

**ASTERIO MARIAM, KIDANE MIHIRET AND ASSUMPTION OF ST
MARY, AS TOLD BY ST JOHN.**
(Excerpts from the ‘Legends of St Mary’)

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY BY EPIPHANIUS, BISHOP OF CYPRUS

(Born about 320, died 404 a.d.)

THE moral character and the material disposition of her youthful form were, according to Epiphanius, in this wise : He says : —

She was grave and dignified in all her actions. She spoke little and only when it was necessary to do so. She listened readily and could be addressed easily. She paid honour and respect (i.e. she saluted) everyone. She was of middle stature, but some say that she was of more than middle height. She was wont to speak to everyone fearlessly and clearly, without laughter, and without agitation, and she was specially slow to anger. Her complexion was of the colour of ripe wheat, and her hair was auburn (or reddish). Her eyes were bright and keen, and light brown in colour, and the pupils thereof were of an olive-green tint. Her eyebrows were arched (or semicircular) and deep black. Her nose was long, her lips were red and full, and overflowing with the sweetness of her words. Her face was not round, but somewhat oblong (i.e. oval). Her hand was long and her fingers were long. She was wholly free from all ostentatious pride, and she was simple, unpretentious, and inclined to excessive humility. She wore garments of natural colours (i.e. undyed homespun), and was content with them, a fact which is even now proved by her holy head-cloth. And to sum up, she was filled with divine grace in all her ways.

THE COVENANT OF CHRIST WITH THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, COMMONLY CALLED THE " COVENANT OF MERCY."

[Version I. A.Fol. 75a, i ; Orient. No. 604, Fol. 65a.]

ON THE SIXTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH YAKATIT (FEBRUARY 10) SHALL BE CELEBRATED THE COMMEMORATION OF OUR HOLY LADY, THE VIRGIN, TWOFOLD MARY, THE GODBEARER, BECAUSE SHE RECEIVED THEREIN THE COVENANT OF MERCY FROM HER SON, OUR REDEEMER, JESUS CHRIST. WHOSEVER SHALL CELEBRATE HER COMMEMORATION, AND SHALL CALL UPON HER NAME, AND SHALL GIVE ALMS UNTO THE POOR AND NEEDY, EVEN IF IT BE A CUP OF COLD WATER ONLY [SHALL RECEIVE HIS REWARD].

NOW when the Son of this holy woman Mary, whose pure flesh He had taken upon Himself, went up into heaven, He sat down on the right hand of His Father, having fulfilled all the Law, and taken upon Himself human nature, with the exception of sin, and gained dominion over the pains of the Cross by His own free will which He exercised for our redemption. And He left His mother Mary in the house of John His disciple, whom He loved, and whom He committed unto her protection, saying, "Behold thy son," and also to that disciple He said, " Behold thy mother." And our Lady Mary dwelt [there], and she was wont to go unto the grave of her Son, that is to say, to Golgotha, to pray there. And it came to pass that when the Jews saw her they were filled with wrath and jealousy, and they wished to stone her, but God made her to disappear from their sight. Then they took counsel together and appointed guards over His grave, so that she might not be able to come and pray there again; but she ceased not to go there each day. Now the guards never saw her, for the mantle of the glory of her Son made her to be invisible, and angels came unto her at all times to minister unto her, and her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, watched over her continually, and fulfilled for her all her desires.

And after this He made her to ascend into heaven, and He shewed her the place where the righteous rest, and where dwell Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and the spirits of all the Fathers who had died from Adam unto

Christ received her. And they bowed down before her and said, "Glory be unto God Who hath created thee for us, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone ; in thee we have found redemption. And thou hast become the Gate of Life leading away from destruction, through the Incarnation of the Son of God of thee." Then the angels lifted her up and carried her unto her beloved Son, [Who was seated upon] His throne; and flames of fire covered Him round about on the right hand and on the left. Then our Lord took her hand, and He kissed her mouth and said unto her, "Hast thou come, O My mother ? "Then He made her to ascend His throne of glory, and to sit by His side, and He described unto her the joy and gladness which eye hath never seen, and ear hath never heard, and the heart of man hath never imagined, that He had prepared for her. And below the throne she saw David her father, the King of Israel, together with all the Company of the Prophets and the angels ; and the souls of the righteous were standing round about them. And David was singing psalms to his harp, and saying, " Hearken, O my daughter, see and incline thine ear, forget thy people in thy father's house, for the King hath desired thy beauty, and He is thy Lord " (Psalm xlv, lo, ii).

And again the angels set her so that she might see the place of judgement, and they brought her unto the place which was the boundary of the darkness that had been prepared for Satan and his angels, and for all those who walked in his ways. Then our Lady Mary said, " Woe is me ! Who will announce to the children of men that they shall come here ? " And an angel said unto her, " Fear thou not, O Mary, God is with thee. He is with thee, and He will be with those who shall come after thee." Then the angels carried her along and brought her back to her [former] place. And straightway our Lady Mary sat down, being exceedingly sorrowful for all the sinners. Now that day was the sixteenth day of the month Yakatit, and she stood up on the " place of the skull " (Golgotha), and she made supplication unto her Son, saying, " I adjure Thee, O my Son, by God Almighty Thy Father, and by Thy Name Christ, by the Paraclete Thy Spirit, and by my womb which bore Thee, Whom earth is not able to bear, and Whom even the angels are not able to approach, for nine months and five days ; I adjure Thee, O my Son, by Thy going forth from me without pain, and by Thy birth ; I adjure Thee by my breasts which gave Thee suck, and by my lips which kissed Thee, and by my arms which embraced Thee, and by my feet which walked about with Thee ; I adjure Thee by the cradle wherein Thou didst lie, and by the swaddling bands wherewith Thou wast swathed ; O my Son, my beloved One, I entreat and make supplication unto Thee that Thou mayest hearken unto the voice of my petition, and mayest come unto me, and mayest fulfil everything which is in my heart."

And it came to pass that when our Lady, the holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Light, had thus spoken, our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ came down, and with Him and round about Him were thousands of thousands and tens of thousands of angels. And He said unto her, " What shall I do for thee, O Mary My Mother ? And what wish is it that thou wishest Me to fulfil for thee ? " Then our Lady, the Holy Virgin Mary, made answer unto her beloved Son, and said unto Him, " O my Son, my beloved One, my Lord and my Redeemer, my Hope, and my Refuge, in Whom is my trust, in Thee have I my strength, and in Thy asylum do Thou protect me ; Thou art He Whom I remember always. And now, hearken Thou unto my prayer and unto my entreaty, and incline Thine ear unto the words of my mouth. I who speak unto Thee am Thy Mother Mary, and I am Thine handmaiden. Whosoever shall celebrate the festival of my commemoration, or shall build a church in my name, or shall clothe the naked, or shall visit the sick, or shall feed the hungry, or shall give drink to him that is athirst, or shall comfort him that is sorrowful, or shall make to rejoice him that is broken in spirit, or shall write a book of my praises, or shall meditate upon the hymns [sung] to me on the day of my festival, reward Thou him, O Lord, with a good reward from Thyself, the which eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard, nor mind of man hath conceived. I beseech Thee and I make supplication unto Thee, O Lord, on behalf of all those who shall believe on me, that Thou wilt make them to be free from Sheol ; and that Thou wilt remember him that is an hungered and him that is athirst, and all the trials which came upon me with Thee."

And our Lord Jesus Christ answered and said unto her, " It shall be even as thou sayest, and I will fulfil for thee all thy petition. Did I not become man through thee ? I swear by Myself that I will not break My Covenant with thee." Salutation unto thee, O Book of the Law and the Covenant like unto the Tables of stone, For each and every one who shall call upon thy name! Let the hearts of sinners be softened, let the hearts of the oppressors be softened. Let the hearts of those who are afflicted with sorrow be softened, O Mary. AMEN.

THE COVENANT OF MERCY

[Version II. A.Fol. ib, i.]

One day our Lord Jesus Christ said unto Mary, " What sorrow can be greater than that which came upon thee for My sake ? " And our Lady Mary said unto Him, " O my Lord and God, there were Five Sorrows that came upon me for Thy sake, and they overcame me mightily. The first of them was that which came upon me when Simeon prophesied concerning Thee in the Sanctuary, saying that the Jews would slay Thee. The second was the sorrow I endured when I lost Thee in the Sanctuary, and I was seeking for Thee for three days. The third was the sorrow I endured when I remembered how they had bound Thee hand and foot, and how Pilate's men scourged Thy back. The fourth was the sorrow I endured when they crucified Thee between two thieves on the day of the Eve of the Sabbath, and Thou wast naked, and they drove five nails through Thy flesh. The fifth sorrow I endured when I remembered how Joseph and Nicodemus took Thee down from the Cross, and swathed Thee in fine linen, and laid Thee in the tomb."

And our Lord said unto her who had given Him birth, " Thus saith our Father Who is in heaven : Whosoever shall keep in remembrance the sorrows and sufferings which have come upon thee for My sake, and the salutation of Gabriel, I will remit to him his sins. And whosoever shall give an offering for thy name's sake I will remit to him his sins, and I will make him to inherit the kingdom of heaven. And I will come unto him with thee, O thou who didst give Me birth, and I will appear to him three days before his death."

This was the Covenant which Christ made with His mother, and she told it unto Dexius, who wrote it down, together with her Miracles, so that [all] believers might read it. May her prayer and blessing be with us for ever and ever. What sorrow can be greater than the sorrows that came upon thee, O Virgin? For thou didst utter a cry when He cried unto thee a cry On the Eve of the Sabbath, the day upon which He was on the holy wood, the Cross. By the Five Sorrows, O deliver me from perdition, And from the mighty terror of the terrible Sheol.

THE SEVEN SALUTATIONS TO THE COVENANT OF MERCY

Salutation to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, my hope, the justifier of the sinner, the seeker after the one sheep of the ninety and nine which hath become cast away.

Salutation to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, thou pillar set up by God ; be thou a sign of salvation unto all sinners, O thou whose love strengtheneth.

Salutation to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, thou gold that embraceth all riches, the storehouse of the poor and needy, and the wealth of him that is in heaven.

Salutation to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, who weighest the heavens in a balance ; my trust is in thee, grant thou unto me both the strife and the conquest thereof.

Salutation to thee, O Covenant of Mercy, earnest of the kingdom of heaven; whosoever loveth thee shall live in hope until the resurrection of all [mankind] shall take place.

Salutation to thee, O Covenant of Mercy. If I cannot justify myself by strivings and good works, let me rely upon thee, O Virgin Covenant, to save my soul from perdition.

Salutation to thee. Upon him that shall build a temple in the name of thy Covenant, and upon those of us who pray in thy name, O Mary, bestow a portion of thy blessing, and make supplication unto thy Good Son [on our behalf]. AMEN.

THE HISTORY OF THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN MARY AS TOLD BY SAINT JOHN

The 'Astar'eyo, which is to be read on the 21st day of the month Ter.
[Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 604, foL 45a.]

