

Holy Spirit

Holy means set apart. When God is the referent, it means that God is set apart to Himself. In Exodus 3:14, when asked by Moses for His Name, God replied, "I am that I am." This means that there is no one like Him, not in one's farthest imaginations, and that is the essence of His holiness. The New Testament reveals what the essence of God is: *God is love* (I John 4:8). Therefore, to speak of God's holiness is to speak of the beautiful and wonderful interpenetrating reality of the self-giving love between the three persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. Each person of the Godhead is set apart to each other in the delight of self-giving love, truly a wonder beyond the farthest limits of finite contemplation. To speak of Holy is to contemplate the eternal wellspring of love that flings Himself away, first within Himself and, second, in His action to give Himself in totality to His creation. Holiness is the warmth of immeasurable and eternal affection. Holiness is the embrace of a God who will not be God without you. Holy is a father who runs to a son that smells like a pig and flings His arms around him kissing that filthy flesh all over saying, "My son, you were dead but now you are alive." Holy is the out-radiance of the undivided light of the love of God. **Spirit** means invisible person, who a person essentially is. Spirit is the essential being of God who is love. In both Hebrew and Greek, spirit carries the image of breath or wind. This wind is revealed sometimes as a gentle breeze, bringing nourishment and refreshment. At other times this breath is revealed as a violent, rushing whirlwind, purging, like fire, everything in its path. The God-wind is love that will not let me go and not let me remain in the pig sty of my fallenness. Spirit is the out-breathing, the out-reaching of the love that God is. Spirit is love-breath, love in action changing me, baby step by baby step, from glory to glory, as a participant in His holiness. The essence of the grace of the self-giving love of the Father as revealed by the Son is being breathed into me by the Spirit. "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

James D. Nickel

When the Holy Spirit is poured out in a day of power the result is bound to affect whole communities and even nations. Conviction of sin, an anxiety to possess the Word of God, and dependence upon those truths which glorify God in man's salvation, are inevitable consequences.

Iain H. Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy*, p. 3

The Holy Spirit does not dispense His gifts to His people like Santa Claus distributing individual presents. The Holy Spirit does not come with gifts; He comes with Himself and He manifests Himself in a multitude of ways (I Corinthians 12).

James Nickel

God did not give us Scripture to convey to us mere, brute facts. Yes, facts are given in Scripture, but given as instruments to motivate us, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to change our lives. Never merely forage Scripture for information ... if you do, the life of a Pharisee lies within your immediate grasp.

James Nickel

The illuminating work, yes, even the revealing and inspiring work of the Holy Spirit did not terminate with the "drying of the ink on the last page of the book of Revelation." God the Holy Spirit inspired the writing of Scripture, but He is also active in our reading of Scripture. Are our eyes focused and ears attuned?

James Nickel

The Holy Spirit is the face of God turned toward the believer with the shining light of His abiding presence. In this context, ponder Numbers 6:24-26.

James Nickel

Knowing the third person of the trinity, God the Spirit, necessitates both knowledge and experience, truth and transformation.

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James Nickel

In R. J. Rushdoony's fine work (*Systematic Theology*), he has chapters on the theology of "land" and "time" that you will never see in a standard work on systematics. In his section on the Holy Spirit, he makes this point: "The Holy Spirit is [easily] treated as a resource, as something to be exploited, rather than as the commanding power and authority in our lives." Well worth pondering and implementing ...

James Nickel

"The letter kills, the Spirit gives life." To study the Bible without reliance upon both the illumination and correction of the Holy Spirit is deadly and it will produce deadly people.

James Nickel

Far too many people (including theologians, pastors, and congregations) pay "lip service" to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. If we merely state the creed, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," without experiencing the Holy Spirit in life, love, blessing, gifts, knowledge, power, and authority, our creed, instead of an expression of the dynamics of the Living God, will become nothing but empty words voiced from spiritual corpses.

James Nickel

What is the signature proof or evidence of the gift of the Holy Spirit? One who has received the Holy Spirit confesses with the entirety of his or her being, "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Acts 2).

