

VARIOUS



**THE FORGOTTEN
GOSPELS AND
EPISTLES OF THE
ORIGINAL NEW
TESTAMENT**

Various

The Forgotten Gospels and Epistles of the Original New Testament

**The Gospel of the Birth of Mary, the Protevangelion,
the Infancy of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of Nicodemus**

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Table of Contents

[The Gospel of the Birth of Mary](#)

[The Gospel Called the Protevangelion;](#)

[The First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ](#)

[The Second, Or St. Thomas's Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ.](#)

[The Gospel of Nicodemus, Formerly Called the Acts of Pontius Pilate.](#)

[The Epistles of Jesus Christ & Abgarus King of Edessa.](#)

[The Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Laodiceans.](#)

[The Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to Seneca, With Seneca's to Paul.](#)

[The Acts of St. Paul and Thecla.](#)

[The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.](#)

[The Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians](#)

[The General Epistle of Barnabas.](#)

[The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians.](#)

[The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians.](#)

[The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians.](#)

[The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans.](#)

[The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians.](#)

[The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnæans.](#)

[The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp](#)

[The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians.](#)

[The First Part of the Book of Hermas Called His Vision.](#)

[The Second Part of the Book of Hermas, Called His Commands.](#)

[The Third Part of the Book of Hermas, Called His Similitudes.](#)

[The Apostles' Creed](#)

[The Ancient and Modern Apostles Creed Contrasted](#)

THE GOSPEL OF THE BIRTH OF MARY

[Table of Contents](#)

CHAP I.

1 *The Parentage of Mary. 7 Joachim her father, and Anna her mother, go to Jerusalem to the feast of the dedication. 9 Issachar, the high priest, reproaches Joachim for being childless.*

THE blessed and ever glorious Virgin Mary, sprung from the royal race and family of David, was born in the city of Nazareth, and educated at Jerusalem, in the temple of the Lord.

² Her father's name was Joachim, and her mother's Anna. The family of her father was of Galilee and the city of Nazareth. The family of her mother was of Bethlehem.

³ Their lives were plain and right in the sight of the Lord, pious and faultless before men; for they divided all their substance into three parts:

⁴ One of which they devoted to the temple and officers of the temple; another they distributed among strangers, and persons in poor circumstances; and the third they reserved for themselves and the uses of their own family.

⁵ In this manner they lived for about twenty years chastely, in the favour of God, and the esteem of men, without any children.

⁶ But they vowed, if God should favour them with any issue, they would devote it to the service of the Lord; on which

account they went at every feast in the year to the temple of the Lord.¹

⁷ ¶ And it came to pass, that when the feast of the dedication drew near, Joachim, with some others of his tribe, went up to Jerusalem, and at that time, Isachar was high-priest;

⁸ Who, when he saw Joachim along with the rest of his neighbours, bringing his offerings, despised both him and his offerings, and asked him,

⁹ Why he, who had no children, would presume to appear among those who had? Adding, that his offerings could never be acceptable to God, who was judged by him unworthy to have children; the Scripture having said, Cursed is every one who shall not beget a male in Israel.

¹⁰ He further said, that he ought first to be free from that curse by begetting some issue, and then come with his offerings into the presence of God.

¹¹ But Joachim being much confounded with the shame of such reproach, retired to the shepherds who were with the cattle in their pastures;

¹² For he was not inclined to return home, lest his neighbours, who were present and heard all this from the high-priest, should publicly reproach him in the same manner.

CHAP. II.

1 An angel appears to Joachim, 9 and informs him that Anna shall conceive and bring forth a daughter, who shall be

called Mary, 11 be brought up in the temple, 12 and while yet a virgin, in a way unparalleled, bring forth the Son of God: 13 Gives him a sign, 14 and departs.

BUT when he had been there for some time, on a certain day when he was alone, the angel of the Lord stood by him with a prodigious light.