(FoL 45a, CoL 1) **IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, ONE GOD CHRIST, MY GOD AND MY HOPE ! AND MAY MY LADY MARY PRAY FOR ME. THIS IS THE HISTORY OF OUR HOLY AND PURE LADY MARY, THE MOTHER OF THE LIGHT, BY THE GRACE OF GOD MOTHER OF OUR LORD AND REDEEMER JESUS CHRIST, AND HOW HER DEPARTURE TOOK PLACE FROM THIS FLEETING WORLD TO THE EVERLASTING LIFE, WHICH PASSETH NOT AWAY AND IS NEVER DESTROYED. AND MAY HER PRAYER BE WITH OUR KING SO-AND-SO FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.**

OUR holy father John, who took [her] to him after the Ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ into heaven, who discoursed on theology, [who] was one of the disciples of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who preached the Gospel in all the world, told us that our holy and pure Lady never ceased to go to the grave (Fol. 45a, col. 2) of our Lord, and God, and Saviour, Jesus Christ, where she prayed and praised Christ. And then she went, according to her wont, and came here. And when Christ wished to remove her from this fleeting world, she stretched out her hands to her Son and God, and asked Him to take her soul from her. And Satan entered into some of the Jews who used to see her come continually to the grave, and make long prayers there, and because of this they went to the chief priests and told them everything which the holy woman, the Mother of our Lord, used to do, and thereupon the chief priests set watchmen over the grave, and they ordered them to prevent those who wished to go into the tomb to pray [from doing so]. And then the chief priests sent to the watchmen, and enquired of them concerning this thing. And these watchmen lied (FoL 45a, col. 3) and swore that no one whatsoever had passed [them] and entered the tomb. Now our Lord Jesus Christ had blinded their eyes so that they could not see the holy and pure woman whilst she was praying, or when she came in or went out.

I. And in the three hundred and fifty-second year of Alexander (=A.D. 40), that is to say, two years after the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, on the 28th [day of the month . . .], on the fourth day of the week, in the morning, the holy and pure Mary took fire and incense, and set out for the tomb in order to pray, according to her wont, in the tomb in Golgotha. Now she was in fear of the Jews. And having arrived she made an offering of incense at the mouth of the holy tomb, and according to her wont she praised and gave thanks unto Christ, saying, " O my Lord, Good Master, send and take me from this world which is full of sorrow and trouble." And as she was praying straightway the heavens opened, and Gabriel (Fol. 45b, col. i) the Archangel came down, and he did homage to her and gave her his message, saying, " Rejoice, O full of grace, behold, thy prayer hath ascended and hath reached our Lord Jesus Christ Who was born of thee. And behold, God hath heard thy prayer and thy petition wherein thou hast stated thy desire to go forth from this fleeting world into the life which is for ever." And when she had heard this word from the Angel she returned to Bethlehem. And straightway she gathered together the women and holy virgins who ministered unto her continually, and she said unto them, *' Behold, since the Jews have set watchmen over the tomb, I am afraid lest my action be discovered by them, and lest they prevent me from coming there " — and then she said in peace — " Now I am going to Bethlehem, and if there be any among you who wisheth to come with me let her do so." And they answered and said unto her with one voice, " We will all go with thee wheresoever thou goest, (Fol. 45b, col. 2) and we will not separate ourselves from thee all the days of our life." And straightway she took them, and departed to Bethlehem, and dwelt there.

II. And on the eve of the Sabbath (Friday) she fell sick. And she answered and said unto those virgins who lived with her and ministered unto her, " Bring me a censer and incense, for I wish to pray " ; and they brought a censer and incense unto her, even as she had commanded them. And she put incense into the censer, and she prayed, saying, " My Lord and my God, Jesus Christ, Who didst hold thine handmaiden worthy of Thine Incarnation from her, to sanctify men and to remove the sin of the world, hearken unto my prayer, and accept my petition in this hour. And bring unto me John Thy disciple, who preached Thy holy Gospel, so that I may rejoice in the sight of him. And likewise' send Thou to me all Thy disciples — whereof

some have fallen asleep, — so that I may see them (Fol. 45b, col. 3) and be blessed by them before I go out from this world. Thou art the God of the living and of the dead, and I believe that Thou wilt hearken unto my prayer and will grant me everything that I ask from Thee." And [Saint John said], " Behold, before her prayer was ended, a cloud of light snatched me away in the Holy Spirit from the country of Ephesus, and set me before Mary the holy and pure, and when I stood up before her I looked upon her, and I praised Christ our Lord and God. And I said unto her. Rejoice, O holy woman. Mother of Christ our Lord. And the Holy Spirit spake by my tongue, and I said unto her, Thou shalt go forth from this world in great glory, and Christ shall make manifest by thee many signs and wonders, so that His Name may be praised and glorified. And straightway the holy woman remembered that Christ said unto her at the time of the Crucifixion, " Woman, behold thy son," and [that] He looked at him (Fol. 46a, col. i) and said unto His disciple, " Behold thy mother."

III. And when the women her companions heard [these things] they wept with a great weeping and bowed low to her. And then the pure woman said unto me, " Take a censer and incense, pray and say, My Lord and my God Jesus Christ, Thou doer of wonders innumerable, do Thou now make manifest Thy wonders on behalf of Thy Mother, and make her to go forth from this fleeting world with great glory, even as Thou didst say unto her, that those who crucified Thee should fear and be dismayed, and believe in Thee." And I did even as the Mother of Light and Mercy commanded me. Then she took the censer from my hand, and cast incense [therein], and prayed, saying, " I praise Thee, my Lord and God Jesus Christ ; behold, Thou hast given unto me according as Thou didst say unto me. Behold now, receive me, and take me up into the heavens as soon as my spirit goeth forth from my body. For Thou didst say unto me, ' I will come (Fol. 46a, col. 2) unto thee with My angels to take [thy] soul.' " And then the Holy Spirit spake by my mouth and I said unto her, " Christ, our God and thy Son, will perform thy desire according to what thou sayest, and thou shalt see Him with thine eyes." And then she turned to me and said unto me, " O John, the Jews wish to burn my body in the fire after I am dead." And I said unto her in the Holy Spirit, " Rejoice and be glad, for thy body shall see no corruption whatsoever, and shall suffer no harm." And then she said unto me, " O John, cast incense into the censer, and pray in secret " ; and I did even as she commanded me. And behold, a voice came from heaven, and I heard it saying, Amen. I John am a witness before Christ that I myself heard this voice from heaven. And the Holy Spirit said unto me, " O John, didst thou hear this voice from heaven when (Fol. 46a, col. 3) thou didst finish thy prayer ? " And I said unto Him, " Yea." And this voice which I heard said unto me, " Let the disciples thy brethren be gathered together, and come hither in this hour, and all the angels shall come." And I prayed and made supplication for this, even as my Lady Mary, the Mother of the Light, commanded me.

IV. And then the Holy Spirit spake, saying, " Let all the disciples come from the ends of the earth, riding upon clouds, to Bethlehem, for the sake of the Mother of Christ — thou, O Peter, from Rome, and thou, O Paul, from 'Abrakeya (Phrygia ?), and thou, O Thomas, from the interior of India, and James from Jerusalem, and Andrew, the brother of Peter, and Peter, and Luke." And those who were asleep (i.e. dead) woke up in the Holy Spirit from their graves. And ye must not imagine [that they thought] the time for the resurrection of the dead had arrived, nay, they only woke up from their graves for the sake of Saint (Fol. 46b, col. i) Mary, the Mother of the Light, to salute her and to pay honour unto her. Since the time of her translation to heaven had arrived, he came from Alexandria, together with the rest of the Apostles.

V. And at that moment the Holy Spirit gathered together all the Apostles, and they mounted upon clouds, and He brought them into Bethlehem, and spake unto them, saying, " Behold, the Mother of your Lord wished to see you before her departure from this world." And in like manner all the disciples were brought upon clouds, and they came with Peter and stood up before the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they made obeisance to her, and said unto her, " Rejoice, O holy Virgin, for our Lord and God Who was born of thee shall translate thee from this world with great glory, even as He said unto thee." And when (Fol. 46b, col. 2) the holy woman saw the disciples and heard their words she remained upon her couch, and said unto them, " Now know I that your Teacher, and my God and your God will come to me, and that I shall see Him, even as I see you, and that afterwards I shall be translated from this world. But I desire you to tell me how it was that ye learned concerning my departure from this world, and how it is that ye are gathered together to me ; my God would not hide this from me." And Peter and all the disciples said unto her, " The Holy Spirit told us,

and commanded us to come to thee." And John said unto her, " Whilst I was in the house of the sanctuary in Ephesus and about to offer up the offering, the Holy Spirit said unto me, ' Behold, the departure of the soul of the Mother of thy Lord from her body hath drawn nigh. Get thee quickly to Bethlehem that thou mayest bid her farewell.' And a cloud of light snatched me away and brought me into (Fol. 46b, col. 3) this place." And Peter said unto her, " Whilst I was in Rome, at dawn I heard the Holy Spirit saying unto me. Behold, the time of the departure of the Mother of thy Lord hath drawn nigh. Get thee quickly to Bethlehem that thou mayest bid her farewell. And a cloud snatched me away between heaven and earth, and brought me here. And I saw all the disciples coming upon clouds, and I heard a voice, saying, ' Get ye, all of you, to Bethlehem.' " And Paul said, " Whilst I was very far away from Romya (Rome) in a remote place in the country of 'Abrakeya, I heard the Holy Spirit saying unto me, ' Behold, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ wisheth to go forth from this world and to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Get thee away that thou mayest bid her farewell.' And a shining cloud carried me and brought me here." And Mark said, " Whilst I was in Alexandria, after (Fol. 47a, col. i) I had finished the prayer of the third hour, behold, the Holy Spirit snatched me away and made me to mount upon a cloud, and it brought me to you." James said, " Whilst I was in Jerusalem the Holy Spirit spake unto me in similar wise, and a cloud snatched me away and set me here." And Matthew said, " I say that whilst I was in a ship, in great fear by reason of the great waves and billows of a violent sea, a cloud snatched me from among the billows and set me here." And the disciples who had fallen asleep [and had left] this world described how they had heard [a voice], and how they had woke up from their graves, and how they had been snatched away by clouds, and how they had come to them (i.e. to their fellows). And Bartholomew said, " Whilst I was preaching and was in the city, the Holy Spirit said unto me, ' Behold, the Mother of thy Lord is about to depart from this world ; get thee to Bethlehem.' And a cloud snatched me away and brought me into (Fol. 47a, col. 2) this place." And these things did these disciples say unto Mary, the holy and pure woman. At that time the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ lifted up her voice, and said, " I worship, and praise, and give thanks unto Thy holy Name, O my Lord and God, because Thou hast regarded the humility of Thine handmaiden, and hast revealed unto me Thy wonders. O thou Mighty and Powerful One, Who canst do all things, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

VI. And when she had finished her prayer she said unto all the disciples, " Bring ye censers and incense, and make supplication unto my Lord and God, Jesus Christ, and do ye as He shall command you." And as they were praying, they heard a terrifying sound from heaven like the noise of horsemen riding, together with hosts of angels, and archangels, and they also heard as it were the sounds of (Fol. 47a, col. 3) men. And the Seraphim surrounded the house wherein our Lady was with the disciples. And this miracle was seen by all those who were in Bethlehem, and those who were in the house of the sanctuary, and they described what they saw, and they heard the roar of the thunder and the noise of the chariots. And the sun and the moon appeared above that place, and many angels surrounded that place because of the majesty and glory of the holy and pure Mary. And they also saw very many signs and wonders, the blind received their sight, the lame walked, and the lepers were cleansed of their leprosy, and the devils went out of the demoniacs. And all those who were sick, or who were suffering from any kind of disease, drew nigh unto that house wherein was the holy and pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and were healed of their sicknesses. (Fol. 47b, col. i) And all those sick folk who were suffering from every kind of disease, and who came to that house from Bethlehem, and the districts round about, and from the land of Judah, were two thousand eight hundred souls, and they cried out, saying, " O Mary, thou holy one of God, have compassion upon us."

