

look back, nor stop anywhere in this whole region; but reach safety in the hills lest you too perish together with the rest." Lot entreated the two Divine Persons to allow him to take refuge in the town of Segor, which God preserved from destruction so that Lot and his family might live there. When they entered the town, then day, God caused fire and brimstone to rain down from heaven over Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying the two towns and others of Pentapolis and killing all their inhabitants, their animals and their prolific vegetation. However, as they entered the town of Segor, Lot's wife looked back, contrary to God's command; and for her disobedient and unwholesome nostalgia and curiosity, was killed by God by means of an immense quantity of salt which fell upon her, whereby she was turned into a block of salt. Through the chastisement, many of the inhabitants of those accursed towns, recognizing the righteous anger of God on account of their sins, repented as they felt the scorching deluge cascade down upon them.

4. The towns of Sodom and Gomorrah, together with those of Adama, Seboim and others, all of them situated on the shores of the southern part of Lake Essenia, today Dead Sea, were destroyed by God when He deflected the orbit of a heavenly body formed of water, sulphur and salt, and which had the shape of a giant mushroom, which He caused to pass over those towns. Exploding, it disintegrated, and fell upon those towns in the form of a downpour of water, fire, sulphur and salt. This heavenly body had been formed by God at the universal Flood from a small part of the excess water. By this chastisement, that paradisiacal region to the south of Lake Essenia, highly productive and climatically pleasant, was transformed into the most barren desert until then known. Lake Essenia itself, a body of fresh water abounding in fish, became contaminated, foul, extraordinarily salty and divested of animal life due to the destructive elements which fell upon the region. Abraham, who from the city of Hebron heard the awesome thunder of the heavenly body exploding over the cursed towns, went out to the place where days previously he had interceded before the Lord for Sodom and Gomorrah. From there he looked out towards the chastised area, and saw burning embers and thick clouds of smoke arising from the land. The chastisement of the cursed towns of Sodom, Gomorrah and others of Pentapolis, took place in the year 3283.

5. Lot, who had been freed by God from perishing in the chastisement thanks to Patriarch Abraham's intervention, had taken refuge with his two daughters in the town of Segor, though only for a short while; for fearful and unsure lest this town be chastised later, he fled with his twin daughters to the mountains and dwelt in a cave. And it came to pass that the daughters, on the fictitious pretext that there were no men by whom to have children, tempted by sensuality, conceived the deplorable design of having them by their own father. To this end they added an excitant and hallucinatory potion to wine, and one night, after making Lot drunk, the elder daughter sinned with him; and the following night, again making him drunk, the younger daughter sinned with him. On both occasions, given the powerful effect of the potion, Lot was quite unaware of becoming drunk and of the vile incest that his daughters had committed with him, and was therefore ignorant of the whole outrage. There can be no justification for the perverse actions of Lot's daughters, since there can never be a just cause for knowingly committing a sin. Moreover, the lack of men was a fictitious pretext, since both in Segor and in the righteous and virtuous Abraham's family, there were indeed men. As incest with the father was already cursed by God from the time of Adam and Eve, being an abominable sin, Lot's daughters automatically became accursed. And they, when they felt themselves pregnant, and before their father could become aware of it, by their own decision disappeared from his presence forever, and lived errant about the earth undergoing great hardships and calamities. Lot never knew that his daughters had conceived by him. From their respective sons, by name Moab and Ammon, arose the idolatrous Moabite and Ammonite peoples. Saint Lot, amid his great sufferings and trials, which served to expiate some of the errors of his life, remained always faithful to God, ending his days in sanctity as a hermit in the desert.

Chapter XI Isaac's birth

In the year 3284, when Abraham, one hundred years of age, was with his family in Hebron, God's promise was fulfilled and Sarah gave birth to a son; so that she said: "God has given me cause to rejoice, and whoever hears of it will rejoice together with me." And moved beyond measure, she could scarcely believe her eyes. Thus she said: "Who would have believed that Abraham would ever see me nursing a child born to him by me in my old age?" Abraham circumcised his son on the eighth day of his birth, and gave him the name Isaac, which means 'laughter'.

Chapter XII

Agar and her son Ishmael are dismissed from Abraham's household

1. A few months following Isaac's birth, Patriarch Abraham, with all his family, servants and possessions, went to the town of Beersheba, to the south of Canaan, bordering on the Pharan desert. When Isaac was two years old, he was weaned, and on the day of his weaning Abraham celebrated a great feast. At that time Ishmael was five years old. It came to pass, however, that during the celebrations, Sarah observed her maidservant Agar's child persecute and maltreat Isaac yet again under the pretence of playing with him, and she told Abraham: "Send this evil maidservant and her envious son away, for what they intend shall not be, that the maidservant's son be heir together with my son Isaac." It seemed hard to Abraham to have to curse Agar and Ishmael and dismiss them from his household for the cruel treatment that both mother, and son induced by her, continually meted out to Isaac, through the envy they bore towards him as the son of the promise. But God said to Abraham: "Let your wife's words regarding this child and his mother your maidservant, not seem harsh to you; so do all that Sarah asks of you, because it is through the line of Isaac that the name of your posterity has to endure; though I shall permit the son of your maidservant, being of your blood, to become the leader of a great people." The following day, Abraham rose in the morning, took bread and a skin of water, and placed them on Agar's shoulders, and placed her son Ishmael on her back as well, and sent them away. Agar, leaving, wandered errant about the desert of Beersheba. And as the water in the skin came to an end, and seeing her son quite extenuated from thirst, she set him down beneath a tree and then withdrew a short distance, for she said:

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"I do not wish to see my son die," and seated thus facing Ishmael, cried out loud and began to weep. The child, hearing the wails of his mother, also cried out and wept. God, however, heard the voice and cries of the child, and the Angel of the Lord, who was the Soul of Christ, called to Agar from Heaven saying: "What are you doing, Agar? Do not be afraid, because God has heard your son's voice from the place where he is. Rise up, go to the child and take him by the hand, for in attention to my most faithful son Abraham, I will allow Ishmael to become the head of a great nation." At once, the Angel of the Lord indicating, Agar saw a well close by, to which she went running, filled the skin and gave the child to drink, and he was restored. In spite of Abraham's cursing of Agar and Ishmael for the ill-treatment they had both meted out to Isaac through envy, God, in a gesture of His infinite Goodness, helped mother and son on their journey so that they might not collapse and die; since divine Providence acts not only over the good, but as well over the bad. Ishmael lived and grew up in the Pharan desert, close to Beersheba, and became highly skilled in the use of bow and arrow; and his mother married him to an Egyptian woman of Arab race called Saracena, and their descendants are the Ishmaelite Arabs, named as well Agarenes and Saracens.

2. Following Agar's repudiation, Abraham took his maidservant Cetura as second-order wife or concubine. While Cetura was concubine, Abraham had six sons by her in four deliveries in four years: two of twins and two of single births: Zamram, Jecsan, Madan, Madian, Jesboc and Sueh. When they could fend for themselves, Cetura separated them from Isaac for fear they might do him some harm and the curse of God fall upon them, as had occurred with Ishmael. Nevertheless, the six brothers, though separated from Isaac, continued as faithful of the People of God, submissive to Patriarch Abraham; and later they were also to remain under obedience to Isaac. Among them we should mention Jecsan and Madian, from whom descended the Holy Magi Kings who visited the Child Jesus in Bethlehem. Madian, married to Noelia, in time became a Holy Patriarch who observed and carried out the law his father had given him in the Book of Abraham, thus titled, which was handed down to the Holy Magi Kings, and was afterwards lost without its whereabouts being known for the present. Patriarch Jecsan and his wife Patriarch Samaria, name which means 'Mary's lap', died in holiness, as did Patriarch Madian and Patriarch Noelia.

3. During the four years he spent in Philistine territory or Palestine, Abraham sunk many wells, above all close to the towns of Gerrara and Beersheba. Habitually there was certain envy and rivalry between the Philistines and Abraham's servants with respect to these wells, given the need of water for them and their livestock to drink. Granted the short distance from Gerrara to Beersheba, Abraham went from one town to the other. Once, when staying in Beersheba, there were difficulties with respect to a well he had sunk, since the Philistines had wrested the use of it away by force, and Abraham lodged his complaints. In the year 3288, the Abimelech, or Philistine king at the time, who had granted Abraham the favour of living there as a foreigner, went accompanied by his Picol, or prince of his army, to where Abraham was, since he knew that the latter was displeased because the Philistines hampered his work greatly in that area. The Abimelech, not wishing hostilities or discord with Abraham, said to him: "Your God is with you in all that you do: make an oath to me then by your God that you will do no harm to me, nor to my descendants, nor to any of my race, but that you will act towards me and the land you dwell in as a foreigner according to the kindness I showed you." And Abraham said: "I will take the oath." Abraham, however, made his complaints to the Abimelech for the well that the king's servants had wrested away from him by force. And the Abimelech replied: "I have no knowledge of this doing, nor did you advise me of it, nor have I heard of it until today." And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them to the Abimelech, and they made an alliance between themselves. Abraham separated seven ewe lambs from the flock, and the Abimelech asked him: "What are these seven ewe lambs for, that you have separated from the flock?" Abraham answered him: "So that you receive them from my hand, and thus serve as proof that I opened this well." Therefore that place was called Beersheba, because there the two took an oath and made an alliance with respect to the Well of the Oath. Following this, the Abimelech and the Picol returned to Gerrara, the Philistine capital.

Chapter XIII

God tries Patriarch Abraham asking him for the sacrifice of his son Isaac

1. That same year 3288, after the pact with the Abimelech, Patriarch Abraham planted a wood in Beersheba, and in it erected an altar to God, where he invoked His Holy Name and offered Him sacrifices of bread and wine.

2. In the year 3290, Isaac having reached six years of age, while Abraham was in Beersheba God tried him. The Eternal Father, spoke and said to him: "Abraham, Abraham." Who replied: "Lord, here I am." The Eternal Father told him: "Take Isaac, your only son by Sarah, the child you love so tenderly, and go to the Land of Vision, and there you will offer him to Me in holocaust upon one of the hills I will show you." The Land of Vision, today the hill of Calvary, was the highest part of Mount Moriah, in Jerusalem. God asked of Abraham a supreme act of obedience, the sacrifice of Isaac, by whose bloody immolation He would seal His alliance with the Holy Patriarch; since in that sacrifice, although there was no physical bloodshed, there was in Abraham's will and in that of his son, having fully accepted it; since though there was no physical bloodshed because divine intervention prevented it, there was spiritually. Abraham told his wife Sarah that the Lord had ordered the sacrifice of their son Isaac. Sarah, though transpierced by grief, generously accepted the command of the Lord.

3. Abraham, then, rising before dawn, saddled his donkey; and taking his son Isaac with him, and two lads, cut and prepared the firewood for the holocaust, and from Beersheba journeyed to the place whither the Eternal Father had ordered him to go. On the third day of the journey, looking up he beheld the place from afar. So he said to his servant-lads: "Stay here with the donkey; I and my son will go up there." He took the firewood of the sacrifice as well and loaded it upon his son Isaac, while he bore in his hands the fire and the knife. While going along together the two of them, Isaac, although he had a presentiment that he was to be the victim, said to his father: "My Father." And he replied: "Son, what do you want?" And Isaac said: "We carry the fire and the firewood with us, but where is the victim of the holocaust?" To which Abraham replied: "My son, God has commanded that you be the victim for the

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holocaust." They continued on their way together; and once they reached the place that God had indicated to him, Abraham, bathed in tears, erected an altar upon which he placed the firewood; and then, having bound his son Isaac, Abraham placed him upon the pile of firewood on the altar and took up the knife to sacrifice him. When he had raised his hand to thrust the blade into Isaac's heart, of a sudden the Angel of the Lord, Who was the Most Divine Soul of Christ, cried out from Heaven saying: "Abraham, Abraham, hold back your hand and do not let the blow fall upon the child, nor do him any harm, since now God the Father is convinced that you fear Him; given that out of obedience and love for Him you have not pardoned even your only son born to Sarah." And Abraham, raising his eyes, saw behind him a ram caught by the horns in a brier; and having taken hold of it he offered it in holocaust in place of his son. And he called that place Moriah, that is, 'the Lord sees and provides'. The Sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham was precisely in the same spot where Christ would later be crucified.

4. Abraham, though an excellent figure of the Eternal Father for not having pardoned his son Isaac, delivering up to death the object of his complacency and hope of the fulfilment of the promises, is nevertheless, in a more special and deeply significant way, figure of Mary, since he accepted the divine decree of the death of his son and brought him willingly to execution. Abraham, then, figure of Mary, reveals heroic obedience, the transpiercing of his heart, the union of his own sacrifice to that of his son, and his own spiritual immolation. Isaac, climbing Mount Moriah loaded with firewood in order to be sacrificed, is the most vivid figure of Christ: Jesus, laden with the wood of the Cross, climbed to the summit of Mount Calvary to be crucified, accepting with supreme obedience and without complaint His own immolation. Isaac, accepting his own sacrifice, is then a figure of Christ's obedience and submission to the will of the Eternal Father.

5. When Abraham had finished the sacrifice of the ram he had found behind him, the Most Divine Soul of Christ spoke to him a second time from Heaven, conveying to him the following words of the Eternal Father: "I swear by My Self, word of God: that since out of love for Me you did not pardon your son, I will fill you with blessings and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea; your posterity will possess the cities of its enemies, and in a Descendant of yours all the nations of the Earth shall be blest, because you obeyed My voice." The sacrifice of Abraham was, then, majestically crowned by the eighth and definitive blessing and promise of a numerous posterity from which Our Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the world, would be born. After all this, Abraham, from Mount Moriah, set out with his son Isaac and the two servant-lads to Beersheba, where Sarah his wife had just passed away; since at the very moment Abraham was at the point of sacrificing his son Isaac, Matriarch Saint Sarah, at the age of ninety-six years, died in Beersheba, from the grief caused her by the thought that her son had at that moment been sacrificed. Patriarch Abraham, back in Beersheba, wept the death of his wife with deep feeling. Following the funeral rites, he conveyed her to Hebron in order to bury her in the Machpela Grotto, purchased by him to give burial to her. After Sarah's interment, the Patriarch returned to Beersheba; and once there, took Cetura as principal wife, who until then had been second-order wife or concubine. Cetura died in the year 3314, when Abraham was one hundred and thirty years of age.

Chapter XIV

Patriarch Abraham gives instructions for his son Isaac's marriage.

Patriarch Abraham, shortly before death, gives Isaac the blessing of the firstborn

1. In the year 3322, Abraham, when one hundred and thirty-eight years of age and therefore very elderly, seeing that death was imminent, commended to his majordomo Eliecer the responsibility for Isaac's marriage; to this end he made Eliecer swear by the Lord God that he would not take a wife for his son from the daughters of the Canaanites. Hence Abraham said to his majordomo: "You will go to my land and kinsfolk, and from there you will take a wife for my son Isaac." The majordomo replied: "And if the woman shall not wish to come here with me, shall I return home and take your son to the place where you came from?" And Abraham said: "Be sure never to take my son there; since the Lord God of Heaven, who took me from my father's house and the land of my birth, spoke to me and swore an oath saying: 'I will give this land to your descendants'. He Himself will send His Angel before you, and will have you bring back a wife for my son from that land; and if the woman should not wish to follow you, you will be free of the oath; but under no circumstance ever take my son there." The majordomo took ten of his master's camels together with rich presents and, setting out, left for the town of Haram in Mesopotamia.

2. In that same year 3322, days after Eliecer had set out for Mesopotamia, as the hour of his death had arrived, Abraham called his son Isaac in order to impart to him the blessing of the firstborn, which consisted of two blessings: firstly, by means of the Priestly Blessing, he delivered to his son the Triple Benediction, which became incrustated in the scrotal zone of his body, so that Isaac was sanctified by virtue of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in his soul; then, through another special blessing, Abraham conferred on Isaac the Diaconate, Presbyterate and fullness of the Priesthood or Episcopate according to the Order of Melchisedech. That same day in the year 3322, Patriarch Saint Abraham died in the town of Beersheba at the age of one hundred and thirty-eight years. Following Abraham's death, his son Isaac, thirty-eight years of age, was constituted Patriarch of God's People. Abraham, before death, besides making Isaac heir to all he possessed, also left to each of the seven sons by his two concubines their corresponding inheritances. Isaac, taking the dead body of his father, brought him to Hebron, and there gave him burial in the Machpela cave where Sarah his wife already lay buried. At the burial, Abraham's six sons by Cetura were present, having been notified by their brother Isaac; and Ishmael too was present; since though he lived in the Pharan desert he was notified of his father's death by some servants whom Isaac had sent to inform him, and thus as well give him a fresh opportunity of conversion, since Ishmael felt implacable aversion and profound resentment towards Abraham, Sarah and Isaac. Therefore Ishmael's presence at Abraham's burial was solely due to his concern to obtain the part of the inheritance left to him by his father. Afterwards Ishmael returned again to the Pharan desert where he had been living.

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3. Sadly, Ishmael did not respond to the Graces God gave him for his salvation, and for this his own mother was greatly to blame. Agar, as she desired the salvation of the human race to come from the lineage of her son Ishmael, ever envious and resentful of the preference Abraham showed to Isaac, inspired by Satan, instilled in her son Ishmael a mortal hatred for his brother as the son of the promise from whose descendants the Saviour of the world would be born. And Ishmael, though he received many Graces from God for his salvation, did not repent of the hatred he bore towards his brother; and therefore died impenitent, in the year 3407, at the age of one hundred and twenty-six years, and eternally damned himself. His wife Saracena likewise died impenitent and damned herself, and is one of the principal figures of Antimary.

Chapter XV

Patriarch Isaac's marriage to Rebecca

1. When Abraham's death took place, his majordomo Eliecer was journeying along towards the town of Haram in Mesopotamia, where Bathuel lived, son of Nachor, Abraham's brother. Reaching the town of Haram, he rested on the outskirts close by a well; and as evening was setting in, hour when the women used to come out to draw water, he prayed to the Lord to condescend to show him the one chosen to be Isaac's wife: that she would be the one whom he would ask for water to drink and that she would gladly acquiesce to his petition, and also give his camels to drink. At that moment his attention was drawn to a comely and graceful maiden, Rebecca by name, Bathuel's daughter, who came out from the town bearing a pitcher upon her shoulder and, coming up to the well, filled it with water and made to return. The majordomo hurried towards her and said: "Give me a little water to drink from your pitcher." And she said: "Drink, good sir;" and lowering the pitcher onto her arm, she gave him to drink. And when he had drunk, she added: "I will draw up water for your camels as well until all have drunk." And emptying the pitcher into the troughs there, she turned back to the well to draw more water and gave all the camels to drink. Eliecer watched her in silence, desiring to know if the Lord had led him whither his master wished. Then, to confirm that she was from Abraham's family, he asked her: "Whose daughter are you?" And she answered: "I am the daughter of Bathuel, Melcha's son by Nachor." Then Eliecer handed her some gold earrings and bracelets, saying to her: "Is there somewhere in your house to pass the night?" She answered: "In our house there is straw and hay and room to pass the night." The majordomo gave thanks to God that He had guided him to where Abraham had sent him. The young Rebecca hastened off home where Bathuel her father was close to death, telling him all that had happened. At once Laban, the girl's brother, went out to the well and brought the majordomo back with him. Once in Bathuel's presence, Eliecer asked Rebecca's hand for Isaac, telling him: "I am Abraham's servant, and the Lord has heaped blessings upon my master and has made him prosper. Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master; and my master made me swear: 'You will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I dwell, instead you will go to the house of my father and my kindred to take a wife for my son.' My master told me then: 'You will go to the house of my father, and from there you will bring back a wife for my son.'" And as well he related to Bathuel and to his family all that had providentially occurred at the well with his daughter Rebecca.

2. On hearing Eliecer's proposal, as Bathuel was sinking and his words were not intelligible to the majordomo, although they were to his son Laban, the latter spoke in his father's name saying: "This is God's doing. There you have Rebecca. Take her with you, so that she become the wife of your master's son, according as the Lord has manifested." A short while after this episode Bathuel died. When the mourning period was over, the majordomo handed over the rich gifts for the dowry corresponding to Rebecca, her mother and her brother; and when the celebration of the petition for Rebecca's hand was ready, they ate and drank together. The day following the celebrations, still early in the morning, Eliecer entreated Rebecca's family to allow him to leave with her and bring the news of such a happy event to Abraham as soon as possible, unaware that Abraham had died during the journey. Rebecca's mother and brothers, however, said to him: "Let the girl be here with us just ten days, and then go." The majordomo agreed to this; and it came to pass that in those days Rebecca's mother died, called Rocio. When the mourning was over, as Laban and the other brothers wanted to detain Rebecca yet longer with them, Eliecer manifested with firm decision that they should allow him to leave with her then for his master's home. Laban, however, who keenly felt the separation from his sister, wanted her to decide; so, asking Rebecca if she wished to leave then with Eliecer, she replied that she did. Laban and his brothers bid Rebecca farewell and blessed her. Forthwith Rebecca, with the nurse of her prospective children, Deborah by name, and her maids, left with Eliecer for the Land of Canaan. At the time Isaac still dwelt in Beersheba. When Rebecca arrived, she found that Isaac had gone out to the fields to meditate, the day being spent. And she, on seeing him, veiled her face as a sign of modesty. Patriarch Isaac, after Eliecer had recounted all that had happened, brought Rebecca into Sarah's tent and took her as wife, when he was forty years of age, in the year 3324. After their marriage, Rebecca gave clear signs that she was barren.

