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## ARTICLE VII.

### THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST.

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THERE is a class of commentators on the New Testament, but confined almost exclusively to modern times, who maintain that of the two genealogies of our Lord which are contained in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, the former only is on the side of Joseph, his father according to the law, and that the latter is on the side of Mary his mother. These hold the establishment of the latter genealogy as that of Mary to be of great importance, in order, according to their view of the case, to show that our Lord was "of the seed of David according to the flesh," a character which by the prophecies must belong to the Messiah. The argument is indeed stated with a good deal of obscurity, and its links are in a great measure assumed, instead of being proved, arising from the circumstance that, quite unaccountably on the basis on which the view in question depends, our Lord's connection with David through Joseph, David's undoubted descendant, appears to be set forth on the face of the scripture narratives as the fulfilment of those prophecies, and little is said of Mary in this respect except in connection with Joseph. In consequence of this difficulty, the assumed necessity of evidence of Mary's descent from David, if it does not take the place of the actual evidence required, is at least held to give a decisive weight to articles of evidence, which of themselves infer various degrees of probability only, and often very slight ones, of what Mary was, and so to make up for the absence of what may be deemed satisfactory proof. We propose to examine this question, which has recently been the subject of a good deal of discussion. The point at issue is interesting, and it would be momentous, could it be made out that

the Lord must be shown to have descended from David through Mary. We shall state in the sequel our reasons to the contrary, and for the conclusion that Mary's descent from David is not only not mentioned in the New Testament as a fact (whatever may be its probability), and consequently is not the basis of the fulfilment of the promises to David's seed, but that, in accordance with the character of our Lord's mission, her pedigree was purposely intended to be left unnoticed and without positive establishment.

We have hardly any light on this subject but what the scriptures themselves afford us, and this is confined to what is required for their own ends. This is a feature which is characteristic of the scriptures. They record enough in every instance to show that the events which came in the way of the sacred historians were real, that is, pertained to actual and known human interests, and this in a more intense degree, as regards expression and genuine form, than is found in any portion of secular history. But no care is taken merely to convey information, or to gratify curiosity. Wisely, and, we doubt not, purposely, the sacred narrative is guarded from being mingled with the stream of the secular annals of the human race; which are too often both superficial and full of errors, the record of the vain imaginations of men, subserving at best only temporal ends, and altogether failing to show the truth regarding the condition of men as God sees it. The mere matter of fact set forth in the scriptures, genuine as it is, is constantly kept subordinate to the spiritual purpose. We have no expectation that there will ever be much success in perfectly harmonizing sacred and secular history, the objects of the several writers, and the points of view from which they wrote, having been so essentially different as to make such a result as unattainable as undesirable. Subject to this guard from the insuperable heterogeneousness of the materials, we have no desire to discourage such partial illustration of scriptural statements, as can be obtained from the facts of nature or the secular records of history. On the contrary, this, wisely done, is fitted to lead to more enlarged views of the truth and wisdom of the writ-

ten word of God; only, we insist, the subject-matter and the mere natural judgment of men are both treacherous, and will deceive, if in the examination the purifying eye-salve do not purge the mental sight.

At the time when a pure and powerful influence from God is on the minds of men, as at the chief events of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, those engaged have their thoughts too much absorbed by interests transcending the things of the earth, to admit of their caring for the mere material scenes where they were transacted; and before the opposite feeling sets in — which it is sure to do as soon as the religious feeling has lost its high tone, and become worldly — the usual effect of lapse of time and of imperfect memorials is to spread a veil over the outward circumstances, and to cover them with uncertainty. Providence would thus kindly dissuade men from making too much of the mere outward material of great events, and confine them to the spiritual substance; but too often in vain; for there is a proneness in the natural mind to the idolatry of such things. We need not dwell on what is so well known, — the uncertainty as to the precise scenes of many of the most important events of sacred history. Let two instances suffice. The exact place of the sensible manifestation of the presence of God to the thousands of Israel among the singular mountain cluster which forms the peninsula of Sinai, — the most imposing public event, perhaps, ever witnessed by the eyes of men, — is the subject of keen controversy; and the disputants appear to be governed in their conclusions rather by the fitness of particular places to exhibit the appearances in what they would deem the most effective manner, than by what may be regarded as sober evidence as to the actual locality. Nay, Mr. Ferguson, of London, in his work on Jerusalem, has startled every one by maintaining the positions, backed by an array of authorities from scripture and ancient travellers, that the real Zion was the temple eminence, and that the site of the temple was not what is now commonly but erroneously termed the mosque of Omar, but was at the south-western end of mount Moriah, chiefly on the spot

where stands the mosque of Aksa; and, more surprising still, not merely that the locality of Calvary and of the Holy Sepulchre is not indicated by the church at present bearing the latter name, — which had been questioned by Robinson, Barclay, and others, — but that the bare rock known to lie within the mosque of Omar, and the cavern underneath, which have ever been held by the Mohammedans in superstitious veneration, are the real Calvary and sepulchre, and that the mosque itself, instead of being on the site of the temple, is the monumental church built by Constantine over them! If the evidence adduced by Mr. Ferguson should be held adequate, — a subject we do not enter upon, — one could not but admire the righteous retribution, that those who have been foremost in casting out the faith of Christ, should thus have been made to bow down in prostrate adoration to the place sanctified by his death.

It is exactly the same as to persons, in their relation beyond the need of scripture. We know nothing as to the private history of such personages as Abraham, Isaac, and Solomon, as soon as, after having satisfied the ends of instruction and type for which they were used, they drop into the background of the inspired recital. To come lower down — who were "the Lord's brethren," repeatedly mentioned in the evangelists? Some think they were the children of Joseph by a former marriage; some, the children of a deceased brother, Alpheus; some, the children of another Mary, a widowed sister of Mary the Lord's mother; some, that they were children of Joseph and Mary; and there are other suppositions still. Similar difficulties surround the question: "Who was James the Lord's brother," mentioned in Galatians? To all such questions, and many others, no answers can be given. Scripture is either silent or undecided, and tradition is quite unsatisfactory. There was no practical end for the faith to be answered by the solution of such questions.

Returning backwards to a generation earlier than that of our Lord and his brethren, we find no such difficulties in regard to the position in which Joseph stood in his nation

and tribe. Because it was a point of high scriptural importance that his descent should be perfectly known, the particulars are minutely and emphatically dwelt on. But as to Mary, we find nearly an absolute blank of information of this kind; for we shall show that the apparent absence of such information on the face of the narratives is not obviated on a closer scrutiny of its import. Scripture and tradition are as uncertain as to Mary's descent and connections, as in regard to those of "the Lord's brethren." This is a state of facts just the opposite of what ought to have appeared on the views adopted by the class of commentators mentioned at the outset. They would say that Joseph's kindred and pedigree were matters of no importance, but Mary's all-important. But God's ways are not as man's; and it is our part reverently to bend to his, and to give our best endeavors to discover the reasons for them.