VII. And they were healed of their sicknesses at that moment. And when the people who were sitting in the house of the sanctuary heard this word, men and women went out from among them to be blessed by the holy and pure Mary, and they saw the signs and wonders which Christ wrought in Bethlehem through our Lady Mary, the Bearer of God. And all those who were sick or diseased came to the holy woman, and made supplication unto her, and were healed of their sicknesses ; and there was great joy and gladness because of those who were healed of their sicknesses. And all those who were there gave thanks unto our Lord Jesus Christ and blessed Him, (Fol. 47b, col. 2) and praised the holy Virgin. And all the people of the house of the sanctuary went forth uttering cries of joy, and singing and praising Christ in Bethlehem.

VIII. And straightway the priests of the Jews were dismayed when they saw the great praise, and heard their cries of gladness, and their singing, and the rejoicings of the believers, and they were wroth because of this. And many men went out from Judah to Bethlehem that they might seize the disciples of Christ and His holy Mother. And it came to pass that, when they had marched for an hour, a mighty miracle appeared in respect of them on the road, for their eyes were darkened, and they were not able to see Bethlehem ; and they turned back to their own city, and told the chief priests everything that had befallen them on the way, and how they were unable to march to Bethlehem. And when the chief priests heard this thing they were exceedingly wroth, and they went to the governor, (Fol. 47b, col. 3) and cried out, saying, "All the people of Judah are corrupted through Mary, and now we demand from thee that thou remove her from Bethlehem and from the house of the sanctuary." And the governor marvelled at this word and said unto them, " It is not for me to drive her out of Bethlehem." And all the Jews cried out and swore by Caesar and said, " If thou dost not expel Mary and the disciples from Bethlehem, behold, we will tell this thing to Caesar, and we will relate to him al] thy behaviour." And straightway he was afraid of them, and he sent his officer, together with one thousand horsemen, and he commanded him to drive forth Mary and the disciples. And the Holy Spirit said unto the holy woman, the Mother of our Lord, and to the disciples, " Behold, an officer hath been sent unto you, together with one thousand men, to drive you out of Bethlehem according to what the Jews have demanded. And now, get ye out, and fear not, for (Fol. 48a, col. i) I will snatch you away on a cloud, and will bring you into the house of the sanctuary." And straightway the disciples went forth, bearing the couch of the holy and pure Mary whereon she lay during her lifetime, and they were snatched away on a cloud, and it brought them to the house of the sanctuary as the Holy Spirit spake unto them.

IX. And they tarried there five days praying to Christ and glorifying Him. And the officer who had been sent came to Bethlehem, and he found neither the holy woman nor any one of the disciples. And then he took the men of Bethlehem, and said unto them, "Are ye not those who came to the governor and to the chief priests, and did ye not tell them that signs and wonders had appeared ? And did ye not say that the disciples were gathered together from the ends of the earth to Bethlehem ? Where are they now ? Come ye now to the governor and to the chief priests, and tell them how [these things] took place." And the governor (Fol. 48a, col. 2) did not know of the coming of the disciples and the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ unto the house of the sanctuary. And the officer took the men of Bethlehem and brought them with him to the governor, and he told him how he had not found any one [of the disciples] there.

X. And after five days the governor and the chief priests knew that the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was in her house, and that all the disciples were with her, and that many signs and wonders took place through her. And there were with her many men, and women, and virgins, and they cried out, saying, " O holy and pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, forget thou not the children of men." And because of this the great men among the Jews, and their governors, and their officers, together with all their people, were wroth. And then they rose up, and they took with them wood and fire, wishing (Fol. 48a, col. 3) to set on fire the house in which the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ was, together with the disciples, and the angels and all the believers ; and the governor stood afar off in order that he might see what would happen. And when the chief priests had come and certain of the Jews to the door of the courtyard, a great fire went forth with the angels from that place, and burned up many of the Jews. And then a great fear came upon the men of the house of the sanctuary, and all those who dwelt in it among the Jews, together with their governors. And sorrow laid hold upon the adversaries of Christ, and they praised Christ our God, Who was born of the holy and pure Virgin Mary. And the governor cried out with a loud voice, saying, " Verily, O Mary, He Who is born of thee is the Son of God, and His Christ, before Whom we have quarrelled, and we have driven Him out and (Fol. 48b, col. i) cast Him forth from among us, for no one except the Son of God, and Him only, could do these signs and wonders." And there was a great tumult among them, and very many of them believed on the Name of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ.

XI. And then after this miracle concerning our Lady and the disciples had appeared, the Holy Spirit spake, saying, " Now know ye that on the First Day of the week the Angel Gabriel announced to Saint Mary the glad tidings that Christ, the Word of God, should dwell upon her. And on the First Day of the week He was born in Bethlehem of Judah. And on the First Day of the week old men and young men and maidens went out to meet and welcome our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, saying, ' Hosanna in the heights ! Blessed [is He] Who Cometh in the Name of God.' And on the First Day of the week our Lord rose from the dead. And

on (Fol. 48b, col. 2) the First Day of the week He shall come on a cloud of heaven to judge the living and the dead. And on the First Day of the week He shall come, because of its majesty and glory, at the going forth of the soul of Saint Mary from this world."

XII. And it came to pass that on the First Day of the week Mary said unto the disciples, " Throw incense into the censers, for my Lord Jesus Christ is coming to me with all His angels." And whilst she was holding converse with them after they had burnt incense, behold, our Lord Jesus Christ came, together with His angels, seated upon the throne of His glory. And there appeared before Him angels innumerable, and moreover, there appeared a great light, and the holy woman was crowned with very great glory at the coming of her Son and her God, and all the powers of heaven worshipped her. And a Voice came to the holy woman, saying, " O Mary." And she answered (Fol. 48b, col. 3) and said, " Here am I." And again, the Voice said, "Rejoice and be glad, and let thy soul be glad because thou hast found great grace with Me ; see thou the glory and praise which My Father hath given unto Me." And straightway the Mother of our Lord saw a great light which man cannot describe, and then that Voice said unto her, " Henceforward thy body shall rest in the Garden (i.e. Paradise), and thy holy soul in the kingdom of the heavens, a habitation that is filled with grace, and where there are joy and gladness." And our Lady Mary said, " My Lord and my God, stretch out Thy hand over me and bless me."

XIII. And then our Lord Jesus Christ stretched out His strong hand and blessed her, and the holy woman took His hand, and kissed it, and said, " I give thanks unto this right hand, and I glorify it because it hath made strong the heavens, and ordered the earth firmly. I beseech Thee, O King, O Only Son, Who hath made His handmaiden worthy to become incarnate of her (Fol. 49a, col. i) by His wise Nature for the salvation of men, to hearken unto my prayer, and of Thy great mercy show favour unto me, and unto all those who shall make supplication unto Thee in the name of me. Thine handmaiden, and be kind and gracious unto them. And do Thou hearken unto their prayer and to their petition in respect of everything that they shall ask of Thee, for Thou art able to do everything." And when the disciples heard this request of Saint Mary, they bowed themselves down to the ground on their faces at her feet, saying, " O Mother of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, leave thy holy blessing in this world wherefrom thou art going forth." Then straightway the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ prayed and said, " O God, Who in the abundance of His compassion and mercy was pleased to send His only Son into my body, and Who made me worthy that He should become incarnate of me, behold, from this time forth have compassion upon the work of Thy hands, and upon every (Fol. 49a, col. 2) soul that praiseth Thy Name." And again she said, " O Jesus Christ, the Son of God the most high. Who doeth whatsoever He pleaseth both in the heavens and in the earth, bless, O Lord, that place where a festival shall be celebrated in my name, and receive my prayer, and bless Thy people and Thy anointed ones who shall offer unto Thee sacrifices in my name." And our Lord Jesus Christ answered and said unto her, " Behold, I have done this for thee, now and henceforth. Rejoice thou, for all grace hath been and shall be given unto thee by Me, and by My Father, and by the Holy Spirit. And every one who shall observe thy commemoration and call upon thy name shall never perish in this world, but shall find grace with My Father Who is in heaven."

XIV. And then our Lord Jesus Christ turned to Peter, and said unto him, " Behold now, the time hath come, but first I will read and sing the psalm." And then Peter (Fol. 49a, col. 3) began to read and to sing with the angels. And at that moment a great light rose upon the face of the holy woman, and she lifted up her hands and blessed the disciples. And then our Lord Jesus Christ stretched out His holy hand and received her soul, and straightway her soul was separated from her body. And a great light filled that place, and there came forth a beautiful, sweet fragrance, the like of which existed not, and a voice came from heaven, saying, " Blessed art thou, O blessed Queen of women." And then Peter and the disciples bowed down at the feet of the holy woman, and embraced [them] and were blessed by her. And they laid her upon a bier and the disciples carried her holy body [to the tomb]. And as they were carrying her a certain strong and mighty Jew, whose name was Taronya, rushed at them, and he laid hold upon the bier of the holy woman so that he might prevent them from carrying away her dead body. And (Fol. 49b, col. i) straightway an angel came and smote him with a sword of fire, and cut off both his hands, and the bier was lifted up [again] with the two hands of the Jew suspended from it.

XV. And when the Jews saw this miracle which had taken place, they cried out and said, " Verily He was God Who was born of thee, O our Lady Mary." And Taronya followed after the bier, and cried out and said, " O holy woman of God, Mary, woman undefiled, the Mother of Christ, turn thou to me and have mercy and compassion upon me." And then Peter turned to him and said unto him, " In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our God, Who was born of her, let the two hands which were cut off from him return to their former place." And when Peter spake thus his two hands came down from the bier, and they returned [to their place] whilst all the people were looking on. And at that moment Taronya and all the Jews who were (Fol. 49b, col. 2) there believed when they saw this miracle that had taken place. And then the disciples buried the body of Saint Mary in the village which is called " Geteseman " (Gethsemane), in a new sepulchre, and they glorified Christ, and they remained there three days.

