

Afterwards, on Calvary, the mob blasphemed Jesus derisively shaking their heads, and drunk with blood, raved voraciously at the Innocent Prey.

4. Mary along the Way of Bitter Sorrow: "O all you that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like My sorrow, for the Lord has despoiled Me of what I loved most, according as He decreed on the day of His fiercest Wrath against the sins of My people." Here is related Christ's and Mary's meeting along the Way of Bitter Sorrow, expressing the acme of suffering of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary's Soul on being deprived of Her Divine Son, who has been snatched from Her company and vilely outraged by the perfidious Jews; thus fulfilling the decree of the Eternal Father whereby He unleashed His Wrath upon the Innocent Lamb, Jesus Christ, loading Him with our sins.

5. Christ on the Cross, Victim decreed by the Father: "They heard My groaning and there is no one to console Me; all My enemies have seen My ill and rejoiced; and all because You, my Father, decreed it thus, so that they might be like unto Me, and rejoice with Me on the day of consolation. All their wickedness which has recoiled on Me is in Your presence; and just as You have dealt with Me violently despoiling Me of My beauty and depriving Me of Your consolation, make them strip themselves of their wickedness, because My incessant groans and the bitterness of My Heart are for their welfare." Christ on the Cross, as Victim decreed by the Father, offers Him His suffering for the salvation of mankind.

6. Mary's Suffering and Spiritual Death at the foot of the Cross: "See, Lord, I am in tribulation, and My inner self is shaken; My heart has been transfixed within Me, for I am filled with bitterness: because abroad the sword slays, and at home there is a like death." Mary, at the foot of the Cross, feels overwhelmed by the most terrible desolation, seeing the Fruit of Her womb converted on the Cross into the most abject of lepers. Her maternal Heart is transfixed by a sharp-pointed sword, and through this most painful transfixion She partakes of the same bitter agony as Her Divine Son, Who a while before had expired, and whose Divine Heart is now transpierced by Longinus's lance, which causes in Mary a death like to that of Her Son, only spiritual.

7. Mary, at the foot of the Cross, Co-Victim decreed by the Father, weeps bitterly for the many who are condemned: "Therefore do I weep, and My eyes are fountains of water, because the Consoler, who revives My Soul, is gone far from Me; My children are lost, because the enemy prevailed." Mary, at the foot of the Cross, is engulfed in a sea of weeping; since, besides the loss of Her Divine Son, the Consoler Who relieves and vivifies Her Soul, She feels within Herself the bitter gall produced by the damnation of so many children who, by not availing themselves of the Salvific Blood of Christ, irremediably become Satan's prey.

8. Mary's Heart, fully consoled by our Redemption: "To whom shall I compare You, or to whom shall I liken You, Daughter of Jerusalem? To whom shall I equal You, and how shall I console You, O Virgin Daughter of Zion? For immense as the sea is Your grief: who shall succour You?" On Calvary, Saint John the Evangelist completed the Infinite Sacrifice of Christ and Mary by uniting it to the finite sacrifice of the Church, the Heart of the Sorrowful Mother thereby becoming fully consoled by the presence of the good works of mankind on Calvary, for She sees in them the fruits of so bloody a Passion, whereby many are ransomed from the bondage of sin and the devil, and begotten to the life of Grace.

Book III The Prophet Ezechiel

Chapter I Birth of the Prophet Ezechiel

The Prophet Ezechiel, from the tribe of Levi, son of the priest Buzi, was born in Bethlehem of Judah in the year 4580, during the reign of Josias, king of the reunified Kingdom of Israel, forty-nine years prior to the general deportation to Babylonia. Ezechiel is one of the prophets called Major. His name signifies 'God is strong'.

Chapter II State of corruption in the reunified Kingdom of Israel

From the death of virtuous King Josias, which occurred in the year 4583, until Ezechiel was deported to Babylonia, the prophet's life unfolded amid the idolatry and other aberrations which infested the People of Israel.

Chapter III Ezechiel is anointed prophet in minor grade.

Ezechiel's graphic and symbolical prophetic vision of the siege of Jerusalem. Ezechiel's preaching in the city

1. In the year 4592, when twelve years old, Ezechiel was anointed prophet in minor grade by Most Holy Melchisedech, in the Cave of Bethlehem where Our Lord Jesus Christ was to be born. With regard to the Kingdom of Israel, Ezechiel carried out his prophetic mission as minor grade prophet during the reigns of the perverse kings Joachim, Jechonias and Sedecias.

2. After Ezechiel had been anointed prophet in minor grade, in the Cave of Bethlehem itself the Lord God manifested to him a symbolical vision of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian armies, as Ezechiel himself describes. "The Lord God of Hosts said to me: You, man, take a brick slab, go to the centre of the city of Jerusalem and lay it before you in a public place, and with a burin you will draw the city on it. Next you will delineate a well-ordered siege against her: you will raise fortifications, dig trenches, set up an enemy camp and position battering rams by the walls. Next you will take an iron frying pan and place it as if it were wall of iron between you and the outlined city, upon which you will look with the stern gaze of an inflexible enemy; and she will be besieged, because you will beleaguer her: All this is a sign or prophecy against the People of Israel. Moreover you will sleep on your left side for three hundred and

three hundred and thirty days, and by this posture you will assume and expiate the wickedness committed by My People Israel; and after that a year must be understood for each day. Then you will sleep on your right side for three hundred and thirty days, and by this posture you will again assume and expiate the wickedness committed by My People Israel: given that a year must be understood for each day. Thereafter you will again gaze sternly and angrily upon the besieged Jerusalem you have portrayed; and stretching out your right hand, you will prophesy against the city and against all My People Israel. Look, man, how I now encircle your body with chains so that you cannot move, and you yourself assume the anguish of the frightful oppression the inhabitants of Jerusalem will suffer during the enemy siege."

3. "From time to time you will eat and drink sufficient so as not to die. You yourself will cook barley bread in the members of the fire you will make using the dung of dry human excrement. And the Lord went on to say to me: In like manner will the children of Israel eat their unclean bread among the people of the foreign nation to which they are to be deported. And I said to the Lord: Ah, ah, Lord God of Israel! Listen, never until now has anything so repugnant as bread cooked in human excrement entered my mouth. And the Lord added: Well then, instead of human excrement you will use the dung of oxen to cook your bread. And the Lord also said to me: See here, O man, during the siege of Jerusalem I will permit the city almost to run out of bread and water; and the little there is to eat will be eaten in fear, and the little there is to drink will be drunk in affliction. And when they find themselves completely deprived of bread and water, many will die of hunger and thirst, and even reach the point of eating one another, thereby paying for their iniquities." The Prophet Ezechiel saw, experienced and felt in symbolical vision the siege of Jerusalem that the Babylonian army was to set up, as well as the frightful suffering of its inhabitants due to plague, famine, deaths and other manifold misfortunes.

4. The Prophet Ezechiel, in symbolical vision, lay on his right and left sides for a total of seven hundred and eighty-six days, representing that same number of years, in order thus to assume and expiate the sins of the People of Israel; namely those sins committed from the year 3806 until the year 4592, in which Ezechiel saw this symbolical vision; since in the year 3806, due to the transgressions of a section of the Israel's People during Othoniel's caudilloship, God permitted the army of the king of Edom or Idumea in exile to invade that southern part of Israelite territory. This was the first apostasy of a section of the People of Israel after the crossing of the River Jordan by the Israelites under Joshua's command. Therefore, between the year 3806, when this invasion took place, and Ezechiel's vision in the year 4592, seven hundred and eighty-six years had elapsed.

5. At the conclusion of this vision the Lord God of Hosts commanded the Prophet Ezechiel to go to Jerusalem, and in the midst of the city proclaim in a loud voice all he had seen in the symbolical vision, and everything the Lord had communicated to him in the course thereof. And, moreover, to announce to the people that if they were willing to be converted to the Lord God of Israel, and banish all idolatry and other corruption, He, as Father of Goodness, would forgive them and not permit the disastrous prophecies announced concerning Jerusalem and all Israel to take place. But Ezechiel's words on God's behalf were the object of contempt and mockery by the majority of the people.

Chapter IV

Ezechiel's marriage. Vision of idolatry inside the Temple of God in Jerusalem

1. In the year 4598, when eighteen years old, Ezechiel married a beautiful girl. Both had been Essenian terciarios from childhood. Ezechiel's wife bore him seven children, all boys.

2. In that same year 4598, the Prophet Ezechiel was translated in vision from his home to the Temple of God in Jerusalem, as he himself relates: "While I was seated in my home, having a conversation with two elders, faithful to the Lord, belonging to the Great Sanhedrin of Israel, I suddenly felt upon myself like the hand of the Lord God, touching me from behind on the shoulder. I looked back, and lo I saw the image of a man with the appearance of fire; since from waist to feet all was fire, and from the waist up like a resplendent light. And I saw like a hand stretched out, which grasped me by a lock of my hair, and lifted me up in spirit between heaven and earth; and without moving me from my home, transported me in vision to the Porch of the Temple of Jerusalem; and then I saw the glory of the Lord God of Israel. He then took me to the part of the court of the Israelites beside the gate of the Temple facing northwards, and there I saw a multitude of women adoring the idol Adonis. And the Lord said to me: 'Man, now you are seeing abominations'."

3. And the Lord went on to say: "Man, but do you by any chance think you have seen all the abominations Israel commits in My Sacred Temple? Turn around and you will see yet greater abominations. And He took me to the part of the court of the Israelites beside the gate of the Temple facing southwards, where the altar with the idol 'Jealousy' stood, placed there with the intention of making God jealous by the worship they paid to the idol. And the Lord spoke to me and said: 'Man, look up'; and looking up I saw the altar of the idol Jealousy surrounded by a multitude of men adoring it."

4. "And the Lord said to me: 'Man, do you by any chance think that you have seen all the abominations Israel commits in My Sacred Temple? Wait, and you will see greater abominations than these.' He then brought me into the court of the priests; and there I saw, beside the altar of holocausts, seventy of the elders of the Great Sanhedrin of Israel, who with their backs to the Tabernacle of the Temple of the Lord and their faces to the east, were adoring the rising sun. And the Lord God told me: 'Now you have seen something, man, and there is still more to see.'"

5. "Then the Lord brought me into a secret chamber, which was the Sanctum, and said to me: 'Man, draw back the curtains'; and having done so a door appeared, which was that giving access to the Sanctum Sanctorum. Then the Lord told me: 'Go in and observe the manifold abominations My bad priests commit here'. And having entered, I saw the forms of all kinds of reptiles and abominable beasts, and idols of Israel, painted all over the walls. I beheld many priests, and in their midst the priest Jechonias son of Saphan, and the prince of the people Felthias son of Banahias.

All were kneeling before the idols, each with a thurible in his hand, and the incense raised so much smoke as to seem a mist. Then the Lord God of Israel said to me: 'Man, surely you see what My bad priests do in the dark, as if hidden from Me, for they say: Since the Lord God cannot see or hear us, we will adore these idols so that they protect us.'

6. "And the Lord said to me: Man, now you have observed the iniquities of My people, but not all. Now you see how this perverse and ungrateful people occupies itself in suchlike abominations and thus irritates Me further every day. But I as well will treat them with just rigour; since if they are not sincerely converted to Me, I will neither look upon them compassionately nor employ mercy towards them, however much they cry out to Me to hear them."

Chapter V

Ezechiel receives the rank of levite minister. Fresh symbolical vision of Jerusalem's punishments

1. In the year 4599, ninth of perverse Joachim's reign, the Prophet Ezechiel, nineteen years old, received the rank of levite minister in the Temple of God in Jerusalem. After the ceremony, the Lord God showed him in symbolical vision, with fresh details, the siege of Jerusalem and its disastrous consequences, as Ezechiel describes. "The Lord God of Hosts said to me: Man, take a barber's sharp razor, and with it you will cut off the hair of your head and shave off your beard. Next, take a pair of scales and make your way to the centre of Jerusalem, and in the most public spot you will divide the hair into three equal parts: a third part you will burn in the fire, thereby symbolizing those who will die of plague and famine in the siege of the city; another third part you will cut with a knife, thereby symbolizing those who will die by the sword during the siege; and the remaining third part you will scatter to the wind, thereby symbolizing the scattering of My people and their being led into captivity. But of the remaining third part of hair, before scattering it to the wind, you will take a portion thereof, of which: some, you will also cast into the midst of the fire, thereby symbolizing that from there will issue fire against all the house of Israel; and another part, you will bind to the extremity of your cape, thereby symbolizing the tiny remnant of My people which will remain in Israel." The Prophet Ezechiel, through this symbolical vision, beheld, experienced and felt all the misfortunes the Lord was showing him concerning the siege of Jerusalem.

2. When the vision had come to an end, the Lord God said to Ezechiel: "Make known the following to My people. The Lord God of Hosts says this: See how corrupt Jerusalem now is! She whom I established as My Holy City so that, by her good example, she might serve as model for the whole territory of Israel and also for the surrounding pagan nations! See how Jerusalem has despised My plans, becoming more impious than pagan peoples; since she has transgressed My commandments, despised My laws and denied worship to her God and Lord in order to render it to idols. O Jerusalem, O My People Israel, be converted to Me! It is not too late! Banish the idols and their altars, those set up in My Sacred Temple and as well throughout Israel, and let so much corruption and wrongdoing finally cease."

3. "Now the Lord God of Hosts says this: Listen, I am angry with you because of your wrongdoings; and if you do not amend, I Myself will punish you, Jerusalem, and all My people, in the sight of the other nations; and I will permit that, because of your abominations, to you be done what was never done to you before. So that in you, parents will be seen to eat their children and children their parents, and I will judge you severely, and allow many of you to be scattered like dust by the wind. Therefore, the Lord says: I swear to you, O Jerusalem, that just as you have profaned the Sacred Temple by all your scandal and all your profanation, I will cause My Holy Wrath to fall upon you permitting your enemies to have no mercy on you. One part of your inhabitants will die of plague or perish from hunger in your midst; another part will die by the enemy sword; and another part will be deported and subjected to captivity. In this manner will I vent My holy fury and My Just Wrath, and then you will acknowledge that it was I, your God and Lord, who have so often spoken to you filled with zeal for My glory and your salvation. O Jerusalem! You will be laid waste in such a fashion as to become the object of derision and mockery of all who, coming from other nations, pass through you; since though now you trample on My Holy Law and in addition despise the prophecies I send you through My prophets, the day you are beleaguered and subjected to famine, thirst and plague, you shall realize that it was I, the Lord God of Hosts, Who so often warned you through My prophets." The Prophet Ezechiel fulfilled with the greatest exactness everything that the Lord had commanded him; but his prophetic symbols and words were greeted with contempt and laughter by many of Jerusalem's inhabitants.

Chapter VI

Ezechiel receives the rank of Levitical priest. Ezechiel's prophetic vision on the punishment of idolaters.

Ezechiel foretells the second deportation of Israelites to Babylonia

1. In the year 4601, eleventh of perverse Joachim's reign, the Prophet Ezechiel, twenty-one years old, received the rank of Levitical priest in the Temple of God in Jerusalem.

2. After the ceremony, the Lord God spoke to Ezechiel, as he himself narrates: "Man, look with indignation at the People of Israel and prophesy against them. And you will say on My behalf: 'Oh! People of Israel, listen to the word of the Lord God of Hosts: The Lord God says this to the towns, mountains, hills and valleys: I will permit that, for a second time, the sword of the enemy be unsheathed against My people, and that many of your towns be invaded, and remain under Babylonian rule. I will allow the invading armies to raze a great number of your towns, many of whose inhabitants will fall dead before the idols they adore. Thus the slaughter among you will be very great, in order that you acknowledge Me as the Lord God. And those who manage to escape the enemy sword and take refuge in other countries, as well as those who are led away captive, shall all remember Me wherever they may be, for I will crush the adulterous heart of this people which has withdrawn from Me, and will humble their eyes inflamed from their infamous adoration of idols; then they, on remembering the wickedness they committed by all their abominations, will reproach themselves for the many misfortunes which have befallen them. And they will know that I am the Lord God of Mercy, and at the same time the Avenger.'"

3. "And the Lord also said this to me: Ezechiel, strike one of your hands and one of your feet and say: Woe to the People of Israel on account of her iniquity and abomination! Because many of her inhabitants are to perish by the sword, by famine and by plague. I will unleash My just indignation upon this ungrateful people. And they will know that I am the Lord God of Hosts when many of their corpses lie beside the idols and their altars they set up in towns, on fells, on hilltops, beneath trees, and in many other places. My Holy Wrath will be unleashed over this iniquitous people, which will be ravaged and abandoned, and shall acknowledge that I am the Lord God of Hosts."

Chapter VII

Ezechiel's prophecies on bad shepherds

1. In the year 4604, while the Prophet Ezechiel was fulfilling his turn as priest in the Sacred Temple of Jerusalem, the Lord God of Israel spoke to him saying: "Man, prophecy on the shepherds of Israel. Prophecy and say to the shepherds: The Lord God of Israel says this: Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who instead of shepherding the sheep, shepherd themselves in riches and comforts! Should the flocks by chance not be shepherded by good shepherds? But you, shepherds of Israel, do nothing other than nourish yourselves with the milk of your sheep, clothe yourselves with their wool and sate yourselves with their flesh, but you do not shepherd them. For you neither strengthen the weak, nor heal the sick, nor bind up the broken-legged, nor bring back the stray, nor go in search of the lost, but harshly and high-handedly domineer over them. And My sheep have dispersed because they were without shepherds; and straying as they did, they came to be prey of all the wild beasts. My flock is lost amid all the hills; My flocks have scattered about all the high places, and there is no one to go in search of them."

2. "Therefore, pay heed, O bad shepherds, to the voice of the Lord: Because My flocks have been delivered up to pillage and My sheep left to the mercy of wild beasts, since My shepherds do not tend My flock, I swear, says the Lord God: Behold I Myself will require My flock from the shepherds and will take their pastorship from them so that they never again shepherd My flock, and I will deliver My sheep from their jaws so that they never again serve as food for them."