² To whom, being troubled at the appearance, the angel who had appeared to him, endeavouring to compose him, said:

³ Be not afraid, Joachim, nor troubled at the sight of me, for I am an angel of the Lord sent by him to you, that I might inform you that your prayers are heard, and your alms ascended in the sight of God.²

⁴ For he hath surely seen your shame, and heard you unjustly reproached for not having children: for God is the avenger of sin, and not of nature;

⁵ And so when he shuts the womb of any person, he does it for this reason, that he may in a more wonderful manner again open it, and that which is born appear to be not the product of lust, but the gift of God.

⁶ For the first mother of your nation, Sarah, was she not barren even till her eightieth year: and yet even in the end of her old age brought forth Isaac, in whom the promise was made of a blessing to all nations.³

⁷ Rachel, also, so much in favour with God, and beloved so much by holy Jacob, continued barren for a long time, yet afterwards was the mother of Joseph, who was not only governor of Egypt, but delivered many nations from perishing with hunger.⁴

⁸ Who among the judges was more valiant than Sampson, or more holy than Samuel? And yet both their mothers were barren.⁵

⁹ But if reason will not convince you of the truth of my words, that there are frequent conceptions in advanced years, and that those who were barren have brought forth to their great surprise; therefore Anna your wife shall bring you a daughter, and you shall call her name Mary;

¹⁰ She shall, according to your vow, be devoted to the Lord from her infancy, and be filled with the Holy Ghost from her mother's womb;⁶

¹¹ She shall neither eat nor drink any thing which is unclean, nor shall her conversation be without among the common people, but in the temple of the Lord; that so she may not fall under any slander or suspicion of what is bad.

¹² So in the process of her years, as she shall be in a miraculous manner born of one that was barren, so she shall, while yet a virgin, in a way unparalleled, bring forth the Son of the most High God, who shall, be called Jesus, and, according to the signification of his name, be the Saviour of all nations.⁷

¹³ And this shall be a sign to you of the things which I declare, namely, when you come to the golden gate of Jerusalem, you shall there meet your wife Anna, who being very much troubled that you returned no sooner, shall then rejoice to see you.

¹⁴ When the angel had said this, he departed from him.

CHAP. III.

1 The angel appears to Anna; 2 tells her a daughter shall be born unto her, 3 devoted to the service of the Lord in the temple, 5 , who, being a virgin, and not knowing man, shall bring forth the Lord, 6 and gives her a sign therefore. 8 Joachim and Anna meet, and rejoice, 10 and praise the Lord. 11 Anna conceives, and brings forth a daughter called Mary.

AFTERWARDS the angel appeared to Anna his wife, saying; Fear not, neither think that which you see is a spirit;

2 For I am that angel who hath offered up your prayers and alms before God, and am now sent to you, that I may inform you, that a daughter will be born unto you, who shall be called Mary, and shall be blessed above all women.

3 She shall be, immediately upon her birth, full of the grace of the Lord, and shall continue during the three years of her weaning in her father's house, and afterwards, being devoted to the service of the Lord, shall not depart from the temple, till she arrive to years of discretion.

4 In a word, she shall there serve the Lord night and day in fasting and prayer, shall abstain from every unclean thing, and never know any man;

5 But, being an unparalleled instance without any pollution or defilement, and a virgin not knowing any man, shall bring forth a son, and a maid shall bring forth the Lord, who both by his grace and name and works, shall be the Saviour of the world.

6 Arise therefore, and go up to Jerusalem, and when you shall come to that which is called the golden gate (because it is gilt with gold), as a sign of what I have told you, you shall meet your husband, for whose safety you have been so much concerned.

7 When therefore you find these things thus accomplished, believe that all the rest which I have told you, shall also undoubtedly be accomplished.

8 According therefore to the command of the angel, both of them left the places where they were, and when they came to the place specified in the angels prediction, they met each other.

9 Then, rejoicing at each other's vision, and being fully satisfied in the promise of a child, they gave due thanks to the Lord, who exalts the humble.

