

Fifth Part The Book of Joshua

Book I

The People of Israel's conquests in the Promised Land under Joshua's command

Chapter I

Tali and many partisans rebel against Joshua

On the 8th of September in the year 3730, while the People of Israel were encamped in the Settim valley in the land of Moab, the following came to pass: Tali, from the tribe of Dan, rose up against Joshua with the design of usurping his post of Caudillo. In this rebellion a very considerable number from all the tribes, including that of Levi, joined up with Tali. Faced with this rebellion, God told Joshua: "Raise your staff and cause all the rebels to be struck by fire." Joshua held his staff aloft, as symbol of Christ on the Cross of Calvary; and from the uppermost part of the staff rays of fire issued forth upon the multitude, and some one hundred thousand persons, male and female, perished. All the rebels who died had been born in Egypt, and none had been born in the desert.

Chapter II

God's exhortations and promises to Joshua as Israel's new Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo

In the first days of December in the year 3730, Most Holy Ananias appeared to Joshua and told him: "Make ready and cross the Jordan with all your people, so as to enter the western part of the land I will also give to the children of Israel. I will deliver up to you any and every spot you tread upon. None shall be able to resist your impetus, because the assistance I gave to Moses I will give to you, and I will not forsake you. Take heart, then, and arm yourself with great fortitude to keep and to practise all My Law prescribed by Moses; do not turn aside one whit therefrom, and thus you will act prudently. Let your lips continually speak of the Book of this Law; meditate day and night on what is contained therein so as to keep and to practise all that is written. Doing this you will keep to the right path and will act wisely. See, it is I who command you; take heart and remain steadfast; be neither afraid nor fainthearted, because the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Chapter III

Joshua bids his People prepare to cross the Jordan

Some days after Most Holy Ananias had encouraged him with His words, Joshua ordered the chief men of the people saying: "Tour the encampment and announce this order of mine to the people: Get provisions ready, because three days after breaking camp, you have to cross the Jordan and enter into possession of the land which the Lord your God is to give you." He likewise said to the children of the tribes of Ruben and Gad: "Remember the command that Moses, the Lord's servant, gave you when he said: the Lord your God has given you all this land to the east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea where we are now camped. Therefore your women and children and your livestock will remain in this territory which Moses gave over to you, together with a good number of men to protect them; but all the other hardy and seasoned men of these two tribes are to fight with their brethren, until the Lord gives those of the other tribes the part of the Promised Land corresponding to them, and then you shall come back to inhabit the territory that Moses gave to you in this part to the east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea." And they replied to Joshua: "We will do all you have told us and will go wherever you send us; just as we obeyed Moses in everything, in the same way we will obey you as well; we desire only that the Lord our God be with you as He was with Moses. Let whoever shall oppose your words and not wish to obey your orders, die. You, for your part, take heart and act resolutely, for we shall follow you."

Chapter IV

Joshua sends explorers to Jericho

1. On the 8th of December that year 3730, from the People of Israel's camp in the Settim valley of the land of Moab, Caudillo Joshua sent two valiant soldiers to explore the city of Jericho; they, having crossed the Jordan, when making their way into the town, tempted by lust, entered a house of prostitution adjoining Jericho's walls, whose proprietress was the harlot Rahab. The two explorers were recognized as Israelite soldiers by the two prostitutes with whom they sinned, one of them Rahab. The other prostitute, once she realized that the soldier with whom she had sinned was an Israelite, went to inform the king of Jericho, saying: "Some men of the children of Israel, come to explore the land, entered my mistress Rahab's house by night." While this harlot was on her way to inform the king, the two explorers, sincerely repentant for their sin, spoke to Rahab of Israel's God, of the Chosen People and of the extermination that would befall Jericho when the Israelite army entered. The king of Jericho sent several of his guards to tell the harlot Rahab to deliver him up the Israelite men who had entered her house. She, however, had hidden them beneath some bundles of flax in an attic of the house, and when the men sent by the king arrived, she told them: "It is true that they came to my house; however they left as night was falling, when the gates were about to be shut, without my knowing where they were going; run after them quickly and you will catch up with them." Forthwith Rahab went to acquaint the two Israelites of the danger they were in, counselling that they let themselves down by the wall with the help of a scarlet rope, and stay three days in the hills until their pursuers disappeared.

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2. Rahab, moved to conversion by her heroic action in favour of God's People sending the two Israelites to safety at the risk of her own life, told the explorers before they let themselves down by the walls: "Swear to me by the Lord your God, Who is the true God of Heaven and Earth, that in the same way as I have been merciful to you, you will be likewise to my father's household; and therefore you will give me a countersign as surety that you will save my father, my mother, my brothers and my sisters from death, and that you will protect as well all their goods." The Israelites told the woman that, when the city was to be taken, she should leave the same scarlet coloured rope hanging from the wall as a sign to the armies that it was her house. The explorers followed Rahab's advice, and three days later, crossing the Jordan, returned to the Settim encampment, informing Joshua of all that had happened to them, telling him: "The Lord delivers all this land into our hands, and all its inhabitants are seized by fear." The two Israelites asked forgiveness of Joshua for their sins of lust in Jericho, forgiveness that they magnanimously obtained. The convert Rahab converted her whole family to the People of God.

Chapter V

The Israelites miraculously cross the river Jordan captained by Joshua

1. Once the Israelite explorers had returned from their mission in Jericho, Joshua, after invoking Almighty God and imploring His aid, felt that the moment had come to prepare his People to cross the Jordan and undertake the conquest of that part of Canaan territory. On the 22nd of December that year 3730, when he had everything ready, Joshua arose at night and broke camp; and leaving the Settim valley reached the eastern bank of the Jordan that same day with all the children of Israel; and there they halted for three days. After two days, the criers crossed the encampment proclaiming in loud voice: "When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord God of Israel set forth, borne by the priests of Levi's lineage, take down your tents and set out as well after them, leaving a space between yourselves and the Ark." And Joshua told the people: "Purify yourselves in soul and body, because tomorrow the Lord is to work wonders among you."

2. On Sunday the 25th of December in the year 3730, Joshua told the priests: "Take the Ark of the Covenant and go ahead of the people." And they took it and set out ahead of them all. Then the Lord told Joshua: "Today I will exalt you once again in the sight of the whole People of Israel, so that they see that as I was with Moses, so I am with you also. You, then, tell the priests who bear the Ark of the Covenant: 'As soon as you set foot in the waters of the Jordan, halt there and do not advance until the Lord divides the waters.'" Joshua made these words of the Lord known to his People as well, adding: "In this miracle which the Lord shall perform, you will know that the Lord, the Living God, is in your midst, and that He will exterminate before you the peoples of the land we are going to conquer, who are enemies of the People of God." All those peoples were idolatrous and sunk in the most degrading corruption. Therefore the Lord had commanded the Israelites to exterminate all those inhabitants who were not converted to the true God.

3. Hardly had the priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant set foot in the waters by the banks of the Jordan river, which at that time had a very considerable flow, when the waters on the down river side followed their course, and on the up river side halted in the form of a wall of great height, and a road of dry ground was formed in the manner of a bridge. The priests who bore the Ark of the Covenant halted in the centre of the miraculously formed highway to serve the Israelites as guarantee of the miracle, though at the same time they told them to cross in haste. Once the People of Israel had crossed over that prodigious highway on foot, Joshua, to perpetuate the memory of this extraordinary divine favour, ordered thirteen men, one from each tribe, to drag thirteen large stones from the river, to collocate later in the place chosen for the encampment, as a sign to posterity of such a signal favour from God. And besides, also to perpetuate the memory of the great Jordan miracle, he sent thirteen, one from each tribe, to take out another thirteen large stones and leave them in the manner of a column on the spot in the centre of the miraculous bridge where the Ark of the Covenant had halted. And it came to pass that, once the column had been erected in the centre of the bridge, the latter disappeared; however, at the same time an island appeared in the centre of the river upon which the stone column stood as sign of the miracle. The place where the Israelites crossed the Jordan is that later known as Bethabara of Perea, which means 'crossing place', where Christ was to be baptized by Saint John the Baptist one thousand four hundred and ninety-nine years later.

4. That same 25th of December, after the Israelites had crossed the river, they encamped in a place called Galgala, in the vale of Jericho, outside the walls of the city, whose gates remained shut for fear of them. When the Amorrite or Canaanite kings, in their different kingdoms and several peoples, heard that the Lord had divided the waters of the Jordan for the children of Israel to cross over, they were filled with dread at the fame of the Chosen People's conquering might.

Chapter VI

God orders Joshua to circumcise those recently converted to God's People

On Sunday the 1st of January in the year 3731, while the People of Israel was encamped on the outskirts of the walled city of Jericho, the Lord told Joshua: "Circumcise the recent male converts to the Faith of the People of Israel", the Lord referring here to those from other peoples who had been converted during the Canaan conquests that had preceded the Jordan crossing, and those who had been converted on account of the miraculous crossing. For, with the exception of the recent male converts, all the other menfolk of God's People had been duly circumcised; since Moses, during the forty years he had guided his People through the desert, had zealously procured the fulfilment of the divine command of circumcision as indispensable condition for belonging to Holy Church. So Joshua, complying with the Lord's order, helped by the priests, circumcised the new converts.

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Chapter VII**The Most Divine Soul of Christ appears to Joshua as Prince of the People of Israel's Army**

1. As soon as the People of Israel had crossed the river Jordan, the Souls of Christ and Mary ceased to manifest themselves under the form of Cloud and Fire Columns. Moreover, the manna that God had sent them in the desert in times of scarcity, ceased definitively to fall; so that from then on, the Israelites supplied themselves solely from the abundant victuals produced in the western part of Canaan.

2. On Sunday the 15th of January in the year 3731, Joshua, being at prayer some distance away from the encampment, raised his eyes and saw a Man clothed as a warrior standing before him, with drawn upraised sword. Joshua, going towards Him, said: "Are you one of ours, or of the enemy's?" The Man, who was the Most Divine Soul of Christ under the figure of Most Holy Melchisedech, replied: "I am the Prince of the People of Israel's army, and have come to go before your hosts now to guide and protect you." Joshua, face prostrate to the ground, adored Him saying: "What does my Lord say to His servant?" The Most Holy Man told him: "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are is sanctified by My presence." Joshua did as he had been told. God thereby showed Joshua that the Soul of Christ would no longer guide His People in Cloud Column, but in the form of a Divine and Invincible Warrior, becoming visible on many occasions.

Chapter VIII**The city of Jericho is taken and razed by the Israelites under Joshua's orders**

1. The presence of the Israelites encamped on the outskirts of the city of Jericho caused such consternation to the inhabitants that they kept the city gates shut and the walls well garrisoned, and no Jericho citizen was so bold as to leave or enter. However, on the 27th of January that year 3731, the moment for the conquest of the city having arrived, the Lord told Joshua: "This is the way I place Jericho, its king and all its inhabitants in your hands: for six consecutive days all your armed men will make the circuit of the city once a day, together with the Ark of the Covenant and all the people as well. Come the seventh day, the priests will take the seven trumpets used on feasts, and will precede the Ark of the Covenant borne by other priests. And in that order, you will make seven circuits of the city, and the priests will sound the trumpets. And when the sound of the leading trumpet is longer and more strident, and at the end be suddenly interrupted, all the people will shout out loudly in unison, and the walls of the city will tumble to their foundations, and each Israelite will enter by the section he has before him."

2. Joshua transmitted the Lord's orders to his People, and they did just as had been ordered. So that, on the seventh day, Thursday the 2nd of February that year 3731, when the sound of the leading trumpet ceased to be heard, which was the prescribed signal, Joshua raised his voice, and with him all the people shouted out in unison, and at that same instant the walls of the city all came tumbling down. And each combatant entered the section he had before him, so that the assault was general and concurrent, and all the inhabitants of the city of Jericho and their livestock were wiped out, save the converts Rahab and her parents, brothers and sisters, who were brought out of the city and taken to the encampment of God's People, and later aggregated to Holy Church after complying with the required rites. Finally, the Israelite soldiers set fire to Jericho and all that was in the city, with the exception of the gold, silver, and vessels of bronze and iron, which were consecrated for the Lord's treasury in the Tabernacle. By this victorious battle, Joshua's name became known throughout those lands. Rahab lived doing penance for her past life, and later married Salmon, from the tribe of Judah, who was the explorer with whom she had sinned. From this marriage Booz was born, fruit of that sin, who later married Ruth, from whose descendants Christ was to come. A few years after its destruction, the city of Jericho was rebuilt by the Israelites in God's honour for the miraculous victory under Joshua's command.

Chapter IX**The Israelite army's defeat in the Hai town siege**

On the 17th of February that year 3731, Joshua made preparations for the conquest of the Amorrite town of Hai, some twenty kilometres north-west of Jericho and two kilometres from Bethel. However, prior to besieging the town, Joshua sent several explorers to reconnoitre it. They, seeing that it was a small town and its inhabitants few in number, returned telling Joshua that some three thousand men would suffice to take it. A few days later, that number of soldiers having been sent by Joshua, they fell back full of alarm at the impetuous outrush of the Hai people, who put thirty-six Israelite soldiers to the sword and pursued the other combatants from the gates of the town up to the neighbourhood of Sabarim, more dying in the flight. The surviving Israelite soldiers returned to Galgala and gave an account to Joshua of their misadventure. The Israelites' sorry and unexpected defeat at Hai filled Joshua with consternation, and he rent his garments and prostrated to the ground before the Tabernacle, raising humble complaints to the Lord on account of the debacle. At the entreaty of the intrepid Caudillo, the Lord revealed to him that the defeat before the Amorrites of Hai had been caused by the covetousness of an Israelite, who had kept some jewellery from the Jericho spoils when it should have been handed over with all the other valuables to the Lord's treasury in the Tabernacle. Joshua, investigating the matter, found that the culprit was a man of the Fares family from tribe of Judah called Achan who, seeing himself detected, confessed his sin before Joshua and the whole people. Achan with his sons and daughters, accomplices in his sin, were stoned to death, and a bonfire made of his tent, livestock and all his possessions. By Achan's and his family's chastisement, God's wrath was appeased.

