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HE WHO GIVES LIFE

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



GRAHAM A.
COLE

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Why another series of works on evangelical systematic theology? This is an especially appropriate question in light of the fact that evangelicals are fully committed to an inspired and inerrant Bible as their final authority for faith and practice. But since neither God nor the Bible changes, why is there a need to redo evangelical systematic theology?

Systematic theology is not divine revelation. Theologizing of any sort is a human conceptual enterprise. Thinking that it is equal to biblical revelation misunderstands the nature of both Scripture and theology! Insofar as our theology contains propositions that accurately reflect Scripture or match the world and are consistent with the Bible (in cases where the propositions do not come per se from Scripture), our theology is biblically based and correct. But even if all the propositions of a systematic theology are true, that theology would still not be equivalent to biblical revelation! It is still a human conceptualization of God and his relation to the world.

Although this may disturb some who see theology as nothing more than doing careful exegesis over a series of passages, and others who see it as nothing more than biblical theology, those methods of doing theology do not somehow produce a theology that is equivalent to biblical revelation either. Exegesis is a human conceptual enterprise, and so is biblical theology. All the theological disciplines involve human intellectual participation. But human intellect is finite, and hence there is always room for revision of systematic theology as knowledge increases. Though God and his Word do not change, human understanding of his revelation can grow, and our theologies should be reworked to reflect those advances in understanding.

Another reason for evangelicals to rework their theology is the nature of systematic theology as opposed to other theological disciplines. For example, whereas the task of biblical theology is more to describe biblical teaching on whatever topics Scripture addresses, systematics should make a special point to relate its conclusions to the issues of one's day. This does not mean that the systematician ignores the topics biblical writers address. Nor does it mean that theologians should warp Scripture to address issues it never

intended to address. Rather it suggests that in addition to expounding what biblical writers teach, the theologian should attempt to take those biblical teachings (along with the biblical mind-set) and apply them to issues that are especially confronting the church in the theologian's own day. For example, 150 years ago, an evangelical theologian doing work on the doctrine of man would likely have discussed issues such as the creation of man and the constituent parts of man's being. Such a theology might even have included a discussion about human institutions such as marriage, noting in general the respective roles of husbands and wives in marriage. However, it is dubious that there would have been any lengthy discussion with various viewpoints about the respective roles of men and women in marriage, in society, and in the church. But at our point in history and in light of the feminist movement and the issues it has raised even among many conservative Christians, it would be foolish to write a theology of man (or, should we say, a "theology of humanity") without a thorough discussion of the issue of the roles of men and women in society, the home, and the church.

Because systematic theology attempts to address itself not only to the timeless issues presented in Scripture but also to the current issues of one's day and culture, each theology will to some extent need to be redone in each generation. Biblical truth does not change from generation to generation, but the issues that confront the church do. A theology that was adequate for a different era and different culture may simply not speak to key issues in a given culture at a given time. Hence, in this series we are reworking evangelical systematic theology, though we do so with the understanding that in future generations there will be room for a revision of theology again.

How, then, do the contributors to this series understand the nature of systematic theology? Systematic theology as done from an evangelical Christian perspective involves study of the person, works, and relationships of God. As evangelicals committed to the full inspiration, inerrancy, and final authority of Scripture, we demand that whatever appears in a systematic theology correspond to the way things are and must not contradict any claim taught in Scripture. Holy Writ is the touchstone of our theology, but we do not limit the source material for systematics to Scripture alone. Hence, whatever information from history, science, philosophy, and the like is relevant to our understanding of God and his relation to our world is fair game for systematics. Depending on the specific interests and expertise of the contributors to this series, their respective volumes will reflect interaction with one or more of these disciplines.

What is the rationale for appealing to other sources than Scripture and other disciplines than the biblical ones? Since God created the universe, there is revelation of God not only in Scripture but in the created order as well. There are many disciplines that study our world, just as does theology. But since the world studied by the non-theological disciplines is the world created by God, any data and conclusions in the so-called secular disciplines

that accurately reflect the real world are also relevant to our understanding of the God who made that world. Hence, in a general sense, since all of creation is God's work, nothing is outside the realm of theology. The so-called secular disciplines need to be thought of in a theological context, because they are reflecting on the universe God created, just as is the theologian. And, of course, there are many claims in the non-theological disciplines that are generally accepted as true (although this does not mean that every claim in non-theological disciplines is true, or that we are in a position with respect to every proposition to know whether it is true or false). Since this is so, and since all disciplines are in one way or another reflecting on our universe, a universe made by God, any true statement in any discipline should in some way be informative for our understanding of God and his relation to our world. Hence, we have felt it appropriate to incorporate data from outside the Bible in our theological formulations.

As to the specific design of this series, our intention is to address all areas of evangelical theology with a special emphasis on key issues in each area. While other series may be more like a history of doctrine, this series purposes to incorporate insights from Scripture, historical theology, philosophy, etc., in order to produce an up-to-date work in systematic theology. Though all contributors to the series are thoroughly evangelical in their theology, embracing the historical orthodox doctrines of the church, the series as a whole is not meant to be slanted in the direction of one form of evangelical theology. Nonetheless, most of the writers come from a Reformed perspective. Alternate evangelical and non-evangelical options, however, are discussed.

As to style and intended audience, this series is meant to rest on the very best of scholarship while at the same time being understandable to the beginner in theology as well as to the academic theologian. With that in mind, contributors are writing in a clear style, taking care to define whatever technical terms they use.