XVI. And Thomas, one of the Twelve Disciples, whose name was " Didmos " (Didymus), was not with the disciples when the soul of our Lady Mary went forth [from her body]. And he came from India riding upon a cloud, and he saw the body of Saint Mary and angels carrying it along on a cloud and taking it up to heaven. And then when Thomas arrived Peter and all the disciples said unto him, " The body of Saint Mary hath departed from this world ; why didst thou tarry in coming to her burial ? " And Thomas said, " The Mother of our Lord is not dead ; unless I see her dead body I will not believe [it]." And the disciples said unto him, " Behold, before this thou (Fol. 49b, col. 3) didst say, ' I will not believe that Christ is risen unless I can thrust my hand into His side, and my fingers into the nail marks,' and in the abundance of the mercy of Christ He showed thee these things, and thou didst cry out and say, ' My Lord and my God.' " And Thomas answered and said unto them, " I will not believe unless I see where ye have buried the body of the holy woman." And straightway Peter rose up and all the disciples with him, and they showed [him] the grave, and they found nothing whatsoever in it. And Thomas answered and said unto them, " Whilst I was preaching in the Name of Christ, and was baptizing Felodyos, the son of the king's sister, the Holy Spirit said unto me suddenly, ' Rise up quickly, O Thomas, and salute the body of the holy woman, the Mother of thy Lord.' And a cloud snatched me away from that place and brought me hither, and whilst I was coming to you I saw in the clouds (Fol. 50a, col. i) the body of the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the angels carrying it up into heaven." And when the disciples heard the words of Thomas they glorified our Lord Jesus Christ.

XVII. And then when the disciples were gathered together twelve clouds came unto them and carried them away unto the Garden, to the place wherein was the body of Saint Mary, and they saw her with their eyes. And they also saw Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Hanna, the mother of the holy woman [Mary], and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, the holy fathers. And David the Prophet also was singing praises with the chosen ones and the righteous ones, and they worshipped the majesty of the body of Mary in the Garden, and they gave thanks unto Christ, Who was born of her, and they ascribed holiness unto Him, the greatness of Whose mercy and compassion cannot be reckoned ; for there is no one who is able to describe the greatness of His glory and power. And then (Fol. 50a, col. 2) we the disciples glorified our Lord Jesus Christ, Who showed favour unto us and revealed unto us these miracles at the departure of the body of Saint Mary from this fleeting world to life everlasting, and to the gift of the grace which is imperishable. Behold now, we ask our Lord and God Jesus Christ, through the prayer of the holy woman, to protect us with His right hand, and to give us power and victory in this world, and in that other mercy and compassion. Let us then glorify every day and in every place the Only Son, Who was begotten of the Father before the world and was, moreover, born of Saint Mary in the later days, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now, and forever, and for ever. Amen.

Christ, my God and my hope, and my Lady Mary, who saveth me, pray for me forever and forever. AMEN.

THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY AND PURE MARY, THE MOTHER OF CHRIST OUR GOD, AND OF HER DEPARTURE FROM THIS FLEETING WORLD INTO LIFE

[Brit. Miis. MS. Orient. No. 604, Fol. 53a, col. 2.]

I. AND then on the third day, at the time of noon, St. Mary went out from her house and departed to pray at the Tomb, for it was her custom daily to go forth to the Tomb of Golgotha and to pray [there]. And when the Jews heard that Christ was dead, they laid a great stone on the mouth of the (Fol. 53a, col. 3) Tomb, and sealed it with a seal, and they set watchmen, and commanded them not to allow anyone whatsoever to pray there ; and that if anyone did come there to pray they were to stone him with stones and kill him. And behold, the Jews took the Cross of Christ, and the two crosses on which the thieves were crucified, and the spear wherewith they pierced His side, and the raiment wherein they had arrayed Him, and the crown of thorns which they had woven for Him, and the nails which they had driven into Him, and buried them together in the earth. For they were afraid that some king would come and ask them questions about everything that had happened to Christ, and therefore they buried them in the earth so that they could not tell anyone about them. And the Jews used to see Mary come every day to the Tomb to pray, and she used to bow down with her face to the ground, and then stand up there for a period of an hour, saying, " O my Lord and God, send to me that they may take me from this (Fol. 53b, col. i) evil world, for I am greatly afraid of the Jews mine enemies. Formerly when they used to come to me I drove them away and made them depart by the word that went forth from my mouth. It shut their eyes and darkened their hearts by the might of my Lord Jesus Christ, Who was born of me of His own free will, for they were unable to do any harm to me or to make me to drink the water of correction.

II. " Now when they see me coming to the Tomb and praying, they revile me, and magnify themselves against me." And then the watchmen went to the priests, and said unto them, " No one cometh to pray at the Tomb of Golgotha except Mary, who cometh to pray daily evening and morning." And the priests answered and said unto the watchmen, " If she cometh again stone her with stones." And the watchmen said unto the priests, " We will not stone her, but (Fol. 53b, col. 2) when she cometh to the Tomb we will tell you, and ye must deal with her as ye wish." And the priests said unto the watchmen, " Ye must stone her heavily, for she deserveth punishment because she hath put to shame the children of Israel." And on the evening of Friday Mary went to the Tomb to pray according to her wont. And as she was praying she lifted up her eyes to heaven — with the sweet odour of incense —

III. and then the Angel Gabriel came to Mary the Virgin, and bowed down to her, and said unto her, " Peace be unto thee, O blessed among women, God is with thee, O Mother of God. Behold, thy prayer hath arrived, and our Lord Jesus Christ hath accepted thy petition. Henceforward thou shalt go forth from this world, and thou shalt depart to life and mercy forever and ever. For this reason I have been sent unto thee. I tell thee and declare unto thee that at the very moment when thou prayest upon the earth thy prayer is heard in heaven. And every petition which thou makest to Christ, Who sitteth on the right hand of the Father, He will grant thee, and He will grant thy wish in heaven and upon earth. Blessed be thy name forever and ever."

IV. And again the watchmen came to the priests and told them that Mary had come and prayed at the Tomb, and had turned and gone back to her house. And behold, there was a great commotion in the house of the Sanctuary because of Mary. And the priests went unto the governor, and said unto him, " Send ye to Mary [telling her] that she must not go to the Tomb of Golgotha, and that she must not pray there." And whilst they were troubled about this matter, a letter came from 'Ankor, king of Roha (Edessa), to Tibaryos (Tiberius) the Emperor, saying, " I tell thee (Fol. 54a, col. i) that one of the two and seventy disciples hath built a church in the city of Roha, and that he hath healed me of the disease which was upon me, and that he hath related unto me the miracles that Christ wrought. And when the love of Him had entered my heart, I wished to see Him and wanted Him to be with me in my city, but when I heard that the Jews had taken Him and crucified Him, I was exceedingly sorry. And then I rose up and I mounted my horse, and I came to the Euphrates to cross over to Jerusalem, in order to make war and to lay waste the country, and to kill all those who dwelt there, because they had killed Christ. And as I was marching along the road I meditated in my heart and said, \i I cross this Euphrates which doth not belong to me, Tiberius will make the desire for vengeance to dwell in his heart, and enmity, and vengeance, and slaughter will be between us. Therefore I turned and went back to my city. Now therefore (Fol. 54a, col. 2) I wish thee to slay those Jews who crucified Christ without cause. Had I only known beforehand that they were going to crucify Christ I would have come to thee to prevent them crucifying Him." Thus did 'Ankor, the king of Edessa, write to Tiberius. And when this letter had been read to the Emperor Tiberius he trembled and was dismayed, and was afraid with a great fear, and he wished to kill the Jews.

V. And when the men of Jerusalem heard this thing fear seized them, and they went to the governor and said unto him, "All this hath happened through Mary, and through Him that was born of her will Jerusalem be laid waste. Now send and prevent Mary from going to the Tomb of Golgotha and praying there." And the governor answered and said unto them, " Go ye yourselves and tell her what ye wish." And then the priests went unto Mary, and said unto her, " Behold, from this time take heed to thyself that (Fol. 54a, col. 3) thou goest not to the Tomb of Golgotha to pray there ; O Mary, behold, we have warned thee. Remember thou the sin that thou hast committed before God. And if thou wishest to pray then pray with the people, and follow the commandments of Moses, so that God may forgive thee the sin which thou hast committed. And on the Sabbaths go thou to the synagogue with the [other] people, and let the priest lay upon thy head the [roll of the] Law that God may forgive thee thy sin. And if thou doest this we will not deal craftily with thee, and we will not cast thee out. And if thou art ill we will visit thee, and we will proclaim (?) with the sound of the trumpet, and in due season thou wilt be healed, and we will entreat God to have mercy upon thee, and to have compassion upon thee. And if thou wilt not observe our words, get thee out of Jerusalem, and go to Bethlehem, for we will not allow thee again to pray at the Tomb of Golgotha. What sayest thou ? " And Mary answered and said unto them, " I do not wish you to say these things to me ; I will not accept your (Fol. 54b, col. i) words, and I will not obey your commands, and I will not walk in the perversity of your paths." Then the Jews went forth from Mary in rage and indignation, and they departed to their houses, for the sun was setting.

VI. And on the morrow they came to Mary and they said unto her, " O Mary, we have already spoken unto thee, and thou wilt neither accept our commands nor obey our words, and thou hast treated our words as contemptible things." And she held her peace, and made no answer unto them whatsoever. And after this Mary fell sick, and she called all the women of her quarter and said unto them, " Peace be unto you. Behold, I wish to go to Bethlehem and to dwell there in my house, for the Jews have prevented me from praying at the Tomb of Golgotha ; and if there be any who wisheth to come with me, let her make haste and come. For I trust in the Lord (Fol. 54b, col. 2) my God, Who is in heaven, and He will give unto me whatsoever I ask and will do for me what I desire." Moreover, her heart rejoiced because of the word that the Angel Gabriel had said unto her when she was praying at the Tomb, " O blessed among women, behold, thou shalt go forth from this fleeting world into everlasting life whereof there is no end. Thy prayer hath been heard by the ear of the Lord of Hosts." And then there came to her three virgins who ministered unto her, and they said unto her, " Be not sad, O our Lady. Behold, we will come with thee, so that we may find compassion with the Lord Who was born of thee. For thy sake we have forsaken our families, and we have chosen thee in preference to everything that we have, and we have come to thee to die and to live with thee." Thus did the virgins speak, and they devoted themselves to serving her by day and by night. And they entreated her (Fol. 54b, col. 3) to tell them how it was that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, was born of her without carnal union. And Mary, the Mother of the Light, explained [this] clearly to these virgins, and she told them everything that they wished to be taught by her, and they accepted service [with] her, and they did her good pleasure. And they washed her feet, and they perfumed her apparel, for she was accounted by them a glorious woman, because they saw the signs and wonders which Mary wrought before them by day and by night. And the first miracle which they saw was that her odour, and sweetness, and perfume filled the house wherein our Lady was, like the waves of the sea. And all the sick and diseased used to come to her, and be blessed by her, and they worshipped her and were cured of their sicknesses, and those virgins marvelled when they saw (Fol. 55a, col. i) that great glory rested upon her.

VII. And then multitudes of men and women came to Mary, and they bowed down before her, and said unto her, " Have mercy upon us and show us compassion, and reject us not, O our Lady." And the blessed woman stretched out her hands and blessed them, and said unto them, " God shall accept your prayer and your petition before our Lord Jesus Christ." And she also blessed those virgins who were with her and who ministered unto her [saying], " Out of all the people of Israel only they have followed me." And then Gabriel, the Angel of God, appeared unto the blessed woman Mary, and said unto her, " Be strong, and fear not, O Mother of God. Rise up, and go to Bethlehem, and remain there; thou shalt see coming to thee the hosts of the angels, and the Apostles, and all created beings, to salute thee and to proclaim thee blessed."

