

spirits, they go none the less astray. They make them corporeal images which require food and drink. They believe that the appointed place for souls, to which after death they are to retire, is in the direction of the setting sun, and there they are to enjoy feasting, hunting, and dancing; for these pleasures are held in the highest repute among them.

When they first heard of the eternal fire and the burning decreed as a punishment for sin, they were marvelously impressed; still, they obstinately withheld their belief because, as they said, there could be no fire where there was no wood; then, what forests could sustain so many fires through such a long space of time? This absurd reasoning had so much influence over the minds of the savages, that they could not be persuaded of the truth of the gospel. For, plainly, in the physical man, as some one from Sts. Peter and Paul says, the entire system of knowledge is based on vision. Nevertheless, a clever and ingenious priest overcame their obstinacy. He confidently declared that the lower world possessed no wood, and that it burned by itself. He was greeted by the laughter of the crowd of savages. "But," said he, "I will exhibit to you a piece of this land of Avernus, in order that, since you do not believe the words of God, you may trust the evidence of your own eyes." The novelty and boldness of the promise aroused their curiosity. Upon the appointed day they assembled from the whole neighborhood, and sat down together in an immense plain, surrounded by hills like an amphitheater. Twelve leading men of the tribe, persons of dignity and sagacity, were chosen to watch the priest, in order that neither fraud nor sorcery might be concealed. He produced a lump of sulphur and gave it to the judges