James Nickel

Our concern must be with more than His manifestations; it must be with the Spirit Himself.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 293

The Holy Spirit, a very God of very God, manifests in His person and power the determining will and sovereignty of the triune God. A charismatic emphasis should thus be highly Calvinistic, but it is not normally so and is commonly very alien to such a stress. Likewise, those who are Calvinistic and who stress God's sovereignty should logically be very emphatically given to a high emphasis on the doctrine of the Spirit. This, however, is clearly not the case. It may be that sovereignty is confused with an exclusive transcendence, so that immanence is seen as a compromise. In any case, where a strong doctrine of the Spirit is not operative and governing, a strong doctrine of the church replaces it, so that institutional controls and government replace the Spirit. On the other hand, where the doctrine of the Spirit is not in union with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the triune God, human activity and enthusiasm replace the Spirit, and men set about to engender the ostensible working of the Spirit by trying to create in themselves an emotional climate. In this way, both charismatics and non-charismatics conclude by stressing man, institutional controls in one case, and emotional charges within man in the other. This should indicate to us that the true starting point with respect to the Spirit is in Scripture and the Spirit Himself.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pp. 295-296

He [God] is incomprehensible, yet understandable; we can know Him truly, but never exhaustively. He is most near to us in the Spirit, and yet never more remote to our capacity to grasp His infinite and inexhaustible being than in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 297

The fusion of Greek and Biblical views of God led to a belief in the Trinity in terms of Aristotle. The three persons of the Godhead came to be analyzed as substance (the Father), structure (the Son), and act (the Spirit). The Son thus as Structure became the reason in all ultimate being, the mind, as it were,

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of God. The Father became ultimate being, and this contributed to the impersonality which has haunted the doctrine of the Father: as pure being, with reason isolated from Him, He was a difficult concept to warm to or view as a Person. The Spirit, as pure, ultimate act, was impersonal and mindless, so that “to be filled with the Spirit” came to mean, in terms of this paganized view, to be anti-rational and emotional in an irrational sense. To be filled with the Spirit meant thus a kind of transcendence but also a form of abandonment and even hostility to reason and to our being, an all too solid flesh. Indeed to cultivate the Spirit for some required the abandonment of intellectual pursuits and achievements.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 298

Such men [clergy] stressed reason and reasoning. In their view of the church, the clergy replaced the Holy Spirit as the governing power. John Milton could with justice charge, “New presbyter is but old priest writ large.” We still find among current “Christ only” preachers a very strong authoritarian and antinomian tendency. On the other hand, those who stressed the Holy Spirit felt it necessary to declare that learning was unnecessary for preaching. In fact, according to Thomas Collier, an uneducated Baptist, God used the intellectually weak to prevent any glorying in knowledge. Indeed, he held, there were “none but Assess in the things of God, who study Arts and Sciences, to help them preach and prophecy.” Learning was thus seen as a handicap to the ministry, *and to the Spirit*. The Quaker, George Fox (1624-1691), held that the teaching of the Spirit came without and did not need human means, including education.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 299

Reason ... could not work properly unless aided by the Spirit.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 299

To prophesy is to speak for God, and to predict by applying God’s word. To declare that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) is to prophesy. The Holy Spirit works to further God’s kingdom and reign. He is God, and He is God centered in all His ways, not man centered.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 299

Man is most truly himself, as God intended him to be, when he fulfills his vocation by living in the Spirit.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 307

All excellence is associated with the Lord, and with the Spirit. Too often churchmen see virtue in an ugly church, or no church property at all. The Lord stresses in His word the need for such a physical (as well as spiritual) witness, and a beautiful one. The church is His palace and throne room from whence His law-word goes forth. Hence, the Lord called out by name the artisans who were to do His work, and He empowered them by His Spirit. As surely as prophets were used by the Holy Spirit, so too were God’s artisans.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 307