Finally, we believe that systematic theology is not just for the understanding. It must apply to life, and it must be lived. As Paul wrote to Timothy, God has given divine revelation for many purposes, including ones that necessitate doing theology, but the ultimate reason for giving revelation and for theologians doing theology is that the people of God may be fitted for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16–17). In light of the need for theology to connect to life, each of the contributors not only formulates doctrines but also explains how those doctrines practically apply to everyday living.

It is our sincerest hope that the work we have done in this series will first glorify and please God, and, secondly, instruct and edify the people of God. May God be pleased to use this series to those ends, and may he richly bless you as you read the fruits of our labors.

John S. Feinberg
General Editor

For many years now there has been great popular interest and growing theological interest in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit or, technically put, pneumatology. The rise of modern Pentecostalism and the subsequent manifestation of Pentecostal phenomena and doctrine within mainline denominations through the charismatic movement are indicators of the fresh attention that is being given to the Third Person of the triune Godhead. For someone like myself who teaches in a divinity school, which attracts students from Pentecostal denominations as well as mainline churches, questions about how we are best to understand the Spirit's nature and work are inescapable. So the invitation to contribute to a theological series of monographs on key doctrines with my brief being the topic of pneumatology was irresistible though daunting. I have taught pneumatology classes in Australia, England, and now the United States. However, to teach systematically about the Holy Spirit, when Scripture itself does not present the story of the Spirit in that way, has always proved a considerable challenge. Moreover, if one believes the biblical testimony—which I do—then when I write about Holy Spirit, surely I ought to be *in* the Spirit. Moreover, as I write I am actually in the Spirit's own unseen presence, who may be grieved by what I say and do with the written page. Indeed, in human experience there is something odd, in fact impolite, about talking to a third party about someone else in that person's very presence and never directly addressing the person under discussion even though he or she is there. Likewise with the Spirit. Sobering!

Special thanks and acknowledgment need to be given to John Feinberg, my editor, for unfailing encouragement, and to two doctoral students for their research assistance, Steve Garrett and Jim Franks. In particular, I am grateful to the Board of Regents of Trinity International University for granting a sabbatical leave which was crucial for this work to progress.

L I S T O F

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

AsTJ	<i>Asbury Theological Journal</i>
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> . Liguori, Mo.: Liguori, 1994.
CD	Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i> . G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, eds. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936–1977.
CJCC	<i>The Comprehensive John Calvin Collection</i> . Rio, Wis.: Ages Software, 2002. CD-Rom version.
CSR	<i>Christian Scholar's Review</i>
DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> (EIRC)
DPHL	<i>Dictionary of Paul and His Letters</i> (EIRC)
EBC	<i>The Expositor's Bible Commentary</i> . Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1976– . CD-Rom version.
EDT	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</i> . Walter A. Elwell, ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994.
EIRC	<i>The Essential IVP Reference Collection</i> . Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001. CD-Rom version.
ESV	<i>English Standard Version Bible</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSB	<i>Jewish Study Bible</i>
NBC	<i>New Bible Commentary, Twenty-first Century Edition</i> , G. J. Wenham et al., eds. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
NBCRev	<i>New Bible Commentary Revised</i> (EIRC)
NDBT	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i> (EIRC)
NDOT	<i>New Dictionary of Theology</i> (EIRC)
NIDNTT	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . Colin Brown, ed., 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1975–78. CD-Rom version.
NIV	<i>New International Version Bible</i>
NRSV	<i>New Revised Standard Version Bible</i>
RTR	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds. G. W. Bromiley, trans. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
TrinJ	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary, Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, eds. Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2004. CD-Rom version.
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

INTRODUCTION

There is no higher pursuit than the worship of God. In fact we become like the God we adore and serve for good or ill. All depends upon the nature of the God or gods we follow. If we follow the living God of biblical revelation then we will image him. If we follow idols we will image them. A. W. Tozer saw this when he wrote,

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. . . . The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. . . . Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech. She can never escape the self-disclosure of her witness concerning God.¹

Tozer was on solid biblical ground for his view. As the psalmist says of the worship of idols in Psalm 115:8, "Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them." This is a firm biblical principle.

SCRIPTURAL REVELATION

But where do we get our ideas of God? Evangelical theology prizes the Scriptures as the revelation of the only God there is. Without revelation from God our theology is blind and represents the best human guesses about the divine. Such guessing would make for an interesting chat show on late-night television but hardly a body of knowledge worth staking one's

1. A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (London: James Clarke, 1965), 9.

life on. Therefore this study will need to examine carefully the witness of Scripture. In so doing it assumes that Scripture ought to occupy a unique place in understanding God's relationship with creation and ourselves. The important doctrines that spell out that uniqueness include inspiration, inerrancy, sufficiency, clarity, and canon, to name a few. These are not the subject of this study but are presupposed by it. In other words, this study presupposes a high view of biblical authority, which is a defining characteristic of the evangelical tradition.

