

THE GOSPEL OF PSEUDO-MATTHEW, OR OF THE INFANCY OF MARY AND OF JESUS.

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[Extracted from his *Apocryphal Gospels*, pp. 27-83.]

This composition is extant in Latin in different forms. Thilo published a recension of it containing chaps, i.-xxv., and ending with the return of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus from Egypt; but the text followed by Tischendorf, and here translated, includes a narration of subsequent occurrences. Two letters relating to some such document are by Tischendorf prefixed to this, and probably he is right, but it has not been deemed necessary to give them here. The first letter pretends to be addressed to Jerome by two bishops, Chromatius and Heliodorus, requesting him to translate it out of Hebrew. The second letter, in the name of Jerome, refers to the fulfilment of the request, and ascribes the book to a certain Leucius, a Manichaeon. Both letters must be rejected as spurious, but the work itself may belong to the fifth century. The Scripture texts quoted do not always accord with the version of Jerome, but some of them [p.28] are directly rendered from the Greek of the LXX. The original may have been in Greek; certainly there is good reason for believing it not to have been in Hebrew. No one translating from Hebrew into Latin would be likely to go to the LXX. for his rendering of texts of Scripture.

The writer repeats with many variations from the Protevangelium, the story of Mary's parents, birth, and infancy (chaps, i.-viii.). He then narrates the Annunciation and the events which followed till the birth of Jesus (chaps, ix.-xiii.). After these he gives us accounts of the Circumcision, the visit of the Magi, the slaughter of the infants, and the flight into Egypt (chaps, xiv.-xvii.). The journey to Egypt and sojourn there (chaps, xviii.-xxv.) are followed by a series of miraculous deeds which Jesus is said to have performed in his childhood (chaps. xxvi.-xlii.). The miraculous element is puerile and ridiculous, and shows clearly that the author or authors ill understood the true Spirit of Christ.

[p.29]

THE GOSPEL OF PSEUDO-MATTHEW.

*The Book of the Birth of the Blessed Mary and of the Infancy of the Saviour.
Written in Hebrew by the Blessed Evangelist Matthew,
and translated into Latin by the Blessed Presbyter Jerome,*

CHAPTER I.

In those days there was a man in Jerusalem by name Joachim, of the tribe of Judah. He was the shepherd of his sheep, fearing the Lord in his simplicity and goodness. He had no care but that of

his flocks, with the produce whereof he nourished all who feared God, and offered double presents in the fear of God to the labourers in doctrine¹ who ministered to him. Therefore, whether of lambs, or sheep, or wool, or any of his goods, of whatever he saw that he possessed, he made three portions: one part he bestowed upon the orphans, widows, and strangers, and poor; a second part he gave to them that worshipped God; the third part he reserved for himself and all his house. Now while he did these things, the Lord [p.30] so multiplied his flocks that there was no man like him among the people of Israel. This then he began to do when he was fifteen years of age. When he was twenty years old, he took Anna, the daughter of Achar,² to wife, of his own tribe, that is, of the tribe of Judah of the stock of David. And when they had remained together twenty years, he had no sons nor daughters by her.

CHAPTER II.

Now it came to pass that on the feast days Joachim stood among those who offered incense to the Lord, preparing his gifts in the presence of the Lord. And the priest, Reuben by name, came to him and said, It is not lawful for thee to stand among those who perform the sacrifices of God, because God hath not blessed thee to give thee a branch in Israel. Therefore being put to shame in the sight of the people, he retired weeping from the temple of the Lord, and did not return home, but went away to his sheep, taking with him the shepherds to the mountains in a far off land, so that Anna his wife could hear no message from him for five months. She meanwhile wept in her prayer, and said, Lord God of Israel, most mighty, seeing that thou hast not yet given me sons, why hast thou also taken my husband from [p.31] me? Behold, for five months already, I have not seen my husband. And I know not where he tarrieth: if I only knew that he was dead, I would perform his funeral ceremonies. And as she wept exceedingly, she went into the garden of her house, prostrating herself in prayer, and poured out her petitions before the Lord. After this she rose from prayer, and as she lifted up her eyes to God, she saw a nest of sparrows in a laurel tree, and uttered her voice to the Lord with groaning and said, Lord God Almighty, who hast given offspring to every creature, to beasts and cattle, to serpents and fowls and fish, and all rejoice in their offspring,—me alone dost thou exclude from the gift of thy bounty. For thou, God, knowest my heart, that from the beginning of my marriage, I confess to have made this vow, that if thou, God, shouldst give me son or daughter I would offer them to thee in thy holy temple. And, while she said these things, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared before her face, saying. Fear not, Anna, for thy offspring is in the purpose of God; for that which shall be born of thee shall be in admiration to all ages unto the end. And when he had said this, he vanished from her sight. But she, fearing and trembling because she had seen such a vision and heard such a saying, at length entered her chamber, and threw herself on her bed, as if she were dead. And all day and night she [p.32] continued in excessive trembling and in prayer. But after this she called her maidservant to her, and said to her, Thou seest me in widowhood deceived, and brought into tribulation, and wast thou unwilling to come in to me? Then she, with a little complaining, answered thus, saying. If God hath closed thy womb, and taken thy husband from thee, what am I to do for thee? When Anna heard this, she cried with a loud voice and wept.

CHAPTER III.

At the same time there appeared a certain young man unto Joachim on the mountains where he fed his flocks, and said to him, Wherefore dost thou not return to thy wife? And Joachim said,

For twenty years, I have had her, and God would not give me children by her. I therefore, when reproached, went forth with shame from the temple of the Lord. Why should I return to her, when I have been once degraded and greatly despised? Here then will I be with my sheep. And so long as the God of this world will grant me light, I will willingly, by the hands of my servants, bestow their portions upon the poor and orphans and them that worship God. And when he had said this the young man answered him, I am the angel of God, and have appeared to-day to thy wife, who was weeping and praying, and I have [p.33] comforted her. Thou shouldst know she hath conceived a daughter by thee, and thou not knowing hast left her. She shall be in the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit shall rest on her; and her blessedness shall be beyond that of all holy women, so that none can say that any hath been like her before her, or shall be after her in this world. Therefore go down from the mountains and return to thy wife, whom thou shalt find pregnant; for God hath raised seed by her, for which give thanks to God, and her seed shall be blessed, and she shall be blessed, and shall be constituted mother of eternal benediction. Then Joachim, adoring the angel, said to him, If I have found favour before thee, sit a little in my tent and bless thy servant. And the angel said to him, Do not call thyself servant, but fellow-servant, for we are servants of one Lord. Besides, my food is invisible, and my drink can be seen by no mortal. Therefore thou oughtest not to ask me to enter thy tent; but if thou wast about to give me anything, offer it for a burnt offering to the Lord. Then Joachim took an unspotted lamb, and said to the angel, I should not have dared to offer a burnt offering to the Lord, unless thy command had given me priestly authority to offer it. And the angel said to him, I should not ask thee to offer unless I knew the Lord's will. Now when Joachim, offered the sacrifice to God, the angel and the perfume of [p.34] the sacrifice went up to heaven together with the smoke.

Then Joachim cast himself down upon his face, and lay in prayer from the sixth hour of the day until the evening. Now when his servants and hirelings saw, and knew not for what cause he lay there, they thought him to be dead, and, coming to him, almost raised him from the ground. But when he had told them the vision of the angel, smitten with exceeding fear and wonder, they urged him that without delay, he should carry out the vision of the angel, and speedily return to his wife. And when Joachim turned the matter over in his mind, and thought whether he should return or not, it came to pass that he was overcome with sleep, and behold, the angel which had already appeared to him while awake, appeared to him in sleep, saying, I am an angel and am given thee by God as a guardian; go down in confidence, and return to Anna, because the kind acts which thou and thy wife Anna have done are rehearsed in the presence of the Most High; and God will give you such fruit as neither the prophets nor any saint ever had from the beginning, nor shall have. Now when Joachim had awaked from sleep, he called all his herdsmen to him, and told them the dream. And they adored the Lord, and said to him. Take heed not to contemn the sayings of the angel any further. But arise, let us [p.35] go hence, and let us return at a slow pace, feeding our flocks.