VIII. And when (Fol. 55a, col. 2) those virgins saw the Angel of God talking to Mary they were afraid with a great fear. And then the blessed Mary called to those virgins and said unto them, " Bring ye me incense and apparel, so that I may give an oblation to God." Now those virgins were the children of the elders of Jerusalem, and their names were these : the first was " Hanna," the meaning of whose name is " The Church, the assembly of the nations, which is the heavenly Jerusalem." The name of the second was *' 'Absa," and its meaning is, " Christ, the Son of God, Who sitteth on the right hand of the Father." And the name of the third was " Saga," and its meaning is, " It is the Holy Spirit Who giveth life to all those who believe in Christ, the First God." And on the fifth day, at dawn, Mary went forth, together with those virgins, and she departed to Bethlehem, and she remained there (Fol. 55a, col. 3) that night. And on the morning of the sixth day Mary fell sick, and then she said unto the virgins, " Bring me a censer, for I wish to pray to my Lord Jesus Christ Who is in heaven." And they brought the censer to her, and she placed incense therein, and she prayed, saying, " O my Lord, and God, and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Who dwellest in heaven, hearken Thou unto my prayer and petition, and send unto me John the Less, for I wish to see him and to rejoice with him, and also send unto me all the Apostles his brethren. I believe in Thy grace wherewith Thou hast been gracious unto me. I know that Thou wilt hear me, and wilt give me everything that I want from Thee." And when she had finished her prayer the Holy Spirit spake unto John in Ephesus, and said unto him, " Behold, the Mother of thy Teacher wisheth to see thee. Get thee forth at dawn, (Fol. 55b, col. i) and depart to Bethlehem. And I will go to thy brethren the Apostles, and will gather them together from all countries. And I will wake up those who are asleep from their graves, and I will bring all of them together that they may salute the holy and blessed Mary." Thus did the Holy Spirit speak to John, and then he removed Himself from him.

IX. And on the following morning John rose up and began to command his disciples not to cease from their service in the Sanctuary, but to perform the offices of prayer in their due season. And the Holy Spirit told him what he should say to them concerning Mary. And then he departed from Ephesus, and he bowed low and prayed, and said, " O my Lord and God Jesus Christ, the Son of God, give unto me help, O Lord, and strength on this journey, wherein I am going to see Thy Mother before she dieth." And as he was praying, suddenly the Holy Spirit came, and (Fol. 55b, col. 2) caught him up in a cloud of light, and brought him to the door of Mary's house ; and it seemed to him that he travelled to Bethlehem by way of the desert. And when they opened the door of Mary's house he went into her presence, and he found her lying upon her couch, and he drew nigh to her, and he bowed low at her feet and said unto her, " Peace be unto thee, O blessed among women, the Mother of God ! Be not sorrowful, behold, thou shalt go forth from this world with joy, and gladness, and great glory." And then those virgins came to John and were blessed by him. And Mary said unto John, " Put incense into the censer " ; and he did as she commanded him. And he prayed, saying thus, " O my Lord and God Jesus Christ, perform Thou signs and wonders for Thy Mother before she departeth from this world, so that all those (Fol. 55b, col. 3) who do not believe in Thee — now Thy Name is praised by those who love Thee, and believe that Thou art Christ, the Son of God — may be put to shame and suffer loss. And behold, the heavens and the earth are witnesses that Saint Mary is Thy Mother, and that Thou art the Son of the Living God. And all those who believe in Thee shall live forever and ever."

X. And when John had finished his prayer Saint Mary said unto him, " Behold, thy Teacher said unto me, If thou wishest to go forth from this world I Myself will come unto thee with all the hosts of My angels." And John answered and said unto her, " Behold, He will come, and thou shalt see Him, even as He said unto thee." And the blessed woman answered and said unto him, " Behold, the Jews have planned that, after my death, they will burn my body with fire." And John answered and said unto her, " Fear thou not, God is with thee, for unto none hath power over thee been given." (Fol. 56a, col. i) And the blessed woman answered and said unto him, " When I am dead where wilt thou bury me ? " And John said unto her, "Where Christ shall command me " ; and at that moment the blessed woman wept and shed tears. And when John saw her weeping he was exceedingly sorrowful, and he wept with the virgins. And he drew nigh unto her, and said unto her, " Is it then that thou, the Mother of God, art afraid of the departure from this world ? How then do the righteous and the good fare when they go forth from this world ? Fear thou not, for behold, the Holy Spirit said unto me in Ephesus, ' Rise up and go to the blessed woman Mary [and tarry there] until the Apostles come and bow down before thee.' " And Mary answered and said unto him, " Put incense [in the censer], and pray, and do as He commanded thee." And John prayed, saying, " O my Lord Jesus Christ, hear my prayer, and receive the petition of Thy Mother, and graciously grant unto her that she may see Thee whilst (Fol. 56a, col. 2) she is alive, as Thou didst promise with thy holy mouth, when Thou didst come to

her of Thine own free will and by the good pleasure of Thy Father, Who is in heaven, even as Thou didst come down from heaven, and didst dwell with her. And now, visit Thou her with Thy hosts of angels, that Thy Name may be praised in heaven and upon the earth." And whilst John was praying in this wise, a voice came from heaven, saying, "Amen." And whilst John was marvelling at the voice which he had heard, the Holy Spirit came unto him and said unto him, " This voice which thou didst hear [signifieth] that it was to gather together the Apostles from everywhere, in order to salute Saint Mary."

XI. And then the Holy Spirit went to the Apostles and said unto them, " Get ye to Bethlehem that ye may receive the blessing of Mary." And behold, Simon Peter wished to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Offering, and the Holy Spirit came to him, (Fol. 56a, col. 3) and said unto him, " When thou hast finished the Offering, get thee to Bethlehem, for the time hath come for the departure of Mary, the Mother of thy Lord, from this world," And He spake also unto Paul in the city the name of which is Tereyos, which is a distance of fifty marches from the city of Rome, and He found the Jews quarrelling with him, and reviling him, saying, " We will not hear thy words, for thou art of the men of Tersus (Tarsus), because thou preachest Christ. And behold, we know that thou art a man of no account." And whilst they were quarrelling with him in this wise, the Holy Spirit said unto Paul, " Behold, the time hath come for the departure of the Mother of thy Teacher from this world ; rise up and go to her." And the Holy Spirit also spake unto Thomas in the country of India, as he was sitting on the couch of the daughter of the king, and said unto him, " The time hath come for the departure from this world (Fol. 56b, col. i) of Mary, the Mother of thy Teacher ; get thee to her quickly." And then Thomas rose up and went into the church, and put incense into the censer, and prayed for her. And the Holy Spirit also spake unto Matthew, and said unto him, " The time hath come for the departure of Mary, the Mother of thy Lord ; get thee to her quickly." And likewise the Holy Spirit spake unto James in Jerusalem. And to those who were sleeping (i.e. dead), Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, and Luke, and Simon Zelotes, came the Holy Spirit, and He spake unto them in their graves, saying, " Think not that the time for the resurrection of the dead and the end of days hath come, nevertheless rise up this day from your graves, and get ye to Bethlehem, that ye may receive the blessing of Saint Mary." Thus did the Holy Spirit speak (Fol, 56b, col. 2) unto all the Apostles. And they pondered, saying, " How is it possible for us to get to Bethlehem quickly ? " And then the Holy Spirit came to them and caught them away into the clouds, and the winds blew upon them from every quarter, and the heavens and the earth were lighted up with multitudes of flashes of lightning, from the fourth hour of the morning until noon, at which time the Apostles arrived in Bethlehem. And very great fear was caused by the greatness of their awful majesty, for they arrived mounted upon a shining cloud, and their raiment was as white as snow, and crowns of glory sparkled on their heads, and the angels bore the chariots of light and cloud whereon the Apostles were mounted. And the Holy Spirit guided the clouds between heaven and earth. And behold, David, the son of Jesse, came with them, and he was singing [to the harp] and saying, " Glory be to the Father, glory be (Fol. 56b, col. 3) to the Son, glory be to the Holy Ghost." Thus did he sing before them.

XII. Then came the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, and they stood up before the Apostles and said unto them, " Peace be unto you, O ye disciples of the Great King Who chose you at His wish." And the Apostles said unto them, " Peace be unto you, O ye Angels of our Lord Jesus Christ, ye guardians of the holy mystery of His Word, the Holy Ghost." And the Holy Spirit said unto John, " Get thee out to welcome thy brethren the Apostles ; behold, they have come to Bethlehem." And straightway John went forth to welcome them, and he bowed down to them, and Peter said unto him, " Is the glorious and blessed Mother of the Light dead, or not ? "

And John answered and said unto him, " She is not dead." And then John prayed and made supplication before them, and Bethlehem was filled with (Fol. 57a, col. i) its odour and perfume. And then the Apostles and the Angels came together into the house of the holy and blessed woman, and they bowed low at her feet. And they said unto her, " Peace be unto thee, O thou who art full of grace, God is with thee, and joy ; fear not, neither be dismayed, O thou blessed among women. For He Who was born of thee shall take thee out of this world with great glory, and shall carry thee into the treasury of light, for in thee is power over them and over all the righteous." And at that moment Mary rose up and sat upon her couch, and said unto the disciples, " Behold now, I believe in the coming of my Lord from heaven, and that I shall see Him without dying, even as ye see me. Tell me, who was it that told you that I was a sick woman? And from what country have ye

come to me ? And on what did ye ride and how did ye arrive [so] (Fol. 57a, col. 2) quickly here ? Behold, I wish to praise God Who told you about me." And Peter answered and said unto John, and unto the disciples, " Tell her, each of you, how ye came here to her." And the disciples answered and said unto John, " Behold, thou didst come first, do thou tell her how thou camest." And John answered and said, " I was in Ephesus, and the Holy Spirit came and said unto me, ' O John, the time hath come for the departure from this world of the Mother of thy Lord, and she wisheth to see thee.' And the Holy Spirit also said unto me, ' Behold, I will go and pass through all the countries and announce this to the Apostles, [both] those who are alive and those who are dead, and I will tell them about Mary, and that they are to go to Bethlehem and salute her.' And behold, suddenly the Holy Spirit caught me away into a cloud of light, and brought me (Fol. 57a, col. 3) that very moment into the house of Mary." And Peter answered and said, "And I was in the city of Rome, wishing to offer up the Offering of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins, [when] the Holy Spirit came and said unto me, ' The time hath come for the departure from this world of Mary, the Mother of thy Lord ; get thee to her in Bethlehem.' And then a shining cloud caught me up and brought me here, and I saw all the Apostles mounted upon clouds coming to me." And Paul answered and said, " I was contending with the Jews when suddenly the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me to you." And Thomas answered and said, " I was in the country of India, and the Holy Spirit came and caught me (Fol. 57b, col. i) up and brought me to you." Mark said, " I was. praying in Alexandria, and the Holy Spirit came to me and said, ' Behold, the departure of the Mother of thy Lord from this world is nigh, rise up and get thee to Bethlehem.' And the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me here." James answered and said, " I was burning incense in the Tomb at Golgotha, and the Holy Spirit spake unto me, saying, ' The holy and blessed woman is going to depart from this world ' ; and [then] the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me here." Matthew said, " I was in a ship preaching God and blessing Him, when the waves surrounded me from all sides. I wept and prayed, and as I prayed the Holy Spirit caught me up in a shining cloud, and brought me to you." Philip said, " I being dead heard the voice of a herald crying out, and saying, ' Philip, Philip, (Fol. 57b, col. 2) rise up, and come forth from the grave.' And straightway I rose up, and behold, the Holy Spirit caught me up and brought me to you." Simon Zelotes said, "After I was dead I rose up from the grave, and behold, the hand of a stretched-out arm came to me, and it raised me up from among the dead, and the Holy Spirit caught me up in a shining cloud, and brought me to you." Luke said, " When I was in the grave I heard the sound of the horn which the angels blow, and a light came and entered into the grave wherein I was. Now I thought that the resurrection of the dead [was come], when behold, the Holy Spirit came and brought me to you." And Andrew answered and said, " I rose from the dead because I heard the voice of the Son of God saying, 'Andrew, Andrew, rise up, and get thee, (Fol. 57b, col. 3) together with the Apostles, to Bethlehem. Behold, I and all the armies of the angels will come with you. For the time of the crowning of Saint Mary with honour and glory hath arrived, and she is going forth from this world. And behold, I will bring her into the treasures of the light of the Father, and she shall dwell there until I come to judge the living and the dead.' " And Bartholomew said, " Behold, I was preaching in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was trusting in the riches of His grace, and the Holy Spirit came and caught me up, and brought me to you." In this wise did the Apostles speak unto the holy woman Mary, and each one of them described to her how he had come thither.