The work of the Spirit in the life of Bezaleel, Paul, and John meant the mature and fuller realization of all their being and all their aptitudes ... The whole man is affected by the Spirit.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 308

The Holy Spirit thus comes to us, not to fulfill our purposes, nor to gratify us, but to fulfill His purposes, and all our lives and being are a preparation by Him for His work ... the Spirit is directly related to our calling. He appoints the calling, and He appoints the purposes of our lives. The gift of the Spirit Himself is permanent and abiding.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 309

Because we have the unction or anointing of the Spirit, *we now know all things in principle.*, we have

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the key to all knowledge, i.e., the Lordship of Christ and the triune God. We do *not* know all things in detail, but we know them in principle, as part of God's kingdom and order. We have the key to knowledge.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 315

The sectaries of the 17th century English scene wanted to replace all book-learning and study by an experience in the Spirit which would open up by revelation all knowledge. The university preachers closed the door on the Spirit and stressed their logic and reasoning. Both were wrong. The Spirit gives us the key to all knowledge, and He opens the doors of our understanding. He does not thereby implant in our minds the mathematical times-tables, nor the elements of chemistry. He does enable us to see their meaning as none other can. The Spirit anoints and frees the whole man. As Darwin developed his theory and perspective, he lost his ability to enjoy music, and to enjoy life. As we receive the Spirit and grow in Him, every aspect of our life is freed and opened. If the Spirit is at work in our lives, we are made into *dominion men*.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 315

... too often these "greater works" [John 14:12-14] are limited to Pentecost and its aftermath, and to supernatural and miraculous events. They cannot be so limited. The work of our Lord was our salvation; our work in Him is discipling all the nations under Him (Matt. 28:18-20). The work of atonement is a finished work in Christ. The work of dominion continues to His coming again. There is no independence in these "greater works." We work as members of the Son's new humanity in and through the Holy Spirit. We are given *power* in order that we may exercise *dominion*.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 318

The Spirit is called *Parakletos*; the word has reference to an advocate or legal assistant in a court of law; such a person is a comforter to one who is accused; he is, however, a prosecutor of the guilty also.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 320

... the limits of His word are their [our] limits: there can be no new revelations. There can be and are gifts of wisdom and light which enable men to see the meaning of those words, and their light on our times.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, pp. 322-323

... traditional orthodoxy will deny that it has emptied the world of God, or that it has limited or silenced the Spirit. Technically, such answers are correct. Practically, the Spirit has been so circumscribed, and so limited to official church channels, that for the people the Spirit is remote. Earlier eras saw the triune God at work in storms, droughts, and the like, and rightly so. They recognized that God is not remote but closer to us than we are to ourselves. With the Enlightenment, Deism saw God as an absentee landlord: He created the world, and it now operates in terms of its built-in laws and clockwork ... Thus, without agreeing with all that the charismatic movement holds, we need to welcome it with certain dissents. The Holy Spirit has not spoken for the last time, nor is His work limited to ordination services and ecclesiastical functions. He is at work with the godly and the ungodly. He is the very present power, work, and person of God. At every moment, it is God the Spirit with whom we have to deal. Our relationship to Him is closer and more thorough than with our husband, wife, children, parents, or friends. Our relationship to the Holy Spirit, unlike any other we have, is *total*. This is true of the regenerate and the unregenerate alike. Perhaps we need to say that the charismatics have not gone far enough. We cannot limit the Spirit's presence and power to certain meetings, moments, and events.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 324

The *gifts* of the Spirit were the miraculous powers. These were *the Spirit's witness* to His coming and

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His Presence in Christ's members. It must be stressed that, in some sense, the Spirit still witnesses to His presence in and with us. We may differ as to what that witness is, but we dare not deny that witness. The life of the covenant man is a supernatural fact because of that witness. It is a very sad fact that today's differences as to the nature or extent of that witness of the Spirit blind us to the all-important fact of the reality of that witness.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 327