When we turn to the New Testament, nothing can be more natural and engaging than the pictures presented of the families and individuals whom the course of events brings up to view. Every notice, while brief and undesigned, has the stamp of truth and reality, and there is nothing forced or exaggerated. The glimpses of the genuine ways of men in the narratives, compared with the blank before and after, may not unaptly be likened to those of the private ways of the Romans at a period not long subsequent, which have been furnished so wonderfully in consequence of the drawing aside of the rocky screen of ages from the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii; saving that in the former the view has the forms of life, while in the latter it has those of death. While every trait is characteristic and full of humanity, the notice of mere external events is rigidly kept within the closest compass that would admit of the due exhibition of the facts and doctrines, which it was the ultimate design of the record to set forth; and hence many minor difficulties, of no importance in themselves, are left unanticipated and unresolved. The narrative has manifestly flowed from a preëxisting life, and not the life from the narrative. The mouth has spoken out of the fulness of the heart. It

has always appeared to us a striking internal proof of the truth of the gospels, that the statements which convey such momentous realities for the faith of men in order to their salvation, should be so restrained and temperate in their details, and, while presenting facts with a power and naïveté unapproached in any work of mere human authority, should have referred to persons, places, and incidents in ways so little intended to beget credence by the arts of composition, and so unlike those of persons engaged in making or explaining a story.

A blank occurs. The gospel has been sown, and has taken root in the hearts of men. So intent are the believers on the working of the new life, of which they have been made partakers; so surpassingly weighty do they find the truth by which they had been made free, and so trivial in comparison not only the aims of men in the world around them, but the mere earthly relations of the persons and events through whose means that truth had been conveyed, — that we hardly find in the church, beyond its authoritative documents, a word of record regarding such topics for two or three centuries after the establishment of the gospel. Generations pass away, leaving untold their remembrances of the worldly connections of the founders of the faith; and the destruction of Jerusalem, and the troubles of the lands which had been the seat of the Lord's residence and ministry, with the outward violence to which Christians were subjected from proscriptions and persecutions, add their influence in extinguishing evidence regarding such matters, as well as in indisposing the minds of believers from being careful about them.

A new condition of things emerges. The churches are found in some stability, and growing formidable in numbers. Something of a more cultivated intellectual condition appears in them. The members begin to inquire, to dispute, to impugn, to write for the instruction or conviction of one another, and of the Jew and the heathen around. But with this a new mind appears in the churches. The word transmitted from the past in purity and simplicity, does not now

satisfy them. They give unmistakable proofs, that "having begun in the spirit," they are desirous of being "made perfect in the flesh." With other vanities, out of place here to mention, they "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith," as their fathers had been inclined to do even in the days of Paul, but which the early vigor of a higher life, and the authoritative teaching of the heads of the church, had restrained for a time. This is the period when, in the natural course of things, myths, legends, traditions, and fleshly conjectures and plausibilities regarding facts, will attempt to make a lodgement in the church, and will partly succeed; while there may also be expected some slight admixture of tradition of a character less questionable.

With the myths and legends, which arose in the early centuries succeeding the apostolic period of the church, in relation to our Lord's earthly connections and the lives and actions of the individuals brought into notice by this means, we have no intention of detaining our readers. Writings of this character appear to have been numerous, but the greater part of those whose titles are found in the writings of the Fathers have entirely disappeared, having sunk into oblivion under the weight of their inherent untruth and folly. A few specimens only, and these probably not of the worst sort, still remain in such works as "The Gospel of the Birth of Mary," "The Protoevangelion," a pretended account of our Lord's birth "by James the Lesser, cousin and brother of the Lord Jesus, chief Apostle and first Bishop of the Christians in Jerusalem," "The Gospels of the Infancy of Jesus Christ," and one or two others. But their contents are so puerile and incredible, at once so unlike nature, and the truth and simplicity of the gospel narratives, as to betray their distance from the apostolic age, and give ground to doubt whether (excepting what is palpably borrowed from the New Testament) there is in them even the slenderest vein of tradition regarding the persons and times professed to be treated of. Whatever of this there may be is so mixed with and overborne by palpable fictions, as to be inextricable.

From the materials which we have described, and which, as we have said, must be limited almost entirely to the information contained in the books of the New Testament, we have to inquire what was the genealogy of the Lord which the scriptures set forth as connecting him with the house of David, of whose seed the prophecies of old declared the Messiah should be. This will best be done by a simple classification of the facts, accompanied by notices of difficulties which have been experienced in explaining them.

1. Joseph, the husband of Mary the Lord's mother, was the known descendant of David, and recognized by his countrymen as of his royal seed. This fact is substantiated so largely on the face of the gospels, as to make details almost unnecessary. Joseph is so described at the outset of the narrative. The record of the annunciation bears, that the angel Gabriel was sent "to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:27). Here the words "of the house of David," naturally belong to Joseph. And the words of the angel to Joseph, when he was pondering what to do as to Mary (Matt. 1:20), applied to him the title, doubtless familiar to his own ear and thoughts: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife."

2. The narrative of the events of this time embraces, as if regarded as an essential part of it, the position of Mary, as being the affianced spouse of Joseph. We have seen this in the record of the annunciation. In like manner the narrative in Matthew 1:18 bears: "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together," etc. In both these passages the espousals of Mary (a tie having much of the obligation of marriage, and not capable of being dissolved except in a formal way) is made a pointed part of the narrative.

3. Before the birth of Jesus, Joseph was commanded to take Mary to his house as his wife. It is not enough to say, that this was in order to protect Mary. Joseph and Mary, previously joined together by the act of espousals, by this

further act became perfectly one in God's sight; and it conferred on Joseph the title of father, according to the law, of the child about to be, and some time afterwards born of Mary. The gift of a son, in a most important sense, was to Joseph as well as Mary. And God, in so dealing with Joseph's wife, doubtless intended that it should be so. God could give Joseph such a gift, and he could accept it; and its character and relations the law was at hand to define and maintain.

