

Terms such as these clearly express a superiority of man to the lower animals, which no conformation of his physical frame, erect posture, or even superior intellect, can adequately represent, but must be sought for only in that moral and religious nature which allies him to divinity, constitutes him a spiritual being, and makes him a child of God, and an heir of immortality. With such teaching as this before them, the ancient Israelites must have had some glimpses of their spiritual nature and of the future life.

The expressions used in reference to the death of the Patriarchs in the book of Genesis teach, I think, clearly the doctrine of a future state. Of Abraham, it is said that he "gave up the ghost," and "was gathered to his people."* The first term clearly implies the existence of something which was separated from the material body at death, and is the equivalent of the expression used by Stephen in his last memorable prayer, when being about to die for the faith he had cherished, he looked up to heaven and exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,"† and the second sets forth the doctrine of a future life, inasmuch as Abraham's body was not buried with his people, but in a strange land far away from that where the bones of his ancestors reposed. Of Ishmael, it is also declared that "he gave up the ghost and was gathered unto his people,"‡ and precisely the same terms are applied to Isaac,§ and with very slight variation to Jacob.|| In all these cases the giving up of the ghost is clearly expressive of the separation of the soul from the body, and the being gathered to their people implies not the burial, for it takes place before the act of interment, but the rejoining of their ancestors in the region of disembodied spirits of which I shall have more to say presently. God is called "the God of the spirit of all flesh,"¶ an expression which clearly implies some sort of spiritual resemblance between God and the human soul—a fact which is also made more apparent in the Hebrew form of oath which we so constantly meet with in the Old Testament, "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth."** It is difficult to understand this oath, except upon the principle

* *Genesis* xxv., 8. † *Genesis* xxv., 17. ‡ *Genesis* xlix., 33. ** 1 *Samuel* xxv., 26.

† *Acts* vii., 59. § *Genesis* xxxv., 29. ¶ *Numbers* xxvii., 16.