However, it is one thing to have such a high view of Scripture and quite another to interpret the Bible responsibly. A high view of Scripture requires a respectful hermeneutic. The Reformers had such a respectful and responsible interpretive approach summed up in the notion of the analogy of faith (*analogia fidei*), which took seriously the unity of the canon.² Scripture is to interpret Scripture, Scripture is not to be interpreted against Scripture, and the plain Scripture is to interpret the obscure Scripture. I would add to these a fourth principle: Scripture is to be interpreted genre by genre. However, sometimes conservatively minded Christians can read Scripture in a one-dimensional and wooden way. I recall talking to an elder in a church who insisted that if there wasn't an actual robbery informing Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, then Jesus was not the Son of God. Why? Because Jesus would have attempted to teach truth by a lie. "But it is parable!" I insisted, to little effect.³

What then do the Scriptures tell us? As we shall see, the Scriptures reveal to us a God who is personal. Persons generate narratives or stories that can be told by them and not simply by us. Scripture contains much divine autobiography. God has his own stories. For example, God presents himself to the Israelites as the one who brought them out of the land of Egypt (Ex.

2. From a literary viewpoint Leland Ryken sees five kinds of unity in the Bible: "There is unity of national authorship, with only two books in the whole Bible (Luke and Acts) not having been written by Jews [better, "Israelites and Jews"]. There is a unity of subject matter, consisting most broadly of God's ways with people and the relationship of people to God and fellow humans. There is a unity of worldview and general theological outlook from book to book. There is unity of purpose underlying all biblical literature—the purpose of revealing God to people so that they might know how to order their lives. There is, finally, a unity of literary texture based on allusion. No other anthology of literature possesses the unified texture of allusions that biblical literature displays" (*The Literature of the Bible* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1980], 15–16).

3. When I teach the doctrine of Scripture in a seminary setting, I will start the class by saying that I am distressed because of the news. England has been invaded. The landscape is ablaze. There is mayhem everywhere. Surprised students want to know how come they haven't heard the news. I point out that it is in the paper and we even have the name of the invading leader in print, Hagar the Horrible. Of course, I am referring to a cartoon character and have turned the cartoon into a piece of foreign correspondence. A category mistake. For when it comes to the newspaper we recognize that the editorial is not the weather report, nor the TV guide, nor the feature article, and so forth. At times, however, the conservative Christian appears to read the daily newspaper with more sophistication than the Scriptures.

20:1–2). Unless our doctrine of the Spirit can be anchored firmly in the narratives of the self-presentation of the God of creation and redemption as found in the Bible, that doctrine has little, in fact, no claim on Christian allegiance.

OTHER SOURCES

Given that evangelical theologians have such a high regard for Scripture as God’s Word written—albeit in human words—one might expect wrongly that other sources for theological reflection are thereby neglected. But in practice evangelical theologians work with tradition, or with what I call the witness of Christian thought, and do so also with a firm eye on the contemporary world of human predicament which we ourselves experience. We live outside of Eden. We live this side of the fall (Augustine’s *lapsus*), or as French lay theologian Jacques Ellul (1912–1994) put it, “The Rupture” (*La Rupture*).⁴ Thus the evangelical theologian seeks to connect the text and today, past and present, the Word and the world. To make these connections both truthful and fruitful requires wisdom and not simply intelligence. Wisdom is our intelligence exercised within the attitudinal framework of the fear of the Lord (Prov. 1:7). Doing theology ought to be therefore a wisdom activity embodying a particular attitude of reverence toward God. When done so it becomes part of the Christian’s reasonable worship—that is to say, worship understood in that broad NT sense of life lived in response to the gospel (Rom. 12:1–2) and not in the traditional but narrower sense of the corporate acknowledgment of the grandeur of God (as in Revelation 4–5).

This study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit will need then not only to respect Scripture but also to interact with the witness of Christian thought. By that I mean the study will need to be in conversation, as it were, with the creeds and with the great theologians of the past and present who have turned their attention to the person and work of the Spirit of God. Basil of Caesarea, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Owen, Kuyper, Barth, Moltmann, and many others will need to be given their due. Doing theology is an ecclesiastical practice or it runs the risk of idiosyncrasy. Sometimes at a popular level evangelicals can act as though God has not been active in the world and in his people between St. Paul’s conversion and their own. That trap we will need to avoid. Moreover this study will need to make connection with the issues surrounding the doctrine of the Spirit today in the world of human predicament. Last century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945) asked,

4. Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1985), chapter 7.

Who is Christ for us *today*?⁵ An analogous question may be asked of the Spirit: Who is the Holy Spirit for us *today*?

The theological enterprise, therefore, involves the foundational and normative Word of Revelation brought to bear on the World of Human Predicament with an awareness of the Witness of Christian Thought.⁶ To do so responsibly is a Work of Wisdom predicated on the fear of the Lord and is to be conducted in the Way of Worship offered to the living God.

AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

In my view an evangelical approach to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit needs to be an evidence-based practice.⁷ Philosophy offers a parallel. In their useful book *What Philosophers Think*, Julian Baggini and Jeremy Stangroom maintain,

What regulates the flow of ideas in philosophy is rational argumentation. Exactly what makes an argument rational is itself a philosophical question, but in general it is that any conclusions reached are based upon a combination of good evidence, good reasoning and self-evident basic principles of logic. (The ‘evidence’ philosophy draws upon is not usually the special data of science, but the kind of evidence which is available to all. These are facts which are established by every

5. See Keith Clements, “Bonhoeffer, Dietrich,” in Adrian Hastings, Alister Mason, and Hugh Pyper, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 79, emphasis mine.

6. Scripture, according to my view, because it is the Word of God, is the “norming norm” (*norma normans*) while other authorities (tradition, reason, and experience), although operative in Christian theology, are “ruled norms” (*norma normata*). Put another way, in any contest between authorities we appeal to Scripture since it is the touchstone and rules the others. As article 21 of *The Articles of Religion* of the Church of England of 1562 has it, “General Councils . . . may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining to God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture” (see *An Australian Prayer Book: For Use Together with the Book of Common Prayer [1662]* [Sydney: AIO Press, 1978], 632). Likewise, reason (our discursive thought) may err and experience may be misdescribed.