It appears to us that, in considering this matter, sufficient weight is not allowed to the inevitable result that Jesus, in consequence of the marriage of Joseph to Mary, really became the son of Joseph, "by the law and according to the flesh." What was thus scripturally expressed, — which means, not the law of physiology according to our modern scientific language, but just the natural law of human society, and the rules of the Jewish law applied thereto, as distinguished from the law of the higher and purely spiritual life revealed by Christ, — could in such matters deal only with the outward fact; and its conclusion for its own ends was not meant to be traversed by a supernatural fact proceeding from God, and supernaturally revealed. The supernatural fact has its own effects, to those who believe it, for its own sphere, according as its consequences shall be developed; but in regard to earthly things (which succession in the fleshly line of David was), the law according to human ways and the outward fact, so long as the facts abide in that sphere, must take effect according to its own principle. Any rule which would operate otherwise, and cause the supernatural to overthrow the natural, within the proper sphere of the latter, would produce inextricable confusion. Overlooking this, some allow the thought to take shape in their mind, as if the knowledge of the supernatural conception, which has been certainly conveyed to us by supernatural revelation, would make Jesus, as it were, a supposititious child in regard to Joseph and the line of descent through him, with the privileges appertaining, if anything were claimed by inheritance in consequence of such sonship.

This appears to us a notion altogether erroneous. While our Lord's supernatural origin secured to him everything which was to be his inheritance in a sense higher than what was promised to the seed of David in the literal kingdom of Israel, it did not exclude him from that natural benefit which the law gave to him as the son of Joseph, and which no Jew or Jewish tribunal bound by the law could object to his receiving. Jesus was not the less the son of Joseph according to the flesh, that he was the direct gift to him from God.

It may be proper to notice the light indirectly thrown by the scripture on this subject. By a provision of the Jewish law (Deut. 25 : 5—10), when a brother died childless, his surviving brother was commanded to marry the widow : "and it shall be that the firstborn son which she beareth shall succeed in name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." By this means the Jews were familiar with the idea of an heir being given to one who was not the real father. In their eyes the heir from such a source was as truly such as if born naturally to the deceased. That they remained familiar with this case in our Lord's time, appears from the question put to him by the Sadducees, mentioned by Matthew 22 : 23—28, as well as by Mark and Luke. This levirate law, as it is termed, is brought into notice in regard to an early portion of our Lord's genealogy in Ruth iv. ; and we shall afterwards find that it is again forced on our attention by the earliest, and probably on the whole (notwithstanding the disparaging view of it taken by some modern commentators) the most tenable of the interpretations of the genealogy of our Lord in Luke.

We are inclined to think that there is something more than a mere analogy between the point of the Jewish law to which we have been adverting, and the gift of a son to Joseph on the part of God. The grand truth of Christianity is, that man being dead through sin, and incapable by himself of recovery, God gave redemption and salvation by sending his own Son, the Lord of life, into his nature, to serve as a quickening seed therein by his Spirit to all who should

receive him. Of this truth the scriptures teem with types and illustrations, and it was interwoven with the whole law and customs of the Jews. What more apt figure can we find of it than in Joseph, the husband after the flesh of her of whom the Messiah was to be born, taken as representing either the fallen man after the flesh, or the Jew under the law, or both of them, to whom as in himself impotent for good and dead in trespasses and sins, God as the living One raises up the true seed who shall save and perpetuate the race about to perish? The figure is exactly the same as that which Paul makes use of in Rom. 7 : 1—4, with this difference only, that in the application we have made of it, it embraces the act of God in sending his Son into our nature for our salvation; while in that made by Paul, it embraces the act by which believers in Christ are enabled to lay hold by faith of what Christ has done,—the one the root, the other the application, of the same truth. We thus see that from the fact of a son being given to Joseph by God through Mary, important meaning may be drawn, in close harmony with the fundamental truth of God's revealed dispensations towards man, and that it throws light upon a pointed rule of the Jewish law, not otherwise capable of easy explanation.

But, however deserving of consideration may be these views of the type and antitype of the levirate marriage, we rest nothing upon them in our present argument. All we contend for are the two following propositions:

(1) That by the birth of Jesus to Mary, Joseph's wife, a son was given by God to Joseph, and accepted by him, who thus was his "according to the law and after the flesh;" that is, that according to the common laws of humanity and the Jewish rules, which could take cognizance only of external conditions and events, Jesus was the lawful son of Joseph, and entitled, as such, to all the rights and privileges arising from that relation.

(2) That Jesus was consequently of the seed of David according to the flesh, and capable, as such, of receiving in his person the fulfilment of all the promises made to that seed.

4. Jesus, who was at the due time presented in the temple, and recorded in the national register and tables of genealogy, must have been so presented and recorded as the lawful son of Joseph by Mary, and thus must have appeared on the face of the books of the temple as the first-born of their marriage according to the law, by evidence irrefragable by man.

5. Joseph and Mary are called the "parents" of Jesus in Luke 2 : 27 and 41, and in v. 48 Mary calls Joseph his "father." This shows the continuation of the state of things commencing at birth. To the same effect,

6. To the Jews, and to his brethren in the flesh, Jesus was the son of Joseph, as appears both from what has been noticed, and from the current of the narrative of the gospels; as in John 6 : 42, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, that I came down from heaven?" — also in Matt. 13 : 55; Mark 6 : 3, and Luke 4 : 22. The conclusion is the stronger, that in these instances Jesus was at Nazareth or Capernaum, the places of the residence of the family, where they were well known. The saying: "We know this man whence he is" (John 7 : 27), — by which was meant his known position as the son of Joseph and Mary at Nazareth, — seemed to the Jews a conclusive argument against the claims of Jesus.

7. Jesus was familiarly known to the Jews as "the son of David," which could have arisen only from his being taken to be the son of Joseph, who was known to be of David's line (Matt. 9 : 27; 15 : 22; 20 : 31).

In passing from these details regarding our Lord's personal condition and relations in the sight of his kindred and people, we add, that we consider it a mistake to suppose that the supernatural characters of our Lord's assumption of human nature were any part of the gospel preached to the Jews in his lifetime. As to this, we agree with what is said by Dr. Thiersch, in his "History of the Christian Church," in accounting for the absence from the gospel according to Mark (which is now generally recognized as being the ear-

liest in date of composition of all the gospels), of notice of any event connected with Jesus previous to his baptism by John (p. 95), —

"Granting that the wonderful birth of the Redeemer had been already related to the Apostles by the Holy Virgin before they left Jerusalem; granting that they had already possessed that information out of the bosom of the holy family which Luke has adopted in his first and second chapters; the time to publish these mysteries, that Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin, had not arrived. Even though these things might be talked over within the circle of the faithful, they were such as could not be committed to writing, and exposed to the risk of coming into strange hands."

