

# The Indwelling and Outflowing of the Holy Spirit

by C. H. SPURGEON

*“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”—John 7:38,39.*

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you”—John 16:7.*

It is essential, dear friends, that we should worship the living and true God. It will be ill for us if it can be said, “Ye worship ye know not what,” “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” The heathen err from this command by multiplying gods, and making this and that image to be the object of their adoration. Their excess runs to gross superstition and idolatry. I fear that sometimes we who “profess and call ourselves Christians” err in exactly the opposite direction. Instead of worshipping more than God I fear we worship less than God. This appears when we forget to pay due adoration to the Holy Spirit of God. The true God is triune, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and though there be but one God yet that one God has manifested himself to us in the trinity of his sacred persons. If, then, I worship the Father and the Son, but forget or neglect to adore the Holy Spirit, I worship less than God. While the poor heathen in his ignorance goes far beyond and transgresses, I must take care lest I fall short and fail too. What a grievous thing it will be if we do not pay that loving homage and reverence to the Holy Spirit which is so justly his due. May it not be the fact that we enjoy less of his power and see less of his working in the world because the church of God has not been sufficiently mindful of him? It is a blessed thing to preach the work of Jesus Christ, but it is an evil thing to omit the work of the Holy Ghost; for the work of the Lord Jesus itself is no blessing to that man who does not know the work of the Holy Spirit. There is the ransom price, but it is only through the Spirit that we know the redemption; there is the precious blood, but it is as though the fountain had never been filled unless the Spirit of God lead us with repenting faith to wash therein. The bandage is soft and the ointment is effectual, but the wound will never be healed till the Holy Spirit shall apply that which the great Physician has provided. Let us not therefore be found neglectful of the work of the divine Spirit, lest we incur guilt, and inflict upon ourselves serious damage.

You that are believers have the most forcible reasons to hold the Holy Ghost in the highest esteem; for what are you now without him? What were you, and what would you still have been, if it had not been for his gracious work upon you? He quickened you, else you had not been in the living family of God to-day. He gave you understanding that you might know the truth, else would you have been as ignorant as the carnal world is at this hour. It was he that awakened your conscience, convincing you of sin: it was he that taught you to believe, and made you see that glorious Person who is to be believed, even Jesus, the Son of God. The Spirit has wrought in you your faith and love and hope, and every grace. There is not a jewel upon the neck of your soul which he did not place there.

“For every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are his alone.”

What have we learned, if we have learned aright, except by the teaching of the Holy Ghost? What can we say either in prayer to God or in teaching to men that shall be acceptable unless we receive the unction of the Holy One of Israel? Brethren, who is it that has comforted us in our distresses, directed us in our perplexities, strengthened us in our weaknesses, and helped our infirmities in ten thousand ways? Is it not the Comforter whom the Father hath sent in Jesus’ name? Can I speak too highly of the riches of his grace toward us? Can I too much extol the love of the Spirit? I know I cannot, and you that know what he has wrought in you delight to hear him highly spoken of and his work and offices set forth. We are bound by a thousand ties to seek his honour who has wrought in us our salvation. Let us never grieve him by our ingratitude, but let us endeavour to extol him. For my part, it shall be the labour of this morning to impress upon you the necessity for his work, and the superlative value of it.