Chapter X**The town of Hai is taken and razed by the Israelites under Joshua's command**

On the 28th of February that same year 3731, God, appearing to Joshua, told him: "Be neither afraid nor daunted: take part of your army and go up to Hai town. See, I place its king, its people, the town and the land in your hands. And you will do to Hai town and its king as you did to Jericho, and will distribute the spoils and all the animals among yourselves." That same day, eve of the battle, at night, five thousand Israelite soldiers hid in ambush behind Hai town. At dawn Joshua presented himself with three thousand soldiers of his army on the opposite side to attract the enemies' attention. As Joshua and his hosts, dissembling fear, took to flight, the Amorrites, puffed up by the memory of their previous victory, left the town in the Israelites' pursuit, without noticing the men in ambush at the back of the town. Then the Lord told Joshua: "Raise the standard you have in your hand towards the town of Hai, because I will deliver it up to you." And having raised his shield, the men lying in ambush at once rose up, took the town and set fire to it. The defeat of the Hai Amorrites took place on the 1st of March in the year 3731, with the killing of twelve thousand men, women and children. Thus perished all of Hai's inhabitants. Their king was taken alive, and died hung from a cross raised on a platform, and was later buried under a great pile of stones. All the beasts and other spoils of the town were shared out by the children of Israel among themselves as Joshua had commanded.

Chapter XI**The Israelites celebrate the Passover encamped in Galgala**

On Saturday the 15th of April that year 3731, 14th day of Nisan, the Israelites ended their preparations for the celebration of the seven days of unleavened bread and the Paschal solemnity. At sunset on the 14th of Nisan, when the 15th of Nisan or Paschal solemnity began, each Israelite family celebrated the legal supper in its tent, eating the lamb immolated by the priests in the Tabernacle. And for seven days they ate unleavened bread as well, and bitter herbs.

Chapter XII**The Gabaonites make a pact with the children of Israel**

1. When Joshua's victory over the Hai Amorrites reached the ears of the other Canaanite kings, some of those peoples made a pact by common accord and design to combat Israel.

2. The Gabaonites, however, inhabitants of Gabaon, a town close by Hai, who had accepted Melchisedech's preaching and knew of Joshua's recent victories, and therefore that the true God was on Israel's side, on the 15th of May that year 3731, sent emissaries to tell Joshua that the Angel of the Lord, namely Most Holy Melchisedech, had visited and moved them to conversion by means of preaching and miracles, and that the Gabaonites, converted to the true God, were desirous of joining the Chosen People. Joshua, inspired by the Lord, did not doubt the sincerity of those recent converts and promised them his protection; accordingly, they were aggregated to God's People in holy alliance with the same rights as the Israelites, following circumcision of the Gabaonite menfolk. The People of Israel celebrated this mass conversion with great rejoicing. The Gabaonite kingdom was formed by five towns: Gabaon the capital, Caphira, Beroth, Cariathiarim and Mechmas. The Gabaonites who had been aggregated to the People of Israel rendered them invaluable assistance, for they were valiant warriors and well acquainted with the land of Canaan.

3. On Monday the 5th of June in the year 3731, the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Pentecost at the Galgala encampment.

Chapter XIII**Joshua fights five Canaanite kings and causes the sun to halt until complete victory is gained**

1. Adonisedech, king of Jerusalem, hearing of Joshua's victories and that the Gabaonites had made an alliance with the Israelites after converting to the Faith of the true God, wished to put an end to the inhabitants of the Gabaonite kingdom. However, at the same time Adonisedech greatly feared waging war on them, for their warriors were exceedingly valiant; above all, joined to those of the People of Israel, they formed a powerful army. Therefore Adonisedech, king of Jerusalem, summoned Ochan king of Hebron, Pharan king of Jerimot, Japhia king of Lachis and Debir king of Eglon, to conquer the Gabaonite kingdom between the five of them. However, the Gabaonites, seeing that they could not withstand the powerful onslaught of the five enemy armies, turned for succour to Joshua, who was encamped in Galgala with all his People.

2. On Sunday the 16th of July that year 3731, Joshua, with his army of exceedingly valiant men, set off into the hills to defend the Gabaonites who fought against the five kings. On the way the Lord told Joshua: "Do not be afraid of them, because I place them in your hands; none of them will be able to resist you." And after marching all night from Galgala, he fell without warning on the besiegers of the Gabaonite towns, obliged them to raise the siege, and went off in their pursuit along the road that goes up to Bethoron, cutting them down as far as Azeca and Macedah. However, when the fleeing enemy armies were on the way down from Bethoron, God sent a heavy and terrible shower of great hailstones which, falling upon the armies of the five Canaanite kings, caused them more victims than had been caused by the Israelite swords.

3. However, as Joshua saw that the sun was about to set, and that victory over his enemies was not as complete as he wished, he humbly entreated the Lord to allow him sufficient time to finish them off that same day; and knowing that God had heard his fervent prayer, Joshua raised his eyes heavenwards saying: "Sun, stand still over the kingdom of Gabaon, and moon, over the vale of Ayalon." And that same day, the 16th of July in the year 3731, the sun and moon halted until the People of Israel had taken vengeance upon all their enemies; and by this extraordinary miracle God's alliance with the Gabaonites was confirmed. The sun halted in the midst of the sky for the space of twelve hours longer than naturally corresponded, without thereby altering the natural calendar of time in the least. And during the time of this light, they exterminated all the inhabitants of the towns of the five enemy kingdoms, including those of Jerusalem. So great was the slaughter of the enemy that none were left alive, and the only ones to elude death were

those able to escape and hide in other towns that were enemies of the People of Israel. The five Canaanite kings who had leagued together against Israel were seized by Joshua from within a cave where they had hidden. After killing them, he ordered them to be hung on five beams, where they were left until eventide, when their corpses were buried in the cave where they had hidden. In this victorious battle, Joshua conquered the cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jerimot, Lachis and Eglon, and the other towns of these kingdoms.

Chapter XIV

Joshua's conquest of Bethel

1. On the 5th of August in the year 3731, Most Holy Melchisedech appeared to Joshua in Galgala and told him: "Prepare your valorous army for the conquest of Bethel. Fear not. I will be with you brandishing My flaming sword at the head of your soldiers, and the triumph you will achieve in this battle will sound like a thunderbolt in the ears of the other enemy kingdoms." That same day the 5th of August, eve of the great battle, Joshua sent thirty thousand Israelite soldiers to lie in ambush behind the town of Bethel.

2. On the following day, Sunday the 6th of August, Joshua, at the head of eight thousand troops, took up positions on the opposite side to the ambush, and therefore facing the main gates of Bethel town, thus to attract the enemy's attention. The Bethel Amorrhites, seeing Joshua's hosts before the main gates of the walls, went out to harass the Israelite soldiers accompanying Joshua; they, feigning fear, fled from the Amorrhites. And when the enemy had pursued them a fair distance, the thirty thousand Israelite soldiers lying in ambush left their hiding places and entered Bethel, which remained under the control of a good number of Israelite soldiers. The other part of the thirty thousand troops launched out after the Amorrhite army pursuing Joshua and his forces, and the Amorrhites were caught between the two armies of the People of Israel. All the Amorrhite soldiers from Bethel perished in the battle, including their king. Afterwards the Israelite army wiped out all of Bethel's inhabitants, for not one of them converted to God's People. The total death-roll of the Bethel idolaters was one hundred and twenty thousand, men, women and children.

Chapter XV

Joshua's other battles from August of the year 3731 until November of the year 3733

1. Following the victorious conquest of Bethel, Joshua, from Galgala, launched out on the conquest of the south-west of Canaan, seizing Philistine territory as well. And after notable triumphs over his enemies, he took his army further north, conquering among others the towns of Shiloh, Macedah, Lebna, Gazer, Tamna, Pharaton and finally Sichem, which he took in November of the year 3733. The kings of these conquered territories were exterminated by the Israelite army, as were all the inhabitants, male and female, who did not convert to the true God.

2. During the three years that the People of Israel encamped in Galgala, they celebrated there, besides the feast of the Passover and that of Pentecost, the priestly feast of Expiations and the feast of Tabernacles on their respective dates.

Chapter XVI

From Galgala the Israelites go to Sichem. There they bury Joseph's bones, offer sacrifice and read the divine blessings and maledictions

1. On the first days of December in the year 3733, Caudillo Joshua and his People departed from Galgala and set out for the recently conquered city of Sichem, taking with them the Ark of the Covenant borne by priests; and as well Patriarch Saint Joseph's remains which they had brought from Egypt to bury in Sichem, in the part of the field that his father Jacob had bought from Hemor's sons, and which he had left to his son Joseph in inheritance, passing on later to Joseph's sons. The People of Israel encamped in Sichem on the 8th of December of the same year.

2. A few days later, Joshua placed the Tabernacle with the Ark of the Covenant in the valley between Mounts Hebal and Garizim, and High Priest Eleazar offered holocausts to the Lord and sacrifices of pacific victims. Afterwards, Joshua ordered half of the people to stand beside Mount Hebal and the other half beside Mount Garizim, exactly as Moses had ordained in his last testament. Forthwith, the levite ministers read the divine blessings and maledictions as written down by Moses. Finally Joshua blessed the People of Israel.

3. The People of Israel remained encamped in Sichem for four years, complying with the feasts ordained in Mosaic Law on their corresponding dates. The Chosen People's four-year stay encamped in Sichem, brings to mind Patriarch Jacob's last four years in Sichem following his victory over the Amorrhite, before going down into Egypt.

Chapter XVII

During the four years that the People of Israel remain encamped in Sichem, Joshua launches out on further victorious battles, crowning his labour of warfare with the rout of the Canaanite emperor. Canaan's miraculous transformation, fruitfulness and enrichment following Joshua's conquests

1. During the first three years of the People of Israel's sojourn in Sichem, Joshua and his valorous warriors went out to and returned from their victorious campaigns in north-west Canaan, conquering among others the towns of Megiddo, Bethsan, Assor, Madon, Semeron, Assad, Meron, as well as the region of Dor beside the Mediterranean sea; killing their kings as well as the men and women who did not convert to the true God, and also setting fire to some of their towns; since the great Caudillo Joshua, always faithful to God's orders, was not to rest until he achieved the conquest of the greater part of western Canaan.

2. On the 23rd of November in the year 3736, Joshua crowned his military mission with the great victorious battle against the powerful Canaanite emperor, whom he slew with his own sword, and the great majority of his subjects were exterminated as well by the swords of the Israelite armies. The imperial city of North Cana was completely destroyed, and the Israelite armies took possession of the immense wealth in the emperor's splendid palace.

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3. Joshua, in his victorious campaigns, conquered all the north-west of Canaan, including what today is Lebanon. Thirty-two were the kings he overcame, besides their powerful emperor.

4. The territory of the Promised Land conquered by Moses and by Joshua had as limits: to the north, Syria; to the south, the Idumean Ranges; to the east, the Arabian Desert; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

5. When Joshua concluded his conquests, the eastern part of Canaan as likewise the western part, both occupied by Israel, underwent a miraculous transformation, with greater fruitfulness and enrichment than previously possessed, thereby becoming a veritable paradise.

Chapter XVIII

Distribution of the occidental part of the Land of Canaan by Joshua. Situation of each tribe's corresponding territory following the distribution first by Moses and later by Joshua

1. In December of the year 3736, when the People of Israel were encamped in Sichem, the Lord told Joshua to distribute that part of the Promised Land he had conquered, namely the zone of Canaan to the west of the Jordan, in ten portions. They drew lots for the ten portions, thus to decide the territories corresponding to each of those ten tribes.

2. Here follows the distribution of the whole land according to each tribe. In the part to the east of the Jordan, conquered and shared out by Moses:

The tribe of Ruben was situated towards the south, and had the following limits: to the north, Mount Nebo; to the south, Idumea; to the east, the Arabian Desert; and to the west, the Dead Sea.

The tribe of Gad was situated in the centre, and had the following limits: to the north, the Golan heights; to the south, the Dead Sea and the tribe of Ruben; to the east, the Arabian Desert; and to the west, the river Jordan.

In the part to the west of the Jordan, conquered and distributed by Joshua:

The tribe of Dan was situated towards the south-west, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribe of Ephraim; to the south, that of Simeon; to the east, those of Benjamin and Judah; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The tribe of Nephtali was situated towards the north-east, and had the following limits: to the north, Syria; to the south, the tribe of Zabulon; to the east, Lake Genesareth and the Jordan; and to the west, the tribe of Asser.

The tribe of Simeon was situated towards the south-west, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribes of Dan and Judah; to the south, Idumea; to the east, the tribe of Judah; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The tribe of Judah was situated towards the south-east, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribe of Benjamin; to the south, Idumea; to the east, the Dead Sea; and to the west, the tribes of Simeon and of Dan.

The tribe of Asser was situated towards the north-west, and had the following limits: to the north, Syria; to the south, the tribe of Zabulon; to the east, the tribe of Nephtali; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The tribe of Issachar was situated in the centre, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribe of Zabulon; to the south, that of Manasses; to the east, the river Jordan and the tribe of Gad; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The tribe of Zabulon was situated centrally in the north, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribes of Asser and Nephtali; to the south, that of Issachar; to the east, Lake Genesareth; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The tribe of Benjamin was situated in the centre, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribe of Ephraim; to the south, that of Judah; to the east the river Jordan, the Dead Sea and the tribe of Gad; and to the west, the tribe of Dan.

The tribe of Ephraim was situated in the centre, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribe of Manasses; to the south, the tribes of Dan and Benjamin; to the east, the river Jordan and the tribe of Gad; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

The tribe of Manasses was situated in the centre, and had the following limits: to the north, the tribe of Issachar; to the south, that of Ephraim; to the east, the river Jordan and the tribe of Gad; and to the west, the Mediterranean Sea.

3. The tribe of Levi, in fulfilment of Jacob's curse, did not have any territorial part in the distribution of the Promised Land; instead it was designated a total of forty-eight towns distributed among the other tribes. Those of the tribe of Levi had indirect dominion or usufruct over the towns they had to live in; and besides, the priests and levite ministers received from the thirteen tribes tithes from the incomes of their properties and harvests gathered, so that they might thus dedicate themselves freely to their ministries, whether properly priestly, or solely that of the levites, according to case.

4. In the distribution of the Promised Land, Joshua granted Caleb the city of Hebron for himself and his children in perpetuity, just as the Lord had ordered Moses, as reward for his veracious testimony regarding Canaan following the exploration of the land.