10 After having praised the Lord, they returned home, and lived in a cheerful and assured expectation of the promise of God.

11 So Anna conceived, and brought forth a daughter, and, according to the angel's command, the parents did call her name Mary.

CHAP. IV.

1 Mary brought to the temple at three years old. 6 Ascends the stairs of the temple by miracle. 8 Her parents sacrifice and return home.

AND when three years were expired, and the time of her weaning complete, they brought the Virgin to the temple of the Lord with offerings.

2 And there were about the temple, according to the fifteen Psalms of degrees, fifteen stairs to ascend.

3 For the temple being built in a mountain, the altar of burnt offering, which was without, could not be come near but by stairs;

4 The parents of the blessed Virgin and infant Mary put her upon one of these stairs;

5 But while they were putting off their clothes, in which they had travelled, and according to custom putting on some that were more neat and clean,

6 In the mean time the Virgin of the Lord in such a manner went up all the stairs one after another, without the help of any to lead her or lift her, that any one would have judged from hence, that she was of perfect age.

7 Thus the Lord did, in the infancy of his Virgin, work this extraordinary work, and evidence by this miracle how great she was like to be hereafter.

8 But the parents having offered up their sacrifice, according to the custom of the law, and perfected their vow, left the Virgin with other virgins in the apartments of the temple, who were to be brought up there, and they returned home.

CHAP. V.

2 Mary ministered unto by angels. 4 The high priest orders all virgins of fourteen years old to quit the temple and endeavour to be married. 5 Mary refuses, 6 having vowed her virginity to the Lord. 7 The high-priest commands a meeting of the chief persons of Jerusalem, 11 who seek the Lord for counsel in the matter. 13 A voice from the mercy-seat. 15 The high-priest obeys it by ordering all the unmarried men of the house of David to bring their rods to the altar, 17 that his rod which should flower, and on which the Spirit of God should sit, should betroth the Virgin.

BUT the Virgin of the Lord, as she advanced in years, increased also in perfections, and according to the saying of

the Psalmist, her father and mother forsook her, but the Lord took care of her.

2 For she every day had the conversation of angels, and every day received visitors from God, which preserved her from all sorts of evil, and caused her to abound with all good things;

3 So that when at length she arrived to her fourteenth year, as the wicked could not lay any thing to her charge worthy of reproof, so all good persons, who were acquainted with her, admired her life and conversation.

4 At that time the high-priest made a public order, That all the virgins who had public settlements in the temple, and were come to this age, should return home, and, as they were now of a proper maturity, should, according to the custom of their country, endeavour to be married.

5 To which command, though all the other virgins readily yielded obedience, Mary the Virgin of the Lord alone answered, that she could not comply with it,

6 Assigning these reasons, that both she and her parents had devoted her to the service of the Lord; and besides, that she had vowed virginity to the Lord, which vow she was resolved never to break through by lying with a man.

7 The high-priest being hereby brought into a difficulty,

8 Seeing he durst neither on the one hand dissolve the vow, and disobey the Scripture, which says, Vow and pay,

9 Nor on the other hand introduce a custom, to which the people were strangers, commanded,

10 That at the approaching feast all the principal persons both of Jerusalem and the neighbouring places should meet together, that he might have their advice, how he had best proceed in so difficult a case.

11 When they were accordingly met, they unanimously agreed to seek the Lord, and ask counsel from him on this matter.

12 And when they were all engaged in prayer, the high-priest according to the usual way, went to consult God.

13 And immediately there was a voice from the ark, and the mercy seat, which all present heard, that it must be enquired or sought out by a prophecy of Isaiah, to whom the Virgin should be given and be betrothed;

14 For Isaiah saith, there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall spring out of its root,

15 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and Piety, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him.

16 Then, according to this prophecy, he appointed, that all the men of the house and family of David, who were marriageable, and not married, should bring their several rods to the altar,

17 And out of whatsoever person's rod after it was brought, a flower should bud forth, and on the top of it the Spirit of the Lord should sit in the appearance of a dove, he should be the man to whom the Virgin should be given and be betrothed.

