

# FORBIDDEN GOSPELS AND EPISTLES - VOLUME 1 - MARY

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THE ORDER OF ALL THE  
FORBIDDEN BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT  
WITH THEIR PROPER NAMES, AND NUMBER OF CHAPTERS

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#### PREFACE.

To uphold the "right of private judgment," and our "Christian liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;" to add fuel to the fire of investigation, and in the crucible of deep inquiry, melt from the gold of pure religion, the dross of man's invention; to appeal from the erring tribunals of a fallible Priesthood, and restore to its original state the mutilated Testament of the Saviour; also to induce all earnest thinkers to search not a part, but the whole of the Scriptures, if therein they think they will find eternal life; I, as an advocate of free thought and untrammelled opinion, dispute the authority of those uncharitable, bickering, and ignorant Ecclesiastics who first suppressed these gospels and epistles; and I join issue with their Catholic and Protestant successors who have since excluded them from the New Testament, of which they formed a part; and were venerated by the Primitiv Churches, during the first four hundred years of the Christian Era.

My opposition is based on two grounds; first, the right of every rational being to become a "Priest unto himself," and by the test of enlightened reason, to form his own unbiassed judgment of all things natural and spiritual: second, that the reputation of the Bishops who extracted these books from the original New Testament, under the pretence of being Apocryphal, and forbade them to be read by the people, is proved by authentic impartial history too odious to entitle them to any deference. Since the Nicene Council, by a pious fraud, which I shall further allude to, suppressed these books, several of them have been reissued from time to time by various translators, who differed considerably in their versions, as the historical references attached to them in the following pages will demonstrate. But to the late Mr. William Hone we are indebted for their complete publication for the first time in one volume, about the year 1820; which edition, diligently revised, and purified of many errors both in the text and the notes attached thereto, I have re-published in numbers to enable all classes of the nation to purchase and peruse them. As, however, instead of being called by their own designation "Apocryphal," (which yet remains to be proved), they were re-entitled THE FORBIDDEN BOOKS, and, from communications received, appear to have agitated a portion of the great mass of ignorant bigotry which mars the fair form of Religion in these sect-ridden dominions, I have modified the title to its present shape with the hope that in spite of illiberal clerical influence, my fellow Christians will read and inwardly digest the sublime precepts they inculcate;—as pure, as holy, and as charitable as those principles of Christianity taught in the Scriptures they; now read by permission; although their minds may, after mature reflection, doubt the truth of the miraculous records therein given.

To ensure these Gospels and Epistles an unprejudiced and serious

attention, which they are entitled to, equally with those now patronised by Church authority, I will briefly refer to that disgraceful epoch in Roman Ecclesiastical Annals, when the New Testament was mutilated, and priestly craft was employed for excluding these books from its pages. HONE, in the preface to his first edition of the Apocryphal New Testament, so called, without satisfactory grounds, by the Council of Nice, in the reign of the Emperor Constantine, thus opens the subject:—

”After the writings contained in the New Testament were selected from the numerous Gospels and Epistles then in existence, what became of the Books that were rejected by the compilers?”

This question naturally occurs on every investigation as to the period when and the persons by whom the New Testament was formed. It has been supposed by many that the volume was compiled by the first Council of Nice, which, according to Jortin (*Rem. on Eccl. vol. ii. p. 177*), originated thus: Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, and Arius, who was a presbyter in his diocese, disputed together about the nature of Christ; and the bishop being displeased at the notions of Arius, and finding that they were adopted by other persons, ”was very angry.” He commanded Arius to come over to his sentiments, and to quit his own; as if a man could change his opinions as easily as he can change his coat! He then called a Council of War, consisting of nearly a hundred bishops, and deposed, excommunicated, and anathematized Arius, and with him several ecclesiastics, two of whom were bishops. Constantine sent a letter, in which he reprimanded the bishops for disturbing the church with their insignificant disputes. But the affair was gone too far to be thus composed. To settle this and other points, the Nicene Council was summoned, consisting of about 318 bishops. The first thing they did was to quarrel, and to express their resentments, and to present accusations to the Emperor against one another. ”The Emperor burnt all their libels, and exhorted them to peace and unity.” (*See Mosheim’s Eccle. Hist.*) These were the kind of spiritual shepherds of whom Sabinus, the Bishop Heraclea affirms, that excepting Constantine himself, and Eusebius Pamphilus, they ”were a set of illiterate creatures, that understood nothing.” And now intelligent Catholics, especially Protestants who are content to read only the books of the Testament authorized by the Council of Nice, and agreed to ever since by your own bishops, although they and you profess to dissent from the Papacy, hear what Pappus in his *Synodicon* to that Council says of their crafty contrivance when they separated the books of the original New Testament:—He tells us, that having ”promiscuously put all the books that were referred to the Council for deliberation under the communion-table in a church, they besought the Lord that the inspired writings might get on the table, while the spurious ones remained underneath; and that it happened accordingly!” (*See Com. Mace’s N. T. p. 875.*) Therefore, good reader, every Christian sect from the fourth century to the present period, have been blessed with the books that climbed upon the communion-table, and in consequence were deemed inspired and canonical; at the same time have been forbidden to read the Gospels and Epistles herein published, because they could

not perform the same feat, but remained under the table, and were condemned accordingly, as uninspired and apocryphal writings. If you believe this popish legend, you will not read the good books I lay before you, but still continue to possess only HALF THE TESTAMENT, instead of the PERFECT ONE, which will enable you to burst the trammels of priestcraft, and by the light of God's whole truth become free. In conclusion, I implore you to examine for yourselves, and observe the testimony of Archbishop Wake and other learned divines and historians appended thereto; and subscribe myself,

Your well-wisher,  
EDWARD HANCOCK.

FORBIDDEN BOOKS  
OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT.

THE GOSPEL OF THE BIRTH OF MARY.

## CHAPTER 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.

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.

## CHAPTER 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.

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.

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.

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

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;

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.

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.

### **CHAPTER 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 ring 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.

## CHAPTER 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.

## CHAPTER 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.

## CHAPTER 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.

## CHAPTER 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.

## CHAPTER 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, 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.]