

Were this all-consuming remorse the only punishment of the lost soul, it would surely be a dreadful misfortune to be forced to endure it forever. Even in life, when men cannot be as keenly sensitive as in the spirit world, and when they can still find some form of pleasure, or distraction, remorse will not unfrequently cause the murderer to give himself up to justice. A shameful death on the gallows seems preferable to a life tortured by the remembrance of his guilt. This will help us to form some faint idea of the unhappy state of those whose self-reproach, and bitter remorse are in proportion to their realization of their folly, and their knowledge of what they have lost for all eternity, and how easily they might have attained everlasting bliss. Hence the sorrowful wail,—“we fools,”—hence the unavailing confession,—“therefore, we have erred from the way of truth,”—hence the humiliating admission, “what hath pride profited us; or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us.” Alas! this is no overdrawn picture; it has been limned by the Holy Ghost—“Such things as these the sinners said in hell.”—(Wisdom V, 14).

Our Divine Lord Himself has thrown a fuller light on the sufferings of the wicked after death. His words are accommodated to our modes of speech, which can only figuratively describe the hereafter; yet, we may be certain they are such as can best express to mortals the nature of the torments of hell. Our Lord could speak no untruth; He could not make use of exaggeration, or seek to inspire superstitious fear. His aim was to instruct, to teach the truth as He Himself avers—“For this was I born, and for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth.”—(John XVIII, 37).

Now, in the parable of the self-indulgent rich man, and the