When II Peter 1:4 tells us that we are made *partakers* of the divine nature, the word translated *partakers* is again *koinonia*: it means that by grace we have fellowship with God ... In Romans 15:26, when Paul speaks of the collection for the relief of the poor in Jerusalem, he uses the word *koinonian*, translated "contribution." In II Corinthians 9:13, *koinonias* is translated as "distribution." Fellowship is thus set forth as a very practical concern one for another. In Hebrews 13:16, we read, "But to do good and communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The word translated as *communicate* is again *koinonias*, and it refers to the act of giving to one another's needs. This point is very important. In the 20th century, stormy controversies have sometimes arisen between Pentecostals and charismatics on the one hand, and their critics within the church on the other. Among many on both sides, "the communion of the Holy Ghost" is often lacking. On the one hand, the presence of the Spirit is identified sometimes with correctness of doctrine, and on the other, sometimes with gifts and experiences. The Scriptures are clear that this communion of the Holy Ghost is a fellowship by grace with the triune God, and a resulting fellowship in the Spirit one with another. It is in a love which is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:8), and it is a fellowship which is practical and caring. It is a life in family; it means being members one of another (Eph. 4:25). Where the Spirit is, there is communion.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 337

... the true experience in the Holy Spirit is one of learning and growth.

Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 355

Extracts from Clark Pinnock's book *Flame of Love*:

The Holy Spirit epitomizes the nearness of the power and presence of God (p. 9).

Experience needs good theology the way a traveler needs a reliable map. A traveler with lots of enthusiasm but no map for the journey is a dangerous person to travel with. Together, you can get hopelessly lost. (p. 12)

Trinity and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God's face turned toward us and God's presence abiding with us (p. 14)

The Holy Spirit is the loving, self-communicating, out-fanning, and out-pouring presence of the eternal divine life of the triune God. (p. 15)

When one speaks about God it is only meaningful if there is an encounter of God to back it up. (p. 18)

There is a mystery to the revelation to the Triune God, but this revelation is not irrational. This mystery, the One and the Many, both epitomizes and justifies every aspect of the human experience. (p. 29)

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Creation is not a necessity in God for God is in the fullness of Trinitarian fellowship from eternity past to eternity future. He is the living communion of persons. (p. 35)

The Holy Spirit choreographs the dance of God in creation and calls man made in His image to dance in step with Him. Mankind is destined for this dance! (p. 37)

The Holy Spirit both embodies and triggers the infinite overflow of God's holy love. He truly is the bond of love. (p. 38)

The Holy Spirit is a true gentleman; He does not call attention to Himself for He wishes to remain anonymous. (p. 39)

God is beautiful and supremely loveable. Atheism is partly the result of bad theology, an unpaid bill resulting from failures in depicting God. (p. 42)

God delights in social existence, ecstatic dance, creativity and spontaneity. This is why we humans love to play in the midst of the seriousness of ordinary life - play bespeaks eternity. (p. 43)

In creating all things, God is like an artist who makes things because He delights in self-expression. His rest on the 7th day was a rest of satisfaction in a job well done. (pp. 44-45)

Professional theologians tend to be biased toward human reason (systematics); they need a good dose of the artistry of music in their theological constructions. It should not surprise us that music thrills us so much, because it draws us to the celestial sounds of the Spirit within us. (p. 46)

Works of art flow freely and overflow out of a rich inner life. They arise from celebration and sheer delight in existence (p. 55)

Let God not be defined so much by holiness and sovereignty in which loving relatedness is incidental, but by the dance of Trinitarian life. (P. 47)

Spirit and the Creation

The Spirit energizes and sustains the world through the sweep of history. (p. 61)

All existence, from the motion of atoms to the motion of galaxies, manifest the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, there can be no "sacred-secular" split and everything in the universe is a sacrament (p. 62)

The world reflects God's glory; therefore anything can mediate the sacred, where there are eyes to see and ears to hear. (p. 120)

We encounter the Holy Spirit in the life of creation itself, in the vitality, the joy, the radiance, the music, the honey, the flowers, the embrace. (p. 50)