When they had tarried the space of thirty days on their return, and were now nigh,³ behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Anna as she stood and prayed, saying to her, Go to the gate which is called the Golden Gate,⁴ and meet thy husband in the way, for to-day he will return to thee. She therefore went out in haste to meet him, with her maidens, and, praying to the Lord, she stood in the gate a long time waiting for him. When she was growing faint with very long expectation, she raised her eyes and saw Joachim afar off coming with his flocks; and she met him, and hung upon his neck, giving thanks to God, and saying, I was a widow, and lo, I am not

one now; I was barren, and, behold, I have already conceived. So then, having worshipped the Lord, they entered the house. When this was heard, great joy was caused to all his neighbours and acquaintances, so that the whole land of Israel was gladdened by this report.

CHAPTER IV.

Now when nine months were completed after [p.36] this, Anna brought forth, a daughter, and called her Mary. When she had weaned her in her third year, Joachim and Anna his wife, went together to the temple of the Lord, to offer sacrifices to God, and placed the babe that was named Mary in the apartment of virgins, wherein virgins continued day and night in the praises of God.⁵ When she had been set before the gates of the temple, she went up the fifteen steps⁶ at such a rapid pace, that she did not at all look back, nor ask for her parents as is usual with infancy. Her parents, therefore, being anxious, and each of them asking for the infant, were both alike astonished, till they found her in the temple, so that even the very priests of the temple marvelled.

CHAPTER V.

Then Anna was filled with the Holy Spirit in the sight of all, and said. The Lord Almighty God of [p.37] hosts, being mindful of his word, hath visited his people with a good and holy visitation, to humble the hearts of the nations who rose up against us, and to convert them to himself. He hath opened his ears to our prayers, he hath banished from us the exultations of all our enemies. She that was barren is made a mother, and hath borne exultation and joy to Israel. Behold, I was set to offer gifts to my Lord, and my enemies could not prevent me. But God hath turned their heart towards me, and he hath given me eternal joy.

CHAPTER VI.

Now Mary was in admiration with all the people of Israel. When she was three years old, she walked with so firm a step, spoke so perfectly, and was so assiduous in the praises of God, that all were astonished at her, and marvelled; and she was not regarded as a little child, but as an adult of about thirty years, she was so earnest in prayer. And her face was beautiful and splendid, to such a degree that scarcely any one could look upon her countenance. Now she applied herself to wool-work, so that whatever the elder women could not do, she accomplished when set to it in her tender age. And she adopted this rule for herself, that she would continue in prayer from morning until the third [p.38] hour; from the third to the ninth she would occupy herself at her weaving and from the ninth again she would apply herself to prayer. Nor did she retire from prayer until an angel of God appeared to her, from whose hand she received food; and so she advanced more and better in the work of God. Further, when the elder virgins left off the praises of God, she did not leave off, so that in God's praises and vigils no one was found before her, nor any more skilled in the wisdom of God's law, more humble in humility, more beautiful in singing, or more perfect in all virtue. Indeed, she was constant, immoveable, unalterable, and daily advanced to better things. None saw her angry, or heard her reviling. For all her speech was so full of grace, that God might be known to be in her tongue. She was ever diligent in prayer and in searching of the law, and was anxious not to sin by any word against her companions. Moreover, she feared to make any mistake in laughter or by the sound of her lovely voice, or lest

any insult or pride should show itself against her equals. She blessed the Lord without intermission; and lest perchance even in her salutations she should cease from God's praise, if any one saluted her, she answered by way of salutation, Thank God! From her it first originated that men, when they would salute each other, replied, Thank God! With the food which she daily [p.39] received from the hand of the angel she refreshed herself alone; but she distributed to the poor the food which she received from the priests. The angels of God were frequently seen to talk with her, and they most diligently obeyed her. If any one that was sick touched her, that same hour he returned home whole.

CHAPTER VII.

Then Abiathar the priest^r offered infinite gifts to the high priests, that he might receive her for a wife for his son. But Mary forbid them, saying, It cannot be that I should know man, or man know me. Now the high priests and all her kindred said to her, God is honoured in children, and is adored in posterity, as it ever was among the children of Israel. But Mary answered and said to them, God is honoured in chastity, so that it is approved before all things; for before Abel there was none just among men, and he pleased God by offerings, and he was mercilessly slain by him who displeased God. Therefore he received the two crowns of offering and of virginity, because he admitted no pollution in his flesh. Elijah, too, when he was in the flesh, was taken up in the flesh because he preserved his flesh [p.40] in its virginity. Now, from my infancy I have learned in the temple of God that virginity could be sufficiently dear to God; and therefore, because I can offer what is dear to God, I have decreed to him in my heart that I would not at all know man.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now it came to pass, that when she was fourteen years of age, and this gave occasion to the Pharisees to say that according to custom a woman of that age could not remain in the temple of God, a decision of this kind was come to, that a crier should be sent among all the tribes of Israel, (saying) that all should meet on the third day, at the temple of the Lord. Now when all the people had met, Abiathar, the high priest, arose, and ascended to the upper step, so that he could be heard and seen by all the people; and when great silence was made, he said. Hear me, children of Israel, and receive my words in your ears. Since this temple was built by Solomon, there have been therein virgins, the daughters of kings, and the daughters of prophets, and of high priests, and of priests, and they have been great and admirable. But when they have come to a lawful age, they have been given in marriage to husbands, and have followed the course of their precursors, and have pleased God. But by [p.41] Mary alone a new order of life has been invented, and she promiseth God that she will remain a virgin. Wherefore it seems to me, that by our inquiry and the answer of God, we should seek to know to whom she ought to be committed to be kept. Then his saying pleased all the synagogue. And the lot was cast by the priests for the twelve tribes, and the lot fell upon the tribe of Judah. And the priest said, On the next day, let whoever is without a wife come and bring a rod in his hand. Wherefore it came to pass, that Joseph brought a rod along with the younger men. And when they had delivered their rods to the high priest, he offered sacrifice to the Lord God, and asked of the Lord; and the Lord said to him, Put the rods of all in God's holy of holies, and there let the rods remain, and bid them come to thee in the morning to receive their rods, and to him from the top of whose rod a dove shall come forth and fly to heaven, and in whose hand the rod, when returned, shall give this sign, Mary

shall be delivered to be kept.