3. Given the proximity of Beersheba and Gerrara, both Philistine towns, Isaac proceeded from one to the other with his herdsmen tending the cattle. In Gerrara, years previously, Abraham had sunk several wells. As the Philistines were envious of Isaac, since God blessed his crops and he was becoming exceedingly wealthy, they filled up the wells his father had sunk. And it came to pass that the Abimelech or Philistine king at the time, observing the disputes between Isaac's household and his own subjects due to the latter's envy, went up to the Patriarch one day and told him: "Begone from here, because you have become far more powerful than we are." Isaac, withdrawing from the neighbourhood of the town, left for a valley not far distant from Gerrara, where he reopened the wells that his father had sunk years previously and which had now been filled in by the Philistines, finding substantial water in them. In this valley too, however, there were hostilities and altercations between the town shepherds and Isaac's, who said: "The water is ours." Therefore the Patriarch left for Beersheba, where the Lord appeared to him at night and told him: "I am the God of Abraham your father, fear not, I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your posterity out of love for My

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servant Abraham.” In this place, on the altar raised up by Abraham, Isaac invoked the Name of the Lord and offered sacrifices of bread and wine. The Abimelech of the Philistines having come over from Gerrara with a friend called Ochocaz and the Picol or general of his troops, Isaac said to them: “*Why do you come out to me here, when I am a man whom you detest and have cast from among you?*” The king then proposed an alliance between them. The following day, the two parties made an oath of peace, and afterwards the king and those who had come with him departed. As the Philistines had filled up the well that Abraham had sunk there in Beersheba, known as the ‘Well of the Oath’, Isaac’s servants reopened it, and the water it gave was such that they called it besides ‘Well of Abundance’.

Chapter XVI

God ratifies with Patriarch Isaac the alliance made with Abraham. Isaac journeys down into Egypt. Isaac anointed king of Hebron

1. Given that, in the same year 3324, there was once more famine in the Land of Canaan, Isaac with his wife Rebecca returned to Gerrara intending to go thence down into Egypt. While in Gerrara, the Lord appeared to Isaac and, after blessing him as the new Patriarch of the People of God, in order to test his obedience, told him: “*Do not go down into Egypt, but stay here in the Land of Canaan, which I will give you. Pilgrim about the Land, I will be with you, and will bless you, because I will give you all these lands in fulfilment of the oath I swore to your father Abraham. And I will multiply your posterity as the stars of heaven and I will give all these lands to your descendants, and all the nations of the Earth will be blessed in you, and in Him who shall be born from your posterity; seeing that Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My precepts and Commandments, and observed My ceremonies and laws.*” Isaac manifested his most entire submission and obedience to this divine disposition; and when thoroughly disposed to remain in the Land of Canaan, God spoke to the Patriarch again ordaining him then to go down into Egypt, so that he left for this land some days after having received the divine countermand.

2. Isaac, with Rebecca, his servants and livestock, reached Egypt that same year 3324. When Isaac and Rebecca had sojourned in Egypt for three years, they decided on their own account to return to Philistine lands. Isaac and Rebecca, before undertaking their proposed return to Philistine soil, went to bid farewell to the Pharaoh of the time. And he besought them with tears in his eyes not to depart, and to stay some time longer; for ever since they had entered Egypt, he and his people had found themselves showered with material blessings and prosperity. To this they gladly acquiesced. When Isaac and Rebecca had sojourned in Egypt for six years, Most Holy Ananias appeared to Isaac, telling him among other things: “*Leave the Land of Egypt and return to Philistine country, where I will give you more instructions.*” Isaac and Rebecca, before undertaking the return to Philistine country, went to bid farewell to the Pharaoh; and he thanked them profusely for having stayed for three more years in Egypt; since he and his people had found themselves yet further showered with material blessings and prosperity. The Pharaoh, with a great part of his Court and of his army, accompanied Isaac and Rebecca as far as Egypt’s frontier with Philistine territory, lavishing on them gold, silver, menservants, maidservants and innumerable livestock. Isaac and Rebecca had been in Egypt for six years.

3. In the year 3330, Isaac, with his wife, his servants and abundance of goods, made his way out of Egypt to the Philistine town of Beersheba, in Canaan. There an Angel appeared to Isaac and ordered him on God’s behalf to leave for the city of Hebron. Twenty-four days prior to Isaac’s and Rebecca’s arrival at this city, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Hebron’s extensive district to the city and told them: “*From tomorrow, in seven days’ time, a third part of your fields will become a veritable paradise. Following this, I will come back again with My seven Archangels.*” Sixteen days prior to Isaac’s and Rebecca’s arrival at the city of Hebron, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Hebron’s extensive district to the city and told them: “*From tomorrow, in seven days’ time, another third part of your fields will become a veritable paradise. Following this, I will come back again with My seven Archangels.*” Eight days prior to Isaac’s and Rebecca’s arrival at the city of Hebron, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Hebron’s extensive district to the city and told them: “*From tomorrow, in seven days’ time, the remaining third part of your fields will become a veritable paradise. Following this, I will come back again with My seven Archangels and will give you a king.*” The following day, that is, the twenty-fifth day of this period, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Hebron’s extensive district to the city, and in their presence and in that of a great part of the people, anointed Isaac as king, when forty-six years of age, since this event occurred in the year 3330. Isaac’s reign over Hebron and district lasted fourteen years, he remaining in the city until the end thereof, which was in the year 3344, when Isaac was sixty years of age. Isaac’s priestly, patriarchal and monarchical authority was recognized by all the inhabitants of the extensive territory of his realm, who were converted to and adored the God of Isaac, and therefore the one true God. Patriarch Isaac raised an altar to God in the city of Hebron where he invoked His Holy Name and offered Him sacrifices of bread and wine.

Chapter XVII

Birth of Esau and Jacob

1. Isaac and Rebecca prayed constantly to God to obtain a child, fruit of their marriage, since she was barren. And it came to pass that, when Isaac and Rebecca had been married for seventeen years without fruit, Rebecca, wishing to give Isaac offspring, proposed to him that he take the nurse Deborah, her handmaid and confidante, as second-order wife or concubine, so that he cohabit with her and be able to have offspring; which, as we know, at that time did not imply any offence to God. Nevertheless, Isaac, without disdaining either Rebecca or Deborah, said to his wife: “*It is more pleasing to God that we continue to pray, trusting that He turn childlessness into fruitfulness.*”

2. In the year 3344, God, heeding the prayers of Isaac and Rebecca, granted her the virtue of conceiving twin boys when Isaac had reached sixty years of age and was eleven months short of the end of his reign in Hebron. During

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Rebecca’s pregnancy, she noted that the two children struggled in her womb. And foreseeing that there would be enmity between the two when born, she said to herself: “*If this has to happen, why then have I conceived?*” And later she went to consult with the Lord, and He said to her: “*You bear two peoples in your womb, two peoples who, on leaving your womb, will separate, for one people will prevail over the other people, and the elder will serve the younger.*”

3. That same year, whilst in Hebron, Rebecca gave birth to twin boys: the first to be born was a red-haired boy, covered with down, and was called Esau, which means ‘downy man’. Following on came the other, clasping his brother’s heel, and was therefore called Jacob, which means ‘he who trips up’. That same year 3344, in which Isaac’s reign in Hebron ended, he left with his whole family to live in Beersheba, with Esau and Jacob two months old. The two children grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter and outdoors man; Jacob, however, simple in his ways, was more home-loving and given up to things of the spirit. Isaac had predilection for Esau as he was the firstborn; Esau, moreover, pleased him by bringing him good things for the table from his hunting. Rebecca loved Jacob better, because she knew the designs concerning her son of which God had told her, and which she kept secret without telling her husband.

Chapter XVIII

Esau sells Jacob the rights of the firstborn

1. In the year 3384, when Isaac was one hundred years of age and his two sons forty, Esau was named superintendent by his father over all his stewardships; consequently, Isaac put up a rich tent or dwelling at some distance from the patriarchal tent or dwelling, for Esau to exercise the superintendency. Three months later, Esau abandoned the superintendency and left without asking his father’s blessing. With the superintendency vacant, Isaac named his son Jacob superintendent, giving him the tent which Esau had occupied. Isaac, following Esau’s departure and apostasy, resolutely swore that he disinherited him from all the rights of the firstborn.

2. That same year 3384, when Isaac’s two sons were still forty years of age, it came to pass that Esau, two months after having abandoned the superintendency, following days of utter hunger, had not sufficient humility to approach his father for the purpose of seeking help. Esau, knowing that Jacob had occupied his old tent, turned to his brother to seek help from him. It was then that Esau, tired and feeling the pangs of hunger, came up to his brother who had just cooked a lentil stew, and said to him: “*Give me that stew to eat.*” Jacob, to whom his mother had confided the secret that the elder would serve the younger, saw there the opportunity to appropriate the rights of the firstborn that pertained to his brother. And therefore he answered Esau: “*I will give you my stew on condition that you sell me your firstborn rights.*” Esau replied: “*You see I am dying, what use will my birthright be to me?*” And Jacob said: “*Then swear it to me.*” And Esau swore, selling him his birthright for that dish of lentils; and when he had eaten he left, unconcerned at having sold it. Patriarch Isaac was one hundred years old at the time.

3. Esau, still forty years old, on the occasion of his meeting with Jacob in the superintendent’s tent or house, on hearing the news that, as a result of his apostasy, Isaac had resolutely sworn that he had completely disinherited him, became satanically infuriated with his parents; and therefore to wound them took to wife two Canaanite women: Judith, daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemat daughter of Elon the Hittite. This greatly displeased his parents, since both women were idolaters. Rebecca said to Isaac: “*I am tired of life because of these Hittite women. Esau’s wives; if Jacob should come to take a wife from this land, I no longer wish to live.*” Isaac, then, called his son Jacob to recommend him to seek a wife from his father’s kindred in Haram when the time came for him to marry; and therefore said to him in anticipation: “*I do not want you to take a wife of the Canaanite race. Go to Mesopotamia of Syria, to the house of Bathuel, your mother’s father, and choose a wife there from the daughters of the house of Laban, your mother’s brother. And may God Almighty bless you, and increase and multiply you, so that you come to be father of many peoples. And may He grant you Abraham’s blessings, both to you and to your posterity after you, so that you possess as your own the land where you are now a pilgrim, which He promised to your grandfather.*” Thereupon Jacob asked a blessing from his father so that, come the moment, everything be fulfilled according to the will of God.

4. Esau, still forty years of age, learned that Isaac had told Jacob “*Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan*”, and that when the time came for Jacob to marry he should go to Mesopotamia and take a wife there from his mother’s family. Esau, knowing that his parents did not look with pleasure on the daughters of Canaan, to wound them further went to the Pharan desert and took a third wife, the pagan Mahelet, Ishmael’s daughter, an act which deeply grieved Isaac and Rebecca.

Chapter XIX

Patriarch Isaac, shortly before death, gives Jacob the Blessing of the Firstborn

1. In the year 3404, Isaac and Rebecca, as also Jacob and their servants, were still to be found residing in Beersheba. On the other hand, Esau, for twenty years, had lived outside the paternal home with his three pagan wives. And it came to pass that, in that same year, when Esau was sixty years of age, he was given the news, by way of the nurse Deborah, that his father Isaac lay dying. Esau transmitted to his father, through the same Deborah, that he was sincerely repentant and disposed to obey him in all things, including to break definitively with his three wives, when in reality he was not disposed to obey him in anything. Isaac, on learning from the nurse that his son Esau had repented of everything and was willing to return, and including to repudiate his three wives, ordered Deborah herself to summon Esau, whom he believed repentant.

2. When Isaac received Esau believing him sincerely repentant, he ordered him to fetch a young goat from the field, and not to hunt any animal, in order to celebrate his return and give him the blessing of the firstborn. Therefore Isaac said to Esau: “*You see that I am now very old, and I feel that death is close at hand. Go out and fetch a young goat from the field, stew it the way you know I like, and bring it to me so that I may eat with you and my soul bless you before I die.*” But Deborah, who was close by and heard this, for she was the one who had brought Esau, told Rebecca at once of Isaac’s disposition, and Rebecca, prompted by Deborah, saw the opportunity and the means for obtaining

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the blessing of the firstborn for Jacob. Therefore, when Esau went out to the fields to comply with his father's order, she said to her son Jacob: "Deborah has told me that your father spoke with your brother Esau and told him: 'Go out to the field, bring me a young goat and stew it for me so that I may eat with you, and bless you in the presence of the Lord before I die. Now then, my son, hearken to my advice: Go off to the stables and bring me at once two of the best young goats to make a stew of them for your father to his liking; in order that after you have brought it to your father, and when he has eaten, he bless you before he dies.'" Jacob said to Rebecca: "You know that Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am smooth-skinned, and if my father should touch me, and realize who I am, I fear he will think I have tried to trick him, and bring a curse upon myself instead of a blessing." And his mother told him: "Let the curse fall upon me, my son; but you, just obey my voice, and go and bring me what I have told you." Jacob went and brought the two young goats, and gave them to his mother; and she cooked the stew as she knew her husband liked. Then she clothed Jacob with the best of Esau's garments which she had in the house; and with the skins of the goats she covered his hands and the smooth of the neck. Next Rebecca handed Jacob the stew and the loaves she had baked, for him to take to his father.

3. Given Isaac's age of one hundred and twenty years when he was dying, his sight was so weakened that he could no longer see. Jacob, bringing the meal to his father, said to him: "My father?" And he replied: "Here I am: Who are you, my son?" And Jacob told him: "I am your firstborn Esau. I have done what you told me; rise up and seat yourself and eat the goat-meat so that afterwards you may bless me." Isaac, however, said to Jacob: "How could you go off so quickly to the field and stew it as I told you, my son?" Who replied: "It was the will of God that everything be very quick." And Isaac said: "Come up here for me to feel you, my son, and recognize if you are my son Esau or not." And he did not recognize him, because the hands covered over seemed like those of the elder brother. When prepared to bless him, he first asked him: "Are you my son Esau?" Jacob replied: "I am." And Isaac said to him: "Bring me the stew, my son, so that my soul may bless you." And when it was presented to him, and he had eaten of it, wine was served to him as well; which once he had drunk, he said to Jacob: "Come up to me and give me a kiss, my son." Jacob came up, and kissed his father. He, after hesitating, when he perceived the fragrance of his clothing, humanly convinced that he had Esau before him, gave him the blessing of the firstborn, and told him: "Behold the odour of my son like the odour of a laden field that the Lord has blessed. May God give you of the dew of the heavens, and of the fat of the earth abundance of wheat and of wine, and may the nations serve you, and the tribes prostrate before you: be lord of your brother and of his posterity, and may he bow before you. Whoever shall curse you, shall be cursed; and whoever shall bless you, shall be filled with blessings." Isaac, by the priestly blessing of Jacob, bestowed on his son the Triple Benediction, which became incrustrated in the scrotal zone of his body, and thus Jacob was sanctified, receiving a character similar to that of Baptism. Then, by means of another special blessing, Isaac conferred on Jacob the Diaconate, Presbyterate and fullness of the priesthood or Episcopate according to the Order of Melchisedech, by which he would have to offer to God sacrifices of bread and wine. God, although utterly reproving the means employed by Jacob and Rebecca, nevertheless gave validity to the ceremony, without Isaac realizing the deception until the true Esau arrived later.

4. Hardly had Isaac finished uttering the previous words and Jacob left the room, when Esau arrived, who brought his father his goat-meat stew, telling him: "Rise up my father and eat your son's stew, so that afterwards you may bless me." Astonished, Isaac said: "Then who are you?" His son replied to him: "I am your firstborn Esau." Then Isaac, with vehement anguish, and marvelling more than can be believed, said: "Then who is the one who a short while ago brought me a goat-meat stew, of which I ate before you came, and I blessed him, and he is blessed?" Esau, when he heard his father's words, broke out in cries and bitter weeping, and consternated said: "Give me as well your blessing, my father." Isaac, however, told him: "Your brother came fraudulently and received the blessing which has tripped me up, since previously he robbed me of my firstborn rights, and now he has robbed me of my blessing." And he spoke to his father again: "Have you by any chance not kept a blessing for me as well?" Isaac replied: "I have constituted Jacob your master, and have subjected your posterity to his service; with wheat and wine I have strengthened him; and after this, my son, what can I yet do for you?" To which Esau responded: "Then my father, do you have no more than one blessing? I entreat you then to bless me as well." And as he wept with great laments, Isaac, much moved, gave him the ordinary paternal blessing, as he often used to give to the members of the family, and also to the servants. But when Esau had received from Isaac this ordinary blessing and, moreover, merely material, since he continued inwardly to be an apostate, he, utterly indignant, wounded his father yet again, revealing that he was not repentant nor had he thought of obeying him in anything. To which Isaac replied: "If you end your life like that, your recompense is already given." And he added: "Look, outside the extension of the chosen land will be your dwelling, and outside the dew that falls from off your neck." This is how the aged Isaac foretold: that Esau would live separated from the People of God, and outside the Graces reserved for this People; that Esau and his descendants the Idumeans would be a warlike people who would fight with fierce hatred against Jacob and his descendants; and that, in time, Esau's descendants, due to their situation as apostates, would be a people socially and politically distinct from the people of Jacob's descendants.

5. Rebecca committed a most grievous sin by deceiving her husband Isaac and inducing her son to do the same by such a vile imposture. However, both recognizing their mistake, one hour after Esau had left his father's presence, Rebecca and Jacob went before Isaac sincerely repentant to ask his forgiveness. And Isaac, forgiving them, exclaimed: "Blessed be God who permitted your evil actions so that the primogeniture might not pass to Esau." Deborah the nurse, however, fearful of being dismissed by Isaac, did not ask for pardon. It is admirable that Isaac blesses God for permitting his wife's and his son's imposture; since, if instead of Jacob it had been Esau who had gone up to his father

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to receive the blessing of the firstborn, this blessing would have been invalid, for Esau was an apostate whose repentance was a sham. Though God willed that the blessing of the firstborn should go to Jacob and not to Esau, that did not justify Rebecca's conduct; since she, who already knew God's designs upon her son Jacob when he was conceived in her womb, had the sacred duty to reveal them to her husband without delay. Nevertheless, she concealed the matter for lack of courage and because Isaac showed a preference for Esau. Certainly, however, should he have known the prophecy concerning their son Jacob given to Rebecca, Isaac would have had sufficient light to accept God's plans concerning their son; so that without being victim of any deceit, he would have blessed Jacob. Moreover, Rebecca committed another most grievous sin by concealing from her husband the sale of the firstborn rights by Esau to Jacob for a dish of lentils. By Jacob's co-operation in his mother's fraud, he received the blessing of the firstborn sacrilegiously but validly. Although he had been sanctified, he did not receive the Indwelling of Sanctifying Grace at that moment, though he did afterwards when he asked God's forgiveness for his sin.

6. Esau, who ever loathed Jacob for the blessing of the firstborn that his father had given his brother, said: "The days of mourning for my father are close; after he dies, I swear that I will kill my brother Jacob." Esau's hatred towards Jacob and his descendants always persisted in him. Deborah advised Rebecca of Esau's vengeful resolve, and she, sending for her son Jacob, said to him: "Look, your brother Esau threatens to kill you. See here my son, believe me, after your father dies and is buried, flee to my brother Laban's home in the town of Haram, and stay there until your brother's fury abates and he forgets what you have done. Later I will send for you to come back here." Moreover, Rebecca lamented: "Why should I lose my two sons in one day?", since she had given Esau up for lost as a son because of his hostile attitude towards her; and if Rebecca did not now prevent Jacob's death, she would be left without the other son as well.

