

## Filled with the Spirit

An article written long ago by the late W. H. Westcott.

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The present dispensation is peculiarly characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ, having finished the work of redemption, is gone on high, and the Spirit is now here to represent Him. All the work of the Spirit tends to make much of Christ. "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16: 14).

This being the case it would be well for us all to be **filled** with the Spirit, that we may get to know Him in His fulness, and in the beauty and wisdom of His ways. It is thus that we shall learn to find our delight in Him as God does, and get the power to represent Him worthily here.

The words, "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee" (Eph. 5: 14, New Tr.), seem like the New Testament paraphrase of, "Arise, shine for thy light is come, and **the glory of the Lord** is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60: 1).

Those who sleep are in appearance very like the dead. The Apostle calls on such to arise, shake off their slumbering inactivity, and, he adds, "the Christ shall shine upon thee." At this fag-end of the Christian dispensation there is a strong tendency to grow heavy with sleep. It is a solemn thing that the company **who know more than many**, as at Ephesus is the one to which the exhortation is given. They had the highest truth, and were in danger of going to sleep over it.

Shall we consider how we arrive at such an experience as is here enjoined? And how God would bring it about in our souls?

Ploughing up of heart and conscience — a preparation we know little of — is doubtless the first thing (Rom. 1: 16 — Rom. 3: 20). Then Christ is set before the soul; and when there is rest, and we have come into Christian liberty, then we are free to learn (Rom. 3: 21 — Rom. 8: 39). Light displaces darkness. The work of Christ being before God in all its unchanging and eternal efficacy, the Holy Spirit produces in the soul desires Godward. He gives a real sense of the existence and the presence of God, a true view of our present state and what our solemn future might be. We are led to see things not merely as they affect us, but in their relation to God. The fear of God is created, which is the beginning of wisdom. We realize that to be God, God **should** be holy, He **should** be just. We get a growing sense of the holiness of His throne and of indwelling sin. Hence in Acts 13: 26, it is said, "**Whosoever among you feareth God**, to you is the word of this salvation sent." I think we should be ready to acknowledge the sovereign and gracious ways of God, who uses various instrumentalities in awakening souls. The testimony of an itinerant or open-air preacher may be used to awaken; then perhaps God permits the awakened soul to go elsewhere, to get peace through hearing the Gospel preached more fully. Herein is that saying true, "One sows and another reaps," for it is God that is working all the time.

The Spirit is here in Christ's name. When He finds one who has trusted in the atoning work of Christ which the Gospel presents, one who has definitely yielded himself to Christ, He comes and takes possession of that soul on behalf of Christ and for God. He seals him for God, as belonging to God.

The Spirit links Himself with the believer and dwells in him as one who is of Christ, and as belonging to God. Note well that the **blood** was first placed on the leper's ear and hand and foot, and afterwards the **oil** (Lev. 14: 17), The Spirit's power is not something added to what I am as a mere

natural man. The work of Christ must be apprehended, its results formed in the soul, see, Romans 3: 25. Have you not found this out? You felt that as to yourself you had not a word to say (v. 19), and God having closed your lips, then set forth **Christ** as your Saviour. See how He directs your faith: first, in the blood (v. 25); secondly, in Jesus (v. 26); thirdly, in Him that justifieth the ungodly (Romans 4: 5); and fourthly, in Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (Romans 4: 24). Instead of yourself, God sets before you **Christ**, raised from the dead — once delivered for your offences, but raised again for your justification. It is on this ground that the Holy Ghost is given to you (Romans 5: 5). Faith in the blood, in the Saviour whose blood it was, in the God who gave the Saviour and raised Him up again — wherever such faith is found there is peace with God, and the Spirit is given.

The exhortation to be filled with the Spirit implies that the Spirit is within you and is able to fill you. He is prepared to bring you completely under Christ's control. If you were filled, you would be engaged with Christ and all that is His, and would do everything unto Him. How much of you has the Holy Spirit really got under His control?

We sometimes think that the filling of the Spirit will be like a sudden effusion after long prayer and waiting, and much seeking. But let us understand that **here is the Spirit**, the Spirit IS, He is within us who are saved. He is a Divine Person in great earnest to **fill** us with positive, divine energy — willing, longing to do it.

How, then, may we be filled? Just by being free from everything which would grieve or obstruct Him. There are two other exhortations in Scripture to the Christian in regard of the Holy Spirit, and both are negative. One is, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" do not grieve Him by unseemly or unsuitable behaviour. The other is, "Quench not the Spirit;" do not hang back when He urges you to some act in daily life, service, or ministry. To quench the Spirit is to refuse to obey some leading. You yield to human motives or listen to natural reasonings, and the thing is not done. On the other hand, if you obey, you get all His divine power to carry you onward. But He will always carry you along on well-defined lines laid down in Scripture. He **never** leads contrary to it, therefore let us study the Scriptures ever.

If you are awake you will often be conscious of the distinct leading of the Spirit. Many illustrations are found in the Word. "Arise, and go.... And he arose and went" (Acts 8: 26, 27). "Run, speak to this young man" (Zech. 2: 4). He would have your every faculty subjected to the operation of the Spirit.

All the verses which refer to the Spirit are like rosebuds. Linger over them, and you will be astonished to see how they open out, and how much sweetness there is in them. For example: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Rom. 5: 5). Then, if filled with the Spirit, God's **love to you** would surely flood your soul, and everywhere you went you would show to all **the love of God**. It would sway us in all our actions towards our fellow-men.

Take Romans 8: 2 — "Life in Christ Jesus." What is that? There is no fret, nor disturbance, nor turmoil in His life, no ruffle there. If Satan could have succeeded in extracting from His lips one expression of impatience, all the work of redemption would have been spoiled. Then, if the Spirit filled us — the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus — He would so engage us with Him that we too should be freed from every element of unrest. Instead of weakness and failure in seasons of temptation, we should be held up and enabled to exhibit His life by the Spirit.

So with each passage in which is stated anything of the office and work of the Spirit. Each suggests a line upon which the saint may be filled, and come under the unchecked control of this Holy and Divine Person.

Accompanying this exhortation in Ephesians 5: 18, there is the other "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." If we were set for being Spirit-filled, we should guard against anything that would simulate it without being **it**. We should never mistake exhilaration for unction. All extravagancies would be shunned, however pleasing to the flesh: a sober, holy, happy devotedness unto Christ, altogether beyond the flesh, would take their place. The natural excitement of wine and the Spirit's power, that takes a man outside of himself, are not to be confounded (see, Acts 2: 13-17). They are as different in their origin as flesh and spirit.

Further, there are given some marks of one filled with the Spirit. There will be not only **singing**, but the making of melody **in the heart** to the Lord. There will be a **thankful spirit** for everything — not only for the agreeable things, but for all things; and there will be **subjection to one another** in the fear of Christ, the regarding of each other, brother or sister, as more worthy than myself.

Let us go in for being "filled with the Spirit."