Now on the next day, when they all came early, and an offering of incense had been made, the high priest went into the holy of holies and brought out the rods. And when he had given a rod to each, and a dove had not gone forth from any, the chief priest arrayed himself with twelve bells and a priestly robe and went into the holy of holies and burned sacrifice [p.42] and poured out prayer there. **And an angel of God appeared, saying, There is here a very short rod which thou hast counted for nothing, and hast placed it with the rest, but hast not taken it out with the rest: when thou hast taken that out and given to him to whom it belongs, there shall appear in it the sign which I have spoken to thee of. It was the rod of Joseph, and because he was old he was as it were discarded, as though he could not receive it; but neither would he himself ask for his rod. And when he stood, humble and the last, the chief-priest with a loud voice cried to him, saying. Come Joseph, and receive thy rod, because thou art waited for. And Joseph came fearing, because the high priest called him with so very loud a voice. But straightway as he stretched out his hand to receive his rod, immediately a dove went forth from its top, whiter than snow and most beautiful, and fluttering a long time among the pinnacles of the temple, at last it flew towards the heavens. Then all the people congratulated the old man, saying, Thou art become blessed in thy old age, father Joseph, in that God hath shown thee fit to receive Mary. And when the priests had said to him, Take her, for out of all the tribe of Judah thou alone art elected by God, Joseph began to worship them with modesty, saying, I am old and have sons, and why do ye deliver to me this little child, whose age is less even than that of [p.43] my grandchildren? Then Abiathar the chief priest said to him, Remember, Joseph, how Dathan and Abiram and Korah perished, because they contemned the will of God. So will it happen to thee if thou contemnest what is commanded thee by God. Joseph answered him, I do not condemn the will of God, indeed, but I will be her keeper until I know this by the will of God,—which of my sons can have her to wife. Let there be given her certain virgins of her companions for a solace, with whom she may meanwhile abide. Abiathar the chief priest answered, saying, Five^s virgins shall be given, indeed, for her solace, until the day appointed cometh in which thou shalt take her, for she cannot be joined to another in matrimony.**

Then Joseph took Mary with five other virgins, who were to be with her in the house of Joseph. Now these virgins were Rebecca, Zipporah, Susanna, Abigea, and Gael, to whom there was given by the chief priest, silk and blue, and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and flax. And they cast lots among themselves what each virgin should do; and it fell out that Mary received the purple for the veil of the temple of the Lord. When she had received it, the virgins said. Since thou art the last, and humble, and less than all, thou hast deserved to receive and obtain the purple. And saying this, as though in a vexa- [p.44] tious speech, they began to call her the queen of virgins. Therefore, while they did thus among themselves, an angel of the Lord appeared among them saying unto them, That saying shall not be uttered for vexing, but prophesied for a most true prophecy. Therefore, being terrified at the presence of the angel and at his words, they asked her to pardon them and pray for them.

CHAPTER IX.

Now on the second day, while Mary stood near the fountain to fill her pitcher, the angel of the Lord appeared unto her, saying, Blessed art thou Mary, for in thy womb thou hast prepared a

habitation for the Lord. Behold, light from heaven shall come and dwell in thee, and through thee shall shine in all the world.

Again on the third day, while she wrought the purple with her fingers, there came in to her a young man whose beauty could not be told. When Mary saw him she feared and trembled. And he said to her, Hail Mary! full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.⁹ When she heard this she trembled and feared. Then the angel of the Lord [p.45] added, Fear not Mary, thou hast found favour with God; behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bear the king who filleth not only earth but heaven, and reigneth for ever and ever.

CHAPTER X.

While these things were doing, Joseph was busy at work in making tabernacles in the maritime regions; for he was a carpenter. But after nine months he returned to his house and found Mary with child. Wherefore being in a great strait, he trembled, and cried, saying, Lord God, receive my spirit; for it is better for me to die than to live longer. The virgins who were with Mary said to him. What sayest thou, master Joseph? We know that man hath not touched her: we are witnesses that virginity and integrity remain in her. We have kept ward over her: she hath ever continued in prayer with us; the angels of God daily talk with her; daily hath she received food from the hand of the Lord.¹⁰ We know not how it can be that any sin should be in her. For if thou wishest us to reveal to thee our surmise, no one hath made her pregnant but the angel of the Lord. Joseph said, Why do you mislead me to believe you, that an angel of the Lord [p.46] hath made her pregnant? For it may be that some one hath feigned himself an angel of the Lord and deceived her. And saying these things he wept and said, With what face shall I look to the temple of the Lord, or with what face shall I see the priests of God? What am I to do? And saying this, he thought he would flee and send her away.

CHAPTER XI.

And while he thought to rise and hide himself, and to dwell in secret, behold the same night an angel of the Lord appeared to him in sleep, saying, Joseph, son of David, fear not; take Mary thy wife, for that which is in her womb, is of the Holy Spirit. Now she shall bear a son, and his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.¹¹ And Joseph, rising from sleep, gave thanks to God, and spoke to Mary and the virgins who were with her, and told his vision. And he was comforted concerning Mary, saying, I have sinned, in that I had some suspicion of thee.

CHAPTER XII.

After this there arose a great rumour that Mary was with child. And Joseph was laid hold of and led by the ministers of the temple, with Mary, to the [p.47] chief priest, who together with the priests began to reproach him and to say, Why hast thou wronged her who is such and so eminent a virgin, whom as a dove the angels of God nourished in the temple, who would never see nor have a husband, and who had the best learning in the law of God? If thou hadst not done violence to her, she had still remained in her virginity. And Joseph took a solemn oath that he

had never touched her at all. The chief priest Abiathar answered him. As God liveth, I will now cause thee to drink the water of the Lord's drinking, and forthwith thy sin will appear.

Then there gathered together a multitude of people which could not be numbered, and Mary was brought to the temple. Now the priests, and her relatives and her parents, weeping said to Mary, Confess to the priests thy sin, thou who wast as a dove in the temple of God, and used to receive food from the hand of an angel.

Joseph again was called to the altar and there was given to him the water of the Lord's drinking,¹² which when anybody who told a lie had tasted he went round the altar seven times, and God gave a certain sign in his face. When therefore Joseph had drunk it without fear, and had gone round the altar seven times, no sign of sin appeared in him. Then [p.48] all the priests and attendants and people justified him, saying, Thou art become blessed, because no guilt is found in thee.

And they called Mary and said to her. And what excuse canst thou have? or what greater sign will appear in thee than this, that thy pregnancy betrayeth thee? This only we ask of thee, since Joseph is pure concerning thee, that thou shouldst confess who it is that deceived thee. For it is better that thy confession should expose thee, than that the anger of God should make thee manifest among the people by giving a sign in thy face. Then Mary confidently and intrepidly said, Lord God, the King of all, who art conscious of secret things, if there is any pollution in me, or any sin, or any lust or immodesty, reveal me in the sight of all peoples, that I may be an example for the correction of all. Having said this she approached the altar of the Lord with confidence, and drank the water for drinking, and went round the altar seven times, and there was found no spot in her.¹³

And when all the people were beside themselves with amazement, seeing her pregnancy and that no sign appeared in her face, the people began, with varied talk together, to be troubled. Some said she was holy and spotless, but others that she was bad and defiled. Then Mary, seeing she was held in [p.49] suspicion of the people, and did not seem to them to be entirely cleared, said with, a loud voice in the hearing of all, As the Lord Adonai liveth, the Lord of hosts in whose presence I stand, I have never known man; but I am known by Him to whom from my infancy I have devoted my mind. And I made this vow to my God from my infancy, that with him who created me I would abide in integrity, wherein I trust to live to him alone, and serve him alone: and as long as I live in him I shall abide without defilement. Then they all began to kiss her feet, and to embrace her knees, praying her to pardon their evil suspicions. And the people and priests and all the virgins led her with exultation and great joy to her house, crying out and saying. The name of the Lord be blessed for ever, for he hath manifested thy holiness to all his people Israel.

CHAPTER XIII.