It does not appear, from the narratives of the evangelists or from any other source, that these circumstances were known in our Lord's lifetime outside of the family to which they had been entrusted. "Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19, 51) In the multitude of our Lord's addresses, he never alludes to his supernatural origin in such a way as that the Jews could understand the literal truth in regard to it, or as founding on it his claims to their faith. On the contrary, he evaded the literal conclusion, and referred sometimes to his words and sometimes to his works as the ground of the faith, through which the Jews might savingly understand that he was sent forth from God, as in John 10:34—8. In the mood in which the Jews were towards him, they could not but have made the circumstances in question the subject of reproach, had they known of them. But, in all their questions and cavils at his doctrine; in their indignation at his testimony, and rejection of his claims; in the betrayal, the accusation, the judgment, and the infliction of death; and in their eager inculpation of their victim, and justification of themselves, there is not an allusion to what they would readily have stigmatized as evidence of imposture, and made the occasion of obloquy. We see the same manner of dealing with the subject in the addresses of the apostles, as recorded in Acts; as of Peter in

chapters 2d, 3d, and 10th; and of Paul in chapters 13th and 17th; where, combined with hints of a higher truth regarding the Messiah whom they preached, such as could find a full response only in the hearts of the faithful, the testimony which reached the ears of the people at large from them was to Jesus as "a man approved among you by miracles, and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know,"—"whom God had raised up, having loosed the pains of death,"—the man of whom David knew that "God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Such is the combined truth and wisdom with which Jesus is presented to the Jews,—as the son of Joseph, the undoubted seed of David, their own records and the acknowledged fact among their own people being witnesses; but, at the same time, the accredited messenger of God, whose true nature and dignity those should learn who recognized the words and the works of his Father proceeding from him.

It is plain that the supernatural generation was not a miracle for the conversion of men, but was a fact necessarily flowing from the dignity of our Lord's divine person. There never was preaching from this fact to faith in Jesus, but, conversely, from faith in him to the reception of this fact.

8. There are two genealogies of Jesus to be found in the first chapter of Matthew and in the third chapter of Luke; the first to show his descent from David and Abraham by the line of Solomon, and the second both to show the same by the line of Nathan, another son of David, and to carry the descent back to the creation. In both of these the descent is traced through Joseph alone, as the last link of the chain leading back to David. But we are here brought to a stage of the inquiry of so much importance as to call for a separate and special notice of the two genealogies.

It is not our intention to notice questions regarding the extension or abridgment of these lists, arising from the various readings of manuscripts and other considerations, be-

cause they do not enter into the matters we propose to discuss in this Article.

It is admitted on all hands that the genealogy in Matthew is that of Joseph; among the many questions as to matters of fact, this has never been disputed. It begins with Abraham, and proceeds downwards, through David, along the line of the kings of Judah to Jechonias, when the Babylonish captivity took place. Then come Salathiel and Zorobabel, names which are found also in 1 Chron. 3:17,19, as well as others of the later books of the Old Testament; after which follow nine names, from Abiud to Jacob, the latter being the father of Joseph, which fill up the period from the close of the Old Testament till the time of Joseph. This genealogy was doubtless extracted from the accredited lists preserved by the proper Jewish officers. The Jews must have instantly detected and exposed any erroneous entries, which indeed there is no conceivable motive for any one to have inserted, for Joseph's descent from David was known and commonly admitted. This genealogy, then, never having been called in question, must be taken as correctly setting forth what appeared in the temple register, which is also certain from its being inserted in an inspired composition, and from the use made of it there.

At the beginning, this genealogy has the following title: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;" meaning that the genealogy which follows shows this to be the case. The genealogy ends thus: "and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ." This notice of Mary's union with Joseph is the only interest ascribed to her in this genealogy of her son in the kingly line. And then occurs the statement, that the genealogy before detailed comprises three series of fourteen generations each, viz., from Abraham to David, from David to the captivity, and from the captivity to Christ. Whatever might be the full design of this summary, it at least indicates that Jesus was intended to be pointed out bound up in the threefold series of the genealogy, as having his descent thereby shown through

Joseph both to David and Abraham; and perhaps what was chiefly in view was in this way to express the fact emphatically at the close, as it had been at the beginning.

Here then, as plainly as words could express it, we have the statement that by the links of this genealogy through Joseph and the line of the kings of Judah, our Lord was of the seed of David and Abraham. It is God's own explanation to this effect, and of the manner of it, given in the most formal way, and showing that, in the light of the divine purpose, the Lord Jesus Christ was thereby in a condition to receive the fulfilment of the promises made to the seed of these two fathers.

The other genealogy contained in Luke iii. begins with the Lord, and proceeds upwards, in this way: "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli," etc. This genealogy equally runs through Joseph, Heli however being represented as his father, and not Jacob, as in the other genealogy. Seventeen names are then reckoned backward after Heli, none of them agreeing with the names in Matthew; and after Rhesa, the seventeenth, come Zorobabel and Salathiel, the same as in Matthew; but instead of Salathiel being represented as the son of Jechonias, the last of the kings, and of the list being continued through the line of kings to Solomon, he is said to be the son of Neri, from whom the line runs through eighteen private persons till it reaches Nathan the son of David; beyond whom it proceeds to Abraham and the creation. The difference between the two genealogies is, in substance, this: that while the one is in the line of Solomon, and the other in that of Nathan, there is the remarkable feature, that Salathiel and Zorobabel appear as father and son in the middle of both, the former in the one having as his father Jechonias, and in the other Neri; and the other in the one having as his son Abiud, and in the other Rhesa.

Of the genealogy in Luke it may be said, as in regard to the other, that no reasonable doubt can be entertained that it was taken from the tables of descent extant in the Jewish

archives, and that the circumstances forbid the supposition of any unfairness in this respect, and of all motive for attempting any. Its very difficulties are a proof of genuineness.

In considering this second genealogy, the first question that meets us is the force of the words "as was supposed," attached to the relation of sonship ascribed to Jesus in regard to Joseph. The original words are ὡς ἐνομίζετο, a verb derived from the noun νόμος, which, in the lexicon of Hedericus, is explained to mean: 1. *lex, jus;* and, 2. *consuetudo, mos, institutum.* Following its root, νομίζω: is said to mean 1. *lege sancio;* 2. *puto, existimo, arbitror, reor.* Taking the primary sense Matthew Henry says that the phrase means "*uti lege sanctum est* — as we find it in the books, as it is on record;" and the spirit of this interpretation seems most in harmony with the nature of the case. If it should be preferred to assign to the term a slighter and more general meaning, such as it frequently bears, viz., "as was supposed or reckoned," we submit that this should not be held to infer any question of the reality of the sonship of Jesus to Joseph for the ends of the genealogy; for this (besides violating the letter of the genealogy in Luke) would vacate of substantial meaning the genealogy in Matthew through Joseph, the terms of which show that it is the principal genealogy, and that to which the genealogy in Luke is subordinate and supplemental. It sufficiently accounts for these words, that they were necessary to save the supernatural origin of our Lord.

