

ARTICLE III.

THE TWO GENEALOGIES OF JESUS.

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THERE are persons who take delight in discovering discrepancies in the Bible. It never seems to occur to them that the absence of what they regard as discrepancies would be proof positive that the book was a fraud. Perfect agreement in details on the witness stand is recognized by all lawyers as one of the most reliable tests when collusion is suspected, and a similar agreement in the Bible stories that appear at different places would be enough to condemn it offhand. Honest witnesses never see things exactly alike, and no such witnesses ever agree in all their statements. At times they may even appear to contradict one another; but a seeming contradiction is not necessarily a real one.

Three of the Gospel writers tell of a certain anointing of Jesus, with such close agreement in some of the details as to leave no doubt concerning the identity of the occasion. Matthew (xxvi. 7) and Mark (xiv. 3) fail to identify the woman who did the anointing, but John (xii. 3) says that it was Mary. They all agree that she used genuine nard (Gr. *nardou pistikēs*) and that it was very precious. John says that there was a pound of it, — the others a cruse. John also says that she anointed his feet, while the others agree that it was his head. John adds that she wiped his feet with her hair. As the anointing of the head was a normal act and a pound of ointment was a quantity in excess of what she could

use for the purpose, it is not hard to imagine that she took some of what was left and put it on Jesus's feet to John's great surprise, and that this particular part of the performance was the thing that he remembered best and spoke of.

Again, Judas hanged himself according to Matthew (xxvii. 5), but Luke's account (Acts i. 18) has him obtain a field with the money, fall headlong, burst asunder in the midst, and have his bowels gush out. Luke does not say that he bought the field but that he "acquired" (*ektēsato*) it, and Matthew (xxvii. 9 f.) relates that the thirty pieces of silver were used to purchase the potter's field. As the money belonged to Judas, it would be in keeping with the facts, as they looked at things, to say that he acquired the field. He did, in a sense. If, in addition, he attempted to hang himself in that same field, by some chance, but used a rotten rope, it at once becomes clear that a violent fall from a tree onto broken crockery below would supply the needed elements to make Luke's account comprehensible.

An admirable illustration of this sort of thing was published some years ago in this *Quarterly* (lxiv. 769). A class in history, reporting on the condemnation of Louis XVI., could not be made to agree. About half of them declared that the vote against him was unanimous. Most of the others asserted vigorously that there was but one majority. A few said that the majority was one hundred and forty-five in a vote of seven hundred and twenty-one. The facts were these. On the first question ("Is the king guilty?") there was no vote in the negative. Each deputy was then asked to state his penalty. Those including death, at some time, amounted to a majority of one hundred and forty-five. Those involving immediate death were, however, only three hundred and sixty-one, as against three hundred and sixty for

some other penalty or for delay in execution. There was therefore no real contradiction in the various reports submitted by the class, provided all the facts were known.

A similar statement might possibly hold good in many another case, notably in that concerning the two genealogies of Jesus, which have caused much discussion and many a heart-quake. If we only had the later records to consult, so as to find out what Matthew and Luke actually did, the whole thing might become simple and clear. That they worked independently is beyond question, and evidently each got what he was after. Both, doubtless, consulted public records that were still available in Jerusalem. Luke, as a physician and a gentile, would naturally seek for the exact line; but Matthew, as a Jew and a traditionalist, would be likely to be influenced by Jewish prejudices which would lead him to observe any peculiar methods that might be in use among his countrymen in reckoning the successors to the throne of David. Differences of viewpoint would certainly affect results; and it is therefore plain that this must be allowed for in studying the problem.

Some discrepancies are easily disposed of at the start. Differences in names, particularly those that occur in comparing the genealogies of Matthew and Luke with those found in the Old Testament, may be due to the change from Hebrew to Greek; and this consideration alone may meet that difficulty. English John and Russian Ivan do not look much alike, but they are the same name nevertheless. In like manner, Ahasuerus and Xerxes are identical, in the Book of Esther, and Amraphel of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis is Hammurabi, the first king of Babylonia to rule the entire country. Differences of spelling are accordingly of little moment.