Chapter XX Death of Patriarch Isaac

1. Hours after Jacob received the blessing of the firstborn, Patriarch Saint Isaac died in Beersheba in the year 3404 at the age of one hundred and twenty years, in Rebecca's and Jacob's presence. Both wept for Isaac's death with great feeling. Jacob took his remains to Hebron for burial in the cave of Machpela where the bodies of Abraham and his wife Sarah were interred. Deborah had advised Esau of his father's death; so that this accursed son was present for the burial and, dissembling, wept. Following Isaac's death, his son Jacob, sixty years of age, was constituted Patriarch of the People of God.

2. Once he had buried his father, Jacob, without waiting to complete the days of mourning, urged by his mother Rebecca, secretly left for Beersheba, where days later his mother Rebecca arrived. Esau, realizing that Jacob had left Hebron, went to Beersheba to carry out the oath of vengeance against his brother. Meanwhile, Jacob had already left Beersheba for Haram in Mesopotamia. Esau, when he reached Beersheba and found that Jacob was not there, set out in fierce pursuit of his brother, from which he had to desist, since God protected Jacob very specially and freed him from the bloodthirsty clutches of his brother. Esau, however, burning with rage, decided to take vengeance on his mother Rebecca, whom he hated; so that she, being in Beersheba, was stabbed in the chest by Esau. Rebecca did not die immediately, rather she had a slow and excruciating agony, in which she acknowledged, with all the ardour of her soul, the grave sin committed when she deceived her husband Isaac and induced her son Jacob to deceive him in order to receive the blessing of the firstborn pretending to be Esau. Rebecca then, deeply repentant of her grave mistakes asked pardon again of God; and purified by her terrible agony, died in holiness at the age of one hundred and ten years. When Deborah the nurse, Rebecca's handmaid and confidante, found her mistress murdered, she died of grief and tears, thus expiating her wicked conduct, and saved herself. The servants took Rebecca's remains to Hebron and buried her in the cave of Machpela, where Isaac already lay. Deborah was buried at the foot of an oak tree in Beersheba.

3. When Jacob left Beersheba on his flight to Haram in Mesopotamia, not only Bathuel and his wife Rocio, but also Laban, their oldest son, and his wife Scarcha, had already died in holiness. Therefore the order Isaac and Rebecca had given Jacob years previously to go to Mesopotamia and seek a wife from Bathuel's and Laban's families, was for him to choose a wife from their descendants, and specifically from the daughters of another Laban, Rebecca's nephew, son of her brother called Laban. These daughters were Lia and Rachel.

4. Esau, following his abominable matricide, forsaking his kinsfolk for ever, departed from Canaan for Arabia Petrea and established himself in Idumea.

Chapter XXI

God ratifies with Patriarch Jacob the alliance made with Abraham and Isaac. The vision of the heavenly stairway

1. In the year 3404, Jacob, on his way to Haram in Mesopotamia, on nearing Luz stopped to rest for the night, without knowing where he was. And he took one of the stones lying there and, using it as a pillow, fell asleep in that spot. And in dreams he saw a stairway which, poised on the earth, reached up to Heaven, and the angels of God went up and down upon it. And he saw as well the Eternal Father standing upon the stairway, Who told him: "I am the Lord God of Abraham, your grandfather, and the God of Isaac, your father; the land where you sleep I will give to you and to your descendants. And your posterity will be as numerous as the grains of dust of the earth; and you will spread out to the West, to the East, to the North and to the South, and all the tribes of the Earth will be blessed in you and in the One who shall come forth from your descendants. I am with you, and will be your Keeper wherever you go, and I will bring you back into this land, and will not let you go from My hand until I fulfil all the things I have spoken to you." The Eternal Father blessed Jacob as the new Patriarch of the People of God.

2. Jacob, awakening from the dream, said: "Truly this place is sacred, and I did not know on arriving." And full of holy fear, he added: "How majestic is this place! Truly this stairway is the Gateway to Heaven which leads to the House of God." Jacob, then, getting up at dawn, took the stone he had placed as pillow and set it up as a memorial of

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the vision, and poured oil upon it. And he gave the name Bethel to the town previously called Luz. Moreover, he swore this oath saying: *"If the Lord is with me and succours me in the journey I am making, and gives me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I return happily to my father's land, it will be the sign that the Lord God has kept His servant from harm, and from all that He shall give me I will offer Him the tenth part. This stone which I leave here set up as a monument, will be the sign that I have seen the House of God in this place."*

Chapter XXII

Patriarch Jacob reaches his cousin Laban's home

Jacob, continuing on his journey, reached Haram in Mesopotamia in the year 3404, when sixty years of age. And he saw a well in the open field, and close by were three flocks of sheep resting, since the livestock were watered there. The well mouth was covered over by a stone, since the custom was that, when the shepherds had gathered there, the great stone be removed, and once the sheep had drunk, the well be covered over again. Jacob asked the shepherds: *"Where are you from?"* They replied: *"We are from Haram."* Jacob said to them: *"Do you know Laban, from Nachor's family?"* They said: *"Surely we do."* And he said: *"Is he well?"* And they replied: *"He is well; look, here comes Rachel, his daughter, with her flock."* Jacob was still speaking with them when Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, since she herself pastured the flock. Laban, Rachel's father, was, as we know, the son of Rebecca's brother also called Laban. When he saw Rachel, his first cousin once removed, and the sheep of Laban, his first cousin, Jacob removed the stone which covered the well so that Rachel's sheep might drink, letting it be known that he was the son of Rebecca, the girl's great-aunt. As Laban's family knew of Rebecca's murder from some of Isaac's servants come from Canaan, Rachel told Jacob forthwith that his brother Esau had killed Rebecca, mother of the two. Jacob, deeply moved and weeping, kissed his cousin. The girl hastened to tell everything to Laban, and he, going out to meet Jacob, embraced him, kissed him and brought him into his home. Jacob told Laban the reasons for his journey, among them that he came fleeing from his brother Esau. And Laban said to Jacob: *"You are my own flesh and blood. I will take care of you."* Jacob stayed with his cousin helping him in his work.

Chapter XXIII

Jacob weds Lia and Rachel

1. Laban had two daughters: the elder, Lia by name, and the younger, Rachel. Lia was not very pretty, but had sweet and affectionate eyes. Rachel was very fair of countenance, and graced with a charming demeanour. After the month of mourning for Rebecca's death, Laban said to Jacob: *"Will you serve me then for nothing because you are my cousin? Tell me what your salary shall be."* And Jacob, who had fallen in love with Rachel, said to Laban: *"I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."* And Laban replied: *"It is better that I should give her to you than to a stranger. Stay with me."* And Jacob said: *"Then give me Rachel for my wife, because the time of mourning is over."* Laban gathered all the people of the area to celebrate Jacob's and Rachel's wedding, which was preceded by the usual festivities.

2. But at night, when Jacob was in the wedding chamber, Laban put his daughter Lia secretly into the room. Although Jacob realized that she was not Rachel, he nevertheless accepted Lia as wife in order that she might not suffer any harm to her good reputation in the eyes of others. In those days the marriage bond was produced at the moment the contracting parties accepted each other in the nuptial chamber. Nevertheless Jacob, the morning after having spent the night with Lia, greatly surprised, said to Laban: *"What did you intend to do by this? Didn't I undertake to serve you for Rachel? Why have you deceived me?"* And Laban replied: *"It is not the custom here to give the younger daughters in marriage first. Keep the seven days of celebration for your marriage to Lia, and then I will give you Rachel as well to wife, in return for seven more years in my service."* Jacob condescended, and following the week of festivities, married Rachel, whom he loved more than Lia. Jacob married Lia and Rachel when he was sixty years of age.

Chapter XXIV

Jacob's children born in Haram

1. Jacob loved Rachel more than Lia. God, however, made Lia fruitful, Rachel remaining barren. And it came to pass that, when Jacob was sixty years of age, Lia gave birth to her first son, who was named Ruben, since she said: *"The Lord saw my abashment; now my husband will love me more."* Rachel, as she was barren, was jealous of her sister, and said to her husband: *"Give me children, if not I will die."* To which Jacob indignantly replied: *"Am I then God to be able to free you from barrenness?"* And she said: *"I have my maid Bala; make her conceive by you, so that I can have children through her."* And she gave him Bala as wife: and Bala, when Jacob was sixty years of age, bore him a son who was named Dan, for Rachel said: *"The Lord has done me justice, and has heard my cry, giving me a son."* The following year, when Jacob was sixty-one years of age, Bala bore him another son, who was named Nephtali, Rachel saying: *"God made me strive with my sister and I have surpassed her."* The following year, when Jacob was sixty-two years of age, Lia bore him another son, who was named Simeon, and she said: *"Inasmuch as the Lord heard that I was less beloved, He gave me this son as well."* A year later, when Jacob was sixty-three years of age, Lia bore him another son, who was named Levi, and his mother said: *"Now as well my husband will unite oftener to me, because I have borne him three sons."* The following year, with Jacob sixty-four years of age, Lia bore him another son, who was named Judah, and she said: *"Now I will praise the Lord."* Following his birth, Lia ceased for a time to conceive.

2. Lia, however, seeing that she had ceased to bear children, gave her maidservant Zelpha as wife to Jacob; the maidservant, when Jacob was sixty-five years of age, bore him a son who was named Gad, for Lia said: *"Come at a good moment."* The following year, when Jacob was sixty-six, Zelpha bore him another son who was named Asser, for Lia said: *"This is happiness for me: for women will call me happy."* Lia, however, who desired to bear more

children, prayed to the Lord to restore her fecundity, and He heard her prayers; and so, when Jacob was sixty-seven, Lia bore him another son, who was named Issachar, for Lia said: *"God has given me my recompense for having given my maid to my husband."* The following year, when Jacob was sixty-eight, Lia bore him another son, who was named Zabulon, for she said: *"God has given me a good dowry, now my husband will dwell with me oftener, because I have given him six sons."* The following year, when Jacob was sixty-nine, Lia bore him their daughter Dinah.

3. The Lord remembering Rachel as well, heard her, and made her fruitful. When Jacob was seventy years of age, she bore him a son who was named Joseph, for she said: *"God has taken away my reproach, for He has added a son of my own to those my maid gave me."* Joseph was born in the year 3414.

Chapter XXV

Jacob, though desiring to return to Canaan, serves Laban another six years

1. When Joseph was four years old, Jacob said to his father-in-law Laban: *"Let me return to my country and my homeland. Give me then my wives for whom I have served you, and my sons, so that I may go; for you well know the good service I have rendered you."* However Laban, Lia's and Rachel's father, who was avaricious, usurious, exploitive and deceitful, said to Jacob: *"Do me the favour of listening to what I am going to say. The time you have been with me God has blessed me, so that I wish you to stay on with me in my service. Let me know what wages I should give you."* And Jacob replied: *"You know how I have served you, and how much your goods have prospered by the work of my hands. Few enough were the goods you had before, but now your property has greatly increased, since God has blessed you by my staying here. So it is fair that now I work as well for my own family's benefit."* And Laban said: *"What shall I give you?"* But Jacob said: *"I want nothing; but if you do as I ask, then I will again pasture your flocks and watch over them."* Jacob, at his father-in-law's egoistic attitude, did not think it was the right moment to leave with his wives, his children and his abundant possessions, since his departure could result in great unpleasantness with his father-in-law and the latter's sons. Therefore he chose to stay on with him, in order to please him and thus also wait for God to indicate the right moment.

2. Jacob, with the aim of satisfying his father-in-law, in good faith and rectitude made him a proposal that benefited Laban more than himself, and that later resulted quite the opposite, for God blessed Jacob and multiplied his goods. Laban accepted his son-in-law's proposal and they agreed to gather all the goats and sheep of the two of them. Then they put all the parti-coloured goats and sheep on one side, with the intention that Jacob pasture only the flocks of one single colour, whether all white or all black; agreeing moreover, that all the single-colour offspring be for Laban, and the parti-coloured for Jacob; the latter being less in number than those of a single colour. This agreement favoured Laban exceedingly, since it was naturally to be expected that the greater number of young be either black or white. God, however, in whose providence Jacob placed all his hope, advised him in dreams how he was to act so that the greater number of young be parti-coloured; and Jacob's wealth thus increased so notably that it came to be the envy of Laban's whole family. Though on several occasions Laban sought to alter the conditions they had agreed to, and Jacob accepted, Jacob always came out favoured with the better and more numerous part of the flocks. Jacob had many menservants and maidservants, and herds of livestock, camels and asses. Thus Jacob, having served Laban fourteen years for his two daughters, served him six more years for his livestock.

3. Jacob was enriched to such a degree that Laban's sons, full of envy, said among themselves: *"Jacob has taken possession of everything that belonged to our father, he has enriched himself with our father's goods, and has become a potentate."* As Jacob heard about what they had said, and moreover noted that Laban no longer looked upon him as kindly as before, he decided to leave for his own country. This decision was confirmed by the words of Most Holy Ananias, who told him: *"Go back to the land of your fathers and your kinsfolk, for I will be with you."* Jacob sent to call Lia and Rachel who were out in the fields and told them: *"I see your father no longer looks upon me as he did before. You know that I have served your father to the best of my ability, and that he has not been fair in his dealings with me, and therefore God has enriched me with his goods and made my work fruitful."* Lia and Rachel replied: *"Do we perhaps have any part in the goods and inheritance of our father's house? God is the one who has made our goods and those of our sons thrive through our work, availing Himself of our father's goods."* Forthwith they made the preparations for the journey.

Chapter XXVI

Jacob's return to the Land of Canaan

1. In the year 3424, Jacob, when eighty years of age, after having served Laban for twenty years, rose very early; and setting his wives and children on camels, left for Canaan, the land of his father, taking with him his servants, livestock and whatever he had acquired in Haram, without a word to his father-in-law, whom he feared might stop them. To do so, Jacob availed himself of the circumstance that Laban was away shearing the sheep. Rachel also took advantage of the same circumstance to steal her father's artistic gold jewellery, of great value, secretly taking it with her. Laban found out three days later and, gathering the men of his household, went off in pursuit of Jacob, and succeeded in catching up with him at Mount Galaad, near the border of Canaan. However, while on the way, Laban saw God in dreams, who said to him: *"Keep yourself from saying anything harsh to Jacob."*

2. After reaching Jacob, Laban pitched his tent on the same Mount Galaad and said to his son-in-law: *"Why have you left in this manner, without saying a word to me, as though you were taking my daughters off as prisoners-of-war? Why did you want to fly away without my knowing, and without telling me so that I might accompany you with merrymaking, tambourines, lutes and song? You did not let me kiss my daughters and grandchildren farewell; you have acted shamelessly. And now, in truth, my hand is strong enough to return you wrong for wrong; but yesterday God told me: Keep yourself from saying anything harsh to Jacob."* Jacob replied: *"I went without telling you because I was afraid you would take your daughters from me by force."* And Laban said: *"Your wish to go to your own kinsfolk*

and the land of your father is justified. But why have you stolen my jewellery?" Jacob, who had left Mesopotamia with all the possessions that in conscience belonged to him, unaware that Rachel had with her the jewellery she had stolen from her father, told Laban to investigate till he found whoever was guilty and put him to death. Laban, then entering Jacob's tent, Lia's and that each of the two maids, did not find it. Then, entering Rachel's tent, he did not find it there either, since she had hidden it beneath a camel-saddle and herself sat on top, alleging untruthfully that she could not stand up because of her menstrual period. Thus she eluded the search her father made for the jewellery. But later, repentant of her sin, she returned it, without her father realizing.

3. Afterwards, annoyed, Jacob reminded Laban how well he had served him in his household: fourteen years for his daughters and six for his livestock; and that, if God had not assisted him, perhaps he would have sent him away without any goods at all; and furthermore that he had changed his wages ten times from greater to lesser amounts. By these and other appropriate considerations, Jacob calmed Laban's fury, and they agreed to make an alliance by virtue of which both promised never to break the bonds of the most cordial and sincere friendship on any account. As sign of this perpetual alliance, they made a small monument with a mound of stones to serve as testimony that neither Laban nor Jacob could cross over it to do any wrong to the other. Then they decided to celebrate this family alliance, so they prepared everything necessary, killing animals for the banquet. But before the repast, Jacob, as Priest he was according to the Order of Melchisedech, called all his family to be present at the sacrifice of bread and wine that he offered. After the sacrifice, all ate contentedly and slept there. Laban, rising before dawn, kissed his daughters and grandchildren goodbye, blessed them, and after embracing Jacob, returned home to Haram.

Chapter XXVII

Patriarch Jacob's meeting with his brother Esau

1. As soon as Laban had left, Patriarch Jacob continued on towards Canaan. Before reaching Sichar or Sichern, along the way two armies of God's angels came out to meet him, and when he saw them he said: "This is God's encampment," and therefore called the place Mahanaim, which means 'God's encampment'.

2. As God wished to give the perverse Esau another opportunity for conversion by accepting Jacob as Patriarch of the People of God and submitting to his authority, the Soul of Christ spoke to Jacob telling him that, as lord he was of his brother Esau, he should send him messengers for Esau to come out to meet him, and Jacob then exhort his wayward brother to bow his arrogant head and submit to him as Patriarch and Priest of God that he was. And besides, the Soul of Christ told Jacob that he should have no fear at all, since he had at his disposal two angelic armies to protect him from whatever danger might ensue.

3. But Jacob, far from trusting in divine protection, became greatly afraid and confused. Though he sent messengers to his brother Esau in the Land of Seir in Idumea, he did not do so in the manner God had told him; but sent a message in which he pretended to acknowledge his brother as if he were his lord, contrary to the truth, since Jacob, as Patriarch and Priest of God, was Esau's lord. Thus Jacob told the messengers before they left: "You will speak thus to my lord Esau: This is what your brother Jacob tells you: I have been with Laban and have stayed with him all this time. I have menservants and maidservants, oxen, asses and sheep, and I wish to make this known to my lord in order to find grace in his eyes." By these words, Jacob, full of cowardice and dissimulation, offended against God and his own authority as Patriarch and Priest, thereby sinning grievously. Days later, the two envoys returned to Jacob telling him: "We went to your brother Esau, and he is coming out now in haste to meet you with four hundred men." At this news, Jacob conceived even greater fear and alarm, so that he divided the company he had with him together with the livestock into two parties, saying: "If Esau attacks one party and destroys it, the other party that is left will be saved."

4. So little was Jacob's confidence in the help God promised him, that he exclaimed: "O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father Isaac! You, Lord, who told me: 'Go back to your land, to the place of your birth, for I will fill you with blessings'; I am unworthy of all your mercies, and of the fidelity with which You have fulfilled the rich with companies of men and livestock. Free me, I pray you, from the hands of my brother Esau, because I greatly fear him lest, just as previously he killed my mother Rebecca, coming up now against us, he kill everyone of us as well, who are all in one way or another her children. You have promised to grant me a thousand benefits and multiply my descendants as the sands of the sea, that for their immensity cannot be counted."

5. With the aim of placating his brother's possible anger, the next day Jacob ordered various servants to go on ahead of him with gifts for Esau, telling them that if his brother were to ask them to whom it all belonged, they were to reply: "These are gifts your servant Jacob has sent to my lord Esau, and he himself is coming after us. And you will add: Jacob himself, your servant, follows this way as well, because he said: I will placate him with the gifts sending them on ahead. And then I will see him. Perhaps he will receive me well." With this abominable adulation, Jacob again feigned to be his brother Esau's servant, and not Esau's lord. While Jacob's servants went on ahead with the gifts, he stayed there that night in the camp, with his wives, children, servants and livestock. The following day, Jacob, raising his eyes, saw Esau coming towards him with four hundred men. Jacob, quaking with fear, went out to meet Esau and prostrated seven times on the ground before his brother to show him reverence, feigning that he submitted to his authority. Esau, seeing this gesture, truly believed that Jacob acknowledged him as his lord and master, so that, with the maximum hypocrisy, he ran towards Jacob whom he hated so much, embraced him and kissed him with feigned tears. By Jacob's order, his wives and children as well, prostrate on the ground, made reverence to the perverse Esau seven times. Such was Jacob's cowardice and dissimulation that, as his brother did not accept the gifts he offered him, he said to Esau: "If I have found grace in your eyes, accept this gift from my hand, since I saw your countenance as if it were God's Countenance. Be then gracious to me, and receive this gift as a blessing of mine." Following this detestable adulation of Esau, he so insisted, that in the end his brother accepted the gift he offered him. Jacob's cowardly attitude towards

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him, far from helping Esau on towards possible conversion, produced the opposite effect, since souls can only be drawn towards God by the truth, for dissimulation and deceit are resorts proper to the devil.