XIII. And when the holy Virgin Mary heard the words of the Apostles, she praised the God of heaven and earth, and said, " I worship Thee, O my Lord and God. I believe in Thee, and I praise Thee, (Fol. 58a, col. i) and I magnify Thee, and I sing unto Thee, and I bless Thee because Thou hast not made me a laughing-stock for the nations. Moreover, Thou hast put to shame the wicked Jews, who have meditated evil against me and would burn my body in the fire. And now, I praise Thy Name, and I magnify Thy power forever and ever. And evermore will I sing praise before Thee because Thou hast sent Thy Apostles to me." And when Mary had ended her prayer, she said unto the Apostles, " Put ye incense in the censer and pray " ; and they did as she commanded them, and they prayed and bowed low to the ground. And behold, there was the roar of thunder in the heavens, and there came a voice that was like unto the noise of a heavy wheel revolving swiftly, and a sweet and lovely odour from heaven. And then the angels and the armies of heaven, which are innumerable, came down, and they covered the house wherein was the holy, and blessed, and pure Virgin twofold, Mary, (Fol. 58a, col. 2) the Mother of God, and they crowned her with their wings, saying, " Holy, Holy, Holy [is] the Lord our God Whom celestial and terrestrial beings worship." And then there was great fear in Bethlehem, and signs and wonders were revealed there, and the hosts of the armies of God

ceased not to go up into heaven and to come down again into the house. And there went forth from their midst as it were the sound of the Son of Man Who was speaking in the chariot of the Cherubim, saying, " Get ye gone and go into the house of Mary." And then the watchmen of Bethlehem went into Jerusalem, and they told the elders and the priests of all the signs and wonders which they had seen take place through the holy woman Mary. And when the watchmen and the men of Bethlehem had come and related unto the people (Fol. 58a, col. 3) all the signs and wonders which they had seen wrought before the holy woman, they would not believe them until messengers had been sent to find out what had happened to her. And when these had come thither they saw the gates of heaven opened, and the angels of God descending and coming into the house of Mary, and also the lightnings and the thunders going forth from the house of the holy woman, and [the angels] going up to heaven. And with this they saw the disciples ministering to the holy woman. And they also saw the clouds coming from heaven and dropping dew and storm upon Bethlehem. And they also saw the stars coming down from heaven and bowing low before the holy woman Mary. And they also saw the sun and moon, which illumine all the world, come down from heaven, and bow low before Mary. And they also saw the holy woman (Fol. 58b, col. i) lying upon her couch, and the Angel Gabriel standing at her pillow and Michael at her foot-cushion ; and there were lamps in their hands, and they were making the holy woman to rejoice.

XV (sic). And then they saw the Apostles standing by the couch in fear and trembling, and stretching out their hands to heaven, and Peter and John receiving the tears of the holy woman on their apparel. And they also saw the perfume and smoke of the incense rolling out from the foundations of that house like the waves of the sea, and the countless hosts of the angels standing in fear and trembling and ascribing glory to God, Who had dwelt in the womb of the Virgin Mary. And they spread out their wings and bowed down to the holy and blessed Mary, the Mother of Christ, and they were crying out and saying with a loud (Fol. 58b, col. 2) voice, " Peace be unto thee, O blessed among women ; and blessed be He Who was born of thee, our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ." And the hosts of heaven sang hymns, and the beings of the spirit rejoiced, and the mighty Powers ascribed blessing to the holy woman Mary. And they were not able to draw nigh unto her because of the intensity of the light that rose up on her. And they also saw on her right hand and on her left those who were broken [in spirit] and those who were in tribulation coming to the house of the blessed and holy woman, and crying out and saying, " O holy and blessed Mary, have mercy upon us, show compassion to us, and heal us by means of thy prayer and supplication " ; and [they saw also] that they were healed straightaway of their sicknesses. And other sick folk were coming, and were taking the mud of her house and smearing it over their bodies, and they were healed of all their sicknesses. And thus Mary wrought signs and (Fol. 58b, col. 3) wonders innumerable. He Who was born of her came down from heaven, became incarnate, and made her the house of the Sanctuary of His glory. And then the men of Bethlehem ascribed praise to the holy Lady Mary. And moreover, women came unto her from every country, from Rome and Alexandria, and the daughters of kings and governors, and they brought gifts and bowed low before Mary, and they confessed Christ Who was born of her. And they said unto her, " Tell us how Christ was born of thee without the seed of man " ; and Mary told them everything that had happened to her. And when they were going to return to their own country she blessed them, and gave them beautiful smelling perfume, so that their kinsfolk might believe that the story of the holy woman Mary was well-founded. And there came unto her other women whose hands had been made useless by a devil, and they said unto her, " Have compassion upon us, O holy and (Fol. 59a, col. i) pure woman, and heal us of our sickness." And the holy woman prayed over them, and blessed them, and straightway they were healed of their sickness. And again, there came unto her a woman from Egypt who had a violent fever, and she bowed low before Mary, and straightway she was healed of her fever. And again, there came unto Mary a woman whose right eye a devil had blinded, and she made supplication unto her, and said, " Have mercy upon me, O my Lady, and lay thine hand upon my eye " ; and she was healed in that same hour. And again, there came unto her a woman whom a multitude of devils were dragging about, and she cried out with a loud cry to Mary, and said, " Heal me, my Lady." [And Mary] said, " I adjure you in the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ to go forth from this soul, and not to afflict her again." And from that moment (Fol. 59a, col. 2) the devils went out from that woman, and they cried out, saying, " What have we to do with thee, O Mary, the Mother of Christ ? Behold, we have been scattered about in every country through the Great Power of Him that was born of thee. For we are unable to stand up before Him, and He hath made us descend into the depths of the earth, and thou, like Him, hast driven us away from this soul by thy prayer." And thereupon Mary made them to descend into the depths of the sea. And Safron, king of Egypt, whose ... a lion, had seized (i.e. clawed), cried out and said, " Heal me, O my Lady, by thy

prayer." And she stretched out her hands and laid them on his head, and he was healed of his sickness in that same hour.

XIV (*sic*). And then a great multitude of sick and diseased people gathered together in Jerusalem, and they enquired and said, (Fol. 59a, col. 3) " Where is the blessed woman Mary ? " And they answered and said, " She is not here, she dwelleth in Bethlehem." And many sick folk, and innumerable people came to her, and they fell down on their faces at the door of Mary's house, and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, " O holy Mary, Mother of God, have compassion upon us, and heal us, and do not suffer us to be put to shame." And when Mary heard their voices, she prayed over them and said, " O my Lord Jesus Christ, in Thy great majesty receive their prayer and hearken unto my petition, and heal Thou those sick and suffering souls who have come unto Thee " ; and they were all healed straightway. Now the number of those people was two thousand and eight, besides women and children ; and there was great praising in all the country of Bethlehem. And at that moment the magistrates of Jerusalem and the elders of (Fol. 59b, col. i) Bethlehem came, and they called the men who had been healed by Mary, and asked them and said unto them, " Tell us what Mary did unto you." And they answered and said unto them, " When Mary prayed over us great power went forth from her, and we were healed."

XV (*sic*). And when the Jews heard these things from them, their eyes became dark, and their priests were afraid, and their magistrates were terrified ; and they said with a loud voice, " Behold, great sorrow, and tribulation, and destruction have come upon us through Mary " ; and there were some who said, " From this moment cast forth Mary from Bethlehem. She shall not dwell among you." And when the evening of that day had come, the Jews arrived at the house of Mary in order to lay hold upon the disciples and Mary. But when they arrived at her house they could not enter therein, for at that moment the gates of heaven were opened, and a great light shot forth, (Fol. 59b, col. 2) and then they returned to the magistrates and priests, and told them what had happened. And they commanded the captain to go with thirty men, and to seize Mary and the disciples. And at that moment the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, and He said unto them, " Behold, a captain with thirty soldiers hath come from Jerusalem to seize you. And now, rise up, get ye forth from this place, and fear not* Behold, I will make you to pass between heaven and earth, and no man shall be able to see you, for the might of the Son of God shall be with you." And then the Apostles went forth bearing Mary's couch, and the Holy Spirit came, and caught them up, and brought them to Jerusalem. And when the captain arrived and his soldiers and went into the house they found there no one whatsoever. And they were exceedingly angry, and they said unto (Fol. 59b, col. 3) the men of the house, " Did not ye come to the magistrates and priests, and inform them that the disciples of Jesus were with Mary, with great glory, and that the angels of God were ascending to heaven and descending to Mary's house ? And now, come ye to the magistrates and the priests, and tell them everything ye wish." And they departed with them, and they came into Jerusalem, and told the magistrates and the priests, saying, " We came to Bethlehem, and we found nobody there — neither Mary nor the disciples." And the priests said unto them, " Do ye not know that the disciples worked the bewitchment of your eyes so that ye might not see [them] ? But now that ye have heard certain news of them, seize them and bring them unto us."

XVI. And five days afterwards the men of Jerusalem saw the angels (Fol. 60a, col. i) of God coming into and going out from the house of Mary. And behold, her neighbours gathered together, and they said, " O holy Mary, Mother of God, we put our hope in thee that thou wilt beseech Christ to send unto us salvation from Him." And on the morrow the priests sent and called her neighbours, and said unto them, " What are these cries and noises which we hear from you ? " And they answered and said unto them, " Behold, Mary, the Mother of God, hath returned to her house, and the angels of God are singing praises before her." And then the priests went to the governor and said unto him, " Behold now, there is a great earthquake, and murder, and revolt in Jerusalem because of Mary." And the governor answered and said unto them, " What then shall we do that the men of Jerusalem may be quieted (?) ? " And they said unto him, " Let us take fire and wood and burn her house where she is." And the governor answered and said unto them, " Do what ye wish." And then (Fol. 60a, col. 2) the men of Jerusalem took fire and wood to burn down the house wherein Mary dwelt. And when they had come to the house wherein Mary lived, they began to burn the doors of her house, and straightway the angels of God came down, and beat upon the faces of the men with their wings, and they burned up all those who approached the doors of her house, and many people died there, and there was great fear in Jerusalem. And when the governor saw this miracle, he stretched out his hands to heaven, and said, "

Glory be to God Who was born of the Virgin Mary. I will thank Him, and praise Him, and worship Him for ever." And on the following day the governor sent and gathered together the priests and all the men of Jerusalem, and he said unto them, " O ye evil men w^ho crucified Christ, Who came down from heaven for the salvation of all the world, I believe in Him, for I am not [one] of you, and I do not belong to the people (Fol. 60a, col. 3) of your country, for it was the Emperor Tiberius who made me governor over you because of the wickedness of your deeds. Behold, henceforth I command you that no man shall approach the house of Mary the twofold Virgin, the Mother of God."