CHAP. VI.

1 Joseph draws back his rod. 5 The dove pitches on it. He betroths Mary and returns to Bethlehem. 7 Mary returns to her parents' house at Galilee.

AMONG the rest there was a man named Joseph of the house and family of David, and a person very far advanced in years, who kept back his rod, when every one besides presented his.

2 So that when nothing appeared agreeable to the heavenly voice, the high-priest judged it proper to consult God again.

3 Who answered that he to whom the Virgin was to be betrothed was the only person of those who were brought together, who had not brought his rod.

4 Joseph therefore was betrayed.

5 For, when he did bring his rod, and a dove coming from Heaven pitched upon the top of it, every one plainly saw, that the Virgin was to be betrothed to him.

6 Accordingly, the usual ceremonies of betrothing being over, he returned to his own city of Bethlehem, to set his house in order, and make the needful provisions for the marriage.

7 But the Virgin of the Lord, Mary, with seven other virgins of the same age, who had been weaned at the same time, and who had been appointed to attend her by the priest, returned to her parents' house in Galilee.

CHAP. VII.

7 The salutation of the Virgin by Gabriel, who explains to her that she shall conceive, without lying with a man, while a

Virgin, 19 by the Holy Ghost coming upon her without the heats of lust. 21 She submits.

Now at this time of her first coming into Galilee, the angel Gabriel was sent to her from God, to declare to her the conception of our Saviour, and the manner and way of her conceiving him.

2 Accordingly going into her, he filled the chamber where she was with a prodigious light, and in a most courteous manner saluting her, he said,

3 Hail, Mary! Virgin of the Lord most acceptable! O Virgin full of grace! The Lord is with you. You are blessed above all women, and you are blessed above all men, that have been hitherto born.

4 But the Virgin, who had before been well acquainted with the countenances of angels, and to whom such light from heaven was no uncommon thing,

5 Was neither terrified with the vision of the angel, nor astonished at the greatness of the light, but only troubled about the angel's words,

6 And began to consider what so extraordinary a salutation should mean, what it did portend, or what sort of end it would have.

7 To this thought the angel, divinely inspired, replies;

8 Fear not, Mary, as though I intended anything inconsistent with your chastity in this salutation:

9 For you have found favour with the Lord, because you made virginity your choice.

10 Therefore while you are a Virgin, you shall conceive without sin, and bring forth a son.

11 He shall be great, because he shall reign from sea to sea, and from the rivers even to the ends of the earth?

12 And he shall be called the Son of the Highest; for he who is born in a mean state on earth, reigns in an exalted one in heaven.

13 And the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

14 For he is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and his throne is forever and ever.

15 To this discourse of the angel the Virgin replied, not, as though she were unbelieving, but willing to know the manner of it.

16 She said, How can that be? For seeing, according to my vow, I have never known any man, how can I bear a child without the addition of a man's seed.

17 To this the angel replied and said, Think not, Mary, that you shall conceive in the ordinary way.

18 For, without lying with a man, while a Virgin, you shall conceive; while a Virgin, you shall bring forth; and while a Virgin shall give suck.

19 For the Holy Ghost shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you, without any of the heats of lust.

20 So that which shall be born of you shall be only holy, because it only is conceived without sin, and being born, shall be called the Son of God.

21 Then Mary stretching forth her hands, and lifting her eyes to heaven, said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Let it be unto me according to thy word.

CHAP. VIII.

1 Joseph returns to Galilee, to marry the Virgin he had betrothed; 4 perceives she is with child, 5 is uneasy, 7 purposes to put her away privily, 8 is told by the angel of the Lord it is not the work of man but the Holy Ghost; 12 Marries her, but keeps chaste, 13 removes with her to Bethlehem, 15 where she brings forth Christ.