5. Following the distribution of the part of the Promised Land that corresponded to Joshua, each tribe left for the territory it had been assigned in the part to the west of the Jordan. The menfolk of the tribes of Ruben and Gad, who had accompanied Joshua in his conquests, left as well for the territories they had been assigned by Moses in the part to the east of the Jordan. All the tribes left in possession of many goods and riches: gold, silver, copper, iron, clothing, and so forth, result of the despoiling of their enemies.

6. The land conquered by Moses and by Joshua was not the complete Promised Land under Abraham's rule that God had promised him to give to his descendants; since, following Joshua's death, the People of Israel had to continue their conquests until finally gaining the entirety of the ample territory of the Promised Land, and this did not occur until the reign of David, from whom Solomon received it all.

5th Part: The Book of Joshua – Book I: The People of Israel's conquests in the Promised Land under Joshua's command

Book II

Last years of Joshua's life

Chapter I

Joshua installs the Tabernacle in the town of Shiloh

On the 23rd of December in the year 3737, Caudillo Joshua set out from Sichem for Shiloh, accompanied by Vice-Caudillo Caleb, High Priest Eleazar and a considerable cortege. On the 25th of December that same year, he established the Lord's Tabernacle in Shiloh, town to the north of Bethel, within the territory of the tribe of Ephraim; given that Shiloh, located in the centre of Canaan, was better situated than any other town for the observance of the annual feasts by the children of the People of Israel, who had to travel from the corresponding territories they had each been assigned.

Chapter II

Men of the tribes of Ruben and Gad erect an altar close by the Jordan

Once distribution had been made of the Canaanian territory to the other tribes, when the soldiers of the tribes of Ruben and Gad had left Sichem for their respective territories on the east side of the Jordan, it came to pass that, having crossed the river, they erected an altar of great dimensions to God on the riverbank; which they did with the pious intention of giving testimony to posterity that, though separated by the Jordan, they too belonged to the Holy Church of the Lord God of Israel. However, as this reached the ears of the other tribes, believing that the altar had been erected to offer sacrifices to God, which could only be done in the Tabernacle, Joshua dispatched the priest Phinees, High Priest Eleazar's son, and with him a representative of each of the tribes of Canaan's western territory. When they reached the tribes of Ruben and Gad, they told them: "What transgression is this? Why have you abandoned the Lord God of Israel, erecting a sacrilegious altar and separating from His worship?" However, those of the other two tribes showed the priest Phinees and his companions that they had not erected the altar to offer holocausts or other sacrifices to God, since that was strictly forbidden by the law, rather as testimony to all that they adored the same God as the other tribes of Israel. Phinees, seeing that they were far from any prevarication, was satisfied with them; and praising God, returned to Shiloh.

Chapter III

Joshua builds a Temple of lasting character to God in Shiloh

1. On the 1st of January in the year 3740, that is, eight years prior to Joshua's death, God ordered him to build a temple in Shiloh town, well fortified, lasting, not transient. Joshua, with all diligence quickly set to work, employing seven years in the construction of the Temple in God's honour. On the 1st of January 3747, the Temple concluded, Joshua consecrated it according to the rite established in Mosaic Law, and ordered the Ark of the Covenant to be placed in the Sanctum Sanctorum. As from the inauguration of the Temple, the town of Shiloh was called Holy City, until this Temple was destroyed more than three centuries later.

2. During the eighth year, last of Joshua's life, in the great Temple raised up by him to God, all the feasts prescribed in Mosaic law were celebrated: Passover, Pentecost, Expiations and Tabernacles, and several others besides.

Chapter IV

Joshua conducts a census of the People of Israel

On the 1st of January in the year 3747, last of his life, Joshua conducted a census of God's People subject to him, including all the members of the People of Israel: both those who were Israelites by birth as well as those who were Israelites solely by Faith. According to this census, the total of those belonging to the Chosen People was eight hundred and sixty-four thousand persons, male and female, according to the following distribution: from the house of Joseph, seventy-two thousand: thirty-six thousand from the tribe of Ephraim and thirty-six thousand from the tribe of Manasses. From the tribe of Ruben, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Dan, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Nephtali, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Simeon, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Levi, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Judah, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Gad, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Asser, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Issachar, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Zabulon, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Benjamin, seventy-two thousand.

Chapter V

Holy death of High Priest Eleazar

A few days after the end of the Feast of Tabernacles that year 3747, High Priest Eleazar died in holiness in Shiloh. However, moments before his death, Joshua transmitted the High Priesthood to Phinees the Priest, clothing him with the vestments of his father Eleazar; so that at the latter's death, Phinees was consecrated High Priest of God's People. Afterwards Joshua undertook to give worthy burial to Eleazar, laying him to rest beneath the Shiloh Temple.

Chapter VI

Caleb, son of Hur, is anointed Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo of the People of Israel by Joshua. Joshua's holy death in Shiloh

1. In the year 3747, three days prior to Joshua's death, he, by order of the Lord, before the Temple in the city of Shiloh, laying his hands upon Caleb's head, anointed him Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo of Israel. Present at this ceremony were High Priest Phinees, the seventy-two priests of the Council of Elders, the seventy members of the Council of Judges, and a great multitude of Israelite faithful.

2. Following this most solemn ceremony, the great Caudillo Joshua gave his last exhortations to his People, placing before them all the great benefits they had received from the Lord, Whom alone they should serve as Holy and Jealous God, and that if some day they were unfaithful to Him, serving false gods, God would turn against them and destroy all the good He had done for them. He exhorted them most especially to continue to battle against the natives of those territories of the Promised Land which still remained to be conquered; and to wipe out, from the pagan peoples whom they were to conquer, their temples, altars, idols and idolaters, in order that Faith in the true God might not become mingled with iniquity. At Joshua's words they replied unanimously that they would serve the Lord in obedience to His precepts. Joshua, that day, made a new covenant of his People with the Lord, and wrote the acts of this new covenant together with divine precepts and laws which he gave the people to know. Then he ordered thirteen large stones to be brought, and raised a great column in that place, and told all the people: "This sign will serve as testimony that you have heard from my mouth the words that the Lord has spoken through me and which you have undertaken to fulfil, so that afterwards you may not deny it, nor lie to the Lord your God." And he dismissed the people, so that each might go to his destination. Joshua committed to Caleb the original Books of Moses for them to be placed in the Ark of the Covenant; and besides, he committed to him his own Book and several copies of Moses', so that Mosaic Law might be continually recalled to the People and be passed down from parents to children.

3. On the 25th of December that year 3747, Joshua died a holy death in Shiloh, on the same day that he reached one hundred and eleven years of age, seventeenth anniversary as well of the miraculous crossing of the river Jordan by the Israelites. Joshua, then, was Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo of Israel for more than seventeen years. Following his death his successor, the Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo Caleb, buried him in Shiloh town beneath God's Temple.

Book III

God's People governed by Caleb, Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo

Chapter I

New conquests by the People of Israel under Caleb's command

1. In the year 3747, when Caleb was anointed Israel's Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo by Joshua, he was one hundred and seven years of age. The first eight years of Caleb's rule over the People of Israel were of great peace, since they passed without any war at all.

2. In December of the year 3755, the eighth of Caleb's leadership, the northern part of the territory of the People of Israel, in the neighbourhood of Mount Hermon, was invaded by the thirteen kings of the territory today called Syria. At this invasion, Most Holy Ananias told Caleb: "Prepare an army from each of the thirteen tribes and go north to Mount Hermon. Not only fight against these kings, but procure the conversion of many and occupy as well the territory of the thirteen invading kings. I will go before you. This territory was conquered by the sword of My servant Abraham, and now it behoves you to reconquer it." Caleb and his army set off to where Most Holy Ananias had sent him, and took to the field against Syria's thirteen kings, and the Lord placed them in his hands, routing them. By this great victory, Caleb reconquered for the People of God the extensive territory of Syria, in which the respective kingdoms were situated. Many of their inhabitants converted to the true God; the kings, however, and the great majority of their army, did not convert, and were wiped out. The Israelite victory under Caleb over the Syrian kings and their army took place on the 25th of December that year 3755.

3. Following the reconquest of Syria's territory, Most Holy Ananias told Caleb: "Share out the reconquered land among Israel's tribes." Of the thirteen tribes, only that of Ruben had no part in this distribution, since that tribe's army had a merely symbolic presence in the conquest of the territory, without taking any part in the fighting; therefore the tribe of Ruben was not given any part of Syrian territory, for not having fought, fulfilling once again Jacob's prophecy concerning his firstborn: "Ruben, ... do not grow, because you went up to your father's bed and profaned his nuptial couch." The tribe of Levi was given twenty-four more towns in usufruct which, together with the forty-eight towns previously given to them, made a total of seventy-two towns. The sharing out of Syrian territory implied an enlargement of each of the twelve tribes so favoured by way of a northerly displacement of their previous borders.

4. In Caleb's great battle against the thirteen Syrian kings, Othoniel, general of his army, son of Joshua's younger brother Cenez, won distinction. For Othoniel's brilliant war exploits, Caleb gave him his daughter Axa to wife.

Chapter II

Caleb conquers a great part of Sinai territory, including Mount Horeb

1. Eight years after the Syrian conquest, in December of the year 3763, Most Holy Ananias told Caleb: "Take Mount Sinai and a great part of its territory, somewhat more than half; that is My Mount; but do not take the whole of that desert." Caleb, always obedient to God's commands, undertook the conquest of a great part of that territory, obtaining victory against the enemy armies on the 25th of December that year 3763, sixteenth of Caleb's Caudilloship over the People of Israel. As the territory of Edom or Idumea pertained geographically to the Sinai desert, Caleb, on reconquering a great part of that desert, naturally also took a great part of Edom or Idumea in the reconquest.

2. Following Caleb's conquest of that part of Sinai territory, Most Holy Ananias ordered him to share it out among the tribes. In this distribution, a portion of territory was given to the tribe of Ruben, since it had co-operated with its army in the conquest. The tribe of Levi was given another eight towns in usufruct, and possessed from then on a total of eighty. The distribution of Sinai territory implied as well an enlargement of the territory of each of the thirteen tribes by means of a southerly displacement of their previous borders.

Chapter III**Caleb conducts a new census of the People of Israel**

On the 1st of January in the year 3770, Caleb's twenty-third as Caudillo, he conducted a census of all the children of the People of Israel, both those who were Israelites by birth as well as those who were Israelites solely by Faith, all adorers of the true God. The total registered was one million one hundred and fifty-two thousand persons, male and female, as follows. From the house of Joseph, ninety-six thousand: forty-eight thousand from the tribe of Ephraim and forty-eight thousand from the tribe of Manasses. From the tribe of Ruben, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Dan, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Nephtali, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Simeon, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Levi, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Judah, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Gad, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Asser, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Issachar, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Zabulon, ninety-six thousand. From the tribe of Benjamin, ninety-six thousand. Thus the total came to two hundred and eighty-eight thousand persons more than in the census that Caudillo Joshua had conducted twenty-three years previously. On conducting the census, the new converts were distributed among the thirteen tribes in order to equalize each tribe's number.

Chapter IV**Caleb, Prophet, Pastor and Caudillo of the People of Israel dies a holy death. High Priest Phinees' interim government over the People of Israel**

On the 29th of December that same year 3770, having completed twenty-three years of Caudilloship, Caleb died a holy death in Shiloh at the age of one hundred and thirty years. There was no successor. Caleb had charged that, following his death, High Priest Phinees was to bury him in Hebron, a short way from the Machpela grotto where Abraham and other Patriarchs lay buried; and this he did. Immediately after Caleb's death, Phinees took over interim rule of the People of Israel, feeling the divine impulse in his heart to do so. Phinees' regency lasted somewhat over three years, since he ruled until the appointment of Israel's first Judge, Othniel, which occurred in the year 3774.

Chapter V

The cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron and other nearby towns, always pertained to the territory of the tribe of Judah
In both the northerly and southerly displacements of the tribal territories, according to the divine plan, the cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron, and other nearby towns, always remained within the territory of the tribe of Judah.

Sixth Part

The Book of Judges

Book I**Authority of the Judges of the People of Israel**

1. In Israel each Judge exercised his authority over the whole territory of the Chosen People, so that his rule was not merely local. God ruled His People through Judges chosen directly by Him, not by popular election. Hence the government was theocratic, government by God. Throughout the three hundred and twenty-three years during which Judges ruled the People of Israel there were interregnums, that is, periods in which the People of God were deprived of a Judge's authority, which was exercised by the corresponding High Priest until a new Judge was chosen.

2. During the theocratic period there were thirteen Judges who successively ruled the People of Israel; each of them, in addition to being Judge, was Prophet and Caudillo. Each Judge of the People of Israel came from a different tribe, that is, there were thirteen Judges, one for each tribe, in the following order: Othniel, Aod, Samgar, Deborah, Gedeon, Tola, Jair, Jephthe, Abesan, Elon, Abdon, Samson, and Samuel.

3. During the period of rule by Judges, invasions occurred in Israelite territory by people from pagan nations, who as a result influenced quite a number of Israelites by their paganism and idolatry. This is one of the sundry reasons why many of the children of Israel accepted idolatrous worship and way of life, thereby prevaricating from the true God on manifold occasions.

4. Throughout the extended period in which Israel was ruled by Judges, there occurred one interregnum of seven years and eleven of one month. The interregnums of one month which preceded the election of a new Judge corresponded to the thirty days of mourning for the preceding deceased Judge; they, then, were ordinary interregnums. Nonetheless, the interregnum of seven years that preceded the election of the corresponding Judge came about because of the prevarication of the children of Israel. God permitted, during this long interval in which His People were deprived of the authority of a Judge, enemies to invade some Israelite territories, which remained under the invader's yoke; and this lasted until the Lord God of Israel, ever awaiting the conversion of His children, on perceiving their display of sincere repentance, took pity on them and chose a new Judge in order to raise up His People from their prostration, and thereby cause divine intervention to shine. There were also perverse Judges, permitted by God because His People deserved them.

5. Every time God chose a Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel, the newly elect went to where the Temple of God was located; and in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, the corresponding High Priest anointed him with oil, thereby officially proclaiming him Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. Through the anointing, the High Priest transmitted to him the governmental powers the Pontiff had been exercising during the interregnum. But prior to anointing the new Judge, the High Priest consulted with God in order for Him to confirm that this was the one He had chosen as Judge.