Now it came to pass after some little time, that a registration took place, according to the edict of Augustus Caesar, that all the world was to be registered every man in his own native place. This registration was made by Cyrinus, the president of Syria.¹⁴ It was needful, therefore, that Joseph should be registered with the blessed Mary in Bethlehem, [p.50] because thence came Joseph and Mary, of the tribe of Judah, and of the house and family of David. When, therefore, Joseph and

the blessed Mary were going by the way which leads to Bethlehem, Mary said to Joseph, I see two peoples before me, the one weeping, and the other rejoicing. And Joseph answered her, Sit on thy beast, and do not speak superfluous words. Then there appeared before them a certain beautiful youth, clothed in white array, and he said to Joseph, Why didst thou call superfluous the words concerning the two peoples of whom Mary hath spoken? For she saw the people of the Jews weeping, who have departed from their God,—and the people of the Gentiles rejoicing, who have now approached and are made nigh to the Lord, as he promised our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for the time is come that in the seed of Abraham a blessing should be bestowed on all nations.¹⁵

And when he had said thus, the angel commanded the beast to stop, for her time to bear had come; and he directed the blessed Mary to come down from the animal, and to enter a cave below a cavern, in which there was never any light, but always darkness, because it could not receive the light of day. And when the blessed Mary had entered it, it began to become all light with brightness, as if it had been [p.61] the sixth hour of the day; divine light so illumined the cave, that light did not fail there by day or night, as long as the blessed Mary was there. And there she brought forth a male child, whom angels instantly surrounded at his birth, and whom, when born and standing at once upon his feet, they adored, saying, Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will.¹⁶ For the nativity of the Lord had already come, and Joseph was gone to seek midwives. When he had found them, he returned to the cave, and found Mary with the infant she had borne. And Joseph said to the blessed Mary, I have brought thee Zelomi and Salome the midwives, who stand without before the door of the cave, not daring to enter here for the too great splendour. And the blessed Mary smiled at hearing this. And Joseph said to her. Do not smile, but be cautious, that they may visit thee, lest perchance thou shouldst require medicine. Then she bade them enter unto her. And when Zelomi had come in, Salome not having come in, Zelomi said to Mary, Allow me to touch thee. And when she had suffered herself to be examined, the midwife cried with a loud voice, and said, Lord, great Lord, have mercy! Never hath it been heard, or suspected, that the breasts of any woman should be full of milk, and the child born show its mother to be a virgin. But as there [p.52] is no defilement of blood on the child, there is no pain in the mother. A virgin hath conceived, a virgin hath borne, and a virgin she hath continued.¹⁷ And when Salome heard this word, she said. Suffer me to touch thee, and to prove whether Zelomi hath said the truth. And when the blessed Mary had consented to be touched by her, Salome put out her hand. But when she withdrew her hand from touching her, her hand dried up, and through excessive pain she began to weep violently and to be distressed, crying and saying, Lord God, Thou knowest that I have always feared thee, and have healed all the poor without reward, of the widow and orphan I have taken nothing, and I have not permitted the needy to go from me empty. And lo, I am made wretched because of my unbelief, for without cause I wished to test thy virgin.

When she said this, there appeared near her a certain youth, who was very splendid, saying to her, Approach the infant and adore him, and touch him with thy hand, and he shall deliver thee; for he is the Saviour of the world and of all who hope in him. And she straightway approached the infant, and adoring him, touched the border of the cloths in which the infant was wrapped, and immediately her hand was healed. And going forth she began to [p.53] cry out, saying what great things she had seen and suffered, and how she had been healed, so that through her preaching many believed.

For the shepherds of sheep also declared that they had seen angels at midnight, singing a hymn, praising and blessing the God of heaven, and saying that the Saviour of all was born, which is Christ the Lord, by whom the salvation of Israel will be restored.¹⁸

Moreover, from evening until morning, a great star shone above the cave, and one so great had never been seen from the beginning of the world. And prophets who were in Jerusalem said that this star indicated the nativity of Christ, who should restore the promise, not only to Israel, but to all nations.

CHAPTER XIV.

Now on the third day after the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the most blessed Mary went out of the cave, and, entering a stable, put her child in a manger,¹⁹ and the ox and ass adored him. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, who said. The ox doth know his owner, and the ass his master's crib. The very animals, therefore, ox and ass, having him between them, incessantly adored [p.54] him. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Habakkuk the prophet, who said, Between two animals thou art made known.²⁰ In the same place Joseph tarried with Mary three days.

CHAPTER XV.

Now on the sixth day they entered Bethlehem, where they spent the seventh day. But on the eighth day they circumcised the child, and his name was called Jesus, as he was called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.²¹ Now after the days of the purification of Mary were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, then Joseph took the infant to the temple of the Lord; and, when the infant had received peritome (*peritome*, that is circumcision), they offered for him a pair of turtles, or two young pigeons.

Now there was in the temple a certain man of God, perfect and just, whose name was Simeon, a hundred and twelve years old.²² This man had received an answer from the Lord that he should not taste death unless he saw Christ the Son of God living in the flesh. When he saw the infant he cried out with a [p.55] loud voice, saying, God hath visited his people, and the Lord hath fulfilled his promise. And he made haste and adored him. And after this he took him into his cloak, and kissing his feet, said, Now Lord, thou sendest away thy servant in peace, according to thy word, because mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel.

There was also in the temple of the Lord, Anna a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity; and she had been a widow now for eighty-four years, and had never departed from the temple of the Lord, spending her time in fastings and prayers. She also likewise adored the infant, saying, In him is the redemption of the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

Now when the second year was past. Magi came from the East to Jerusalem, bringing large gifts. And they earnestly asked the Jews, saying, Where is the King who is born to you? for we have seen his star in the East, and have come to adore him.²³ And this report came to King Herod, and so terrified him [p.56] that he assembled the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the people, inquiring of them where the prophets had foretold that Christ should be born. And they said to him, In Bethlehem of Judah. For it is written. And thou Bethlehem, the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come forth the ruler who shall rule my people Israel.²⁴ Then Herod the king called the Magi to himself, and diligently inquired of them when the star appeared to them. Then sending them to Bethlehem, he said. Go and ask diligently about the child, and when you have found him, report it to me, that I too may come and adore him.

Now as the Magi went on their way, the star appeared to them, and was, as it were, their guide, going before them until they came where the child was. And when they saw the star the Magi rejoiced with great joy, and entered into the house and found the infant Jesus sitting in the lap of his mother. Then they opened their treasures and bestowed large presents upon the blessed Mary and Joseph; but to the infant himself each offered a single piece of gold; in like manner one (offered) gold, another frankincense, and a third myrrh. But when they would have returned to King Herod, they were warned by an angel in a dream not to return to Herod; and they returned to their own country by another road.

[p.57]

CHAPTER XVII.

Now when Herod saw that he was mocked by the Magi, his heart was puffed up, and he sent all ways, wishing to catch and kill them. But when he found them not at all, he sent anew to Bethlehem and all its borders, and slew all the male children whom he found, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had enquired of the Magi.²⁵

But one day before this happened, Joseph was warned in a dream by an angel of the Lord, which said to him, Take up Mary and the infant, and go into Egypt by way of the desert. And Joseph went according to the saying of the angel.²⁶

CHAPTER XVIII.

And when they had come to a certain cave and wished to rest in it, the blessed Mary came down from the beast, and sat and held the child Jesus in her lap. Now there were with Joseph three youths, and with Mary a certain damsel, who went on their way at the same time; and behold there suddenly came out of the cave many dragons, seeing which the youths cried out through excessive fear. Then Jesus, descending from his mother's lap, stood on his feet before the dragons, and they adored Jesus [p.58] and then departed from them. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by David the prophet, saying, Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, ye dragons and all deeps.²⁷ And the little infant Jesus, walking before them, commanded them to hurt no man. But Mary and Joseph feared greatly lest perchance the little infant should be injured by the dragons. And Jesus said to them. Fear not, nor consider me because I am a little infant, for

I was, and am ever perfect; it must needs be that all the wild beasts of the woods should grow tame before me.

CHAPTER XIX.

In like manner lions and leopards adored him, and kept company with them in the desert; whithersoever Joseph and blessed Mary went, they went before them, showing the way and bowing their heads; and showing subjection by wagging their tails, they adored him with great reverence. Now when Mary saw lions and leopards and various kinds of wild beasts coming round them, she was at first exceeding afraid; and Jesus with a glad countenance, looking into her face, said, Fear not, mother; because they come not for thy hurt, but they hasten to come for thy service and mine. By these sayings he removed fear from her heart. Now the lions walked [p.59] along with them, and with, the oxen and asses, and the beasts of burden which carried necessaries for them, and hurt no one although they remained with them; but they were tame among the sheep and rams which they had brought with them from Judea, and had with them. They walked among wolves and feared nothing, and no one was hurt by another. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet: Wolves shall feed with lambs; lion and ox shall eat chaff together.²⁸ There were two oxen also with them, and a cart, wherein they carried necessaries; and the lions directed them in their way.