Chapter VIII

Prophecy on Christ, the Good Shepherd. Prophecy on the Church of Christ and the Messianic Kingdom

1. And the Prophet Ezechiel goes on to say: "For the Lord God of Hosts also says this: Behold I Myself will go in search of My sheep, and will inspect and count them; and I will gather them from all the places where they were scattered on the day of murk and of darkness, and I will lead them to My own sheepfold. I Myself, says the Lord God, will shepherd My sheep in prolific pastures beside streams of crystal clear water; I will seek those that have been lost, heal the wounded, strengthen the weak, preserve the strong, and tend them all with love and wisdom."

2. "And Most Holy Ananias says: I will raise up over My sheep a single Shepherd to shepherd them, Who is Christ the Son of David. He Himself will shepherd them, and He Himself will be their Good Shepherd. And I will be the God of My flock, and He will be Prince amid the sheep."

3. "I, your God and Lord, tell you, My flock: See here, I Myself will judge your behaviour, and will separate the good sheep from the bad. For did I not give you all good and abundant pastures in which to feed, and crystal clear waters to drink? Nonetheless, some of you, after feeding in My pastures and drinking of My waters, trampled down My pastures and muddied My water with your unclean feet, perverting and corrupting the others. So then, I will pass judgement and distinguish between sheep faithful to Me and unfaithful sheep. I, the Lord God of Hosts, will save My flock and deliver it from the ravenous wolves, and will separate the good sheep from the bad." The Good Shepherd, Christ, knows His true sheep, those who feed in good pastures and drink of crystalline waters, availing themselves of the Graces and using the Sacraments to good effect, which in them will yield fruits of virtue and sanctity. But the bad sheep trample the good pastures underfoot and muddy the crystalline waters, misusing the Sacraments, perverting and corrupting others in order to separate them from the flock. But the Good Shepherd, as Supreme Judge, at the Last Judgement, will separate the bad sheep from the good as cockle is separated from wheat: since cockle is cast into the fire and wheat gathered into the barn.

4. "I, Your God and Lord, say unto you: I will raise up for My sheep a bud of renown, and no more shall they be wasted away by famine in the land, nor shall they bear any more the reproach of the Gentiles. I will make a covenant of peace with My flock, and will exterminate the voracious wild beasts from My fields, and those who dwell in the wilderness shall sleep secure in the forests. I will gather them around My Hill, fill them with blessings, and in due season send them rains, which will be rains of blessings. And the tree of the countryside will produce its fruit, and the land its crops, and they will live without fear of anything. They shall acknowledge Me forever as the Lord God, and will praise and glorify Me when I snap the chains of their yoke and deliver them from the power of the infernal enemy, and never again will they be exposed to becoming the prey of wild beasts nor will they be devoured by them. And they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and they shall be My people." In the Messianic Kingdom Christ will establish His glorious throne in the midst of men, and His glory will take root not only in their souls, but also in their bodies; in such a fashion that they shall be partakers of the gifts of Christ's glorious Body, by the glorification of His Mystical Body. Man will enjoy the preternatural gifts to extraordinary degree, among them the glorious sublimation of his body; and, moreover, the supernatural gift of beatific vision, uninterruptedly and unveiled. Man, ecstatic at the vision of God, shall live fully sated by every joy, and therefore no longer subject to bodily needs, nor to the burden of his fallen nature; nonetheless, he will be able to acquire higher heavenly grades according to the measure of his love. Marriage will attain its peak of perfection, and men will multiply like the sands of the sea and the stars of the sky. Mary will reign in the hearts of all men so completely as to make of them all a single heart with that of Christ: the Mystical Body. She is the Hill upon which Christ reigns; and all men, round about Mary, will reign with Christ, since She is Throne of Wisdom, Mother of the Church and Fount of all Graces and blessings. When the Messianic Kingdom arrives, there will be one single flock and one single Shepherd, Christ, Who will personally shepherd His flock.

Chapter IX

Ezechieel's prophecies on false prophets and idolatrous elders

1. That same year 4604, while the Prophet Ezechieel was again in the Temple of God in Jerusalem, the Lord God of Hosts spoke to him saying: "Man, prophesy against the false prophets of Israel who make prophecies at their fancy. To them you will say: Harken to what the Lord God says: Woe to insensate prophets! Those who, without any true vision or revelation, prophesy under the influence of the spirit of lies they possess in their hearts! They are like ravaging foxes among the crops. O false prophets of Israel! Your evil deeds delate you; since your prophecies neither favour My cause nor the spiritual and material welfare of your people. Vain, then, are your visions, and impostures your prophecies when you say: 'The Lord has said'; since you, knowing you are not My envoys, insist in assuring that I have communicated what you announce. You say: 'Thus has the Lord spoken', when I have said nothing to you. Therefore, your Lord God says this to you: Because you have published fictions, and your visions are lies, listen, with all rigour I recriminate your perverse conduct; and if you do not amend, forsake your falsehood and be converted to Me, your God and Lord, I will let My avenging hand fall upon you, false prophets, forgers of empty visions and lying announcements. Your frauds will be unmasked and your false prophecies rejected in the record of the true prophets of Israel, because you have deceived My people telling them: 'have no fear, peace there will always be'; thereby hindering true conversion by discrediting the announcements I make through My true prophets. Because of your falsehood, My people go about seduced by futile illusions of happiness, like a wall built of flimsy material. Therefore the Lord your God says to you: amid My just indignation, I will suddenly cause an impetuous wind to spring up; and in My implacable fury I will send torrential rains that shall flood everything; and in My Holy Wrath I will cause enormous stones to fall that shall raze everything. And the mud wall you built without mortar will tumble to the ground to reveal its frail foundations; and you yourselves, prophets of lies, shall perish beneath the weight of the futile illusions you have forged in My people. And then I, your God and Lord, will say: The wall no longer exists, neither do they exist who wickedly built it, namely the false prophets of Israel who flattered the people by their prophecies and had visions announcing peace; the fact being that there will be no such peace, rather invasion, war and annihilation."

2. When Ezechieel, in God's Name, had finished recriminating the false prophets, some elders of Israel came and sat beside him with the object of having him ask the Lord something on their behalf. But the Lord God of Hosts addressed Ezechieel as he himself narrates: "Man, those men bear the filth of idolatry in their hearts, and the scandal of wickedness is reflected on their faces. Do you think that I am going to answer if they ask Me something through you? Therefore, speak to them as follows: 'The Lord God says this: If any man of the People of Israel who bears the filth of idolatry in his heart and on whose face is reflected the scandal of wickedness, were to come up to one of My prophets to ask Me through him, I, the Lord God of Israel, will answer him according to the excess of his filthiness, since he has withdrawn from Me to follow after idols'. Therefore, tell those elders and the whole People of Israel: 'The Lord God of Hosts speaks thus: Be converted and leave off your idols and all your abominations, and desist from coming hypocritically up to My prophets to have them ask Me questions on your behalf; for I will respond with an irate Countenance, and will cause all those rogues to become the laughing-stock and object of scorn on everyone's lips'. And if they persist in deriding My word and that of My prophets, I will exterminate them from the midst of My people, and they shall know that I am the Lord God of Israel."

Chapter X

Ezechieel's prophecies on Jerusalem, withered vine stem and faithless spouse

1. In the same year 4604, the Lord God appeared to the Prophet Ezechieel to communicate His word, as the prophet himself relates. The Lord God spoke to me again, saying: "Man, does the withered stem of the vine serve for anything other than to be thrown onto the fire? Do you by any chance use its stem to make anything? Is it not true that all you can carve out of it is a peg to hang things on? What is more, after the stem of the withered vine is thrown onto the fire, it is not even worth using as a firebrand, since it is reduced to ashes. Therefore, the Lord God of Hosts says this: Just as the stem of the vine is thrown onto the fire to be consumed, the like will I permit to happen to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: since if they remain obstinate in their wrongdoing and do not convert to Me, I will treat them with an irate Countenance; and the fire of affliction, famine and sword shall consume them. When I turn My Countenance against them and their land becomes uninhabitable and waste, then they shall know that I am the Lord God of Hosts, because they have become prevaricators."

2. "The Lord spoke to me anew saying: Man, make Jerusalem aware of her abominations, and tell her: O Jerusalem! You were full of uncleanness and trampled underfoot when My servant David seized you from the hands of the Jebusites. Enamoured of you, I covered you with My mantle and espoused Myself to you, and from then on took you as My own. I washed you with rose-water and anointed you with the oil of My love. I attired you in varicoloured clothing, I shod you with hyacinth-coloured footwear, waistband of fine linen and choicest mantle. I decked you out in splendid attire, and put golden bracelets on your wrists, and a string of white pearls around your neck. I adorned your brow with precious stones, your ears with earrings, and your head with a beautiful crown, and thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and dressed in embroidered fine linen of variegated colours. I gave you the finest flour with honey and oil to eat. O Jerusalem, you were indeed exceedingly embellished, and came to be queen! Your loveliness acquired renown among the nations, for they saw you perfect from the beauty with which I had adorned you."

3. "But afterwards, induced to vanity by your loveliness, you prostituted yourself as if you were your own mistress, and offered yourself licentiously to every passer-by, surrendering yourself up into his arms. Taking your garments, you made adornments from them for idols, prostituting yourself for their sake. And taking off the adornments of gold and silver with which I had embellished your beauty, from them you made all kinds of idols, which you adored, offering to them My oil, My perfumes, the bread I gave you, and the finest flour and oil with which I nourished you. And you

took your sons and daughters whom you had engendered for Me, and sacrificed them to idols. Following all your abominations and prostitution, you forgot the time when, trampled underfoot and covered with filth, I raised you up out of the mire, washed you, purified you and adorned you exquisitely and made you My beloved spouse. But now, with what can I cleanse your heart when you stubbornly live a bad life without any sign of remorse and do everything proper to a shameless whore? For on every crossroads you set up a brothel and in every plaza you put up a profane couch. You were not even like the harlot, sought after and paid for by her lovers; but yet worse, like the adulteress who seeks and pays the husbands of others to sate her passions. All harlots receive their hire for the services they render, but you were still more perverse, since you paid your lovers and made them gifts for them to come from every quarter and prostitute themselves with you. Therefore, harlot Jerusalem! Harken to the word of the Lord! You have flung away the gifts and privileges which I heaped upon you, and have made your ignominy public fornicating with your lovers, and have offered the blood of your children to the idols of your abominations. Accordingly, I, the Lord God of Hosts, will permit that all the lovers with whom you have prostituted yourself and still hold as friends, and all the lovers with whom you have prostituted yourself and afterwards detested, to gather against you, unmask your ignominy in the sight of all, and publicly execrate and ridicule you as a vile object of contempt. They themselves shall judge and condemn you as the adulteress you are; since I, the Lord God of Israel, will allow you to fall into their hands; and they shall destroy your brothels, strip you of your clothing, rob you of all that embellished you, and leave you naked and shamed; and then the multitude will gather against you, and with rabid fury cruelly stone you to death. In this way, O Jerusalem! I will unleash My Just Anger against you if you do not repent and return to Me sincerely converted."

Chapter XI

Ezechieel's prophecies on the Messias and the re-establishment of the People of God

After the Prophet Ezechieel had preached the aforementioned parables to the people, the Lord told the prophet: "Communicate the following to My people: The Lord God of Hosts says this: From the heart of the proud olive tree, and from the best of its offshoots, I will cut off a sprig and plant it on a high and sublime mountain: on Zion's high mount will I plant it. And it shall put forth branches and yield fruit, and become a magnificent olive tree. All the birds will take shelter in it and dwell in the shade of its branches. And all the trees of the forest will know that I, the Lord God, humbled the proud olive tree and exalted the humble olive tree; withered up the green olive tree and caused the withered olive tree to flourish. Thus have I, the Lord God of Israel, spoken, and thus will I bring it about." From the proud olive tree of the People of Israel, God chose an offshoot of David's lineage, the Messias, Whom He sent to Earth, and Who was crucified on the heights of Mount Calvary. As fruit of His Passion and Death the magnificent olive tree of the Church of Christ was born, in which all those who desire to be saved find shelter. At the same time, then, as God humbled the haughty olive tree of the People of Israel for its pride, He exalted the humble olive tree, Christ, taken from among this people. And at the same time as God withered up the green olive tree of His Old Church due to her apostasy, He caused her to flourish anew with most abundant branches and fruit when the New Church was born cleansed and renewed on Calvary.

Chapter XII

Death of Ezechieel's wife and seven children

1. In the year 4605, during the reign of King Joachim, when the Prophet Ezechieel was twenty-five years old, his wife and their seven children all died at the same time; the eldest son was six years old and the youngest six months. The deaths of Ezechieel's wife and seven children symbolize: with regard to her, the destruction of Jerusalem; and with regard to the children, the deaths of many of the city's inhabitants.

2. Here is what the Prophet Ezechieel himself narrates: "And word from the Lord God of Hosts came to me, saying: Listen man, all of a sudden I am going to take from you what you love best. Neither lament, nor cry nor let tears flow, but groan in secret without the mourning customarily made for the dead. Therefore, neither remove the turban from your head nor the shoes from your feet; neither will you cover your beard nor eat what is proper to times of mourning. For thus shall it come to pass among the survivors of Jerusalem when her destruction comes; since they, amid the great death toll occurring in the city, will disregard such observances; since, prey to terror and fright, they will be overwhelmed by the remorse they feel and the lamentations they proffer, because of the sins that have brought upon them such misfortunes."

3. And Ezechieel goes on to narrate: "In the morning I was speaking to the people in God's Name, and in the afternoon my wife and seven children died, and I conducted myself as the Lord had commanded. Days after burying my wife and seven children, when the people of the city saw that I disregarded the observances proper to mourning, some said to me: 'Why don't you explain to us the meaning of your conduct?' He replied: The Lord God of Hosts spoke to me saying: 'Say to the People of Israel: Harken, I will permit the profanation of your kingdom's most sublime, glorious and best loved possession, the one you most fear to lose: My Sacred Temple of Jerusalem; and your sons and daughters will perish by the sword. And then you will do as did My servant Ezechieel after the death of his wife and their seven children: for neither will you lament nor cry nor let tears flow; neither will you uncover your heads nor take off your shoes nor eat what is proper to times of mourning; rather you will waste away with remorse for your wrongdoing and groan to one another filled with dread.'"

4. The Lord God goes on to say through Ezechieel: "Listen, then, O people of Jerusalem! The death of Ezechieel's wife and children, and his comportment, is a symbol of what shall befall you and how you will act when disaster befalls the city, so that you may then acknowledge that I am the Lord your God. And you, man, My servant Ezechieel, the day I permit the ruin of that which Jerusalem's inhabitants love best in her, and moreover, deprive them of their sons and daughters, your conduct now, O Ezechieel, will serve them as sign in order that they acknowledge that I am the Lord God of Hosts."

Chapter XIII**Ezechie's prophecy on the Holy Wrath of the Victim Melchisedech**

In the year 4608, first of the reign of perverse King Jechonias, the Prophet Ezechie, twenty-eight years old, being in the Temple of God in Jerusalem amid a crowd of priests, said to them: *"The time will come in which Melchisedech, Most High Priest of God, when He makes His way invested as Victim, with a whip in His right hand will twice expel the merchants from the Temple built upon the ruins of this Temple yet standing. On both occasions the priests of the Temple will feel scourged in their hankered coffers of spoils."*

Chapter XIV**The Prophet Ezechie's teaching on the just and merciful God. Everyone will be rewarded or punished according to his own deeds**

1. In that same year 4608, the Prophet Ezechie, being in the court of the Jerusalem Temple, relayed to many of those present the following teachings, just as he was receiving them from the Lord. Here is the prophet's account: *"The Lord spoke to me again saying: How is it that you, of the People of Israel, have spread about this saying which is going from mouth to mouth, as if it were a maxim of Mine: 'The parents ate bitter things and the children's teeth are set on edge'? For I swear to you, says the Lord God of Hosts, that I will show you that it will avail you nothing to make use of this saying to lay the blame for the punishment you deserve for your own sins on those your parents committed. Because all souls are Mine. Just as the father's soul is Mine, so is the son's; therefore, the soul who sins is the soul I will judge as deserving of the punishment the sin warrants."*

2. *"For if a man is righteous and lives according to My Law, that is to say: if he neither adores idols, nor eats in high places from things sacrificed to idols, nor violates his neighbour's wife, nor cohabits with his own wife during her periods, if he offends no one, nor takes what belongs to another, if he feeds the hungry and clothes the naked, if he does not lend with usury, nor do evil, nor pass unjust sentence, and, in short, if he acts according to the commandments and observes all My Laws, then that person is a righteous man, and will possess true life and, therefore, the reward his own virtues have earned him. But should this righteous man have a perverse son who commits all kinds of abominations, that son, if he is not converted, will not possess true life, since he will receive the punishment his own sins deserve. And if this wicked son were to have a son who, seeing the sins committed by his father, does not imitate his bad example, but, full of the fear of God, acts uprightly, that son will not die because of his father's wrongdoing, but will possess true life and, therefore, the reward his own virtues have earned him."*

3. *"And you will say: 'Why has the righteous son not paid the price of his father's wrongdoing?' And the Lord replies to you: 'Because the good son has acted according to the Law and according to justice, since he has observed all My commandments, and for doing so will possess true life. So then, the soul who sins is guilty of his own offence. Therefore, the son will not pay the price for his father's wrongdoing, nor the father for his son's. The righteousness of the righteous will redound to the righteous, and the godlessness of the godless will redound to the godless. But if one who was godless were later to do penance for all the sins he committed, and keep all My commandments, he will possess true life and not die. I will no longer remember all the evil he committed. He will find true life in the virtues he has practised'. The Lord God says: 'Do I by chance desire the death of the godless, and not that he be converted and live? And if one who is righteous afterwards strays from the right path despising My commandments, will he by chance possess true life? Not only will he not possess true life, but none of his good works will be taken into account, owing to the prevarication into which he has fallen.'"*

4. *"You have said: 'The attitude the Lord adopts is not just'. Listen, then, O children of Israel: How can you say that My attitude is unjust when it is precisely yours that is wicked? For I tell you again, this time more pointedly: If the man who is righteous later strays from the right path, he will kill his own soul since he will not enjoy true life; and if the man who is godless later ceases to be godless and acts uprightly, he will give life to his own soul, since he will enjoy true life." And the children of Israel again repeated: 'The attitude the Lord adopts is not just.' And the Lord replies to you: "It is not My attitude that is unjust, but your depraved attitude. Therefore, O children of Israel! I will judge, says the Lord, each according to his works. Again I insist: Be converted, and do penance for all your wrongdoing. Cast far from you all the transgressions you have committed and form a new heart and a new spirit. For I do not desire the death of the sinner, rather that he be converted and live."*

Chapter XV**The Prophet Ezechie's vision in the Temple of God in Jerusalem**

1. In the year 4620, second of perverse Sedecias' reign, the Prophet Ezechie, forty years old, in the Temple of God of Jerusalem performing his turn as priest, had the following vision: The Heavens opened before him, and rapt in ecstasy he saw coming towards him: a whirlwind, which was the Holy Spirit; and a great Cloud, which was the Divine Soul of Mary under this form; and encompassed within this Cloud, a fire of blazing radiance greatly resembling the figure, seated upon a throne, of a Heavenly Man, Who was the Most Divine Soul of Christ under human form.