XVII. And then there rose up a certain man who was a believer, and whose name was Caleb — now he believed in Christ — and he spake unto the governor privily, and said unto him, " O governor, make them to swear by the Living God, Who brought the children of Israel out from the land of Egypt, and by the Holy Law of Moses, that they will not swear falsely ; but let them speak what is the truth, and let them say truly whether Christ, Who was born of Mary the prophetess, is the Son of God, or a man who was born through carnal union. For behold, I know that they are wise men, and are able to understand the word of the Book." And then (Fol. 60b, col. i) the governor rose up and seated himself upon a high throne, and he commanded [his men] to gather together all the people of Jerusalem. And he made them to swear the oath which Caleb had uttered to him, and he said unto them, " O children of Israel, I adjure you by the Holy Law, that ye separate those in your midst who believe that Christ was born of Mary from those who do not believe."

XVIII. And when they heard this they separated themselves each from his fellow in great fear. And the governor answered and said unto them, " Do ye believe in Christ Who was born of Mary, or not ? " And the elders said unto the governor, " We believe in Him, that He is the Son of God, the Maker of the heavens. And of the earth, and of everything that is in them." And the others who did not believe said unto the governor, " Behold, we know that the coming of Christ is not near." And those who loved Christ answered and said, " Did not (Fol. 60b, col. 2) our father Adam command his son Seth before his death, and say unto him. Behold, sacrifices of [the] offering shall be set in the treasury of the Cave ? The men of wisdom shall bring gold, and frankincense, and myrrh before the Son of God, Who is to be born in Bethlehem." And those who denied Christ and did not believe said, " Is Christ greater with God than Abraham who opened the heavens and held converse with Him ? " And those who loved Christ answered and said, "Assuredly ye are deniers who are without knowledge. But we believe and we know well that He Who was born of Mary, the Creator of all the world, was Creator before Abraham was in the womb ; Christ existed before all creation." And the deniers said, " Is this Christ in Whom ye believe more honourable than Isaac, who was a fair offering unto God ? " (Fol. 60b, col. 3) And the lovers of Christ said, " If Isaac had been offered up he might be called an offering, but he was only a symbol of the Son, whereas Christ, Who was crucified on the wood of the Cross, was an offering for the v^hole world, and in Him they make offering to God." The deniers of Christ, who did not believe in Him, said, " Is Christ greater than Jacob who saw the Ladder of heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on that Ladder ? " The lovers of Christ said, " The angels and the Ladder which Jacob saw between heaven and earth are a prophecy concerning Christ." And the deniers, who did not believe, said, " Is Christ greater than Elijah who went up to heaven, and with all of whose works God was well pleased ? " The lovers of Christ said, " Elijah [went up] into the cloud which is under heaven, to the place where the sun and moon appear, (Fol. 61a, col. i) but there was no one who worshipped Elijah in the place where he went except Elisha his disciple. But after Christ went up above the heavens all created beings worshipped Him, both those who were in the heavens and those who were on the earth." And the deniers who did not believe said, " Is Christ greater than Moses who drowned Pharaoh and his host in the sea, and who made the water to stand up like a wall on this side and on that, and who delivered the children of Israel ? " And the lovers of Christ said, " Did not Christ rebuke the devils and drown them in the sea ? And again. He stretched out His hands, and saved Simon Peter from the water of the sea. For He had dominion over all created things, both those that were on dry land and those that were on the water." And when the governor heard this he believed on Christ, and he had the forty men who did not believe scourged with cords, (Fol. 61a, col. 2).

XIX. And when the evening of that day had come, and the cock crew, the governor went to Mary with his two sons ; now one of the governor's sons was sick. And when he arrived, he knocked at the door of Mary's house, and one of the maidens who ministered unto Mary went out, and the governor said unto her, " Speak to the holy woman on my behalf." And when the holy woman heard she commanded her to open her door. And when the governor entered her presence, he wept and said unto her, " O Mother of God, peace be unto thee, and peace be unto Christ Who was born of thee, and peace be unto the heavens which carry the throne of His power. Behold, from this time forth, by heaven, I will worship thee, and I will believe on Christ Who was born of thee. Do thou stretch out thy right hand and bless me, O Mother of the Light, and pray for my son that he may be healed of his sickness. And pray thou for the men of Romeya (Romiya), and pray also for me, that I may go forth from this (FoL 6ia, col. 3) city in peace, and depart and see my kinsfolk safe and well." And then the holy woman stretched out her hand, and blessed him, and said unto him, " Sit down here." And when the governor saw the Apostles standing before Mary, he prostrated himself at their feet, and said unto them, " Peace be unto you, O ye holy ones of God, Who hath chosen you to preach in His Name in all the world." And then the Apostles blessed the governor, and straightway his son was healed, and he departed to Romeya, and related unto many everything that he had seen with Mary. And there were there the disciples of Paul, and they wrote down all the signs and wonders that took place through those who called upon the name of the holy woman Mary.

XX. And when the morning had come, the Holy Spirit said unto the Apostles, " Take Mary, and carry her away out of Jerusalem, and bring her along the road that (Fol. 6ib, col. i) leadeth to the river to the place towards the east, where there are caves and caverns." And they took her and seated her upon that couch, and they sang hymns over her until the day broke ; and when the day had come they took Mary out from Jerusalem. And then many Jews gathered together, and they said unto Tafonya, " We know that thou art a strong and mighty man, now go, and seize the couch of Mary, and hurl it on the ground, and we will burn her body in the fire, so that the disciples may not imagine that they have overcome the men of Jerusalem."

XXI. And then Tafonya rose up and stretched out his hand to break the couch of Mary, and at that moment the Angel of God came down and smote him with a sword of fire, and cut off his two hands and arms up to the shoulders, and they were hanging upon the couch. And then he wept and cried to the Apostles, and said unto (Fol. 6ib, col. 2) them, " Have mercy upon me and show compassion unto me. And do Thou, O Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have compassion upon me, according to Thy great compassion." And the Apostles answered and said unto him, " Ask Mary, whose couch thou didst wish to break." Thereupon Tafonya said, " O Mary, Mother of God, have compassion upon me." And Mary answered and said unto Peter, " Let these limbs, which have been cut off and are lying upon the couch, be restored to him in their former state and place." Then Peter took up the two arms which had been cut off, and he said, " In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Name of Mary, the holy woman, get ye back to your former places " ; and they were healed straightway. Then Peter took up a rod and gave it to Tafonya, and he said unto him, " Go thou, and henceforward reveal the power of the Son of God before all the Jews, and relate unto them how the worker of miracles, (Fol. 6ib, col. 3) Mary, wrought a miracle on thy behalf (now they hated Mary exceedingly), and ye say. This woman hath killed us during her life [time] ; now we will burn the body of Mary in the fire." But the deniers of Christ did not know and did not understand that our Lord Jesus Christ would not leave the body of His Mother in this world. Behold now, I will tell [the truth to] you, O lovers of Christ, all who love Mary and celebrate her commemoration and believe in her Son, and are not friends of the Jews — for if they are they are far from the love of Christ. And whilst the Apostles were singing hymns over Mary in the cave, the Holy Spirit spake and said unto them, " On the sixth day of the month, on the first day of the week, the Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, the Mother of God, and he announced unto her concerning Him that was to be born of her for the salvation of all the world. And on the first day of the week the Lord (Fol. 62a, col. i) Christ was born of Mary the Virgin in Bethlehem. And also on the first day of the week old men and young men praised Him. And also on the first day of the week our Lord rose from the dead. And on the first day of the week He will come again to judge both the quick and the dead. And on the first day of the week He will come, together with all the hosts of heaven. And to those who are on earth that they may make Mary to depart from this world will He show His glory through her. And on the first day of the week came Eve, the mother of the race of men, and Hanna the mother of the holy woman Mary, and Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. And they drew nigh to Mary, and they bowed low at her feet and they said, Glory be to God, Who chose thee to be for Him the habitation of His glory."

XXII. And when Peter saw the disciples coming to Mary, he said unto the women, " Remove her from here." (Fol. 62a, col. 2) And then came Adam and Seth his son, and Noah and Shem, and bowed low at the feet of the holy woman. And then came the other fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and David the Prophet, and they bowed low before Mary. And there came also the Prophets, having in their hands censers, and bowed down before the blessed woman. And the heavens opened, and there came forth therefrom the armies of the angels, which were without number, that they might see the departure of Mary from this world. And then came Enoch, Moses, and Elijah mounted upon chariots of fire, and they stood up between heaven and earth that they might see the descent of our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ.

XXIII (sic). And then came the Twelve Hosts of the Archangels, and their number was twelve times ten thousand. And after this appeared our Lord Jesus Christ, (Fol. 62a, col. 3) sitting upon the chariot of the Cherubim and Seraphim, and He came unto Mary. And all created beings thanked Him, and praised Him, and blessed Him. And He said unto the holy woman, " O Mary ! " And she answered and said unto Him, " I am here, my Lord and my God, Jesus Christ." And our Lord said unto her, " Behold thou the glory that hath been given unto Me by the Great Father." And Mary looked upon the glory which none can describe. And our Lord said unto her, " Henceforth I shall take thy body into Paradise, where it shall dwell until the Resurrection of the dead, and I will command the angels to minister unto thee." And then the Apostles came to Mary and said unto her, " O Mother of the Light, pray thou for the world wherefrom thou art going forth. And pray thou for all those who shall celebrate thy commemoration, and who shall offer up offerings in thy name. And pray for all those who believe in God, Who sent His beloved Son, and dwelt in thee." (Fol. 62b, col. I.)

XXV (sic). And thereupon Mary prayed and said, " O Lord God, Who dwellest in the heavens. Who of Thine own free will didst send Thy Son Jesus Christ and He dwelt in my womb, I beseech and entreat Thee for all the children of baptism who shall celebrate my commemoration, and make offerings to me. Hear, O Lord, their prayers and petitions, and remove from them captivity, and slaughter, and famine, and every kind of sorrow, and barrenness from barren women, when they make offerings to me. And deliver their crops from mice, and locusts, and the large wingless locust, and from hail, and frost, and the little wingless locust. And let those who are under the power of devils, and are grievously sick, be healed in my name. And save Thou those who go down into the sea in ships, when they call upon my name from the waves and billows (Fol. 62b, col. 2) of the sea and from the violence of the winds. And when those who journey into a far country call upon my name, do Thou bring them back into their city. And let the crops of those who bring forth fruit for offerings in my name be blessed. And let all those who celebrate my commemoration be blessed forever and ever." Then our Lord answered and said unto her, " Everything for which thou hast asked Me shall be given unto thee. And I will have mercy upon everyone who shall call upon thy name, and I will have compassion upon him, and will forgive his sins. And for everyone who shall make alms and offerings in thy name, the odour and perfume thereof shall ascend to heaven before the throne of My Father, and before thy Son Jesus Christ, and before the Holy Spirit, forever." And all created beings answered and said "Amen."