What we have said opens the way to the great difficulty of the case: How is it that the Lord had two genealogies through his legal father Joseph? The genealogies themselves give no answer to this question. They have, indeed, different characters. The one, beginning with Abraham, embraces patriarchs and kings and the heirs of kings. This genealogy may be said to have on it the stamp of Christ the ruler, in the threefold series marked in the genealogy itself, and realized in Jewish history: first, in the form of faith as giving worthiness to rule; second, in that of rule attained in the dignity of king; and third, in the same seen in decay.

The other genealogy, again, which, as far as possible, takes private names and avoids official persons, and which mounts beyond Abraham up to the creation, seems to denote Christ as the subject one, the representative of the whole race of man, whose nature he took as comprehensively as the first Adam had it, "who is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14). These characters, however, do not explain the difference of the contents of the genealogies, and according to what often occurs in scripture, they may have been engrafted on lines of descent, the divergence of which had arisen from an independent cause.

In the examination of this question we naturally betake ourselves first to the views held on the subject by the early church; for theirs was the time for what have long ceased, — real conflicts with the Jews, who were familiar with and directly concerned in the genealogies, as well as the time when tradition and opinion might throw light on this subject. We have important information regarding this matter in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius, bk. i. c. 7; the more so that, instead of giving any statement of his own, and the views of his own time, the third century, he quotes largely from an epistle (not now extant) to Aristides from Africanus, born at Emmaus, or Nicopolis, in Palestine, near a century earlier, setting forth the tradition which had come down to his day, and which appeared to solve the difficulty in a satisfactory manner.

The explanation of Africanus has reference to that reading of the genealogy in Luke, supported by ancient copies and approved by some commentators, which omits Matthat and Levi, the father and grandfather of Heli, and goes to Melchi, as Heli's father. The substance of his prolix statement is that Matthan (Joseph's grandfather, in the line of Solomon) and Melchi (his grandfather, in that of Nathan) married, successively, a woman named Estha, by whom the former had Jacob and the latter Heli, who were thus brothers uterine. Heli married and died childless, whereupon Jacob married his widow, and had Joseph, who was naturally the son of Jacob in the line of Solomon, but by the levirate law

was accounted the son of Heli in that of Nathan. Africanus gives this account, not as an ingenious speculation, but as a positive tradition derived from the *Desposyni*, the name given in the early church to those who were in affinity with the family of Jesus. He explains the double record thus:

"It was customary in Israel to calculate the names of the generations either according to nature or according to the law; according to nature, by the succession of legitimate offspring; according to the law, when another raised children to the name of a brother who had died childless. For as the hope of a resurrection was not yet clearly given, they imitated the promise which was to take place by a kind of mortal resurrection, with the view to perpetuate the name of the person who had died. Since, then, there are some of those who are inserted in this genealogical table, that succeeded each other in the natural order of father and son, some again being born of certain persons, and ascribed to others by name, both the real and the reputed fathers have been recorded. Thus neither of the gospels has made a false statement, whether calculating in the order of nature or according to the law."

This view of the matter received credence in the early church, and governed the common opinion for ages. Jerome (on Matt. i.), in answer to the emperor Julian, says: "Julianus Augustus, in this place, attacks the evangelists on the ground of discrepancy. Matthew calls Joseph the son of Jacob, whereas Luke calls him the son of Heli. Had Julian been better acquainted with the mode of speech of the Jews, he would have seen that the one evangelist gives the natural, and the other the legal pedigree of Joseph." Augustine expresses himself strongly in support of the explanation of Africanus. In a treatise against Faustus Manichaeus, he had said that his objection on the ground of discrepancy was obviated by the fact that the one father was by adoption, and the other natural, but he had not explained the kind of adoption. In his *Retractationes* (bk. 2, cap. 7), he supplies the omission, having now read the work of Africanus, which he had not done when he made that statement. "Hoc in

eorum litteris monitum est," he says, "qui recenti memoria post adscentionem Domini de hac re scripserunt. Nam etiam nomen ejusdem mulieris quae peperit Jacob patrem Joseph de priori marito Matthan, qui fuit pater Jacob avus Joseph, secundum Matthaeum; et de marito posteriore peperit Heli, cujus erat adoptivus Joseph, non tacuit Africanus."

If the facts were well founded, the explanation of the double genealogy which satisfied the early church sufficiently accounts for it. "The best hypothesis," says Dr. Wall, "that has been given for reconciling the two catalogues, is the old one of Africanus." It is true the explanation rests only on a tradition; but it conflicts with no other facts; it states nothing but what is credible, and in accordance with the usages of the people; and it has, perhaps, as much of the marks of authenticity as any other tradition of that age bearing upon such events. In regard to the relation of this to the other genealogy, it might have sufficed to say, without the explanation of Africanus, that the fact of such an explanation being possible, was enough to show that there might be no inconsistency between them.

Some modern writers have endeavored to explain these genealogies on other principles. We shall first notice one of those schemes which still supposes that the genealogy in Luke is that of Joseph. Grotius had said that the genealogy in Matthew was meant merely to exhibit the successive heirs reigning or entitled to reign, including Joseph, and ending with Christ. The Rev. Lord Arthur C. Hervey, a recent English writer on the subject, who gives, in Dr. Smith's valuable "Dictionary of the Bible," in course of publication in London and Boston, under the title "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," the substance of a treatise he had formerly written, adopts this suggestion, and maintains that the genealogy in Matthew does not show the direct descent of Joseph from David, but only the successive heads of the families entitled to the throne; and that the genealogy in Luke contains the private genealogy of Joseph. He concludes (as had been previously contended for by Dr. Lightfoot, in the second

series of his "Harmony of the New Testament") that Salathiel and Zorobabel, who appear as descended from Jechonias both in the genealogy in Matthew and in 1 Chron. 3: 17, 19, could not have been his natural issue, because it had been declared in Jer. 22 : 30 that he should be childless, and that none of his seed should sit upon the throne of David, or rule in Judah; and that, the line of Solomon being supposed to have thus failed, the names in question, which, as the genealogy in Luke seems to show, represented persons descended from Neri of the family of Nathan, must have been transferred from the genealogy of Nathan's family to the royal line of Solomon. He represents Joseph as descended through his grandfather Matthan, or Matthat, — names in the two genealogies which he considers as denoting the same individual, — from a younger son of Abiud, the eldest son of Zorobabel (the same, he says, as the Juda of Luke 3 : 26, getting rid of Rhesa and Joanna as interpolations); this Matthan having become head of the royal line on the failure of the elder branch. And finally, he alleges that Matthan, or Matthat, had two sons, Jacob (Matt. 1 : 15) and Heli (Luke 3 : 23), the former of whom having died childless, Joseph the son of Heli, who had predeceased, became the heir of his uncle, and the head of the royal line. To this scheme we state the following objections:

(1) That it throws aside, without adequate reason, the explanation of Africanus and the opinion of the early church. Hervey, indeed, says that this explanation does not account for the meeting of the two lines in Salathiel and Zorobabel. But Africanus did not need to do this. These names necessarily remained, even on Hervey's principles, in both the tables, and his explanation of the transfer to the royal line, if just, serves as well for Africanus's view as for his own.

(2) That it seems to deny the character of a proper genealogy to the table in Matthew, although claimed by its title, its contents, and the summary at the close. Down to Jechonias, and including all the kings, this is unquestionably a proper genealogy, excepting as to certain omissions or condensations not affecting this character, and at variance with

Hervey's principle. Lightfoot's supposition (for it is no more) of the transfer of Salathiel and Zorobabel from Nathan's family, is not acquiesced in by all; and some, holding that the promise to Solomon's seed in 2 Chron. 6: 12—16 precludes the supposition of the failure of his line, explain the entries by the suggestion of a marriage between Salathiel as son of Jechonias and a daughter of Neri; but even were it well founded, it respects only a single link in an exceptional case, and the concluding links ought to be held the links of a proper genealogy, unless the contrary is shown.

(3) It seems quite unlikely that, besides the proper genealogies of families from generation to generation, the priesthood should have kept a table of assorted names, patent to the people, showing the individuals entitled to the throne throughout the whole period from the Babylonish captivity down to the time of our Lord. This would have been a dangerous practice under their jealous masters, both for the priesthood and for the individuals so pointed out.

(4) The state of the families from Abiud down to Matthan, the blending of Matthan and Matthat as one, and the holding Jacob and Heli to be his sons, and so forth, are all speculation and hypotheses, without proof. The scheme consists of the rearranging the names under an assumed thesis, so that no manifest inconsistency appears; it is *not impossible* but that the scheme may be true, but its truth is not necessarily implied, and there is no proof of it.

We do not go more minutely into the theory of Hervey, because, in truth, his views arrive at the same conclusion, practically, as that which we maintain, — that the genealogies, both in Matthew and Luke, are those of Joseph. We hold that Christians are not bound now to explain every difficulty connected with the genealogies. And in regard to our own position, it is enough that there are two genealogies in the sacred records, professing to justify the Lord's claims to be the Messiah on the ground of his descent from David, and not necessarily irreconcilable; published at a time when it might be easy to reconcile them, and when

their falsity must have been capable of easy proof; agreeing as to Joseph's descent from David with the common belief of the nation at the time, — and both bearing on their face that Jesus was descended from David, through Joseph his legal father.

But some maintain another mode of obviating the apparent inconsistency between the genealogies, by supposing that the genealogy in Luke is through Mary, the Lord's mother. There is hardly any trace of this opinion in the early church, and it has been held chiefly by writers subsequent to the Reformation. The less simple character of the modern mind, which binds sequences to physical or semi-physical causes, with little respect to a law not so realized, and which tends towards science rather than faith, accepts with favor a supposition which obviates the difficulty that Joseph, not being the natural father of Jesus, could not serve as a link connecting him with David; and, in consequence, the opinion that the genealogy in Luke is that of Mary, has at present obtained a somewhat wide acceptance. This is a plausible and popular way of solving the problem, rather than, in our judgment, a solid one.

We have already said that the words "as was supposed," at the beginning of this genealogy, are sufficiently explained as having been necessary to save the supernatural origin of Jesus. They are, in fact, the equivalent of Matt. 1 : 16. Some of those who claim the genealogy for Mary say that the words should be read thus: "as was supposed (but erroneously, and really) of Heli," etc.; Heli having been, as they assume, Mary's father. But this is at once too subtle and too violent. No writer, meaning to be intelligible, would make his expressed contradict his real meaning, and trust the discovery of the latter to an ellipsis not hinted at, but to be assumed from unstated facts. Such a style, which makes language a riddle, is far removed from the simplicity of the evangelists. Others make Joseph a name substituted for that of Mary, under the rule of the Jews to exclude women from their genealogies, and substitute their husbands. But, besides that it is not to be supposed that the genealogy

of Mary would be presented in this form without notice, there is no apparent reason for Joseph getting his name inserted in the genealogy of his wife's family. For there is no ground to suppose that this was ever done by a husband, unless there was an inheritance belonging to the wife, as provided in Numbers xxxvi., of the existence of which, in this case, there is no evidence or hint. This was what the kinsman of Naomi refused to do, "lest he should mar his own inheritance" (Ruth 4 : 6).

Nor is there any evidence that Mary was the daughter of Heli. In apocryphal writings and in some of the Fathers, it is said that her parents were named Joachim and Anna, a statement which may have been derived from a common tradition. This is made consistent with the supposed parentage of Heli, by saying that Joachim is convertible, in Hebrew usage, with Eliakim, of which Eli, or Heli, is the contraction. The reasoning might be fair, if it had been shown that Mary's father was one in the position which Heli holds in the genealogy in Luke in all respects except as to the name; but as this is only an assumption, it is idle: it merely paves the way to a possibility.

The words of the angel to Mary, and her answer in Luke 1:30—34, are thought to show that she was addressed independently as a descendant of David. But her betrothal to Joseph, of the house of David, was carefully mentioned just before, and Mary could not but have understood the address of the angel as having reference to her position in regard to him. Although, then, she might have been of David (of which we shall speak in the sequel), the angel's address would not infer that she was regarded as independent of Joseph. Even the announcement in verse thirty-five, of the exact meaning of which Mary must have had a very imperfect apprehension, must be construed in consistency with the context and with the genealogies.