2. All was transported in a heavenly chariot by four cherubs having human aspect. Each had four faces similar to man's, and four wings; their legs were remarkably straight and their feet sparkled like glowing steel. Under their wings, on the four sides, there were man's hands, and each cherub had four faces and four wings. The wings of one were joined up to those of the others, and they didn't turn back when they advanced, but each, moved by the impulse of the spirit, went in four different directions simultaneously, according to the direction of each face. One cherub came with the attributes of a man's figure; another, with those of a lion's; another, with those of a bull's; and another, with those of an eagle's. These cherubs, to the eye, shone like fiery coals and like blazing torches. Flashes like lightning were seen to dart back and forth in their midst.

3. The four cherubs came and went in the likeness of highly glowing sparks. The chariot they bore had four wheels, and to the eye it had the colour of the sea. And it seemed as if one wheel were amid another wheel, and they constantly moved by their four sides, and they did not turn back when they moved. The circumference and height of the chariot's wheels were such as to cause terror to behold. And the entire perimeter of the four wheels was everywhere covered by eyes. When the cherubs advanced, the wheels moved likewise alongside of them; and when the cherubs rose up from the earth, the wheels rose in like manner with them. Whither the Spirit went, there the wheels also turned and followed, because the spirit of life was in them. The wheels moved if the cherubs moved, and stopped if they stopped.

4. Over the heads of the cherubs there was a likeness of firmament which appeared to the eye like an astonishingly beautiful crystal which stretched upwards. Beneath the firmament two of the wings of the cherubs were seen to be touching two wings of the others, and each covered his body with the other two wings. Each covered himself in the same manner. And the noise of the wings was to the ear like the noise of many waters, like thunder of the august God. And whenever the cherubs moved, the noise of their wings was like that of a vast crowd or army. However, when a voice issued from above the firmament which was over their heads, they halted and lowered their wings.

5. Upon this firmament was placed the throne on which was seated the One who resembled the figure of a Heavenly Man, like a great blaze of fire.

Chapter XVI**Prophecy of Ezechie on God's avenging sword**

1. The nearer the time came for the third invasion of the People of Israel by the Babylonian armies, with the consequent destruction of Jerusalem and its Sacred Temple, the prophets of the Lord, Ezechie among them, rebuked the people more vigorously to move them to conversion and thereby avoid the great approaching catastrophe.

2. In the year 4624, the Lord God of Hosts appeared to the Prophet Ezechie, saying: *"Man, turn your face towards Jerusalem, and speak against the prevaricators of My Sacred Temple and of all My synagogues, and prophesy against the land of Israel. The Lord God says this: Listen, I will unleash My Just Wrath against you permitting the Babylonian armies to fall upon Jerusalem and slay the godless together with the righteous. But you, Ezechie, groan like one whose back is broken, groan in the bitterness of your heart in the sight of all. And when they ask you: 'Why are you groaning?', you will answer them: Because, as result of your iniquities, God will permit the enemies to fall upon the city with rabid and destructive fury. And your hearts will all be dismayed, and your courage will desert you, spirits will languish and all will tremble with fear. See, Jerusalem, your ruin is nigh, and will be accomplished if you do not convert, and repentant turn your eyes towards God."*

3. And shortly afterwards the Lord spoke to him again saying: *"Prophecy, man, and say: The Lord God of Hosts says this: The sword is sharpened and burnished: sharpened to cut the throats of the wicked, and burnished to make My Just and Holy Anger shine forth. O sword! You shall humble Israel's sceptre, which My Son the Messias will one day bear. The sword of My justice is already sharpened in readiness; the sword has been whetted and burnished for the exterminator to wield. Cry out in the greatest anguish, man and prophet of Mine, because this sword of My Just Anger will be wielded against My people, and by it many shall perish. Cry out with the greatest anguish, man and prophet of Mine, because the wrath of this sword is now ready, and its fury will be seen when it has destroyed Israel's sceptre, which shall cease to exist until I re-establish the sceptre in the Messias I will send. You, then, man and prophet of Mine, prophesy and clap your hands the better to draw the people's attention: for I, the Lord God of Hosts, in My Just and Terrible Wrath, will permit the fury of the killer sword to double and to triple: the sword of great slaughter which will leave My people aghast, multiplying havoc among them. Terror of the sharpened and burnished sword is already reaching every gate of the city, so that My justice shine forth and be ready to deal out death. Be sharpened, O sword. O sword of My justice, go out right and left and wherever you please; since you shall be the instrument by which I will satiate My holy indignation. It is I, the Lord God of Hosts, Who speaks."*

4. *"The sword of the king of Babylonia will head straight for Jerusalem to undo her, to surround her with ramparts and bunkers, to intimidate her to death, and to fall upon the city, take her and devour his prey. Therefore, the Lord God says: O My People Israel! Many of you will be cruelly slaughtered and others led away captive, because you have flaunted your perfidy, and made your transgressions public and your sins patent with the greatest brazenness. As for you, O Sedecias, profane and impious king of Israel, the day marked out to punish your iniquity is approaching. The Lord God say this: Take the crown off your head, a symbol which serves to exalt the humble, and also to humble the proud, as in your case. And I, the Lord God of Hosts, will make the pride and iniquity with which you wear it very evident. And after you, O iniquitous Sedecias, I will cause the crown of Israel to remain vacant until girded by the Messias King I am going to send, to Whom it belongs by every right and title."*

Chapter XVII**Ezechie's symbolical and prophetic action concerning the siege of Jerusalem and its disastrous consequences. Everything will be fulfilled as prophesied by Ezechie**

1. In the year 4626, eighth of the reign of iniquitous Sedecias, the Lord God spoke to the Prophet Ezechie, saying: *"Man, you dwell amid a people who provoke My wrath by their abominations; for they are a contumacious and rebellious people, who have eyes to see and do not look, and ears to hear and do not listen. You, then, O man, prepare your things as if you were moving abroad, and carry them outside your home in their sight, as those who make ready to go on a journey usually do. With them observing, you will make a hole in the wall of your home, and you will leave by it on all fours as if wanting to flee. And then, in the sight of the people, you will have yourself taken by others as if you were captive, till outside the city; and on leaving you will cover your eyes to symbolize that you will see this land no more. You will do all this to see if My people, centring their attention on you, realize what is going to happen to them, and perhaps disavow their perverse conduct, and thus I be able to free them from the approaching punishment."*

2. Ezechiel goes on to narrate that he did exactly as the Lord had commanded. And the Lord spoke to His prophet the following morning, saying: "Man, as you have been able to observe, the People of Israel, contumacious and rebellious, seeing all that you were doing, didn't even bother to ask you: 'Why are you doing that?' Well then, say to them: 'The Lord God of Hosts: Everything that you have seen me do, in God's Name, in a symbolical manner, is a prophecy of the punishments that will be unleashed, principally upon King Sedecias who resides in Jerusalem, and upon those of the People of Israel dwelling within her walls. And tell them besides: 'I, Ezechiel, prophet of the Lord, have given you a prodigious sign on His behalf so that, sincerely repentant of your sins, you turn your eyes towards the Lord God; because just as I have done, so will it come to pass to this people, since many will be taken captive and deported to another country. And the king who is in their midst will also be taken captive when he attempts to flee, and his eyes will be as if covered so that he may not see the land, since they shall be plucked out'. And the Lord says: I will permit Sedecias to fall into the enemy net and be led captive to Babylonia, which being blind he will not see, and there he will die by the sword of King Nabuchodonozor III. And many of his princes, his guards, his troops and his people who are not led into captivity will be scattered abroad to other countries by the sword of the Babylonians, who will rabidly and furiously pursue them, and there they shall give testimony of their wickedness and of My just dealings with them. They shall all acknowledge that I am the Lord God of Hosts when they find themselves dispersed amid other nations.'"

3. On another occasion the Lord spoke to the Prophet Ezechiel: "Man, the following saying discrediting My prophets I see to be the talk of the town: 'Days will go by, and all the visions shall come to nothing'. Therefore, tell My people: The Lord God of Hosts says this: I will put a stop to this saying, so deeply rooted among you, and ensure that it never again be repeated by the people, since the days are close at hand for the fulfilment of all the events announced in all the visions; for no vision will be left unfulfilled, nor will any of My prophecies be ambiguous. Everything I said will be fulfilled, and everything will happen as I say, without delay, since everything shall come to pass in your days. Just as I speak, so will I act, says the Lord God."

4. "Man, I also see that many of My people say with regard to what I foretell to you: 'The vision the fellow has had is for many years hence, since he prophesies for faraway times'. But you will tell them: The Lord God of Hosts speaks thus: My words will not be deferred any longer: What I say shall be fulfilled. And tell them as well that, notwithstanding My Just and Terrible Wrath against My prevaricating and thankless people, I am always willing to forgive them and stretch out My arms to welcome them with every kindness, whenever they return repentant to Me."

Chapter XVIII

Ezechiel's prophecies on the imminent destruction of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple

1. In the year 4627, shortly before Nabuchodonozor III invaded the Kingdom of Israel and laid siege to the city of Jerusalem, the Lord God said to the Prophet Ezechiel: "Man, proclaim out loud everywhere: The Lord God of Hosts says this to the Land of Israel: Woe to the Kingdom of Israel owing to her iniquitous abominations! Because many of her inhabitants will perish by the sword, by famine and by plague. The end is coming, the end is now coming from every quarter of the land. O People of Israel! O Jerusalem! If you are not converted, I will unleash My just fury and judge you according to your bad actions, and lay all your abominations before you. I will have no compassion on you; and so, just as you have despised My mercy, you will experience My justice, and that I am the merciful and avenging Lord God of Israel. Behold the anguish of affliction, see it coming. The end, the end is coming. See, annihilation is coming upon those who dwell in this land. The time is now come, the day of slaughter is nigh, is close at hand. I will unleash My Holy Wrath upon this abominable people which shall be punished according to its works, and thus I will vent My just fury. See, the day is now coming, annihilation is now coming. The rod of punishment has blossomed and pride has grown her branches. The wickedness of this people has produced the same inexorable rod with which it shall be scourged."

2. "Outside will be the sword and inside plague and famine. Whoever is out in the fields will perish by the sword. And plague and famine will devour whoever is in the city. Only those who can flee to other countries and those who hide in the mountains like doves of the valley will be saved from it all. All shall tremble with fear on account of their wickedness. Lo! On the day of My fury their silver will be thrown out into the streets and their gold into the rubbish, for neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them, nor satisfy their souls, nor fill their bellies, since it has served them for evil. I will permit all the wealth that fostered the pride of My people to be converted into filth; since it will become the spoil of the plundering invader, staying in his hands. I will permit as well that many of the gold and silver vessels of My Sacred Temple fall into pagan custody and be profaned at their hands. King Sedecias will be plunged into affliction, and the princes overcome with sorrow. I will permit them to be dealt with as their godlessness deserves, and will judge them according to their deeds, and they shall know that I am the Lord God of Hosts."

Chapter XIX

The Prophet Ezechiel in the Babylonian captivity. The Prophet Ezechiel's vision.

Ezechiel is sanctified and anointed prophet in major grade

1. In the year 4629, after the destruction of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple by Nabuchodonozor III, the Prophet Ezechiel, forty-nine years old, was led away captive to Babylonia with many other Israelites.

2. In that same year 4629, while Ezechiel was in his house among the captives of the city of Babylon, beside the River Euphrates, also called 'Chobar' or 'Voluminous', he had a vision similar to that of the year 4620 when he was in the Temple of God in Jerusalem: He again saw the four cherubs, each with four faces, with the attributes of the Evangelists, bearing the heavenly chariot, in which the Most Divine Soul of Christ, under human form, was seated upon a throne, now holding in His hands a kind of brilliant vessel, which was the Chalice of Melchisedech, inside which was a small object sparkling like sapphire, which was the Sacrament of the Triple Benediction.

3. Ezechiel, at this fresh vision of the glory of God, fell on his face in astonishment; and then heard the voice of the Heavenly Man, Who said to him: "Man, rise up and I will speak with you." After the Heavenly Man had called him, the prophet recovered his valour and stood up. Then the Heavenly Man Who was seated on the throne, and Who was the Soul of Christ in human form, purified Ezechiel's lips by touching them with the Triple Benediction, and the prophet received the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and prophetic unction in major grade. At the same time He said to him: "Man, open your mouth and eat everything I give you." And Ezechiel saw a hand stretched out towards him holding a book or rolled up scroll, which was unrolled in the prophet's presence, and upon both sides were written lamentations, melancholy canticles, curses and other dictums. And the Heavenly Man said to him: "Man, eat this book." So Ezechiel opened his mouth and the Man gave it to the prophet to eat. And the Lord said to Ezechiel: "Man, by this book which I have given you to eat, while your belly fills, your soul will also fill with My Divine Word." Ezechiel ate, and it tasted as sweet as honey. Ezechiel's prophetic anointing is symbolized by his eating the mysterious book the Lord gave to him.

4. All of Ezechiel's prophetic mission as prophet in major grade unfolded in the Babylonian captivity, where by his prophecies and thoroughly exemplary life, he was the mainstay of the Israelites deported there.

Chapter XX

Beginning of Ezechiel's mission as prophet in major grade

1. That same year 4629, shortly after Ezechiel had been sanctified and anointed prophet in major grade, the Lord God of Hosts said to him: "Man, I send you to the children of Israel who have become gentiles by their apostasy on separating themselves from Me, and who are with you in captivity, for they have violated the pact they made with Me. These children to whom I send you are brazen-faced and self-willed. But let us now see if at last they listen to you and stop offending Me; and thus they will also know that they have another prophet among them. You then, man, be neither afraid of them nor intimidated at their words, because the majority of the Israelites with you are unbelievers and perverters, since you live among scorpions. You, then, will bravely transmit My words to them, to see if perhaps they listen and stop sinning, because they are people quite adept at exasperating Me."

2. "Man, be on your way then, and announce My words to the children of Israel in captivity with you: since you are sent to them. For you are not sent to a people of foreign tongue, whose words you cannot understand; though if you were, they would indeed listen to you. Nonetheless, those of the People of Israel do not want to listen to you because they do not even want to listen to Me, since they have hardened their hearts. But I will give you a face more brazen than theirs. Go then, and present yourself to the children of your people who were taken into captivity, and speak to them in My Name saying: 'Listen to what the Lord God of Hosts says', in case they listen to you and stop sinning."

3. No sooner had the Lord finished speaking than occurred what the prophet now relates: "My spirit felt itself frapt up in the vision of the Essence of God, and behind me I heard a thunderous voice saying: 'Blessed be the glory of the Lord which is manifested in this place'. When the vision of God ended, I heard the noise of the cherubs' wings beating one with another, and the noise of the wheels as they followed the cherubs. And the Spirit of the Lord lifted me up, and I went with great bitterness, but He consoled me; and forthwith I found myself in a place called 'heap of the new harvest', also beside the River Chobar, where many of the Israelite deportees had encamped, and I stayed with them for seven days, though deeply saddened."

4. At the end of seven days the Lord spoke to me saying: "Man, I have placed you as sentinel among the children of My People Israel; from My lips you will hear My words, which you will announce to them on My behalf. Therefore, if I command you to tell the ungodly man: 'If you do not repent, you will die in your wickedness', and you do not rebuke him and do not speak to him so that he mend his ways, the ungodly man will die in his wickedness, but I will hold you responsible for his wicked death. But if you have rebuked the ungodly man and he is not converted from his wickedness and his bad ways, he will die in his wickedness, but you will reap great benefit for your soul. And if the righteous man and his bad ways, he will die in his wickedness, but you will reap great benefit for your soul. And if the righteous man were to abandon his righteousness and do wrong, and you do not rebuke him, he will die in his villainy, but I will hold you responsible for his wicked death. But if you admonish the righteous not to sin, and he thereupon stops sinning, he will live true life because he was rebuked, and you will have reaped great benefit for your soul."

Chapter XXI

Ezechiel's prophetic vision on the new Temple of Jerusalem and its worship.

Ezechiel's prophecy on the Perpetual Virginity of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary

1. In the year 4654, twenty-fifth of Ezechiel's captivity in Babylonia, and, therefore, of the destruction of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple, the Prophet Ezechiel relates: "I felt the Spirit of the Lord God upon me, and He took me in vision to the city of Jerusalem, and set me down on a very high mountain, upon which was something like a building. There, at the door stood a Heavenly Man, Who was Most Holy Melchisedech, Who held a linen cord in one hand and a measuring rod in the other. And this Heavenly Man said to me: 'Man, look with your eyes and listen with your ears, and give all your attention to what I show you, and afterwards tell the People of Israel, because for that reason I have brought you here'."