7. Philosophically speaking, by “evidence” I mean “information bearing on the truth or falsity of a proposition,” as Richard Feldman maintains in “Evidence,” in Robert Audi, gen. ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 293. There is another way worth noting to understand what constitutes evidence. R. G. Collingwood suggests, “Anything is evidence which enables you to answer your question—the question you are asking now” (*The Idea of History* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1961], 281). The fundamental questions asked in this study are: “What are we to believe about the Holy Spirit?” and “What are some of the implications of that belief for Christian thought and life?” To answer those questions, evidence drawn from Scripture will be essential. Hence there will be frequent reference to Scripture in this work.

day experience or established science. *In this way there is no special evidence-base for philosophy.*)⁸

Like philosophy, theology needs to have its ideas regulated. Like doing philosophy, doing theology is an evidence-based practice. Like philosophy, rational argument is a desideratum for theology as a discipline. But unlike philosophy, as Baggini and Stangroom conceive of it, theology does have a special evidence-base: namely, that provided by special revelation now crystallized as Holy Scripture and by general revelation as interpreted by that same Scripture.

Likewise any evidence provided by contemporary Christian experience needs to be viewed through the grid of Scripture and not the other way around, especially when the question of how best to describe the experience is under examination—a question to which we shall return in a later chapter.

The alternative to the above is to spin theological ideas out of our minds much like one of Francis Bacon's spiders which spins its web out of its own body.⁹ In contrast to such self-sufficient spiders, Dietrich Bonhoeffer can still teach a fresh generation when he writes,

We must learn to know the Scriptures again, as the Reformers and our fathers knew them. We must know the Scriptures first and foremost for the sake of our salvation. But besides this, there are ample reasons that make this requirement exceedingly urgent. How, for example, shall we ever attain certainty and confidence in our personal and church activity if we do not stand on solid biblical ground? It is not our heart that determines our course, but God's Word. But who in this day has any proper understanding of the need for scriptural proof? How often do we hear innumerable arguments 'from life' and 'from experience' put forward as the basis for the most crucial decisions *but the argument of Scripture is missing*. And this authority would perhaps point in exactly the opposite direction. It is not surprising, of course, that the person who attempts to cast discredit upon their wisdom should be the one who himself does not seriously read, know, and study the Scriptures. But one who will not learn to handle the Bible for himself is not an evangelical Christian.¹⁰

8. Julian Baggini and Jeremy Stangroom, eds., *What Philosophers Think* (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 1–2, emphasis mine.

9. Francis Bacon (1561–1626), *The Advancement of Learning*, book 1:5: "For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it worl [*sic*] upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit" (see <http://www.lewis.up.edu/efl/asarnow/eliza4.htm>, accessed February 23, 2005).

10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (London: SCM, 1983), 39, emphasis mine.

Evidence-based theological practice provides scriptural support for its affirmations and denials.¹¹ Moreover, that scriptural support will be utilized in a way that is sensitive to the biblical text in its immediate context in its literary unit in its book in the canon in the light of the flow of redemptive history.¹²

This is not to say that there is no room for daring theological hypotheses. There is. But they need to be identified as such and offered to the church for debate as *theologoumena* (theological opinions) rather than as convictions. Some notion of dogmatic rank needs deployment when proposals are offered that far outrun the force of the scriptural evidence. If such proposals lead away from the body of divinity (teaching) found in Scripture then they are to be abandoned. If they are consistent with that body of divinity then they may be embraced heuristically until better are found.

THE HISTORY OF PNEUMATOLOGICAL DISCUSSION AND DEBATE: A SKETCH¹³

A conventional way to periodize the Christian past is to divide it into four periods.¹⁴ The Patristic era covers late NT times to the eighth century, the Medieval Era covers the eighth century to the fifteenth, the Reformational one from the sixteenth to the seventeenth, and the Modern from the eigh-

11. A feature of this systematic treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit will be the intentional use of biblical theologies as resources as well as, more traditionally, commentaries and works of systematic theology. Biblical theologies attempt to understand Scripture from within. Brian S. Rosner defines the biblical theology project in these terms: “To sum up, *biblical theology may be defined as theological interpretation of Scripture in and for the church. It proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyse and synthesize the Bible’s teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus*” (“Biblical Theology,” *NDBT*, 11, emphasis original). D. A. Carson adds that, “biblical theology stands as a kind of bridge discipline between responsible exegesis and responsible systematic theology (even though each of these inevitably influences the other two)” (*ibid.*, 94). Names of biblical theologians that will appear in the present work include Childs, Dumbrell, Goldsworthy, Scobie, and VanGemeren, to name a few.

12. Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), describes such an approach in terms of sensitivity to the textual horizon, the epochal horizon, and the canonical horizon (293–310). My use of biblical evidence will employ such an approach, although limitations of space preclude showing one’s workings very often.

13. “Sketch” is the operative word. For far more extensive historical treatments see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971–1989), *passim*; and the three works by Stanley M. Burgess: *The Holy Spirit: Ancient Christian Traditions* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1984); *The Holy Spirit: Medieval Roman Catholic and Reformation Traditions* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997); and *The Holy Spirit: Eastern Christian Traditions* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1989).

