

whether the time will ever come on this earth when the Church militant will be seen to triumph over Satan, when peoples will be guided in their actions and policies not by the lower passions but by Christian principles.

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What is the teaching of Genesis ii, 7 about the human soul?

In the Douay Version Gen. ii, 7 is translated 'And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life ; and man became a living soul'. The Revised Version has : 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul'. The matter out of which man's body was fashioned is called 'slime' in the former which follows St Jerome's Latin Vulgate, and 'dust' in the latter. The same word occurs again in Gen. iii, 19, in the sentence of condemnation after the sin of our first parents : 'Dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return'. Here both versions use the same word 'dust', which accords both with the realities of death contemplated in the sentence and with the meaning of the Hebrew word elsewhere (Deut. xxviii, 24). And this sentence of condemnation obviously refers back to the formation of man's body in our verse, so that the translation should use the same word in both places. St Jerome's choice of the word *limus* seems to have been dictated by the thought that dry dust would lack the cohesiveness required to form a body. But the use of the word is not confined to the meaning 'dust' ; it also stands for 'soil' (Job v, 6, xiv, 8), and the shade of meaning is conveyed by the context. So that if it were not for the desirability of using the same word in ii, 7 and iii, 19, in the former passage the translation might well be 'soil', a word which avoids the idea of dryness ; and we are told that water was not lacking (ii, 6, 10).

When the body of man had been thus formed, it was lifeless. To give it life God breathed into its nostrils (so more appropriately according to the Hebrew text) the breath of life. This conception is based on the most obvious difference between a living and a dead body. The living body breathes, the dead body does not. As long as there is breath in the body, the person lives (Job xxvii, 2) ; when there is no breath left, the person dies (III Kings xviii, 17, 21 f). It is God who gives it (Isaias lxii, 5), and it is God who takes it away (Job xxxiv, 14 f). And it is beyond the power of any man to grant it (Job xxvi, 4). But it is not the special possession of man. As essential to life, it is common to man and the animals (Gen. vii, 22). In all these cases the same word *neshāmāh* is used. In Ps. ciii (civ) 29 f., where the word *rūach* 'wind, breath, spirit' is used, the giving and taking away of the life-breath of animals is directly attributed to God :

'If thou hidest thy face, they are troubled ;
 If thou takest away their breath (*rúach*), they expire
 And go back to their dust.
 When thou sendest forth thy spirit (*rúach*), they are created,
 And thou renewest the face of the earth'.

And this word *rúach* is also used indifferently of man and of animals, as in God's announcement of His intention to destroy all living things in the waters of the Flood (Gen. vi, 17). In Prov. xx, 27, a passage of late date (and see Isai. lvii, 16) the word *neshāmāh* is used of a permanent principle in man :

'The spirit (*neshāmāh*) of man is the lamp of the Lord
 Scrutinizing all the inward parts of his being'.

We have to remember that there was a development of doctrine in the long centuries which saw the gradual growth of the Old Testament literature. The idea of a spiritual being is not one that we can expect to find in the early days of Israel. It is a concept of which an uncultured people is incapable. Even to-day after centuries of profound philosophical and theological speculation our notion of a spiritual being is vague and largely negative. It is not therefore surprising that Gen. ii, 7 should speak of man only as a living being, such as he presents himself to the observation of all human beings. For it should be added that the final clause of our verse 'and man became a living soul' can with better justification be translated 'became a living being'. The word used is *nephesh*, which denotes the principle of animal life and is here and elsewhere used to denote that which possesses this principle just as the word *neshāmāh* is used of what possesses breath (Deut. xx, 16; Jos. xi, 11, etc). This, of course, is paralleled by our own use of the word 'soul' to speak of human beings as possessors of souls. And this use of *nephesh* is not confined to man. In this same chapter (Gen. ii, 19), the same phrase is used of the beasts and the birds, and is translated both in the Douay Version and the Revised Version 'living creature'.

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How could St Elizabeth be the 'kinswoman' (Luke i, 36) of our Lady, and also a 'daughter of Aaron' (Luke i, 5), and therefore of the tribe of Levi, if St Joseph was of 'the house of David' (Luke ii, 4) and therefore of the tribe of Judah? According to Num. xxxvi, 7-8 (Vulgate) both men and women were to marry within their own tribe, whereas here there must have been intermarriage between the tribes of Judah and Levi.

It will be clearer to deal with this difficulty under four headings :

(1) *The Text of the Latin Vulgate* in Num. xxxvi, 7-8, does indeed lay it down that 'all men shall marry wives from their own tribe and clan, and all women shall take husbands from the same (*i.e.*, their own) tribe,