2. And Most Holy Melchisedech went with Ezechiel to look over the new Temple of God which would be rebuilt in Jerusalem, and which was shown to him anticipatively in vision: first, they examined the outside; next, the different courts and their corresponding gates; and finally, the most sacred enclosures: the Sanctum and the Sanctum Sanctorum. Ezechiel measured out all the different dimensions of the Sacred Edifice in greatest detail, taking note of the altars, tables and other furnishings and sacred objects inside.

3. The new Temple of God in Jerusalem seen anticipatively by the Prophet Ezechiel was similar to that built by Solomon, though considerably larger and more beautiful.

4. When the Prophet Ezechiel had toured the entire enclosure of the new Temple of God in Jerusalem which he beheld in vision, he went on to say: "The Heavenly Man took me outside the Temple enclosure by the gate looking towards the east or Golden Gate, and lo! the glory of the Lord God of Israel entered by that gate with such deafening noise and such great majesty as to cause the earth to tremble and glow. And suddenly the Spirit of God took me to the innermost court, and I saw how the Temple was filled with the glory of the Lord God of Hosts. The Heavenly Man, Who was beside me, said: 'Man, here is the location of My throne, and the place where I will rest My feet and where I will fix My abode among the children of Israel.' He then made me return to the gate looking towards the east, or Golden Gate, which I saw was now shut, and He told me: 'This Gate is closed and shall not open, and no man shall pass through Her: because the Lord God of Israel has entered through Her, and She shall remain closed'."

5. Most Holy Melchisedech also reminded Ezechiel about everything regarding the Law of Moses concerning Levitical feasts and worship, and in a vision showed him the splendour with which they would be celebrated in the new Temple of God to be rebuilt in Jerusalem.

6. The previous words spoken by the Lord God to Ezechiel concerning the Golden Gate, "this Gate is closed and shall not open, and no man shall pass through Her: because the Lord God of Israel has entered through Her, and She shall remain closed," are a prophetic figure of the Perpetual Virginity of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

Chapter XXII

Ezechiel's prophecy on the Holy and Terrible Name of Mary

In the year 4656, when the Prophet Ezechiel, seventy-six years old, was captive in Babylonia, and six centuries before the glorious Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven in Body and Soul, he told a great multitude of Israelites: "The time will come when Essenia, Melchisedech's Co-Priest, the Woman announced at the beginning of the world, the Immaculate Perpetual Virgin, the awaited Mother of the Desired of the eternal hills, following Her sweet birth will receive the Holy and Terrible Name of Mary, at which Name all heads will bow in Heaven, on Earth and in the abyss."

Chapter XXIII

Ezechiel's symbolical vision on the Last Times

1. In that same year 4656, twenty-seven years after having been deported to Babylonia, the Prophet Ezechiel saw Most Holy Melchisedech seated upon a throne, in a heavenly chariot borne by four cherubs. The Lord God symbolically manifested to him part of mankind's punishments in the Last Times, as the prophet himself narrates:

2. "The Lord God cried out vigorously in my ears, saying: 'Man, the punishments are drawing near, and seven men are coming towards you, and each carries in his hand an instrument of death'. Surely enough, I saw seven men making their way from one of the gates of the Sacred Temple, and each bore in his hand an instrument of death. And one of them, who was the foremost, stood in their midst, and came robed in a linen garment, and brought some instruments appropriate for writing. And the seven stood beside the altar of holocausts. Then from the throne placed in the chariot borne by the four cherubs, the glory of the Lord became manifest as far as where we were, and the Lord God called to the one who wore the linen garment and held the instruments appropriate for writing. And the Lord told him: Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and mark with the letter 'Tau' or sign of the cross the foreheads of the men who groan and lament for all the abominations committed in her midst. And the Lord also said to the other six men: Go too throughout the city following the foremost, and mortally wound those whose foreheads he does not mark with the cross. Neither look with compassion nor take pity: therefore, beginning in My Sacred Temple, kill all those whose foreheads are not marked, whether they be old, young, women, damsels or children, until none remain, but do not kill those marked with the cross."

3. "And the foremost man said to the other six: 'Kill all in the Temple not marked with the sign of the cross, and fill its porches with their corpses. You do not on that account profane the Sacred Enclosure, since it is a command of the Lord God of Hosts'. And after the six had fulfilled their mission inside the Temple, the foremost man said to them: 'Follow me outside'; and they went outside and slew all in the city not marked with the cross."

4. Ezechiel goes on to relate: "The slaughter over, I fell on my face and cried out to Him: Ah, Ah, Ah, my Lord God! Will You by chance proceed likewise with the rest of Israel venting Your fury as You have done with Jerusalem? And the Lord God said to me: 'The iniquity of the People of Israel is inordinate, and the earth is covered by enormous crimes and filled with apostasy, for they said: "The Lord has abandoned the Earth, and no longer sees us." Now then, I will neither look upon them with compassion nor take pity, but deal with them as they deserve'. And then the man who wore the linen garment and carried the writing instruments came to report to the Lord, saying: 'I have done what You commanded me'."

5. This vision of Ezechiel is a symbolical prophecy, in part, on what Saint John the Evangelist would afterwards describe in his Book of the Apocalypse: the great final apostasy, the seven Archangels bearing the seven cups of God's Wrath, those marked on the forehead with the cross of Christ, and the extermination of all the godless during the last three days of darkness preceding the Glorious Second Coming of Christ to Earth, as Supreme Judge.

Chapter XXIV

Ezechiel's eschatological prophecies on Gog and Magog

1. In the year 4657 the Lord God of Hosts spoke to the Prophet Ezechiel saying: "Man, turn your gaze against Gog, chief prince of Mosoch, and his ally the land of Magog, and prophesy concerning him, and tell him: The Lord God says this: Behold Me against you, O Gog, chief prince of Mosoch: I will watch over your steps and place a bit in your devouring jaws: I will allow you to wage war on Me using your great army, with lances, shields and swords, with horses and horsemen all clad in armour. For this purpose other forces will join up with you. But, O Gog, chief prince

of Mosoch, be prepared to resist Me, deploy yourself in battle array with all your hosts pressing about you, and take command of them yourself. Defend yourself, and, if you can, resist My power and the strength of My arm; since, come the day, you will be punished by Me. At the end of time you will dare to give the decisive battle to My People, chosen from among all nations and gathered together by Me in Israel. You will go to the land they shall inhabit, and will enter it like a tempest and like a cloud to invade it with all your forces, detachments, and those of many other peoples allied to you."

2. "The Lord God of Hosts says this: 'On that day you will conceive arrogant thoughts in your heart and scheme perverse plans, and say: 'I will make for a defenceless land, without walls or gates or locks, whose people are carefree and live without fear'. You, O prince, Gog, will come, then, to despoil and fall upon the prey, and let your hand fall upon My people whom I have re-established, centre of the nations of the earth. Then you will gather together the hosts of your army to invade, sack and annihilate it'."

3. "Therefore, prophesy, man, and tell Gog: Thus speaks the Lord God of Hosts: 'So then, are you not waiting for that day to arrive in order to give battle to My people re-established in Israel? You will set out from the land of Septentrion or Magog, taking with you numberless troops, soldiers all on horseback, making up a powerful army, and all will head against My People Israel. In the Last Times I will allow you to come up against My land so that, by My defeating you in the sight of all, the nations may have clear proof of My power, sanctity and justice, and of the zeal with which I protect My Chosen People. In that time, many of the children of Israel who had apostatized in past times, and from whom I had turned away My Face and left in your power, O prince of darkness, will acknowledge their sins, repent of them and return to Me. I will gather them in with the sheep of My fold who remained faithful to Me, and they will acknowledge Me as their God and Lord'."

4. "O Gog, prince and chief of Mosoch! The Lord God of Hosts says this: I will give you the decisive battle in the Mountains of Israel. I will destroy the bow you hold in your left hand, and will make the arrows fall from your right. Your forces and those of your allied peoples will perish in the Mountains of Israel. I will deliver you up to be devoured by wild beasts, birds and other animals of the earth. You will perish in the open country because I, the Lord God of Hosts, have decreed it. And I will issue fire against your ally, the land of Magog, and will annihilate its inhabitants, who live without any fear of Me at all; since I will punish them by plague, by blood and by a torrential rain with large stones: fire and brimstone will rain down upon them. And all shall acknowledge that I am the Lord God of Hosts, and thus I will cause My Holy Name to be praised yet more in the midst of My Chosen People, and from then on I will not allow My Holy Name to be profaned, and the nations shall know that I am the Lord God of Hosts, the Holy One of My Chosen People."

5. "The Lord God of Hosts says: 'On that day, O Gog, you will be fulminated by the breath of My mouth and buried forever in the lake of fire and brimstone, and thereafter have no power at all to tempt men. I will make a display of My glory and power in the midst of the nations, and all peoples shall see the just vengeance I implacably unleash upon you and your followers. And from that day on and for evermore, My Chosen People shall never again separate from Me, their God and Lord, because I will pour My Spirit out upon them'."

6. Gog, prince and chief of Mosoch, is Antichrist-in-person or the Man of Iniquity, prince and chief of darkness. Antichrist-in-person, in the Last Times, will publicly reveal himself during the three and a half years preceding the Glorious Second Advent of Christ. The land of Magog is the empire of Antichrist made up of godless men who will place themselves at the service of the Man of Iniquity; who will also be powerfully aided by the Planet of Lucifer's inhabitants, who shall come to Earth. Antichrist-in-person and his hordes will struggle furiously against Holy Church; and in their implacable persecution will kill the last Pope and many of his princes and faithful children; as well as the Prophets Elias, Henoah, Moses and all the other inhabitants of Mary's Planet, since they will all come to Earth to do battle against Antichrist-in-person and to die. Following the glorious resurrection of the last Pope and those who die with him, the last great battle of Antichrist and his forces will take place against the children of Holy Church, captained by the last Pope, who will be helped by the Prophets Elias, Henoah, Moses and all the rest. During this period shall take place the mass conversion of the Jewish People, who will acknowledge Christ as the Son of God and cross over to form part of His Holy Church. Antichrist-in-person will be fulminated by the breath of Christ and deprived forever of power to tempt men. The inhabitants of Lucifer's Planet will be fulminated together with him. All the remaining militants of Magog's empire shall perish during the last three days of darkness to befall the universe. The Glorious Second Coming of Christ to Earth to judge the living and the dead and establish His Messianic Kingdom will take place at the conclusion of the last day of darkness.

Chapter XXV

Ezechiel's prophetic vision on the Universal Resurrection of the dead

1. In the year 4670 Ezechiel had the following vision in his home in Babylon by the River Chobar, as he himself relates: "The virtue of the Lord came upon me, and I saw a field covered with bones lying about on the ground, and I saw that their number was exceedingly great and that they were quite dry. Then the Lord said to me: 'Man, do you by chance believe that these bones will come back to life again?' And I answered: 'Oh, Lord, You know well, and only You can do that!' Then the Lord God of Hosts said to me: Man, prophesy over these bones, and tell them: Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus speaks the Lord God of the living to these dead bones: Behold, I will infuse into you the soul that previously animated you and the spirit that previously gave you form, and you will again have your flesh and live. And you will know that this is the work of the Lord your God."

2. "And while I prophesied, a noise was heard and there was a commotion, and bone joined up to bone, each at its own joint. And I saw flesh grow upon them, and they were covered over with skin and regained life." The universal resurrection of the dead will take place at the very instant of Christ's Glorious Second Coming to Earth.

3. The Lord, however, also told Ezechiel that the dry bones and the universal resurrection he had seen in vision, were as well a figure of the Israelites' captivity in Babylonia and their return to the land of Israel: "And the Lord said to me: Man, all these dry bones represent those of the People of Israel scattered throughout the Babylonian Empire and other nations. Because the Israelites, owing to their captivity, say in bitter desolation: 'Our bones have dried up and our hope has perished, for we have been uprooted from our land, and will not be grafted back onto her'. Therefore, prophesy and say to them: The Lord God of the living says this: Behold, I will open your sepulchres and bring you out of them, O My People, and will lead you to the land of Israel, and you shall know that I am the Lord God of the living when I open your sepulchres and bring you out of your graves, put My Spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will set you down in your land again, and you shall acknowledge that I, the Lord God, made it come to pass exactly as I said."

Chapter XXVI

Other prophecies of Ezechiel on the Church of Christ

Ezechiel presents us with another series of prophecies on the Church, the Sacraments, Holy Mass and the Priesthood. Here are the most outstanding: "I will take you from among the nations, and will gather you together from all lands, and will lead you to your own land," whereby God shows us His Church, constituted by the elect of the whole world who respond to His call. "And I will pour upon you clean water, and will purify you of all your filth, and from all your idols I will cleanse you"; since by Baptism received within the true Church man acquires the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, loses it by mortal sin and must recover it by means of the Sacrament of Penance. "I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in your midst"; words which describe the deep significance of the Mass and the Priesthood; since the Holy Sacrifice of Mass is the Heart of the Universe, and the Priest is the spirit who gives life to this mystical Heart. "And I will take away the heart of stone from out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh", meaning that in the heart of each of those who live in the state of Grace, by virtue of Holy Communion, a particle of the Deific Heart of Jesus and, by concomitance, a particle of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, become enthroned in singular sacramental form. "I will put My Spirit in your midst; and will cause you to walk in My precepts, and keep and carry out My judgements," here manifesting the Holy Spirit as the Soul of the Church, and as well the constant help and assistance of the Divine Spirit, Spouse of the living souls of the faithful; whom He fills with His gifts and fruits according to their correspondence. "And you will dwell in the land I gave to your fathers: and you shall be My people, and I will be your God"; meaning: 'if you hear My words and put them into practice, I will make a lasting abode for you in Mary, Whom I have given as Spouse to your Fathers, the Priests, for them to live in Her and for Her; and you will be able to espouse yourselves to Mary through the Priest, and make your souls My dwelling place, and live in My City, Mary.' "I will save you from all your uncleanness, and I will call for wheat and multiply it, and will not bring famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the crops of the fields, so that you no longer bear the reproach of hunger among the nations"; symbolizing in these words the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist: first referring to wheat, the matter used to consecrate the Eucharist; and, then, the multiplication of the Fruit of the Tree: since Christ, Fruit of the Tree, which is Mary, multiplies His presence in a multitude of consecrated Hosts in order to nourish, strengthen and sanctify the faithful of the Church.

Chapter XXVII

Ezechiel's death

In the year 4678 the Prophet Ezechiel died a martyr in Babylonia at the age of ninety-eight, forty-nine years after the general deportation, in the thirteenth year of the reign of impious King Balthassar. Ezechiel was killed in Babylonia personally by a Jewish judge whom the prophet had reproached for his idolatry.

Book IV

The Prophet Daniel

Chapter I

Birth of the Prophet Daniel

The Prophet Daniel, from the tribe of Ephraim, was born in Bethoron, some twenty kilometres north-west of Jerusalem, in the year 4617, twelve years prior to the general deportation to Babylonia, during the ninth year of the reign of perverse King Jechonias of the reunified Kingdom of Israel. The name Daniel means 'God, my Judge'. Daniel was a bachelor and Essenian terciario until his return to the land of Israel, when he became a religioso. He is one of the prophets called Major.

Chapter II

Daniel is sanctified and anointed prophet in minor grade

In the year 4624, when Daniel was still seven years old, while in the Temple of God in Jerusalem, the Most Divine Soul of Christ under human form appeared to him. Let us see how the prophet himself relates this: "Lo I saw the likeness as of son of man, who touched my lips; and I, opening my mouth, spoke to the one who stood before me: 'My Lord, the sight of You has deprived me of all strength. How can I, Your servant, speak with My Lord when there is no strength left in me at all, and I can scarcely breathe?' The one I saw as son of man then touched me again and comforted me." Daniel was sanctified by the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in his soul and anointed prophet in minor grade at the very moment when the Soul of Christ, in the form of Son of Man, touched his lips the first time with the Sacrament of

according to the Infallible Magisterium of the Church

the Triple Benediction He bore in His hands; the second time He touched the prophet's lips, however, was to comfort him morally and physically.

Chapter III

Daniel is deported to Babylonia. Daniel is schooled to enter King Nabuchodonozor III's service.

Daniel is anointed prophet in major grade

1. In the year 4629, after Nabuchodonozor III's invasion of the reunified Kingdom of Israel and destruction of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple, Daniel, twelve years old, was deported to Babylonia with the Prophet Ezechiel and many other Israelites.

2. In the year 4630, King Nabuchodonozor III told Asphenez, chief majordomo of the palace, to choose from among the children of Israel some boys without defects, of good appearance and with sure signs of intelligence, in order to prepare them for the king's service by way of teaching them reading and writing, the sciences and the Chaldean language, in quarters close by and dependant on the imperial palace. Daniel, Ananias, Mishael and Azarias were among the boys selected. The king ordained that every day they be given the same food he ate and the same wine he drank; so that, being thus maintained for some years, they might afterwards serve in the king's presence.

3. But Daniel proposed in his heart not to contaminate himself eating and drinking the viands brought to him from the king's table, so he implored the palace majordomo to let him eat only what the Law of the God of Israel allowed, and his three companions did likewise. And the majordomo willingly consented to bring them food and drink in accordance with their Law.

4. God granted the boys Ananias, Mishael and Azarias science and intelligence on many matters. But they were surpassed by Daniel who, as prophet in minor grade, possessed in addition the gift of interpreting visions and dreams.

5. In the year 4631, when Daniel was fourteen years old, while in the residence adjoining the royal palace in Babylonia, Most Holy Melchisedech appeared to him and anointed him prophet in major grade by touching his lips with the Sacrament of the Triple Benediction.

