

there they have heard wonders,— that they have been assured that these things which are said of Paradise and of Hell are fables; [43] that it is true that souls are immortal, but that, upon exit from the first bodies which they had, they see themselves at liberty, and gain entirely new bodies, more vigorous than the first, and a more blissful country; and that thus our souls, at death, leave their bodies in the manner of those who abandon a cabin and an exhausted soil, in order to seek one newer and more productive.

At other times there have come, it is said, certain news that there has appeared in the woods a phantom of prodigious size, who bears in one hand ears of Indian corn, and, in the other, a great abundance of fish; who says that it is he alone who has created men, who has taught them to till the earth, and who has stocked all the lakes and the seas with fish, so that nothing might fail for the livelihood of men. These he recognized as children, although they did not yet recognize him as their father,— just like an infant in the cradle, who has not firm enough judgment to recognize those to whom he owes all that he [44] is, and all the support of his life. But this phantom added, they said, that our souls, being separated from our bodies, would then have a greater knowledge; that they would see that it is from him that they hold life; and that then, upon rendering him the honors which he deserves, he would increase both his love and his cares for them,—that he would do good to them all. He also said that to believe that any one of them was destined to a place of torments and to the fires, which are not beneath the earth, were false notions,— with which, nevertheless, we treacherously strive to terrify them.