Naturally, the lack of agreement in the two Gospels has

been made much of by the enemies of the Christian religion, and the process began very early in the history of the church. Its defenders were then hard pressed for a satisfactory explanation. Some asserted that the lists were purely imaginary ones; but this was stoutly denied early in the third century by Julius Africanus, a Christian historian, who was the author of a treatise on chronology. There was also a tradition, derived from the Desposyni, who claimed to have the royal blood of David in their veins (Gr. *desposunos* means, "belonging to the master"), to the effect that two uterine brothers, whose mother had first married into the house of Solomon and then into the house of Nathan, had come under the law of Levirate marriage, and, one dying without issue, the other had raised up seed unto him, as the law required (Deut. xxv. 5 f.). This met a part of the difficulties, but it did not touch the coming together of the lines in Zerubbabel and Sathiel, or Shealtiel, was still unaccounted for.

Then, there was the difference in the number of persons in the two lines which is, however, of no consequence, since Christ himself is called a son of Abraham and a son of David in the same breath (Matt. i. 1), without any regard to the intermediate generations. The fact is that the habit was a common one, and the word "son" is to be taken in the sense of "descendant" rather than as a term applied to a man's direct offspring. Other Oriental peoples have a similar custom, and it need not occasion the slightest difficulty. The trouble lies in the matter-of-fact English, which is not and cannot be a true medium for the exact interpretation of an Oriental language with its peculiar viewpoint.

One solution that has been offered hardly needs to be mentioned; and yet it cannot be passed over. In spite of the fact that the Gospel narratives themselves implicitly deny it, to say

nothing of the further fact that women did not count in such matters among the Jews, some have even gone so far as to assert that one genealogy was that of Joseph, while the other was that of Mary. Each is, in fact, the line of Joseph, as the reputed father of Jesus; and it is useless to attempt to dodge that conclusion. As Mary seems to have been the first cousin of Joseph, however, and a daughter of Jacob, the older brother of Heli who was Joseph's actual father, that is of no consequence.

The first thing to be observed in studying the two genealogies, is the fact that Luke begins with Adam, to whom he gives the surname, *Son-of-God*, or rather *God-son* (the Greek omits son, reading "the of God"), since that comes nearer to the real meaning of the original Hebrew term. For this reason, he has an initial list that is not in Matthew's Gospel. Following the spelling of the Revised Version, it included the names:—

Adam — Seth — Enos — Cainan — Mahalaleel — Jared — Enoch — Methuselah — Lamech — Noah — Shem — Arphaxad — Cainan — Shelah — Eber — Peleg — Reu — Serug — Nahor — Terah (the father of Abraham).

Each of these in turn gave his own name plus the Hebrew prefix *Bar-*, which is practically equal to the suffix *-son*, to his son as a surname; and Luke implies (iii. 23) in his translation of the names that this was the regular Hebrew custom by saying: "being, as the custom was [not, *as was supposed*], Jesus son of Joseph, the of Heli," which amounts to Joseph-son Heli-son, etc. This gives the direct line of descent in the Scandinavian fashion, and it was an easy method to follow. It likewise justifies the practice of calling Jesus a *Son-of-David* (*David-son*), since that became a part of his full pedigree name, as it would appear in the records.

If the above list is now compared with 1 Chron. i. 1-4, 24-26, it will be seen that Cainan has been inserted between Arphaxad and Shelah, but that otherwise, apart from some differences in the spelling, the two lists are the same. However, it is not altogether safe to assume that there was no Cainan at that point, even if it does seem highly probable on the surface of things, since there may have been one. When a man begets a son, he begets, potentially, all that part of his posterity which happens to fall in that son's line. From an Oriental standpoint, this justifies the statement that a man begot his grandson or his great-grandson or his great-great-grandson at the time that he begot his son who was their ancestor. Unimportant persons may thus be omitted from the line at any point, and that should never be forgotten in dealing with Biblical or other Oriental genealogies, since there is always a possibility of that kind to be reckoned with.

