

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas

2007-08-01 20:48:13 by Southern

Greek Text A

From "The Apocryphal New Testament"

M.R. James-Translation and Notes

Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924

Introduction

The older testimonies about this book have been given already. I now present the three principal forms of it, as given by Tischendorf: two Greek texts, A and B, and one Latin.

The few Greek manuscripts are all late. The earliest authorities are a much abbreviated Syriac version of which the manuscript is of the sixth century, and a Latin palimpsest at Vienna of the fifth or sixth century, which has never been deciphered in full.

The Latin version translated here is found in more manuscripts than the Greek; none of them, I think, is earlier than the thirteenth century.

The stories of Thomas the Israelite, the Philosopher, concerning the works of the Childhood of the Lord.

. I, Thomas the Israelite, tell unto you, even all the brethren that are of the Gentiles, to make known unto you the works of the childhood of our Lord Jesus Christ and his mighty deeds, even all that he did when he was born in our land: whereof the beginning is thus:

II. 1 This little child Jesus when he was five years old was playing at the ford of a brook: and he gathered together the waters that flowed there into pools, and made them straightway clean, and commanded them by his word alone. 2 And having made soft clay, he fashioned thereof twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when he did these things (or made them). And there were also many other little children playing with him.

3 And a certain Jew when he saw what Jesus did, playing upon the Sabbath day, departed straightway and told his father Joseph: Lo, thy child is at the brook, and he hath taken clay and fashioned twelve little birds, and hath polluted the Sabbath day. 4 And Joseph came to the place and saw: and cried out to him, saying: Wherefore doest thou these things on the Sabbath, which it is not lawful to do? But Jesus clapped his hands together and cried out to the sparrows and said to them:

Go! and the sparrows took their flight and went away chirping. 5 And when the Jews saw it they were amazed, and departed and told their chief men that which they had seen Jesus do.

III. 1 But the son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Joseph; and he took a branch of a willow and dispersed the waters which Jesus had gathered together. 2 And when Jesus saw what was done, he was wroth and said unto him: O evil, ungodly, and foolish one, what hurt did the pools and the waters do thee? behold, now also thou shalt be withered like a tree, and shalt not bear leaves, neither root, nor fruit. 3 And straightway that lad withered up wholly, but Jesus departed and went unto Joseph's house. But the parents of him that was withered took him up, bewailing his youth, and brought him to Joseph, and accused him 'for that thou hast such a child which doeth such deeds.'

IV. 1 After that again he went through the village, and a child ran and dashed against his shoulder. And Jesus was provoked and said unto him: Thou shalt not finish thy course (lit. go all thy way). And immediately he fell down and died. But certain when they saw what was done said: Whence was this young child born, for that every word of his is an accomplished work? And the parents of him that was dead came unto Joseph, and blamed him, saying: Thou that hast such a child canst not dwell with us in the village: or do thou teach him to bless and not to curse: for he slayeth our children.

V. 1 And Joseph called the young child apart and admonished him, saying: Wherefore doest thou such things, that these suffer and hate us and persecute us? But Jesus said: I know that these thy words are not thine: nevertheless for thy sake I will hold my peace: but they shall bear their punishment. And straightway they that accused him were smitten with blindness. 2 And they that saw it were sore afraid and perplexed, and said concerning him that every word which he spake whether it were good or bad, was a deed, and became a marvel. And when they (he ?) saw that Jesus had so done, Joseph arose and took hold upon his ear and wrung it sore. 3 And the young child was wroth and said unto him: It sufficeth thee (or them) to seek and not to find, and verily thou hast done unwisely: knowest thou not that I am thine? vex me not.

VI. 1 Now a certain teacher, Zacchaeus by name, stood there and he heard in part when Jesus said these things to his father and he marvelled greatly that being a young child he spake such matters. 2 And after a few days he came near unto Joseph and said unto him: Thou hast a wise child, and he hath understanding. Come, deliver him to me that he may learn letters. And I will teach him with the letters all knowledge and that he salute all the elders and honour them as grandfathers and fathers, and love them of his own years. 3 And he told him all the letters from Alpha even to Omega clearly, with much questioning. But Jesus looked upon Zacchaeus the teacher and saith unto him: Thou that knowest not the Alpha according to its nature, how canst thou teach others the Beta? thou hypocrite, first, if thou knowest it, teach the Alpha, and then will we believe thee concerning the

Beta. Then began he to confound the mouth of the teacher concerning the first letter, and he could not prevail to answer him. 4 And in the hearing of many the young child saith to Zacchaeus: Hear, O teacher, the ordinance of the first letter and pay heed to this, how that it hath [what follows is really unintelligible in this and in all the parallel texts: a literal version would run something like this: how that it hath lines, and a middle mark, which thou seest, common to both, going apart; coming together, raised up on high, dancing (a corrupt word), of three signs, like in kind (a corrupt word), balanced, equal in measure]: thou hast the rules of the Alpha.