Beloved Brethren, notwithstanding all that the Spirit of God has already done in us, it is very possible that we have missed a large part of the blessing which he is willing to give, for he is able to “do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.” We have already come to Jesus, and we have drunk of the life-giving stream: our thirst is quenched, and we are made to live in him. Is this all? Now that we are living in him, and rejoicing to do so, have we come to the end of the matter? Assuredly not. We have reached as far as that first exhortation of the Master, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink”: but do you think that the generality of the church of God have ever advanced to the next, “He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”? I think I am not going beyond the grievous truth if I say that only here and there will you find men and women who have believed up to that point. Their thirst is quenched, as I have said, and they live, and because Jesus lives they shall live also, but health and vigour they have not: they have life, but they have not life more abundantly. They have little life with which to act upon others: they have no energy welling up and overflowing to go streaming out of them like rivers. They have not thought it possible to themselves; or believing it possible to themselves they have not aspired to it, but they have stopped short of the fullest blessing. Their wading into the sacred river has contented them and they know nothing of “waters to swim in.” Like the Israelites of old, they are slow to possess all the land of promise, but sit down when the war was hardly begun. brothers let us go in to get of God all that God will give us: let us set our heart upon this, that we mean to have by God’s help all that the infinite goodness of God is ready to bestow. Let us not be satisfied with the sip that saves, but let us go on to the baptism which buries the flesh and raises us in the likeness of the risen Lord: even that baptism into the Holy Ghost and into fire which makes us spiritual and sets us all on flame with zeal for the glory of God and eagerness for usefulness by which that glory may be increased among the sons of men.

Thus I introduce you to my texts, and by their guidance we will enter upon the further consideration of the operations of the Holy Spirit, especially of those to which we would aspire.

I. We will commence with the remark that **THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH THE WORK OF CHRIST**. It is a great pity when persons preach the Holy Spirit’s work so as to obscure the work of Christ; and I have known some do that, for as they have held up before the sinner’s eye the inward experience of believers, instead of lifting up first and foremost the crucified Saviour to whom we must look and live. The gospel is not “Behold the Spirit of God” but “Behold the lamb of God.” It is an equal pity when Christ is so preached that the Holy Spirit is ignored; as if faith in Jesus prevented the necessity of the new birth, and imputed righteousness rendered imparted righteousness needless. Have I not often reminded you that in the third chapter of John, where Jesus taught Nicodemus the doctrine, “Except a man be born again of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven,” we also read those blessed words, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” The necessity for regeneration by the Spirit is there put very clearly, and so is the free promise that those who trust in Jesus shall be saved. This is what we ought to do: we must take care to let both these truths stand out most distinctly with equal prominence. They are intertwined with each other and are necessary each to each: what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

They are so joined together that, first of all, *the Holy Spirit was not given until Jesus had been glorified*. Carefully note our first text; it is a very striking one: "This spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet." The word "given" is not in the original" it is inserted by the translators to help out the sense, and they were perhaps wise in making such an addition, but the words are more forcible by themselves. How strong the statement, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet." O course, we none of us dream that the Holy Spirit was not yet existing, for he is eternal and self-existent, being most truly God, but he was not yet in fellowship with man to the full extent in which he now is since Jesus Christ is glorified. The near and dear intercourse of God with man which is expressed by the indwelling of the Spirit could not take place till redeeming work was done and the Redeemer was exalted. As far as men were concerned, and the fulness of the blessing was concerned, indicated by the outflowing rivers of living water, the Spirit of God was not yet. "Oh," say you, "but was not the Spirit of God in the church in the wilderness, and with the saints of God in all former ages?" I answer, Certainly, but not in the manner in which the Spirit of God now resides in the church of Jesus Christ. You read of the prophets, and of one and another gracious man, that the Spirit of God came upon them, seized them, moved them, spake by them; but he did not dwell in them. His operations upon men were a coming and a going: they were carried away by the Spirit of God, and came under his power, but the Spirit of God did not rest upon them or abide in them. Occasionally the sacred endowment of the Spirit of God came upon them, but they knew not "the communion of the Holy Ghost." As a French pastor very sweetly puts it, "He appeared unto men; he did not incarnate himself in man. His action was intermittent: he went and came, like the dove which Noah sent forth from the ark, and which went to and fro, finding no rest; while in the new dispensation he dwells, he abides in the heart, as the dove, his emblem, which John the Baptist saw descending and alighting upon the head of Jesus. Affianced of the soul, the Spirit went off to see his betrothed, but was not yet one with her; the marriage was not consummated until the Pentecost, after the glorification of Jesus Christ." You know how our Lord puts it, "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." That indwelling is another thing from being *with* us.