The doctrine of creation undergirds the doctrine of salvation. To associate the Holy Spirit only with the work of redemption is a limiting factor and downgrades God's active role in the totality of life. (p. 50)

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The importance of Scriptural truth cannot be measuring by quantification. (p. 52)

The Holy Spirit is present and active in creation ... in its inception, continuation, and perfection. (p. 53)

God the Spirit implements God's decrees as His "playful wisdom" sent into the world to bring God's plans into effect. (p. 53)

God is not like Aristotle's God, thinking only about thinking. (p. 55)

God is just as present in the craftsmanship of Bezalel and in the prophecies of Jeremiah. (p. 53)

Providence refers to God's sustaining and governing all things and therefore indirectly to the moving of the Holy Spirit in creation and history. (p. 53)

It is the Holy Spirit who bestows gifts and talents on all human beings (from Abraham Kuyper). (p. 54)

As the logos of God, the Son is the source of rationality and order in the universe. The Holy Spirit, as a skillful artisan, is the One who sees to it that creation's forms unfold into the perfection of beauty. (p. 60)

Spirit and Christology

It is the anointing of the Spirit that made Jesus the Christ. (p. 80)

By the finished work of Christ (outpouring of the Spirit as evidence) a door (Revelation 4:1) has been opened for humanity to enter God's presence. (p. 81)

400 years of silence (*bat qol*) ... "echo of His voice." In the birth narratives of Luke, the scenes are alive with the activity of the Holy Spirit. God's logos wisdom (the Son) is pitching a tent in history, and God's presence (the Spirit) has come to dwell in new and unexpected ways (p. 85)

God's wrath is revealed on Calvary; it blazed against sinners in the person of their representative. (p. 108)

In wrath is a revelation of God's grace. (p. 109)

There *is* a legal dimension to the atonement, but it should not dominate and eclipse every other dimension. Human guilt is a problem, but mere acquittal was never the goal of the cross. (p. 110)

Spirit and Church

The church rides the wind of God's Spirit like a hawk endlessly and effortlessly circling and gliding in the summer sky. (p. 114)

Jesus poured out the Spirit on all flesh to effect the hope for world transformation. (p. 114)

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At Pentecost (Act 2), the conversion of people from many nations foreshadowed the evangelization of the world. (p. 118)

More than churches full of people, God wants (and the world needs) people full of the Spirit. (p. 119)

There is a physical side to being spiritual. (p. 119)

The physical and the spiritual are not antithetical but cooperative and synergistic. (p. 122)

In the early centuries, the churches were sacramental and charismatic. In the Middle Ages the tendency was to favor sacramental over charismatic, and at the Reformation the sacramental principle itself suffered. (p. 119)

Worship can too easily be a cognitive affair (reciting of creeds, singing hymns without the experience to back up the reciting and singing). (p. 121)

The Incarnation is the fundamental sacrament of God. (p. 121)

The sacramental principle (knowing the presence of God), along with other beliefs of the church, such as the possibility of signs and wonders, has suffered from modernity, which leaves little room for the activity of God. (p. 128)

The sacraments ought to be viewed as means of grace and not reduced to mere ordinances. (p. 129)

The Spirit is present beyond liturgy in a wider circle. There is a flowing that manifests itself as power to bear witness, heal the sick, prophesy, praise God enthusiastically, perform miracles and more. There is a liberty to celebrate, an ability to dream and see visions, a release of Easter life. (p. 129)

It is a false dichotomy to split the charisms that flow from liturgical actions from charisms that flow free of institutional structures. (p. 130).