It is this peculiarity which vitiates the Biblical chronology devised by Archbishop Usher in 1650-54. This chronology is still found in the margin of the more elaborate editions of the Bible; but recent investigations along the line mentioned have shown it to be practically worthless. We can never be sure that all the generations are represented, and it is therefore unsafe to rely, as Usher did, on the ages mentioned in the text. No such data will furnish a reliable basis for a Biblical chronological scheme, since one, two, three, or even more generations may be omitted at any point in the reckoning. The important names are given. Others are not.

The next person in the genealogical list is Abraham, and with him Matthew begins his enumeration. With a single exception, the two now agree as far as David, the names being (R. V.):—

Abraham — Isaac — Jacob — Judah — Perez — Hezron — Arni

— Amminadab — Nahshon — Salmon — Boaz — Obed — Jesse — David.

For Arni, Matthew has Ram, the Greek being Aram. The two may thus be intended for the same name. With this list should be compared 1 Chron. i. 27 f., 34; ii. 1-15; and Ruth iv. 18-22. It will be found that the Old Testament has Ram, and that the Revised Version has slightly altered the spelling of the names in some places.

Up to this point there is no real difficulty. The variations found are no more than should be expected. From here on, with a few exceptions, the two lists are entirely different, and it is this fact that has caused all the trouble. The present explanation holds that Matthew has given Joseph's official line and Luke his actual one. It follows the assertions of Grotius (1583-1645), who taught that Matthew gave the genealogy of Joseph as the legal successor to the throne of David. Luke was accordingly supposed to have followed, as a physician naturally would, the private line, which exhibited Joseph's real birth as David's descendant and Solomon's heir.

Apart from one or two other minor difficulties, which will come up incidentally as the argument progresses, it is maintained that this simple principle explains all the anomalies of the two genealogies, including both their differences and their agreements, and yet the layman is still left with an uncomfortable feeling as to details, and he has a powerful inclination, even if it is somewhat nebulous, to ask the question: How?

As a preliminary to a better understanding of the situation, it may be best to consider what the Old Testament records teach. According to 1 Chron. iii. 10-16, the kingly line was (R. V.):—

Solomon — Rehoboam — Abijah — Asa — Jehoshaphat — Joram — Ahaziah — Joash — Amaziah — Azariah — Jotham — Ahaz — Hezekiah — Manasseh — Amon — Josiah — Jehoiakim (omitting

the two who did not reign, Shallum and the second Zedekiah, and the two who reigned but three months each, Jehoahaz or Johanan and Jeconiah or Jehoiachin) — Zedekiah.

The oldest son of Josiah is given as Johanan; but according to 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1-4 and 2 Kings xxiii. 30-34 it was Jehoahaz or Joahaz, who was made king by the people, but was deposed, after three months, by the king of Egypt. His successor's name is there given as, originally, Eliakim, which was changed to Jehoiakim.

His son Jehoiachin, a boy of eight (2 Chron. xxxvi. 9) or eighteen (2 Kings xxiv. 8), reigned three months and ten days according to one account (xxxvi. 9), and his brother Zedekiah then succeeded him (xxxvi. 10). According to 2 Kings xxiv. 8-17, however, at the end of three months, in the eighth year of the king of Babylon, the uncle of Jehoiachin was made king, his name being changed from Mataniah to Zedekiah. As this account is the older of the two and the ages of the men themselves forbid any other plan than the arrangement mentioned, it is undoubtedly the correct statement of what took place, the other readings being due to scribal errors. Moreover, according to Jer. xxxvii. 1, Zedekiah was the son of Josiah and reigned instead of Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, who came to be regarded as the rightful heir. This name (Coniah) is plainly a variation of Jeconiah, who is commonly known as Jehoiachin.