6th Part: The Book of Judges – Book I: Authority of the Judges of the People of Israel

Book II**The Judges Othniel and Aod****Chapter I****Othniel, first Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel.****Othniel frees the Israelites from the oppression of Cusan, king of Edom. Death of Othniel**

1. In the year 3774 God chose the first Judge of the People of Israel. He was called Othniel, of the tribe of Ephraim, son of Joshua's younger brother Cenez. Othniel was at the same time son-in-law of Caudillo Caleb, whose daughter Axa he had married. At the time of his election the High Priest was Phinees, who as regent had been ruling the People of Israel for somewhat more than three years following the death of the Prophet, Shepherd and Caudillo Caleb. It was Phinees who anointed Othniel before the Temple of Shiloh, in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Othniel was Judge of Israel for forty years and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

2. Eight years prior to the final year of Othniel's Caudilloship, that is, in the year 3806, King Cusan of Edom invaded part of the territory of Israel. This was permitted by God owing to the prevarication of the children of Israel dwelling there. Not all Israel came under the yoke of the king of Edom as a result of this invasion, but only the part bordering on Idumea. The other Israelite territories remained under Othniel's rule. In the year 3814 Othniel went out to give battle to the invading armies, and the Lord vanquished the enemies of His People and delivered King Cusan of Edom into the hands of His Caudillo. By this victory Othniel not only reconquered the Israelite territories invaded by King Cusan, but in addition entered the territory of Edom or Idumea and completely reconquered it. As a result, all of Edom or Idumea came under the dominion of the People of God.

3. In the same year 3814, that is, in the fortieth year of his rule, Othniel died in holiness and was buried beneath the Temple of Shiloh.

Chapter II**Aod, second Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel.****Aod frees the Israelites from the oppression of Eglon, king of the Moabites in exile. Death of Aod**

1. After the death of Othniel there was a month's interregnum, during which Phinees, High Priest at the time, assumed command. In the same year 3814, the interregnum concluded, God chose Aod, son of Gera, from the tribe of Benjamin, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. After Aod had been chosen, the High Priest anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Aod was Judge of Israel for eighty years, and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

2. With the passing of time, during Judge Aod's rule many of the Israelites living on the east side of the Jordan and to the east of the Dead Sea prevaricated. This region is where the kingdom of Moab conquered by Moses had been. And God permitted Eglon, king of the Moabites, who was in exile waiting for the opportunity to invade and regain his former possessions, to arm himself powerfully for waging war on the inhabitants of this prevaricating Israelite territory, with the object of invading it. To do so Eglon recruited all his subjects who had taken refuge outside Moabite territory: some in Egypt, others in Mesopotamia, others in Arabia, and so forth; moreover, he joined forces with the Ammonites and Amalechites.

3. In the year 3876, that is, eighteen years prior to the eightieth year of Aod's rule, the king of the Moabites defeated the children of Israel; and he not only invaded the kingdom of Moab conquered by Moses, but also other neighbouring territories, seizing as well the city of Jericho. The Israelites who lived in the territories invaded by King Eglon were subject to his servitude for eighteen years; that is, until God was moved to pity for those children of His People seeing their repentance and hearing their clamour. In order to free them from the enemy yoke, in the year 3894, God said to the Prophet, Judge and Caudillo Aod: "Take your powerful army and give battle to King Eglon of the Moabites until you overcome him, and retake all the territory he has seized, including that formerly possessed by the Moabites. I will be with you. Trust in Me."

4. Following God's instructions, Aod, commanding the army of the People of Israel, made ready to fight against the king of Moab in face to face combat that was a holy war directed by God, Supreme King of the Universe. For the great battle against the invaders, the Judge and Caudillo Aod marshalled his army on the eastern limits of Mount Ephraim, not far from the city of Jericho. When Aod sounded the trumpet on the Mount, as a sign to start the war, he said to his soldiers: "Follow me, for the Lord has delivered our enemies the Moabites into our hands." The great battle was fought in the valley of Galgala, on the west bank of the Jordan, near Jericho, where the large Moabite army was encountered and vanquished with great slaughter. During the battle the courageous Judge Aod, fighting against King Eglon in face to face combat, slew him with his own sword. In view of the death of their king, the survivors of the enemy army fled. But since the Israelite army had cut off the roads of access to the Jordan, none of the enemy was able to cross to the other side of the river. In this great victory the Israelites slew ten thousand Moabites, all robust and vigorous men, none of them managing to escape. In this way the kingdom of Moab was reconquered and the Moabites humbled by Israel. In the year 3894 Aod, Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel died in holiness in Shiloh, having ruled for eighty years.

6th Part: The Book of Judges – Book II: The Judges Othniel and Aod

Book III The Book of Ruth

Chapter I

Noemi leaves Bethlehem and goes to live in the Israelite land of Moab. Ruth's conversion

1. The history of the Moabitess Saint Ruth occurred during the long rule of Judge Aod. Among the many pagan Moabite families who had infiltrated the People of God was that of Ruth's parents, who had arrived at the town of Ar, in Israelite Moab territory, in the final year of the rule of Judge Othoniel. When Aod became Judge, in the year 3814, a daughter named Orpha was born in Ar to the Moabite couple, and Ruth a year later. The father of the two girls was a distinguished man.

2. And it came to pass that in the twenty-eighth year of the rule of Judge Aod, there occurred a great famine in some of the western territories of the land of Israel. For that reason, Elimelech, from Bethlehem of Judah, was compelled to depart for the Israelite territory of Moab with his wife Noemi and their two sons Mahalon and Chelion, all born in Bethlehem. Entering Moab, they settled in Ar.

3. Shortly after they had established themselves, Noemi became acquainted with the pagans Orpha and Ruth, who lived with their widowed mother. Despite the differences in blood and faith, the two sisters felt drawn to Noemi owing to her great virtues. And she, a great Apostle of the Faith of the People of Israel, spoke to Orpha and Ruth about the religion of the true God. The two sisters and their mother, through Noemi's pious exhortations, were converted to the Faith of Israel.

4. In the year 3844, two years after establishing themselves in Moab, Noemi's husband Elimelech died, and she remained there with her two sons, who married that same year: Mahalon to Ruth and Chelion to Orpha. Ruth at the time was twenty-nine years of age. Two years after the double marriage, Noemi and her sons and daughters-in-law went to live in Settum of Moab. The mother of Orpha and Ruth remained behind in Ar. After ten years of marriage Mahalon and Chelion died childless. Shortly afterwards, having heard that the famine in her land had ceased, Noemi decided to leave the Israelite territory of Moab and return to Bethlehem of Judah. And though she desired to take Orpha and Ruth with her, Noemi wanted them to freely make up their own minds. To put them to the test, she said to her daughters-in-law: "You can return home to your mother, and may the Lord be merciful to you, just as you were to my deceased sons and to me. And may God grant that you find rest in the homes of the new husbands He can give you." When she heard this, Orpha, whose Faith in the God of Israel was not very strong, and who, therefore, did not wish to accompany her mother-in-law, saw the way clear to leave her without any opposition; hence, kissing Noemi, she made ready to return to her mother's home in Ar. Ruth on the contrary, raising her voice, began to weep saying to Noemi: "I will go with you to the town of your birth." To which Noemi responded: "Go back as well, my daughter, why come with me? Do I perhaps have another son so that you can hope for a new husband from me? No, my daughter, don't come with me, for your anguish worsens mine and the hand of God is raised up against me." Then Ruth, who did not want to abandon her mother-in-law, bathed in tears said: "Don't insist further that I leave you and go, for wherever you go, I too will go, and wherever you live, I too will live. Your people is my people and your God is my God. In the land where you die, I too will die, and where you are buried, there too will I be buried. Only death will separate me from you." When she saw Ruth's firm determination, Noemi, filled with joy, left with her for Bethlehem of Judah. After they had entered the town, the news quickly spread to everyone, and the women said: "This is that Noemi." To whom she said: "Do not call me Noemi (meaning gracious) but Mara (meaning bitter) because the Almighty has filled me to the brim with bitterness. I left filled, and the Lord has caused me to return empty. Why then call me Noemi, when the Lord has humbled me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?" So then, Noemi proceeded from the land of her pilgrimage accompanied by her daughter-in-law the Moabitess Ruth, and returned to Bethlehem at the beginning of the grain harvest.

Chapter II

Ruth goes to glean grain on Booz's estate

1. Elimelech, Noemi's deceased husband, had a blood relative, a powerful and very wealthy man called Booz, who was very elderly. Ruth said to her mother-in-law: "If you give me leave, I will go out into the fields and pick up the ears that fall from the hands of the reapers; for I hope that some householder will receive me well and have compassion on me." Noemi replied: "Off you go, my daughter." So Ruth went out, and following after the reapers she picked up the ears of grain. And it chanced that the field belonged to Booz; who, when he came from Bethlehem to see to the harvest, said to the reapers: "May the Lord be with you." And they made him answer: "May the Lord bless you." And observing Ruth gleaning, Booz said to the overseer: "To whom does that woman belong?" He answered: "She is the Moabitess who came with Noemi, and who has asked leave to follow after the reapers picking up the ears that are left; and she has been in the field since very early up until now, without going back home for a moment." And Booz said to Ruth: "Listen, my daughter, don't go to glean in other fields, nor go away from this place; but keep on gleaning here with the other girls. I have given orders to my servants that no one bother you; on the contrary, if you are thirsty, go to the camp and drink the water my servants also drink." Then Ruth, bowing her face to the ground, made him a deep reverence, and said: "Whence comes to me the happiness of finding grace in your eyes, that you deign to treat me so kindly, and I a stranger?" To which Booz responded: "They have told me of all the good works you did for your mother-in-law after your husband's death, and that you have left your relatives and homeland in order to come to a land you do not know. May the Lord reward you according to your works and may you receive a fitting crown from the God of Israel, to Whom you have had recourse, and under whose wings you have taken shelter." She said: "I

have found grace in your eyes, my lord, for you have consoled and spoken to the heart of this your slave, who is not even worthy to be numbered among your servants." Booz said to her: "When it is time to eat, come here and eat of the bread, and dip your morsel in the sauce." And Booz gave this order to the reapers: "Now and then, purposely let ears fall from your sheaves, so that she can pick them up easily without feeling ashamed."

2. Come midday, Ruth sat with the servants; and Booz gave her a share of the pottage and she ate her fill, keeping the leftovers. Booz was charmed at Ruth's virtue, simplicity and beauty; but without aspiring to marry her on this account, given the great difference in age. Ruth, then, kept on gleaning in the fields until evening; and after graining the ears gathered, she found herself with a fair amount of cereal; and laden with the grain, she returned to the town and gave it to her mother-in-law; and, moreover, gave her the leftovers of the meal of which she had eaten her fill. Noemi asked her: "Where have you gleaned today? Blessed be the man who had pity on you." And Ruth made known to her that she had been gleaning in the field of a man called Booz. To this Noemi replied: "May he be blest by the Lord. He is a very charitable man and a relative of ours." Ruth said: "He also bid me join his servants until all the fields are harvested." And Ruth continued to glean in Booz's fields until the grain and the wheat were stored in the barns.

Chapter III

Booz marries Ruth

1. Booz's kindly treatment of Ruth had instilled in her not only veneration, but even great affection for the old man; all of which he was very pleased to observe. And since it was God's desire for the two to join in holy matrimony, despite the great difference in age, Booz felt in his heart the divine impulse to seek Noemi's permission to marry Ruth.

2. In the summer of the year 3855, while Ruth was gleaning in Booz's fields, the latter went to Noemi's home to speak to her about marrying her daughter-in-law. And though Noemi interiorly felt that the old man's desire was prompted by God, she did not wish to give her consent to the marriage without knowing Ruth's opinion. Hours after Booz had left Noemi's home, Ruth arrived laden with the grain she had gathered in her work, and Noemi said to her: "My daughter, I wish to seek rest for you, and arrange for your welfare. That relative of ours, Booz, with whose maidservants you go out into the fields, and who is a very virtuous man, has asked me to give you to him as wife. Now I want to know if you are prepared to marry him, since the difference in age is very great. But by the signs, I see that it is in God's plan that you both marry for the greater glory of the Lord God of Israel." When Ruth heard her mother-in-law's words, her heart was filled with supernatural joy, for she perceived that the feeling in Booz's soul was the same as in hers. Accordingly, Ruth made known to her mother-in-law her eager desire to accept Booz as her husband. So Noemi said to Ruth: "Wash, then, and perfume yourself, and put on your finest garments; for I am going to let Booz know that it is God's wish, and yours, that he take you to wife." And Noemi sent a message to Booz to come and interview Ruth so as to arrange the marriage. The old man, accompanied by some of his principal menservants and maidservants, came to Noemi's home. When Ruth saw Booz enter, she knelt before him. And Booz, in the presence of Noemi and his servants, said to Ruth: "May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have surpassed your first kindness and prudence by this one of now, because you have not desired to marry a man younger than I, but have laid your eyes upon me, an old man, whom God has prepared for you. I shall take you to wife, for all the people of Bethlehem know you to be a woman of great virtue." Booz, despite his many years, was a man who, by divine providence, was still handsome and vigorous.

3. That same year 3855, the forty-first of Aod's rule, the aged and venerable Booz, one hundred and twenty-four years of age, married Ruth, forty years of age. And after cohabiting with her, the Lord granted that she conceive and bear a son, whom they called Obed, who was the father of Isai surnamed Jesse, the father of David. From the descendants of Booz and Ruth would be born the Messias Saviour.

4. The women of Bethlehem, felicitating one another, said to each other: "A son has been born to Ruth." And they also manifested their joy to Noemi, saying to her: "Blessed be the Lord for having given a son to your daughter-in-law who loves you, and which is for you as much happiness as if you had seven children." And Noemi cared for that child as if he were her own grandson.

5. Ruth's sister Orpha, on the other hand, returned home to live with her mother in the town of Ar, in the Israelite territory of Moab. A year later her mother died, and Orpha, whose faith in the religion of Israel had always been weak, apostatized from the true God returning to the idolatry and pagan morals she had practised prior to her conversion. Such was her corruption that she left the People of Israel and married a Philistine. The giant Goliath was to be born from the descendants of Orpha and the Philistine.