6. Esau, who believed that he had gained his brother to his cause, manifested his desire that Jacob follow him to Idumea with his wives, children, servants and livestock, telling him: "Let us move on. I will go ahead of you;" since what he sought was that Jacob cede him the blessing of the firstborn, together with the Priesthood and the possession of the Triple Benediction; and thus Jacob be placed under his authority. With these ambitions, Esau's desire to kill his brother was for the time being placated. Jacob, however, who in spite of his debility was not prepared to carry out such an abominable action, answered his brother with shrewd dissimulation: "My lord sees well enough that there are young children, and that I bring sheep and cows with their young, and if I overdrive them for a day all the livestock will perish. So let my lord go on ahead of his servant, and I will follow slowly at the pace of the herds I have in front, and at the pace of the children, until I reach Seir with my lord." What Jacob sought by this dissimulation, was that his brother, on the way to Idumea, go on ahead of him and his family, with the aim of seeking an opportunity to free himself from his clutches turning aside towards Canaan.

7. However, in spite of the most grievous sin that Jacob committed putting his sacred authority in jeopardy, God freed him from other evils that, by his cowardly dissimulation, could have befallen him, as for example apostasy. For, when Jacob found himself in that perilous situation, God showed his perfidious brother the two angelic armies He had ready to defend Jacob. The sight of those two numerous armies caused Esau such terror that, of a sudden, with his four hundred men, he fled away to Seir of Idumea, without again concerning himself any further with his brother. Jacob, seeing Heaven's latest protection, regained his confidence in divine favour, staying the night in that place of Mahanaim. In Idumea, Esau died impenitent, eternally damning himself.

8. The following day, Jacob rose very early, took his two wives, his eleven sons, his daughter Dinah, his servants and animals, and crossed the torrent of the river Jaboc, camping a short distance away. At night, Jacob sought a secluded place to pray to God, for his soul was dejected after all that had occurred with his brother. Jacob, deeply repentant for his most grievous sin of cowardice and dissimulation, asked forgiveness of God, and felt himself to be generously pardoned. Thereupon, whilst he shed tears of contrition, the Soul of Christ appeared to him under bodily form, and began an arduous struggle with him, without Jacob being able to understand who that mysterious Man was. Jacob struggled with the unknown Being until morning. The Soul of Christ, apparently unable to overcome Jacob, touched him impetuously and forcefully in the scrotal zone, and left him wounded and lame on seizing the Sacrament of the Triple Benediction that Jacob bore incruited in that same zone ever since he had received the blessing of the firstborn. As the Divine Personage showed His desire to leave with the Sacred Mystery, Jacob, struggling with Him, told Him that he would not let Him leave as long as He did not give him back what He had taken from him. By divine permission, however, Jacob succeeded in overcoming Him and holding Him back so that He might not bear away the Sacred Deposit, until at last the Patriarch recovered it. The Soul of Christ then said to Jacob: "What is your name?" And he replied: "Jacob;" and the Soul of Christ told him: "From now on you will be called, not Jacob, but Israel, since if you were strong fighting with God, how much stronger you will be fighting against men!" By these words, He admonished him for the cowardice he had shown towards his brother. Jacob, however, asked Him who He was, and the Divine Personage became transfigured and blessed the Patriarch, who then realized that the Personage was God Himself. Jacob called that place Phanel, which means: "I have seen God face to face;" and later exclaimed: "My soul has been saved," for Jacob had contemplated God in His Divine Essence for brief moments.

9. When the sun was risen, Jacob left Phanel with all his family, and reached a place where he built a house and pitched tents for his livestock; therefore that spot was called Socoth, which means tents. From there, Jacob went to the city of Sichern, today Nablus, arriving in the year 3425, now recovered from his wound and lameness. He dwelt close to the city, and bought the part of the field where he had pitched his tents for a hundred lambs from the sons of Hemor, Sichern's father. There he sunk a well for his son Joseph that, together with the plot of land in which it was opened, he would later bequeath to him in inheritance. This well is known as Jacob's well. On this property, Patriarch Jacob raised an altar and offered sacrifices of bread and wine invoking the most powerful God of Israel. Jacob was eighty-one years of age when he established himself in Sichern on returning from Mesopotamia, and his son Joseph eleven.

Chapter XXVIII

Joseph's dreams. Joseph is sold by his brothers and taken down into Egypt

1. Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other sons because of his innocence and candour, and had presented him with a varicoloured embroidered tunic. Joseph was eleven years of age at the time, and already went out to pasture the flocks with four of his brothers, the sons of Bala and of Zelpha his father's wives. One day, as Joseph saw that each of his four brothers had committed a sin of impurity, bestiality, he went and told his father, who admonished them severely, arousing in them certain anger against Joseph. Furthermore, Jacob's great love and predilection for this son of his produced such feelings of envy in all his brothers that they came even to hate him, and Joseph became the object of ill-treatment on their part.

2. It came to pass that, on the 6th of January in the year 3426, Joseph, twelve years of age, had two dreams; and drawn by his innocence, related them to his brothers, and this increased their hatred towards him further still. Joseph, then, said to them: "Listen to the dream I had: It seemed to me that we were all tying up our sheaves in the fields, and that my sheaf arose and stood upright; whilst your sheaves, placed around, adored mine." This caused such indignation in his brothers that they replied: "Are you then to become our king, and we subject to your dominion?" And this dream further excited envy and hatred in them. Forthwith, Joseph recounted the other dream to his brothers, saying: "In the dream I saw how the sun, the moon and eleven stars adored me." The brothers, thoroughly indignant, told

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their father of this, and he called Joseph to come and explain to him, afterwards saying to his son with great gentleness: "What is the meaning of this dream you have had? Have I and your mother and your brothers by chance to adore you, prostrate on the ground?" Thenceforth his brothers regarded him with ever increasing envy; but his father considered these mysteries in silence.

3. In the first dream Joseph had seen that his eleven brothers were indeed those who adored him; for though Benjamin had not yet been born, he was already conceived, and the child, from within the womb of his mother Rachel, miraculously all of a sudden received the use of reason, and with his body made an act of adoration towards his brother, returning afterwards to the normal state of a child in gestation. In the second dream, Joseph had understood that the sun, the moon and the eleven stars, represented his father, his mother and his eleven brothers.

4. A few days after Joseph had revealed his dreams, he went with his father Jacob, his mother Rachel and some servants, to the Mambre Valley in Hebron, to visit the Cave of Machpela, where Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob's parents, and his grandparents Abraham and Sarah, were buried. On their journey to Hebron, they passed through Jerusalem, where Jacob showed Rachel and Joseph the place where the Temple had stood, and the Hill of Isaac's sacrifice. Joseph's ten brothers, however, remained in Sichem pasturing the sheep, and together with them Lia, Dinah, Bala and Zelpha. One day, Jacob, by name Israel as well, while in Mambre, said to Joseph: "Your brothers are tending the sheep in the Sichem pastures; make ready, I want to send you over to them." And he replied: "Ready I am to go;" and later Jacob told him: "Well then, off you go and see if all is well with your brothers and the livestock, and bring me news of what is happening." Joseph, together with a few servants, journeyed from the Hebron valley up to Sichem and sought his brothers in the pastures close by the city; and when he did not find them, a man who was about there, seeing him asked him whom he was seeking, and Joseph replied: "I am looking for my brothers; show me where the flocks are grazing." And the man said: "They moved away from this place and I heard them say: Let us go on to Dothain." The servants accompanying Joseph stayed in Sichem; and he went off alone in search of his brothers, and found them in Dothain, some twenty kilometres further north.

5. On the 17th of February that year 3426, his brothers, when they saw Joseph from afar, before he came up to them, said among themselves instigated by Dan: "Look, here comes the dreamer. Let us kill him and cast him into one of these wells; and we will say that a wild beast has devoured him. Then we shall see what his dreams come to." Ruben, however, the eldest, wishing to free him from the fratricidal hands of the other brothers, said to them: "Don't take his life, or shed his blood, but cast him into that dry cistern in the desert, and do not stain your hands"; which he said with the aim of freeing him from them and later restoring him to his father. Hardly had Joseph arrived when, seeing his brothers' aggressive attitude, he begged them to have compassion on him; however, they did not listen to him, but stripped him of the varicoloured tunic and cast him into an old cistern empty of water.

6. Promptly the brothers sat down to eat close by the well. Ruben subsequently left intending to return when they had departed and draw Joseph out so as to take him back to his father. And it came to pass that the other brothers, looking up, saw a caravan of Ishmaelites come from Galaad with camels laden with perfumes and other spices to take down into Egypt. Accordingly Judah said to his brothers: "What do we gain by taking our brother's life and concealing his death? It is better to sell him to the Ishmaelites and not stain our hands, because after all he is our brother and our own flesh and blood." The other brothers agreed with this idea, so that after Joseph had been in the cistern for an hour, they drew him out in order to sell him. To cause Joseph more pain and falsely justify themselves, Nephtali and Simeon, in agreement with their other brothers with the exception of Ruben who was not present, told Joseph that his father Jacob, counselled by Rachel, had ordered his sale because of the dreams he had had; which Joseph believed. His brothers then sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for thirty pieces of silver, and he was taken down into Egypt. Ruben, having returned to the cistern, did not find the boy, and rending his garments went back to his brothers saying: "The boy does not appear. What will I do now?", since as eldest brother the whole weight of responsibility would fall upon him. The other brothers informed him of what they had done, and moreover handed him the three pieces that corresponded to him from the sale, whereby Ruben became guilty of the same offence. Afterwards, by common consent, they took Joseph's tunic, tinged it with the blood of a goat, and gave it to a servant to take to Jacob, still at Hebron, with the following message: "We have found this tunic; see if it is your son's tunic or not." Their father, recognizing it, said: "The tunic is my son's; a wild animal has eaten him, a wild beast has devoured my son Joseph." And rending his garments, he dressed in a hair shirt and wept lengthily for his son, without suspecting the crime his brothers had committed. Days later, Joseph's ten brothers, with Lia, Dinah and the rest, arrived at Hebron, where Jacob wept inconsolably, and they tried to comfort him but in vain, for he said: "I will go down to the grave weeping for my son;" and Jacob continued to weep for Joseph. At this terrible blow of the disappearance of his beloved son, whom he believed dead, Jacob was purified yet again for the sins of his life; above all for the deceit he had practised on his father Isaac at the blessing of the firstborn. For Jacob to believe that his son was dead caused him greater sorrow than if his perverse sons had told him the truth, for then he would at least have been left with the hope of seeing Joseph again one day.

7. In the meantime, the Ishmaelites who had bought Joseph, once in Egypt, sold him as a slave to Putiphar, at that time the Pharaoh's chancellor and captain of his guard. It was the 19th of March in the year 3426 when Joseph, at twelve years of age, found himself a slave under Putiphar's orders.

Chapter XXIX

Patriarch Jacob and his family return to Sichem. Dinah is violated

1. That same month of February of the year 3426, following the dolorous episode of Joseph's sale by his brothers, Patriarch Jacob, with his whole family, returned to Sichem, where the livestock was to be found grazing under the care of several servants. At the time, Rachel was in the fourth month of pregnancy with her son Benjamin.

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2. Some days after their return, it came to pass that Dinah, drawn by curiosity, wanted to visit the city on the occasion of a solemn festival that the inhabitants celebrated. Sichem, son of Hemor the Prince of that region, seeing Dinah and captivated by her beauty, abducted and violated her; she however, in part, was also to blame; since although at the beginning she did not yield, later she consented because the youth pleased her very much. Sichem, in spite of his violent proceeding, in love with Dinah, consoled her with caresses and manifested his earnest desire to marry her, so that he kept her at his home in the hope that her father would give her to him as wife. However, since the affront to Dinah deeply wounded Jacob's family, the girl's brothers secretly decided to avenge themselves on the first occasion that might present itself. She for her part, after the sin, repented of having committed it.

3. Sichem, who truly loved Dinah, and wished to make good the offence he had given her, deeply repentant, said to Hemor his father: "Ask for the girl to be my bride." Hemor went to speak with Jacob, and said to him: "Sichem, my son, has fallen in love with your daughter: Give her to him, I pray you, to be his wife. Make an alliance with us and let us be joined together by marriages. Give us your sons and take our daughters, and live among us. The land is at your disposal, cultivate it and have properties." Sichem, on his part, in all honour and sincerity, said to Dinah's father and brothers: "May I find grace with you, and I will give you whatever you ask of me. I only pray that you give me this girl as wife." Jacob heard this proposal and showed his good will. But his sons, who were conceiving an uncontrollable desire for vengeance, with fraudulent dissimulation, replied to Sichem that they would admit his marriage to Dinah on condition that all the men of Hemor's house be circumcised. Their acceptance was unanimous; and at Jacob's well the wedding between the two young people, and peace between the two families, was agreed, although as far as Jacob's sons were concerned it was a mere sham. And it came to pass that, on the third day of their being circumcised, while the men of the house of Hemor found themselves in painful convalescence, Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob, with a group of servants armed with swords, killed every man in the house, including Sichem and his father, then taking with them their sister Dinah. Afterwards, all Jacob's sons hurled themselves upon the dead, plundering Hemor's house, and took captive the women, children and livestock. This criminal massacre was carried out by Jacob's sons in the month of March in the year 3426, some days after the violation of their sister Dinah, thirteen years of age.

4. Patriarch Jacob, who had had no part in this horrendous crime, reproved his sons severely, and said to Simeon and to Levi: "You have perturbed my life, making me odious to the Canaanites and to the Pherizeans, inhabitants of this land. We are few, they will unite against me and will kill me, and I will be destroyed and my household as well." The two brothers in answer asked why they had abused their sister as though she were a whore. Jacob, seeing that the hate-filled vengeance of his sons cried out to Heaven, did all that was in his power to compensate Sichem's family for the harm caused by them, and consequently set the women and children at liberty and restored to them what his sons had robbed in their plundering.

Chapter XXX

Benjamin's birth and Rachel's death

1. That same year 3426, when Jacob's spirit was most deeply troubled on account of the dreadful crime his sons had committed, finding himself in Sichem, the Most Divine Soul of Christ appeared to him to strengthen and console him, and told him: "Come, climb the hill beside Bethel, and make an altar to God in the place where He appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." Jacob, obedient to God's voice, made ready to leave. But as some of his sons had secretly kept some idolatrous trinkets they had taken in the looting of Hemor's house, Jacob ordered that they throw them out, and that they purify themselves and change their clothing. After setting out on the journey, when they found themselves some distance from Sichem, Jacob destroyed the trinkets and buried them beneath a tree. The outraged inhabitants of the city who, together with those of other nearby towns, had planned to take vengeance on Jacob and his family for the dreadful crime his sons had committed, seeing that they had all left, prepared to follow them with the aim of carrying out their vindictive intentions; God, however, did not allow this.

2. Jacob, then, reached the hill beside Bethel with his family, servants and livestock. There he erected an altar and offered God a sacrifice of bread and wine. And the Eternal Father appeared to him telling him again: "You will now no longer be called Jacob; instead Israel will be your name." And He called him Israel. And the Eternal Father continued saying: "I am Almighty God, increase and multiply; peoples and hosts of nations shall proceed from you, kings will come forth from your lineage. And the land I gave to Abraham and to Isaac, I will give to you and to your posterity." Days later, Jacob moved further south, and with his family reached the town of Bethlehem, then called Ramah, later Ephrata. In June that year 3426, when they found themselves encamped in this town, with Rachel eight months pregnant, labour pains came upon her, and the delivery became so difficult that not only was the life of the mother in danger, but that of the child as well. The servant midwife who assisted her, told her: "Do not fear; you will still have this child." Rachel, however, amid excruciating birth-pains, before dying, seeing that her son had been born, called him Benoni, meaning 'son of my dolour'; but Jacob called him Benjamin, which means 'son of my right hand', since he considered him as very dear son and the stay of his old age. After Saint Rachel had died in Bethlehem, Jacob buried her in this same town; and pitched his tent there in a district with excellent grazing, called Cattle Tower. Jacob then dedicated thirty days to mourning the death of his wife.

Chapter XXXI

Jacob anointed king of Bethlehem

The day following the thirty days of mourning for the death of Rachel, and therefore twenty-four days before Jacob's anointing as King of Bethlehem, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Bethlehem's extensive district to the city and told them: "From tomorrow, in seven days' time, a third part of your fields will become a veritable paradise. Following this, I will come back again with My seven Archangels." Sixteen days prior to Jacob's anointing as King of Bethlehem, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven

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her God favoured his household with the services she rendered him, became very fond of her, to the point that he adopted Asseneth as his own daughter. As Dinah's entrance into Putiphar's household followed Joseph's departure for prison, brother and sister had no opportunity of seeing each other; so that they were each unaware of the other's presence in Egypt.

Chapter XXXV

Joseph in prison. The dreams of the Pharaoh's cupbearer and of his baker

1. The Lord God, however, who protected Joseph, took pity on him and caused him to find grace in the eyes of the jail-keeper, who placed in Joseph's hands the custody of the other prisoners; so that all that was done there was by his order. The jail-keeper did not concern himself about anything after confiding all to Joseph, since he saw that Joseph's God was with him and managed everything by means of the young servant. In the year 3433, when Joseph had been in prison for a year, the king of Egypt's chief cupbearer and his head baker, having displeased their master, entered jail. The two coming under the custody of Joseph, who attended them with great charity.

2. One day, when Joseph came in the morning to visit them, seeing them grieved, he asked them: "Why are your faces so downcast today?" And they replied: "We have had a dream and do not know how to interpret it, neither is there anyone here to explain it." And Joseph told them: "Is not the interpretation of dreams a gift of God? Tell me then what you have seen." The chief cupbearer was the first to recount his dream as follows: "I saw a vine before me, with three shoots, and the buds grew little by little, and after flowering, they bore grapes, and the grapes ripened; I had the Pharaoh's cup in my hands, and taking the grapes I squeezed them over the cup and served it to the Pharaoh." To this Joseph replied: "This is the meaning of the dream: the three shoots signify three days still to pass; after them the Pharaoh will remember your ministry and will reinstate you to your previous office, and you will serve him the cup according to your commission, as you used to before. I only ask you to remember me when things go well for you, and have compassion on me, intimating to the Pharaoh that he discharge me from this jail; for they wickedly took me away from the land of the Hebrews, and now here they have put me in jail, likewise being innocent." The head baker, seeing that he had unravelled the dream sagely, said: "I too in a dream saw that I bore on my head three baskets of flour, and that in the uppermost basket there were all kinds of confectionaries that are made by art of baking, and that the birds ate from it." Joseph replied: "This is the interpretation of the dream: the three baskets are three days, following which the Pharaoh will discharge you from the post of head baker and will hang you on a cross, and the birds will tear your flesh to pieces." In effect, three days later, when the Pharaoh celebrated his birthday and had prepared a great banquet for his courtiers, at table he remembered the chief cupbearer and the head baker who were in jail. He ordered them both to be summoned: the former he restored to his employ so that he serve the cup to him; and the other he hanged on a cross. Thereby the interpretations Joseph had made of the two dreams were confirmed as true. In spite of this, the chief cupbearer, returned to prosperity, allowed his dream's interpreter to slip from memory.

Chapter XXXVI

Joseph continues in prison. The Pharaoh's dreams

1. In the year 3435, when Joseph was twenty-one years of age and was in his third year in prison, the Pharaoh had the following dream: It seemed to him that he had halted by the River Nile, from which seven fine-looking, fat cows came up and began to graze on the river bank. Seven other cows came up as well from the river, lean and unsightly such as had never been seen in Egypt, and they devoured the seven fine-looking, fat cows. Afterwards the Pharaoh awoke and, falling asleep again, had another dream: He saw seven fine-looking grained ears of wheat that stemmed from the same stalk; and he saw as well another seven grainless ears of wheat scorched by the wind, which devoured the seven fine-looking grained ears. The Pharaoh, having woken, full of horror and dread, it being now day, ordered all the diviners and magi of his palace to be summoned. And once gathered, he recounted the dreams, without any of them being able to interpret them. The chief cupbearer, however, remembering Joseph, told the king: "I confess my sin;" and he related that when he and the head baker had been in prison, each of them had a dream in which future events were foretold; and that a young Hebrew boy there had interpreted the dreams for them, and things had happened afterwards exactly as he had said.

2. The Pharaoh ordered Joseph to be fetched from jail, and they brought him into his presence. The Pharaoh told him: "I have had some dreams and no one succeeds in explaining them; I have heard that you have much light to interpret them." Joseph replied: "It will not be me, but God who will reply favourably to the Pharaoh." Then the Pharaoh recounted his dream of the fine-looking, fat cows, and the lean and unsightly ones; and the other dream of the fine-looking grained ears of wheat, and the scorched and grainless ones. To this Joseph replied: "The king's two dreams are one and the same thing that God shall do, and has therefore revealed it to the Pharaoh. The seven fat and fine-looking cows and the seven grained and fine-looking ears of wheat, have the same meaning: they are seven years of plenty which are to come. The seven lean and unsightly cows, and the seven scorched and grainless ears of wheat, are seven years of famine which are to come. The two dreams shall be fulfilled in this order: first will come the seven years of great fruitfulness in the whole land of Egypt, which will then be followed by another seven years of such unfruitfulness that it will cause all the previous plenty to be forgotten; because famine will ravage the whole land, and great scarcity will put an end to the great plenty." And he added: "The fact that you have had a second dream with the same meaning as the first, is sign that the events will most certainly happen just as God has decreed, and swiftly."