In the same sense are to be understood the terms in which the apostles speak of Jesus as the promised seed of David according to the flesh. Take, for instance, the language of Peter in Acts 2 : 30, which is as strong as can be conceived:

"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne, he knowing this," etc. Now, Peter could not have meant to signify anything else by these words than the known descent of Jesus from David through Joseph. The occasion was on the day of Pentecost, next after the ascension, when every hint of the miraculous conception must have been absent from the minds at least of the Jews addressed, who had known Jesus familiarly as the son of David through his connection with Joseph only, and who could not have understood Peter except in this sense. The different parts of the records of inspiration cannot but agree. The words of Peter and Paul merely adopt as true what they found authoritatively declared in the genealogies in Matthew and Luke. "It is evident," says Paul, "that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. 7:14). How could this be evident, but in the mode which the gospels point out, — the public facts and the public records and genealogies?

Observations are made, as if the references to our Lord's supposed connection with Joseph were meant merely, as it were, to humor the peculiarities of the Jews as to the preference of male descent, and the exclusion of female; while the truth behind was, that the genuine link of our Lord with David, according to the flesh, was his mother. We object, decidedly, to this manner of dealing with the scriptures. What the Jews looked for in the Messiah was one of the seed of David truly according to the law; and what God gave them was one justly answering this description. The fulfilment may not have been in the very way the Jews expected, for they were not capable of comprehending the fulfilment which God purposed; but then the mode of fulfilment was beyond their expectation, and not beneath it.

What really gives occasion to the efforts to discover a line of descent for Jesus to David through his mother, is the secret thought that the line through Joseph is not genuine, but pretended. We do not pause longer on the inconsistency of such an impression with the plain terms of scripture

which connect the promise with a definite person in the line of David's seed; so that, if that line went by Joseph, as the genealogy in Matthew testifies, to find it in Mary would be to vacate that genealogy; if it went by Mary, which is nowhere said, then all that is so anxiously declared regarding Joseph was fallacious and unmeaning; and if somehow it went by both, this would be to satisfy the requirements of positive prophecies by surmises and doubtful possibilities, instead of by means of clear issues of fact, which the fulfilment of prophecies requires. But we pass by all this, in order to state the grounds on which it appears to us that the demand of a line of natural descent for our Lord from David by his mother, is not only a mistake in regard to interpretation and the matter of fact, but involves a doctrinal error.

The assumption is, that if Mary is shown, from the scriptures, to be of the line of David, Jesus her son will then appear as his promised seed, the prophecies will be fulfilled, and the strong language of the apostles' description of his relation to David will be justified. It appears to us that there is a vital error at the basis of this way of speaking. We are now considering the case, not from the point of view of the Jew, who saw in Jesus only the son of Joseph, but from that of the Christian, seeing him as, supernaturally, both son of Mary and Son of God. In this point of view we are closed up to contemplate him as God and man in one person. Though, then, all had been as before supposed, Jesus would not have been the seed of David in a natural sense. The seed of David, as the subject of promises, means a human person, and not a mere nature as one of the elements of a person. But Jesus was never, at any time of his being, a human person. We quote from the Athanasian creed, which on this point has ever been regarded as being as orthodox as it is distinct.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. He is God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and he is man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect man of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as

touching his manhood; who, although he be God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God; One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person; for as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ."

Jesus the Messiah, in the substance of his being as thus described, could never, in a natural or any other than a legal sense, have been the seed of David according to the flesh. The human ancestry of his person could not ascend higher than his mother. There was no power in any human descent, or in all humanity together, could it have been concentrated as one, to give birth even to the human nature of Jesus in the manner in which it was conveyed to him (though the same in substance as that of all men), and still less to his whole person. Nor was there any such power in Mary of herself, any more than in any other of the daughters of the race, for in no respect was she in essence different from or superior to any one of them. Lightfoot (Harmony, 2d series, § 10) says that Jesus "looked on as the seed promised to Adam, 'the seed of the woman,' was to be looked after by the line of his mother." Why so? He was not to derive his personality through the line of his mother, or to receive virtue from it more than from the line of Joseph. Mary's ancestors were not in any sense the derivation of "the seed of the woman." They were themselves the seed of Eve, as all men are; but Eve was not the woman in the view of the promise, although she may have vainly thought so when at the birth of Cain she said, "I have gotten a (or rather, the) man from the Lord" (Gen. 4:1). Mary was that woman, and yet of herself no more a plant fit to yield such seed than Eve had been. The act of God by which Jesus was born of Mary was altogether special, unique, and transcendent. It was preëminently "a new thing" which "the Lord *created* in the earth," when "a woman compassed a man" (Jer. 31:22). Indeed, the words "the seed of the *woman*" imply, even in regard to his humanity, the original and underived source of Jesus. Consequently the Messiah

could naturally have no grandfathers or line of human ancestry; he was the seed of no man in this sense. Without a mother he could not have taken hold of the nature in which it was the divine will that God should be manifested. Yet even as to this, the scripture takes the form of paradox, striving to express by this means what ordinary language fails to do, and in order to show how exclusively and directly Jesus came forth by God's power, figures him (as represented by Melchisedec) as without even a human mother as well as father, and without a genealogy: "without father, without mother, without genealogy (ἀγενεαλόγητος), having neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb.7:3).

While Jesus thus could not be naturally of the seed of David, all question as to any supposed rights of his mother was, by that far-sighted wisdom of God by which the scriptures provide for every emergency, removed by means of the rule of the Jewish polity, that a woman could not of herself head a family, or appear in a genealogy. As to this, Lightfoot (Harmony, 1st series, § 4) says:

"There were two remarkable maxims among the Jewish nations: 1. that there was to be no king of Israel, but of the house of David and line of Solomon; and 2. that the family of the mother is not called a family. Hereupon hath Matthew most pertinently brought the pedigree through the house of Solomon, and ended it with Joseph, a male, whom the Jews looked upon as the father of Jesus."

It followed from this rule, that all Mary's rights in respect to her own family passed over to and were represented in the person of Joseph her husband. How, then, could Jesus be of the seed of David according to the flesh, as scripture required him to be and represents him to have been? In no other way than that which the evangelists Matthew and Luke set forth — through his being the son of Joseph according to the law, in consequence of Joseph's union with Mary his mother. This was the result of the law of the flesh,— that is, of earthly humanity under the Jewish law, — above that of mere physiology, and constituted the nearest possible approach our Lord could make as a person to be of the seed of David

according to the flesh, and it made him legally of that seed.