VII. 1 Now when Zacchaeus the teacher heard such and so many allegories of the first letter spoken by the young child, he was perplexed at his answer and his instruction being so great, and said to them that were there: Woe is me, wretch that I am, I am confounded: I have brought shame to myself by drawing to me this young child. 2 Take him away, therefore I beseech thee, my brother Joseph: I cannot endure the severity of his look, I cannot once make clear my (or his) word. This young child is not earthly born: this is one that can tame even fire: be like this is one begotten before the making of the world. What belly bare this, what womb nurtured it? I know not. Woe is me, O my friend, he putteth me from my sense, I cannot follow his understanding. I have deceived myself, thrice wretched man that I am: I strove to get me a disciple and I am found to have a master. 3 I think, O my friends, upon my shame, for that being old I have been overcome by a young child;- and I am even ready to faint and to die because of the boy, for I am not able at this present hour to look him in the face. And when all men say that I have been overcome by a little child, what have I to say? and what can I tell concerning the lines of the first letter whereof he spake to me? I am ignorant, O my friends, for neither beginning nor end of it (or him) do I know. 4 Wherefore I beseech thee, my brother Joseph, take him away unto thine house: for he is somewhat great, whether god or angel or what I should call him, I know not.

VIII. 1 And as the Jews were counselling Zacchaeus, the young child laughed greatly and said: Now let those bear fruit that were barren (Gr. that are thine) and let them see that were blind in heart. I am come from above that I may curse them, and call them to the things that are above, even as he commanded which hath sent me for your sakes. 2 And when the young child ceased speaking, immediately all they were made whole which had come under his curse. And no man after that durst provoke him, lest he should curse him, and he should be maimed.

IX. 1 Now after certain days Jesus was playing in the upper story of a certain house, and one of the young children that played with him fell down from the house and died. And the other children when they saw it fled, and Jesus remained alone. 2 And the parents of him that was dead came and accused him that he had cast him down. (And Jesus said: I did not cast him down) but they reviled him still. 3 Then Jesus leaped down from the roof and stood by the body of the child and cried with a loud voice and said: Zeno (for so was his name called), arise and tell me, did I cast

thee down? And straightway he arose and said: Nay, Lord, thou didst not cast me down, but didst raise me up. And when they saw it they were amazed: and the parents of the child glorified God for the sign which had come to pass, and worshipped Jesus.

X. 1 After a few days, a certain young man was cleaving wood in the neighbourhood (MSS. corner), and the axe fell and cut in sunder the sole of his foot, and losing much blood he was at the point to die. 2 And when there was a tumult and concourse, the young child Jesus also ran thither, and by force passed through the multitude, and took hold upon the foot of the young man that was smitten, and straightway it was healed. And he said unto the young man: Arise now and cleave the wood and remember me. But when the multitude saw what was done they worshipped the young child, saying: Verily the spirit of God dwelleth in this young child.

XI. 1 Now when he was six years old, his mother sendeth him to draw water and bear it into the house, and gave him a pitcher: but in the press he struck it against another and the pitcher was broken. 2 But Jesus spread out the garment which was upon him and filled it with water and brought it to his mother. And when his mother saw what was done she kissed him; and she kept within herself the mysteries which she saw him do.

XII. 1 Again, in the time of sowing the young child went forth with his father to sow wheat in their land: and as his father sowed, the young child Jesus sowed also one corn of wheat. 2 And he reaped it and threshed it and made thereof an hundred measures (cors): and he called all the poor of the village unto the threshing floor and gave them the wheat. And Joseph took the residue of the wheat. And he was eight years old when he wrought this sign.

XIII. 1 Now his father was a carpenter and made at that time ploughs and yokes. And there was required of him a bed by a certain rich man, that he should make it for him. And whereas one beam, that which is called the shifting one was too short and Joseph knew not what to do, the young child Jesus said to his father Joseph: Lay down the two pieces of wood and make them even at the end next unto thee (MSS. at the middle part). And Joseph did as the young child said unto him. And Jesus stood at the other end and took hold upon the shorter beam and stretched it and made it equal with the other. And his father Joseph saw it and marvelled: and he embraced the young child and kissed him, saying: Happy am I for that God hath given me this young child.