Book IV

The Judges Samgar, Deborah, Gedeon and Tola

Chapter I

Samgar, third Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel. Death of Samgar

1. Judge Aod died in the year 3894, and after a month's interregnum during which the corresponding High Priest assumed command, God chose Samgar the son of Anat, from the tribe of Simeon, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. After Samgar had been chosen, the High Priest anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Samgar was Judge for seven years, and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people. During his rule the Philistines invaded part of the south of the People of Israel, and Samgar, with his army, expelled the invaders, killing more than six thousand of them.

2. In the seventh and final year of Judge Samgar's rule, given the prevarication of many Israelites in some of the territories of the northern part of Israel, God permitted Jabin, the Canaanite king in exile, to invade some of those territories, to dominate them for twenty years and to establish his throne in the Israelite town of Assor. The general of Jabin's army was called Sisara, who lived in the nearby town of Haroseth. Samgar died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 3901.

Chapter II

Deborah, fourth Prophetess, Judge and Caudilla of the People of Israel. Barach, military Caudillo of the People of Israel. Death of Deborah

1. With Judge Samgar dead, after a month's interregnum during which the corresponding High Priest assumed command, in that same year of 3901 God chose Deborah as Prophetess, Judge and Caudilla of the People of Israel. She belonged to the tribe of Nephtali, was born in Cades, and was the wife of Lapidot, also known as Abinoem. Deborah was sanctified when anointed Prophetess by the Triple Benediction touching her lips, through the ministry of the Soul of Christ, at the moment she was chosen as Judge of the People of Israel. Thus was this holy woman prepared to rule and judge her people. After she had been chosen, the High Priest anointed Deborah with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to her the powers of government. Deborah was Judge for twenty years and had her official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where she ruled and judged her people.

2. In the twentieth year of Judge Deborah's rule, God seeing the sincere repentance of that part of His People invaded by the Canaanites, and hearkening to the clamour of His grievously oppressed children, commanded the Prophetess, Judge and Caudilla Deborah to expel the invaders. Deborah sent for her son Barach and said to him: "The Lord God of Israel has given me this command for you: 'You, Barach, will be military Caudillo of Israel. Go, then, and take ten thousand Israelite soldiers, and proceed with the army to Mount Thabor, and I will cause Sisara, general of the army of the Canaanite king Jabin, together with his chariots and all his people, to go to the Cisson Brook, where you will go as well, and I will deliver them up into your hands.'" Prompted by God, Barach said to his mother: "If you come with me, I will go; but should you not wish to, I will not go." To this Deborah replied: "Well and good, I will accompany you; but the victory will not be attributed to you, because Sisara will be vanquished by the courageous spirit of a woman." Deborah, Barach and ten thousand soldiers departed from Shiloh for Mount Thabor.

3. When Sisara received the news that Barach, military Caudillo of Israel, had gone up to Mount Thabor with a powerful army in order to present him battle, the general of the Canaanite army assembled nine hundred armed chariots, and marched all his men from Haroseth to the Cisson Brook. Then Deborah said to Barach: "Let us go then, since this day the Lord has delivered Sisara and his army into our hands. Look, the God of Israel Himself is our Caudillo in the battle." And Deborah gave her son every instruction as to how he should conduct the battle. And while she remained on Mount Thabor praying to God for the triumph of Israel's armies, Barach descended with ten thousand soldiers to wage war on the Canaanites. At the sight of Israel's army, the Lord filled Sisara and all his soldiers with terror; and the great majority perished in the battle at the hands of the Israelite army. As the surviving Canaanites fled, they were pursued by the Israelite soldiers up to the city of Haroseth, where Barach ran Sisara through with his sword and killed him. At this triumph the children of Israel became more determined and headed for the city of Assor, seat of King Jabin, which after a difficult siege was taken by Barach, who captured the Canaanite king alive and took him to Deborah, who pierced him through with her sword on Mount Thabor. In this manner God, through a resolute woman, the Prophetess, Judge and Caudilla Deborah, on that day humbled Jabin, usurper of part of the territories of the People of Israel. This victory took place in the year 3921.

4. After Deborah's and Barach's glorious victory against the Canaanite armies, mother and son sang a hymn in honour of the Mighty and Powerful God of Israel. Deborah began thus: "O men of Israel, who have voluntarily risked your lives, bless the Lord for such a great victory. Listen, kings, pay great heed, O princes, I, a woman, Deborah, will be the first to sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord of Israel." For his part, Barach, in order to exalt the grandeur of God for having availed Himself of a woman's courage in order to defend the rights of His People, said: "The brave had come to an end in Israel, had disappeared, until Deborah rose up and showed herself a mother to Israel. The Lord has chosen a new and marvellous method of waging war, and He Himself, by means of a woman, has destroyed the strength of His enemies. O People of Israel, bless the Lord!" Deborah died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 3921.

Chapter III

Fresh prevarication of the children of the People of Israel

1. After the death of Deborah in the year 3921, there was an interregnum of seven years during which the High Priest of that time assumed command. That Israel should have been deprived of a Judge to rule over her for so many years was due to the prevarication of many of the People of Israel, especially those in the south; and during the interregnum, God permitted the zones of the prevaricators to fall into the hands of the Madianites, who oppressed their inhabitants in such fashion that they were compelled to make grottos and caves in the mountains to take refuge, as well as strongholds for their defence.

2. During those seven years, the Israelites who lived under Madianite domination were the victims of oppression; for the Madianites laid waste to the crops the Israelites sowed in their fields, and destroyed their fruit or seized it at harvest time. Thus the Israelites underwent such utter humiliation that, moved to sincere repentance, they clamoured for the help of the Lord with cries of distress.

Chapter IV

Gedeon, fifth Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel

1. In the year 3928, the seventh of the interregnum, the Angel of the Lord, who was the Most Divine Soul of Christ, appeared, under the figure of a Man, in Ephra, seated beneath a holm-oak in the field of Joas, Gedeon's father, when his son was threshing and cleaning grain in the press in order to conceal it from the Madianites. Gedeon's family had remained faithful amid the apostasy of that section of His people. The Angel of the Lord said to Gedeon: "The Lord is with you, O bravest of men. Go in your strength and free Israel from the power of the Madianites; and know that I have sent you." In these words God chose Gedeon, from the tribe of Manasse, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. Gedeon, who deemed himself unworthy of the exalted and difficult post entrusted to him, replied: "Ah, my Lord, I beseech you to tell me how I can liberate Israel. See, my family is the least in the tribe of Manasse, and I am the youngest in my father's house." And the Lord said to him: "I will be with you, and you will defeat the Madianites as if they were a single man." Gedeon contested: "If I have found grace before You, give me a sign that You who speak to me are the God of Israel, and do not leave until I return and bring a gift in order to offer it to You as a meal." And the Angel of the Lord said: "I will await your return." Gedeon went home, cooked a kid and baked loaves of bread; and putting the meat in a basket, and pouring the broth of the meat into a pot, he carried it all beneath the holm-oak and presented it to Him. The Angel of the Lord said: "Take the meat and the loaves, and lay them upon that stone, and pour the broth over them." And Gedeon having done so, the Most Divine Soul of Christ, under the figure of Angel of the Lord, extended the tip of the staff He held in His hand and touched the meat and the loaves, and fire issued from the stone, consuming the meat and the loaves. And the Angel of the Lord disappeared from his sight. Gedeon, seeing that it was the God of Israel under the form of Angel, said: "Woe to me, my Lord, for I have seen God." But the Lord appeared to him again and said: "Peace be with you, fear not." Then the Lord commanded Gedeon to destroy the altar dedicated to the god Baal which the pagan people had erected in Ephra. Gedeon did so, bravely standing up to death threats from the followers of idolatry, who said to Joas: "Bring your son Gedeon out here for us to kill, since he has destroyed Baal's altar." Then Gedeon very courageously emerged from his home and said: "If you believe Baal to be the true God, let him fulminate me right now, since I have destroyed his altar; and if he is not, let the God of Israel, in whom I believe, fulminate the priest of Baal in the sight of all." No sooner had he finished these words, Most Holy Melchisedech appeared and with a ray fulminated the priest of Baal in the sight of all, and then vanished. At this great sign from Heaven, all were converted to the God of Israel.

2. After being chosen Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel, Gedeon was anointed with oil by the High Priest before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes. By way of this anointing, the High Priest transmitted to him the powers of government. Gedeon was Judge of Israel for forty years, and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

3. Gedeon's heroic deed of destroying the altar of Baal, and the fulfilment of the idolatrous priest, astounded the Madianite invaders, above all when the alarm spread from mouth to mouth that the followers of the God of Israel were preparing, under Gedeon's command, to liberate His People from the yoke that oppressed them. The Madianite army set up camp in the Jezreel valley, situated between Mount Carmel and the River Jordan, and prepared for war. Gedeon, who was in Shiloh, felt impelled by the Lord to unleash the great battle against the large enemy army. He therefore sent messengers to the different tribes of Israel, for them to organize. But before Gedeon went out to confront the Madianites, deeming himself incapable of such a difficult enterprise, he very humbly requested of God some prodigious signs which might suffice to give him complete security, and not only him, but also his followers, that it was truly the Lord who moved him to such a heroic enterprise. This prudent conduct was worthy of divine approval, and God acceded to the request of His servant. Gedeon, then, said to God: "If You are going to save Israel by my weak hand as You have said, this will be the first sign I humbly request of You: I will lay this fleece on the ground, and if the dew falls only on the fleece, and the surrounding ground remains dry, I will know that it is Your will to save Israel by my hand, as You have said." And so it happened. And getting up before dawn, Gedeon wrung out the fleece and filled a cup with the dew. And he said again to God: "Do not unleash Your wrath against me if I make yet another request seeking another sign by means of the fleece. I beseech You that only the fleece remain dry, and the surrounding ground be wet with dew." And that night the Lord did as Gedeon had asked, and only the fleece remained dry, and the ground was all covered with dew.

Chapter V

Gedeon's victory over the Madianites. Death of Gedeon

1. Strengthened by the miraculous proofs God had given him, Gedeon arose during the night and went with an army of thirty-two thousand soldiers to Mount Gelboe. The Madianite camp was in a valley close by the Mount, and their army numbered sixty-four thousand men. Gedeon, in his camp, said to his men: "Let us rise up and go, for the Lord is going to deliver the Madianites into our hands." He divided his forces into four corps and placed them around the enemy camp. At midnight Gedeon and his men attacked the enemy camp to the sound of trumpets, all crying out in unison: "The sword of the Lord and of Gedeon will vanquish." This caused such great fear and confusion in the Madianite camp that, howling, they fled terror-stricken, killing one another thinking they were enemies. Gedeon, leading his army, pursued his adversaries and inflicted great slaughter on them, capturing, moreover, the two Madianite kings Oreb and Zeb, whom Gedeon pierced through with his sword. Then bringing the heads of both, they continued the pursuit until driving the enemy out of Israelite territory. Of the thirty-two thousand men of Gedeon's army, not one was wounded or killed in the battle, for the Lord God of Hosts was their Protecting Shield. The Madianites, then, humbled by the children of Israel, were never again a threat, and the entire country was at peace during Gedeon's forty-year rule.

2. After the great victory over the Madianites, some ambitious Israelites, influenced by Gedeon's majordomo Fura, said to the Judge: "Become our king, and after you your son, and your grandson, since you have freed us from the power of the Madianites." To which Gedeon replied: "I will not be your king, nor shall my son nor my grandson, since the Lord is your sovereign and reigns over you."

3. And Gedeon said to the men of his army: "Give me the earrings you found in the enemies' booty." Now the Madianites were accustomed to wear golden earrings. They responded: "Very readily will we give them to you." And laying a cloak upon the ground, on it they cast the despoiled earrings, many of which bore idolatrous figures. The weight of the golden earrings he had requested amounted to one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold. Gedeon collected these earrings with holy intentions: one, to prevent the Israelites, inclined to idolatry, from raising idols to adore them; another, to erect a monument to God in gratitude for His having obtained victory for them over their enemies, and thus place on record this glorious triumph, due to God alone. But sadly, after Gedeon's holy death, many of the People of Israel idolized at the gold monument erected by him in God's honour. The great Caudillo cannot be held to blame for this in any way, given that Gedeon erected the monument guided by a strong and noble heart, grateful to God.

4. Gedeon, son of Joas, had seven sons by his one and only wife; and as well, Abimelech, a bastard son borne to him by a harlot from Sichern. Gedeon died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 3968, and was buried in Ephra, in the same sepulchre as his father Joas.

5. After the death of Gedeon many of the children of Israel prevaricated and gave themselves up to idolatry, adoring Baal and thereby forgetting all God's benefits to His People in freeing them from the tyranny of the Madianites. Gedeon's eight sons, both the seven legitimate as well as the illegitimate one, and also the great majority of his other relatives, all apostatized from the true Faith.

Chapter VI

Tola, sixth Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel

1. After the death of Gedeon in the year 3968, there was a month's interregnum during which the High Priest of the time assumed command. This very brief interval having elapsed, God chose Tola as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. Tola belonged to the tribe of Issachar and was the son of Fua, Gedeon's brother on his mother's side. After Tola had been chosen, the High Priest anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Tola was Judge for twenty years, and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

2. Shortly after the election of Tola as Judge of Israel, his cousin Abimelech, Gedeon's bastard son, rose up against him with the intention of proclaiming himself king. At the same time Abimelech's seven ambitious stepbrothers, who lived in Ephra, did likewise, the objective of each being to rule Israel on his own account. The bastard Abimelech, seeking the support of many of the Israelites who had apostatized, went to Sichern, where the majority of his relatives on his mother's side were to be found. They encouraged the other citizens to join Abimelech in his uprising against Tola, Caudillo of Israel chosen by God. The Sichern apostates deemed Abimelech's rebellion as quite opportune, since he would rule them in accord with the pagan and idolatrous morals they practised. Thus the inhabitants of Sichern were favourably inclined towards Abimelech as king of Israel, for they said as well: "He is a relative of ours."

3. Then Abimelech, in view of the claims of his seven perverse stepbrothers, in order to make his position secure, recruited an army in Sichern and went to Ephra, his father's city, where he slaughtered all his seven ambitious stepbrothers. After his fratricide, Abimelech returned to Sichern. Here all the citizens assembled, as did those come from the town of Mello, and proclaimed Abimelech as their king and lord.