XXIV (sic). (Fol. 62b, col. 3) And then our Lord answered and said unto Peter, " Speak unto all the beings of heaven and command them to sing hymns and play instruments of music with joy and gladness " ; and at that moment the soul of the holy woman Mary went forth, and He took it away into the treasures of the Father. Then John stretched forth his hand, and straightened her, and closed her eyes ; and Peter and Paul straightened her hands, and feet, but they did not remove the apparel that was upon her, for the Holy Spirit had arrayed her in great light which could not be comprehended. And the Twelve Apostles lifted her up, and twelve clouds of light bore the Apostles, and brought them into Paradise. And there went before her Eve our mother, and Hanna, the mother of the holy Lady Mary, and Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. And after them came Adam and Seth, and Noah and Shem ; and after them Abraham, Isaac, and (Fol. 63a, col. i) Jacob, and David the Prophet ; and after them other prophets, and Enoch, and Moses, and Elijah ; and after these the chariots of our Lord Jesus Christ. And after this the Twelve Apostles went forth and brought the holy woman Mary into the Garden of Delight, and they laid her down there.

XXV (sic). Then all the created beings turned and went back to their habitations ; and the Apostles went to Mount Sinai, being carried thither upon the clouds, and there was not one of them left behind. And they

prayed, saying, " We praise Thee, O our Lord Jesus Christ, because Thou hast gathered us together from the ends of the world, and hast held us worthy to receive the blessing of Mary Thy mother, before she departed from this world. And as Thou didst speak with Thy holy mouth and say unto us, ' Behold, I will give you power to tread upon vipers and scorpions ; and (Fol. 63a, col. 2) ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, and shall judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel, who would not believe in Thee and in Mary Thy mother." And when the Apostles had finished praying, they said, " Let us write down everything that we have seen, and heard, and known, concerning the departure of the blessed Mary from this world. The departure of the pure and holy Lady Mary took place in the three hundred and forty-fifth year. And we ordain and command that men shall celebrate the commemoration of the holy and blessed Mary three times yearly, the first is the day of her commemoration, the [second is the] following day, and [the third is] Christmas Day. On the day whereon one shall celebrate her commemoration he shall be delivered from the locust that is hidden in the ground, and his crop shall be blessed. Moreover, by her prayer kings shall be delivered from murder (or, battle), and there shall be no enemy among them, and the blood of men shall not be poured out on the earth." And the Apostles also commanded that men should celebrate her commemoration in the month of Iyar, on the day of her death, for (Fol. 63a, col. 3) through her prayer the birds of the air shall not devour the fruit of the earth, nor the worms, nor the black worm, nor the locust, and there shall not be a famine among men.

XXVI. And then the Holy Spirit said unto the Apostles, " I will declare unto you the country whereto God wisheth to send the punishment of His wrath ; and He will bring the locust to that country as it were in the twinkling of the eye." And for this reason the Apostles commanded men in each month of Iyar to perform her covenant, and to pray to God to be delivered from tribulation. And the Apostles also commanded men to celebrate the commemoration of Mary on the 16th (or 17th) day of Nohasse, for the sake of the vineyard and the flowering vines and the fruit-bearing trees. And the Apostles also commanded those who are willing to give a gift, and to present in the evening pure flour of wheat. And a watch (or, custody) shall be kept over it in the church until the dawn, and the priests shall pray over it, (Fol. 63b, col. i) saying, " O Mother of God Most High, hear thou the prayer of those who commemorate thy name, and accept this offering which they bring unto thee." And whilst they are praying in this wise, Mary, the Mother of the Light, shall come, and shall bless this offering, and those who have brought it to her, and those who are changed thereby forever and ever. And when the Apostles had finished this matter a voice came unto them from heaven, saying, " Let each one of you take a copy of the commemoration of Mary, and return to his own country." And then chariots of clouds came and caught up each of them, and brought each of them into his own country ; and those who were dead returned to their graves.

XXVIII (sic). And after our Lord Jesus Christ had come to Mary in the Garden, He (Fol. 63b, col. 2) said unto her, " Behold thou the good things which God hath prepared for those who love Him." And then she lifted up her holy eyes and saw the habitations of the saints and their exceedingly great beauties, and the saints dwelt therein in great happiness. And she also saw the habitations of the martyrs with their crowns on their heads ; and some of them exhaled a sweet perfume, and from some of the trees there went forth the scent of flowers. And then our Lord Jesus plucked some of the fruits of those trees, and gave them unto Mary, and said unto her, "Ascend that thou mayest see what is in the heavens." And the holy woman went up and saw the water which is above the third heaven, and above it was the heavenly Jerusalem. And the Lord commanded the sun to stand still in the door of heaven, and the light thereof came into the Garden ; the foundations of which are in the earth, and its walls reach (Fol. 63b, col. 3) up to heaven. And from it there went forth four rivers, Ifoson, and Goyon (Nile), and Tigris, and Euphrates. Now when the Flood came upon the earth the might of God did not permit heaven to raise up the Garden greatly. And our Lord Jesus Christ sat upon the throne of a chariot of light above the sun, and Mary saw the storehouses of God, the storehouse of the snow and ice, the storehouse of the dew and the storm, the storehouse of the cold and the rain, and the storehouse of the lightning and the thunder. And she also saw the places where were all kinds of beautiful things, and the place where Elijah stood, and he was praying in the forefront of heaven. And she saw the second heaven also, and the angels with their wings spread out, and their eyes were turned upwards, and they ceased not from reciting words of praise, and they said, " Holy, Holy, Holy, God of (Fol. 64a, col. i) Hosts." And she also saw in the third heaven twelve Mansions, and in them were the Twelve Apostles. And each Apostle stood in one gate, with hosts and armies of angels ascribing praise [to God]. And in the largest gate was the heavenly Jerusalem. And in that place she saw Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Prophet David

standing, and worshipping the Great King Jesus Christ. And then she went in and saw the heavenly Jerusalem. And when she came to the first gate the angels worshipped her. And in the second gate Surafil worshipped her. And in the third gate the Cherubim worshipped her. And in the fourth gate the hosts of the Powers worshipped her. And in the fifth gate the lightnings and the thunder worshipped her. And in the sixth gate the angels cried out before her, saying, " Holy, Holy, Holy, God (Fol. 64a, col. 2) of Hosts." And in the seventh gate the lights of fire worshipped her. And in the eighth gate the rains, and the dew, and the mists worshipped her. And in the ninth gate Michael and Gabriel worshipped her. And in the tenth gate all the splendours of the sun and the moon and the stars worshipped her. And in the eleventh gate all the Apostles praised her and worshipped her. And in the twelfth gate all the powers (or, hosts) of God worshipped her, and there she saw Him Who was born of her. In this wise did the entrance of Mary into the heavenly Jerusalem take place, and at that moment she bowed down before God the Father. And then the holy woman saw the Holy Father, and the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and the Father was being praised by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit by the Father and by the Son. And then Jesus Christ showed Mary the hidden (Fol. 64a, col. 3) mysteries, which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard of, [for] the heart of man hath not been able to conceive what God hath prepared for and will give unto those who love Him and believe in His Name. And at the Last Day He will make them to see the joy that is never-ending. And our Lord also showed her the place wherein Enoch prayeth.

XXXIII. And then Mary lifted up her eyes and saw the abode of [beings] innumerable, and they shone with exceedingly bright light, and there went forth therefrom the odour of sweetly perfumed incense, and the sweet sound of a beautiful trumpet was heard in those habitations ; and multitudes of men and women were standing in them. And then Mary said unto Him, " Tell me, O my Lord and God, who are those who dwell in this habitation ? " Our Lord answered and said unto her, " They are the righteous and the good. Behold, the light shineth upon them because of their greatness, (Fol. 64b, col. i) and they await joy and gladness at the Last Day." And she also saw the country of darkness, whereout go smoke and a foetid smell, and a mighty flame of fire blazed therein ; and multitudes of men and women were standing facing that country of darkness, and they were weeping and wailing. And Mary answered and said unto Him, " Tell me, O my Lord, who are these that are standing facing the country of darkness ? " And the Lord answered and said unto her, " This is the country of darkness. These who are standing in it are the sinners who are awaiting the punishment that is prepared for them. Moreover, there shall be cast into this fire all those who have refused to perform My commandment." And then our Lady Mary heard the voices of the righteous, saying, "Praise be unto Thee, O our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, Who in return for (Fol. 64b, col. 2) very little dost reward greatly those who call upon Thee and believe in Thee." And when Mary heard the voices of the righteous her mind was relieved and she rejoiced. And again she heard the cries and the wailings of the sinners who stood away in the country of darkness, saying, " Have mercy upon us, have compassion upon us, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, when Thou comest to judge the living and the dead." And when Mary, the mother of mercy, heard this she was exceedingly sorrowful, and she said, " O my Lord and God, have pity and compassion upon the sinners, and neglect not Thy handiwork when Thou comest to judge them, for I have heard their groaning and their weeping, and I am sorrowful on their account."

XXXIV. And then our Lord took His mother Mary and brought her into the Garden of Joy with all the denizens of heaven. And our Lady Mary told John the Less (Fol. 64b, col. 2) everything that our Lord Jesus Christ had shown her. And she said unto him, " Take heed to this matter, which thy Teacher hath shown me, until His appointed time shall be revealed unto those who celebrate my commemoration, and call upon my name. For in the last days sorrow shall be multiplied for men, and there shall be slaughter, and fear, and famine through excess of sins and evil-doing. And in that day it shall increase upon the earth, and the powers of heaven shall be moved, and the days shall be changed, and He will make days of signs and wonders to appear, and calamity shall find men, and a great sickness shall come upon them. And in that day the Only Son Jesus Christ shall first come, and neither faith nor good deeds shall be found on the earth." This is what our Lord Jesus Christ revealed unto His Mother Mary, and His Mother Mary (Fol. 65a, col. i) told it to John the Less. And then our Lord said unto His Mother Mary, " O blessed one, O blessing, everyone who calleth upon thee and celebrateth thy commemoration shall be delivered from tribulation." And His Mother Mary answered and said unto her beloved Son, our Lord, " Rightly sayest Thou, my Lord and my God, even as spake the mouth of Thy holy Father and Thine own life-giving voice. Everyone who hopeth on me upon the

earth shall be given unto me, and everyone who believeth in Thee shall live forever, and shall inherit the kingdom of heaven which Thou hast prepared for those who love Thee. Moreover, those who believe in Thee and that Thou art the Christ Who was born of me of Thine own free will in the last days for the sake of Adam, Thy first creation, shall praise Thy vivifying Name now, henceforth, and forever." May He deliver us from the nets of the Enemy Satan by the might of the prayer of our Lady Mary, (Fol. 65a, col. 2) the merciful intercessor of Christian folk forever and ever. AMEN.