14. For example, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “History of Theology,” *NDOT*, 309–312.

teenth until today. Let's examine briefly each period in turn—albeit in broad strokes.¹⁵

The great topic of discussion and debate in the Patristic era concerned the ontology of the Spirit in relation to the essential Trinity rather than the work of the Spirit in the economy (administration) of salvation. Was the Spirit as much God as the Father is God and as the Son is God? The orthodox judgment—both East (Greek speaking) and West (Latin-speaking)—was strongly affirmative. The Spirit is to be worshiped with the Father and the Son, one God in three Persons. However, there is a plausible historical argument that despite the espoused equality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son in the Trinity there was operationally a “subordination” of the Spirit, especially in the West, as reflected in the somewhat minimal treatment of the Spirit in comparison with the Father and the Son in the great creeds of Christendom, whether Apostles', Nicene, or Athanasian.

The Medieval period saw further wrestling over the precise nature of the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son within the triune Godhead with respect to the biblical ideas of the sending of the Spirit by the Father and the Son. Did these sendings reflect the inner life of God as Trinity or was the sending of the Spirit from the Son reflective only of an economic function? As Raymond E. Brown observes, “In the first millennium of Christianity at the great Councils the Churches could agree on God and, for the most part, on Jesus Christ; but East and West ultimately split apart over the Spirit.”¹⁶ The *filioque* (“from the Son also”) controversy, which we will explore in more than one place in subsequent discussion, engendered much bitterness and is part of the story of the schism of Eastern and Western Christianity (A.D. 1054) which continues to this day. The West embraces *filioque*. The East rejects it.

With Reformational Christianity, the conclusions of the Patristic era concerning the ontology of the Spirit (the person of the Spirit) were maintained in their Western form (Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer). What does emerge is more attention given to the work of the Spirit. Brown contends, “The Reformation was a battle among Western Christians who were united in the belief that the Spirit had come forth from the Son (as well as from the Father) but who were divided over how the Spirit functioned in the church.”¹⁷ Luther (1483–1546) and Calvin (1509–1564), in particular, emphasized the work of the Spirit in conjunction with the Word to bring about faith both in response to the preached gospel and to Scripture whether taught or read. Both Reformers reacted strongly against

15. For this section I am very much indebted to the discussion of William W. Menzies, “The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology,” in Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley S. Gundry, eds., *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1979), 67–79.

16. Raymond E. Brown, “Diverse Views of the Spirit in the New Testament,” *Worship* 77 no. 3 (May 1983): 226.

17. *Ibid.*

the Roman Catholic claim that the Spirit worked in some exclusive way through the official spokespersons of that church: namely, “the hierarchy of bishops” as “the interpreters of the Christian faith.”¹⁸ Likewise both Reformers reacted strongly against enthusiasts of the day with their stress on immediate Spirit experience. Calvin, in particular, contributed the lastingly fruitful notion of an inner witness of the Spirit in the believer to the objective Word of God (*testimonium internum Spiritus Sancti*). He is rightly described by J. I. Packer as “*the* theologian of the Holy Spirit,” just as Athanasius (c. 296–373) is “*the* theologian of the incarnation” and Luther “of justification.”¹⁹ In the next century the great Puritan divine John Owen (1616–1683) did pioneering work on the Spirit’s role in progressive sanctification or the believer’s growth in godliness.²⁰

The Modern period has witnessed a number of phases of interest in the Spirit’s work. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the experiential dimensions of the Spirit’s work were especially to the fore. The mission of the Spirit is to regenerate and sanctify. George Whitefield (1714–1770) especially thematized the former and John Wesley (1703–1791) the latter. Subsequently, in the nineteenth century the topic of Spirit-impelled sanctification was understood in terms of the experience of a “higher Christian life” and holiness before the Lord. In the early twentieth century modern Pentecostalism arose against this holiness background and out of a concern to serve the Lord with power in what was perceived to be an increasingly hostile world. The concern for power to serve was not confined to the rising Pentecostal movement. Prominent evangelists such as R. A. Torrey (1856–1928) also accented the need for “a baptism in the Spirit.” At the present time a number of pneumatological currents are at work. There is the continued growth of the Pentecostal movement worldwide, the influence of the charismatic movement within mainline churches, and the rise of “Third Wave” congregations.²¹ There is continued interest in such issues as *filioque*, the Spirit and the power to serve, the Spirit and the gifting of today’s church, the Spirit and the doctrine of

18. Ibid.

19. J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1984), 235, emphasis original.

20. Owen is a good example of Menzies’ point about the historical shift of attention to the Spirit’s work in the Reformational period while affirming the early church’s legacy concerning the person of the Spirit. The full title of Owen’s work is illustrative, as is the structure. The title runs: *The Holy Spirit, His Gifts and Power: Exposition of the Spirit’s Name, Nature, Personality, Operations and Effects* (reprint, abridged, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1967). And as for the structure: book 1 consists of five chapters, two of which concern the person of the Spirit. Books 2 to 4 concern the operations of the Spirit, while book 4 focuses on progressive sanctification. Owen’s work may be fruitfully contrasted with the fourth-century Basil of Caesarea, where discussion of the person of the Spirit predominates (Basil of Caesarea, *On the Holy Spirit*, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press Translation [New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980]).