JOSEPH therefore went from Judaea to Galilee, with intention to marry the Virgin who was betrothed to him:

2 For it was now near three months since she was betrothed to him.

3 At length it plainly appeared she was with child, and it could not be hid from Joseph:

4 For going to the Virgin in a free manner, as one espoused, and talking familiarly with her, he perceived her to be with child,

5 And thereupon began to be uneasy and doubtful, not knowing what course it would be best to take;

6 For being a just man, he was not willing to expose her, nor defame her by the suspicion of being a harlot, since he was a pious man:

7 He purposed therefore privately to put an end to their agreement, and as privately to send her away.

8 But while he was meditating these things,⁸ behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, and said, Joseph, son of David, fear not;

9 Be not willing to entertain any suspicion of the Virgin's being guilty of fornication, or to think any thing amiss of her, neither be afraid to take her to wife:

10 For that which is begotten in her and now distresses your mind, is not the work of man, but the Holy Ghost.

11 For she of all women is that only Virgin who shall bring forth the Son of God, and you shall call his name Jesus, that is, Saviour: for he will save his people from their sins.

12 Joseph thereupon, according to the command of the angel, married the Virgin, and did not know her, but kept her in chastity.

13 And now the ninth month from her conception drew near, when Joseph took his wife and what other things were necessary to Bethlehem, the city from whence he came.

14 And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled for her bringing forth.

15 And she brought forth her first-born son, as the holy Evangelists have taught, even our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, lives and reigns to everlasting ages.

REFERENCES TO MARY'S GOSPEL

In the primitive ages there was a Gospel extant bearing this name, attributed to St. Matthew, and received as genuine and authentic by several of the ancient Christian sects. It is to be found in the works of Jerome, a Father of the Church, who flourished in the fourth century, from whence the present translation is made. His contemporaries, Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, and Austin also mention a gospel under this title. The ancient copies differed from Jerome's, for from one of them the learned Faustus, a native of Britain, who became Bishop of Riez, in Provence, endeavoured to prove that Christ was not the Son of God till after his baptism; and that he was not of the house of David and tribe of Judah, because, according to the Gospel he cited, the Virgin herself was not of this tribe, but of the tribe of Levi; her father being a priest of the name of Joachim. It was likewise from this Gospel that the sect of the Collyridians established the worship and offering of manchet bread and cracknels, or fine wafers, as sacrificed to Mary, whom they imagined to have been born of a Virgin, as Christ is related in the Canonical Gospels to have been born of her. Epiphanius likewise cites a passage concerning the death of Zacharias, which is not in Jerome's copy, viz.: "That it was the occasion of the death of Zacharias in the temple, that when he had seen a vision, he, through surprise, was willing to disclose it, and his mouth was stopped. That which he saw was at the time of his offering incense, and it was a man standing in the form of an ass. When he was gone out, and had a mind to speak thus to the people, *Woe unto you, whom do you worship?* he who had appeared to him in the temple took away the use of his speech. Afterwards when he recovered it, and was able to speak, he declared this to the Jews; and they slew him. They add (viz. the Gnostics in this book), that on this very account the high-priest was appointed by their lawgiver (by God to Moses) to carry little bells, that whensoever he went into the temple to sacrifice he, whom they worshipped, hearing the noise of the bells, might have time enough to hide himself, and not be caught in that ugly shape and figure."— The principal part of this Gospel is contained in the Protevangelion of James which follows next in order.]

¹ Sam. i. 6, 7, &c.

² Acts, x, 4.

³ Gen. xvi, 2, &c., and xviii, 10, &c.

⁴ Gen. xxx, 1-22, and xli. 1, &c.

⁵ Judg. xiii. 2, and I Sam.6, &c.

⁶ Luke, i. 15.

⁷ Matth. i. 21.

⁸ Matt. i. 19.

THE GOSPEL CALLED THE PROTEVANGELION;

[Table of Contents](#)

Or, an Historical Account of the BIRTH of CHRIST, and the perpetual VIRGIN MARY, his Mother, by JAMES THE LESSER, Cousin and Brother of the Lord Jesus, chief Apostle and first Bishop of the Christians in Jerusalem.

