

the life which is in the Son of God.¹

Samuel Ridout, in his The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, writes:

New birth, in the individual, is the first work of the Spirit of God of which we speak. Let us thank Him for the Gift of life by the Spirit. It is the common blessing of all dispensations. Revelations vary, modes of dealing change--ever accomplishing the counsels of Him who is perfect in wisdom; but the common life produced by the Spirit of God is in the whole family--before Christ, now, and during the Millennial age.²

With G. Campbell Morgan, however, we find a different idea:

These words of Jesus to Nicodemus were the more remarkable because spoken to him. He was no profligate sunk in the mire and filth of bestiality. Nor was he a self-centred and self-satisfied Pharisee. He was a sincere seeker after truth, and the question he put to Jesus revealed the working of his mind. He came to a Teacher from God, and therefore he came with an open mind willing to receive truth. He was perhaps the most perfect example of the highest possibilities of the old covenant, which had instructed men in the things of God and had led them to the highest act possible in the energy of fallen nature--that, namely, of submission to a baptism which symbolized repentance. Christ's answer cast no aspersion upon the past. It revealed its limitations. It was as though He had declared that John, the last of the magnificent line of the Hebrew prophets, had done all that was possible in leading unregenerate men to the door of the kingdom. To enter, there was necessary the new and essential miracle of Christianity--that man should have a second birth, without which he could neither see nor enter in.³

Pentecost affected the whole position of the disciples. In the moment when the Holy Spirit fell upon them, the company of apostles and disciples, about one hundred and twenty in number, were changed from being merely followers of the Messiah into members of the risen Lord. . . .

When the Spirit came, they were born again. Hitherto they had been followers of the Christ; and in the purpose of God, in company with faithful Abraham and all who preceded them in a life obedient to the measure of light received, were reckoned as sharers in the work of Christ. But, as an actual fact of life, it was only when the Spirit came

¹Ibid., p. 21.

²Samuel Ridout, The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.), p. 12.

³G. Campbell Morgan, The Spirit of God (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), pp. 214-15.