

'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 *nepshesh*, 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 *nepshesh* 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,

so that the inheritance may remain in the families, and tribes may not intermingle'. It may be noticed at once (1) that the Latin Vulgate (chiefly in virtue of the decrees, etc., of the Council of Trent) must be regarded as substantially faithful, and safe in faith and morals : (2) that the Vulgate reading here is not correct, and does not give the right sense : (3) that the word 'inheritance', throughout this paper and throughout the biblical passages quoted, refers to land. Upon careful consideration of the passages this becomes obvious ; the whole matter at issue is the transmission of land.

(2) *The history of the matter* helps to throw light upon the regulations. The question arose in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad (Salphaad), who had died without male heirs (cf. Num. xxvii). His daughters asked that they might inherit his land, which evidently at that time they would not normally have done. The Lord not only granted their petition, but also made a general law that when a man died leaving no sons, his land was to go to his daughters (Num. xxvii, 8).

The second stage of the legislation was reached when heads of the families of the tribe of Manasseh protested that in this way the land might pass out of the possession of the tribe to which it had been assigned ; for normally the land of these daughters would be inherited by their sons, who would belong to the tribe of their fathers. These last might not be of the tribe of the daughters (e.g., of Zelophehad) whom they had married (cf. Num. xxxvi, 1-4). The Lord then commanded that daughters who inherited land were to marry within their own clan, so that the land would remain within the tribe. This law is stricter than was essentially required, the 'clan' being a subdivision of the tribe ; but doubtless it was desirable that the territories even of the clans should remain intact. In Num. xxxvi, 6 and 8, the Hebrew text requires the heiress to marry a husband of 'the clan of the tribe' of her father ; in English such a rendering would not make the sense clear enough, so that it is better to render (as below) 'her father's tribal clan'. The Latin Vulgate, however, and therefore the Douay and Knox versions, omit the mention of the clan.

It may be asked why the Lord did not exact at once that daughters who inherited land should marry within their own clan, instead of there being two stages in the legislation. The answer appears to be that the legislation could develop more naturally and without opposition through these two stages : first of all, land had to be secured to the daughters, and then the rights of the tribe and clan to their own land were safeguarded.

(3) *The Hebrew text* of Num. xxxvi, 7-9 now calls for a short notice separately. It runs : 'An inheritance of the children of Israel shall not pass from tribe to tribe : for the children of Israel shall cleave every one to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter

that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall become wife to one of her father's tribal clan, so that the children of Israel may possess every one the inheritance of his fathers. And so no inheritance shall pass from one tribe to another tribe; for the tribes of the children of Israel shall cleave every man to his own inheritance.'

(4) *Our Lady and St Elizabeth*, it can now be shown, could certainly have been kinswomen. Our Lady's descent is not explicitly mentioned, but St Paul emphatically states that our Lord was born of the seed of David (Rom. i, 3); and even from a strictly historical point of view it may be noticed that he was intimate with 'the beloved physician Luke' (Coloss. iv, 14), who in his turn was intimate with our Lady, as is clear from the first two chapters of his gospel. Some other passages in St Luke's writings point the same way, for he is especially well informed about the holy women. It cannot seriously be doubted that our Lady was descended from the tribe of Judah, no less than St Joseph. Since St Elizabeth's husband Zachary was a priest, it may be worth noting that there was no restriction of a tribal kind in the marriage of priests; it is only laid down that the high priest must marry a virgin (Levit. xxi, 14), and that the ordinary priest must not marry a woman divorced or polluted or a harlot (Levit. xxi, 7). In actual fact St Elizabeth was 'of the daughters of Aaron', and therefore of the tribe of Levi.

Our Lady and St Elizabeth, then, as a matter of fact both married into their own tribe, though there is no particular reason to think that they had inherited land. Our Lady, in particular, made the offering of the poor at her purification, which rather makes against her having inherited land (cf. Luke ii, 24; Levit. xii, 8). But in any case there is no positive reason to suppose that their two mothers (or their grandmothers) had inherited land, so that there is no difficulty in supposing that one (or both) of them might be descended in part from the other's tribe.

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*How is Matt. v 17-18, to be reconciled with the abolition in the New Law of the Jewish ritual observances, the sabbath rest, the Pasch, etc?*

Very early in His sermon on the Mount our Lord speaks of the relation of His mission to the Mosaic Law and to the prophets. He has not come to destroy them, to cast them out of His own religion and to deny them all force. He has come to fulfil them, to develop them into something greater. Thus, the ritual observances find their supreme expression in the Holy Eucharist, but also in the divine office: the sabbath rest remains, though transferred to the first day of the week; our own passover is Christ (I Cor. v, 7). Thus the Old Testament still lives in the New, which we cannot fully understand without it, any