The Holy Spirit was with the Apostles in the days when Jesus was with them; but he was not in them in the sense in which he filled them at and after the day of Pentecost. The operations of the Spirit of God before our Lord's ascension were not according to the full measure of the gospel, but now the Spirit of God has been poured upon us from on high; now he has descended, and now he abides in the midst of the church, and now we enter into him and are baptized into the Holy Ghost, while he enters into us and makes our bodies to be his temples. Jesus said, "I will send you another Comforter, which shall abide with you for ever;" not coming and going, but remaining in the midst of the church. This shows how intimately the gift of the Holy Ghost is connected with our Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch as in the fullest sense of his indwelling the Holy Ghost could not be with us until Christ had been glorified. It has been well observed that our Lord sent out seventy evangelists to preach the gospel, even as he had aforetime sent out the twelve; and no doubt they preached with great zeal and produced much stir; but the Holy Ghost never took the trouble to preserve one of their sermons, or even the notes of one. I have not the slightest doubt that they were very crude an incomplete, showing more of human zeal than of divine unction, and hence they are forgotten; but no sooner had the Holy Spirit fallen than Peter's first sermon is recorded, and henceforth we have frequent notes of the utterances of apostles, deacons, and evangelists. There was an abiding fulness, and an overflowing of blessing, out of the souls of the saints after the Lord was glorified, which was not existing among men before that time.

Observe, too, that the Holy Spirit was given after the ascent of our divine Lord into his glory, partly *to make that ascent the more renowned*. When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts to men. These gifts were men in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt, who preached the gospel unto the nations. The shedding of the Holy Spirit upon the assembled disciples on that memorable day was the glorification of the risen Christ upon the earth. I know not in what way the Father could have made the glory of heaven so effectually to flow from the heights of the New Jerusalem and to come streaming down among the sons of men as by giving that chief of all gifts, the gift of the Holy Spirit when the Lord had risen and gone into his glory. With emphasis may I say of the Spirit at Pentecost that he glorified Christ by descending at such a time. What grander celebration could there have been? Heaven rang with hosannahs, and earth echoed the joy. The descending Spirit is the noblest testimony among men to the glory of the ascended Redeemer.

Was not the Spirit of God also sent at that time *as an evidence of our divine Master's acceptance*? Did not the Father thus say to the church, "My Son has finished the work, and has fully entered into his glory; therefore give I you of the Holy Spirit"? If you would know what a harvest is to come of the sowing of the bloody sweat and of the death wounds, see the first fruits. Behold how the Holy Spirit is given, himself to be the first fruits, the earnest of the glory which shall yet be revealed in us. I want no better attestation from God of the finished work of Jesus than this blazing, flaming seal of tongues of fire upon the heads of the disciples. He must have done his work, or such a boon as this would not have come from it.

Moreover, if you desire to see how the work of the Spirit comes to us in connection with the work of Christ, recollect that *it is the Spirit's work to bear witness of Jesus Christ*. He does not take of a thousand different matters and show them to us, but he shall take "of mine," saith Christ, "and he shall show them unto you." The Spirit of God is engaged in a service in which the Lord Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end. He comes to men that they may come to Jesus. Hence he comes to convince us of sin that he may reveal the great sacrifice of sin: he comes to convince us of righteousness that we may see the righteousness of Christ; and of judgment that we may be prepared to meet him when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Do not think that the Spirit of God has come or ever will come among us to teach us a new gospel or something other than is written in the Scriptures. Men come to me with their fudges and fancies, and tell me that they were revealed to them by the Holy Spirit. I abhor their blasphemous impertinence, and refuse to listen to them for a minute. They tell me this and that absurdity, and then father it upon the Spirit of wisdom. It is enough to try our patience to hear their foolish ravings; but to find the Holy Spirit charged with them is more than we can bear. We have tests and judgments by which to know whether they who claim to speak by the Holy Spirit do so or not: for the testimony to the Spirit is ever most honourable to our Lord Jesus Christ, and does not concern itself with the trifles of time and the follies of the flesh.