3. When Joseph had finished interpreting the dreams, he said to the Pharaoh: "Now then, let the king choose a wise and intelligent subject, and place him as governor over the land of Egypt; who, in turn, shall establish superintendents in each region to store in the palace and city granaries, at the Pharaoh's disposition, the fifth part of the harvest of

the land of Egypt obtained in the years of plenty; so that there be reserves of victuals for the seven years of famine which are to afflict Egypt, and thus during them there be no scarcity in this land."

Chapter XXXVII

Joseph named Viceroy of Egypt

1. And as Joseph's wise counsel was pleasing to the Pharaoh and all his ministers, the king said: "Can we by any chance find a subject such as him, so full of the spirit of his God?" And then the Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Considering that your God has shown you all that you have just spoken, shall I by chance find anyone else wiser and equal to you? You then shall have the government of my household, and at the command of your voice the whole people shall obey; only I on the royal throne shall hold precedence over you." And the Pharaoh added to Joseph: "I hereby constitute you Viceroy over the whole land of Egypt." And then he took the ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's, and he clothed him in the finest linen, and placed a golden chain about his neck. Next he made him mount the second of his chariots, and one of the king's heralds went ahead shouting for all to bend the knee before Joseph, and know that he was governor of the whole land of Egypt. And the king said as well to Joseph: "I am Pharaoh; without your command no one will move hand or foot in the whole land of Egypt." And he changed Joseph's name, calling him in the Egyptian language 'Saviour of the world'. It was in the year 3435 when Joseph, twenty-one years of age, was named Viceroy of Egypt.

2. When Joseph was named viceroy of Egypt, Jacob had still five years to reign in Bethlehem and its extensive district. This prestigious reign of Jacob was generally known to the peoples of other lands. And although Joseph of course knew that his father reigned in Bethlehem, he did not wish the news of the high post he occupied in Egypt to reach him; since if his father and mother, whom he believed chiefly responsible for selling him as a slave, had dispensed with him, it was a sign that his person held no importance for them; especially when Jacob, being a powerful king, had not even bothered to search for him and bring him back. All these thoughts churned about in Joseph's head with greater or lesser intensity according to circumstances, given his erroneous belief that Jacob and Rachel had been the promoters of his sale to the Ishmaelites. Nevertheless, Joseph bore no resentment towards his parents nor towards his brothers on account of the outrage committed against him. Joseph, first amid his misfortunes, then in his elevation to glory, left everything in God's hands, for Him to act according to His plans.

Chapter XXXVIII

The years of fruitfulness and the years of scarcity

1. So the years of fruitfulness came, from 3436 to 3442 inclusive. And when the harvest was brought in, the wheat was stored in the granaries of Egypt; and the quantity was such that it equalled the sands of the sea, and exceeded all measure.

2. Following the seven years of plenty began the seven years of scarcity also foretold by Joseph, which were from 3443 to 3449 inclusive. Outside the land of Egypt famine afflicted all lands, they lacking any means of their own to mitigate it. Nevertheless, in Egypt, when the people began to feel the famine and turned to the Pharaoh asking for provisions, he said to them: "Go to Joseph, and do whatever he tells you." And Joseph opened all the granaries and began to sell the wheat to the Egyptians. And the neighbouring provinces came to Egypt to buy victuals and relieve the hardship caused by the famine.

Chapter XXXIX

Joseph's brothers resort to Egypt

1. In the year 3443, when the seven years of scarcity foretold by Joseph began, as the land of Canaan was also victim of famine, Jacob, who had ended his reign in Bethlehem and was now to be found in Sichem together with his eleven sons, said to them: "Why do you not concern yourselves with this dire need? I have heard that wheat is being sold in Egypt. Go down there, then, and buy whatever is necessary so that we may live and not perish in this famine, and not only ourselves, but the inhabitants of the whole district as well." Jacob ordered ten of his sons to go down and buy wheat in Egypt; for, as he loved Benjamin very dearly, he kept him with him, saying: "Lest some misfortune occur to the boy along the way."

2. Days later the ten brothers went down into the land of Egypt, entering with other people who were also on their way to buy. And as only Joseph, who was prince of that land, could license the sale of wheat to the nations, Jacob's ten sons had to present themselves before Joseph to request permission. Once before him, they revered him. On seeing them, Joseph recognized them at once, and hiding his emotion did not want to make himself known, remembering the dreams he had before when he was in Canaan, because of which he had been sold; and as well because now their partial fulfilment was plain to see, his brothers having resorted to him in their need and revered him owing to his high rank in Egypt. Joseph, however, not allowing himself to be overcome by emotion, took the necessary precautions, since he believed they were spies; and furthermore, that they had been sent on this mission by his own father Jacob. Therefore Joseph treated his brothers as suspicious persons, subjecting them to strict questioning, saying to them: "Where have you come from?" The brothers replied: "We have come from the Land of Canaan to buy the provisions we need." Joseph, however, told them: "You are spies who have come to reconnoitre the undefended districts of the land." They told him: "That is not so, sir, rather your servants have come to buy provisions. We are all sons of one father; we have come in peace; neither do your servants scheme any evil." Joseph answered them: "Not so, quite the contrary, you have come to spy out the undefended districts of this country." But they said: "We are your servants, twelve brothers, sons of the same father, in the Land of Canaan; the youngest stayed behind with our father; another no longer exists." Joseph said: "That convinces me of what I said: you are spies; for sure I shall find out if you are telling the truth. By the life of the Pharaoh, you shall not leave here till your youngest brother appears. Send back

one of you to bring him here; and in the meantime you will remain in custody until it is proven if what you have said is true; since if it is not, by the life of the Pharaoh, then you are indeed spies."

3. Following this, he put his brothers in prison for three days. But on the third day, taking them out, he said: "Do what I tell you, and you will keep your lives, because I fear God. If you are men of peace, let one of your brothers stay in custody; and the rest go home and take with you the wheat you have bought; and bring me back your youngest brother so that I can be assured of your words and you be not condemned to death." And everything was done as Joseph said. And the brothers conversed among themselves and said: "We are suffering this deservedly because we sinned against our brother when we saw him in anguish of soul ask us for compassion, and we did not listen to him; and as well, because we sinned against our father by saying calumniously of him that he had ordered the sale of our brother, and by causing him great sorrow when we told him that a wild animal had devoured him, to hide our wicked deeds. That is why this misfortune has come upon us." And one of them, Ruben, said: "Look, did not I tell you then: 'do not commit this crime against the boy; and you took no notice? See how God requires his blood of us.'" And they did not know that Joseph understood them; since in order not to make himself known, he spoke with them through an interpreter as though he did not know their language. However, when Joseph heard his brothers' remarks in his presence, they believing he did not understand Hebrew, he realized that his father had not taken any part in his sale. Moreover, Joseph saw that his brothers acknowledged the evil they had done both to him and to their father. Joseph then, unable to contain his emotions, retired for a while, and wept freely.

4. Afterwards, having returned, Joseph spoke to them again. And he had Simeon seized and bound in their presence. Privately, however, he ordered his ministers to fill their donkey-bags with wheat and place each one's money inside them; and moreover give them supplies for the road. Joseph's nine brothers, loading their wheat-sacks onto their donkeys, departed. That same year 3443, Jacob's nine sons reached their father's home in Sichem in the Land of Canaan, and gave him all the details of their stay in Egypt. One of them, opening a sack, saw the money inside; so that he said to his brothers: "They have given me back the money, look, here it is in the sack!" And the others could also see the same for themselves in the other sacks. Therefore, surprised and worried, they said one to another: "What is this that God has done with us?" However, the money that Joseph's brothers found in their sacks had come out of Joseph's own pocket; since what they had brought for the purchase had entered the Pharaoh's treasury. Jacob, on hearing that Simeon had stayed behind in custody and that in order for him to be freed the Egyptian governor required Benjamin's presence, said bitterly: "You shall leave me without children: for Joseph no longer exists; Simeon is in jail, and you want to take Benjamin from me as well. All these woes have come upon me." Ruben replied: "Give him to me, and I will return him to you." But Jacob answered: "My son will not go with you. You know that my wife Rachel bore me two sons. The first died devoured by a wild animal; and this one alone is left to me. If some tragedy occurs to him in the land where you are going, you will send me down to the grave in my old age with yet greater sorrow."

Chapter XL

Jacob's sons' second journey into Egypt

1. At the start of the year 3444, the second of the famine that cruelly scourged the land, as the provisions brought up from Egypt had by then been consumed, Jacob told his sons: "Go back and purchase supplies." Ruben replied: "The lord who rules there told us categorically: 'I will not receive you if you do not bring your youngest brother back with you.'" And at Jacob's tenacious refusal to allow them to take Benjamin, Ruben told his father: "Let me take the boy, so that we can be on our way and not die of hunger either you or our children. I will answer for the boy. You can claim him from my hand; and if I do not bring him back again, before you I will always be guilty." So Jacob agreed to them taking his son Benjamin in view of the pledge they had given to the governor of the land of Egypt. Moreover, he told his sons to take double the money to buy the provisions, together with the amount they had found in the sacks in order to give it back, since it could have been put in by mistake; and besides he gave them some gifts for the governor of the land of Egypt. Jacob took leave of them saying: "May my Almighty God protect you and bring you back to me together with your brother whom the governor has in his keeping, and Benjamin here; and I in the meantime shall live deprived of my children."

2. So taking Benjamin with them, together with the money and the gifts, the ten went down into Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph. When he saw them, and Benjamin with them, inwardly he felt so delighted that, though he did not receive them at that moment, he gave this order to his majordomo: "Take these men into my house, kill animals and prepare them a meal, because at midday they must dine with me." The majordomo did all that he was told. But when the brothers found themselves in Joseph's home, full of anxiety they believed that he had taken them for thieves of the money they had discovered in their sacks, and that therefore they had been conducted there to be put into custody. Therefore, approaching the majordomo of the household, they reported how they had come upon the money in the sacks and that they had it with them to give back. But he, refusing the money, told them to be at peace, that all had been the work of their God, and he attended them well. Then he fetched Simeon from jail for them.

3. At noon, Joseph presented himself before his brothers; and once they had revered him with respect, they offered him the gifts they had brought. Joseph, however, though he continued to feel doubts about their intentions, after receiving them courteously and pleasantly, asked them: "Is your aged father, of whom you spoke to me, well, then? Does he still live?" And they replied: "Our father enjoys good health; he still lives." And once again they revered their brother Joseph. Then he, raising his eyes, saw Benjamin, his brother by both parents, and said: "Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?" And afterwards said: "God have mercy on you, my son, and bless you." And he hastily withdrew, for his emotions were enkindled at the sight of his brother, and his tears welled up, so that going to his room he broke out weeping. Joseph, coming out again after washing his face that they might not see he had been

weeping, ordered the table to be laid for dinner; and his brothers sat at table before him, in order according to age. And they all ate their fill and drank in good spirits among themselves.

4. However, before Jacob's eleven sons departed from Joseph's palace, the latter told the majordomo of his household: "Fill their donkey-bags with wheat, as much as they can hold, and put each one's money in the top of the bag." That is, Joseph solely ordered the price of the wheat to be put into each of their bags. Then he delivered Simeon over to them, and retained Benjamin at his side, though not in the role of prisoner but with full liberty in his home until Jacob should come. Therefore his younger brother stayed with Joseph by his own choice, at Joseph's request, because of the great liking he had taken to him as son of his own mother. Although Joseph told his brothers that nothing would happen to his father if they returned without Benjamin, their concern was such that Ruben said to his brother Joseph: "I implore you, my lord, to allow your servant to speak and not to be annoyed with your slave, since after the Pharaoh you are the chief authority. My lord asked the first time he saw your servants: 'Do you still have a father, and do you have any other brothers?' And we answered: 'We have an aged father and a younger brother born to him in his old age; his brother by the same mother is dead, and he is the only son left of his mother, so that his father loves him tenderly.'" And forthwith Ruben explained that if they had brought Benjamin, it was at Joseph's request; but that his elderly father had not wanted to be separated from his youngest son for fear that something might befall him, and at last had ceded trusting that they would return him alive. And Ruben went on: "If my father should find that the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring our elderly father with sorrow down to the grave. Let me be your slave and surety for him, since I gave my word to bring my brother back saying to my father: 'If I should not bring him back, I will always be guilty of that offence against my father'. Therefore I, your servant, will stay as your slave, and I will serve my lord in place of the boy, with the object that he return with his brothers. For I cannot return to my father without the boy, so as not to witness the extreme affliction that must put an end to him."

Chapter XLI

Joseph makes himself known to his brothers. Jacob's sons' third journey to Egypt

1. Joseph, unable to contain his emotions further, ordered all the servants to leave so that no outsider witness the mutual recognition between himself and his brothers. He then burst out weeping with great cries that the Egyptians and the Pharaoh's whole family heard. Straightaway he told his brothers: "I am Joseph." His brothers could not answer him because of their great fear and dread. Joseph, however, said gently to them: "Come up to me." And having come, he told them: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold to be taken down into Egypt. Fear not, because although you did wrong to sell me, for the grievous offence to God and to me, being innocent, God permitted your hateful action so that I arrive here ahead of you, since He draws good out of evil. Because the scarcity began two years ago in the country, and there are still five years to go without sowing or harvest. Thus the Lord sent me beforehand, in order for you to subsist on the earth and have nourishment to sustain life. I am viceroy, not by your wish, but by God's, who has ordained that I be like a father to the Pharaoh, and lord of all his household, and prince in the whole land of Egypt. Make haste and return to my father and tell him: your son Joseph sends to tell you: 'God has made me lord of the whole land of Egypt: come to me, do not delay; you will live in the land of Gesen, and you will be close to me together with your sons, your sheep and other livestock and all you have. And there I will nourish you, because there are still five years of famine, so that you and your family and all you have, may not perish.' Declare to my father all my glory and all you have seen in Egypt. Make haste and bring him to me." The land of Gesen, the most fertile district in all Egypt, Joseph held as his own. Next, weeping, Joseph embraced Benjamin, and he, weeping too, embraced Joseph. And then Joseph, weeping, kissed all of his brothers. When this took place, Joseph was thirty years of age.

2. The Pharaoh and all the court, having been informed of the event, rejoiced exceedingly, and the Pharaoh gave orders to Joseph to have his father come together with all his family and subjects, and assign them wagons from the land for the transport, and the provisions necessary for the journey.

3. That same year 3444, following their second meeting with Joseph, his brothers returned home to Jacob in Sichem, and related to their father all that had occurred in Egypt, and told him: "Your son Joseph is alive; he is the lord who rules in the whole land of Egypt." Hearing this, Jacob, like someone waking from deep sleep, could not believe them. Jacob's sons sincerely asked forgiveness for the wrongs they had done in the past, and their father, after pardoning them, overcome with inexpressible joy, said: "If my son Joseph still lives, I will go and see him before I die!" And without further delay Jacob sent his ten sons to inform Joseph of his most eager desire to go down into Egypt, if that were pleasing to God. Jacob, whilst his ten sons went back to Egypt, offered a sacrifice of bread and wine to God in Oath well. Subsequently Most Holy Ananias appeared in the same place, and among other things ordered him to go down into Egypt, telling him: "Israel, Israel." And he replied: "Here You have me." God told him: "I am the mighty God of your father and your grandfather, do not fear. Go down into Egypt, because there I will make you head of a great nation. I will go down there with you, and I will bring you back once you are dead. Joseph will close your eyes when you die." Many days later, Jacob's ten sons returned from Egypt with wagons and much else besides, sent by Joseph for the journey.

Chapter XLII

Jacob, together with his children, goes to live in Egypt

1. Within the year 3444, when he was one hundred years of age, Jacob left Sichem for Egypt, visiting the towns of Bethel, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron and Beersheba. Those who left Sichem with Jacob and those who joined him later in the other five towns, together came to a total of seven hundred souls, who are those who entered Egypt, including Jacob. Therefore, together with Jacob, from Sichem departed: ten sons, ten daughters-in-law, and forty grandsons and granddaughters, making a total of sixty-one members of the family, to whom must be added descendants of Madian

and Noelia, descendants of Jecsan and Samaria, menservants and maidservants, and as well converted Canaanians. Moreover, along the way, more joined the caravan: converts from Bethel, converts from Jerusalem, converts from Bethlehem, converts from Hebron and converts from Beersheba. All of them came to a total of seven hundred souls: Jacob and six hundred and ninety-nine children: some according to the flesh and others according to the Faith. They took numerous cattle and other animals. In the town of Beersheba they halted at the well that Abraham had opened, also called 'Oath Well' from the alliance the Patriarch had made there with the Abimelech of the Philistines. Jacob offered a sacrifice of bread and wine there, and afterwards, with all taking part, he held a banquet, for which they killed animals to eat. Before leaving, Most Holy Malachias appeared to Jacob and told him among other things: "I will go before you. Fear not." And following these words, He blessed everyone and disappeared. Later, Jacob and his numerous followers resumed their journey.

2. That same year 3444, when Jacob was still one hundred years of age, he made his entrance into Egypt. Jacob sent Ruben on ahead of him to advise Joseph, for him to come out with Benjamin to meet him in the land of Gesen. Following Jacob's arrival there, Joseph mounted his chariot and, accompanied by Benjamin, went out to meet his father there. When Joseph saw his father, weeping he embraced him. Jacob too wept, embracing Joseph and Benjamin. And Jacob said to Joseph: "Now I shall die happy because I have seen your countenance, and I depart leaving you alive." Joseph afterwards told his father: "I am going to inform the Pharaoh and will tell him: 'My father, my brothers, many others of my family, as well as numerous followers of my father's God, have come to me. Many of them are shepherds and their business is cattle-breeding; they have driven their flocks and herds down with them, and all they could acquire.' Therefore, when he shall call you and ask you: 'What is your trade?' You are to reply: 'We, your servants, are chiefly pastors from our childhood up till the present, as our fathers were before.' You will say this so that he feel great joy at your stay in this land of Gesen, since the Egyptians have a high regard indeed for all pastors of sheep."

3. Joseph, accompanied by his eleven brothers, went to report to the Pharaoh, telling him: "My father, my brothers and many others, with their sheep and cattle and all they possess, have come from the Land of Canaan, and have halted in the land of Gesen." At the same time he presented his eleven brothers, and the Pharaoh asked them: "What is your trade?" And they replied: "We are shepherds, the same as our forebears. We have come to live in your land, because in the Land of Canaan there is insufficient pasture for your servants' cattle; the famine is worsening, and we request you to permit your servants to stay in the land of Gesen." The Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Your father and your brothers have come to you. You have the land of Egypt at your disposal; give them the best spot to live in, and may they be welcome to the land of Gesen. And if you know able subjects among them, set them as foremen over my cattle."

4. Following this, Joseph brought his father into the palace, and the Pharaoh received Jacob with the honours of a king. Jacob greeted him, desiring him every manner of good fortune, and the Pharaoh asked him: "How many are the days of your life?" Jacob replied: "The days of my pilgrimage in this world are one hundred years, few and arduous; I have not yet reached the age to which my father and my grandfather lived." Joseph, according to agreement with the Pharaoh, gave his father and brothers the land of Gesen in possession, the most fertile in Egypt, where later the Pharaoh ordered the city of Ramases to be built, and there the Israelites dwelt until their departure from Egypt. Joseph provided his father, brothers and other relations and followers with sufficient provisions for their sustenance.

5. During the almost five years of scarcity that were still to come in Egypt and outside this land, Joseph gave proofs of possessing great gifts of charitable and just administration. People turned to him not only from all over Egypt, but also from Canaan and other parts of the Earth. As the purchasers lacked money to acquire provisions, Joseph supplied them first in exchange for animals. However, when the purchasers could no longer offer even animals in exchange for provisions, they offered themselves and their lands for the Pharaoh's service; so that they and their lands came under the Pharaoh's dominion. Joseph then said to those peoples: "As you see, the Pharaoh is lord of yourselves and your land; take seed then, and sow your fields so that you can grow crops; you will give the king the fifth part of them; and the other four parts I leave to you for seed and for the sustenance of your families and children." And the people of those lands, who, in spite of the barrenness of the fields, saw their seed miraculously fructify, showed Joseph their gratitude saying: "Our welfare is in your hands. Our only desire is to live beneath your kindly gaze, as lord of us all that you are, and in this way we shall gladly serve the Pharaoh."