Chapter IV

Nabuchodonozor commands many of his court sages, diviners and magicians to be put to death when unable to reveal his dream or decipher its contents

In the year 4634, King Nabuchodonozor III of Babylonia had a mysterious dream which caused him to wake up appalled, and which left him in consternation of spirit, though after waking he could not manage to remember it. So the king commanded the most celebrated sages, diviners and magicians of his court to be summoned in order for them to reveal and interpret his dream to him. When they came before Nabuchodonozor III, the king said to them: "I have had a dream; and with my mind disturbed, I no longer know what I have seen." To this the sages, diviners and magicians made answer: "O king, live forever, tell your servants the dream and we will interpret it for you." And the king replied: "I have forgotten what it was, and if you do not tell me the dream and its meaning, you yourselves will perish and your houses be confiscated. But if you explain to me the dream and its meaning you will receive rewards, gifts and great honours from me. Explain to me, then, the dream and its interpretation." They replied saying: "Let the king tell us his dream, and we will give its meaning." To this the king responded: "I am well aware that you are trying to gain time, because you know that the things I dreamt have slipped my mind. Therefore, if you do not reveal the dream to me, I shall only believe of you that you are incapable of interpreting any dream at all." At this the sages, diviners and magicians said: "There is no man on earth, O king, who can fulfil your command, nor is there any great or powerful king who would command any such thing of a diviner or magician, because what you ask is very difficult." When the king heard this, in a towering rage he ordered them to be put to death, command carried out with great alacrity by Arioch, captain of the troops.

Chapter V

The Prophet Daniel saves the chaste Susanna from death

1. In that same year 4634, when Nabuchodonozor III was still suffering from the effects of the tormenting uncertainty regarding the mysterious dream he was unable to remember and the meaning it might have, the episode of the chaste Susanna took place.

2. There was an Israelite, or Jew, among the deportees who lived in Babylonia, Joachim by name, who was married to a woman called Susanna, of extraordinary beauty. Susanna was fearful of God, for her father Helchias and her mother, who were virtuous, had instructed their daughter according to the Law of Moses. Joachim was a very wealthy man and owned a garden beside his home. Since he was a highly respected man, many Jews gathered at his house. That year two elders had been chosen as judges of Israel's People deported to Babylonia who had a certain air of uprightness, but inwardly were very corrupt. Both elders often came to Joachim's home, for in the house's arcades justice was customarily administered to those who had lawsuits; since during the captivity the Jews were permitted to have judges of their own nation in cases pertaining to their law and their special morals. When the people left at midday, the modest Susanna was accustomed to stroll about her husband's garden.

3. The two elders, having noticed her extraordinary beauty, gazed at her with carnal craving whenever they saw her. And inflamed by passion, they no longer desired anything other than to satisfy their sensuality, thereby despising the just precepts of Divine Law. The two elders, obsessed with Susanna, who was an example of chastity and modesty, did not dare to let each other know of their passionate folly, for they were ashamed to reveal their base desires of sinning with her. Every day, however, with growing eagerness, they sought for opportunities of being able to see her. One day, after hearing the usual trials in the arcade of Joachim's home, one of the elders said to the other: "I'm going home now, it is time for lunch." However he did not go but, without being seen, hid in the garden of Susanna's home.

The other elder, thinking he was then alone, took advantage of the occasion to hide himself as well without being seen; but presently they encountered each other in the same place. When they asked each other the reason, both confessed the unchaste passion they felt for Susanna; and in common accord decided to carry out their plan of enjoying her, being familiar with the habits of the pious lady. That day only Susanna's family and servants were at home.

4. When both corrupt elders had hidden, Susanna, accompanied by two maids, came to the spot in the garden set aside for taking a bath, as she often used to do; and since everyone in the house knew, no one was in the garden except for the two elders, who were lying in wait concealed there. Susanna, then, said to her maids: "Bring me oils, ointments and perfumes, and shut the garden gate, for I want to bathe." They did as their mistress had ordered and then left the garden shutting the gate, unaware that the two elders were hidden inside. When the maids had gone, the two elders emerged from their hiding place and ran up to Susanna saying: "Listen, the garden gate is shut, no one can see us, and we are mad about you. Consent to us, then, and yield to our desires to sin with you." But as the innocent and chaste Susanna categorically refused the unchaste proposal of the two depraved elders, they told her: "If you refuse, we will give testimony against you, saying that we saw you sin with a young man, and for that reason you first sent your two maids away in order to be alone with him." Susanna burst out groaning and said: "I see myself straitened on every side. Anguish besets me on all sides; since if I do what you ask I will offend the Lord my God; and if I refuse I will not escape your hands when unjustly judged and condemned as if I were an adulteress. But that injury is better to me than to commit such a sin in the presence of the Lord." And Susanna cried out for help and support against the violence of the two elders who sprang forwards at her. They, however, in view of Susanna's piercing screams, let her go and cried out even louder calling her an adulteress. The two then ran to the garden gate, opened it and called out to Joachim and the rest in the house; who, when they heard the calls, went out to the garden to see what had happened. But the two iniquitous elders, in order falsely to justify their reason for being in the garden and also to give more weight to the false testimony they were raising against Susanna, said: "For some time now we have suspected that Susanna has been sinning with a young man accustomed to come to the garden when she is alone; and we, as zealous guardians of God's Law, felt it our duty to hide here in order to verify this with our own eyes. And today, with great sorrow of soul, we saw Susanna sinning with a young man." After Joachim and the others had heard what the elders said, they were astonished and exceedingly ashamed, for such a thing would never have been imagined of Susanna, and all were persuaded that she was an adulteress.

5. The following day, many of the people came to the home of Joachim, Susanna's husband, to be present at her trial. The two elders also came armed with falsehoods against her to condemn her to death. And they said in the presence of the people: "Send for Helchias's daughter Susanna, Joachim's wife." They then sent for her. She came accompanied by her parents and children and all her other relatives, while her husband Joachim stayed secluded inside the home so as not to be present at such a pitiful event. Susanna, who was both exceedingly lovely and extremely modest, had covered her face with a veil. But the wicked elders ordered her to unveil so as at least to satiate themselves beholding her charms. In the meantime Susanna's household and all who knew her wept. The two elders, rising up in the midst of the people, laid their hands upon her head, as was the custom with someone guilty of crime. Susanna, bathed in tears, raised her eyes to heaven because her heart's hope was placed in the Lord. Then the two elders said: "We being alone in the garden, Susanna came in with two maids. She then sent them out, and they shut the gate. Then a young man who had been concealed there came and sinned with her. We, seeing the wickedness, ran up to where they were and caught them in the act. But because he was stronger than us we could not seize the young man, who opened the gate and ran off. We then questioned Susanna as to the young man's identity, but she refused to say. And we, as elders of Israel, give trustworthy testimony of this unhappy event." The crowd believed them as elders and judges they were of the people, and condemned Susanna to be stoned to death for adultery.

6. But Susanna cried out in a loud voice: "Eternal God, who knows hidden things, who knows all things even before they happen, You know that these two elders have raised false testimony against me, and here and now I am going to die without having done anything of what they have maliciously fabricated against me." And the Lord hearkened to the prayer of His chaste maidservant. While they were leading her out to die, the young Prophet Daniel, seventeen years of age, who was among the crowd, felt impelled by God to come out in Susanna's defence. All at once Daniel began to cry out loud, saying: "On no account do I consent to the death of this virtuous woman." The people, turning towards him, asked: "What are you saying?" He, standing in their midst, said: "Are you so foolish, O children of Israel, that without the formalities of a trial, and without knowing the true facts, you condemn a daughter of Israel? Come back to court, because they have given false testimony against her." The people quickly returned, and Daniel, seated as judge, with marked anger said to the people: "Keep these two elders well apart and I will examine them in your presence." And when they were separated, he summoned one of them and asked: "If you saw Susanna sinning with a young man as you have said, tell me: In what part of the garden and beneath what tree did you see them sin?" The elder replied: "To the right of the garden, beside the well and beneath a lentisk." And ordering the elder to withdraw, Daniel summoned the other and asked: "If you saw Susanna sinning with a young man as you yourself have said, tell me: In what part of the garden and beneath what tree did you see them sinning?" The elder replied: "To the left of the garden, beside the wall and beneath an oak tree." Then Daniel ordered the other elder to be summoned, and when both old men were in his presence, said to them: "Old men, both in years and in villainy: your own statements betray you as liars before God and before these people here present. You have lied at the price of your own heads. Accursed race of Canaan and not of Israel! A woman's beauty blinded you, and concupiscence perverted your hearts. You have behaved in like manner towards many daughters of Israel, who out of fear consented to your desires; but this daughter of our people, the chaste Susanna, did not consent to your wickedness. You will now receive your just deserts for the sins you have committed until now as judges of Israel, pronouncing unjust sentences, oppressing the poor, freeing the

wicked and condemning the innocent, as in the case of the virtuous Susanna; for the Lord God has said: 'Do not put the innocent or the righteous to death'."

7. Then the crowd, astonished at the unmasking of the malice and wickedness of the two perverse old men, filled with emotion, cried out blessing God, who saves those who place their trust in Him. And the crowd rose up against the two old men; and, according to the Law of Moses, they were stoned and thus put to death. Thanks, then, to the Prophet Daniel's intervention, the chaste Susanna was saved from having her innocent blood shed. Then Susanna's parents, Helchias and his wife, as well as her husband Joachim, and other relatives, praised God and gave Him thanks for the happy outcome of this lamentable event, and because Susanna's honour had been upheld before all. And from that day on Daniel attained yet greater prestige as a prophet among the members of the People of Israel captive in Babylonia.

Chapter VI

Daniel reveals and interprets King Nabuchodonozor III's dream

1. The Prophet Daniel's inspired intervention in defence of innocent Susanna was talked about everywhere. That same year 4634, when the episode reached the ears of King Nabuchodonozor III, he at once commanded Arioch, captain of his troops, to bring Daniel into his presence to see if the prophet could discover his dream and its meaning. Daniel went into the presence of the king and besought him time to give the answer; then returning to his residence, Daniel informed his companions of all that had befallen the king, with the object that they implore the mercy of the Lord God of Israel concerning the mystery. That night Daniel had a vision in which the mystery was revealed to him, and he blest God and burst into praise in these words: "The Name of the Lord be blest for ever and ever, since wisdom and strength are His. He Himself mutates times and ages; transfers kingdoms, and secures them; gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who fulfil His Law. He reveals deep and hidden things, and knows those buried in darkness, since light is with Him. To You, O Lord God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I give thanks and render praise, because You have granted me wisdom and strength and have now made known to me what we begged of You, since You have revealed to me what the king is asking."

2. Daniel, after God had revealed the dream to him, went to the palace; and once in the presence of Nabuchodonozor III and his courtiers, told the king that he would resolve his difficulty. The king asked Daniel: "Do you really believe that you can tell me the dream I had and interpret it for me?" And Daniel answered: "Neither sages nor magicians nor diviners are able to reveal the mysterious dream my king has had, but solely the God of Heaven, the Lord God of Israel, Who reveals mysteries. He has shown you in your dream, O King Nabuchodonozor, things that will come to pass at the end of your reign. Here, then, O King Nabuchodonozor, is the dream you had: You, O king, when in bed, set yourself to consider what would occur in future ages, and the true God, Who reveals mysteries, gave you to see in a dream what shall come to pass. To me as well He has revealed it, so that the king may have a clear interpretation. You, O king, in a dream had a vision in which you contemplated a huge statue; and this huge statue, of great height, stood upright in front of you, and it was dreadful to behold. The head of the statue was of purest gold; the chest and arms of silver; the belly and thighs of bronze; the legs of iron; and the feet of clay. You were thus contemplating it, when a rock, without being moved by any hand, broke away from the mount and struck the feet of clay, shattering them, and the statue fell. Then the iron, the bronze, the silver and the gold were also shattered, and were reduced to dust which was scattered by the wind, so that nothing remained. But the rock which had struck the statue's feet became a great mountain which filled the whole earth."

3. And Daniel went on to say: "This is the dream, O King Nabuchodonozor. Now I will also give its meaning in your presence: You are emperor, and therefore king of kings. It is the God of Heaven, however, who has permitted that you possess this kingdom, strength, empire and glory, and that all provinces in your empire be subject to your power. The clay represents your empire; the iron, an empire greater than yours; the bronze, an empire greater still; the silver, an empire yet greater than the preceding ones; the gold, an empire greater than all."

4. "But in the time of the empire represented by the gold, the God of Heaven will raise up an empire greater than all the others combined, such as has never before existed nor ever will exist; it will never be destroyed, will endure eternally and will shatter and annihilate all other empires. In your dream, O king, the great God has shown you things of the future, and this dream is true and its interpretation faithful."

5. Then King Nabuchodonozor III fell face to the ground and adored Daniel, and commanded sacrifices of victims to be made to him, and incense to be burnt. But Daniel openly rejected so sacrilegious a homage saying that only the Lord God of Israel is to be adored. And Nabuchodonozor III said to Daniel: "Verily your God is the God of gods, King of kings and Lord of lords, and who reveals mysteries, since by virtue of your God you have been able to discover and interpret my dream." Then the king exalted Daniel heaping honours upon him, gave him many and magnificent gifts, and constituted him prince over all the provinces of Babylonia; and president of the magistrates, and of all the wise men of Babylonia. And Daniel besought the king to entrust the affairs of the province of Babylon to his companions Ananias, Mishael and Azarias. From then on Daniel lived in his own palace, together with his three companions and a large serving staff and personal guard. And in whatever matters of wisdom and understanding that Nabuchodonozor consulted Daniel, the king found him to be immensely superior to all the wise men present at his court.

6. With the Prophet Daniel's solid help and counsel, Nabuchodonozor III enjoyed great prosperity in his empire, and lived quite tranquilly in his palace, acknowledging that all this happiness came to him from the Lord God of Israel out of regard for Daniel and the great love the king had for the prophet and his three companions.

7. The statue seen by Nabuchodonozor III in his dream, represents: the clay, the empire of the Babylonians; the iron, the empire of the Medes; the bronze, the empire of the Persians; the silver, the empire of the Greeks; and the gold, the empire of the Romans. The empire which shall never be destroyed and which will endure eternally is Christ's

spiritual empire, the Holy Church which He instituted, whose doctrine has spread out, coming to fill the whole Earth, and will achieve her zenith following His Glorious Second Coming, with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom, which is Christ's total and absolute Reign. The rock which breaks away from the mount without man's agency is Christ; the Mount is the Virgin Mary; the great Mountain is Christ's total and absolute Reign.

Chapter VII

The magnates of the king of Babylon's court are envious at the elevation of Daniel and his three companions. Nabuchodonozor III's arrogance and his dream. Daniel interprets the dream for him

1. The magnates of Nabuchodonozor III's court, however, seeing that the king had raised up Daniel and his three companions and had placed them in the highest posts of his empire, goaded by envy, endeavoured at all costs to influence the king against the four Israelites so that he dismiss them from their posts. The magnates, taking advantage of the king's proud and high-handed character, flattered him exceedingly to the point of making him believe that his glory and power made him yet more excellent than the God of Israel, and therefore worthy to be adored by his subjects, since Nabuchodonozor III had moreover become extremely arrogant due to his great conquests, among them that of the land of Egypt. Nabuchodonozor III's self-deification reached the point that in his mind he conceived the idea of erecting a statue of himself in gold so that all might render him adoration.

2. In the year 4642, when he had not yet given the command to begin his abominable project, Nabuchodonozor III had a dream which appalled him, greatly unsettling his spirits. When he recounted it, none of the sages, diviners and magicians close to him knew how to interpret it. And though he had not dared to consult Daniel for fear of his prophecies, finally he called the prophet into his presence, saying: "O Daniel, wisest of the sages of Babylon, I know that you possess the spirit of your God, and that for you no mystery is impenetrable. Well then, reveal to me the meaning of the following dream I have had: I was asleep in bed and it seemed to me that I saw in dreams a tree of colossal height. The tree was large and sturdy, its top reached up to the heavens and could be seen from all over the earth. Its branches were very beautiful and so heavy-laden with fruit that there was enough to feed everyone. Animals and wild beasts lived in its shade, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches, and every living being ate from it. And suddenly an Angel of the Lord your God came down from Heaven with a sword, and cried out saying: 'Cut down the tree, chop off its branches, shake off its leaves and scatter its fruit; and let the animals beneath its shade and the birds nesting in its branches all flee; but leave the stump and its roots in the ground. Let the king be left out in the open in the pastures, and be bathed by the dew of heaven, and live with the wild beasts. Change the king's heart, and give him the heart of a brute instead of a man's, for seven times, for so has it been decreed by the Lord God of Israel, and thus have His saints demanded, so that the inhabitants of Babylonia know that the Most High God of Israel has dominion over the kingdom of men'. I, King Nabuchodonozor, saw this in dreams. You, then, O Daniel, tell me presently its meaning, for the spirit of your God dwells in you."

3. Then Daniel, troubled, remained thoughtful and silent for about an hour. But the king said to him: "Daniel, do not be anxious on account of the dream and its interpretation." Daniel answered: "Oh, my king! Would that the dream apply to those who hate you, and its purport be for your enemies. This is the interpretation of your dream: The colossal and sturdy tree, the height of which reaches up to the heavens and can be seen from all over the earth, is yourself, O king. Because of the aggrandizement of your power, you have come to believe that you are yet more than God, for you have become conceited to the point of wanting to reach to the heavens and extend your power to the ends of the Earth. And regarding the Angel of the Lord my God whom you saw descending from Heaven with a sword, and commanding the tree and its branches and fruit to be cut down, and you yourself to be turned into an animal for seven times, he was Archangel Saint Michael, Prince of the Heavenly Hosts, who brought the sentence of the Most High God of Israel pronounced against my lord the king; since you will be cast out from among men, turned into an animal, and will dwell among the brutes and wild beasts of the land, be bathed by the dew of heaven and eat grass. And thus you will spend seven years until you acknowledge that the Most High God of Israel has dominion over the power of men. And regarding the command to leave the stump of the tree, this means that your kingdom will still be kept for you after you have acknowledged that there is a power in Heaven over and above all power on Earth. Therefore, O king, heed my advice, do penance for your wrongdoing, redeem your sins by alms and be merciful to the poor; since if you do so, you will be converted to the Lord God of Israel, and He will forgive you."