*It is by the gospel of Jesus Christ that the Spirit of God works in the hearts of men.* "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God": the Holy Spirit uses the hearing of the word of God for the conviction, conversion, consolation, and sanctification of men. His usual and ordinary methods of operation is to fasten upon the mind the things of God, and to put life and force into the consideration of them. He revives in men's memories things that have long been forgotten, and he frequently makes these the means of affecting the heart and conscience. The men can hardly recollect hearing these truths, but still they were heard by them at some time or other. Saving truths are such matters as are contained in their substance in the word of God, and lie within the range of the teaching, or the person, or work, or offices of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the Spirit's one business here below to reveal Christ to us and in us, and to that work he steadily adheres.

Moreover, *the Holy Spirit's work is to conform us to the likeness of Jesus Christ*. He is not working us to this or that human ideal, but he is working us into the likeness of Christ that he may be the first-born among many brethren. Jesus Christ is that standard and model to which the Spirit of God by his sanctifying processes is bringing us till Christ be formed in us the hope of glory.

*Evermore it is for the glory of Jesus that the Spirit of God works.* He works not for the glory of a church or of a community: he works not for the hour of a man or for the distinction of a sect: his one great object is to glorify Christ. "He shall glorify me" is our Saviour's declaration, and when he takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, we are led more and more to reverence and love and adore our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

I will not detain you longer with this. You will see how the works of Jesus and of the Spirit are joined together indissolubly, so that we may neither set the work of Jesus before the work of the Spirit nor the work of the Spirit before the work of Jesus, but we are glad to joy in both and to make much of them. As we delight in the Father's love and the grace of our Lord Jesus, so do we equally rejoice in the communion of the Holy Ghost, and these three agree in one.

II. We will now advance another step, and here we shall need our second text. THE OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE OF INCOMPARABLE VALUE. They are of such incomparable value that the very best thing we can think of was not thought to be so precious as these are. Our Lord himself says, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Beloved friends, the presence of Jesus Christ was of inestimable value to his disciples, and yet it was not such an advantage to his servants as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Is not this a wonderful statement? Well might our Lord preface it by saying, "Now I tell you the truth," as if he felt that they would find it a hard saying, for a hard saying it is. Consider for a moment what Christ was to his disciples while he was here, and then see what must be the value of the Spirit's operations when it is expedient that they should lose all that blessing in order to receive the Spirit of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ was to them their teacher, they had learned everything from his lips: he was their leader, they had never to ask what to do, they had only to follow in his steps: he was their defender, whenever the Pharisees or Sadducees assailed them he was like a brazen wall to them: he was their comforter, in all time of grief they resorted to him, and his dear sympathetic heart poured out floods of comfort at once. What if I were to say that a father is to his children, ay, what a mother is to her suckling, that was Jesus Christ to his disciples; and yet the Spirit of God's abiding in the church is better even than all this.

Now take another thought. What would you think if Jesus Christ were to come among us now as in the days of his flesh: I mean not as he will come, but as he appeared at his first advent. What joy it would give you! Oh, the delights, the heavenly joys, to hear that Jesus Christ of Nazareth was on earth again, a man among men! Should we not clap our hands for joy? Our one question would be, "Master, where dwellest thou? for we should all long to live just where he lived. We could then sympathize with the negroes when they flocked into Washington in large numbers to take up their residence there. Why, think you, did they come to live in that city? Because Massa Abraham Lincoln lived there who had set them free, and they thought it would be glorious to live as near as possible to their great friend. If Jesus lived anywhere, it would not matter where, if it were in the desert or on the bleakest of mountains, there would be a rush to the place. How would the spot be crowded; what rent they would pay for the worst of tenements if Jesus was but in the neighbourhood. But do you not see the difficulty? We could not all get near him in any literal or corporeal fashion. Now that the church is multiplied into millions of believers, some of the Lord's followers would never be able to see him, and the most could only hope to speak with him now and then. In the days of his flesh the twelve might see him every day, and so might the little company of disciples, but the case is altered now that multitudes are trusting in his name.