Matthew's corresponding list (R. V. still) contains the following names:—

Solomon — Rehoboam — Abijah — Asa — Jehoshaphat — Joram — Uzziah — Jotham — Ahaz — Hezekiah — Manasseh — Amon — Josiah — Jeconiah and his brethren (apparently Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, even if they were uncles and not brothers of Jeconiah, since the Greek word that is employed — *adelphoi* — is sometimes used to mean "near kinsmen," although it properly refers to men who are own brothers).

As Uzziah, the tenth king of Judah, is to be identified with Azariah, three names have been omitted after Joram, following the fashion already mentioned; and, possibly, one (or two) before Jeconiah, although "Jeconiah and his brethren" may fairly be said to cover the ground, as was indicated above. In selecting the name Jeconiah, Matthew has followed 1 Chron. iii. 16, rather than the usage in the fuller accounts found elsewhere. The employment of different names for the same man in this curious fashion may possibly account for some of the differences later on in the Gospel narratives, although it is not wise to infer overmuch from that fact.

Now, this man Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, seems to have been well treated by Nebuchadrezzar, and he appears to have had seven sons, according to the record, during his lifetime as a captive. The oldest was, ostensibly, Shealtiel (1 Chron. iii. 17); for the Revised Version reads, "Jeconiah, the captive," instead of the "Jeconiah; Assir," of the Authorized Version, according to which Assir must naturally be taken as the name of another son. No sons of Shealtiel are mentioned, and none are given for the second son; but the third son, Pedaiah, had for his first-born Zerubbabel (ver. 19), who thus became heir to the kingly rights of the tribe of Judah. These two men, Shealtiel and Zerubbabel, both appear in each of the Gospel writers as members of the genealogical line; and they throw some light on the problem as a whole, since the former is spoken of by Matthew as having begotten the latter, who was really his nephew, being the son of a younger brother. No Levirate marriage is mentioned or even suggested.

It thus appears that the oldest son, or the son who was made the official head of the family, was permitted to regard the sons of all his brothers as his own, a situation that is

typically Oriental, however strange it may appear to a Western mind. Zerubbabel's patronymic, or surname, would normally have been Pedaiah-son; but he came to be ranked as a Son-of-Shealtiel (Shealtiel-son) in his capacity as heir to the latter's rights; for the last king, Zedekiah, was a younger son, temporarily exalted and not recognized as properly in the royal line. For some reason, Jehoiachin was so recognized, although his father was also a younger son; and the line was continued through him. The rest of Matthew's account, including the two men already mentioned, contains the following names (R. V.):—

Shealtiel — Zerubbabel — Abiud — Eliakim — Azor — Sadoc — Achim — Ellud — Eleazar — Matthan — Jacob — Joseph.

This list presents difficulties of its own, apart from its failure to agree with that in Luke's Gospel; for, after Zerubbabel Son-of-Shealtiel (Ezra v. 2; Neh. xii. 1; Hag. i. 1), it cannot be duplicated in the Old Testament records, there is no known extant copy of the Jerusalem records from which Matthew undoubtedly obtained it, and the list is too short to cover approximately six centuries, as it must, to span the interval between Jeconiah and Christ. Up to Zerubbabel Matthew unquestionably followed the accepted royal line; but from there on the Old Testament records are fragmentary. Matthew, however, undoubtedly consulted official records for the rest of the line and selected the most conspicuous names. But—and here is an important consideration—the true line might be a matter of dispute and of an honest difference of opinion.