21. For the distinctions between Pentecostal, charismatic, and Third Wave movements see the glossary.

the church (ecclesiology *per se*), the Spirit and the use of gendered language in addressing and describing God, the Spirit and the liberation of oppressed people, and finally the Spirit and claims of authentic religious experience in religions other than Christianity.²² This list is indicative rather than exhaustive.

THE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONS

Questions constitute the lifeblood of both conversation and critical inquiry. This is so with theological discussion and inquiry. Important questions for our study include:

- What does the Bible say about the Holy Spirit?
- How is the Spirit characterized?
- Is the Spirit a person?
- Is the Spirit God?
- If the Spirit is God, should we then pray to the Holy Spirit?
- How is the Spirit to be understood in Trinitarian terms?
- What are we to make of the elusiveness of the Spirit, who is like the wind?
- What role does the Spirit play in creation?
- How does the Spirit make the deep things of God known?
- What is the Spirit's relation to the institutions of Israel: prophets, priests, kings, tabernacle, and temple?
- How does the Spirit figure in the messianic hopes of Israel?
- Were OT believers regenerated and indwelt by the Spirit?
- What is the Spirit's relation to Jesus the Messiah?
- How does the Spirit connect to the life of the believer?
- What is the blasphemy against the Spirit?
- How does the Spirit connect to the life of the church?
- What is the role of the Spirit with regard to Scripture?
- Are all the gifts of the Spirit for today?
- Is the Spirit at work in other religions around the world?
- How are we to discern the Spirit at work today?
- What about ambiguous references to s/Spirit in Scripture?

22. Menzies, "Holy Spirit," 76–78, focuses on the Holy Spirit and the community of faith as the contemporary pneumatological issue. But as he acknowledges, applying theology to life involves "a shifting of the target" (67). In the quarter century since he wrote, the "targets"—not the most felicitous of terms now, post-9/11—have become multiple.

The list of questions is suggestive rather than exhaustive. This study will address to greater or lesser degrees each of these questions. Moreover it will look to theologians of the past and present to see how they have addressed some of these questions: for example, how Augustine (354–430) understood the Spirit as the bond of love in the triune Godhead; and how Calvin saw the Spirit’s role as integral to our belief in the authority of Scripture; and how Moltmann (1926–), with his strong accent on the Spirit’s relation to creation, understands the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of Life.”

However, systematically addressing such questions does raise a problem when it comes to the biblical testimony.

A PROBLEM TO FACE

Scripture is not systematic in its form in the way that traditional Western theology is. Scripture is like a garden richly filled with many plant varieties: trees, shrubs, cacti, flowers, and even reports of weeds. The reader of Scripture is not presented with books—or a canon, for that matter—dealing with the standard theological topics in neat order. Put another way, Scripture is not organized like Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* or Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica* or Calvin’s *Institutes* or Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* or Louis Berkhof’s *Systematic Theology*. Story or narrative is a feature of Scripture: the story of creation, the story of the fall, the story of Abraham, the story of Israel, the story of the one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The challenge facing the systematician is to do his or her theology in an organized way that does not drain Scripture of its narrative color. This problem especially needs addressing when at issue is the discussion of the personal nature of the triune God in general or of one Person of the Godhead in particular. Otherwise a book on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit—the present task—risks becoming a mere collection of words, propositions, arguments, and conceptual gymnastics. All of these elements will feature in this work. But if only *they* feature then something is missing: namely, the drama of redemption and how the Spirit plays his role in the Trinity’s reclamation of creation. J. S. Whale captured the problem vividly when he wrote of the doctrine of the atonement:

Instead of putting off our shoes from our feet because the place whereon we stand is holy ground, we are taking nice photographs of the burning bush, from suitable angles: we are chatting about theories of the atonement [and I would add, chatting about interpretations of Pentecost] with our feet on the mantelpiece instead of kneeling down before the wounds of Christ [and I would add, without recognizing that the Spirit is here].²³

23. J. S. Whale, *Christian Doctrine* (London and Glasgow: Fontana, 1958), 146.

According to Whale, we need a “living synthesis where those very facts [of doctrine], which the intellect dissects and coldly examines, are given back to us with the wholeness which belongs to life.” But how can such a synthesis be achieved?

Two things are required to achieve the synthesis. First, the narrative nature of Scripture will need to be given its due weight. This study will need to rehearse the stories of the Spirit in the Scriptures and reflect on them as well as examine the didactic portions of Scripture that thematize the Spirit. Second, both the writer will need to write and the reader will need to read intentionally *coram Deo* (before God). Augustine knew this latter need. In terms of genre, Augustine’s famous *Confessions* is in the form of a prayer, as is Anselm’s *Proslogion*. Though this study will not be in prayer form it will presuppose the practice of prayer or paying attention to God, as Simone Weil has taught us.²⁴ After all, as the early church theologian Evagrius Pontus (346–399) observed, “If you are a theologian, you truly pray. If you truly pray, you are a theologian.”²⁵

THE SHAPE OF THE STUDY

In the first part of the book the mystery of the Spirit is addressed. As Daniel L. Migliore observes with regard to theology in general, “Christian theology begins, continues and ends with the inexhaustible mystery of God.”²⁶ And as Richard B. Gaffin Jr. wisely suggests with regard to the Holy Spirit in particular, “Any sound theology of the Holy Spirit . . . will be left with a certain remainder, a surplus unaccounted for, an area of mystery.”²⁷ More recently, Gordon Fee has described Paul’s characterization of the Spirit as “God’s empowering presence.”²⁸ There is merit in Fee’s expression and in his recognition of “the dynamic and experienced nature of the life of the Spirit.”²⁹ In his view that experience at the beginning of the Christian’s life was lost early on in the history of the church, to its hurt. Spontaneity gave way to performance.³⁰ The events that occurred on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ provide a case in point. The Spirit’s outpouring on that day was a dramatic and dynamic experience. But in his encounter

24. Simone Weil, *Waiting on God*, trans. Emma Craufurd (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 51.

25. Quoted in Bernard McGinn and Patricia Ferris McGinn, *Early Christian Mystics: The Divine Vision of the Spiritual Masters* (New York: Crossroad, 2003), 55.

26. Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich., and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 64.

27. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980), 25.

28. Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005).

29. *Ibid.*, 899–900.

30. *Ibid.*

with Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel Jesus taught that the Spirit was like the wind (John 3:8). The wind is a mystery. It blows where it wills. It can be overwhelming as a storm wind (Ex. 14:21) or gentle as a breeze. Paul on the Damascus Road experienced the storm wind (Acts 9:1–19). Timothy, who grew up in the faith, may have experienced the breeze (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14–15). As John Wesley wrote in his letter to Mary Cooke, “There is an irreconcilable variability in the operations of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men.”³¹ According to Wesley, “[m]any find Him rushing upon them like a torrent” while in Mary herself the Spirit’s work had been “gentle.” There is an epistemological elusiveness about the Spirit that this part of the study examines. An excursus looks at some of the ambiguities in the biblical text with regard to the Spirit. The issue is whether the issue in a given text is a reference to the Holy Spirit or to the human spirit or to the inanimate wind. Psalm 51, which has four references to “Spirit” or “spirit” (*rûach*), will provide the case in point. In this part of the discussion we also examine the personhood of the Spirit, the deity of the Spirit, the Spirit’s relation to the triune Godhead. In addition, the question of our language about the Spirit and gender issues will be among those discussed. In particular, we will pursue the question of whether the Spirit should be spoken of as “he” or, as some are suggesting, “she.” Another excursus will treat the debated question of whether the order (*taxis*) within the Trinity between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is paradigmatic in some way for Christians’ behavior today.

In the second part we turn our attention from the person of the Spirit to the ministry or the work of the Spirit in the OT presentation. In so doing we will be following the scholastic principle of *operari sequitur esse* (“operation follows being”).³² Or put another way, what we say of the work of the Spirit needs to be predicated on what can be said of the person of the Spirit.³³ Themes covered include: the Spirit and creation as the “Lord of

31. John Wesley, “Letter to Mary Cooke,” in Robert W. Burtner and Robert E. Chiles, eds., *A Compend of Wesley’s Theology* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1954), 94. The letter is dated October 30, 1785.

32. See Thomas A. Smal, *The Forgotten Father: Rediscovering the Heart of the Christian Gospel* (London, Sydney, Auckland, and Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987), 96. Smal applies the principle to his discussion of Christology. However, the same principle usefully applies *mutatis mutandis* to a discussion of pneumatology. Stanley Grenz takes the opposite approach in his “The Holy Spirit: Divine Love Guiding Us Home,” *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 1–13. He discusses “The Spirit in Salvation History” before “The Spirit in Trinitarian Life,” arguing that, “We *must* retrace the steps the biblical people followed which eventually led to the trinitarian pneumatology of the Christian church” (*ibid.*, 2, emphasis mine). “Must” is too strong.

33. Boyd Hunt appears critical of this approach (*Redeemed! Eschatological Redemption and the Kingdom of God* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993], 19). He calls it “standard Pneumatology,” which, he maintains, is “too individualistic,” “too subjective,” and omits the discussion of the Spirit in a kingdom context. However, his complaint is not so much about the standard structure of first the person and then the work. Rather, his problem is that the work is construed too narrowly and without placement in the broad eschatological purposes of God. This study hopes to avoid the trap.

life”; the Spirit’s role in making God known through revelation; the Spirit’s role in the institutional life of God’s OT people Israel; and the Spirit’s part in the messianic hopes of Israel. In this part we will also begin to explore the biblical vocabulary for and symbols of the Holy Spirit (*passim*). An excursus will address the much debated question of whether OT believers were regenerated by the Spirit.

Part 3 continues the study of the Spirit’s ministry, this time looking at the NT testimony. The Spirit’s role in empowering the Messiah of Israel and then the Messiah’s role in bestowing the Spirit upon God’s NT people will be discussed. Next the Spirit’s role in the corporate life of God’s people will be examined. Here our themes, among others, will include Pentecost revisited, the making of God’s children, the baptism and fullness of the Spirit, the Spirit’s relation to water baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the gifts of the Spirit given to the body of Christ, and the future of the church and cosmos in the light of pneumatology. Some readers may note at this point what may seem to be a strange omission. In this study there is no separate chapter on the Spirit and the Christian. Instead when the role of the Spirit in the life of the church is explored, so too will be the implications for the individual believer. The reasons for such an approach are to be found in the chapter itself. But to anticipate: since the rise of modern individualism it comes as so natural in the West to think first of the atom and next, if at all, of the molecule. Or put another way, we concern ourselves with the one and next, if at all, with the many. However, as we shall see, the accent in the scriptural revelation is otherwise. God is making a people for his name.³⁴ Finally, in the last chapter in this part, the question of revelation will again be raised as the Spirit’s role in the inspiration and illumination of the Scriptures is canvassed. This chapter concerns the Spirit and our knowing God. This discussion could have come earlier. Indeed, it could have constituted the very first chapter. However, I have elected to place it last in the part dealing with the Spirit’s ministry in NT perspective. My chief reason for doing so lies in the fact that the NT reveals so much more about the Spirit’s role in epistemology than does the OT, especially Jesus’ teaching about the ministry of the Spirit as the Paraclete in John 14–16 and Paul’s teaching on the Spirit as the searcher of the depths in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16.