4. Despite Daniel's ominous prophecy and good counsel, King Nabuchodonozor III remained obstinate in his intention of erecting a statue of gold in order to be adored by all his subjects.

Chapter VIII

Nabuchodonozor III erects a golden statue of himself so as to be adored as god

1. In the year 4643, King Nabuchodonozor III of Babylonia commanded the execution of his coveted project: the erection of a golden statue of himself in order to be adored; believing that his power and glory merited this.

2. When Daniel learnt of this, he repeatedly rebuked Nabuchodonozor III severely, in God's Name, again prophesying to him the divine punishment that would befall him if he executed his wicked designs. But as the king was unwilling to desist from his perverse project, the Prophet Daniel resigned his post as prince of Babylonia and renounced all the other honours Nabuchodonozor III had bestowed upon him, withdrawing to live with his three companions, Ananias, Mishael and Azarias, who also resigned their posts, in a modest dwelling on the outskirts of the city.

3. That same year 4643, the golden statue of King Nabuchodonozor III was completed and erected. It was over thirty metres high and more than three metres wide, and was set up in the field of Dura, an enclosure on the outskirts of the city of Babylon. Afterwards, King Nabuchodonozor III commanded all the magnates, magistrates, judges, captains, prefects and governors from all his provinces to be summoned in order to attend the dedication of the statue erected in

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his honour. When they all stood before it, a crier loudly proclaimed: "You, from all peoples, tribes and tongues, are commanded that at the very instant you hear the blast of trumpets, you are to prostrate yourselves and adore the golden statue of King Nabuchodonozor III; and if anyone should not prostrate himself and should not adore, at that very moment he will be cast into a fiery furnace." On the day of the dedication of Nabuchodonozor III's statue, the great and the lowly prostrated themselves before it, rendering honours of divinity thereto; and from all provinces of the empire subjects also came to Babylon to adore it. Not a few Israelites were put to death by order of the king for not consenting to render adoration to his statue.

Chapter IX

Nabuchodonozor III threatens Daniel with casting him into a fiery furnace.

Ananias, Mishael and Azarias are cast into a fiery furnace. Hymn of praise to God by the three Israelites inside the furnace.

The three Israelites emerge unscathed and Nabuchodonozor III pardons Daniel

1. The Prophet Daniel and his three companions Ananias, Mishael and Azarias, were among the Israelites who refused to adore the statue of Nabuchodonozor III. The four were accused of infidelity to the king by some of his magnates, who said to him: "O king, live forever! You have issued a decree whereby every man, on hearing the blast of trumpets, should prostrate himself and adore the statue of gold, and that whoever does not prostrate himself and does not adore, be cast into a fiery furnace. Well then, precisely the four Israelite men you kept in the four most important posts at court, namely Daniel, Ananias, Mishael and Azarias, have despised your decree, O king, since they do not adore the statue erected to you as god and lord you are."

2. Nabuchodonozor III then flew into a towering rage and commanded the four Israelites to be brought into his presence. They were immediately brought before the king. Then Nabuchodonozor III spoke first to Daniel's three companions, saying: "Is it true, Ananias, Mishael and Azarias, that you refuse to kneel before the statue of gold I caused to be erected in order to be adored thereby? Now then, if you are willing, when you hear the trumpet blasts, prostrate yourselves and adore my statue; because if you do not, you will be cast into the fiery furnace. And who is the God who will deliver you out of my hands?" To this the three made answer: "O King Nabuchodonozor, we have no need to answer you in this regard, because our God, whom we adore, can free us from the fiery furnace and deliver us, O king, out of your hands. And if He, our God, should not wish to free us from death, be assured, O king, that we willingly give our lives for the honour of the Lord God of Israel, rather than adore the statue of gold you have erected."

3. However, before proceeding to punish the three, the king said to Daniel: "First I am going to punish your three companions who refuse to adore my statue. They shall perish with rage and indignation, decided to cast them into the fiery furnace. At this, Nabuchodonozor III, seething with rage and indignation, decided to cast them into the fiery furnace. But I will give you time to reflect, while they burn and die; and when they are dead, if you are still obstinate and refuse to adore my statue, you shall perish likewise in the furnace." At which Daniel answered Nabuchodonozor III saying that he too was willing to die in the furnace rather than offend the Lord God of Israel by adoring the statue of gold. Moreover, Daniel prophesied to the king that his three companions whom he was about to cast into the furnace, inside would render praise to the Lord God of Hosts, and afterwards would emerge unscathed, since they would not be harmed in any way. So Nabuchodonozor III said to Daniel: "Now we shall see who is the more powerful, your God or I; the challenge has been made." Daniel answered: "My God is the more powerful, as you shall verify, for I tell you again, they shall emerge unscathed." Then Nabuchodonozor III said to Daniel: "If the three come out of the furnace alive, I will set you free." Despite these words, the king did not believe that they would emerge from the furnace unharmed.

4. In that same year 4643, Nabuchodonozor III gave orders for the furnace to be heated with fire, and made seven times hotter than usual. And he commanded some of the strongest soldiers of his army to bind the feet of Ananias, Mishael and Azarias and cast them into the fiery furnace. The three young men were immediately bound and cast into the fiery furnace clad and shod as they were. The soldiers stoked up the fire further with tow, pitch, tar and vines in order to intensify the fire. But the flames, suddenly issuing from the door of the furnace, killed the soldiers who had cast in the three young Israelites. And it came to pass that the Angel of the Lord, who was Most Holy Melchisedech, having descended into the midst of the fire, stood beside the three young men, whom He freed from their bonds and preserved from the flames. And He made a cool breeze to blow which refreshed them in the midst of the furnace, and the fire did not touch them at all, nor trouble them, nor cause them the least discomfort.

5. And the three young men, kneeling in the midst of the flames, praised, glorified and blessed God saying:

"Blessed be You, O Lord God
of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
You are worthy of all praise and glory,
and of being exalted forever.
May Your holy and glorious Name be blessed.
You are worthy to be praised,
and to be exceedingly exalted by every creature.
Blessed be You in the Holy Temple of Your glory.
You are worthy to be sung and glorified
for ever and ever.
Blessed be You, Who penetrate the abyss,
and are seated upon Cherubs.
You are worthy of praise,
and of being exalted forever;
may You be blessed in the firmament of the heavens.

Worthy are You to be sung and glorified
for ever and ever.
All works of the Lord, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Heavens, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
All waters above the heavens,
bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
All Angelic Choirs, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Sun and moon, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Stars of heaven, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Wind and rain, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Fire and heat, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Dew and frost, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Ice and cold, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Ice and snows, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Nights and days, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Light and darkness, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Lightning and clouds, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Let the Earth bless the Lord:
let it praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
All you plants sprung up from the earth,
bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Wellsprings, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Seas and rivers, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
All you whales and fishes that swirl through the waters,
bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
All birds of the air, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
All beasts and cattle, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Sons of men, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Bless, O Israel, the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Religious of the Lord, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord:

according to the Infallible Magisterium of the Church

Ananias, Mishael and Azarias, bless the Lord:
praise and exalt Him for ever and ever.
Because He has saved us from death
in the midst of the fiery flames.
Glorify the Lord, everyone, for He is good,
and because His mercy is
for ever and ever."

6. When informed that the three Israelites had not perished in the fire but, moreover, amid the flames sang and gave glory to the Lord God of Israel, Nabuchodonozor III, filled with amazement and dread, accompanied by some of his magnates, hastened to the fiery furnace. Seeing four men inside the furnace, he asked those accompanying him: "Did I not command three men to be cast bound into the furnace?"; they answered: "Just so, O king." To which Nabuchodonozor III replied: "Well, I see four men walking about in the midst of the fire without having suffered any harm, and the appearance of the fourth resembles that of an Angel of the Lord God of Israel." Then Nabuchodonozor III approached the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and said: "Ananias, Mishael and Azarias, servants of your Most High God, come out, and draw near"; and they came out from amid the fire. The rest of the magnates, magistrates, judges and other courtiers of the king, gathering around contemplated the three young men, whose persons had been left completely unscathed by the fire: not a single hair of their heads had been singed, and not even their clothes smelled of burning. At such an extraordinary prodigy, amazement and panic seized hold of Nabuchodonozor III, in such fashion that he said: "I see that the Lord God of Israel has sent an Angel, and has freed Ananias, Mishael and Azarias from death in the fire." The king, however, did not utter these words because he was repentant of his evil doings, nor because he was willing to demolish the statue of gold he had commanded to be erected. Moreover, the magnates, magistrates, judges and other courtiers around him, though somewhat impressed by the prodigy, told the king that it was not due to the power of the God of Israel, but to an artifice of witchcraft.

7. However, despite the influence wielded by the powerful men of his court, Nabuchodonozor III set the Prophet Daniel free, as he had promised if the three young men were to emerge from the furnace unscathed.

Chapter X

Nabuchodonozor III is turned into an animal

1. In the year 4644, twelve months having elapsed since the episode of the three young Israelites in the fiery furnace, King Nabuchodonozor III was visited by the Prophet Daniel who, in God's Name, reproached him for his conduct and prophesied to him anew that, if he did not demolish the golden statue he had caused to be erected to be adored, the Lord God of Hosts would carry out the previously announced punishment, and he would be turned into an animal for seven years. But the king replied: "Is this not the great Babylon which I have aggrandized by the force of my power and the splendour of my glory?" While the words were still on the king's lips, suddenly the voice of God came down from Heaven and said to him: "O King Nabuchodonozor III, I tell you: your kingdom will be taken from you for a time; here and now you shall be turned into an animal; you will be cast out from among men, and will dwell among the brutes and wild beasts of the earth, be bathed by the dew of heaven and have grass for food. And thus you shall live seven years until you acknowledge that I, the Most High God of Israel, have dominion over the kingdom of men."

2. When God had finished pronouncing His just sentence, Nabuchodonozor III was turned into an animal in everything relating to his accidental body; which became deformed and covered over with fur, thicker about the head; his eyes, nose and mouth became deformed and bulging; claws like those of predatory birds appeared on his fingers, and hooves on his feet; he could walk only on all fours. He could not talk; instead he at times grunted like a pig; at others, bellowed like a bull; at yet others, brayed like an ass; and in many other ways acted as animals do. He ate the grass of the fields and slept in the crannies of the rocks and the hollows of trees. He almost always conserved his mental faculties stemming from the soul; consequently, he was conscious of everything that happened to him, and thus suffered and expiated greatly. He was cast out from social life by the people; and when he came up to settled areas, they threw stones at and made fun of him, to which he reacted brutally like an animal, and at moments like a madman. The more animal he saw himself, the more he suffered. During the seven years of this painful state, Nabuchodonozor III did not lose consciousness of what he was suffering, and that he had been punished by God for endeavouring to supplant Divine Authority by his proud regal authority.

3. During the seven years Nabuchodonozor III lived out in the open as an animal, the throne of the Babylonian Empire was occupied by his son Balthassar as viceroy. He demolished the statue of gold his father had erected, on seeing the punishment the king had received.

Chapter XI

Nabuchodonozor III returns to the normal state of man, is sincerely converted to God and recovers all his kingly honours

In the year 4651, that is, once the seven years of punishment were over, Nabuchodonozor III returned to the normal state of man, with the same appearance and royal attire as before. Sincerely repentant, he praised the Lord God of Israel, and gave Him thanks for His mercy. He then went to his Babylon palace, where his son Balthassar and his magnates gave him an affectionate reception. Nabuchodonozor III, sincerely converted to the Lord God of Israel, publicly blessed and glorified Him, saying: "I, Nabuchodonozor III, exalt and glorify the King of Heaven, acknowledging that all His works are true and His ways just, and that He can humble the proud. His power is eternal and His reign everlasting. Before God Most High all the Earth's inhabitants count as nothing, given that, as He wills, so He disposes, the powers of Heaven as of the dwellers of Earth. Neither is there anyone who may resist what He does nor who can oppose His will. He always acts justly and wisely." Nabuchodonozor III as

was re-established on his throne with yet greater magnificence than before. He banished all traces of idolatry from his empire, and commanded that only the Lord God of Israel be adored and obeyed, and His holy laws fulfilled. Nabuchodonozor III was even willing to restore the sacred vessels to Jerusalem, and rebuild the city and God's Temple, and so forth; but the Lord God said to him through Daniel: "The time has not yet come to restore the sacred vessels or rebuild Jerusalem or My Sacred Temple. I will determine when everything should be carried out." And the king obeyed. God also told him not to make profane use of the sacred vessels, and he obeyed. Nabuchodonozor III again designated the Prophet Daniel as prince of the provinces of Babylonia and entrusted important missions in his empire to Ananias, Mishael and Azarias. Daniel again lived in the king's palace with his three companions and a large serving staff and personal guard. After the punishment, Nabuchodonozor III reigned for fourteen years.

Chapter XII

Prophecy on the Holy and Terrible Name of Joseph

In the year 4657 the Prophet Daniel, forty years of age, told a multitude of Israelites in Babylonia: "The time will come when a Righteous Man of David's lineage, sanctified in his mother's womb, the ever-Virgin Man to be espoused to the ever-Virgin Woman who will conceive and give birth to the Messiah of God, on the eighth day of his birth will receive the Holy and Terrible Name of Joseph. At this Name, all in Heaven, on Earth and in the abyss will bow their heads."

Chapter XIII

Darius, king of Media. Assuerus, surnamed Cyrus, king of Persia

1. In the year 4658, while Nabuchodonozor III reigned in the Babylonian Empire, King Assuerus, surnamed Cyrus, began to reign in Persia. He was grandson of Assuerus who had been king of the Medes, and nephew of Darius, king of the Medes at the time. Assuerus, surnamed Cyrus, married the virtuous Queen Esther. Ecbathana was the capital of the Median Empire and Susa the capital of the Persian Empire.

2. In the year 4659, King Nabuchodonozor III of Babylonia and King Darius of Media became tributary kings of Assuerus, king of Persia. Thereby the powerful Babylonian Empire and the powerful Median Empire became subject as tributaries to the even more powerful Persian Empire. This made it much easier for many of the Israelite deportees in the Babylonian Empire to cross over and live in both the Median and Persian Empires.

Chapter XIV

Death of King Nabuchodonozor III. Balthassar, king of Babylonia

1. In the year 4665, after fourteen years of glorious reign in the service of God through exemplary life, Nabuchodonozor III died piously in Babylon. The Prophet Daniel was at his bedside to comfort and assist him at those critical moments. After the king's death, he was succeeded on the throne of Babylonia by his son Balthassar, then as king.

2. Balthassar, then, began to reign in Babylonia in the year 4665. During his first seven years he was faithful to the Lord God of Israel and His Holy Law. In his palace he had at his side the Prophet Daniel as prince of the provinces of Babylonia, whose wise counsel he took very much into account.

Chapter XV

Apocalyptic vision of the ram, the he-goat and the profaning empire

1. In the year 4665, first of King Balthassar's reign, Daniel had the following vision while in the palace at Babylon. He saw a ram standing before a lagoon, and it had many very long horns, which grew. Next he saw the ram lunging towards the west, towards the east, towards the north and towards the south, and from its power no beast could defend or free itself; since it did whatever it wished, and was aggrandized. While Daniel was considering this vision, all at once he beheld a he-goat which came from the west and traversed the whole earth so quickly as almost not to touch the ground. The he-goat had a salient horn between its eyes. It turned on the ram well-armed with horns that Daniel had seen before the lagoon, charging with all the force of its headlong rush. The he-goat ferociously attacked and struck the ram, broke its horns and brought it down, without the ram being able to free itself from the power of the he-goat.

2. And the he-goat became very great; and when it had grown, from its single horn, four horns grew towards the four winds of the earth. And from one of them a small horn sprouted, which grew greatly towards the south, towards the north, towards the east, towards the west, and chiefly towards the Church of Christ. And the horn rose up as far as the fortress of Heaven and threw to the ground part of the fortress and part of the stars, and trampled them underfoot. And it was aggrandized even against the prince of the fortress and took away the perpetual Sacrifice, and overthrew the place of his sanctification. And power was given it against the perpetual Sacrifice, because of the sins of the people. And power was given it to overthrow truth upon earth and to undertake whatever it pleased with great success. Then Daniel heard one saint speaking to another, both unknown to him, who conversed together. One asked: "How long shall the suppression of the perpetual Sacrifice last, and also the sin of desolation and the trampling of the fortress and the sanctuary, foretold in the vision?"; to which the other replied: "For the space of fully two thousand three hundred days, and then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

3. While Daniel, in the midst of this vision, tried to understand its meaning, the figure as of a man came and stood before him, and he heard the voice of God exclaim: "Uriel, explain the vision to him." Then Archangel Saint Uriel came up to the prophet, and he, filled with fear, fell upon his face. But Archangel Saint Uriel said to him: "O man, understand the manner in which this vision will be fulfilled at the appointed time." While speaking he touched Daniel, and had him return to his previous state. Uriel then told the prophet: "I am going to show you what is to take place when the end shall come of this punishment Israel is now undergoing, because this period has its end. The ram you

saw armed with many horns represents the manifold empires that shall arise following your return to the land of Israel; the he-goat is the judeo-masonic empire, whose mighty power is denoted by the salient horn between its eyes. The four horns born from this salient horn represent four empires that will arise beneath the standard of the judeo-masonic empire. And the perversity of men increasing, from one of these four horns a brazen-faced empire will arise, master of enigmas and highly astute, which will consolidate its power; not solely by its strength, but also by its satanic astuteness; and it is not easy to envisage how it will devastate everything and do whatever it please, and everything will go well for it: and it will take the lives of the worthies from the people of the saints, as it please, and the frauds it devises will succeed well. And its heart will swell, and possessing everything to excess, it shall cause very many to perish, and will rise up against the prince of the fortress; but it will be annihilated, and not by man's doing. Seal and keep the vision, which shall be verified when many years have come to pass." Daniel's strength failed him, and he was unwell for several days; when restored he went on handling the king's affairs; but he was aghast at the vision, which no one else knew about.