The first thing to be noted about Luke's list is the fact that he worked backward from Christ, not forward from Abraham, as Matthew plainly did. The two lines thus obtained may therefore both be correct, even if they do not agree after David's name has been reached in the descending line. Luke

does not take Solomon as the next of kin, but Nathan, the second (third, the first died) son of Bathsheba or Bathshua (1 Chron. iii. 5); and his list accordingly becomes (R. V.):—

Nathan — Mattatha — Menna — Melea — Ellakim — Jonam — Joseph — Judas — Symeon — Levi — Matthat — Jorim — Ellezer — Jesus — Er — Elmadam — Cosam — Addi — Melchi — Neri — Shealtiel — Zerubbabel — Rhesa — Joanan — Joda — Joseph — Semeln — Mattathias — Manth — Naggai — Esli — Nahum — Amos — Mattathias — Joseph — Jannai — Melchi — Levi — Matthat — Hell — Joseph.

It will be seen at once that this list contains a larger number of names than the two already given, which correspond to it in Matthew's account. As a gentile and a physician, Luke would be likely to mention all or nearly all the names in the line, as he found them, as far as David. From there on he would follow the traditional list, including its omissions. Incidentally, in examining the names, the user of the Authorized Version may be somewhat incommoded by the spelling; but it seems best to give up the old usage, even if it did follow the Greek pretty carefully. The hair-spaced names mark the two sections of Luke's list, to correspond to the divisions given Matthew's; and they also indicate the certain agreements of the two evangelists.

While none of the other forms clearly agree, some of them may do so. The name Jeconiah is a favorite one (Esth. ii. 6; Jer. xxiv. 1; xxvii. 20; xxviii. 4; etc., etc.); and yet it was varied to Jehoiachin, which became an official form. It amounted to altering "Jah establishing" to "Jah establishes." In like manner (2 Kings xv. 32; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1, 3; Hos. i. 1), Uzziah ("Jah is strong"), a form in common use, became, apparently, Azariah ("Jah is keeper"), which was also in common use (2 Kings xiv. 21; xv. 1, 6, 7, 8, 17, 23, 27; 1 Chron. iii. 12). Similarly, Bathsheba ("Daughter of an

oath") passed into Bathshua ("Daughter of prosperity"), as already indicated; and such changes were evidently common. Cf. Ruth i. 20.

On that basis, Luke's Jorim— its position in the line favors the supposition even if the relative proportions are not quite what would be expected— may be Matthew's Joram; Matthew's Matthan may be and probably is Luke's Matthat; and Matthew's Abiud may possibly be Luke's Joda, while Luke's Joanan may be the Hananiah of 1 Chron. iii. 19, the son of Zerubbabel, with the two elements of the name ("Jah is gracious") in reverse order. Rhesa is thus excluded from Luke's list; but some scholars see in it a Chaldee title of Zerubbabel, somewhat like the "Assir" (meaning "the captive") of 1 Chron. iii. 17; and they appear to be right, although others stoutly deny that possibility. There is always the alternative, however, that a generation may have been omitted.

Again, the name Shemaiah (1 Chron. iii. 22) seems to be merely a variation of the Shimei of verse 19, since both mean some such thing as "Jah is fame" or "Jah hath heard," and the change is in keeping with those already mentioned. Bearing this in mind, it may be allowable, as some scholars have believed, to identify the Abiud ("Father of honor") of Matthew's account with the Hodaviah ("Honor of Jah") of 1 Chron. iii. 24, since the change in that name would also be a characteristic one. The omissions would likewise be characteristic, and it therefore appears probable that these identifications should be made.

Just here a curious fact must be noted. In 1 Chron. iii. 21, Hananiah (Joanan?) is credited with two sons, Pelatiah and Jeshaiah; but no further notice is taken of them. He is likewise credited, however, with "the sons of Rephaiah, the sons

of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah." Who these men were we have no means of knowing; but they are most likely to have been his sons-in-law, and probably some or all of them were his nephews, since that sort of thing has always been common among the Jews. Shecaniah appears to have been his heir; for his line is the one next taken up, and it yields Shemaiah, Neariah, Elioeni, and Hodaviah (Abiud?), who appear to have been in the royal line. Matthew therefore followed the accepted royal line, precisely as Grotius taught and as scholars have generally come to believe, while Luke selected the actual individual ancestors of Joseph, as he found them.