The third part also considers matters concerning the manifestation of the Spirit in today’s world. The discussion of these practical questions and issues will flow out of the relevant NT material. Debated questions that will be addressed include the important—because so pastorally freighted—matter of blasphemy against the Spirit as well as whether the gifts of NT times

34. On the Spirit and the Christian see the excellent work in this series by Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1997). In his work Demarest lucidly covers such theological themes in the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) as salvation, grace, election, calling, conversion, regeneration, union, sanctification, preservation and perseverance, and glorification, with appropriate references to the Spirit.

such as tongues and prophecy are available today, and whether there is more than one Spirit-reception to be experienced subsequent to conversion. Also examined are the increasing claims that theology now needs to start from the third article of the creed: namely, the person and work of the Spirit. In so doing some maintain that whatever is good, true, and beautiful in the religions of the world can be cited as the Holy Spirit's present manifestation. Such controversial issues raise urgent criteriological questions concerning spiritual discernment.

At the end of each chapter in each part there will be a section dealing with implications for belief and behavior arising from the immediately preceding discussion and in some instances an excursus dealing at more length with one of the debated questions mentioned previously. Theology must not be left unapplied. There is always the temptation in formal theology merely to lay out the conceptual geography of the key ideas with the appropriate definitions and logical linkages shown. However, as Karl Barth (1886–1968) wisely wrote, “. . . we must not present the being and work, Word and Spirit of God as an hypothesis which, even with great majesty and glory, simply hovers over the mind and heart and life of man like a radiant ball of glass or soap-bubble, but never leads to the result that something happens.”³⁵ The Spirit is real and no mere idea. His reality calls for the appropriate understanding, attitudes, and actions on our part.

Drawing out theological implications from the scriptural testimony must be done in a responsible way. Bernard Ramm helpfully argues that, “Theological exegesis extends grammatical exegesis in that theological exegesis is interested in the largest implications of the text.”³⁶ And yet a caveat is needed:

Propositions imply other propositions. In formal systems (logic, mathematics, geometry), the process of drawing propositions from other propositions is strictly controlled. In material systems (science, history, psychology, etc.), the implications of a proposition are not always obvious and the verification of a proposition may be very difficult. The Bible as a literary and historical document does not belong to the formal but to the material. Therefore deducing propositions from Scripture faces all of the problems typical of deducing propositions in a material system.³⁷

As we endeavor to draw out the implications of the scriptural text we will keep Ramm's caveat in mind.

35. Karl Barth, *CD*, IV, 3, 498.

36. Bernard Ramm, “Biblical Interpretation,” in Bernard Ramm et al., *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1974), 28.

37. *Ibid.* Ramm's point is easily illustrated. In a formal system, if A is greater than B, and if B is greater than C, then it follows indubitably that A is greater than C. But, materially speaking, if X is Y's husband, then X is male by definition, but it is only highly probable that X is over eighteen years of age. It is possible that the husband had parental permission to marry earlier than the customary age.

Finally, the whole argument of the study under the broad heads of the mystery and ministry of the Spirit will be summarized by way of conclusion. In the conclusion the magnificence of the self-effacing Spirit comes into prominence. In particular the Spirit as the searcher of the depths of God, as the bond within the Godhead, as the executor of the divine purposes, and as the perfecter of those purposes will come to the fore. The Holy Spirit of God is the glorifier of others. A glossary rounds out the work to help the reader to navigate some of the technical language of the discussion.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Since the study falls into four parts, several reading strategies are possible for a work of this kind. One might read from beginning to end. The logic of the work is more easily seen this way: first the person of the Spirit theologically considered and then the work of the Spirit biblically revealed. The questions and issues in contemporary Christian thought and practice, that arise from the NT's presentation of the work of the Spirit, will figure prominently. Or one may turn first to the discussion of the biblical evidence concerning the Spirit in either OT or NT. Again, the contemporary scene may be the driver and so the last part of each chapter on the person or the work of the Spirit in either Old or New Testament perspective which deals, by way of application, with contemporary matters, may be the place to go. Or the reader might turn first to the debated questions and controversial issues found in the excurses, before exploring other parts. Or one might start at the end with the conclusion and then read the rest to explore in detail the path that led there.

Whichever reading strategy is adopted, the witness of Christian song also needs to be heard at the start of this venture. For the best of our songs arise from the life of God's people with their God. Bianco da Siena's (d. A.D. 1434) great pneumatological hymn is no exception. It is redolent with biblical allusions and expresses a desire that any serious reader of Scripture needs to foster:

Come down, O Love divine,
 Seek Thou this soul of mine,
 And visit it with Thine own ardor glowing.
 O Comforter, draw near,
 Within my heart appear,
 And kindle it, Thy Holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
 Till earthly passions turn
 To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
 And let Thy glorious light
 Shine ever on my sight,
 And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none shall guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.³⁸

May this become our prayer in the course of this study.

38. Bianco da Siena, *Anglican Hymn Book*, trans. R. F. Littledale (London: Church Book Room Press, 1965), Hymn 214.