CHAP. I.

1 Joachim, a rich man, 2 offers to the Lord, 3 is opposed by Reuben the high priest, because he has not begotten issue in Israel, 6 retires into the wilderness and fasts forty days and forty nights.

IN the history of the twelve tribes of Israel we read there was a certain person called Joachim, who being very rich, made double¹ offerings to the Lord God, having made this resolution: My substance shall be for the benefit of the whole people, that I may find mercy from the Lord God for the forgiveness of my sins.

² But at a certain great feast of the Lord, when the children of Israel offered their gifts, and Joachim also offered his, Reuben the high-priest opposed him, saying, it is not lawful for thee to offer thy gifts, seeing thou hast not begot any issue in Israel.

³ At this, Joachim being concerned very much, went away to consult the registries of the twelve tribes, to see whether he was the only person who had begot no issue.

⁴ But upon inquiry he found that all the righteous had raised up seed in Israel;

⁵ Then he called to mind the patriarch Abraham, How that God in the end of his life had given him his son Isaac; upon which he was exceedingly distressed, and would not be seen by his wife:

⁶ But retired into the wilderness, and fixed his tent there, and fasted forty days and forty nights, saying to himself,

⁷ I will not go down either to eat or drink, till the Lord my God shall look down upon me, but prayer shall be my meat and drink.²

CHAP II.

1 Anna, the wife of Joachim mourns her barrenness, 6 is reproached with it by Judith her maid, 9 sits under a laurel tree and prays to the Lord.

IN the mean time his wife Anna was distressed and perplexed on a double account, and said, I will mourn both for my widowhood and my barrenness.

² Then drew near a great feast of the Lord, and Judith her maid, said, How long will you thus afflict your soul? The feast of the Lord is now come, when it is unlawful for any one to mourn.

³ Take therefore this hood which was given by one who makes such things, for it is not fit that I, who am a servant should wear it, but it well suits a person of your greater character.

⁴ But Anna replied, Depart from me, I am not used to such things; besides, the Lord hath greatly humbled me.

⁵ I fear some ill-designing person hath given thee this, and thou art come to reproach me with my sin.

⁶ Then Judith her maid answered, what evil shall I wish you, when you will not hearken to me?

⁷ I cannot wish you a greater curse than you are under, in that God hath shut up your womb, that you should not be a mother in Israel.

⁸ At this Anna was exceedingly troubled, and having on her wedding garment, went about three o'clock in the afternoon to walk in her garden.

⁹ And she saw a laurel-tree and sat under it, and prayed unto the Lord, saying,

¹⁰ O God of my fathers, bless me and regard my prayer, as thou didst bless the womb of Sarah; and gavest her a son Isaac.

CHAP. III.

1 Anna perceiving a sparrow's nest in the laurels bemoans her barrenness.

AND as she was looking towards heaven she perceive a sparrow's nest in the laurel,

² And mourning within herself, she said, Wo is me, who begat me? and what womb did bear me, that I should be thus accursed before the children of Israel, and that they should reproach and deride me in the temple of my God: Wo is me, to what can I be compared?

³ I am not comparable to the very beasts of the earth, for even the beasts of the earth are fruitful before thee, O Lord!

Wo is me, to what can I be compared?

4 I am not compared to the brute animal, for even the brute animals are fruitful before thee, O Lord! Wo is me, to what am I comparable?

5 I cannot be comparable to these waters, for even the waters are fruitful before thee, O Lord! Wo is me, to what can I be compared?

6 I am not comparable to the waves of the sea; for these, whether they are calm, or in motion, with the fishes which are in them, praise thee, O Lord! Wo is me to what can I be compared?

7 I am not comparable to the very earth, for the earth produces its fruits, and praises thee, O Lord!

CHAP. IV.