If our Lord were at this time living in the United States we should be much grieved to have an ocean between us and our leader: all the companies that could be formed would not be able to run enough boats to carry us over. If the Master personally came here to this little island, it would not hold all the vast company of the faithful who would flock to it. It is much better to have the Holy Spirit, because he is dwelling with us and in us. The difficulties of the bodily presence are too great, and so, we would be thankful, like the apostles, if we had known Christ after the flesh, yet we do not marvel that they expressed little sorrow when they said that after the flesh they knew even him no more. The Comforter had filled the void caused by his absence, and made them rejoice because the Lord had gone unto his Father.

Are we not apt to think that if our Lord Jesus were here it would give unspeakable strength to the church? Would not the enemy be convinced if they saw him? No, they would not. If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither would they be converted though one rose from the dead. Jesus rose, but they did not therefore believe. If our Lord had lingered here all this while his personal presence would not have converted unbelievers, for nothing can do that but the power of the Holy Ghost.

“But,” you say, “surely it would thrill the church with enthusiasm.” Fancy the Lord himself standing on this platform this morning in the same garb as when he was upon earth. Oh, what rapturous worship! What burning zeal! What enthusiasm! We should go home in such a state of excitement as we never were in before. Yes, it is even so, but then the Lord is not going to carry on his kingdom by the force of mere mental excitement, not even by such enthusiasm as would follow the sight of his person. The work of the Holy Spirit is a truer work, a deeper work, a surer work, and will more effectually achieve the purposes of God than even would the enthusiasm to which we should be stirred by the bodily presence of our well-beloved Saviour. The work is to be spiritual, and therefore the visible presence has departed. It is better that it should be so. We must walk by faith, and by faith alone; how could we do this if we could see the Lord with these mortal eyes? This dispensation of the unseen Spirit, in which we render glory to God by trusting in his word, and relying upon the unseen energy. Now, faith works and faith triumphs though the world seeth not the foundation upon which faith is built, for the Spirit who works in us cannot be discerned by carnal minds: the world seeth him not, neither knoweth him.

Thus you see that the operations of the Holy Spirit must be inestimably precious. There is no calculating their value, since it is expedient that we lose the bodily presence of Christ rather than remain without the indwelling of the Spirit of God.

III. Now go back to my first text again and follow me in the third head. Those operations of the Spirit of God, of which I am afraid some Christians are ignorant, are of wondrous power. The text says, “He that believeth on me, out of the midst of him shall flow rivers of living water.” THESE OPERATIONS ARE OF MARVELLOUS POWER. Brethren, do you understand my text? Do rivers of living water flow out of you?

Notice, first, that this is to be an *inward work*: the rivers of living water are to flow out of the midst of the man. The words are according to our version, “Out of his belly”—that is, from his heart and soul. The rivers do not flow out of his mouth: the promised power is not oratory. We have had plenty of words, floods of words; but this is an inward work at its fountain head. It is not a work of talent and ability, and show, and glitter, and glare: it is altogether an inward work. The life-flood is to come out of the man’s inmost self, out of the bowels and essential being of the man. Homage is shown too generally to outward form and external observance, though these soon lose their interest and power; but when the Spirit of God rests within a man it exercises a home rule within him and he gives great attention to what an old divine was wont to call “the home department.” Alas, many neglect the realm within which is the chief province under our care! O my brother in Christ, if you would be useful, begin with yourself. It is out of your very soul that a blessing must come. It cannot come out of you if it is not in you: and it cannot be in you unless God the Holy Ghost places it there.

