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Substance of Two Sermons preached by our Pastor  
on October 27. 1974.

Morning Lesson. John 3.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Revelation 22. 17.

In the closing chapter, inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by the apostle John in the Isle of Patmos, is this very beautiful, remarkable, wonderful use of the term Come. Our friends spiritual and exercised will be concerned that it includes them; for if we take initially the two-fold use of the blessed word by God you will see the amazing character of it. It is when our blessed Lord Himself bids you come, - come to Him. What an amazing thing it is for a sinner to receive an invitation from Christ to come to Him! It is very pleasant in loving circumstances to receive an invitation to come. Think of the disparity there is between God's glorious character, holiness and majesty and omnipotence and glory; and consider yourself with all your pollution, ruin and depravity; much to fill you with shame, misery and distress. How amazing it is that God should ever issue through Jehovah Jesus an invitation to sinners to come to Him!

So that is the first application of the word I would have you consider this morning. Do you receive in your soul through the precious, holy gospel invitations to come to Him? (I am speaking in brevity.) Another facet is, how amazing when by the wondrous, efficacious power, influence and work of the Holy Spirit in your soul you are so capacitated for the Advent of Christ to your soul to be personal, that you are able under the Spirit to send an invitation to Christ to come into your heart!

I want you to deeply ponder this. I wonder how many there are in the congregation this morning who feel in such a frame of soul that you are able with the unction of the Spirit and the authority of the Holy Ghost to invite Christ to come in to your heart? I suppose one of the sweetest couplets in the hymn to me is that of Allen's (952)

when he says; "We bow as sinners at Thy feet," now what? "And bid Thee welcome to our heart." - send a welcome: extend a welcome to Christ to come to your heart! You may say; "This seems as remote from me as the sun or the moon; as remote as Saturn, that I should ever be in such a blessed frame of soul to give Christ a welcome to come into my heart."

I should give you time to deeply ponder. You may say to me; "Is it possible?" O yes! You heard at length recently concerning the verse in the Canticles. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." 'Spices.' the oderiferous, sweet, holy perfume of humility and love. And, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."- The time is ripe and proper that He should come into my heart; into His garden." Dear friends, are we in this position now? I wish we could live there, and never remove from it: that we could be always in this blessed state; so capacitated by grace as to extend to the Saviour a sweet welcome. That is what the Christian faith and religion is about. It is not a matter of formality; of a few things that are unimportant; that relate to the traditions of men or official religion. It is to know what it is to have an invitation issued, sent to your soul from Christ, and to extend a welcome to Christ to come to you. Really, if only you deeply ponder this it would be sufficient to assimilate, and the best part would be, not for me by the help of God to give an exposition of the Text, but for you to get it in your very soul.

A few other points. I judge what has been instrumental in leading me to this portion has been the blessed translation of several dear friends to glory recently. Two have gone to rest, and their bodies have been laid to rest: and two have gone and their bodies are yet to be laid to rest. Both were so richly, abundantly prepared for glory. The word, as you go on through the paragraph, you will see the Lord is speaking, and His people. Take the last blessed word; "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." And this is like the last prayer; "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come to my heart. Come." There the word 'come' means "come to take me home. Come to take me on Thy kind wings; to release me from my cage, that I may stretch my wings and fly to Christ, my All." It is the last prayer, and you will pray it many times in your

journey, child of God. You will say; "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come and take Thy mourning people home: weary of earth, self, sin. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Sweet prayer! and the Lord has answered it in the cases of those who have gone to their eternal rest and see the King in His beauty. So that is why the Lord has sent me with this word.

I want to say another word discreetly: are you concerned with confirmations? with anything that is confirmatory? To the rather sweet astonishment of my soul, the prayer in the vestry before we came into the Sanctuary, contained a reference to the water of life. It was very sweet to me because our brother knew nothing of the Text. Here is the water of life. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." So you will be on the look-out for divine confirmations, and I trust this was one of them. Let us by the grace of God, endeavour to speak to the sacred Scripture. It falls evenly into two distinct sections, and a title may be given to both. First is the very blessed, gracious, holy invocation; "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." That is the holy invocation. The second section is the blessed, sacred, powerful, efficacious gospel invitation; "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

You will remember I suggested on Thursday that the Text was really an answer to what we read in the Lesson; "Who then can be saved?" For when the Lord referred to the rich man and said; "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, (not a needle you use in sewing)- a gate; the small gate.- than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." and they said; "Who then can be saved?" I suggested to you that this is a question you often ask ~~yourself~~ concerning yourself, and perhaps concerning others: chiefly self. Our Text was clearly one of the answers to the question, so I will just name it to you. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." This is of course, basic, holy doctrine concerning those who will be saved. - I know this is in the inverse order, but I feel to stay on it.- You say; "Who then can be, or is, saved?" I will give a definition of those who may entertain a hope of being saved, because if you are not saved you are lost. How old are you? You have just a little while,- "Remember how short my time is." - and it will be the end of mortal life

for us. If you are not saved, you will be lost,- and I. I do not want you to think, and I speak now to those of considerable experience of the world and of life: I do not want you to think the preacher is settling in a cosy place and saying, It is all right with me. I am far from that. I am deeply concerned. I want to know I am ready, and that the Lord is in my heart. So do not think those who really love and fear God settle in a nice cosy place and think; "We are all right, and those outside we can forget; far from it. That is Pharisaism; self-righteousness.