6. In the year 3448, when Jacob had been in Egypt for four years, his daughter Dinah appeared before her brother Joseph for the first time; and Joseph brought her to their father and brothers. Eight years after Jacob's arrival in Egypt, Benjamin, who was twenty-six years of age, married Dinah, his sister by his father, who was thirty-nine years of age. This marriage pleased Jacob immensely.

Chapter XLIII

Joseph's marriage to Asseneth. Manasses and Ephraim are born

In the year 3458, fourteen years after Patriarch Jacob's arrival in Egypt, when Joseph was forty-four years of age, he married his niece Asseneth, thirty-two years of age, officially Putiphar's daughter by adoption, but in reality daughter of Dinah and Sicheim. Putiphar, the Pharaoh's chancellor and prince of Egypt when he bought Joseph as a slave, afterwards, due to his impotence, became priest of the pagan Egyptian worship in Heliopolis. In the year 3458, nine months following their marriage, when Joseph was still forty-four years of age, his wife Asseneth bore him his first son, Manasses. And when Joseph was forty-five years of age, Asseneth bore him his son Ephraim.

Chapter XLIV

Patriarch Jacob's testament

1 Patriarch Jacob, called as well Israel, from his arrival and establishment in Egypt dwelt in the land of Gesen which had been given to him in possession. He lived a further seventeen years.

2nd Part: Genesis – Book X: Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph

2. Some days prior to Jacob's death, the envious Dan privately proposed to his father that, at the hour of his testament, he give him the blessing of the firstborn, so that the priesthood, patriarchate and throne all fall to him, as well as the possession of the Triple Benediction. In this way, in imitation of Lucifer, Dan proposed that the Saviour of the world be born from his posterity. Jacob refused this iniquitous proposal with strength received from God. Dan, threatening his father, desired his death, telling him: "Die then, since I cannot receive anything from you." And Jacob replied: "Be accursed for rising up against your father." And Dan, who was already accursed before God, became so now before his father. Dan, however, throwing himself at his father's feet, hypocritically asked his forgiveness, and Jacob forgave him believing that he acted in good faith; though in God's eyes he remained accursed. All the privileges of the primogeniture to which Dan ambitiously aspired would have pertained to Ruben had he not sinned with Bala. Those privileges passed on to Joseph, figure of Christ.

3. In the year 3461, when Jacob was one hundred and seventeen years of age, as the hour of his death was approaching, he called his sons telling them: "Gather so that I may announce to you what shall come to pass in future times. Gather and listen, sons of Jacob, listen to Israel, your father." With the exception of Joseph, who was to arrive a while later since he was occupied with business matters in the Pharaoh's palace, Jacob's other sons gathered round their father's deathbed. Forthwith the Patriarch drew up his will, with dispositions and announcements corresponding to each of his sons; and for the purpose he named and blessed them according to their order of birth: "Ruben, my firstborn, you, who are the eldest of your brothers, were the beginning of my griefs. You were to have been the first in gifts and the greatest in authority. However, you will not have the primacy, you poured yourself out like water, do not grow, because you went up to your father's bed and profaned his nuptial couch." Ruben is the beginning of Jacob's griefs since, as firstborn, he had the duty to protect Joseph from his other brothers, and nonetheless was their accomplice in part; and Joseph's disappearance was the beginning of his father's griefs. Later Ruben added another great grief to his father, which was his sin with Bala, Jacob's concubine wife. "Dan will be judge of his people in the same way as any other tribe of Israel. Dan will be a serpent in the roadway, a cerastes, or viper, along the track, that strikes the hooves of the horse to make the rider fall backwards. O Lord, I shall hope for salvation in the Saviour, Your Envoy." From the tribe of Dan was born Antichrist-in-person, serpent incarnate, who fights against the true Church, represented in the horse, with the intention of ousting Christ who is the rider; and, as well, from Dan's posterity was born Antimary, mother of Antichrist. Jacob, therefore, after pronouncing these words, with deep dismay, exclaimed in the name of God's People: "O Lord, I shall hope for salvation in the Saviour, Your Envoy," since Jacob had a vision in anticipation of Antichrist fighting against Holy Church. "Nephtali will be as a deer at large, speaking with wonderful eloquence." In Galilee, which Nephtali's descendants were to occupy, Christ, as God's Deer, made known His Divine Word, and considered that region as His own homeland following the criminal rejection at Nazareth and given the persecution He had undergone in Jerusalem. "Simeon and Levi, brothers in crime, instruments of wicked violence. May God not allow that my people imitate their bad example, nor obtain their glory by those inhuman means. Since with savagery they cut men's throats, and with wicked vengeance destroyed a household. Cursed be their fury because obstinate and violent, and cursed be their resentment because cruel. Therefore I will separate them in Jacob and I will scatter them in Israel." Simeon and Levi were those who in wicked vengeance killed Sicheim, Dinah's ravisher, and the other men of Hemor's house, and induced their other brothers to plunder their home. Therefore the tribe of Simeon received only a small portion in the midst of Judah's territory, subsequently becoming absorbed by the latter; and the tribe of Levi received no specified portion, instead its descendants were distributed among all the tribes. Moreover, Simeon's and Levi's obstinate fury would subsequently be seen profoundly reflected in the scribes and doctors of the Law born from the tribe of Simeon; and in the priests and levites born from the tribe of Levi, since the former and the latter both obstinately persecuted Christ. "O Judah! Your brothers will praise you, for you will place a yoke upon your enemies. The sons of your father will prostrate before you. You, Judah, my son, will be like a lion's whelp which pursues the prey. The sceptre shall not be taken from Judah, nor the captaincy from his descendants, until the One comes who is to be Sent: the Messiah, who will be the expectation of the nations." The tribe of Judah were those who possessed the primacy and the might in the conquests and great victories; from that tribe came great kings and Caudillos who consolidated their thrones with great might. The sceptre of David's royal house continued in Judah's descendants until the Messiah or Envoy came, in Whom, as King of kings, the inheritance of the throne of Israel culminates. "Gad, armed to the teeth, will fight in the vanguard of Israel; and then he himself will make ready to turn back." The tribe of Gad marched at the front of the other tribes to put them in possession of the Promised Land; and after the conquest, turned back well armed to the territory that Moses had assigned them on the other side of the Jordan, where their wives were. "Asser: his bread will be succulent and will delight kings." The territory apportioned to the tribe of Asser was of great fertility and richness of harvests and fruits. Within the territory of this tribe Nazareth was situated, in whose proximity the Saviour's Mother would be born, and He is the Divine Bread, succulent and delightful to souls. "Issachar will be like a sturdy donkey for work, he will remain within his borders. He considered that repose, or calm, was a good thing, and that his terrain is excellent; and has set his shoulder to labour, and submitted to paying tributes." Within the territory from the tribe of Issachar Mount Carmel was situated, where the Most Holy Virgin Mary founded Her predilect Order, whose Father Founder is the Holy Prophet Elias. The life of its members was passed in solitude, in spiritual calm, combining work and prayer; so that by their penance they paid tribute to God for the sins of humanity. "Zabulon will dwell by the seacoast, where the ships come to shore, extending as far as Sidon." Zabulon's territory extended from the Mediterranean to the Sea of Galilee. In this sea, called as well Lake of Genesareth, Christ chose Peter, a fisherman, to direct the Barque of the Church. "Joseph, son who grows in virtue, rank and authority, handsome in appearance. He was the admiration of the damsels, who caused him sorrow and brought him contentions. His brothers, mortally envious, took up arrows against him; however, he did not use his bow in his own defence, but put all his confidence in God's strength. And the chains were loosened from his arms and hands by the hand of Jacob's Almighty God, from whence

2nd Part: Genesis – Book X: Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph

he came forth to be Israel's pastor and foundation stone." Thus the brothers, at Jacob's death, would all be under Joseph's patriarchal, priestly and monarchical authority. "Benjamin, rapacious wolf, who at morn devours the prey and at eve divides the spoils." The tribe of Benjamin stood out for warlike ferocity, fighting against the other tribes, abducting damsels and committing other outrages.

4. This testament was given them by their father, and he blessed each of them with special blessings. Jacob finally gave his eleven sons present there this command: "I shall be gathered up to my own; bury me with my parents in the Land of Canaan, in Hebron, facing Mambre, in the double cave of Machpela which Abraham bought for his sepulchre. Abraham and his wife Sarah, Isaac and his wife Rebecca, and my wife Lia as well, are buried there."

Chapter XLV

Jacob, shortly before dying, gives Joseph the blessing of the firstborn. Patriarch Jacob's death and burial. The thirteen tribes of Israel

1. While Jacob, on his deathbed, made known his last will to each of his sons, various servants had gone over to where Joseph was to inform him of his father's condition. At the news, Joseph, together with his sons Manasses and Ephraim, made his way to the land of Gesen, where Jacob resided. When Joseph arrived, his father had already drawn up his will in presence of the other brothers; accordingly, they said to their aged father: "Look, here comes your son Joseph to see you." And Jacob, taking heart, sat up on the bed. And they left their father's room, waiting in the next; so that those eleven sons of Jacob were not present at what happened then between their father and Joseph, and Joseph's sons Manasses and Ephraim; neither were the eleven at their father's side at the moment he died.

2. Once Joseph together with his sons Manasses and Ephraim found themselves alone with Jacob, the latter said to Joseph: "Almighty God appeared to me at Bethel, town of the Land of Canaan, and blessing me said: 'I will increase and multiply your descendants, and I will make you Caudillo of a great host of peoples; and I will give this land to you and to your descendants in everlasting possession'. Therefore, your first two sons I take as sons of mine: that is, Ephraim and Manasses will be considered as much my sons as the rest, and with the same rights. But the others you engender after them, shall be yours alone, and the lands they shall possess will bear the name of their other two brothers."

3. After pronouncing these words, Jacob, called also Israel, who because of his great age no longer saw clearly, solely dimly perceiving the two children who were with Joseph, asked the latter: "Are these your two children?" And Joseph answered him: "They are my sons whom the Lord has given me." And Jacob said to him: "Bring them up to me to bless them." And having brought them close, Jacob, embracing and kissing them, told his son: "Besides having the joy of seeing you again after having given you up for dead so many years, God has granted me the favour of allowing me to live to see your descendants as well." Joseph, having withdrawn his sons from his father's lap, revered him profoundly, bowing to the ground. Then Joseph seated Ephraim on Jacob's left knee, and Manasses on the right. Jacob, stretching out his right hand, placed it upon the younger brother Ephraim's head and his left hand upon the elder brother Manasses', crossing his arms intentionally. And Jacob blessed Joseph's sons saying: "May the God in whose presence my father Isaac and my grandfather Abraham lived, the God who sustains me from my youth until today, may the Angel — referring to the Soul of Christ — who has delivered me from all evils, bless these children, and let them be called my children as well, for I adopt them as sons, and they will also be called sons of Abraham and Isaac, and may they multiply more and more upon the earth." Joseph, seeing that his father had placed his right hand upon Ephraim's head, felt this deeply; so that taking his father's hand, he tried to raise it from Ephraim's head and place it on Manasses', telling him: "The hands are not right, father, because this one is the firstborn and not the other; put your right hand then upon his head." Jacob, however, refusing, said: "I know, my son, I know. This one will surely be father of peoples and will multiply; but his younger brother will be greater than him, and his descendants more numerous." Accordingly, blessing them, he said: "In you, Joseph, my Name of Israel will be blessed, when my descendants say: May God bless you as he did Ephraim and Manasses, when Jacob blessed them." And he set Ephraim before Manasses. Forthwith, Joseph withdrew his two sons from his father's lap.

4. Next, Jacob said to Joseph: "You see now that I am going to die. God will be with you and will restore you to the land of your fathers. I give you in betterment over your brothers that part I conquered from the Amorrhites by my sword and my bow." After these words, Jacob, seeing that he was now dying, said to his son Joseph: "If you truly love me, swear to me in all truth that you will not give me burial in Egypt, but that I will rest with my father and my grandfather; and that, taking me away from this land you will lay me in the sepulchre of my forebears." Joseph replied to him: "I will do what you have commanded." Jacob said: "Swear it to me then." And Joseph solemnly swore it. Then Jacob gave him the Blessing of the Primogeniture, which consisted of two blessings; first Jacob gave a blessing to Joseph saying: "O my son! The God of your father will be your Helper, and the Almighty will fill you with blessings; since from the heights of Heaven He will bless all there is here below, giving you an abundance of goods and multiplying your descendants with blessings of breasts and of wombs." By this first priestly blessing, Jacob transmitted the custody of the Sacrament of the Triple Benediction to Joseph, which became incrustated in the scrotal zone of his son, who was sanctified on receiving Perfect Justice or the Indwelling in his soul of Sanctifying Grace, which is the Holy Spirit, and a character similar to that of Baptism. At once Jacob then blessed Joseph a second time saying: "The blessings which your father gives you bear as well the vigour and the fortitude of the blessings of his father and grandfather: Until the Desired of the eternal hills come, let them be fulfilled upon the head of Joseph and upon the crown of the head of the Nazarene among his brethren." By this second blessing and at the moment he pronounced these words, Jacob conferred upon his son Joseph the eternal Priesthood according to the Order of Melchisedech, though solely the Diaconate and the Presbyterate; consequently, following Joseph's death, it was then no longer possible to continue this true priesthood, which was once again re-established in its fullness and maximum perfection by Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He instituted it on the eve of His Passion.

5. Immediately following Joseph's reception of the blessing of the firstborn, Patriarch Saint Jacob drew up his feet onto the bed and died, at the age of one hundred and seventeen years, in the year 3461. Joseph, who was present with Ephraim and Manasses, closed his dead father's eyes and fell upon his countenance weeping and kissing him. Then he called his brothers who were outside the room to come in to where their dead father lay. And Joseph also ordered the embalmers to embalm Jacob's body. Counting the time for the embalming, the funeral and other ceremonies of the mourning, Joseph observed seventy days of mourning. All Egypt wept the death of Joseph's father. After the mourning was over, Joseph told one of the Pharaoh's chief relatives: "I beseech you to inform the Pharaoh that my father on dying made me swear, saying: 'I am going to die; I want you to bury my body in the sepulchre I have in the Land of Canaan. Therefore, tell the Pharaoh that I will go and bury my father, and then return.'" And the Pharaoh sent Joseph Canaan. 'Therefore, tell the Pharaoh that I will go and bury my father, and then return.'" Following Jacob's death, Joseph was constituted Patriarch of the People of God. From Patriarch Saint Jacob's sons there are four lines which reach down to Christ: Levi, Judah, Joseph and Benjamin. The line of Joseph reached Christ through Saint Susanna, Most Holy Joachim's mother.

6. Patriarch Joseph set out on the journey to Canaan bearing the body of his father for burial in Hebron. He was accompanied by the principal lords of the Pharaoh's palace and by the princes of the land of Egypt, likewise by his eleven brothers and other members of his family, and as well by numerous followers of the deceased Holy Patriarch. In the entourage went wagons and horsemen, so that a great company was formed. And in this fashion, once they entered Canaan, passing through Beersheba, they arrived at Hebron, where they employed seven days in celebrating the obsequies, with great and bitter weeping. The inhabitants of the Land of Canaan, having seen this, said: "Great mourning is this for the Egyptians." And as consequence, that spot was called 'Egyptians' Lament'. Thus Jacob's sons did what he had commended to them, and buried their father in the double cave of Machpela that Abraham had bought facing Mambre. And once he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and the whole company.

7. Following Jacob's death and burial, Joseph's brothers, full of foreboding, said to one other: "Who knows whether Joseph, remembering the injury he received from us, will not bear ill will towards us and return us all the evil we did to him?" And so they sent to tell Joseph: "Your father, before dying, charged us to say these words to you in his name: 'I ask you to forget your brothers' wickedness, and their sin, and the ill-will they showed towards you.' We too ask you to forgive this wickedness of us servants of the God of your father." Jacob had made this request to Joseph and the recommendation to his sons on his deathbed after drawing up his will in the presence of the eleven sons. When Joseph heard the words, he broke out weeping. Afterwards his brothers came up to him, and adoring him prostrate on the ground, said: "We are your slaves, we are entirely yours." He responded to them: "You have nothing to fear. You did me an injury, but God turned it to good, in order to raise me up, as at the present you see, and to save many peoples. Do not fear then, I will maintain you and your children." And he consoled them and spoke with soft and loving accents.

8. Though all Jacob's other sons submitted to Joseph on account of his Patriarchal and Priestly authority, nevertheless Dan did so looking more to material than to spiritual advantage. Let us not forget that Dan had incited his other brothers to kill Joseph when the latter was a boy. Dan always stood out for his envy, ambition and insubordination; and from boyhood onwards lived ever devoured by the grasping desire of usurping the rights of the firstborn; to the point that in complicity with his mother Bala he had procured that Ruben sin with her and thus be disinherited as firstborn. Dan hated his father ever since Jacob had dismissed Bala following her incest with Ruben, without ever losing hope of inheriting the primogeniture himself. However, as by Jacob's testament Dan's ambition reached a peak of frustration, since his father had granted Joseph the Priesthood, the Patriarchate and possession of the Triple Benediction, Dan's hatred centred now with greater intensity on his brother, the Patriarch of the People of God. Therefore the pardon he asked of Joseph was an act of calculated hypocrisy. Moreover, Dan had heard in his father's testament that the Messiah Saviour of the world would descend from the tribe of Judah, whereby he was stripped of this privilege as well, which he desired chiefly out of arrogance. Dan, following his father's death, lived secretly consecrated to Satan's service, and died in the most abject impenitence, damning himself eternally. In the Apocalypse, those from the tribe of Dan are not among those marked out as elect.

9. Here are the thirteen tribes of Israel: that of Ruben, that of Dan, that of Nephtali, that of Simeon, that of Levi, that of Judah, that of Gad, that of Asser, that of Issachar, that of Zabulon, that of Benjamin, that of Ephraim and that of Manasses.

Chapter XLVI

Patriarch Joseph, king of Sichem

1. Following Jacob's death, Patriarch Joseph had further offspring by his wife Matriarch Asseneth, to a total of twenty-six children: twenty-four sons and two daughters.

2. In the year 3478, seventeen years after Jacob's death, when Joseph was sixty-four years of age, the Pharaoh of Egypt sent Joseph to the city of Sichem to govern Canaan as his viceroy; without ceasing to be at the same time Viceroy of Egypt and Patriarch of the Israelites. Twenty-four days before Joseph's arrival at the city of Sichem, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Sichem's extensive district to the city and told them: "From tomorrow, in seven days' time, a third part of your fields will become a veritable paradise. Following this, I will come back again with My seven Archangels." Sixteen days prior to Joseph's arrival at the city of Sichem, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Sichem's extensive district to the city and told them: "From tomorrow, in seven days' time, another third part of your fields will become a veritable paradise. Following this, I will come back again with My seven Archangels." Eight days prior to Joseph's

arrival at the city of Sichem, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Sichem's extensive district to the city and told them: "From tomorrow, in seven days' time, the remaining third part of your fields will become a veritable paradise. Following this, I will come back again with My seven Archangels and I will give you a king." The day after, namely the twenty-fifth day of this period, Most Holy Melchisedech, accompanied by the seven Archangels, summoned the elders of Sichem's extensive district to the city, and in the presence of them all and of a great part of the people, before the altar which Jacob had raised up to God, anointed Joseph as king of Sichem and its extensive district, which would later be known by the name of the region of Samaria. Joseph was sixty-four years of age when anointed king, since this event was in the year 3478. In the city of Sichem, before the well that Jacob had opened for Joseph, the latter was acknowledged as king by Abraham's descendants via Jecsan's and his wife Samaria's lineage; and besides, by the descendants of Sichem's inhabitants in Jacob's time; as also by a hundred and forty-four coloured Egyptians of both sexes. All of them, besides acknowledging him as king, took him as father according to the Faith, since they all adored Joseph's God, and therefore the one true God. From an intermarriage with one of the coloured Egyptians came later king Balthassar, one of the three Magi kings who went to visit the Child Jesus in Bethlehem. Joseph's priestly, patriarchal and monarchical authority was acknowledged by all the inhabitants of the extensive territory of his kingdom, who were converted and adored the God of Joseph, and therefore the one true God. Patriarch Joseph, at the altar raised up by his father, invoked the Holy Name of God and offered Him sacrifices of bread and wine. Joseph's reign in Sichem and its district lasted fourteen years; when concluded, he returned to Egypt and remained there until his death, exercising his office of Viceroy of Egypt and Patriarch of the Israelites.