To say that Jesus, having been born of Mary who (as assumed) was of the seed of David, must have been of his seed also, is to attribute an ancestry to one of his personal elements, instead of his person itself; an element, moreover, which itself had originated supernaturally. This language logically involves the principle of what is termed the Nestorian heresy, which consisted in the alleged denial, by Nestorius, that Mary was the mother of the whole person of Christ, and in the assertion that she was the mother only of his human nature, thus dividing his person into two parts, with personal qualities to both. It is to build upon and carry backward this error, to hold Jesus as to his human nature to be of the seed of David, and to have, as such, a line of human progenitors. There was an irreconcilable difference between the person of Jesus and the fleshly line of David in whatever form. The motherhood of Mary was a relation towards the Lord peculiar in all its features, which could not be traced backward to her line of ancestry, because they could not have originated there.[1]

[1] We must not be held as meaning that those who claim a pedigree for Mary from David, are chargeable with the Nestorian heresy. We regard constructive heresy to be as great an offence against true charity as constructive treason against just law. The fault is as likely to be confused thinking as anything deeper; but those who have fallen into it, when laudably though erroneously endeavoring to substantiate the statements of scripture, will remember that it is not the less for this an element of weakness. Neither do we express any opinion on the point whether Nestorius was guilty, of which doubt is entertained. The question arose in an unfavorable way. Nestorius had refused to Mary the name of "the Mother of God," — a refusal with which we sympathize, especially as this manner of speaking arose in the church when the spirit was busily at work to elevate Mary above humanity, and make her an object of worship almost on a level with God, and was one of the proofs and symptoms of its existence. To us it seems that what the term rejected by Nestorius in itself implied, and the fault imputed to him, are complements of one and the same error, — the one supposing the division of the divinity from the humanity, and the other the division of the humanity from the divinity. The Christ, of whom by the ineffable act and inconceivable humiliation of God Mary was made mother, is not God simply, but God humbling himself to exist and act in the form of man, to whose nature the Eternal Son joined himself in order to constitute his person in this new form. The mother of such a one is a term which conveys a

Hence, we conceive, the care with which Mary's connections and ancestors are kept out of view in the whole of the New Testament, and our Lord's connection with David represented as the legal one through Joseph. There was a divine necessity that Jesus should have a human mother, — a fact which, without question, will be held in everlasting remembrance. But we must not be unmindful of the warning which, in view of the death of Christ, Paul found not unneeded by himself: "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. 5 : 16). That was the fact of the incarnation, seen as realized in time, rather than its depths and sources in the divine counsel. As Jesus was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13: 8), Christians, who now know the whole truth concerning him, are to recognize him in his power and dignity as the Messiah, not as born from any earthly source, in which relation we should see him encompassed with sorrow and weakness, but as born from the Father out of the grave, the first-fruits of the dead, once the "offspring," but now the "root" of Jesse; who, indeed, "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," but who is "declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1 : 3, 4); "whose name," in the relations of the eternal kingdom, "shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father" (Isa. 9 : 6).

Who, then, was Mary? We have already stated our reasons for believing that her origin was purposely kept in obscurity. In the case of Melchisedec the obscurity was total; in order that he might fitly represent, typically, Christ

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very different impression from that of the Mother of God without qualification. While those who justified the use of this language may not have received the error into their minds, it was an unsafe dallying with the unlawful thought, which enters into all false religions and all corruptions of religion, and which has since borne abundant fruit, — that the creature can somehow possess a merit or obtain a standing-ground of vantage as towards God; the utter extinction of which thought lies at the root of Christianity, and is the seal of its divine origin. Extremes generate each other. Mary has been made an idol of by the Romanists; and Protestants have been ready to forget that "all generations should call her blessed."

as underived, isolated, independent. In the case of Mary the reason was not subservient to any type, but was the practical one of not seeming to connect the Lord naturally with any human line of descent. This purpose did not require that any mystery should attach to Mary's descent, but only uncertainty. That she was a Jewess appears as undoubted as such a fact can from circumstances. If we dare not speak of a necessity in such a case, still it would be quite too violent to suppose that God, who never acts capriciously, should have suddenly so passed by the Jewish element as at last, without apparent reason (for the Jews were still under trial), to betake himself, for his crowning act, to a strange root. Mary's marriage to Joseph, whose character and descent preclude almost the thought of his marrying a stranger; her being cousin to Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, a priest (Luke 1 : 36); her observance of all the rites of the law; and, what is perhaps decisive above all the other grounds of belief, the total absence of reproach on account of the mother of Jesus being a stranger to Israel, — all this, without the slightest counteracting evidence, makes Mary's nationality free from doubt. But here certainty ceases. Eusebius, indeed, asserts loosely that, according to the Jewish law, Mary must have been of the same family with her husband. But this is not the fact; and the utmost that can be said is, that the husband should take his wife out of the same tribe (Num. xxxvi.). How far this was in observance in the changed condition of the Jewish people, when their original rights of inheritance had ceased, and when, as in Joseph's case, he was living out of the bounds of his tribe in a district substantially heathen, it is impossible to say. It is remarkable that the only certain note of relationship attached to Mary carries our attention away from Judah; yet the irregularity may possibly have been on the side of ancestors of Elizabeth only. The angel's address to Mary is at best rendered a doubtful testimony by the careful mention of Mary's betrothal to Joseph. There seems to have been an opinion or belief, in early times, that Mary was of the family of David; but whether this arose from

genuine tradition, or from the desire that it should be so, is hard to determine. The statement seems not sustained by any peculiar marks of reality, and it assumes various forms. Take away the latent persuasion that a Davidic descent was indispensable for Mary, and it will appear that not only no clear evidence of such descent exists, but that, on the contrary, a studied reserve is held in regard to it; that her being of Judah is no more than a probability; and that the only point certain as to her lineage is, that she was a Jewess of the race of Israel.

We do not say that Mary was not of the tribe of Judah and of the house of David. She may have been of both; but the scripture does not allege either, or state facts from which one or both may, with any certainty, be inferred; while it provides distinctly, in another way, for the end supposed to be answered by her having this origin. Its leaving these points unsettled shows that it was not through Mary that the promises to the seed of David were intended to be fulfilled; for prophecy must have a certain, and not merely a probable or conjectural fulfilment.

The Christian church and the Jews seem to us to have now nothing to do with the letter of the genealogies beyond what we have pointed out. The question as to the truth of Christianity, has, in one respect, a new aspect from what it had eighteen hundred years ago. Christianity is, and has been, during that period, *a fact* in every way in which the minds of men can be so addressed — historically and providentially, as well as morally and spiritually. The power and blessing of God have been manifestly with the Christian nations. Christianity has been set forward to speak to the Jew as a living thing, and in some measure it has done so. Its appointed office now is, "to provoke the Jews to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11). Let the Jews ponder the warning which, with whatever shortcomings, has been held up before them during so many centuries of the long-suffering of God. Let the Christian churches, too, ponder their ways, and remember their responsibility to draw the Jews back within the fold of the Lord by their faithful witness.