

the inauguration of the church age that the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Old Testament saints are clearly declared to be in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:28-29) and therefore they must have experienced the new birth. The Scriptural truth of man's sinful nature would make the new birth a necessity before there could be entrance into the kingdom of God.¹

Perhaps one other indication of the growing tendency among present-day Dispensationalists to return to the affirmative position of C. I. Scofield and William Kelly on this question may be discovered in a thesis presented to and accepted by the faculty of the graduate school of Grace Theological Seminary in June, 1964 (although the president of the seminary, Dr. Herman Hoyt, does not himself hold this view). The author, John J. Davis, entitled his thesis, "Regeneration in the Old Testament." A few quotations from that thesis are enlightening:

Not all soteriological discussions by dispensationalists are devoid of an explanation of the essential elements of salvation as they relate to both the New and Old Testaments; but the greater majority of expositors that have written on this subject reject the idea that the essential elements of salvation were part of the believer's experience in all ages. This is especially true in regard to regeneration.²

It is apparent from the preceding quotations that among dispensational writers there are a considerable number who deny the experience of regeneration to the Old Testament believer. This particular view is the one that brings the most criticism from nondispensationalists, and rightly so.³

It will be shown later that regeneration in the Old Testament not only can be held by a dispensationalist but is more and more being defended as the proper approach to Old Testament soteriology.⁴

¹Roy L. Aldrich, "A new Look at Dispensationalism," Bibliotheca Sacra CXX (1963), January, pp. 47-48.

²John J. Davis, Regeneration in the Old Testament, a thesis presented to the faculty of the graduate school, Grace Theological Seminary, June, 1964, pp. 22-23.

³Ibid., p. 24.

⁴Ibid., pp. 23-24.