Next, it is *life-giving work*. Out of the heart of the man, out of the centre of his life, are to flow rivers of living water; that is to say, he is instrumentally to communicate to others the divine life. When he speaks, when he prays, when he acts, he shall so speak and pray and act that there shall be going out of him an emanation which is full of the life of grace and godliness. He shall be a light by which others shall see. His life shall be the means of kindling life in other men’s bosoms. “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Note the *plenitude* of it. The figure would have been a surprising one if it had said, “Out of him shall flow a river of living water”; but it is not so: it says rivers. Have you ever stood by the side of a very abundant spring? We have some such not far from London. You see the water bubbling up from many little mouths. Observe the sand dancing as the water forces its way from the bottom; and there, just across the road, a mill is turned by the stream which has just been created by the spring, and when the water-wheel is turned you see a veritable river flowing forward to supply Father Thames. Yet this is only one river; what would you think if you saw a spring yielding such supplies that a river flowed from it to the north, and a river to the south, a river to the east, and a river to the west; this is the figure before us: rivers of living water flowing out of the living man in all directions. “Ah,” say you, “I have not reached to that.” A point is gained when you know, confess, and deplore your failure. If you say, “I have all things and abound,” I am afraid you will never reach the fulness of the blessing; but if you know something of your failure, the Lord will lead you further. It may be that the spirit of life which comes forth of you is but a trickling brooklet, or even a few tiny drops; then be sure to confess it, and you will be on the way to a fuller blessing. What a word is this! Rivers of living water!! Oh that all professing Christians were such fountains.

See how *spontaneous* it is: “Out of the midst of him shall flow.” No pumping is required; nothing is said about machinery and hydraulics; the man does not want exciting and stirring up, but, just as he is, influence of the best kind quietly flows away from him. Did you ever hear a great hubbub in the morning, a great outcry, a sounding of trumpets and drums, and did you ever ask, “What is it?” Did a voice reply, “The sun is about to rise, and he is making this noise that all may be aware of it”? No, he shines, but he has nothing to say about it; even so the genuine Christian just goes about flooding the world with blessing, and so far from claiming attention for himself, it may be that he himself is unconscious of what he is effecting. God so blesses him that his leaf does not wither, and whatsoever he doeth is prospering, for he is like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth its fruit in its season: his verdure and fruit are the natural outcome of his vigorous life. Oh, the blessed spontaneity of the work of grace when a man gets into the fulness of it, for then he seems to eat and drink and sleep eternal life, and he spreads a savour of salvation all round.

And this is to be *perpetual*,—not like intermittent springs which burst forth and flow in torrents, and then cease,—but it is to be an everyday outgushing. In summer and winter, by day and by night, wherever the man is, he shall be a blessing. As he breathes, he shall breathe benedictions; as he thinks, his mind shall be devising generous things; and when he acts, his acts shall be as though the hand of God were working by the hand of man.

I hope I hear many sighs rising up in the place! I hope I hear friends saying, “Oh that I could get to that.” I want you to attain the fulness of the favour. I pray that we may all get it; for because Jesus Christ is glorified therefore the Holy Spirit is given in this fashion, given more largely to those in the kingdom of heaven than to all those holy men before the Lord’s ascent to his glory. God gives no stinted blessing to celebrate the triumph of his Son: God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. On such an occasion heaven’s grandest liberality was displayed. Christ is glorified in heaven above, and God would have him glorified in the church below by vouchsafing a baptism of the Holy Ghost to each of us.