Chapter VII

Caudillo Tola rises up in arms against the usurper Abimelech. Death of Tola

1. When Caudillo Tola, who was in Shiloh, knew of Abimelech's uprising, he recruited a powerful army and headed for Sichern. But since the usurper had shut the gates of the city, Tola climbed up to an elevated spot on the slopes of Mount Garizim, and shouting from there proclaimed: "Citizens of Sichern, listen to me on behalf of the true God: You have committed a perverse action in proclaiming Abimelech as your king, trampling on the authority of the God of Israel, who rules His people through His chosen one, namely I myself, Tola, your Caudillo." And Tola challenged Abimelech to come out of the city with his soldiers and give battle to him and his army.

2. Since Abimelech was reluctant to leave the city and fight, one of his military chiefs said to him: "Go out and stand up to him," which he did. Tola, Caudillo of Israel, unleashed a tremendous battle against Abimelech and his partisans, finally taking the city of Sichern, putting a section of its inhabitants to the sword. Abimelech and a part of his army managed to flee, and made for the town of Thebes, whose citizens, forewarned, shut and bolted the gates to prevent him from entering, and manned the battlements in defence. Tola, pursuing Abimelech, vanquished his army before the walls of Thebes, where Tola slew Abimelech piercing him through with his sword.

3. After his victory over Abimelech, Most Holy Ananias said to Tola when he returned to Shiloh: "With your powerful army head now for the desert of Sinai, and take a part to add to that conquered by My servant Caleb, and thus, of the whole extent of the desert of Sinai, three quarters will be under the dominion of Israel. Do not take the remaining quarter. I will go before you. You will overcome." When that part of Sinai had been taken and distributed among the tribes, Tola returned to Shiloh, where for almost twenty more years he lived and ruled over the People of Israel, which enjoyed great peace. Tola died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 3988 and was buried in Samir, a place in the Ephraim hills.

Book V

The Judges Jair, Jephthe, Abesan, Elon, Abdon and Samson

Chapter I

Jair, seventh Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel. Death of Jair

1. After Tola's death in the year 3988 there was a month's interregnum during which the High Priest of the time assumed command. This very brief interval having elapsed, in that same year God chose Jair, of Galaad, from the tribe of Gad, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. After he had been chosen, the High Priest anointed Jair with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Jair was Judge for twenty years, and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

2. During the first two years of Jair's Caudilloship, many of the children of Israel, adding new sins to old, prevaricated before the Lord, serving idols, baals, Astarot, the gods of the Syrians, the gods of the Sidonians, of the Moabites, of the Ammonites and of the Philistines. Therefore they ceased to give worship to Almighty God in order to give themselves up to idolatry. During the remaining eighteen years of Caudillo Jair's rule, the Lord, angry with many of His People for having prevaricated, permitted one part of Israel to be occupied by the Ammonites and another part by the Philistines.

3. As for the Ammonites, these, under the command of their king, who had been in exile, entered from the east across the frontiers of Israel with Mesopotamia. Caudillo Jair, informed about this invasion, with his army headed for Mount Galaad, on the frontier with the desert of Arabia. Jair had a strong and well-disciplined army, more than sufficient to finish off the Ammonites. But, though aware he could vanquish them, he betrayed the People of Israel, given that by divine leave but not by God's command, instead of waging war on the Ammonite king he made the following pact with him: that this idolatrous king would be permitted to enter the territory of the People of Israel unchallenged in exchange for the rule by Jair's thirty sons over thirty towns; that is, by his pact Jair allowed the enemy to enter the territory of Israel, under the condition that of the land taken by the Ammonites, thirty towns would be reserved, one for each of his thirty sons. To this the Ammonite king responded: "Agreed, provided that the princes of these thirty towns become my tributaries"; and Jair added: "And mine as well." This came to pass when that region of Israel was falling into idolatry. After this pact, Jair and his army of the People of Israel retired in the direction of Shiloh, allowing the Ammonites to enter. By this occupation, God punished the prevarication of this region of Israel. Jair's thirty sons, constituted princes of thirty towns in the territory of Galaad, which were called Jair's towns, rode on thirty donkeys, the authority they wielded deriving from Jair's betrayal of the God of Israel.

4. While the Ammonites occupied that part of the territory of the People of God, the Philistines, come from exile in Egypt, entered Israel from the west, invading the south-west. God permitted this Philistine invasion because this south-western region was falling into idolatry; and it remained under the Philistine yoke for eighteen years.

5. The Israelites who lived under the Ammonite invaders as well as those who lived under the Philistines, were cruelly afflicted and oppressed throughout those eighteen years, expiating their idolatry by this punishment. These oppressed territories belonged: some to the east bank of the Jordan and others to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Dan and Simeon.

6. Jair was a perverse and wicked Judge who ruled over all the territories of the People of Israel; many of which, faithful to God, were compelled to endure this iniquitous Judge. Caudillo Jair, traitor to God and to His People, after a perverse and wicked life, died in Shiloh in the year 4008 in the most abject impenitence, and was buried in a place called Camon. Jair is to be found in the eternal fire of Hell.

Chapter II

Jephthe, eighth Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel. The sacrifice of Sheila. Death of Jephthe

1. After the death of Jair in the year 4008, there was a month's interregnum during which High Priest Heli assumed command for the first time. The inhabitants of those regions oppressed by the Ammonites and Philistines, repenting of their prevarications, clamoured to God for help: "O Lord God, we have sinned against You; do unto us as You will, but free us from our oppressors!" And such was their repentance that they cast away and destroyed all the idols of foreign gods, dedicating themselves sincerely to the service of God, Who had compassion on their miseries.

2. There was at the time, in the town of Galaad, a man called Jephthe, from the tribe of Judah, a brave man and a warrior, son of Galahad and a prostitute. Galahad's other sons, borne to him by his true wife, had cast Jephthe out of the house because he defended with ardour the rights of the God of Israel and combated idolatry before them and many in the town; and moreover, since his brothers did not want Jephthe to share in their father's inheritance since he had been born of another mother. Jephthe, hiding from them to avoid being killed, was compelled to live in Tobe, a town to the north of Galaad, on the confines of the Arabian desert. Jephthe, since he was a man faithful to God and an intrepid warrior, soon gained the confidence of many Israelites, who took him as their chief. In not a few parts of Israel, Jephthe was heard spoken of as a just and upright man before God, and skilled in the art of war; for on more than one occasion he had skirmished against the enemies of the People of Israel.

3. In the year 4008, when God took pity on those prevaricating regions of Israel suffering under the Ammonite and Philistine yokes, while Jephthe was in Tobe, a commission of the Israelite elders of Galaad came to him, saying: "Come and be our Caudillo and fight against the Ammonites, for we trust in you alone." Jephthe replied: "Have you not detested me and thrown me out of my father's town, and now you come to me compelled by necessity?" And the elders of Galaad made answer to Jephthe: "Well, for that reason we now turn to you, so that you come with us and fight against the Ammonites, and be our Caudillo." Jephthe, however, said to them: "Let the Almighty God of Israel

name the Caudillo who is to free the lands of His People which are oppressed by the enemy." After these words Jephthe withdrew from them, and kneeling down to pray, he invoked God beseeching His help. And Most Holy Ananias appeared to Jephthe, saying to him: "It is you whom I choose as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel. Go and free the children of My People from the idolatrous invaders, for I have seen their repentance and in My mercy have heard their clamour." After Jephthe had been chosen, the High Priest anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Jephthe was Judge for six years and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

4. Jephthe, after being anointed, impelled by the Spirit of God, took command of a powerful army and went out in search of the Ammonites. But prior to joining battle, he requested God to help him obtain victory over the enemy; and at the same time Jephthe said to God: "Ask of me what You will in order that my request be fulfilled, Lord." And God said to him: "When you return home, the first you see coming out you will kill and offer to Me in sacrifice, in holocaust and immolation." And though it crossed his mind that it might be his own daughter, Jephthe freely and willingly replied to God: "I will, Lord." So it was not Jephthe who on his own account made the vow to sacrifice the first to come out of his house when he returned victorious, rather it was God Himself who set Jephthe this condition for victory, which he voluntarily accepted. Jephthe, then, set out to fight against the Ammonites, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. And Jephthe conquered twenty towns, from Aroer up to Menith, and as far as Abel, which is planted with vineyards. The armies of Israel inflicted great slaughter on their enemies, who were humbled and cast out of the territories invaded.

5. When Jephthe returned victorious to his home in Shiloh, where he had left his only daughter Sheila, for he had no other children, she was the first to come out jubilantly to receive him with tambourines and dancing. When Jephthe saw his daughter he rent his garments and said: "Pity help me, my daughter, what a disenchantment, yours and mine! for I have given my word to the Lord that the first of my house to come out and receive me, I shall offer to Him in holocaust, and it has been you, and now I cannot do otherwise." Jephthe was aware that God is the Author of life and the only one with the right to take it; accordingly, He asks it when He wills, as He wills and of whom He wills. For that reason Jephthe's attitude is heroic and admirable, fully accepting the will of God, however painful it was for him.

6. When Sheila heard her father's announcement, she replied: "My father, if you have given your word to the Lord, do with me whatever you have promised Him, since He has granted that you take vengeance on the enemies of the People of Israel, vanquishing them." Jephthe's daughter also voluntarily accepted her sacrifice, since God had asked this of her father as condition for the great victory over the enemies of His People, and he had accepted; hence Sheila heroically told him to fulfil what he had promised God.

7. However, before Jephthe was to carry out the immolation of his daughter, Sheila said to him: "My father, grant me but this, I beseech you. Let me go for two months into the hill-country, and weep over my virginity with my companions." Jephthe replied: "Go." And he let her go for two months. And having gone with her companions and friends, she wept over her virginity in the hills; which served her as meditation and reflection. Sheila wept over her virginity because, by her childless death, she lost the hope every woman in Israel cherished of leaving descendants from whom the Messiah might be born. When the two months had elapsed, she returned to her father, who fulfilled what God had asked, and what he had promised, with her who had not known man, killing his daughter Sheila and offering her up to God in holocaust.

8. After the sacrifice of Sheila, Jephthe, with a powerful army, embarked on the reconquest of those territories invaded by the Philistines, who were vanquished with great slaughter and expelled beyond the borders of Israel. By this fresh victory, the whole of the People of God was freed from the invaders, and enjoyed great peace and prosperity. Jephthe died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 4014, after having ruled his People for six years, and was buried in his town of Galaad.

Chapter III

Abesan, Elon and Abdon: ninth, tenth and eleventh Prophets, Judges and Caudillos of the People of Israel.

The People of Israel enjoys great peace during the period in which these three Judges rule. Death of the three Judges

1. After Jephthe's death in the year 4014, there was a month's interregnum during which High Priest Heli assumed command for the second time. After this very brief period, in that same year God chose Abesan, from the tribe of Ruben and born in Bethlehem, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. After Abesan had been chosen, the High Priest anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Abesan was Judge for seven years, and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people. Abesan had twenty-four children, sons and daughters. He died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 4021 and was buried in Bethlehem.

2. After Abesan's death in the year 4021, there was a month's interregnum in which High Priest Heli assumed command for the third time. This very brief period having elapsed, in that same year God chose Elon, from the tribe of Zabulon, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. After Elon had been chosen, the High Priest anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Elon was Judge for eight years, and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people. Elon died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 4029 and was buried in the land of Zabulon.

3. After Elon's death in the year 4029, there was a month's interregnum in which High Priest Heli assumed command for the fourth time. This very brief period having elapsed, in that same year God chose Abdon as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. He was the son of Illel, from the tribe of Asser and a native of Pharaton. After Abdon had been

chosen, the High Priest anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Abdon was Judge for eight years and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people. Abdon died a holy death in Shiloh in the year 4037 and was buried in Pharaton.

4. During the rule of these three Prophets, Judges and Caudillos, the People of Israel enjoyed great peace and prosperity, since God did not permit His People to be invaded by any enemy, out of regard for the rectitude of the three Judges and the righteous conduct of the majority of the People.

Chapter IV

Samson, twelfth Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel. Death of Samson

1. There was a man born in Sara called Manue, from the tribe of Dan, whose wife was called Nardina. Manue and Nardina belonged to the tribe of Dan, but with a crossing of Madian in their forefathers, so that they were, respectively, Elder and Eldress of Madian. The Angel of the Lord, who was the Most Divine Soul of Christ, appeared to Nardina and said to her: "You are barren, but you will conceive and will give birth to a son, whose hair must not be cut because he is to be a Nazarite, that is, offered to God from infancy, and chosen for lofty designs." Nardina went in search of her husband and told him the good news the Angel had announced to her. When Nardina had conceived by her husband Manue, he, in prayer, said to the Lord: "I beg you, Lord, that the Man of God whom You sent come again and teach us what we should do with the child who is to be born." God heard Manue's prayer, and the Angel of the Lord again appeared to his wife when she was sitting outdoors. And since her husband Manue was not with her, she ran to tell him, saying: "Look, the man whom I saw before has appeared to me." At this news, Manue followed his wife, and coming to where the man was, he said to him: "Was it you who spoke to my wife?" And the Angel responded: "I am." To which Manue said: "When my son is born, what do you want me to do with him? What should he abstain from?" The Angel of the Lord responded: "He should not drink wine and should abstain from everything unclean and fulfil and keep all that the Lord commands." Since Manue and his wife were unaware that the mysterious man was the Angel of the Lord, he said to Him: "I pray you to condescend that we prepare a kid for you to eat." To which the Angel responded: "However much you urge me, I shall not taste of your food, but if you wish to make a holocaust, offer it to the Lord." Manue, then, took a kid and the corresponding libations, and placed it on a stone in order to offer it to the Lord. Then the Most Divine Soul of Christ, with the appearance of man of God, holding a mysterious staff in his right hand, by means of this kindled the consuming fire of the holocaust upon the altar, thereby manifesting the glory of God. And when the flame of the altar rose towards heaven, the Angel of the Lord also rose up together with the flame, bearing away with Him the fragrant odour of sweetness given off by the sacrifice. When this was seen by Manue and his wife, they prostrated themselves face to the ground, both understanding that it was the Angel of the Lord; consequently, Manue said to his wife: "We shall certainly die, for we have seen God." To which his wife made answer: "If the Lord had wanted to take our lives, He would not have received the holocaust and the libations at our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have foretold to us the things to come." She, then, gave birth to a son, and gave him the name Samson. And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to be manifest in him in the encampment of Dan between Sara and Estahol. From his most tender infancy Samson was of an impetuous, conceited and vengeful character, though these defects were in large part moderated by his fidelity to the Law of God and by the exercise of the virtues, which his holy parents Manue and Nardina endeavoured to inculcate in him with special zeal.