Chapter XLVII

Patriarch Joseph's death

Following his return to Egypt in the year 3492, Joseph lived for another thirty-four years. During this period, before he himself died, his eleven brothers and their wives died, as did his wife Matriarch Saint Asseneth. When Joseph lay dying, he spoke to all his brothers in the Faith, telling them: "After my death God will visit you, and He will take you out from this land to the land which He promised under oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And having required of them under oath, he told them as well: "When the time comes and God visits you, convey my bones with you from this place, and bury them in the part of the field which Jacob bought from the sons of Hemor, Sichem's father." Patriarch Saint Joseph died in the year 3526 at the age of one hundred and twelve years; his son Ephraim closed his eyes. After his body had been embalmed, it was deposited in a casket, in Egypt, and held in deep veneration by the Israelites. Joseph's mortal remains were a fount of sanctification for many.

Book XI

The Prophet Pastors of the Israelites

Chapter I

The Prophet Pastors of the Israelites in Egypt

1. From Patriarch Saint Joseph's death up until the Prophet Moses' fortieth year of age, the Israelites in Egypt were shepherded by six Holy Prophet Pastors, sons succeeding to their fathers, according to the following chronological order: *Ephraim*, Joseph's second son; Ephraim, married to his sister Asseneth, was Prophet and Pastor of the People of God for twenty-four years: that is, from sixty-seven until ninety-one years of age, when he died; at ninety years of age he begot his son Beria; Manasses, Joseph's first son. *Manasses*, married to his sister Dinah, was Prophet and Pastor of the People of God for sixteen years: that is, from ninety-two until one hundred and eight years of age, when he died; at twenty-six he begot his son Machir. *Machir*, son of Manasses. Machir, who was married to Rachel, was Prophet and Pastor of the People of God for twenty-three years: that is, from eighty-two until one hundred and five years of age, when he died. *Beria*, Ephraim's son; Beria, who was married to Sarah, was Prophet and Pastor of the People of God for twenty-four years: that is, from forty until sixty-four years of age, when he died; at thirty-one he begot his daughter Sarah. *Sarah*, Beria's daughter; Sarah, who was married to Uriel, was Prophetess and Pastoress of the People of God for twenty years: that is, from thirty-three until fifty-three years of age, when she died; at sixteen she begot her son Raphael. *Raphael*, Sarah's son, who was married to Rebecca, was Prophet and Pastor of the People of God for seventeen years: that is, from thirty-six until fifty-three years of age, when he died, which was in the year 3650.

2. The Prophet Pastors of the Israelites in Egypt, repairing to Joseph's mortal remains in the place where they were kept, were sanctified in the last days of their corresponding pastorships by means of a ray of light issuing from the Triple Benediction deposited there. None of the Prophet Pastors of the Israelites in Egypt offered animal sacrifices to God, rather they offered to God their whole being as figure of the Pastor who was to be immolated: Jesus Christ, Our Lord and God, who gave His life for His sheep. Subsequent to the death of the Holy Prophet and Pastor Raphael, there was a general apostasy among the Israelites during forty years, since no one wished to accept any new Pastor, and there were manifold Pastors who wished to lead the Israelites; so that with Pastors rising up against Pastors, complete chaos reigned.

Chapter II

The Israelites in Egypt multiply. The Israelites ill-treated by the Egyptians

After Joseph died, the children of Israel multiplied like grass, and grew to fill the land of Gesen in Egypt. In those times in Egypt a Pharaoh reigned who had not had any dealings with Joseph. This Pharaoh told his Egyptian vassals: "You clearly see that the people of the children of Israel are very numerous and stronger now than we are. Therefore

We shall oppress them with guile, lest they persist in multiplying further and further and then when some war occurs join our enemies, and after having conquered and robbed us they finally leave this land." In order to carry out his plan the Pharaoh placed skilled foremen over the Israelites, to load them with intolerable burdens in the work of building the cities of Python and Ramases that the Pharaoh had ordered to be built. However, as the Egyptians saw that however much they oppressed the Israelites, the latter multiplied yet further and grew in number, they loathed them yet more and tormented them with insults; so that oppressing them by inhuman toil, they made them pass their lives in bitterness in the hard labours of bricks and mortar, and cultivation. But seeing that his plan of oppressing the Israelites did not yield the required result of preventing the increase of their children, the Pharaoh, in the year 3609, issued the following edict: "From now on, Israelite parents may not beget more than two children, be they boys or girls. Forasmuch, one year from now, every boy or girl born to the Israelites exceeding the limits imposed for procreation will be killed." This edict, then, was promulgated one year before Moses' birth.

Book XII

Moses, Prophet, Pastor, Lawgiver and Caudillo of the People of Israel

Chapter I

Moses' birth. Moses' first forty years

1. Among the children of the People of Israel in Egypt, lived Amram, married to Jocabed, his first cousin, both Levi's grandchildren. To this pious couple their daughter Mary was born; and nine years later their son Aaron. However, after the birth of these two children, despite the prohibition in the Pharaoh's edict, Amram and Jocabed continued with faith to maintain their marital relations, in order to give more children to God. When Aaron was three years of age, Jocabed conceived another son. A few days before his birth, the Archangel Saint Gabriel appeared to Jocabed and told her among other things: "The son to be born of you will be great and will liberate his people. Your husband will circumcise him and name him Moses." In the year 3610, in the land of Gesen in Egypt, to Amram and Jocabed their third child was born, whom his father circumcised on the eighth day of his birth and named Moses, which means 'from the water shall be saved'. As this new child was the third born to the couple, and therefore subject to the decree which ordered that such should be killed, his mother, to avoid his death, kept him hidden for three months. However, as there was grave danger in prolonging his concealment, Jocabed prayed to God to enlighten her as to what she should do to save the child from death. God heard the prayer of His maidservant and Archangel Saint Raphael appeared to her and told her what she should do with her son to save him from death. Jocabed, following Heaven's instructions, made a small basket of rushes, sealed it over with tar and pitch, placed the child inside and left him thus on the waters by the banks of the river Nile, in a spot protected from the current by reeds and other plants. Once the basket with Moses had been left, Jocabed told her daughter Mary, twelve years of age, to stay as close as possible to see what was to happen to the child.

2. However, as it chanced that the Pharaoh's daughter, who with her ladies had come down to bathe in the river, later went strolling along the banks, she saw the basket laid among the plants, and sent one of her maids to fetch it. When it was brought, she opened it up and saw within a child wailing; so that pitying it, she said to her chief lady-in-waiting: "It is a Hebrew child." And as she desired to keep the boy, she adopted him as her son and ordered the lady-in-waiting to find a woman to nurse him. As Mary, Moses' sister, had observed everything, she drew close to where the Pharaoh's daughter was and asked her: "Do you want me to look for a nurse among the Hebrew women to foster the child?" And she replied: "Off you go then and look for one." Mary ran off and called her mother; and when Jocabed came into the presence of the Pharaoh's daughter, the latter told her: "Take my son and foster him for me, and I will pay you." Jocabed took Moses and nursed him. In the year 3611, that is one year after Moses' birth, the child was weaned and Jocabed gave him back to the Pharaoh's daughter, who presented him to her father. The Pharaoh, when he saw the child Moses, was captivated by his gifts of grace and beauty; so that he congratulated his daughter on this adopted son of hers. The Pharaoh, deeply moved, out of regard for this Hebrew child, revoked his criminal edict, so that from then on the Israelite families could beget children without restrictions. The Pharaoh reared Moses in his palace as a son of his own. And when he reached the age of twenty, he was placed by the Pharaoh at his right hand and named by him prince over all Egypt, and came to be the admiration of the Egyptians, receiving the corresponding honours. In the year 3650, when Moses was forty years of age, the Pharaoh died who had loved him as a son. In that same year a new Pharaoh ascended the throne, who dismissed Moses because he was Hebrew, and gave very harsh orders for the oppression of the Hebrew people.

3. Moses, deeply grieved, saw how his brother Israelites lived under the most iniquitous oppression on the part of the Egyptians. And it came to pass, in the same year 3650 when Moses was still forty years of age, that he saw an Egyptian strike one of the Hebrews; so having looked around to make sure that no one saw him, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. By doing so, Moses sinned grievously since, although he did right to come to the defence of the Hebrew, he went unnecessarily far in killing the Egyptian, without the gravity of the case requiring it. The following day, seeing two Israelite Pastors fight to the death between themselves to take power, he intervened to impose peace, so that he said to one of them: "Why do you strike your neighbour?" And he replied: "Who placed you as prince and judge over us? Do you perhaps want to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?" Moses was afraid, and said: "How did this matter come to be known?" So Moses, instead of securing peace between the two Pastors, was denounced by them to the Pharaoh for having previously killed the Egyptian. When the Pharaoh came to know, he gave orders for Moses to be sought out and killed. In view of this persecution, Moses fled in company with a small group of Israelites to a safe place.

Chapter II

Moses is anointed Prophet and Pastor of the Israelites.

Moses in the land of Madian. God names him Caudillo and Liberator of the People of Israel

1. Moses, after fleeing from Egypt, first took refuge on Mount Horeb or Sinai, called in other times Mount of Ananias, where he asked forgiveness of God for his sin of homicide. Here Most Holy Melchisedech appeared to him and anointed Moses Prophet and Pastor of the Israelites. From then on, Moses, new Prophet and Pastor of the Israelites, would devote himself for forty years to seeking out and bringing back straying sheep in order to shepherd them, until the hour arrived for him to become Caudillo Liberator of the People of Israel.
2. From Mount Horeb, Moses went to live in the south of the Sinai Peninsula, in the land of Madian. This took its name from a son of Abraham and Cetura called Madian, a Holy Patriarch who observed and fulfilled the law which his father had committed to him in the Book called Abraham's. In the land of Madian lived a pious elder called Jethro, adorer of the true God and zealous keeper of the Law contained in the Book of Abraham. Jethro was the son of Raguel, elder of Madian, and of his wife Saturnina, eldress of Madian. Jethro, married to Sephora, had seven most exemplary daughters, who were models of the seven virtues. And it came to pass that when Moses found himself seated by a well one day, these seven damsels came up to draw water. When their vessels were full and they turned to give their herds to drink, various Pastors of the Israelites arrived, of the kind who fought each other to take over power, and ousted the damsels. Moses, seeing this, intervened in defence of the maidens, succeeded in ousting the Pastors, and gave the girls' sheep to drink. When the seven sisters arrived back home, Jethro, also called Raguel, asked his daughters: "Why have you come sooner than usual?" And they replied: "An Egyptian freed us from the hands of the Pastors; and moreover he himself drew up the water and gave our sheep to drink." And he said: "Where is the man? Why did you let him go? Ask him to come and dine with us." Moses agreed to live with Jethro and his family. That same year 3650, when still forty years of age, he married Sephora, the eldest daughter of Jethro and Sephora. In the year 3657, after seven childless years Sephora bore Moses twin boys, whom he circumcised on the eighth day of their birth. Moses named the first Gersam, for he said: 'I was a pilgrim in a foreign land'; and the second Eliecer, for he said: 'Because the God of my father, my Helper, saved me from the Pharaoh's hand.'
3. In the year 3690, the Pharaoh who had persecuted Moses died, and that same year another Pharaoh began to reign in Egypt. The children of Israel, who continued to groan there because of the cruel slavery, cried out to God with greater insistence, and God heard their cries, remembering His alliance with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And it came to pass that, in spite of the spiritual disorder that had prevailed for forty years due to the Israelites' general apostasy, the Lord looked upon them and acknowledged them once more as His People.
4. That same year 3690, Moses, at the age of eighty years, while pasturing the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro, elder of Madian, took the flock into the inner desert; and having reached the slopes of Mount Horeb or Sinai, known as Mount of God, Moses saw something mysterious on the summit that enticed him to go up; so he climbed up step by step until reaching the heights. Once there, Most Holy Ananias appeared to him at a certain distance, under human figure, in the midst of a burning bush; and Moses, seeing that the burning bush was not consumed, said: "I will go up closer and see what great prodigy this is and why the bush is not consumed." God, seeing that he came up to observe what was happening, called him from the midst of the bush and said: "Moses, Moses." And he replied: "Here I am." And God told him: "Do not come up close. Unfasten the shoes on your feet, because the place where you are is holy ground." And He added: "I am the God of your fathers: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses covered his face, because he did not dare to look upon God. And the Lord told him: "I have seen the affliction of My people in Egypt, and I have heard their outcry at the foremen's heartlessness. And knowing their tribulation I have come down to liberate them from the hands of the Egyptians and take them out of that land to a fine and spacious land, to a land that flows with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorrite, the Pherezean, the Hevean, and the Jebusite. For the outcry of the children of Israel has reached Me, and I have seen the affliction wherewith they are oppressed by the Egyptians. Come, then, for I will send you to the Pharaoh in order that you take the children of Israel, My people, out of Egypt." And Moses said to God: "Who am I to go to the Pharaoh and take the children of Israel out of Egypt?" God responded: "I will be with you, and this shall be the proof that I have sent you. After you shall have taken My people out of Egypt, you will offer sacrifice to God upon this mount." Moses said to God: "So then, I have to go to the children of Israel and tell them: 'the God of your fathers has sent me to you.' If they ask me: 'What is His name?' what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses: "I Am who Am; and this is how you shall speak to the children of Israel: 'He Who Is, has sent me to you.'" And God added: "This you will tell the children of Israel: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you; this is My Name for ever, and this is My memorial from generation to generation'. Go then, gather the elders of Israel and tell them: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob appeared to me saying: 'I have visited you and have seen all that has befallen you in Egypt, and have said: I will bring you forth from the affliction of Egypt and will bring you into the land of the Canaanite, and of the Hittite, and of the Amorrite, and of the Pherezean, and of the Hevean, and of the Jebusite, into a land flowing with milk and honey.' And they will hear your voice, and you will go together with the elders of Israel to the king of Egypt, and will tell him: 'The Lord God of the Hebrews has summoned us; we shall go out into the desert to sacrifice to the Lord our God and to where He shall ordain.' However, I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to leave until he sees My powerful hand acting: for I will stretch My hand out and chastise Egypt with all kinds of prodigies that I will work among them, and then they will let you depart."
5. Moses, however, fearing that not only the Pharaoh but the Israelites as well might not believe in his words, said to God: "They will not believe me, nor will they listen to my voice, rather will they say: 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" And God asked him: "What is that you have in your hand?" Moses replied: "A staff." And the Lord said:

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"Throw it on the ground." He threw it down, and it turned into a snake, so that Moses drew back. And the Lord told him: "Stretch your hand out and take it by the tail." He did so, and took hold of the snake, and it turned into a staff. And the Lord told him: "That is so that they believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." And the Lord spoke to him again: "Put your hand within your breast." And having done so, he drew it out covered with leprosy. And then the Lord said to him: "Put your hand within your breast again." He put it in again, and drew it out once more as it had been before. And God added: "If they shall not believe you at the first sign, they will believe you at the second; and if they do not even give credit to these signs, nor listen to your voice, take water from the river and pour it out on the earth; and all that you draw up from the river will turn into blood." Moses said: "Forgive me, Lord, I am not a man to express myself well in speaking, and not since yesterday nor the day before; and even while You are speaking, I find my stammering worse." The Lord told him: "Who made man's lips? Or who formed the dumb and the deaf, the sighted and the blind? Was it not I? Go off then, and I will be on your lips and will teach you what you have to say." And Moses said: "I implore you, Lord, to send another, because I am not worthy." And the Lord, annoyed with Moses, said: "I know that Aaron your brother is eloquent; look, he will come out to meet you, and when he sees you his heart will rejoice. Speak to him and put My words on his lips, and I will be on your lips, and on his lips, and I will show you what you must do. He will speak for you to the people, and will be your lips; but you will be the one who receives My commands. Always carry the staff with which you are to work prodigies." This mission commended to him by the Lord constituted Moses Caudillo Liberator of the People of Israel.

6. Moses departed, and returned to where his father-in-law lived, and told him: "I have to return to Egypt to visit my Israelite brethren to see if they are still alive." Jethro said to him: "Go in peace." When Moses was in Madian, the Lord again confirmed the order He had given to him before, telling him: "Go, and return to Egypt; because all those who sought to kill you are dead." And in that year 3690, when Moses was eighty years of age, leaving his wife Sephora and his two sons with his father-in-law Jethro in Madian, he departed for Egypt bearing the miraculous staff in his hand. When Moses had set out on the journey, the Lord appeared to him again and said: "See that you perform before the Pharaoh all the portents I have given you to do, since his heart will be hardened, and he will not listen to your voice and will not let your people go." And added: "And you will tell the Pharaoh: 'Thus says the Lord: the People of Israel is My firstborn; let My son go then and serve Me rendering the worship which is My due'. And when the Pharaoh persists in refusing, you will tell him that, should he refuse, among other punishments, I will kill his firstborn son."

7. During the forty preceding years as Prophet and Pastor of the Israelites, Moses scrupulously enforced, among other laws, that of circumcision, among Hebrews and converts.

8. Whilst Moses was on his way again to Mount Horeb to continue his journey from there into Egypt, the Lord appeared to Aaron in the land of Gesen in Egypt and told him: "Go out to the Sinai desert and meet Moses." Aaron set off and went out to meet his brother at Mount Horeb or Mount of God; there they embraced and climbed the Mount. And Moses related to Aaron all that the Lord had said when sending him, and the prodigies He had ordered him to perform. With this, they left together for Egypt; and once in the Egyptian territory of Gesen, they gathered all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron related all the words the Lord had spoken to Moses, and Moses performed the prodigies before the children of his people, so that they believed in him. And all of them, when they had verified that the Lord, seeing the affliction of His people, had visited the children of Israel by sending them a Caudillo Liberator, prostrated and adored God.

Chapter III

Moses and Aaron appear before the Pharaoh

1. The same year 3690, when Moses was still eighty years of age, and three weeks had passed since Most Holy Ananias had commended to him the mission of liberating his people, Moses went with Aaron into the Pharaoh's presence, and told him: "The Lord God of Israel has told me that you should let His people go in order to offer Him sacrifices in the desert and where He may ordain." But the Pharaoh replied: "Who is this Lord for me to obey His voice and let Israel go? I do not know any such Lord, nor will I let Israel go." And they answered: "The God of the Hebrews has ordered us to go to the desert and offer sacrifices there to the Lord our God." And the Pharaoh told them: "Moses and Aaron, why do you distract the people from their tasks by your fantasies? Go about your duties." And the Pharaoh ordered the overseers and work inspectors to oppress the Israelites with yet more work so that thus they might not give ear to fables, since according to him they lost time crying out and saying: "Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God." And from then on they did not give them straw as previously to make the bricks, but obliged them to go and look for it, and moreover to make the same number of bricks in the same time as before. And as the master builders who pertained to the people of Israel made reclamations at such injustice, they were scourged by the inspectors. At this cruelty, the Hebrew foremen went up to the Pharaoh exclaiming: "Why do you proceed thus against your servants? They do not give us straw, and they order us to make the same number of bricks; see how your servants are injured by scourgings, and our people treated unjustly." To which the Pharaoh replied: "You are idling and that is why you say, 'let us go and offer sacrifices to the Lord'. So then, off to your work; straw will not be given to you, and you will deliver the usual number of bricks." And the Hebrew foremen found themselves in a predicament, because they were told: "The daily brick production will not be decreased in the least." And as the Israelites brought this to Moses' knowledge, he said to the Lord: "Lord, why do You allow Your people to be so afflicted? What did You send me for? For since I went up to the Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has afflicted the people further still: and You have not freed her." And the Lord said to Moses: "Now you will see what I shall do with the Pharaoh; because forced by the power of My arm, he will allow the Israelites to leave. Therefore tell the children of Israel: I, the Lord, will release

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you from the yoke of the Egyptians and set you free from servitude; and I will rescue you raising My arm and dealing them terrible blows, and you will know that I am the Lord your God, who wrested you from the slavery of the Egyptians and brought you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, because to you I will give it in possession."

2. Moses, then, told all these things to the children of Israel; and they did not give him credit, deeply troubled as they were and overwhelmed by their excessive tasks. However, as seven weeks of Egyptian oppression of the Israelites had gone by since Moses' and Aaron's first visit to the Pharaoh, God said to Moses: "I am the Lord; tell the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, all the things I say to you; and that if he does not obey my orders I will punish the Egyptian people severely." So Moses and Aaron presented themselves a second time before the Pharaoh; and as the latter told them to make him see by a prodigy that the God of Israel had sent them, Moses threw his staff down before the Pharaoh and his courtiers, upon which it turned into a snake. Forthwith the astute Pharaoh called the palace magicians, called Janes and Mambres, and one of them also threw down his staff which, by divine permission, likewise turned into a snake; which was not by any miracle but by a false prodigy of Satan. However, the snake of Moses' staff devoured the snake of the magician's staff; which is figure of Christ vanquishing Antichrist. Despite the miracle worked by God through Moses' staff, the Pharaoh's heart hardened yet further seeing that his magicians did similar things.