4. Here is a clearer explanation of this prophecy: In these Last Times, freemasonry, synagogue of Satan, with its characteristic subtlety and cunning, infiltrated the government of the roman church with the aim of destroying the Church of Christ, which is the fortress thrown down. With the affiliation of many apostate cardinals and bishops, 'fallen stars', into its ranks, freemasonry succeeded in scaling and capturing the key posts in the Vatican offices and in the dioceses of the world, incapacitating and nullifying the eminent personality of the Holy Pontiff Pope Paul VI, prince of the fortress, who found himself reduced to the most abject and pitiless slavery. Once freemasonry had gained its principal objectives in strategic points of the Church, it continued its work of destruction in an official way, with greater vigour, through dispositions and decrees, forging Pope Saint Paul VI's signature and misusing his seal; and often compelling him to sign by means of drugs and threats.

5. In this way freemasonry succeeded in concocting and promulgating, under the seal and signature of Pope Saint Paul VI, the satanic *Novus Ordo* Mass. At the very moment the heretical *Novus Ordo* came into effect in the Church, made rigorously binding, the Holy Sacrifice of Mass or Perpetual Sacrifice was officially abolished. At the establishment of the *Novus Ordo*, the churches or places of sanctification were overthrown and profaned by sacrilegious worship.

6. The disastrous *Novus Ordo* came into effect on the 30th of November 1969; and the official re-establishment of the Sacrifice of Mass or Perpetual Sacrifice was put into practice as from the priestly ordination and the episcopal consecration of Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great, and other members of the Religious Order of the Carmelites of the Holy Face; ceremonies which were carried out, respectively, on the 1st and 11th of January 1976, apostolic succession being thereby assured. Making a comparison between the number of days prophesied by Daniel and the time elapsed between the suppression of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass or Perpetual Sacrifice and its re-establishment in practice, we see then: according to Daniel, two thousand three hundred days, and, therefore, six years, three months and twenty days; and as occurred in reality, two thousand two hundred and thirty-two days elapsed: that is, six years, one month and eleven days; since God shortened the days for love of His Church. Though the Holy Sacrifice of Mass or Perpetual Sacrifice was re-established in practice by the priestly ordination and episcopal consecration of him who is now Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Very Great and of others, nevertheless, this Supreme Pontiff re-established it by document on the 8th of August 1978.

Chapter XVI

Daniel's orison for the restoration of the People of Israel.

Announcement of the Messiah's prompt Coming. Prophecy of the seventy weeks

1. In the year 4666, second of Balthassar's reign in Babylonia, Daniel, considering the Prophet Jeremias's prediction of the seventy years for which the captivity was to last, addressed his orison to the Lord God with petitions and supplications and with fasts, wearing a hair shirt and covered with ashes. Daniel, then, praying to the Lord God of Israel, and rendering Him praise, said: "Deign to listen to me, O Lord, great and terrible God, faithful in keeping Your covenant and merciful to those who love and observe Your Law. My people has often sinned against You, living impiously and apostatizing from Your just judgements and holy commandments. On manifold occasions she has not obeyed Your servants the prophets, who speak in Your Name. Justice, O Lord, is Yours, wherewith You justly punish the sins of Your people. And if we now find ourselves deported to strange lands, this is because Israel transgressed Your law and did not listen to Your voice, and You permitted our wickedness to be thus punished. But, Lord, if Your justice is great, so too is Your mercy. Therefore I beseech You, Lord, to appease Your rage and fury against the razed city of Jerusalem and against the land of Israel. Incline Your ear, my God, and listen to us. Open Your eyes and behold our desolation and that of the city where Your Name was invoked; since, prostrate before You in the name of my people, I present her prayers in Your presence, not because of our merits but because of Your great mercy. Be appeased, Lord, and for love of Yourself do not delay the return of Your people to the land You gave them and the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and of her Sacred Temple, for Your greater honour and glory."

2. While Daniel, prostrate before God, besought Him thus, it happened that Archangel Saint Gabriel, flying up suddenly, touched him, consoled him and spoke to him in the following terms: "Daniel, I am now come to instruct you, in order that you know God's designs. The command was given to me the moment you began to pray, and I am come to show you His designs, because you are a man of desires. You, then, pay heed now to my words, and understand the vision you had some time ago."

3. "Seventy weeks of years are shortened upon your people, and upon your holy city, that prevarication may cease, and sin have an end, and iniquity be washed away, and everlasting justice be ushered in, and the prophetic vision you had be fulfilled, and the Saint of saints, the Anointed of God, be exalted on a Cross. Know, then, and listen carefully: From the going forth of the word for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, her Sacred Temple and her walls to be finally concluded, until the public manifestation of Christ the King, there will be sixty-two weeks of years and seven weeks of years. And

in the middle of the final week of years, the Christ shall be slain, and the people who will deny Him shall no more be His until they acknowledge Him. And the Christ, half way through this last week of years, will seal His new Covenant with many; and also, half way through this week of years the Levitical sacrifice will come to an end, and in the Temple of Jerusalem will be the abomination of desolation. And weeks of years after these seventy weeks of years, a people shall come, which will endure until the end of time."

4. Explanation of this prophecy of Daniel: God had decreed that seventy weeks of years were to pass from the complete rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple until the Death of Christ. Within the seventy weeks of years the following events came to pass: After the lapse of sixty-two weeks of years, Mary's Immaculate Conception; as from Mary's Immaculate Conception, seven weeks of years were to elapse until the Baptism of Christ and the beginning of His Public Life, which occurred at the end of the sixty-ninth week of years; as from the Baptism of Christ and the beginning of His Public Life, within the last week of years, or seventieth week, Christ's Public Life took place; and half way through this final week of years there occurred: the institution of Holy Mass, the cessation of the Levitical sacrifice, the Death of Christ and the apostasy of the Jews. The destruction of Jerusalem and her Temple by the Roman troops under caudillo Titus, subsequently Roman emperor, occurred thirty-seven years after the Death of Christ.

5. The alluded complete rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple was effected eighty-one years after the Prophet Daniel's vision, which he had in the year 4666. Artaxerxes' command or edict authorizing the concluding of the city of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple was issued on the 1st of January in the year 4747. Accordingly, the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and her Sacred Temple was concluded fifty-two days after Nehemias arrived in Jerusalem with Artaxerxes' edict; and therefore four hundred and fifty-two years before Christ's birth.

Chapter XVII

King Balthassar's perversion and apostasy.

Daniel's prophetic vision on the world's four kingdoms or beasts and Christ's Eternal Kingdom

1. By degrees King Balthassar began to disregard the Prophet Daniel's holy and wise counsels. At the end of the seventh year of the king's reign, Daniel renounced his post at court, as did his three companions Ananias, Mishael and Azarias, in view of the evident signs of apostasy and perversion shown by King Balthassar; who, arrogant on account of his power and glory, not only filled his empire with idols but, in the year 4675, even erected a statue of himself in order to be adored as god.

2. In that same year 4675, tenth of the reign of King Balthassar of Babylonia, Daniel had a vision in dreams, of which he afterwards wrote a summary as follows: "I saw that the four winds of the earth combated in the great sea. And four huge beasts, different from one another, emerged from the sea. The first beast was like a lioness, and had the wings of an eagle; and, while I looked, suddenly its wings were ripped off, and it rose up from earth, standing on its feet like a man, and a human heart was given to it. The second beast was like a bear, which stood to one side, and had three rows of teeth in its mouth, and they spoke to it thus: Arise, eat flesh in abundance. The third was like a leopard, and upon it were like four wings of a bird and four heads, and power was given to this beast. The fourth beast was frightful and prodigious, extraordinarily strong, in nowise like the other three beasts, and, moreover, had ten horns. I was looking at the horns of this fourth beast when lo and behold another smaller horn sprang up amid them, and no sooner had it appeared than three of the other ten horns were torn off. This new horn continued to grow until it became larger than all the others, had eyes like a man's, and a mouth that uttered tremendous lies and blasphemies. And then this last horn waged war on the saints, prevailing over them."

3. "While I was observing all this, I saw that before me they placed a large armchair, and I saw how the Ancient of days made His appearance and seated Himself in it: His garments were white as snow, and His hair like clean wool; His throne, flames of fire, and the wheels thereof, blazing fire. A river of impetuous fire issued from before His venerable Countenance; myriads were those who served Him, and thousands of millions those who stood in His presence. I saw that judgement was being prepared, and that the books were being opened. In the meantime I saw that the last horn of the fourth beast waged war on the saints and prevailed over them, and uttered tremendous lies and blasphemies."

4. "While I was observing all this, I saw that the Son of Man drew near amid the clouds of Heaven, and came up to the Ancient of days, Who gave Him the power, the honour and the kingdom, in order that all nations serve Him, since His power is eternal and shall not be taken away from Him, and His Kingdom is indestructible. I observed that the Son of Man, in the presence of the Ancient of days, destroyed the horn that had sprung up amid the other ten of the fourth beast, whose body was cast into the fire to burn; and that He had also taken away the power from the other three beasts forever. I also observed that the Son of Man passed sentence in favour of His Saints, and that the time had come for them to obtain the Kingdom."

5. "I, Daniel, was consternated at the vision of these things; my spirit was aghast and my head perturbed, and one of the saints there approached me, and I asked him the true meaning of all the visions, and he instructed me as follows: 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms which will rise up on earth'. But I desired more detailed information on the fourth beast, which was so different from all the others, and exceedingly horrifying. And I was instructed thus: the fourth beast will be the fourth kingdom on earth, which will be greater than all the kingdoms, and will devour, trample on and smash everything into little pieces; and the ten horns of this kingdom will be ten kings. The horn that sprang up amid the ten horns, becoming larger than these, is a king who shall rise up and be more powerful than the others. This new king will speak evil against the admirable God and will oppress the saints of God Most High, and will believe that he has the power to change times and laws, and all things shall be left to his discretion for a time, two times and half a time. But at the end his power will be taken from him, and he shall be destroyed by the breath of the Son of Man's mouth, and his power will perish forever. And the Saints of the Most High God will receive the Kingdom, and

shall reign for ever and ever; since the magnificence and glory of the Kingdom will be given to the people of the Saints of God Most High, whose Kingdom is everlasting, and all kings shall serve and obey Him."

6. The Ancient of days is the Eternal Father or Most Holy Ananias. The Son of Man is Our Lord Jesus Christ; the fourth beast is the judeo-masonic empire and its ten horns are the multiple kingdoms or countries at the service of this empire, preparing the coming of Antichrist; and the horn that sprang up amid the ten horns of the fourth beast, becoming larger than the other horns, is Antichrist-in-person or the Man of Iniquity.

Chapter XVIII

Invasion of the Babylonian Empire by Darius, king of the land of Media.

Siege of Babylon by the Median army, Death of King Balthassar

1. The city of Babylon was exceptionally well fortified with massive walls and high turrets; consequently, the city was deemed impregnable. In the year 4677 the powerful Darius, king of the land of Media, invaded the Babylonian Empire with a large well-equipped army, took many of the cities and finally laid siege to the opulent and populous city of Babylon. But King Balthassar, who had made sure to stock his imperial capital with abundant provisions and garrison it with a powerful army, was quite confident that King Darius would never succeed in breaking through. King Balthassar's vain assurance reached the point that, living in the city, he gave himself up to all kinds of feasts and licentiousness.

2. In the year 4679, at the most critical stage of the Babylon siege by Darius's troops, King Balthassar, wishing to make a display of superiority and contempt for the enemy forces, invited a thousand of his court nobles to a banquet at which the food and wine were most varied and abundant. As the sacred vessels of gold and silver brought from Jerusalem by Nabuchodonozor III were in the palace, King Balthassar, after the greatest excesses, both of gluttony and licentiousness, inebriated with wine, commanded the sacred vessels to be brought to the hall of the feast, so that he, the grandees of his court and their wives and concubines, might drink from them, and in this way profane them in honour of the empire's idols. But when, quite beside themselves from the strength of the wine, they were acclaiming the idols with hymns and frenziedly cheering them, all of a sudden there appeared some mysterious fingers as though of a man's hand which wrote on the wall in front of the king three arcane words which nobody knew how to read or decipher without divine help. Since Balthassar himself saw them being written, his soul was filled with agitation, the expression on his face fell and his whole body trembled from head to foot. Balthassar then, aghast with dread, cried out loud for the sages, magicians and diviners of his court to be summoned. When they were in his presence, he said: "Whoever among you reads this writing on the wall and tells me its meaning, will be arrayed in purple, wear a golden chain about his neck and be the second person in my kingdom." The sages, magicians and diviners, though they saw the words written, given the mysterious form of the writing, did not succeed in reading them, much less decipher their meaning. As a result the king became considerably vexed and his courtiers quite terrified.

3. The queen, however, came to the rescue of her husband the king, saying: "O my King Balthassar, live forever: let not your thoughts be troubled nor your countenance dismayed. Summon to your presence the Prophet Daniel, who for years has been absent from court; since he has the spirit of his Mighty God within him, and in the time of your father Nabuchodonozor III often revealed the knowledge and wisdom he possesses." They sent to search for Daniel, who came into the king's presence. Balthassar said to him: "I know that knowledge and wisdom reside in you in high degree. My sages, magicians and diviners have been unable to read or tell me the meaning of the writing on the wall. Read it yourself, then, and tell me what it means; since if you can, you will be arrayed in purple, wear a golden chain and be the second person in my kingdom." To this Daniel replied: "O king! Keep your gifts for yourself and grant to others your palace honours. The writing, however, I will read for you, O king, and tell you its meaning. O King Balthassar! You are well aware that the Most High God of Israel conserved your father Nabuchodonozor in his kingdom, greatness, glory and honour, so that all his subjects respected him and all nations trembled in his presence; and that, when through pride his heart hardened, he was deposed from his kingdom's throne, stripped of his glory and turned into an animal, until he acknowledged that God Most High has dominion over the kingdom of men. And you, O Balthassar, being his son and aware of these things, have not humbled your heart, but have risen up against the Creator of Heaven and Earth spreading idolatry throughout your empire, even having a statue of yourself erected to be adored. And as if this were not enough for you, amid the relentless siege of the city, in the course of an orgy with your courtiers, you have ordered the sacred vessels belonging to the Temple of God in Jerusalem to be brought into your presence, and with them have drunk wine, you, the grandees of your court, your wives and your concubines, in honour of your empire's idols, who neither see, nor hear, nor feel. God Most High, however, upon whom depends your breath and your every movement, you have not glorified; accordingly His Son Melchisedech, with the fingers of His hand, wrote the inscription on the wall. This, then, is the inscription: 'Number, weigh, take'. And this is the meaning of His words: 'number': God has numbered the days of your reign and set a limit to them; 'weigh': you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting in good works; 'take': your kingdom shall be taken from you, since it will be given first to the Medes and later to the Persians." Following this, the Prophet Daniel again forthrightly rejected the offer of honours the king had promised to whoever read the writing and deciphered its meaning. Afterwards, the Prophet Daniel withdrew from the king's presence and set off for home.

4. King Balthassar, scorning Daniel's prophecy, continued to celebrate the banquet with his courtiers and other guests, who became intoxicated with the wine they drank from the sacred vessels. But that same night, in the year 4679, King Darius of Media succeeded in breaking through the resistance of the city of Babylon, and headed for the palace of King Balthassar, who was still celebrating the banquet with his thousand guests. Darius himself killed Balthassar with his own sword. The Median army, moreover, slew all those at the palace feast, sparing no one, and seized the sacred vessels of gold and silver.

5. The opulent and populous city of Babylon, as well as many other wealthy and lovely cities of the empire, were almost completely destroyed by the irresistible onslaught of King Darius's forces. Darius, sixty-two years old, incorporated the conquered Babylonian Empire into his Median Empire; but this enlarged Median Empire remained tributary to the Persian Empire. After almost completely destroying the city of Babylon, Darius rebuilt it with even greater magnificence and splendour.

Chapter XIX

Darius, king of the Median-Babylonian Empire. Daniel in the lions' den

1. As from the year 4679, powerful King Darius established his court in the city of Babylon, which he began to rebuild to his taste; though there were also periods when he resided in Ecbathana of Media. Darius, aware of the sterling qualities of the Prophet Daniel, who had held a high post during the reigns of Nabuchodonozor III and his son Balthassar, summoned the prophet to court to become better acquainted with him. Daniel made such a good impression on the king that Darius often invited him to dine at his own table, and came to have a high regard for him. The prophet accepted the king's invitations, always keeping in mind the good he could do thereby for him and for his subjects, and above all for the children of Israel captive there. But not on that account did the prophet consent to the corrupt morals at court; quite the contrary, he condemned them, exhorting the king and his courtiers to comport themselves better, since the Law of the true God, the God of Israel, thus required. Daniel lived in a modest dwelling on the outskirts of Babylon.

2. In order to govern his extensive empire, Darius decided to establish one hundred and twenty satraps or governors, and place three princes over them; and all subject to the authority of Daniel as chief prince; for the king was aware that Daniel surpassed the rest in gifts of government, and that the spirit of righteousness and justice abounded in him. Darius's designs on Daniel filled many of the grandees at court with envy, so that the princes, governors, magistrates and other courtiers sought an opportunity to set the king at odds with Daniel. As they could find no grounds to accuse him of any crime, since he was faithful, just and upright, they said: "We will not find anything of which to accuse this Daniel, unless it be something concerning the law of his God." So the princes, governors and magistrates, catching Darius off guard, spoke to him thus: "O King Darius, live forever: The princes of your kingdom, the governors, magistrates, senators and judges are of the view that a royal decree be issued forbidding all the Israelites captive in your empire to practise their worship publicly without express royal authority, and that whoever infringes this decree be cast into the lions' den. Now, then, O king, confirm our view, draw up the decree, sign and publish it." And King Darius issued a decree commanding this. When the royal decree came to his knowledge, full of confidence in divine protection, the Prophet Daniel continued to give public testimony of his fidelity to the God of Israel; accordingly, at home, with the windows of his room open, in the sight of the people he knelt down thrice daily to adore God and give Him thanks, as he always used to do.

