

## “Come, Ye Sinners Poor and Needy” ~ Joseph Hart

Few Hymns for the last hundred years have been more frequently sung, at times of special spiritual refreshing, than that beginning,

*Come, ye sinners, poor and needy.*

It was written under the inspiration of a somewhat remarkable religious experience. Joseph Hart, its author was born in London in 1712. He was liberally educated, and commenced life as a teacher. At times, in early manhood, he was deeply interested in the subject of religion, and led a restrained and prayerful life. But he fell a victim to temptation, engaged in many evil practices, and gained an unenviable notoriety for his disregard of decency and religious truth. “I was,” he said, “in an abominable state, a loose backslider, and an audacious apostate.” He published heathen translations of a wicked tendency, and a skeptical work, entitled, “The Unreasonableness of Religion.”

His conscious errors and lapses were followed by terrible smightings of conscience, and these inward tortures, which gave him no peace, led at last to his reformation. He now began in earnest to seek the Saviour. After a period of great mental distress, he met with a change of heart, and experienced an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God. This happy change was wrought by his receiving a profound impression of the sufferings of Christ. He says, the week before Easter, 1757, “I had such an amazing view of the agony of Christ in the garden as I know not how well to describe. I was lost in wonder and adoration, and the impression was too deep, I believe, ever to be obliterated. I believe that no one can know anything of the suffering of Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost.” Under the influence of this experience he composed the first part of the hymn beginning

*Come, all ye chosen saints of God.*

This experience he has very vividly impressed upon his well-known hymn,

*Come, ye sinners, poor and needy.”*

*Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love and power.*

*Refrain*

*I will arise and go to Jesus,  
He will embrace me in His arms;*

*In the arms of my dear Savior,  
O there are ten thousand charms.*

*Come, ye thirsty, come, and welcome,  
God's free bounty glorify;  
True belief and true repentance,  
Every grace that brings you nigh.*

*Refrain*

*Come, ye weary, heavy laden,  
Lost and ruined by the fall;  
If you tarry till you're better,  
You will never come at all.*

*Refrain*

*View Him prostrate in the garden;  
On the ground your Maker lies.  
On the bloody tree behold Him;  
Sinner, will this not suffice?*

*Refrain*

*Lo! th'incarnate God ascended,  
Pleads the merit of His blood:  
Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude.*

*Refrain*

*Let not conscience make you linger,  
Not of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him.*

*Refrain*

*From, The Stories of the Hymns, by Hezekia Butterworth. 1872*

*"Please accept this token of God's love as a slight testimonial from a dying man. It is for your sweet music, the greatest gift of God."*

Monsieur E. A. Lefebre, the great saxophone soloist, once received a bouquet to which a note was attached, worded as above. It was at the Warwick hotel, in San Antonio, Tex. An

unaccountable depression had driven the great saxophonist to his beloved instrument, and he had been playing in his room all the afternoon. Thoughts of his childhood had gathered about him, and haunted him. Then he had played with tear-dimmed eyes a number of melodies that had lain idle in his brain more than forty years.

"Ah, those songs of the past, how they affect me I," he had just said to himself, as a vision of the fatherland and of other days arose before him. There was a timid knock at the door. "Come in," he said. A woman entered, and said that her husband in the next room was dying. The great artist was much affected at the thought that he had disturbed a dying man, and began to pour forth his regrets.

"Oh, you misunderstand me!" the woman exclaimed, "you have not disturbed him, you have helped him."

Then she explained that in two years she had not seen a smile on her husband's face, until that afternoon. As the unknown player had called those old melodies out of the past the sick man's face had lighted up with a glory that seemed to come from the other shore. The man whose soul was slipping away to the silent land wanted to hear "Jesus Lover of My Soul" played on the strange instrument in the next room. He had fancied he had heard his mother singing it that afternoon, although the grasses had been growing above her grave thirty years. Once, under the spell of the music, he had thought he caught a glimpse of her face, not old and wrinkled, but young and beautiful.

"Will you come to his room and play it for him?" the woman asked.

Silently Monsieur Lefebre followed the woman into the chamber of death. Then he took a position at the foot of the sick man's bed and softly played the old hymn. It was followed by "Nearer My God to Thee," "Sweet Spirit, Hear My Prayer," and other songs which take hold on the higher emotions. Finally the dying man made a faint signal to the player, and then in faltering words: "Won't you please play 'Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy!'"

Monsieur Lefebre played it, and softly took his leave. On the threshold he paused and looked back into the dying man's face. The eyes were gazing fixedly toward the undiscovered country. The last rays of the setting sun slanted in through the window, and rested on the sufferer's bed. Before the musician went to the opera house to fill his engagement that evening a maid handed him a bouquet and the note quoted at the beginning of this story.

"He's the richest man in all these parts," she said. I wonder what he wanted to hear 'Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy,' for."—*Exchange*.

**Poor And Needy.**—Dr. Cuyler says :—" Well might the legacy-giver of Calvary say that "not as the world giveth give I unto you ;' for this world bestows very meagerly. It promises much and gives but little. When the richest man, who has died in New York, within my memory was on

his dying-bed, he asked his attendants to sing for him. They sang the familiar old revival hymn, 'Come, ye sinners, poor and needy.' The dying millionaire said to them, in a plaintive tone, 'Yes, please sing that again for me. / *am poor and needy?* Ah! what could fifty millions of railway securities and bank stocks do for him on the verge of eternity? One verse out of the fourteenth chapter of John could bring him more peace than all the mines of California multiplied by all the bonds in the National Treasury. 'Poor and needy' was he? I count that one of the most pathetic sayings that ever fell from dying lips."