So I close this, which I hope will be a very comforting and inspiring reflection:—

IV. THESE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD ARE EASILY TO BE OBTAINED BY THE LORD’S CHILDREN. Did you say you had not received them? They are to be had, they are to be had at once. First, they are to be had by *believing in Jesus*. “This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.” Do you not see that it is faith which gives us the first drink and causes us to live, and this second more abundant blessing of being ourselves made fountains from which rivers flow comes in the same way? Believe in Christ, for the blessing is to be obtained, not by the works of the law, nor by so much of fasting, striving, and effort, but by belief in the Lord Jesus for it. With him is the residue of the Spirit. He is prepared to give this to you, ay, to every one of you who believe on his name. He will not of course make all of you preachers; for who then would be hearers? If all were preachers the other works of the church would be neglected; but he will give you this favour, that out of you there shall stream a divine influence all round you to bless your children, to bless your servants, to bless the workmen in the house where you are employed, and to bless the street you live in. In proportion as God gives you opportunity these rivers of living water will flow in this channel and in that, and they will be pouring forth from you at all times, if you believe in Jesus for the full blessing, and can by faith receive it.

But there is another thing to be done as well, and that is *to pray*; and here I want to remind you of those blessed words of the Master, “Everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” You see, there is a distinct promise to the children of God, that their heavenly Father will give them the Holy Spirit if they ask for his power; and that promise is made to be exceedingly strong by the instances joined to it. If there be a promise that God can break (which there is not), this is not the promise, for God has put it in the most forcible and binding way. I know not how to show you its wonderful force. Did you ever hear of a man who when his child asked for bread gave him a stone? Go to the worst part of London, and will you find a man of that kind? You shall if you like, get among pirates and murderers, and when a little child cries, “Father, give me a bit of bread and meat,” does the most wicked father fill his own little one’s mouth with stones? Yet the Lord seems to say that this is what he would be doing if he were to deny us the Holy Spirit when we ask him for his necessary working: he would be like one that gave his children stones instead of bread. Do you think the Lord will ever bring himself down to that? But he says, “*How much more* shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” He makes it a stronger case than that of an ordinary parent.

The Lord must give us the Spirit when we ask him, for he has herein bound himself by no ordinary pledge. He has used a simile which would bring dishonour on his own name, and that of the very grossest kind, if he did not give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Oh, then, let us ask him at once, with all our hearts. Am I not so happy as to have in this audience some who will immediately ask? I pray that some who have never received the Holy Spirit at all may now be led, while I am speaking, to pray, “Blessed Spirit, visit me; lead me to Jesus.” But especially those of you that are the children of God,—to you is this promise especially made. Ask God to make you all that the Spirit of God can make you, not only a satisfied believer who has drunk for himself, but a useful believer, who overflows the neighborhood with blessing. I see here a number of friends from the country who have come to spend their holiday in London. What a blessing it would be if they went back to their respective churches overflowing; for there are numbers of churches that need flooding; they are dry as a barn-floor, and little dew ever falls on them. Oh that they might be flooded! What a wonderful thing a flood is! Go down to the river, look over the bridge, and see the barges and other craft to the river, look over the bridge, and see the barges and other craft lying in the mud. All the king’s horses and all the king’s men cannot tug them out to sea. There they lie, dead and motionless as the mud itself. What shall we do with them? What machinery can move them? Have we a great engineer among us who will devise a scheme for lifting these vessels and bearing them down to the river’s mouth? No, it cannot be done. Wait till the tide comes in! What a change! Each vessel walks the water like a thing of life. What a difference between the low tide and the high tide. You cannot stir the boats when the water is gone; but when the tide is at the full see how readily they move; a little child may push them with his hand.

Oh, for a flood of grace. The Lord send to all our churches a great springtide! Then the indolent will be active enough, and those who were half dead will be full of energy. I know that in this particular dock several vessels are lying that I should like to float, but I cannot stir them. They neither work for God nor come out to the prayer-meetings, nor give of their substance to spread the gospel. If the flood would come you would see what they are capable of: they would be active, fervent, generous, abounding in every good word and work. So may it be! So may it be! May springs begin to flow in all our churches, and may all of you who hear me this day get your share of the streams. Oh that the Lord may now fill you and then send you home bearing a flood of grace with you. It sounds oddly to speak of a man’s carrying home a flood within him, and yet I hope it will be so, and that out of you shall flow rivers of living water. So may God grant for Jesus’ sake. Amen.