So I will deal with the basic thing; "Who then can be saved?" What from? Did you use the word 'saved'? Do you ever think what? Do you ever ponder it? Saved. I suppose I shall begin with what is uppermost in your minds. It means, saved from hell. Some will say; "Outmoded. It is a myth. There is no such thing." Well then, if it is a myth why have you any religion at all? Why the Christian faith? Why the Bible if there is nothing to be saved from? I suggest to you, if your conscience is operative and you do something that is a violation of God's law, you have got a taste of hell in your conscience. No one can make you happy. If you had £10 million you would still be miserable because you have a taste of hell in your conscience: you are guilty. Those who are on the run,- some have gone out to Australia and changed everything they could, and when they have been intercepted by brilliant men they have been glad to give themselves up. They have not known how to live with the hell within. Not all are like that. There is such a thing as a conscience that is seared and ceases to operate.

Saved: what from? Hell; but that is not all. Saved from sin, from guilt, from the power of sin, saved from the wrath to come; saved. You listen: you are in God's House now. You acknowledge it; you have no wish to contradict it. I ask you a plain, pointed question. Are you saved or lost? I expect some would say; "I do not know. There is no certainty about it; no assurance. I do not know." Then you must live an anxious and trembling life. Boy, do you try and pray? You may say; "Me? God would not listen to me." You try. If you feel your need of salvation, you try to pray. Ask God for mercy. Get on your knees in a secret place, and ask God to have mercy on you.

So let me develop this. Who is it, or what is the definition of being

saved? We have it before us in the last part of the Text. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." I will just remind you, the water of life is grace, love divine from the heart of God. Water is for thirsty sinners to drink. God has provided it.

"Drink, and for ever bless His name,  
From whom these streams of mercy came." (996)

Here is a simple, profound, vital, concise summary of who is saved. I will take it up because some of you may not be here this afternoon. There is this living water. If you drink you are safe. Notice how the word is introduced; "And whosoever will," It is universal: it stretches round the human race. When you think the world population will soon be six hundred millions of people, and this <sup>is</sup> absolutely universal, cosmopolitan, people of all nations, whatever the colour of their skin, - whosoever will.

This is a thing I want to work out with you for a few minutes.

"Whosoever will." One of the great gifts of God; one of the qualities He has given to men is a will. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ When God created Adam He gave him a will. It is clear to you if you have no will you would be like a body without a backbone; almost like a lump of protoplasm. He gives you a will. Think of the driving force and the energy of the will! In the pristine innocence of man, before Adam fell, the will was obsequious to God. Immediately man fell, and his fall was complete, his ruin utter; his will came into bondage to sin and Satan, so in man's unregenerate state his will is in bondage to Satan and sin. He has no will for anything else: it is clearly so; it is sadly and terribly so, and you see it all round you and in you, in your own flesh and blood. The Bible? the Lord's Day? divine worship? There is no will for that: there <sup>is</sup> for everything else. Man's will is sin, the world, gaiety, vanity, pleasure, money, nothing else, - sin. I am going to be plain with you, and you must admit it: man in his natural state, - and with a gracious person there is corrupt flesh; - the plain truth is, corrupt nature loves sin. I am not wrapping it up. Man's fallen nature loves sin, and his will is in bondage to sin. The whole driving force of the will is going in the opposite direction to God. Take the word "whosoever will." Your will must be sanctified by the Spirit of God to give you the impetus to seek the

water of life, and to polarise your whole life so you are looking in the other direction.

"Whosoever will," It is as simple as that, if you have a sanctified will. When the Lord quickens a soul into life He deals with every part of the sinner, and with his will. He does not neutralise it: He sanctifies it. You need it. Do you understand? If I could reverently illustrate it with a gear box,- your will is to sin. Satan puts your will into reverse, away from all that is good and holy. When the Lord deals with you in mercy, He does not put your gear into neutral: He puts it in forward. What good is it if your gear is in neutral? He puts it to forward; to Christ; "and whosoever will." So you see your will is sanctified. Let me illustrate from the apostle Paul; as Saul of Tarsus he was a wrecker. He put the whole force of his will into bondage to sin and Satan; to wrecking. When the Lord dealt with him and blessed his soul, he was a builder, and the force of his sanctified will went to building. That is the point. If you have a sanctified will there is a tremendous power in you to take you to all that is holy and good and right; to the Lord.

So it is "whosoever will." Have you this will, taking you in the direction of Christ, heaven, the Holy Scriptures, and the Lord's holy Day, to His royal statutes, the law of liberty? "And whosoever will," Say it to the whole world: Whosoever of you,- you may be hidden: you may be base sinners, rebels; hard sinners in life; you may have roughed it; you know the world. When the Lord deals in mercy it is "whosoever will," and the poor old sinner seeks mercy. This is not soft stuff: it is real, stern, blessed, vital, efficacious, powerful.

"And whosoever will," I am saying it to you this morning. I wish I could say it to all in the parish. I suppose in Hailsham there are ten thousand people: probably two hundred go to Church. "And whosoever will," They may be poor abandoned sinners, outcasts, who have fallen into disgrace and wretchedness. If the Lord in mercy gives them a new heart it is "whosoever will," How wonderful, is it not? I often think of a dear man of God in the East End of London who devoted his life to poor abandoned characters, and he told how there was one man he was especially interested in. In all his misery and rags he would spend his nights under a barrow,- I think it was in Billingsgate, and the dear man of God began

to try to talk with him, and over weeks and months he succeeded. The man confided to him that he was a doctor of medicine. Through evil habits and complete intoxication he had left his wife and family and practice and disappeared, and he was living in this awful state. The end was, the dear man was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. "And whosoever will," He was delivered from sin, and by a miracle re-united with his wife and family, and completely restored. It is a happy thing to save a soul from death. Thanks be to God. Amen.