

But pass this by, and listen to the testimony given to the state of the departed. Is their state such as admits of active consciousness? Do they remember the things of earth? Are they acquainted with what is occurring here below? Do they revisit their former homes, and hover round the scenes which they have left? This is invariably the language of mourning affection about those who are not lost but gone before, and to such enquiries the answer of the text and context is clear. The text implies a state of consciousness. So do the words "I am tormented in this flame." "I have five brothers." "Send Lazarus," "Lest they also come into this place of torment." "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst the good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." But over and above this the text reveals that they increase in knowledge, and this should set all such questions at rest forever. The text represents Abraham as speaking about Moses and the Prophets. But how and when, and where did Abraham learn anything about Moses and the Prophets? Abraham was in Paradise long ages before Moses was born. How then did he acquire the knowledge which he certainly did not possess upon earth? Not by personal observation. Not by revisiting the scenes of earth. I am unable to agree with a poetical representation given in the lines which speak of a mourning child addressing a departed mother, and saying: "Is not thy shade still lingering near?" I suppose it is not impossible for a departed shade to return, as the history of King Saul attests, and the narrative of what occurred at the Transfiguration. But Scripture has no warrant for the idea that it is anything more than an exceptional occurrence. The Scriptural representation is that the departed who are believers are asleep. That is (as natural sleep suggests) their eyes are closed upon this world of sin and sorrow and all that is passing therein. They are fully alive to all that is going on there where they are, but they know nothing by observation of what is passing here. They do know it, however, by other means, either by angel messengers who are constantly ascending and descending between