CHAPTER XX.

Now it came to pass on the third day from their departure, as they went along, the blessed Mary was wearied by the too great heat of the sun in the desert; and seeing a palm tree she said to Joseph, Let me rest a little under the shadow of this tree. Joseph hastened therefore, and led her to the palm, and caused her to descend from the beast. And when the blessed Mary had sat down there, she looked at the foliage of the palm and saw it full of fruit, and she said to Joseph, I desire that I may be able to partake of the fruit of this palm. And Joseph saith to her, I wonder thou sayest this, when thou [p.60] seest what a height the palm is, and that thou thinkest to eat of the fruit of the palm. I think more of scarcity of water, which is already failing us in the bottles, and we have not wherewith we may refresh ourselves and the beasts. **Then the little child Jesus, sitting with a glad countenance in his mother's lap, saith to the palm, tree, bend down thy branches, and with thy fruit refresh my mother.** And straightway at this word, the palm bowed down its top to the feet of the blessed Mary, and they gathered from it fruit wherewith all were refreshed. Now after they had gathered all its fruit, it remained bowed down, waiting to rise at his command at whose command it had bowed down. Then Jesus said to it, Raise thee, palm, and be strong, and be a partner with my trees which are in the paradise of my Father. And open from thy roots a spring of water which is hidden in the earth; and let waters flow forth from it to our satisfying. And immediately it arose, and there began to flow forth at its root a most pure fount of waters, very cool, and exceedingly clear. Now when they saw the fount of water they rejoiced with great joy; and they, and all the beasts and cattle were satisfied; wherefore they gave thanks to God.

CHAPTER XXI.

On the next day when they were departing thence, [p.61] and at the hour wherein they began to pursue their journey, Jesus, turning to the palm tree, said, This privilege I grant thee, palm, that one of thy branches should be taken by my angels, and planted in the paradise of my Father. And this blessing I will confer upon thee, that unto all who have conquered in any contest, it may be said. Ye have attained the palm of victory.²⁹ As he said these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, standing above the palm-tree; and taking away one of its branches, he flew to heaven having the branch in his hand. When they saw this they fell on their faces and became as dead. And Jesus spake unto them, saying, Doth fear possess your hearts? Know ye not that this palm, which I have caused to be removed to paradise, will be prepared for all the saints in the place of delight, as it was prepared for us in this place of solitude? And they were filled with joy, and being strengthened, all arose.

CHAPTER XXII.

After these things, as they pursued their journey, Joseph said to Jesus, Lord, this heat broils us: if it please thee, let us hold our course near the sea, that we may rest in the towns on the coast. Jesus said to [p.62] him, Fear not, Joseph, I will shorten the way for yon, so that what you were to go in the space of thirty clays, you shall accomplish in this one day. While they said these things, behold, they looked forward, and began to see the Egyptian mountains and cities.

And they came, rejoicing and exulting, into the borders of Hermopolis,³⁰ and entered into a certain city of Egypt, which is called Sotinen; and because there was no one known in it from whom they could have requested hospitality, they went into a temple, which was called the capitol of Egypt, in which temple three hundred and fifty-five³¹ idols were placed, to which, on separate days, the honour of deity was rendered in sacrilegious rites. Now the Egyptians of that city entered the capitol, in which the priests admonished them how many sacrifices they should offer on each day according to the honour of their deity.

[p.63]

CHAPTER XXIII.

Now it came to pass that when the most blessed Mary, with her little Infant, had entered the temple, all the idols were prostrate on the earth, so that they all lay upon their faces wholly shattered and broken, and so they showed evidently that they were nothing. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: Behold the Lord shall come upon a light cloud, and shall enter Egypt, and all the handiworks of the Egyptians shall be moved at his presence.³²

CHAPTER XXIV.

Then when it had been told to Aphrodisius the ruler of that city, he came with all his army to the temple. But when the priests of the temple saw that Aphrodisius, with all his army, came to the temple, they thought that he hastened only to see his revenge on those because of whom the gods had fallen. But he, having entered the temple, when he saw all the idols lie prostrate on their faces, drew nigh to the blessed Mary, who bore the Lord in her lap, and adoring him, said to all his army, and to all his friends, If this were not the God of our gods, our gods would by no means

have fallen on their faces before him, neither would they lie prostrate in his sight; wherefore, they silently avow him to be [p.64] their Lord. We then, if we do not very carefully what we see our gods do, may incur the peril of his indignation, and may all come to destruction, as befel Pharaoh, king of the Egyptians; who, not believing such great miracles, was drowned with all his army in the sea.³³ Then all the people of that city believed in the Lord God through Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXV.

But much time after, an angel said to Joseph, Return to the land of Judah, for they are dead who sought the child's life.³⁴

CHAPTER XXVI.

And it came to pass, that after the return of Jesus from Egypt, when he was in Galilee, and now entered on the fourth year of his age, one Sabbath day he played with the children by the bed of the Jordan. When, therefore, he had sat down, Jesus made himself seven pools with mud, to each of which he made little channels, through which, at his command he brought water from the stream into a pool, and sent it back again. Then one of those children, a son of the devil, with envious mind shut up the channels which supplied water to the pools, and overthrew what Jesus had [p.65] made. Then said Jesus unto him, Woe unto thee, son of death, son of Satan. Dost thou destroy the works which I have wrought? And straightway he who had done this, died. Then, with a quarrelsome voice, the parents of the dead cried against Mary and Joseph, saying to them. Your son hath cursed our son, and he is dead. When Joseph and Mary heard, they came at once to Jesus, on account of the complaint of the parents of the boy, and the crowd of Jews. But Joseph secretly said to Mary, I dare not speak to him; but do thou admonish him, and say. Why hast thou raised against us the enmity of the people, and why do we bear the painful enmity of men? And when his mother had come to him, she asked him, saying. My Lord, what hath he done that he should die? But he said, He was worthy of death, because he destroyed the works which I had wrought. Therefore his mother besought him, saying. Do not, my Lord, because they all rise against us. And he, not willing that his mother should be grieved, spurned the body of the dead with his right foot, and said to him. Arise, son of iniquity; for thou art not worthy to enter into the rest of my Father, because thou hast destroyed the works which I have wrought. Then he who was dead arose and departed. But Jesus, at his own command, brought the water into the pools through the water-channels.

[p.66]

CHAPTER XXVII.