2. In the year 4037, after the death of Judge Abdon, there was a month's interregnum, during which High Priest Heli assumed command for the fifth and last time. At the end of the interregnum, God chose Samson, from the tribe of Dan, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. After Samson had been chosen, High Priest Heli anointed him with oil before the Temple of Shiloh in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Samson was Judge for twenty years and had his official residence in Shiloh, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

3. Given the prevarication of numbers of the children of Israel, who had given themselves up to idolatrous worship and morals, God once again permitted the Philistines to invade some territories in the south-west of Israel, cruelly oppressing the inhabitants there. This Philistine invasion lasted for Samson's twenty years as Caudillo, and as well for the first twenty years of the following Judge, Samuel; therefore the Philistines held sway over parts of the territory of Israel for forty years.

4. Despite the pious education he had received from his parents, and the good advice of High Priest Heli, little by little Samson's heart became vitiated owing to his weakness for Philistine women, of pagan and corrupt morals, in the different forays he made with his army in the Israelite territories oppressed by her enemies. And it came to pass that one day, when Samson went down to the town of Tamnatha, he saw there a Philistine woman, and letting himself be carried away by his unbridled instincts, he returned home and informed his parents saying: "In Tamnatha I have seen a woman from among the daughters of the Philistines and I am going to take her as wife." To this his parents replied: "So then, are there no women among our own kin, and in our whole people, that you want to take a woman from among the Philistines, who are pagans." And Samson said to his parents: "I will take this one for myself, because she is pleasing in my sight." And as Samson's desire ran counter to what God had disposed concerning the marriages of the children of Israel, his parents did everything possible to dissuade him from the marriage and have him seek a wife from among the pious daughters of His People. Samson, disdainful of his parents' counsel, went down alone to Tamnatha to marry the woman. And it chanced that when he neared the town a fierce lion cub came out roaring and attacked him; but Samson, with the prodigious strength bestowed on him by God, and without any weapon of defence at all, seized the wild beast by the jaws and killed it. After this episode, Samson entered Tamnatha and married Philistea;

who sought the moral ruin of the Caudillo of Israel and greater Philistine sway over his People. A few days after the wedding, Samson was betrayed by his wife when she revealed to the Philistines a secret wormed out of her husband under a guileful pretence of tears. Samson, angry with his wife, abandoned her.

5. Despite the disillusioning experience suffered at the hands of the Philistine woman, the Prophet, Judge and Caudillo Samson, far from feeling the slightest repentance at having broken the Law of God by marrying a pagan, conceited on account of his extraordinary physical strength, let himself be dragged along yet further by his impetuous vindictive spirit, not considering the honour of God or the honour of His People, but his own exaltation and personal satisfaction. To take revenge for the treachery of his wife and those who had induced her to commit it, he went to Ascalon and killed thirty Philistine men. His wife, finding herself abandoned, took as husband one of Samson's friends and wedding companions. Despite Samson's bad conduct, Almighty God, in His mysterious plans, continued to make use of the Caudillo and Judge, chosen by Him, for the theocratic rule of His People.

6. Samson, leading the army of Israel in different wars, proceeded to restore to his People some of the territories invaded by the Philistines. So great was the terror instilled by his presence that, when they saw him, they fled so as not to perish at his powerful hands. In addition to these wars, Samson used to make forays into enemy occupied territory, sometimes alone and at others accompanied by some soldiers.

7. Some years after Samson had married the Philistine woman from Tamnatha, he returned to the town to be reconciled to his wife. But when he wished to enter her home, her father prevented him, saying: "My daughter now has nothing more to do with you. I thought you hated her, and for that reason I gave her to a friend of yours. But she has a sister who is younger and prettier; take her as wife instead." Samson responded: "From today on the Philistines will have no more grounds for complaint if I take revenge on them for the harm they have done me." To avenge himself for the rebuff he had received on account of his wife, Samson departed thence, and catching thirty foxes, he tied a lighted torch to the tail of each and then released them to run about everywhere. The animals, getting into the wheatfields of the Philistines, set them alight in such a fashion that the flames spread, burning down the vineyards and olive groves as well. And the Philistines asked: "Who has done this?" And they were told: "Samson, the son-in-law of the Tamnathean has done this because his father-in-law took his wife from him and gave her to another." And so the Philistines went and burnt the woman and her father. But Samson said to them: "Though you have done this, nonetheless I will continue to avenge myself on you, and then I will calm down." And he carried out such a great slaughter among them that the inhabitants of the region were filled with terror. Then Samson withdrew to that cave in the Garden of Olives, in Jerusalem, outside of which Christ would be taken prisoner.

8. While he was in the cave, a troop of Philistines entered the territory of Judah and camped near the cave. When some of the children of Israel saw them, they asked: "Why have you come up against us?" The Philistines replied: "We have come to take Samson away bound, and repay him for the evil he has done us." The children of Israel were fearful, so they went in a large body to the cave on the Mount of Olives and said to Samson: "You know that the Philistines hold sway over part of our territory. Well then, why have you done these things for our ruin?" He replied to them: "Just as they have done to me, so have I avenged myself on them." They replied: "We have come to bind you and deliver you up into the hands of the Philistines; for if we do not, they will kill us." Samson, letting himself be bound with cords, was taken out of the cave and brought to the waiting troop of Philistines; who, making an uproar, came out to meet him. But Samson, using the prodigious strength with which God had endowed him, just as linen is consumed when touched by fire, in the same way snapped and broke the bonds with which he was tied. And seeing close by on the ground the jaw-bone or mandible of an ass, he killed thirty men with it. And he said: "I destroyed my enemies, killing thirty men with the jaw-bone of an ass." He then flung the jaw-bone away and called that place Lequi, which means, 'raising of the jaw-bone'. And exceedingly tormented by thirst, he cried out to the Lord, saying: "It is You who have saved me and granted this great victory by the hand of your servant; but look, I am dying of thirst." Then the Lord opened a fount in the molar socket of the ass's jaw-bone, and water came forth, of which Samson drank. That is why this place was called Fount of the Jaw-Bone.

9. One day when Samson's army was camped near the Philistine town of Gaza, he, going into the town at night, saw a prostitute and entered her house to sin with her. The Philistines, however, learnt of this, so they secretly put soldiers at the gates of Gaza, with the aim of killing Samson when he left. But Samson rose up at midnight and confronted the guards, who fled; then he tore out the great gates of the city with their pillars and locks, and loading them onto his shoulders carried them to the top of the mount.

10. In the year 4055, Samson lived in illicit union with a woman called Dalilah, who dwelt in the Sorech valley. After a time, the Philistine princes came to her and said: "Beguile him with caresses and find out the source of his great strength, and how we can seize and ill-treat him after binding him. If you do this, we will give you thirty pieces of silver." In view of this promise, the artful Dalilah said to Samson: "Oh! If you would like to satisfy my curiosity, tell me I implore you: What is the secret of the tremendous strength you possess, and how should you be bound so that you cannot snap the cords and escape?" Samson, always arrogant about his strength, deemed acceding to Dalilah's caprices an amusing pastime; so he responded: "Were I to be bound with seven cords of fresh nerves, still moist, I would be as weak as other men." And the Philistines being informed, they brought Dalilah the seven cords, with which she bound Samson, who then pretended to fall asleep. And since the Philistines were in hiding surrounding the house, Dalilah shouted out: "Samson, the Philistines are coming for you!" Then he, awakening from his apparent sleep, snapped the bonds like someone would snap the weakest thread; and they did not know the secret of his strength. And Dalilah said to him: "See how you have made fun of me, hiding the truth; reveal to me this time at least with what you should be bound." To which he replied: "Were I to be tied with new cords that have never been used, I would be as weak as any other man." Using these, Dalilah tied him up again; and he once more pretended to fall asleep. Dalilah cried out again: "Samson, the Philistines are coming for you!" And he at once awoke from his apparent sleep and

snapped the bonds anew, as if they were threads of cotton. And Dalilah said to him again: "For how long shall you deceive me, and tell lies? Reveal to me now with what you should be bound." To which Samson responded: "If you intertwine the seven tresses of my hair with cords, and wind them around a nail which is then driven into the ground, I will be without strength." And Dalilah having done this, Samson again pretended to be asleep. And she cried out: "Samson, the Philistines are coming for you." But he, awakening from his apparent sleep, tore the nail out by the hair and cords. And Dalilah said to him: "How can you tell me you love me when I can see that your heart is not with me? Three times you have lied to me, and have not wanted to tell me the secret of your tremendous strength."

11. Since Dalilah kept on pestering him for several days, Samson allowed his spirit to be vanquished by the seductive tokens of affection which she lavished upon him; until finally, revealing the truth to her, he said to Dalilah: "My hair has never been cut, because I am a Nazarite, that is, offered to God from my infancy; therefore, if my head were to be shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become weak, and would be like other men." And she, seeing that he had revealed his whole heart to her, sent a message to the Philistine princes, saying to them: "Come this time as well, for now he has opened his heart to me." They came bringing with them the thirty pieces of silver they had promised her. Dalilah gave Samson drugged wine to stupefy him and make him sleepy, and made him rest his head on her bosom, and he fell asleep. She then cut off the seven tresses of his hair. After three hours, when he had almost recovered from the drug, she cried out to him: "Samson, the Philistines are coming for you." He, awakening from his sleep, saw that he had lost the great strength which God had given him. The Philistines seized him and, plucking out his eyes, led him bound with chains to Gaza; and, locking him up in jail, they compelled him to turn the wheel of a treadmill.

12. In the same year 4055, the eighteenth of the rule of Samson, Prophet, Judge and Caudillo, while he was a prisoner of the Philistines, they took advantage of the situation to wage war on the Israelites, who were vanquished. The Philistines robbed the Ark of the Covenant, invaded the Holy City of Shiloh and destroyed the Temple of God.

13. In the year 4057 a large number of Philistines assembled in the temple of the idol Dagon in Azotus in order to offer solemn sacrifices and hold merry feasts. The Philistine chiefs ordered Samson to be taken from the jail, where he had been a prisoner for two years, and brought to the temple, with the aim of amusing themselves making fun of him. During Samson's confinement his hair had grown and he had regained his prodigious strength. The temple was packed with people, among whom were also to be found the Philistine princes; some three thousand persons were there, men and women. When they saw Samson, they all exclaimed with great jubilation: "Our god has delivered up to us Samson, who laid waste our lands and killed numbers of our people." Samson, whose eyes they had plucked out, was led by a boy and placed standing between the two main columns of the temple, and they all mocked him. Samson, stretching out his arms, made sure that he had the two columns within reach, pretending to rest against them from tiredness. Then, arrogant and vindictive, he said to the Lord: "Now You will see how I shall avenge myself on my enemies, and make them pay once and for all for having deprived me of my two eyes." And with immense might he pushed the two columns, one with the right hand and the other with the left; and in a voice ringing with despair cried out: "Let Samson die here with the Philistines." And immediately the temple came crashing down on all the princes and the great multitude there present, all perishing, Dalilah included. God permitted the destruction by Samson of the pagan temple as punishment for the Philistines having destroyed the Temple of God. So Samson died avenging the outrages inflicted on him, without caring in the least that God's honour had been terribly outraged by the Philistines, who had robbed the Ark of the Covenant and destroyed the Temple of Shiloh. If Samson had offered his death to avenge the honour of God humiliated by the enemies of His People, he would not have died impenitent, but as a martyr in defence of the rights of God, and would have saved himself by thus expiating his many sins. Samson's body remained buried under the ruins of the pagan temple.

14. Samson, a figure completely opposed to Christ, is to be numbered among the reprobates, so that he is in the eternal fire of Hell. God, nonetheless, made use of the strength, arrogance and vindictive spirit of the Prophet, Judge and Caudillo Samson to put an end to the Philistine invasion in some territories of Israel, though it continued in others. As for his parents Manue and Nardina, both died holy deaths.

Chapter V

The nonexistent episode of the Benjamites who abused the wife of a levite

Among the falsifications of biblical texts in the bible called official, used up to the publication of the present Palmarian Bible, there are several chapters at the conclusion of the history of Samson which relate how some Benjamites, unable to abuse a levite, violated his concubine or wife of the second order, when the two entered Gabaa on the road to Shiloh and there received the hospitality of an old man. This falsified passage is in large part a copy of that of Lot and the Sodomites who wanted to violate the Angels to whom he had given lodging at his home. None of the episodes of the Benjamites, from the levite on his way to Gabaa, the violation of his concubine, her quartering, the wars, the kidnapping of the maidens and other events, took place at all. All these episodes were a fictitious and falsified narrative written by King Solomon when, in the later years of his life, he lost the light when allowing himself to be led astray by immorality, paganism and idolatry; for in his pride and conceit he even came to believe that he was greater than God, and made a pact including with the devil. Therefore, the three chapters which related the nonexistent episode of the Benjamites, produced by Solomon's vainglorious quill, are expunged from Sacred History or the Holy Palmarian Bible. Nevertheless, we know that this king, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote marvellous things worthy to be narrated in this Sacred History or Holy Palmarian Bible.

Book VI The Judge Samuel

Chapter I

Samuel's family. Presanctification and birth of Samuel. Samuel placed at the service of the Temple

1. In the times when the Prophet, Judge and Caudillo Elon ruled in Israel, and Heli was the High Priest, there lived in the city of Ramatha or North Ramah in the Ephraim Hills a man whose name was Elcana, from the tribe of Levi, a priest, son of Jeroha. This man had two wives, Ana and Phenena by name. Phenena had children but Ana was barren. On the established days Elcana went from his town to Shiloh to adore the Lord God of Hosts and to offer sacrifices to Him in the Temple. Two sons of the High Priest were there, Ophni and Phinees by name, who were priests of the Lord. Coming on one of the established solemn days, Elcana offered his sacrifice and afterwards shared between his wife Phenena and all her children their corresponding portions of the victims; but to his wife Ana, whom he loved dearly, saddened, he only gave a single portion, because the Lord had not given her any children. Because of this, Phenena was accustomed to mortify Ana and cause her great anguish, throwing her barrenness in her face. As a result Ana began to weep and ate nothing. So Elcana her husband said to her: "Ana, why are you weeping and why do you not eat? Why is your heart afflicted? Am I not by chance better to you than ten children of yours would be?"