1 An Angel appears to Anna and tells her she shall conceive; two angels appear on the same errand. 5 Joachim sacrifices. 8 Anna goes to meet him, 9 rejoicing that she shall conceive.

THEN an angel of the Lord stood by her and said, Anna, Anna, the Lord hath heard thy prayer; thou shalt conceive and bring forth, and thy progeny shall be spoken of in all the world.

2 And Anna answered, As the Lord my God liveth, whatever I bring forth, whether it be male or female, I will devote it to the Lord my God and it shall minister to him in holy things, during its whole life.

3 And behold there appeared two angels, saying unto her, Behold Joachim thy husband is coming with his shepherds.

4 For an angel of the Lord hath also come down to him, and said, The Lord God hath heard thy prayer, make haste and go hence, for behold Anna thy wife shall conceive.

5 And Joachim went down and called his shepherds, saying, Bring me hither ten she-lambs without spot or blemish, and they shall be for the Lord my God.

6 And bring me twelve calves without blemish, and the twelve calves shall be for the priests and the elders.

7 Bring me also a hundred goats, and the hundred goats shall be for the whole people.

8 And Joachim went down with the shepherds, and Anna stood by the gate and saw Joachim coming with the shepherds.

9 And she ran, and hanging about his neck, said, Now I know that the Lord hath greatly blessed me:

10 For behold, I who was as a widow am no longer as a widow, and I who was barren shall conceive.

CHAP. V.

1 Joachim abides the first day in his house but sacrifices on the morrow. 2 Consults the plate on the priests forehead, 3 and is without sin. 6 Anna brings forth a daughter, 9 whom she calls Mary.

AND Joachim abode the first day in his house, but on the morrow he brought his offerings, and said,

2 If the Lord be propitious to me let the plate which is on the priests forehead make it manifest.

3 And he consulted the plate which the priest wore, and saw it, and behold sin was not found in him.

4 And Joachim said, Now I know that the Lord is propitious to me, and hath taken away all my sins.

5 And he went down from the temple of the Lord justified, and he went to his own house.

6 And when nine months were fulfilled to Anna, she brought forth, and said to the midwife, What have I brought forth?

7 And she told her, A girl.

8 Then Anna said, The Lord hath this day magnified my soul; and she laid her in bed.

9 And when the days of her purification were accomplished, she gave suck to the child; and called her name Mary.

CHAP. VI.

1 Mary at nine months old, walks nine steps. 3 Anna keeps her holy. 4 When she is a year old, Joachim makes a great feast. 7 Anna gives her the breast, and sings a song to the Lord.

AND the child increased in strength every day, so that when she was nine months old, her mother put her upon the ground, to try if she could stand; and when she had walked nine steps, she came again to her mother's lap.

2 Then her mother caught her up, and said, As the Lord my God liveth, thou shalt not walk again on this earth, till I bring thee into the temple of the Lord.

3 Accordingly she made her chamber a holy place, and suffered nothing uncommon or unclean to come near her, but invited certain undefiled daughters of Israel, and they drew her aside.

4 But when the child was a year old, Joachim made a great feast, and invited the priests, scribes, elders, and all the people of Israel;

5 And Joachim then made an offering of the girl to the chief-priests, and they blessed her, saying, The God of our fathers bless this girl, and give her a name famous and lasting through all generations. And all the people replied, So be it, Amen:

6 Then Joachim a second time offered her to the priests, and they blessed her, saying, O most high God, regard this girl, and bless her with an everlasting blessing.

7 Upon this her mother took her up, and gave her the breast, and sung the following song to the Lord.

8 I will sing a song unto the Lord my God, for he hath visited me, and taken away from me the reproach of mine enemies, and hath given me the fruit of his righteousness, that it may now be told the sons of Reuben, that Anna gives suck.

9 Then she put the child to rest in the room which she had consecrated, and she went out and ministered unto them.

10 And when the feast was ended, they went away rejoicing, and praising the God of Israel.

CHAP. VII.