And it came to pass after these things, that in the sight of all, Jesus took mud from the pools which he had made, and made twelve sparrows out of it. Now it was the Sabbath when Jesus did this, and there were many children with him. When therefore, one of the Jews had seen him do this, he said to Joseph, Joseph, seest thou not that the child Jesus worketh on the Sabbath, which it is not lawful for him to do? for he hath made twelve sparrows of mud. When he heard this, Joseph reprov'd him, saying. Why doest thou, on the Sabbath, such things as it is not lawful for us to do? And Jesus, hearing Joseph, and clapping his hands together, said to the sparrows. Fly!

and at the voice of his command they began to fly. And as all who stood there saw and heard, he said to the birds, Go and fly through the globe and all the world, and live! Now when they who were there saw such signs, they were filled with great amazement. Some praised him and admired him; but others blamed him. And some went away to the chief priests, and to the chiefs of the Pharisees, and told them that Jesus the son of Joseph had done great signs and miracles in sight of all the people of Israel. And this was published among the twelve tribes of Israel.³⁵

[p.67]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Now again, the son of Annas the priest of the temple, who had come with Joseph, holding a stick in his hand, while all beheld, with excessive rage broke open the pools which Jesus had made with his hands, and spilled out of them the water which he had gathered in them from the stream. For he stopped the water-channel by which the water entered, and then destroyed it. When Jesus saw this, he said to the boy who had destroyed his pools, O, most base seed of iniquity! O, son of death! workman of Satan! truly the fruit of thy seed shall be without vigour, and thy roots without moisture, and thy branches dry and not bearing fruit. And, at once, as all beheld, the boy withered and died.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Then Joseph trembled, and took hold of Jesus, and went with him to his house, and his mother with him. And behold, suddenly from the opposite side, a certain boy, himself also a worker of iniquity, ran and thrust himself against the shoulder of Jesus, [p.68] meaning to insult him or to hurt him if he could. But Jesus said to him. Thou shalt not return whole from the way in which thou goest. And immediately he fell down and died. And the parents of the dead, who had seen what was done, cried out, saying, Whence is this child born? It is manifest that every word which he saith is true; and it is often accomplished before he speaketh. And the parents of the dead boy came to Joseph, and said to him, Take away that Jesus of thine from this place, for he cannot dwell with us in this town. Or, indeed, teach him to bless, and not to curse. And Joseph came to Jesus and admonished him, saying. Wherefore doest thou such things? Already many are grieved against thee, and because of thee, hold us in dislike, and we bear the reproaches of men on thy account. Jesus answered and said to Joseph, No son is wise save he whom his father hath taught according to the knowledge of this time; and the curse of his father hurteth none but evil doers. Then they assembled against Jesus, and accused him to Joseph. When Joseph saw this he was exceedingly terrified, fearing the violence and tumult of the people of Israel. The same hour Jesus took the dead child by the ear, and held him up from the ground in the sight of all; and they saw Jesus talking with him as a father with his son. And his spirit returned into him, and he lived again. And they all marvelled.

[p.69]

CHAPTER XXX.

Now a certain teacher, a Jew, by name Zaccheus,³⁶ heard Jesus saying such words, and seeing that there was insuperable knowledge of virtue in him, became angry, and began without restraint, and foolishly, and without fear, to speak against Joseph. And he said. Dost thou not wish to give thy son to be instructed in human wisdom and respect? But I see that thou and Mary will rather love your son than what the elders of the people say in opposition. For he ought more to honour us, the elders of the whole church of Israel, and to have mutual love with children, and to be instructed among us in Jewish doctrine. On the other hand, Joseph said to him, And is there anyone who can restrain and teach this child? But if thou art able to restrain and teach him, we by no means forbid him to be taught by thee what is learned by all. When Jesus heard what Zaccheus said, he answered him and said. The precepts of the law which thou didst mention a little while ago, and all that thou hast named, ought to be kept by those who are taught by the rules of men: but I am an alien to your courts, because I have no carnal parent. Thou who readest the law, and art instructed so, remainest in the law: but I was before the law.

[p.70]

But while thou thinkest thou hast no equal in learning, thou shalt be instructed by me, for no other can teach aught but the things which thou hast named. For he is able who is worthy. But I, when I have been exalted in the earth, will cause all mention of your genealogy to cease. Thou knowest not when thou wast born; but I alone know when ye were born, and how long your life is in the earth. Then all who heard these words uttered were astonished, and cried out, saying, O this marvellously great, and admirable mystery! Never did we hear in this wise! Never was it heard by any other; neither by prophets, nor by Pharisees, nor by Scribes, was it ever said or heard. We know him whence he was born, and he is scarcely five years old; and whence doth he say these words? The Pharisees answered, We never heard such words spoken by another child at such a childish age. And Jesus answering, said to them, Wonder ye at this that such things are spoken by a child? Why then do ye not believe me in the things which I have spoken to you? And because I said to you that I know when ye were born, ye all marvel. I will say more to you, that ye may marvel more. I have seen Abraham, whom ye call your father, and talked with him, and he hath seen me.³⁷ And when they heard this, they were silent, nor did any of them dare to speak. And Jesus [p.71] said to them, I was among you with children, and ye knew me not. I have talked with you as with wise men, and ye have not understood my voice, because ye are inferior to me, and of little faith.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The teacher Zaccheus, a doctor of the law, again said to Joseph and Mary, Give me the boy, and I will hand him over to the teacher Levi, to teach him letters, and to instruct him. Then Joseph and Mary coaxing Jesus, led him to the school, that he might be taught his letters by the old man Levi. When he entered he was silent; and the master, Levi, told one letter to Jesus, and beginning at the first letter, Aleph, said to him. Answer. But Jesus was silent and answered nothing. Wherefore, the preceptor, Levi, being angry, took a rod of a storax-tree,³⁸ and smote him on the head. And Jesus said to the teacher Levi, Why dost thou smite me? Know in truth, that he who is smitten rather teacheth him who smiteth him, than is taught by him. For [p.72] I am able to teach thee what is said by thyself. But these are all blind, who say and hear, like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal in which there is no consciousness of things which are understood by their

sound.³⁹ And Jesus added, and said to Zaccheus, Every letter from Aleph to Tau⁴⁰ is known by its order; thou, therefore, first say what is Tau, and I will tell thee what Aleph is. And Jesus said again to them. They who know not Aleph, how can they say Tau, ye hypocrites? First say what Aleph is, and I shall then believe you when you say Beth. And Jesus began to ask the names of the separate letters, and said. Let the teacher of the law say what the first letter is, or why it hath many triangles, scalene,⁴¹ acute-angled, equiangular, unequal-sided, with unequal angles, rectangular, rectilinear, and curvilinear.

Now when Levi heard this, he was amazed at such an arrangement of the names of the letters. Then [p.73] began he, in the hearing of all, to cry out, and say. Ought he to live upon earth? Verily he deserves to be hung on a great cross. For he can extinguish fire, and mock at other torments. I think he was before the flood,—born before the deluge. What womb bore him? or what mother conceived him? or what breasts gave him suck? I flee before him; for I cannot endure the word of his mouth, but my heart is astounded at hearing such words. For I think no man can attain to his word, except God hath been with him. Now wretched I, have yielded myself to him for derision. For when I thought I had a scholar, I found my master, not knowing him. What shall I say? I cannot endure the words of this boy: I will now flee from this town, for I cannot understand these things. An old man, I am conquered by a child; for I can find neither beginning nor end to what he affirmeth; for it is difficult to find a beginning from one's self. I tell you truly, I lie not, that to my eyes, the conduct of this boy, the beginning of his speech, and the end of his meaning, seem to have nothing in common with men. Therefore, I know not whether he is a magician or a God; certainly an angel of God speaketh in him. I know not whence he is, or where he cometh from, or who he will become.

Then Jesus, with a pleasant countenance, smiling at him, said with command, as all the children of [p.74] Israel stood by and heard: Let the unfruitful be fruitful, and the blind see, and the lame walk well, and the poor enjoy good things, and the dead live again, that in a restored condition, every one may return and abide in Him who is the root of life, and of perpetual sweetness. And when the child Jesus had said this, forthwith all were restored who had fallen under painful infirmities. And they dared not say anything to him, or hear anything from him further.

CHAPTER XXXII.