Chapter IV

God chastises the Pharaoh's obstinacy by ten plagues

1. As the Pharaoh refused to listen to the divine order to allow the People of Israel to depart despite the extraordinary signs Moses had worked, God, during seventy days, chastised the Egyptian people with ten plagues, each of seven days' duration. But the territory of Gesen where the Israelites dwelt was not affected by any of the plagues.

2. **First plague:** God said to Moses: "The Pharaoh's heart has become stubborn, and he does not wish to allow My people to depart. Go out in the morning to meet him, since he will walk down to the river, and you will wait for him on the bank, holding in your hand the staff which turned into a snake, and you will tell him: The Lord God of the Hebrews has sent me to tell you: 'Let My people go and offer Me sacrifice in the desert.' Up until now you have not wished to listen. Well then, the Lord says: 'By this you will know that I am the Lord: Look, I shall strike the water of the river and of all wellsprings with the staff in the hand of My servant Moses, and it will turn into blood, and the waters will become polluted, and the Egyptians will be tormented by thirst.'" In the early morning of the first week, Moses and Aaron went out to give this announcement of the Lord's to the Pharaoh. However, as the latter paid no attention, God, to chastise him by the first plague, told Moses: "Stretch your hand with the staff out so that the waters of Egypt, of its rivers, streams, lakes and other wellsprings, turn into blood; and let there be blood in the whole land of Egypt, including in the vessels of wood and stone." And Moses did as the Lord commanded: and raising his staff, struck the waters of the river in the sight of the Pharaoh and his servants. And not only the river, but all the wellsprings besides, turned into blood. And the fish in the waters apparently died. And as there was blood in the whole land of Egypt, the Egyptians could not drink water. And in many places in the land they searched for water without finding any, only blood. When the plague ended, the Egyptian magicians, seeing that the blood had vanished and had turned back into water, filled a recipient with some and converted it into blood, not by a miracle, but by a false prodigy of Satan. Therefore, despite this first plague, the Pharaoh's heart became further hardened, and he did not give ear to what the Lord had commanded.

3. **Second plague:** As the Pharaoh, despite the previous chastisement, still did not heed the divine commands, the Lord told Moses: "Go up to the Pharaoh and tell him: Thus says the Lord: 'Let My people go and offer Me sacrifice; for if you do not wish to let them go, know that I shall chastise all your lands with a plague of frogs. So many frogs will emerge from the river and other wellsprings that they will climb up and enter your house and your bedroom and your own bed, and also your servants' houses and those of your whole people, and even your ovens and your larders. And thus you and your servants and all your people will be tormented by frogs.'" Moses and Aaron went to communicate the Lord's announcement to the Pharaoh; and as he paid no attention at all to this new threat either, God, to chastise the Pharaoh by the second plague, told Moses: "Stretch your hand with the staff out over the waters, so that from the rivers, streams, lakes and other wellsprings, frogs come out over the land of Egypt." And Moses stretched out his hand with the staff over the waters, and such great multitudes of frogs emerged that they covered the whole land of Egypt. On the penultimate day of this punishment, the Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and told them: "Pray to your Lord to remove the frogs from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to your Lord." And Moses replied: "Tell me when I should pray for you and for your servants and for your people, so that the frogs be removed from you, your house, your servants and your people, and keep solely to the waters." And the Pharaoh responded: "Tomorrow." And Moses told him: "I will do as you have said, so that you know that there is no one like the Lord our God." And after Moses and Aaron had left the Pharaoh's presence, Moses cried out to the Lord to fulfil the promise he had made to the Pharaoh concerning the frogs. And the Lord did according to Moses' word, and the frogs returned to the waters at the end of this second week. However, once the plague was over, the Egyptian magicians, Pharaoh, seeing himself free of the punishment and observing that his magicians could do the same, did not fulfil the pledge given to Moses to let his people go.

4. **Third plague:** At the Pharaoh's repeated obstinacy, the Lord ordered Moses to go with Aaron to announce to him that He would chastise him by a third plague if he refused to let His people leave. However, as the Pharaoh persisted in his intransigence and prevented the departure of the Israelites, God, to punish him by the third plague, said to Moses: "Stretch out your hand with the staff so that from the dust of the earth mosquitoes of all kinds rise up onto the land of Egypt." And Moses having stretched his hand with the staff out over the dust of the earth, men and animals became infested with mosquitoes, and all the airspace became a compact cloud of mosquitoes throughout Egyptian territory.

When the plague ceased, the magicians of Egypt attempted to do something similar to what Moses had done, but did not succeed; so they told the Pharaoh: "It is the Finger of the God of the Hebrews that is acting." Despite this plague, the Pharaoh's heart hardened yet further, and once again he did not give ear to what the Lord had commanded.

5. **Fourth plague:** At the fresh refusal by the Egyptian king, the Lord told Moses: "Rise up early and go up to the Pharaoh, since he will walk down to the river waters; and you will tell him: Thus says the Lord: 'Let My people go to offer Me sacrifice. For if you do not, know that I shall send every kind of fly upon you, your servants, your people and your houses; so that the rooms of the Egyptians and all the places they dwell in shall be filled with flies of different species.'" Moses and Aaron went out to give the Lord's announcement to the Pharaoh. As he, once more, did not fulfil the divine command, God, to chastise him by the fourth plague, told Moses: "Stretch your hand with the staff out over the land, so that swarms of maddening and pernicious flies rise up and engulf the Pharaoh and his servants' houses, and the whole land of Egypt. Thus the country will become infested with those insects." However, despite this plague, the Pharaoh's heart remained so obstinate that not even this time did he let the people of Israel leave.

6. **Fifth plague:** At the latest intransigence of the Egyptian king, the Lord told Moses: "Go up to the Pharaoh and tell him: Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: 'Let My people go to offer Me sacrifice. And if you still refuse to do so and keep them back, know that I shall let My hand fall upon your fields, and I will send a cruel pestilence upon your horses, donkeys, camels, oxen and sheep.'" Moses and Aaron went to communicate the Lord's announcement to the Pharaoh; however, at his refusal, God, to chastise him by the fifth plague, told Moses: "Stretch your hand with the staff out over the land so that pestilence come upon the animals." Thereby all the Egyptians' animals apparently died; and when the plague ceased, they returned to their normal state. Despite this punishment, the Pharaoh's heart hardened yet further, and he did not let the People of Israel go.

7. **Sixth plague:** At the Pharaoh's dogged resistance, the Lord told Moses: "Rise early and go before the Pharaoh and say to him: Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: 'Let My people go to offer Me sacrifice; because if you do not do so, this time I will send My plagues upon your own person, upon your servants and upon all Egyptians, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the Earth. Therefore I will strike you and your people with pestilence, and you Egyptians will suffer greatly. And know that, if until now I have not struck you down, it is in order that by means of your obstinacy My might and My power be made manifest; and thus the power of My Name be recounted throughout the Earth.'" Moses and Aaron went to communicate the Lord's announcement to the Pharaoh. However, as he paid no attention to this announcement, God, to chastise him by the sixth plague, told Moses: "Take handfuls of ash from a stove, and scatter it heavenwards in the presence of the Pharaoh. And let this dust spread throughout Egypt and let there be ulcers and abscessed tumours in the men throughout the land of Egypt." And Moses took ash from a stove, and standing before the Pharaoh scattered it heavenwards; and the Egyptians were covered with malignant ulcers. And the Pharaoh's magicians could not appear before Moses because of the ulcers they had, and everyone throughout the land of Egypt. However, despite this plague, the Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he did not listen to what the Lord had told Moses.

8. **Seventh plague:** Seeing the Pharaoh's latest refusal, the Lord told Moses: "Go and tell the Pharaoh: Thus says the Lord God: 'Will you still keep My people back and not let them go? Well then, look, I shall make a great deluge of hail fall such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded down to the present. And if you wish to protect yourself from grievous harm, send out now for the beasts and everything you have outside to be brought in, because the men, the beasts and everything outside that are not brought in from the fields, will be seriously harmed when the hail falls upon them.'" Moses and Aaron went to communicate the Lord's announcement to the Pharaoh. At this latest news of punishment, those among the Egyptians who feared and believed in the Lord's words, converted to the Hebrews' God and went to Gesen with their families, servants and animals; but those who despised the Lord's words, left their servants and beasts in the fields. God, to chastise the Egyptian people by the seventh plague, said to Moses: "Stretch your hand with the staff out heavenwards, so that hail fall in the whole land of Egypt upon men, beasts and crops in the fields." And Moses stretched his hand with the staff out heavenwards, and the Lord sent thunder, hail and lightning that zigzagged about the land. And the Lord made a deluge of hail mingled with fire fall upon the land of Egypt. And the hail was of a size such as had never before been seen in the whole land of Egypt since that nation was founded. And the hail struck all there was in the fields, from man to beast, and swept away all the crops and destroyed all the trees in the land. However, once the plague had ceased, everything returned to its normal state. Despite this seventh plague, the king's heart hardened in such a way that he did not let the children of Israel go.

9. **Eighth plague:** At the Pharaoh's latest rebuff, the Lord told Moses: "Go to the Pharaoh and tell him that, for having hardened his heart and that of many of his servants, I must let My hand fall upon Egypt with further prodigious punishments." Moses and Aaron went up, then, to the Pharaoh, and told him: "Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: 'Till when shall you continue to disobey Me? Let My people depart to offer Me sacrifice. But if you still resist and do not wish to let them go, see that I shall flood your districts with locusts that shall cover the whole face of the land of Egypt, so that nothing of it be seen; and they will devour whatever there is in the fields: trees and all kinds of plants; and moreover your houses will be filled with them, those of your servants and those of all Egypt, as your fathers and grandfathers never saw from birth until the present.'" However, as the Pharaoh again refused to fulfil the divine command, God, to chastise him by the eighth plague, told Moses: "Stretch your hand with the staff out over the land of Egypt, so that locusts swarm upon it and devour every kind of tree and plant." Moses, then, stretched his hand with the staff out over the land of Egypt; and the Lord sent a scorching wind that raised up locusts; they flooded the whole land of Egypt and alighted on all the districts of the Egyptians in such frightful quantities as had never happened until then, and they devoured every growing plant and tree. However, once the plague had ceased, everything returned to its normal state. Despite this eighth plague, the Pharaoh's heart was still hardened, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

10. **Ninth plague:** As the Pharaoh persisted in his blindness and disobeyed the divine command, the Lord ordered Moses and Aaron to go and warn him that He would chastise him with a ninth plague if he refused to let His people leave. However, as the Pharaoh refused to listen to the announcement, God, to chastise him by the ninth plague, told Moses: *“Stretch your hand with the staff out heavenwards, so that the Pharaoh, his servants and all Egypt go blind.”* Moses stretched his hand with the staff out heavenwards, and all in the land of Egypt instantly lost their sight, so that no one saw anyone else, nor did anyone move from where they were. However, once the plague had ceased, all recovered their sight. In spite of this ninth plague, the Pharaoh did not let the children of Israel go.

11. **Tenth plague:** At the Pharaoh's persistent refusal, God announced that He would chastise the Egyptians by the tenth and last plague. Accordingly, He told Moses: *“I shall chastise the Pharaoh and Egypt by yet another plague, and after this one he shall not only let you go but will even compel you to go. You shall therefore tell all of My people that for the seven days of this last plague, in which there will be for the Egyptians dense and palpable darkness, they leave Gesen and despoil the houses of the Egyptians, whose doors will be opened by My angels, of gold, silver and other objects of value, as just compensation for the abuses, hardships and tribulations they have made them suffer.”* Next, God ordered Moses and Aaron to go to the Pharaoh and tell him: *“Thus says the Lord: I will go out over all the land of Egypt, which will become enveloped in dense and palpable darkness, and all the firstborn of the Egyptians shall die, from the Pharaoh's firstborn who sits on the throne with him, to the maidservant's firstborn who works in the mill. And there will be such an outcry in the land of Egypt as never before until now.”* And Moses added: *“Following this terrible chastisement which the Lord will mete out to Egypt, all your servants will come up to me, and prostrate in my presence will entreat me saying: ‘Depart, you and all the people of Israel under your orders.’ And after that we shall leave.”* At these new announcements, the Pharaoh cast out Moses and Aaron from his presence. Hence the Lord said to Moses: *“Neither has the Pharaoh listened to you this time. Therefore prodigious chastisements shall be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”* And the heart of the Pharaoh was hardened yet further, and he did not let the children of Israel leave his land, despite the announcement of this latest chastisement. Before the last plague began, Archangel Saint Uriel marked all the houses of the land of Gesen, where the Israelites lived, with lambs' blood, as sign of divine protection upon them. During the seven days of darkness, the Most Divine Soul of Christ, as Angel Exterminator, struck down all the firstborn of the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of the least slave up to that of the Pharaoh, who died on the last day, so that the Pharaoh was consternated. And great lamentation was heard throughout the land, for there was no home without its dead. However, it should be understood that their death was for them all an apparent one, though slightly visible and palpable amid the darkness. When the seven days of darkness ceased, the firstborn continued apparently dead. The following day, Sunday, the Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said: *“Begone from my people, you and the children of Israel, and offer sacrifices to your God, as you have asked.”* That same Sunday of the year 3690, the children of Israel set out from the land of Gesen in Egypt towards the Sinai desert, captained by the Caudillo Liberator Moses. Two days after their departure, that is on Tuesday of the same week, all the firstborn of Egypt who were apparently dead returned to their normal state.

Third Part Exodus and Leviticus

Book I The Israelites leave Egypt

Chapter I

Moses takes Patriarch Saint Joseph's remains with him. Moses' Sanctification. The Israelites persecuted by the Egyptians

1. The children of the People of Israel who left the land of Gesen in Egypt, male and female, numbered one million four hundred thousand persons; and this multitude was formed by an immense majority of Israelites and a considerable number of converts. They took with them a large number of sheep, oxen and other animals, as also an abundance of gold, silver and jewelry of great value, and a great amount of clothing and weapons of war; all of which they had acquired by despoiling the Egyptians of their goods at God's command. The children of Israel travelled in good order captained by Moses. And God went before them to show them the way, by day in Column of Cloud, which was Mary's Divine Soul under this form, and by night in Column of Fire, which was Christ's Most Divine Soul under this form. That Column, which was the Espousal of the Souls of Christ and Mary, was never absent, showing itself either as Cloud, or as Fire.

2. The immense multitude of Israelites also took with them the Triple Benediction, and as well the bones of Patriarch Saint Joseph, as he had required under oath before dying. Moses, at the start of the Sunday when the departure from Egypt was to take place, while still night, had removed the Mysterious Sacrament from Joseph's bones, deposited it in the Chalice used by Melchisedech, and placed this inside the golden casket that contained Holy Patriarch's bones. God, to prepare the soul of Israel's Caudillo and Liberator more especially, had then granted him the Grace of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit and a character similar to that of Baptism; for, at the very moment when Moses removed the Triple Benediction from Joseph's bones, It penetrated, sanctified and left him, all in the same instant.

3. The Israelites, in their journey to the Sinai desert, first camped in the vicinity of the town of Socoth, today Tell-el-Mashutah, on the edge of that desert, and later, going down southwards, camped in Etam, today Suez, on the shores of the uppermost and narrowest part of the Red Sea. And although from Etam they could have crossed over to the

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Sinai peninsula by a shorter route, God led them southwards along the Red Sea to steer clear of lands occupied by Philistines, and thus avoid the danger of being attacked by them, and of many of the Israelites defecting and returning to Egypt. Once He had made them journey southwards, the Lord, in His mysterious plans, ordered Moses to turn back north, telling him: *“Speak to the children of Israel: Let them change their route and go to Pihariot, between Migdol and the sea facing Beelsephon; there you will encamp. By that the Pharaoh will think that the children of Israel are wandering aimlessly about the land without a fixed route and that the desert bars their way; for his heart has hardened yet further and he will persecute you again. But I will make My glory shine before the Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know once again that I am the Lord.”* And the children of Israel did just as the Lord had commanded, covering more than three hundred kilometres, which entailed a special assistance on God's part.

4. In effect, two days after the departure of the Israelites, when the Pharaoh saw that the Egyptian firstborn, apparently dead, had returned to their normal state by miraculous means, his heart hardened yet further, and he decided to persecute the children of Israel, above all knowing that they went from one place to another as though disoriented. Thus the Pharaoh said to his people: *“What have we done by letting Israel go and depriving ourselves of their services?”* So from among the Egyptians he at once recruited a large army, which he placed under the orders of experienced commanders; and ordered his chariot to be made ready, as also six hundred more chariots specially fitted out for warfare. Moreover, a great number of men and women of the populace accompanied the army with the aim of recovering all the goods the Israelites had taken from them before departing. With everything ready, the Pharaoh set out in pursuit of the children of Israel, arriving at the neighbourhood of Pihariot facing Beelsephon, which was where they had camped. However, the Israelites, seeing the Pharaoh come up with a large army, full of terror, cried out to the Lord, and said to Moses: *“Is it because there are no tombs in the land of Gesen that you have brought us out here to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out? Did we not tell you: Let us serve the Egyptians, for it is better to serve the Egyptians than die in the desert?”* Moses replied to the people: *“Fear not. Keep calm, and you will see the wonders the Lord will do this day, for the Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will battle for you; be firm then.”* Following these words, the People of Israel, led by their Caudillo and Liberator Moses, headed southwards again, pursued by the Pharaoh and his army. However, to protect the Israelites, the Angel of the Lord or Most Divine Soul of Christ, who at night went ahead of the Israelite hosts as Column of Fire, now went behind; and the Divine Soul of Mary who by day went ahead as Column of Cloud, now went behind. So that the miraculous Column, whether in form of Fire or in form of Cloud, which served as light, protection and guidance for the Israelites, now took up position between the Egyptians and the People of Israel, becoming tenebrous and shadowy at night for the Pharaoh's armies, preventing them from approaching the encampment of the children of God.

5. As soon as the children of the People of Israel in their journey southwards had covered a large section of the western coast of the Red Sea Gulf, today Gulf of Suez, they came to a halt on the shore at one of the widest points of the Gulf. There they were encircled by the Pharaoh's numerous army and the great crowd of Egyptian populace, so that their only way out was by sea. In this situation the Israelites cried out terrified. However, the Lord said to Moses: *“Why the outcry? Tell the children of Israel to start out. You, raise your staff and stretch your arm out over the sea and divide it, so that the children of Israel cross dryshod in the midst. I shall permit the hearts of the Egyptians to harden yet further, so that they enter as well in pursuit, and I will make My glory shine upon the Pharaoh and upon his army, his chariots and his horsemen, and the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord God.”*

Chapter II

The Israelites miraculously cross the Red Sea

1. That Friday the 17th of June in the year 3690, Moses, fulfilling God's commands, stretched his hand with the staff out over the Red Sea, and Most Holy Ananias with His Divine Breath at once made a strong wind arise which divided the upper part of the waters, and a miraculous highway of earth appeared, thirty-five kilometres long, like a bridge, with a considerable depth of water beneath; and, alongside the bridge, a wall of water above the level of the bridge, one to the right and another to the left. The bridge linked the western and eastern shores of the Red Sea.

2. In order for the Israelites to cross the enormously broad miraculous bridge, immensely solid, over the waters of the Red Sea, the Most Blessed Trinity became visible and ordered Moses to divide the People into seven parties or sections of two hundred thousand persons; and placed an Archangel, seen by all, at the head of each section, the first being Saint Michael. Following the last party or section of Israelites, came Mary's Divine Soul in the form of Column of Cloud; and upon it the Most Blessed Trinity: in the centre, Most Holy Ananias; at His right, Most Holy Melchisedech; and at His left, Most Holy Malachias. And a long way behind came the Pharaoh with his army and a multitude of men and women of the Egyptian populace.

3. The Israelites began to cross the miraculous bridge seven minutes after midnight when that glorious Friday the 17th of June in the year 3690 had started; and they finished crossing seven minutes prior to midnight that same Friday, when Saturday was about to start. All the hours of that glorious Friday of the crossing of the Red Sea were sunlit day for the Israelites and tenebrous night for the Egyptians.

4. Once the children of Israel had entered onto the miraculous highway God had fabricated over the waters, the Pharaoh, with his considerable army and the multitude of his people, in furious persecution, entered too in pursuit. And God caused the chariot-wheels of the Egyptians to enmesh with one another, so that they made only very painful progress; consequently, they then said: *“Let us flee from the might of Israel, for their God combats against us Egyptians.”* At the fear of God's anger and the sight of the great miracle of the bridge over the sea, many Egyptians who pursued the Israelites became converted during the crossing of the bridge. And God made a full moon shine for the converts so that, guided by its light, they might join the children of the Chosen People, who accepted them into their ranks

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