

clare most emphatically that he is a God of mercy, and a God of love. Can we, even in our degraded condition; consider a being endowed in the least degree with the attributes of love and mercy, or even of justice, who would consign millions of his creatures to endless torment because they do not believe and obey a doctrine which they never heard? Why such an idea is unworthy of intelligent beings. Suppose that any of us who have families should pass a law or prescribe a rule for their government, and at the time it is passed or prescribed, a portion of our children are not within hearing, and while still in ignorance of it, they unconsciously violate it, and because of this the father punishes them. What would you say of such a father? Would you not say that he was unjust, harsh and cruel? Why, certainly this would be our verdict, if we pronounced any, we could not pronounce otherwise. We would be compelled to come to the conclusion that the father who would act in this manner would neither be kind, just or wise. And shall it be said of our heavenly Father, who is the fountain of love, mercy and justice, that he will act with less justice than man, and that he will punish, curse and consign to eternal misery, his children, because they have failed to obey the laws he has never made known to them? Certainly not; and it is on account of these doctrines, which have been propounded and circulated so widely in Christendom, that skeptics are numbered by hundreds of thousands and it may be said by millions. The feelings of the people recoil, humanity revolts at such monstrous doctrines, and the growth of skepticism and infidelity may be traced to the fact that such hideous principles are advocated by those professing to be servants of the living God and the ministers

of Jesus Christ. But do the Scriptures, the words of eternal life, as recorded in the Bible, inculcate such ideas? Certainly not. There is in the plan of salvation, which God our heavenly Father has revealed, perfect love, mercy and justice, and every other attribute which pertains to the character of Deity are perfectly illustrated in the plan of salvation which he has revealed for man's guidance.

The words of Jesus which I have read to you, contain an immutable truth: that except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God. It is an immutable truth that, except a man be born of the water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. These words proceeded from the mouth of Jesus, the Son of God, the author of our salvation, the founder of our religion.

He was perfectly acquainted with the laws necessary to be obeyed in order to effect an entrance into his Father's kingdom; and being thus acquainted, he had the right as well as the knowledge necessary to advance and proclaim this doctrine to the children of men.

While we are upon the subject we may as well make a few remarks upon the nature of this new birth of which Jesus speaks. As I have told you, and as you well know, there is a large class in Christendom who believe that this new birth consists of what they term a change of heart; if the heart undergoes a change they say the creature is born again. Now, I do not so understand the Scriptures, I do not think that the change of heart thus referred to, is the new birth to which the Savior refers; on the contrary, it says here in great plainness, that they must be born of the water as well as of the Spirit. Not for the putting away the filth of the flesh, as I read to you in the passage from Peter, but for the answer of a