3 Mary being three years old, Joachim causes certain virgins to light each a lamp, and goes with her to the temple. 5 The

high-priest places her on the third step of the altar, and sits dances with her feet.

BUT the girl grew, and when she was two years old, Joachim said to Anna, Let us lead her to the temple of the Lord, that we may perform our vow, which we have vowed unto the Lord God, lest he should be angry with us, and our offering be unacceptable.

2 But Anna said, Let us wait the third year, lest she should be at a loss to know her father. And Joachim said, Let us then wait.

3 And when the child was three years old, Joachim said, Let us invite the daughters of the Hebrews, who are undefiled, and let them take each a lamp, and let them be lighted, that the child may not turn back again, and her mind be set against the temple of the Lord,

4 And they did thus till they ascended into the temple of the Lord. And the high-priest received her, and blessed her, and said, Mary, the Lord God hath magnified thy name to all generations, and to the very end of time by thee will the Lord shew his redemption to the children of Israel.

5 And he placed her upon the third step of the altar, and the Lord gave unto her grace, and she dance with her feet, and all the house of Israel loved her.

CHAP. VIII.

2 Mary fed in the temple by angels. 3 When twelve years old the priests consult what to do with her. 6 The angel of the Lord warns Zacharias to call together all the widowers, each bringing a rod. 7 The people meet by sound of trumpet. 8 Joseph throws away his hatchet, and goes to the meeting. 11 A dove comes forth from his rod, and alights on his head.

12 He is chosen to betroth the Virgin, 13 refuses because he is an old man, 14 is compelled, 16 takes her home, and goes to mind his trade of building.

AND her parents went away filled with wonder, and praising God, because the girl did not return back to them.

2 But Mary continued in the temple as a dove educated there, and received her food from the hand of an angel.

3 And when she was twelve years of age, the priests met in a council, and said, Behold, Mary is twelve years of age, what shall we do with her, for fear lest the holy place of the Lord our God should be defiled?

4 Then replied the priests to Zacharias the high-priest, Do you stand at the altar of the Lord, and enter into the holy place, and make petitions concerning her, and whatsoever the Lord shall manifest unto you, that do.

5 Then the high-priest entered into the Holy of Holies, and taking away with him the breast-plate of judgment made prayers concerning her;

6 And behold the angel of the Lord came to him, and said, Zacharias, Zacharias, Go forth and call together all the widowers among the people, and let every one of them bring his rod, and he by whom the Lord shall shew a sign shall be the husband of Mary.

7 And the criers went out through all Judaea, and the trumpet of the Lord sounded, and all the people ran and met together.

8 Joseph also throwing away his hatchet, went out to meet them; and when they were met, they went to the high-priest; taking every man his rod.

9 After the high-priest had received their rods, he went into the temple to pray;

10 And when he had finished his prayer, he took the rods, and went forth and distributed them, and there was no miracle attended them.

11 The last rod was taken by Joseph, said behold a dove proceeded out of the rod, and flew upon the head of Joseph.

12 And the high-priest said, Joseph, Thou art the person chosen to take the Virgin of the Lord, to keep her for him:

13 But Joseph refused, saying, I am an old man, and have children, but she is young, and I fear lest I should appear ridiculous in Israel.

14 Then the high-priest replied, Joseph, Fear the Lord thy God, and remember how God dealt with Dathan, Korah, and Abiram, how the earth opened and swallowed them up, because of their contradiction.

15 Now therefore, Joseph, fear God lest the like things should happen in your family.

16 Joseph then being afraid, took her unto his house, and Joseph said unto Mary, Behold, I have taken thee from the temple of the Lord, and now I will leave thee in my house; I must go to mind my trade of building. The Lord be with thee.

CHAP. IX.

1 The priests desire a new veil for the temple, 3 seven virgins cast lots for making different parts of it, 4 the lot to spin the true purple falls to Mary. 5 Zacharias, the high priest, becomes dumb. 7 Mary takes a pot to draw water,