When Paul called for order in the church in Corinth (I Corinthians 14), he was instructing in the order that should accompany prophecy and tongues (i.e., the flow of revelation ... a word optimal for the moment ... and knowledge that upbuilds, encourages, and consoles); he did not instruct in the order of "clamping down on such things." (pp. 131,134)

The cessationist mindset becomes self-fulfilling. (p. 133)

Jack Deere, "A deficit in experience best explains the cessationist position." (p. 266)

The Holy Spirit was not so much a creedal issue for the early church as a fact of their experience. (p. 133)

Humanity was made for resurrection, and healing is at most a temporary stop-gap. (p. 135)

Nietzsche's Zarathustra taunts the church: "They would have to sing better songs to make me believe in their Redeemer." (p. 138)

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Limited expectation results in an experiential deficit. (p. 139)

Gifts are like a pipe down which love is to flow. (p. 143)

We look not only for the salvation of souls but for the redemption of creation. (p. 143)

History belongs to intercessors because history belongs to God. (p. 146)

Spirit and Union

Spirit leads to union with God, His person and His purposes. (p. 149)

Removal of condemnation (the emphasis of Luther) is part of a much larger scenario. Acquittal before God is only the beginning, not the end of salvation. (pp. 150-151)

The goal of salvation is the glory of God as seen in a people who participate in the divine nature (Christ formed in us ... Galatians 4:19) in a way that preserves distinctions proper to Creator and creature without losing sight of their union. This union is not peripheral to salvation; it is the goal. (pp. 150-151)

Atonement (at-one-ment) ... unity, a divine dance, between God and man where man is an adopted partner. (pp. 153-154)

Salvation is not cheap grace, based upon bare assent to propositions, or merely a change in status: Romans 6 (union) follows Romans 5 (justification). Never conceive of justification without conceiving of the goal ... a body of people walking with God in the power of the Spirit. (p. 156)

Union with God leads the believer into a familiarity with God's heart ... who He is, what He is doing, and what He plans to do. (p. 166)

Christianity is not a religion of intellectual reflection with little affective impact. We proclaim the presence of the kingdom in the power of the Spirit. (p. 166)

The major cause of the thirst for a second blessing or Spirit baptism today is the earlier neglect of baptism and confirmation as charismatic events. The second-blessing doctrine is fallout from much bad teaching and bad practice in the church. If the power dimension is overlooked (as it often is), the deficit will have to be made up later. (pp. 167-168)

Those of scholarly orientation need to emphasize their need to grow in the ability to rejoice and celebrate. (p. 168)

Western culture favors rational and scientific knowledge and downplays the capacity for religious affections. This is what makes so many Western churches spiritless. It is natural for us, culturally speaking, to quench the Spirit. In our culture it is OK to shout in praise of a home-run hitter at a baseball game, but not acceptable to make a joyful noise to the Lord in church. (p. 169)

Pentecostal reality is much more important than correct terminology. (P. 169)

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Euphoria is not the goal (as in some Pentecostal denominations); the goal is vocation and mission. (p. 171)

Speaking in tongues is normal, not normative. (p. 172)

Tongues is prayer without concepts, prayer at a deep, noncognitive level. (p. 173)

We do not like mysteries (like tongues) very much; we want theology to be as rational as possible. (p. 173)

Unloving persons are not born of God, whatever creed they profess. (p. 180)

We have inherited from Adam guilt (in this case, our guilt is our own when we replicate Adam's commitment to independence), corruption, and death. Therefore, what we need from Christ is acquittal and resurrection; we need to be saved by His life (Romans 5:10). (p. 181)

The Pauline phrase "in Christ" supports the idea of salvation as union and communion. (p. 269)

Spirit and Universality

The good news is for the world, for all sinners without discrimination, for all the hopeless, the lost, the forgotten, the marginalized. (p. 189)

In Scripture, there is a tension between particularly (Christ dying for His people) and universality (Christ saving the world). (p. 192)

Christ is the Savior of His people (particularity) and the Spirit woos the world of sinners (universality) into the sheepfold. (p. 192)

The Spirit prepares the world for the gospel by building redemptive bridges (e.g., Don Richardson). (p. 201)

Luke's genealogy traces Christ's lineage all the way back to Adam, showing that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's dealing with humanity. (p. 202)

Good works do not merit grace, but they may signal a response to grace. (p. 210)

Blessed are the meek, not the meek who sign on the dotted theological line. (p. 210)