After these things Joseph and Mary departed thence with Jesus to the city of Nazareth, and he was there with his parents. And when he was there, on the first day of the week,⁴² while Jesus was playing with the children on the top of a certain house, it happened that one of the children pushed another off the roof on to the ground, and he died. And although the parents of the deceased had not seen it, they cried out against Joseph and Mary, saying, Your son hath thrust our son to the ground and he is dead. But Jesus was silent and answered them nothing. Now Joseph and Mary came in haste to Jesus, and his mother asked him saying. My Lord, tell me if thou didst thrust him to the ground. And immediately [p.75] Jesus came down from the roof to the ground, and called the boy by his name Zeno, and he answered him, Lord. And Jesus said to him. Did I throw thee down from the roof to the ground? And he said, No, Lord. And the parents of the child who had been dead, marvelled, and honoured Jesus for the miracle that was done. And Joseph and Mary departed thence with Jesus to Jericho.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Now Jesus was six years old, and his mother sent him with a pitcher to the fountain to draw water with the children. And it came to pass after he drew the water, that one of the children thrust against him and shattered the pitcher and broke it. But Jesus spread out the cloak which he wore, and took in his cloak as much water as there was in the pitcher, and carried it to his mother. And she marvelled when she saw it, and thought within herself, and laid up all these things in her heart.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Again on a certain day, he went out into the field, and took a little wheat from his mother's barn and sowed it. And it sprang up and grew and multiplied exceedingly. And it came to pass at length [p.76] that he reaped it, and gathered from it three quarters of corn, and gave it to many.⁴³

CHAPTER XXXV.

There is a road which leads out of Jericho and goes to the river Jordan where the children of Israel went over. There the ark of the covenant is said to have rested. And Jesus was eight years old, and he went out from Jericho and went to the Jordan. And there was by the way side near the bank of the Jordan, a cavern where a lioness brought up her whelps; and no one could go along the road in safety. Now as Jesus came from Jericho, knowing that in that cavern the lioness had brought forth her young, he entered it in the sight of all.⁴³ But when the lions saw Jesus they ran to meet him and adored him. And Jesus sat in the cavern, and the lions' whelps ran about his feet, fawning and playing with him. But the older lions stood at a distance with lowered head, and adored him; and fawning, wagged their tails before him. Then the people, who stood at a distance, not seeing Jesus, said, Unless he or his parents had done very grievous sins, [p.77] he would not have willingly exposed himself to the lions. And while the people thought thus within themselves, and were overcome by excessive sorrow, behold, suddenly, in the sight of the people, Jesus came out of the cavern, and the lions went before him, and the lions' whelps played together before his feet. But the parents of Jesus stood afar off with their heads hanging down, and watched; the people too, in like manner, stood afar off because of the lions; for they dared not come up to them. Then Jesus began to say to the people. How much better than you are the beasts, which recognise and glorify their Lord; and ye men, who are made in the image and likeness of God, know him not. Beasts acknowledge me, and grow gentle; men see me, and know me not.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

After this Jesus crossed the Jordan with the lions, in the sight of all; and the water of the Jordan was divided to the right hand and the left. Then he said to the lions, so that all heard. Go in peace, and hurt nobody; neither let any man hurt you, until ye return whence ye set out. And they, bidding him farewell, not only with their voice but with bodily gesture, went away to their places. But Jesus returned to his mother.

[p.78]

CHAPTER XXXVII.

And Joseph was a carpenter, and made of wood nothing except yokes for oxen, and ploughs, and implements for turning up the soil and suited for agriculture, and made wooden bedsteads. And it happened that a certain youth desired him to make a couch six cubits long. And Joseph ordered his boy to cut the wood with an iron saw, according to the measure which he had sent. But he did not keep to the dimensions given him, and made one board shorter than another. And Joseph in anger, began to think what he must do in the case. And when Jesus saw him thus angrily thinking, and not able to remedy what had been done, he addressed him with a consoling voice, saying, Come, let us take hold of the ends of each piece of wood, and lay them together end to end, and let us put them level and pull them to us, for we shall be able to make them equal. Then Joseph obeyed his command, for he knew that he could do what he would, and Joseph took the ends of the boards and put them against the wall and even together, and Jesus held the other ends of the wood, and pulled the shorter piece towards himself, and made it equal to the longer piece. And he said to Joseph, Go on with thy work, and do what thou hast promised to do. And Joseph did what he had promised.

[p.79]

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

And it came to pass a second time that Joseph and Mary were asked by the people, that Jesus might be taught his letters in the school; which, also, they did not refuse to do; and, according to the precepts of the elders, took him to a master to be taught human science by him. And then the master began imperiously to teach him, saying, Say Alpha.⁴ But Jesus said to him, Do thou first tell me what Beta is, and I will tell thee what Alpha is. And for this, the master, being angry, smote Jesus; and soon after he smote him he died.

And Jesus returned home to his mother. But Joseph being afraid, called Mary to him, and said to her. Know truly that my soul is sad unto death, on account of that boy. For it might happen sometime, that somebody should smite the boy in malice, and he should die. But Mary answered and said, Man of God, do not believe that this can be. Nay, surely believe that He who sent him to be born among men, will keep him from all malice; and in His own name, preserve him from evil.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Again, a third time, the Jews asked Mary and [p.80] Joseph that, by their blandishments, they would take him to another master to learn. And Joseph and Mary, fearing the people, and the insolence of the princes, and the threats of the priests, took him again to school, knowing that from man he could learn nothing, who from God alone had perfect knowledge. Now when Jesus had entered the school, being led by the Holy Spirit, he took the book from the hand of the tutor teaching the law, and in the sight and hearing of all the people, began to read; not indeed what was written in their book, but he spoke by the Spirit of the living God, as if a stream of water

went forth from a living spring, and the spring ever remained full. And in such power did he teach the people the great things of the living God, that the very master even fell upon the ground and adored him. But the heart of the people who sat and heard him saying such things, was filled with astonishment. When Joseph had heard this, he came turning to Jesus, fearing lest the master should die. Seeing him, the master said to him. Thou hast not given me a pupil, but a master; and who can endure his words? Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the Psalmist, The river of God is full of water. Thou has prepared their food, for such is its preparation.⁴⁵

[p.81]

CHAPTER XL.

After these things Joseph, removed thence with Mary and Jesus, in order to come to Capernaum on the coast, because of the malice of the men who were hostile to them. And when Jesus dwelt in Capernaum, there was in the city a certain man by name Joseph, very rich. But sinking under his illness, he died, and was lying dead upon a bed. But when Jesus had heard them in the city lamenting and weeping and wailing over the dead, he said to Joseph, Wherefore, since he is called by thy name, dost thou not vouchsafe the benefit of thy favour to him? Joseph answered him, What power or faculty have I of vouchsafing benefit to him? Jesus replied, Take the kerchief that is upon thy head, and go and put it on the face of the dead, and say to him, Christ save thee! and forthwith he will be saved, and the dead shall rise from his bed. When he heard this, Joseph departed, running at once at the command of Jesus, and entered the house of the dead man; and he put the kerchief which he had upon his head, on the face of him that lay on the bed, and said, Jesus save thee! And the dead man forthwith arose from his bed, and asked who Jesus was.

CHAPTER XLI.

And they departed from Capernaum into a city [p.82] which is called Bethlehem; and Joseph was with Mary in his house and Jesus along with them. And on a certain day Joseph called his first-born son James to him and sent him into the kitchen-garden to gather herbs to make pottage. And Jesus followed his brother James into the garden, and Joseph and Mary knew it not. And while James gathered herbs there suddenly came a viper out of a hole and wounded the hand of James, and he began to cry out through excessive pain. And when already fainting he said with a bitter cry. Oh! Oh! a very bad viper has wounded my hand. And Jesus, who stood opposite, at that bitter cry ran to James and took hold of his hand, and did no more than merely breathe upon the hand of James, and soothed it. And immediately James was healed, and the serpent died. And Joseph and Mary knew not what had happened ; but at the cry of James, and at the bidding of Jesus they ran into the garden, and found the serpent already dead and James quite healed.

CHAPTER XLII.

