

THE HOLY SPIRIT, by Charles C. Ryrie. Published by Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois. 126 pages. Price, \$1.75.

Charles Ryrie, professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, has written an easy-to-understand, small volume on THE HOLY SPIRIT. Unlike many modern works on the Holy Spirit, this one is based on the belief that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. Although the book is brief, it is comprehensive, treating many aspects of the Holy Spirit, ~~in a brief compass~~. One reason for its easy reading style is that the author has presented his material in an orderly, systematic fashion, using the format of an outline.

In spite of much of the book that is eminently worthwhile, it is difficult to recommend this study because it overlooks and contradicts important Biblical data. To pass over several points, we focus our attention on Ryrie's unconscious deprecation of the sovereignty of God and exaltation of man's ability. For him the sinner is not dead through trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), but sick. He ~~pas~~^{ses} lip service to the words total depravity but explicitly denies their content. Total depravity, he says, "does not mean that man is incapable of performing good deeds or receiving and appreciating good things" (p. 55). But Paul says that the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (I Cor. 2:14). Consistent with his view of the ability of man, the author denies the Biblical fact of God's irresistible or efficacious grace (chap. 10) and believes that man must fulfill the requirement of faith before he can be born again (pp. 64, 66). Such a view necessarily implies that divine election is based on foreseen faith rather than on God's love that is not conditioned by anything in the

sinner. The Bible does not teach that we first loved God and then he loved us, but rather:

"'Tis not that I did choose Thee,
For, Lord, that could not be;
This heart would still refuse Thee,
Hadst Thou not chosen me."

All of the following illustrations which the Bible uses of the new birth indicate that the sinner is totally unable to believe in Christ without God's efficacious grace: new birth (an unborn "thing" cannot decide to be born); new creation ("something" that is not_x cannot decide to be made); spiritual resurrection (dead Lazarus cannot even hear Christ call him, unless Christ makes him alive). To say that ^{without the new birth} man is not able to believe in Christ or even understand spiritual things is a hard doctrine that insults man, but it shows how glorious and gracious God is in saving anybody. And it is Biblical.

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