



Who Killed the Holy Ghost?: A Journalist Reports on the Holy Spirit

Rufus Goodwin

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When the Christ, in his physical form, left the earthly world, he sent the Holy Spirit?‘‘The Comforter’’?to guide and inspire his followers. Beginning with Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was perhaps the most important aspect of the Godhead for the future of Christianity and for humankind as a whole. Today, however, there are cults for Mary and there are Jesuits and Jesus freaks, but what about the Holy Ghost?why has the Spirit lost its central role in Christianity and the Church?

Who Killed the Holy Ghost? is a sweeping, hard-hitting, and accessible survey of the Spirit in the world and in human life, from the Jewish prophets to modern times. Goodwin?a journalist, former correspondent to the Vatican, and an expert on the Church and its history?investigates the rise of the Holy Ghost, the heresies, the battles, defeats, and victories, and the Holy Spirit’s exile from history. He recounts and contextualizes what individuals have said about the Holy Spirit?from Paul, John, and Jesus to Leonardo da Vinci and George Washington to Einstein, Freud, and John Glenn. We are also given a close look at the various ways world religious traditions have treated the Spirit, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, shamanism, Buddhism, Taoism, and many others. In the process, Goodwin focuses otherwise vague uses of the word *spirit*, from the ancient Greeks and Romans to Christian gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit to modern Pentecostals and the New Age movement.

Journalistic in its sweep, Goodwin’s treatment is nonsectarian and nondenominational, honoring the history of the Holy Ghost in life and death for our materialistic times. The Holy Ghost’s visibility has faded with the centuries, so this is, in a sense, also an obituary. But the Holy Spirit, often so invisible, may not be a mere ghost or dead yet.

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