those who desire this PHYSICIAN’s care nor does this PHYSICIAN welcome the world which has no need of repentance. *“I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”* (John 17:9) HE is a SAVIOR who is exactly suited to the needs of broken sinners and ever stands ready to receive them, tenderly watching over each one and calling them by name. Will HE disregard even the feeblest among them? *“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.”* (Mat 12:20)

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched, Weak and wounded, sick, and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you, Full of pity, joined with power;  
He is able, He is willing; doubt no more.  
Let not conscience make you linger, Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness he requireth, Is to feel your need of him,  
This he gives you, 'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.  
Come, ye weary, heavy laden, Lost and ruined by the fall;  
If you tarry till you're better, You will never come at all.

Not the righteous, Sinners Jesus came to call. Joseph Hart, #723 Gadsby's Hymns

HE shall lose none for whom HE came to save. HE is indeed the SAVIOR of sinners and has spread HIS table in the sight of HIS enemies, but furnished it with such delights that only those who have need of its bounty shall find nourishment there. Shall not HIS mercy follow them the days of their lives. Welcome here ye sinners, HE is the PHYSICIAN who heals. mam