3. Daniel's enemies, assiduously spying upon him, found him praying and making supplications to his God. So they went up to Darius and said to him: "O king, have you not forbidden all Israelites captive in your empire the public practice of their worship without your express authorization, commanding that whoever infringes this decree be thrown into the lions' den?" To this the king replied: "True." Then they said to Darius: "Well listen, Daniel has taken no notice of the decree you issued, but thrice daily prays visibly to his God at home." When he heard this, the king was greatly saddened, and in his heart resolved to save Daniel, doing everything possible to free him, well aware of his uprightness and spirit of justice. But those magnates of his court, aware of the king's desire, said to him: "Be aware, O king, that this decree of yours must be applied to all without exception." Then Darius, under pressure from them, gave the command for Daniel to be brought, so that they might then cast him into the lions' den. And when Daniel was in the den, the king said to him ironically from above: "Your God, Whom you ever adore, will deliver you from death." Forthwith they brought a stone and placed it over the mouth of the deep den; and the king sealed it with his ring. The king returned to the palace, and that night went to bed without supper, and could not sleep. The next day he sent one of his servants to ascertain Daniel's fate, and received news that the prophet was still alive. Thereupon the king considered freeing him, but the envious courtiers dissuaded the king from drawing Daniel out of the lions' den, to allow more time for him to be devoured.

4. At that time, in the land of Israel, lived the Prophet Habacuc. He had cooked a pottage and broken some loaves of bread into a carrier, and was on his way out to the fields to take it to the reapers. While on his way, Archangel Saint Raphael appeared to Habacuc, saying: "Take that food you have to Babylon, to Daniel who is in the lions' den." Habacuc replied: "I have never seen Babylon, nor have I heard of the den." Forthwith the Archangel took him by the hair and brought him with the quickness of his spirit to the Babylon den. And Habacuc raised his voice, saying: "Daniel, servant of God, take the meal He sends you." And Daniel, raising his eyes to Heaven, said: "You, O Lord my God, have remembered me, and have not forsaken those who love You." And Daniel arose and ate. And afterwards the Archangel took Habacuc back to his abode in Israel.

5. During the first six days Daniel was in the lions' den, Darius sent an emissary for information about his condition; but on the seventh day, the king himself went; and peering into the den, he saw Daniel seated amid the lions, who were round about him like tame lambs. Then the king exclaimed in a loud voice: "O Daniel, servant of the God of Israel, how is it possible that you are still alive amid the lions?" Daniel replied: "O king, live forever: My God sent His Angel, who shut the mouths of the lions, and they have not done me any harm, because I have been found just before Him. But neither have I committed any crime against you, O king." Then the king said inwardly: "One can see that the Lord God of Israel is great." Then Darius was filled with utmost gladness owing to his high regard for Daniel, and commanded that he be drawn out of the den; and they found him to be completely unscathed, because he had placed his trust in his God. Next, by the king's command, those who had accused Daniel were summoned; and the king ordered them to be cast into the lions' den together with their wives and children; and the lions devoured them all.

6. As King Darius considered giving Daniel the highest post in his kingdom after himself, he offered the prophet this coveted post; but Daniel roundly refused to accept it, since the idolatrous condition and corrupt morals of the king and his courtiers were absolutely incompatible with the Lord God of Israel and His Holy Law, and Daniel said as much to King Darius.

Chapter XX

Daniel destroys the idol Bel and his temple. Conversion of King Darius

1. After King Darius had seen the great favour the Lord God of Israel had done for Daniel delivering him from death in the lions' den, his idolatrous heart was further softened, and he thought that perhaps the God adored by Daniel was the One True God. The king made sure to keep in contact with the prophet and sought, through him, other proofs that would confirm this truth.

2. The next year, that is, 4680, the following event took place: There was at the time in Babylon an idol called Bel, to which every day more than four hundred kilos of fine flour, forty sheep and six pitchers of wine were offered, all of which disappeared from Bel's altar by the next day as if the idol had eaten and drunk it all. The king often went to the statue of Bel to render it worship; until one day Darius asked the Prophet Daniel: "Why don't you adore Bel?" To which Daniel replied: "Because I do not adore idols made by the hands of men, rather the living God, Who created Heaven and Earth, and is the Lord of all the living." The king responded: "Well then, do you not believe that Bel is a living god? Can't you see how much he eats and drinks each day?" To this Daniel made answer, smiling: "Don't be deceived, O king, because inside he is clay and outside bronze, and never eats or drinks." At Daniel's words, the king began to suspect that it was not true that the idol ate or drank; consequently, summoning the priests of Bel, he said to them: "If you don't tell me who eats all this which is brought, you will die. But if you make me see that Bel eats it all, Daniel will die for having blasphemed against Bel." And Daniel said to the king: "Let it be as you have said." The priests of Bel were seventy in number, not counting the women, little children and youths. And the king went with Daniel to Bel's temple. The priests of Bel said, then: "We will now go outside; and you, O king, have the viands and the wine brought in, shut the door and seal it with your ring; and early in the morning, when you enter, if you do not find that Bel has eaten everything, we will die without remission; contrariwise, Daniel shall die, who has lied against us." Inwardly they were scoffing; because they had made a secret passageway beneath the idol, through which they always entered, taking away the viands and the wine for them to eat and drink later.

3. After they had gone out, the king had the viands and the wine placed before Bel. And Daniel ordered ashes to be brought and sprinkled with a sieve around Bel's altar, in the king's presence; then they went out and shut the door, which the king sealed with his ring, and left. But at night the priests came in, as was their wont, with their wives and children, and took away the viands and the wine. The king rose early in the morning, and so did Daniel, and meeting up they went to Bel's temple. The king asked the prophet: "Are the seals of the door intact, O Daniel?" Who replied: "O king, they are intact." Then opening the door, the king looked towards the idol's altar; and, not seeing the viands and the wine, he cried out loud: "Great are You, O Bel, and there is no deceit whatsoever in your temple." Daniel smiled and, restraining the king from going up to the altar, said: "Look at the floor, O king, and consider whose footprints those are." And the king said: "I see the footprints of men, women and children." At this the king was enraged and commanded the priests and their wives and children to be seized. They revealed to him the secret passageway by which they entered in order to take away what was offered to Bel, and eat and drink it themselves later; consequently, the king sentenced them to die in the lions' den; at the same time placing at Daniel's disposal Bel and his temple, which were destroyed by the prophet on invoking the Name of the Lord God of Israel.

4. After this event, King Darius was sincerely converted to the true Lord God, and said in public to many in Babylon: "Let all the inhabitants of the orb fear the God of Israel, because He is the Saviour, Who works prodigies and marvels upon Earth." And afterwards he wrote a decree to all his provinces, saying: "May peace abound more and more among you. I have decreed that, throughout my empire, all idols, their altars and their temples be destroyed, and that everyone fear and adore the Lord God of Israel, because He is the Sole living and eternal God; and His kingdom shall not be destroyed, and His power is almighty. He is the Deliverer and Saviour, who works prodigies and marvels in Heaven and on Earth: He it is who delivered Daniel from the lions' den and destroyed the idol Bel and his temple." After Darius's sincere conversion, Daniel accepted the post of chief prince of the provinces of the Median-Babylonian Empire, and throughout Darius's reign was honoured by all.

Chapter XXI

Prophecy on the Last Times, the Resurrection of the dead and the Final Judgement

1. In the year 4698, a year prior to the return to the land of Israel, the Prophet Daniel, in the city of Babylon, was transported in vision to the banks of the River Euphrates, where a Man with linen garments, who was Most Holy Melchisedech, appeared to the prophet and said: "In the Last Times, Archangel Saint Michael, Prince of the Heavenly Hosts, the great defender of the children of your people, will rise up; because a time will come such as has never been seen since the nations began to exist. And in the Last Times your people shall be saved; and so shall whoever has his name written in the Book of Life. And the multitude of those who sleep beneath the dust of the earth shall awaken: some to eternal life, and others to eternal damnation; for those who have been truly wise in the things of God, and who taught justice and virtue to many, shall shine like the light in the firmament and like stars for all eternity. And you Daniel, conserve these words, and seal the book in which you write them, until the appointed time. Many will read and draw wise doctrine from it."

2. And the Prophet Daniel went on to relate: "And I Daniel observed and saw that there were two other angels standing: one on this side of the Euphrates riverbanks and the other on the other side. So I asked the Divine Man dressed in linen and standing upon the waters of the river: 'When will these events be fulfilled?' And the Divine Man

dressed in linen and standing upon the waters of the river, raising both arms to heaven, swore by the Most High God who lives forever, and said: 'It shall come to pass in a time, in two times and in half a time. When the scattering of the multitude of the Holy People is completed, then will all these things come to pass'. I heard this, but did not understand, and asked: 'Oh, my Lord, what will come to pass after these things?' And He replied: 'Come now, Daniel, those are hidden things and sealed until the appointed time. Many will be chosen, and purified for the Eternal Kingdom; and those who possess true wisdom will understand; but the godless, workers of iniquity, will not. And as from the time when the perpetual Sacrifice will be taken away and abomination enthroned for the desolation of the Holy Temple, one thousand two hundred and ninety days shall elapse. Blessed the one who, persevering in truth, reaches one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, Daniel, go on preaching My word until the end of your days, after which you will rest, and will delight in your destiny forever'."

Chapter XXII

Death of King Darius. Assuerus, surnamed Cyrus, inherits the Median-Babylonian Empire.

The Prophet Daniel returns to the land of Israel. Death of the Prophet Daniel

1. In the year 4699 King Darius died piously in Babylon. He was succeeded on the throne by his nephew the Persian king Assuerus, surnamed Cyrus, who annexed the Median-Babylonian Empire to the Persian Empire.
2. The Prophet Daniel's prestige earned for him the special grace of King Assuerus, surnamed Cyrus, who, moved by the Spirit of God, at Daniel's urging, decreed the rebuilding of the Temple of God in Jerusalem, and the return to Israel of the exiled Jews, whom he favoured with great privileges, restoring the sacred vessels and other utensils Nabuchodonozor III had stolen from the Temple of Jerusalem.
3. In that same year 4699, forty-first of the reign of King Assuerus, surnamed Cyrus, in Persia, and first of his reign in Babylonia, the Prophet Daniel returned to the land of Israel with Zorobabel and many other Israelites or Jews from each of the thirteen tribes.
4. In the year 4716, Daniel, at the age of ninety-nine, died in holiness in the land of Israel, seventeen years after the return from Babylonia under Zorobabel.

Eleventh Part

The Prophets called Minor.

The Most Holy Prophet Malachias

Book I

The Prophet Abdias, third Superior General of the Essenes

Chapter I

Birth of the Prophet Abdias

The Prophet Abdias, from the tribe of Ephraim, was born in Sichem, Kingdom of Samaria, in the year 4256, twenty-seventh of the reign of virtuous King Asa of Judah, and nineteenth of the reign of perverse King Baasa of Samaria. The name Abdias means 'Servant of God'. Abdias was ever celibate. He is one of the prophets called Minor.

Chapter II

Abdias, majordomo of perverse King Achab. Abdias is accepted as an Essenian religioso and anointed prophet in minor grade

1. In the year 4274, second of the reign of Achab of Samaria, the virtuous Abdias, eighteen years old, entered the king's service as palace majordomo. In the midst of a vicious and idolatrous court, young Abdias not only kept himself uncontaminated, but besides gave the king good counsel and greatly favoured the prophets of the Lord who remained faithful to their sacred mission during persecution by impious Queen Jezebel.
2. In the year 4283, when twenty-seven years old, Abdias was anointed prophet in minor grade by Most Holy Melchisedech, following his acceptance as an Essenian religioso by the Prophet Elias on the occasion of Elias's visit to King Achab in the town of Jezreel. Despite his condition as an Essenian religioso, Abdias, at the Prophet Elias's command, remained at his post as the king's majordomo in order to help Achab persevere along the right path he had begun to follow, though Achab's perseverance in virtue was short-lived.

Chapter III

Abdias departs to live on Mount Carmel. Abdias is sanctified and anointed prophet in major grade.

The Prophet Abdias receives the first three grades of the Essenian priesthood

1. In the year 4291, following the impious death of King Achab of Samaria, the Prophet and Essenian religioso Abdias, thirty-five years old, fled from court and went to live on Mount Carmel, in order to avoid being slain by perverse Queen Jezebel. At that time the Prophet Eliseus was Superior General of the Essenes.
2. In the year 4293, in the Cave of Elias on Mount Carmel, the Prophet Abdias, thirty-seven years old, was sanctified and anointed prophet in major grade by Most Holy Melchisedech. That same year, in the Cave of Elias, the Prophet Abdias received the first grade of the Essenian priesthood, or priestly coadjutor.

3. In the year 4300, in the Cave of Elias on Mount Carmel, Abdias, forty-four years old, received the second grade of the Essenian priesthood, or priest. And in the year 4307, when fifty-one years old, in the Cave of Elias, Abdias received the third grade of the Essenian priesthood, or chief priest.

Chapter IV

The Prophet Abdias succeeds the Prophet Eliseus in the post of Superior General of the Essenes

1. In the year 4384, in the Cave of Elias on Mount Carmel, the Prophet Eliseus, shortly before his death, designated the Prophet Abdias to succeed him in the post of Superior General of the Essenes.
2. In that year 4384, on the same day Eliseus died, the Prophet Abdias received the Essenian High Priesthood on Mount Carmel from the hands of the Holy Prophet Elias. From then on the Prophet Abdias was Superior General of the Essenes until his death.

Chapter V

Abdias's prophetic mission.

Abdias's symbolical prophecy on the reign of the good monarch and of the bad monarch, and on the triumph of the Church

1. Abdias carried out his prophetic mission during the reigns of the following kings of Judah: Josaphat, Joram, Ochozias, illegitimate Queen Athaliah, Regent Joyada, Joas, Amasias and Ozias; and of Samaria: Achab, Ochozias, Joram, Jehu, Joachaz, Joas and Jeroboam II.
2. The Prophet Abdias foretells the perversity of the People of God's enemies, as well as the crushing of their pride and the collapse of idolatry; and lays stress on the spiritual reign of Jesus Christ and the triumph of His Church.
3. The book of the Prophet Abdias implicitly contains the doctrine on the ideal qualities of the good monarch, his uprightness in the exercise of his sovereignty, and the favourable results of his good government. And in contraposition, the Book of Abdias implicitly contains the doctrine on the dreadful qualities of the bad monarch, his iniquitous proceedings in the exercise of his sovereignty, and the baneful consequences of his bad government. The Book of Abdias concludes with the doctrine of the twofold power of the Pope: spiritual and temporal.
4. When the Prophet Abdias speaks in his prophetic book of rule in accordance with God's plan and rule in accordance with Satan's plan, he is referring to different governments of one and the other kind in the history of the People of Israel, as likewise of the new People of God and of the rest of mankind.
5. Here is Abdias's prophecy: "I, Abdias, and other prophets, have heard the word of the Lord, Who sent His pronouncements to the nations through us. The Lord God of Hosts says this: 'See, O house of Esau, how you have become small amid the nations: you are exceedingly contemptible. Your pride of heart has made you arrogant, you who dwell in the clefts of the rocks, who raise your abode up high, who say in your heart: Who shall cast me down to the ground? But I, the Lord God, tell you: Even though you soar upwards like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, I will hurl you down from there. Though your arrogance is great, your cowardice is such that, were thieves and murderers to enter your house by night, you would keep silent for fear that they might kill you, and allow them rob you to their heart's content. And if they entered your vineyard to gather the grapes, they would not leave you a single cluster, since you are incapable of defending it'."
6. "See how his enemies have examined the house of Esau, inspecting all his hiding places; and finally they have cast you outside your frontiers; since all the men of your allies have ridiculed you. The men who were previously your allies have risen up against you by means of a false peace. The very ones who shared your table have set snares for you. There is no good sense in your sceptre."
7. "What! Perhaps on that day shall not I, the Lord, destroy those who consider themselves well-advised, and those who consider themselves far-sighted on the mount of Esau? Then shall your valiant fear, so that every man on the mount of Esau shall die. Since for the slaughter and for the injury you did to your brother Jacob, confusion shall cover you and you shall perish forever. On the day you went out against him, when enemies led his army captive, and strangers entered his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, you too were one of them. From now on, then, you shall no longer ridicule your brother Jacob, nor shall you rejoice at his children's sorrow the day they were lost, nor shall you boast seeing his misfortune. You shall not enter the gate of My people on the day of her downfall in order to gather her spoils. Neither shall you laugh at her ills on her day of tribulation, nor shall you be sent to pursue her army on the day of her defeat. You shall not lie in wait on the outbound roads in order to kill those in flight; nor shall you take prisoner those who remain. Because close at hand is the day when I shall exercise My Divine Justice on all the Gentiles. So that, just as you did, so shall it be done unto you: your deserved punishment shall recoil upon your own head. Because just as you, who dwell on My Holy Mount, drank the chalice of My wrath when you strayed from the right path, so shall all the Gentiles obstinate in wrongdoing drink it continually; since they shall drink it to the dregs and shall be annihilated. And on Mount Sion there shall be deliverance, and it shall be holy, and the House of Jacob shall possess those who had possessed her, and the House of Jacob shall be fire, and the House of Joseph flame; but the house of Esau shall be dry straw which shall be enkindled, devoured, and no trace remain, because the Lord so foretold. And those who are towards the south shall be lords of the mount of Esau. And many of the children of Israel who are in captivity shall occupy all of Canaan as far as Sarephta of Sidon, and the children of Jerusalem captive in the Bosphorus shall possess the cities of the South. And saviours shall come up into Mount Sion to judge the Mount of Esau, and the empire shall be the Lord God of Hosts'."
8. Abdias, in his prophetic book, on the one hand figuratively presents to us the reign of the good monarch, symbolized by the expressions: 'The House of Jacob', and 'Jacob', which are a representation of the monarch according to the divine plan, outstanding for virtue, wisdom and upright judgement in government; and who has as his guideline in the exercise of his authority the exaltation of God and of His Church, the spiritual and intellectual progress of his