

THE SPIRIT- FILLED LIFE

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The Spirit-Filled Life by John MacNeil

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JOHN MACNEIL

**THE SPIRIT-
FILLED LIFE**

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SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

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BY THE LATE
REV. JOHN MACNEIL, B. A.

INTRODUCTION BY THE
REV. ANDREW MURRAY

Be filled with the Spirit—EPH. v. 18

CHICAGO
THE BIBLE INSTITUTE COLPORTAGE ASSOCIATION
250 LA SALLE AVENUE

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INTRODUCTION.

I have been asked by the publishers to write a few lines introducing this book to American Christians. I count it a privilege to be allowed to do so.

The one thing needful for the church of Christ in our day, and for every member of it, is to be filled with the spirit of Christ. Christianity is nothing except as it is a ministration of the Spirit. Preaching is nothing, except as it is a demonstration of the Spirit. Holiness is nothing except as it is the fruit of the Spirit. These truths are so little taught or emphasized as they should be, and the blessings they speak of are so little experienced that one gladly welcomes every voice that draws attention to them.

It is known that all do not perfectly agree as to the best answer to the question: How to be filled with the Spirit? Some press that aspect of truth which reminds us that the Holy Spirit *has been given* to the church and that He dwells in every believer, a fountain of living water. As there have been fountains clogged by stones and earth, and only needing to be cleared and opened up, so we have only to re-

move the hindrances, to yield ourselves in perfect surrender to the Spirit in us, and the filling will come. We must not ask God for more of the Spirit. God asks for more of us that the Spirit may have us wholly.

Others, while admitting fully that the Spirit is in the believer, and that He asks for a more entire surrender, yet urge that it is from God direct that the filling of the Spirit must ever still be asked and received. God cannot give His spiritual gifts apart from Himself, once for all. As the divine and everlasting One, He gives unceasingly. The Spirit has not been given as if He had left heaven. He is in God and in the church. It is from God Himself that larger measures of the Spirit must ever be sought and received.

Among those who hold this latter view, there is again somewhat of a diversity in the representation of truth. On the one hand we are reminded that it is "*by faith*" we receive the Holy Spirit, and that faith often has to rest and to act without any conscious experience—has to walk in the dark. Souls that are *fully surrendered* to God are invited to claim the promise and then to go and work in the full assurance that the Spirit is in them, and will in His fullness work through them. On the other

hand stress is laid on the words "*we receive* the Spirit" by faith. The difference between believing and receiving is pointed out, and we are urged to wait until we receive what we claim, and know that God has anew filled us with His Spirit. "To be filled with the Spirit" is offered us as a definite, conscious experience.

With still other Christians there is to be found what may be regarded as a combination of these different views. They believe that a very definite, conscious filling of the Spirit has been received by some, and may be had by all. Though from their own experience they cannot testify of it, they still look for God to do for them above what they have asked or thought. Meantime they know that God's Spirit is in them, and seek grace to know Him better, and to yield themselves to Him more undividedly. They believe that the Spirit within them is Himself leading them on to the Lord above them, whose it is to fill with the Spirit. They have claimed in faith the fullness; they have placed themselves to be filled; they look to their Lord to fulfill His promise. Whether it comes in one swift moment or more gradually, they know it is theirs.

I have written this with an eye to those who may not entirely agree with the way in which the

truth is presented in this little book. I wish to urge all, especially ministers of the gospel, to give it a prayerful reading. I feel confident it will bring them help and blessing. It will deepen the conviction of the great need and absolute duty of being filled with the Spirit. It will point out the hindrances and open up the way. It will stir up faith and hope. And it will, I trust, bring many a one to feel that it is at the footstool of the throne, in the absolute surrender of a new consecration, that the blessing is to be received from God Himself.

And may this book stir up all its readers, not only to seek this blessing for themselves, but to cry earnestly, "praying exceedingly day and night," "*for all Saints,*" that God may throughout His whole church give the Holy Spirit in power. It is when the tide comes in, that every pool is filled, and all the separate little pools are lost in the great ocean. It is as all believers who know or seek this blessing begin to pray as intensely for each other and all their brethren, as for themselves, that the power of the Spirit will be fully known. With the prayer that this Spirit-filled book may be greatly blessed of God, I commend it to the study of His children.

ANDREW MURRAY.

London, Dec. 1, 1895.

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