Now when Joseph came to a feast with his sons, James, Joseph, and Judah, and Simeon, and his two daughters, Jesus and Mary his mother met them, together with her sister Mary the daughter of Cleophas, whom the Lord God gave to Cleophas her father [p.83] and Anna her mother because they had offered to the Lord Mary the mother of Jesus.⁴⁶ And this Mary was called by the

like name of Mary for the comfort of her parents. And when they assembled Jesus sanctified and blessed them, and began himself first to eat and drink; for none of them dared eat or drink, nor sit at table or break bread, till he had sanctified them and first done this. And if he by chance was absent they waited till he did this. And when he would not come to the repast, neither did Joseph and Mary and his brethren the sons of Joseph come. These brethren, indeed, having his life before their eyes as a light, regarded and feared him. And when Jesus slept, whether by day or by night, the brightness of God shone on him. To him be all praise for ever and ever. Amen. Amen.⁴⁷

FOOTNOTES

1 Comp. 1 Tim. v. 17. Here and elsewhere the readings of the copies vary to an almost incredible degree.

2 There is no historical foundation for this name. The author imitates, alters, and adds to the *Protevangelium* according to his fancy.

3 The thirty days of slow travelling here can hardly be reconciled with the five months mentioned in chap. ii.

4 The Golden Gate is not regarded by modern writers as a gate of the city of Jerusalem, but of the temple. In the *Protevangelium*, chap. iv., the gate of Joachim's residence alone is intended, and in some copies distinctly affirmed.

5 This tradition of young virgins being kept in the temple rests on no historical foundation, though it has been strongly defended by later writers.

6 The fifteen steps (*quindecim gradus*) correspond with the fifteen Psalms of degrees (Psalms 120-134). Some believe that there were fifteen steps leading from the court of women up to that of the priests. Other explanations have been offered, but no reliance can be placed upon the author, whom one reading makes to say, after mentioning the steps: "For there were about the temple—according to the fifteen Psalms of degrees—fifteen steps to ascend: the temple was on a mount, and there was constructed there the altar of burnt offering, which could not be reached from without except by steps." Comp. the *Gosp. of the Nativity of Mary*, chap. vi. This last statement about the steps around the altar is perhaps correct.

7 Abiathar is called the high priest in the next chapter; but nothing I know of him.

8 Seven virgins are assigned in the *Protevangelium*, chap. x.

9 The author of the *Protevangelium* represents this salutation as uttered at the fountain. The words are, however, here introduced more in harmony with Luke i. 28.

10 Cf. 1 Kings, xix. 5. In the *Protevangelium*, chap. viii., it is said that Mary received her food from, the hand of an angel. See also chap, xii., below.

11 Cf. Matt. i. 20-24, in the Latin Vulgate.

12 A Hebraism; for the water which the Lord commanded to be drunk.

13 Lev. V. 14, etc.

14 Luke ii. 1, etc.

15 Gen. xii. 3.

16 Luke ii. 14; Justin, Trypho, sect. 78.

17 The perpetual virginity of Mary is referred to by Clemens Alexandrinus as a prevalent opinion in his day. *Stromata*, lib. vii.

18 Luke ii. 7.

19 Isaiah i. 3.

20 Hab. iii. 2, in the Greek. The Latin Vulgate is, "In medio annorum notum facies,"—In the midst of the years thou shalt make it known.

21 Luke ii. 21-24.

22 This age for Simeon seems quite imaginary. Luke ii. 25-38.

23 Matt. ii. 1, etc.

24 Mic. V. 2.

25 Matt. ii. 16.

26 Matt ii. 14.

27 Ps. cxlviii. 7.

28 Is. xi. 6-9; lxv. 25.

29 This account of the palm as a symbol of victory is of course an anachronism. Readers of Cicero, for example, will remember that he frequently employs the figure.

30 There were in Egypt two or three cities with this name. The Church historian, Sozomen, who tells some of the stories current in his time, mentions the tree above referred to as having miraculous virtues; and he also mentions the story of the text. He says the tree was at Hermopolis in the Thebaid, near to which city its miraculous bowing down took place. He knows nothing of the marvellous journey reported in the first paragraph of this chapter. See Sozomen's

Ecclesiastical History, book v. 20. Sotinen is in the text of Thilo the only name given, whence we may infer that it was regarded as the Egyptian name for Hermopolis. It is rather unfortunate for the story that the Thebaid was the upper province of Egypt.

31 Evidently a mistake for three hundred and sixty-five; one for every day in the year.

32 Is. xix. 1.

33 Ps. cxxxvi. 15. Ex. XV. 4.

34 Matt. ii. 26. The book ends here in the text followed by Thilo.

35 The constant assumption of the continued integrity of the twelve tribes of Israel in these Apocrypha is worth noting, as an additional proof that their writers were ill informed on some very important points. The malevolent character of the early miracles ascribed to Jesus, is good evidence that the early Christian fabulists were as ignorant of the true spirit of Christ as of some other matters.

36 In Tischendorf's text this name is always written Zachyas. Here, however, as in many other like cases, I have adopted a more usual form of spelling.

37 Cf. John viii. 56-58.

38 Or, "a storax-tree stick," for such is no doubt the meaning of "virgara storatinam." The storax is never mentioned in the canonical works, but its odoriferous product is named in *Ecclesiasticus* xxiv. 15 (Anglican version), or xxiv. 21 (Latin Vulgate). Jerome's version also introduces it in Gen. xliii. 11, but with no apparent authority. It should be observed that the storax-tree is still found in Palestine. Mr. Tristram, for instance, speaks of it as abundant in Carmel ("Land of Israel," p. 492). The adjective *storatina* is of course put for *storrcina*, from storax or styrax.

39 Cf. 1 Cor. xii5. 1; xiv. 7.

40 Instead of Tau, the Latin text reads Thet in each case: it is possible that the writer meant to give the name of Teth, but since the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet is required by the context, Tau has been employed in the translation.

41 The words in the original are *gradatos, sulacutos, mediatos, obductos, productos, erectos, fitratos, curvistratos*. We are by no means confident that the terms we have given are the equivalents of these, or all correct; indeed it seems impossible to make sense of the passage as it stands. It is very well known that Christians as well as Jews have speculated, or rather, let their fancies run wild on the subject of the mystic properties of letters, as indicated by their names, forms, powers, positions in certain words, etc. The author of *Pseudo-Matthew* evidently wished to supply high authority for such laborious trifling.

42 The Latin is *una sabbati*.

43 The Latin is *et collegit fructus ex eo tres choros, et donavit multiplicibus suis*.

44 There are no lions in Palestine now; but Reland quotes a passage from John Phocas, in the twelfth century, affirming that they were then to be found among the reeds on the banks of the Jordan (*Falastina*, p. 274).

45 In chapter xxxi. the names of the letters are Hebrew, whereas here they are Greek. We may suppose that this is a later addition to the book.

46 Ps. lxxv. 9. As in the Vulgate, 64, 10.

47 According to the MS. which Tischendorf calls B, the reading is: "And when Joseph, being worn out with old age, was dead and buried with his parents, the blessed Mary was with her nephews or with the children of her sisters. For Anna and Emerina were sisters. Of Emerina was born Elisabeth the mother of John the Baptist. Now because Anna the mother of the Blessed Mary was very lovely, when Joachim died, she married Cleophas, by whom she had a second daughter, whom she called Mary, and gave her to Alphreus to wife, and of her came James the son of Alphaeus, and Philip his brother. When her second husband was dead, Anna was married to a third husband, named Salome, by whom she had a third daughter, whom she likewise called Mary, and gave her to Zebedee to wife; of her was born James the son of Zebedee, and John the Evangelist." Another account is prefixed to this false Gospel in a copy used by Tischendorf, who quotes the passage (*Evang. Apocr.*, p. 104).

48 The MS. called B concludes in a rather different manner, and has the following appended: "The holy apostle and evangelist John with his own hand wrote this book set forth in Hebrew letters which the learned doctor Jerome translated out of Hebrew into Latin." The title and one of the letters prefixed to the book just as plainly ascribe the writing to the evangelist Matthew, and just as truly.