XIV. 1 But when Joseph saw the understanding of the child, and his age, that it was coming to the full, he thought with himself again that he should not be ignorant of letters; and he took him and delivered him to another teacher. And the teacher said unto Joseph: First will I teach him the Greek letters, and after that the Hebrew. For the teacher knew the skill of the child and was afraid of him: notwithstanding he wrote the alphabet and Jesus pondered thereon a long time and answered him not.

2 And Jesus said to him: If thou be indeed a teacher and if thou knowest letters well, tell me the power of the Alpha and then will I tell thee the power of the Beta. And the teacher was provoked and smote him on the head. And the young child was hurt and cursed him, and straightway he fainted and fell to the ground on his face. 3 And the child returned unto the house of Joseph: and Joseph was grieved and commanded his mother, saying: Let him not forth without the door, for all they die that provoke him to wrath.

XV. 1 And after some time yet another teacher which was a faithful friend of Joseph said to him: Bring the young child unto me to the school, peradventure I may be able by cockering him to teach him the letters. And Joseph said: If thou hast no fear, my brother, take him with thee. And he took him with him, in fear and much trouble of spirit, but the young child followed him gladly. 2 And going with boldness into the school he found a book lying upon the pulpit and he took it, and read not the letters that were therein, but opened his mouth and spake by the Holy Spirit, and taught the law to them that stood by. And a great multitude came together and stood there hearkening, and marvelled at the beauty of his teaching and the readiness of his words, in that being an infant he uttered such things. 3 But when Joseph heard it, he was afraid, and ran unto the school thinking whether this teacher also were without skill (or smitten with infirmity): but the teacher said unto Joseph: Know, my brother, that I received this child for a disciple, but he is full of grace and wisdom; and now I beseech thee, brother, take him unto thine house. 4 And when the young child heard that, he smiled upon him and said: Forasmuch as thou hast said well and hast borne right witness, for thy sake shall he also that was smitten be healed. And forthwith the other teacher was healed. And Joseph took the young child and departed unto his house.

XVI. 1 And Joseph sent his son James to bind fuel and carry it into his house. And the young child Jesus also followed him. And as James was gathering of faggots, a viper bit the hand of James. 2 And as he was sore afflicted and ready to perish, Jesus came near and breathed upon the bite, and straightway the pain ceased, and the serpent burst, and forthwith James continued whole.

XVII. 1 And after these things, in the neighbourhood of Joseph, a little child fell sick and died, and his mother wept sore. And Jesus heard that there was great mourning and trouble and he ran quickly and found the child dead: and he touched his breast and said: I say unto thee, Child, die not, but live and be with thy mother. And straightway it looked up and laughed. And he said to the woman: Take him up and give him milk, and remember me. 2 And the multitude that stood by saw it and marvelled, and said: Of a truth this young child is either a god or an angel of God; for every word of his is a perfect work. And Jesus departed thence, and was playing with other children.

XVIII. 1 And after some time there was work of building. And there came a great tumult, and Jesus arose and went thither: and he saw a man lying dead, and took hold of his hand and said: Man, I say unto thee, arise and do thy work. And

immediately he arose and worshipped him. 2 And when the multitude saw it, they were astonished, and said: This young child is from heaven: for he hath saved many souls from death, and hath power to save them all his life long.

XIX. 1 And when he was twelve years old his parents went according to the custom unto Jerusalem to the feast of the passover with their company: and after the passover they returned to go unto their house. And as they returned the child Jesus went back to Jerusalem; but his parents supposed that he was in their company. 2 And when they had gone a day's journey, they sought him among their kinsfolk, and when they found him not, they were troubled, and returned again to the city seeking him. And after the third day they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors and hearing and asking them questions. And all men paid heed to him and marvelled how that being a young child he put to silence the elders and teachers of the people, expounding the heads of the law and the parables of the prophets. 3 And his mother Mary came near and said unto him: Child, wherefore hast thou so done unto us? behold we have sought thee sorrowing. And Jesus said unto them: Why seek ye me? know ye not that I must be in my Father's house? 4 But the scribes and Pharisees said: Art thou the mother of this child? and she said: I am. And they said unto her: Blessed art thou among women because God hath blessed the fruit of thy womb. For such glory and such excellence and wisdom we have neither seen nor heard at any time. 5 And Jesus arose and followed his mother and was subject unto his parents: but his mother kept in mind all that came to pass. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and grace. Unto him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[Gnosis](#)

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