

irrevocably fixed, and that they are consigned to eternal, never-ending misery. I believe that I do not misstate the belief, in this respect, of some of the most prominent sects that comprise the Christian world, so-called. I have conversed with ministers of various denominations in relation to the future of the heathen—those who die without a knowledge of the name of Jesus, and of his character as the Redeemer and Savior of the world. I have asked them what they thought the condition of the heathen would be, and where any definite answer was made, the feelings of such persons would lean to the idea that they would be consigned to hell; with others, either no definite idea was entertained, or, being more tender in their feelings, the answer would be, they did not know what their future condition would be.

There is an expression of the Savior's to Nicodemus, which I think I will read; it is found in the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel. There was a man of the Pharisees, John writes, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Now here is a definite doctrine laid down by the Savior, that unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, and unless he is born of the water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; he cannot even see the kingdom without the new birth, and he cannot enter that kingdom without being born of the water and of the Spirit. This doctrine is exceedingly positive, it leaves no room for doubt; there is no chance to evade the fact of this doctrine if there is to be any reliance placed upon the words of Jesus. Then, we are forced to the belief that no man can enter into the kingdom of God unless he is born of the water and of the Spirit.

Well, taking these passages into consideration, a large class of people have come to the conclusion that unless a man is born again, or, as they term it, experience a change of heart, he is consigned to endless misery; and there are those who believe that all the heathen who have died in ignorance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are thus punished, and, in fact, there are those who profess to have faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, who believe that in hell, that place of torment from which they declare there is no escape, there are infants by scores, and hundreds and thousands, and I may say by millions, enduring inconceivable and endless torment because they have died before receiving the ordinances which they consider necessary to salvation.

I do not thus understand the Scriptures, I do not thus understand the plan of salvation; I do not thus view the character and dealings of God our heavenly Father with his creatures. One of the most prominent attributes which we ascribe to our Father in heaven is mercy. The Scriptures de-