There is a voice in us, isn't there, that says no one ought to gain entry to the kingdom who doesn't really belong and is not wearing the proper badges. (p. 213)

Spirit and Truth

Truth by itself can be heartless and cruel. It can shrivel up and harden and be used to crush others. But God's truth is full of grace, soft and tender. (p. 186)

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Doctrinal fidelity must be connected to the imperative of timeliness. (p. 215)

A theology that does not inquire after God's will for the present may be orthodox but is not really listening to God. (p. 215)

Doctrines are to be timely witnesses, not timeless abstractions. (p. 215)

To do this, we must engage in strenuous theological reflection. (p. 216)

Changing circumstances require timely applications. (p. 218)

The truth of profound matters is not easily grasped and the implications not quickly apparent. (p. 219)

Mature knowledge does not come quickly or easily. (p. 219)

Let us cast aside rigidity and that know-it-all attitude and open ourselves to more light that God can shed on his Word and the human situation. (p. 219)

The evangelical emphasis on the propositional nature of truth has directed attention almost entirely toward biblical exegesis, to the neglect of other dynamics involved in interpretation. (p. 220)

The words of Jesus are quantitatively complete, not needing additions, but they are not qualitatively grasped - they need pondering. They need to become fresh and alive for each generation. Revelation is not a closed system of propositional truths but a divine self-disclosure that continues to open up and challenge. (p. 221)

Humility is foundational for growing as listeners to the Spirit in Scripture. (p. 222)

Though it is the final truth for all time, we also seek the concrete truth of it for this time. It is God's living Word, powerful for the occasion when first spoken and significant for all other times and places as well. It is never surpassed but always richly interpreted. (p. 223)

The Word of Jesus needs to be made effective in concrete situations by the Spirit. (p. 223)

Revelation is an act of interpersonal communication and it is conveyed in the story of the mighty acts of God. (pp. 224-225)

Liberalism places too much emphasis on experience and too little on cognitivity. (p. 224)

Evangelical theology errs on the other extreme: too much emphasis on cognitivity (systems) and too little on experiencing the transforming power of God that the system is supposed to reveal.

If our goal is to synthesize the facts of revelation, then there will be little room for revelation to be opened up by the Spirit and little room for timeliness. (p. 225)

Revelation is neither contentless experience (liberalism) nor timeless propositions (conservatism). It is the dynamic self-disclosure of God, who makes his goodness known in the history of salvation, in a

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process of disclosure culminating in Jesus Christ. Revelation is not primarily existential impact or infallible truths but divine self-revelation that both impacts and instructs. Revelation is neither human transformation alone nor a set of propositions on a variety of topics. It is our introduction to a Person. Revelation is addressed not only to the intellect but to the whole person. There are truths implicit and explicit in it, but they point to the personal center. Revelation is more than propositional, more than experiential. It informs and shapes us, it transforms and instructs us. (pp. 226-227)

Illumination is meant to enable readers to recognize Scripture's timely meaning. (p. 229)

Past inspiration secures Scripture, and present inspiration empowers readers. We need illumination if we are to be transformed by the text. The Scriptures would remain a dead letter apart from the power of God. (p. 230)

The Holy Spirit puts us in touch with the very subject matter of revelation. (p. 230)

To ignore past inspiration would be to risk heresy by straying outside the field of play. To ignore present inspiration would be to risk dead orthodoxy by neglecting what is crucial and timely. (p. 230)

Revelation must not be increased or changed by subsequent illumination. (p. 231)

The development of Christian doctrine is to be viewed as the achievement of Christian thinking directed by the Spirit. (p. 232)

Christology was not the product of human thought alone but arose from the worship of the community and its liturgy. (p. 232)

The spiritual vitality so evident in Scripture is unfortunately rare and thin in many religious circles that are devoted to the study of theology! Why? The atmosphere of this study is often restrained and the style highly cognitive; expectations are rather low regarding the presence of the kingdom in power. (p. 247)