Matthew's task, following the line downward, as he did, was a comparatively simple one, since those in the royal line would be known to all Jerusalem, and the surviving members could be easily identified. Luke's task, on the other hand, tracing the line backward, as he evidently did, was another matter, and the complexities mentioned just above should make this fact clear. If the royal line failed anywhere for any reason, the next of kin stepped in and figured as a son of the last survivor; but his real descent would thus be obscured, and Luke would have to trace it out as best he could.

This led him to the selection of Heli before Matthat rather than Jacob, and it also led him away from the royal line beyond Matthat until he reached Zerubbabel, or rather Abiud, and the same thing happened again between Shealtiel and Joram and between Joram and David. Just what the causes were it is not now possible to say with certainty, although their general character is fairly clear. Luke found a direct line that ended in David, and that he regarded as sufficient. We may also so regard it and accept the result.

Now, there is still current in Jerusalem a tradition to the effect that the reason why Mary went into the temple, in the hunt for Jesus, while Joseph remained outside, was the simple fact that she belonged to the royal line and he did not. That entitled her to enter the sacred precincts and it excluded him. Traditions are not looked upon with favor in these modern days; and yet this one, tallying, as it does, not only with what actually happened but also with the entire setting, cannot be lightly set aside, since there is no just ground for its rejection. Mary, therefore, really was in the royal line, although nothing was made of the fact by the evangelists.

If by any chance it happened that Mary had no brothers or that they all died without male issue, and if Joseph had thus become the heir, as the oldest son of her oldest paternal uncle, he would then obtain a position in the line as a Jacobson instead of a Heli-son. But even as it was, Jacob could regard him as his son, according to their way of looking at things, since he was the child of a younger brother. He had, moreover, married his daughter, and that gave Jacob an additional claim to fatherhood. Possibly Joseph actually was ultimately so reckoned and given a place in the line, for some such reason as that mentioned. If so, the use of "begot" is clear. As is often the case with Oriental words and expressions, it is not to be taken with undue literalness; and that fact meets one of the difficulties in Matthew's account, not only with reference to Joseph himself and likewise to Zerubbabel, but also, doubtless, with reference to others, in places that are no longer so easily understood.

Just why Luke regarded Neri as the father of Shealtiel instead of Jeconiah, it is not now possible to say with certainty; and yet from the complications in the next generation—

Zerubbabel Pedaiah-son becoming Zerubbabel Shealtiel-son—it is not improbable that Jeconiah's first-born was a daughter and a favorite child, and that he reckoned her son (Shealtiel) as his true heir. Pedaiah may then have been the first son to have male issue, and he may have given his son (Zerubbabel) in marriage to a daughter of Shealtiel and thus have united the conflicting lines, with a corresponding change in Zerubbabel's surname. Something of this kind must have happened to account for the facts, since Zerubbabel was born a Pedaiah-son but is everywhere called a Shealtiel-son. The actual father of Shealtiel may therefore have been named Neri, and he must have been a descendant of Nathan, the next younger brother of Solomon, among the sons of Bathsheba who was a Hittite by birth. Luke's list, however, has no duplicate in the Old Testament.

This disposes of the conflicting records of the two evangelists and allows that of Luke to be regarded as the true one from a Western standpoint and that of Matthew to be considered as the true one from a Hebrew standpoint. Both must accordingly be accepted as sound and necessary, in a presentation of all the facts. Where there are agreements in names that are separated by wide intervals of time, it is evident that nothing can be inferred therefrom; and no notice has been taken of such agreements. The entire effort has been to clear up the details with sufficient minuteness to make the whole intelligible to those seeking for a satisfactory explanation of the apparent discrepancies. It is hoped that this has been done successfully, and that the fresh study of the facts and records herein contained may not have been in vain.