2. One day when Elcana and Ana were in Shiloh, and High Priest Heli was seated in his chair in the Temple of the Lord, Ana, her heart filled with bitterness, prayed to God, weeping profusely, and made a vow, saying: "Lord of Hosts, if You deign to turn Your eyes and behold the affliction of this your slave, and being mindful of me give me a boy child, I will consecrate him to You, Lord, for all the days of his life, and his head will never be shaven." Ana afterwards related to High Priest Heli her petition and the vow she had made to the Lord. Heli then gave her a little water blessed by the Most Sacred Mystery of the Triple Benediction. This water was a type of sacramental which was used for pious purposes, among them to bestow fertility on barren women who drank it with faith. Ana drank of the water, and Heli said to her: "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you the petition you have made Him." And she replied: "Would to God your servant finds grace in His eyes." The following day, Elcana and Ana, after adoring the Lord, returned to their home in Ramatha or North Ramah. While in that town, the Lord was mindful of Ana, who conceived a son by her husband Elcana. From Ramatha or North Ramah both spouses went to Ramatha or South Ramah, also known as Bethlehem of Judah and Ephrata. While Elcana and Ana were in Bethlehem of Judah their son was born, whom they circumcised on the eighth day, giving him the name Samuel, for having besought him fervently from the Lord. The child Samuel was presanctified in the womb of his mother Ana, who had already been sanctified, a few days before his birth. Samuel was born in the year 4027, in the days of Judge Elon.

3. Forty days after his birth, Samuel was taken to Shiloh by his parents in order to comply with the rite of the purification of his mother and the presentation of the child. Ana, when she placed Samuel in the arms of Heli in order for the High Priest to offer the child to the Lord, said to him: "I am that woman who was here praying to the Lord before you. This is the child I prayed for, and the Lord has granted my petition." In the year 4030, in which the child Samuel attained the age of three years, his parents Elcana and Ana took him to the Temple of Shiloh in order to leave him there in God's service. They brought with them three yearling calves, three measures of flour and a pitcher of wine in order to offer all in sacrifice. When in Shiloh, they presented the child to High Priest Heli, to whom Ana said: "In accord with the vow I made concerning this child, I place him in the service of the Lord for however long He grants him life."

4. And then Ana, with holy jubilation, exclaimed: "My heart leaps with joy in the Lord, for I have been exalted by my God; now I can answer my enemies to good effect, for all the cause of my joy is the health I have received from You, O Lord. There is no one holier than the Lord. There is no other God than You, and there is no one as strong as our God. Cease, then, to speak glorifying yourselves; for the Lord is the God of Wisdom and He knows all thoughts. The bow of the strong was broken, and the weak have become vigorous. Those that were filled beg bread, and those that were hungry are filled. She who was barren is become the mother of many children; and she who had many has become dispirited. It is the Lord who gives life and who takes it away, who impoverishes and who enriches, who humiliates and who exalts. He raises the beggar from the dust, and from the dung He exalts the poor man, in order that he sit with princes and occupy a throne of glory. For the Lord's are the foundations of the Earth, and upon them He established the world. He will guide the steps of His saints; but the impious will be struck dumb in the darkness; for man is not strong of himself. The Lord's adversaries will fear Him, and He will thunder against them from Heaven. The Lord will judge all the Earth. And He will give the empire thereof to His King, exalting the power and glory of His Christ." Elcana and Ana returned to their home in Ramatha. But Samuel stayed in Shiloh, and in the Temple served the Lord under the guidance of High Priest Heli.

Chapter II

The impious conduct of Heli's sons

1. The High Priest's sons, however, the priests Ophni and Phinees, were impious and perverse, for neither did they respect the Lord nor did they fulfil their priestly duties, above all with regard to the holy sacrifices which were offered in the Temple. In the sight of the Lord the sinfulness of these priests was very great for, because of their iniquity, they dissuaded the people from sacrificing to the Lord, given that despotically they took portions of the flesh of the victims at their good pleasure, thereby transgressing what was established by the Law, and in this Heli at times co-operated by condescending to them.

2. Heli was aware of the wicked things his sons did throughout Israel, and that moreover they committed sins of unchastity with some of the women who came to keep watch at the gates of the Tabernacle. But instead of treating

them with the rigour and severity they deserved for the gravity of their misdeeds and the scandal they gave to the people, Heli limited himself to rebuking them with certain timidity and restraint. One day Heli said to them: "Why do you do these wicked things they tell me of? You ought not to behave that way, my sons, because what I hear of you is very disagreeable: that you cause the Lord's people to prevaricate. If a man sins, he can obtain God's pardon through the prayers of the priest; but if the one who sins against God is the priest, who needs must be the mediator, who will pray for him?" But Heli's sons paid no heed to the weak and negligent reproaches of their father.

3. At that time there came a Man of God, who was the Most Divine Soul of Christ in human form, and said to Heli: "The Lord says this: 'I chose you to be High Priest and your two sons to be priests, in order that you serve at My altar offering sacrifices, burning incense and wearing the ephod before Me, and I assigned to you a portion of the victims and other offerings. Why have you trampled My victims underfoot, and the gifts I commanded to be offered to Me in the Temple? And you, Heli, why have you honoured your sons above Me, eating with them what does not pertain to them from the sacrifices?'" And the severe punishments that would befall Heli, his family and descendants, were made known to him, as well as the disastrous end of his two sons. But despite these announcements, neither did his sons amend nor did Heli make use of the authority he had to depose them from their posts in the Temple.

Chapter III

Samuel's piety and Anna's increased fecundity. Samuel's first vision

1. Elcana and Ana journeyed to Shiloh for the solemn feasts to offer sacrifices in the Temple. On one of the visits on the occasion of the feast of the Passover, High Priest Heli blessed Elcana and his wife, saying to him: "May the Lord grant you more offspring from this wife in recompense for having donated your son to the service of the Lord." After this, both returned home. And, in effect, the Lord granted greater fecundity to Ana, given that she afterwards bore her husband three sons and two daughters. In the meantime, Samuel grew in wisdom and age and virtue, and was pleasing to the Lord and to men. And, under the guidance of High Priest Heli, he carried out his service before God dressed in a tunic made by his mother.

2. In the year 4039, second of the rule of Judge Samson, when Samuel was twelve years of age, the Lord spoke to him for the first time transmitting His announcements to the boy. While High Priest Heli, now blind owing to his great age, was resting, and Samuel asleep near him in the chambers attached to the Temple, it came to pass that the Lord called Samuel, who replied: "Here I am." And thinking that Heli had called him, for this was the first time that God had spoken to Samuel, he ran to the High Priest and said to him: "Here I am, for you called me." Heli replied: "I did not call you, my son, go back to sleep." And he went back to sleep. And the Lord called Samuel anew, who, getting up, went to Heli and said to him: "Here I am, for you called me." Heli answered him: "I did not call you, my son, go back to sleep." And the Lord called Samuel anew, who getting up, went to Heli and said to him: "Here I am, for you called me." At this Heli understood that it was the Lord who had called young Samuel, so he said to him: "Off you go to sleep again; and should He call you later, you will answer: Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening." So Samuel settled down to sleep in his room. The Lord then appeared to him, and coming up to where Samuel was, called him as He had done on the previous occasions: "Samuel, Samuel." To which the boy replied: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." So the Lord said to Samuel: "Mark well that I am going to do something in Israel that will cause both ears of all who hear about it to ring with terror. On that day I will verify all I have spoken against Heli and his house, which will be stripped of the dignity of the High Priesthood which, by succession, corresponds to it from father to son. I announce these punishments because of their iniquity; for Heli, knowing how unworthily his sons behave, has not corrected them as he should." Among other punishments, God would also permit the sacrilegious theft of the Ark of the Covenant, and the destruction of the Temple and the Holy City of Shiloh.

3. Next morning Samuel was afraid to reveal the vision he had had to Heli. But the High Priest, who suspected that the Lord had said something to Samuel concerning him, asked: "Samuel, what did the Lord say to you? I beseech you not to conceal anything from me. May the Lord punish you severely if you should conceal from me any of the things He has told you." Samuel, then, revealed to Heli all that the Lord had told him concerning the iniquity of his sons, and his own for not rebuking them severely. And Heli responded: "It is the Lord: May He do what appears just in His eyes, for we deserve it, but may He have mercy upon us."

4. Samuel, however, grew in years, and the Lord assisted him, and whatever he foretold was fulfilled, whereby all Israel knew that he was a true prophet of the Lord, Who continued to appear to Samuel to make His word known to him.

Chapter IV

Israel's defeat. Death of Heli and his two sons.

The Ark of the Covenant falls into the hands of the Philistines. Destruction of the Temple of Shiloh

1. In the year 4055, eighteenth of the rule of Israel by the Prophet, Judge and Caudillo Samson, while he was a prisoner of the Philistines, they assembled to wage war on the children of the People of God with the aim of invading further territories. The Israelite army, under the command of its general, was mobilized in order to give battle to the Philistines, encamping at the site which would afterwards be known as the Stone of Succour, in the town of Bethar, near Bethlehem. The two armies met and the battle having begun, the Israelites retreated cowardly and four thousand of their men were slain by the Philistines. When the survivors of Israel's army returned to their encampment and told the elders of the slaughter they had suffered, they said: "Why has the Lord vanquished us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord here from Shiloh, to be in our midst, in order to save us from our enemies." The elders sent a commission to Shiloh in order to request High Priest Heli's authorization to take the Ark of the Covenant from the Temple and bring it to where the army was encamped. Heli, at the request of his sons Ophni

and Phinees, improperly condescended to their wishes, so that he charged his sons to accompany the other priests who bore the Ark of the Lord, from the Temple to the encampment. As soon as the Ark of the Covenant arrived at the encampment, the Israelite soldiers, jubilant, made a great outcry.

2. When the Philistines came to know that the Ark of the God of Israel was in the Israelite camp, they were fearful and said: *"Their God has come to help them. Who will deliver us from His hand? For He is the same God who punished Egypt with all kinds of plagues and who led Israel through the desert."* But after these fears, the Philistines, finding their courage again, gave battle and defeated the armies of Israel, of which thirty thousand soldiers perished. In addition, the Philistines seized the Ark of the Covenant and killed Heli's two sons, the priests Ophni and Phinees, who were protecting it, as well as the other priests.

3. One of the soldiers of the People of Israel hastened back to Shiloh to inform High Priest Heli, saying to him: *"The Philistines have vanquished Israel's army, with the loss of almost all her soldiers. Moreover the enemy has slain your two sons Ophni and Phinees and seized the Ark of God."* Scarcely had Heli heard that the Ark of God had been seized by the Philistines, he felt such pain in his soul for its loss and profanation, and such sorrow for his sins, that he fell backwards from the chair on which he was seated at the gate of the Temple, and died of a broken neck. By this death God punished Heli for his mistakes, and at the same time purified him. Thereby Heli managed to obtain the eternal salvation of his soul. But his two perverse sons died impenitent and were damned. Heli died when he was ninety-eight years of age, after having exercised the High Priesthood for more than forty-seven years.

4. Some days after Heli's death, the Philistine army invaded Shiloh and destroyed the Temple of God. This destruction occurred in the year 4055, eighteenth of the rule of Samson, who at the time was a prisoner of the Philistines, and two years prior to Samuel's becoming caudillo. Therefore the Temple had stood for three hundred and eight years, since it had been inaugurated in the year 3747 by the Prophet and Caudillo Joshua.

5. After Heli's death, the post of High Priest was occupied by his grandson, Phinees's son Achitob. Shortly after the Philistines had seized the Ark of the Covenant, and prior to the destruction of Shiloh and its Temple, the Lord appeared to Samuel, then twenty-eight years of age, and commanded him to go with High Priest Achitob and the other Priests to the town of Ain Karem, near Jerusalem. It was in Ain Karem that, one thousand one hundred and forty-four years later, the Most Holy Virgin Mary visited her cousin Saint Elizabeth, and that the Precursor Saint John the Baptist was born.

Chapter V

Captivity of the Ark of the Covenant. Return of the Ark to the People of God

1. After the Philistines had seized the Ark of the Covenant in the place that would be known as Stone of Succour, they took it to the city of Azotus, where they brought it into the Temple of Dagon, placing it beside the idol. Inside the Ark of the Covenant was to be found everything that had ever been deposited there, including the Mystery of the Triple Benediction. It came to pass that, on the following day, the Philistines found the statue of Dagon lying face downwards on the ground in front of the Ark of the Covenant. They put the statue of the idol back in its place and the next day they again found it on the ground; but the idol's head and two hands lay on the threshold of the door of the temple, so that only the trunk of Dagon's statue had remained where it fell. At the same time, God unleashed His wrath upon the citizens of Azotus, producing in their heads and in their profaning hands very painful and repugnant ulcers which caused the deaths of many, and, moreover, their fields were devastated by a plague of ferocious mice which gnawed all the plants. So great was the loss of life and the disasters caused, that the people of Azotus said: *"Let the Ark of Israel's God no longer remain among us, because His hand is very heavy upon us and upon the god Dagon."*

2. And having gone in search of the Philistine princes, who at the time were in the town of Geth, they asked them: *"What shall we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?"*; to which the princes replied: *"Take the Ark from one place to another throughout Philistine territory."* By this they endeavoured to verify if the plagues that had befallen Azotus would be repeated in the different places through which the Ark passed, which would be the sign that the punishments came from the God of Israel. So then, they carried the Ark of God from one place to another; and as they carried it from one town to another, the Lord let His hand fall upon the inhabitants with the same plagues with which He had afflicted the people of Azotus. Finally the Ark of the Covenant was taken to the Philistine town of Acaron; and when it arrived there the citizens exclaimed: *"They have brought the Ark of the God of Israel to us, in order to kill us and destroy our town."* And the terror of death spread throughout all the Philistine towns, for God's hand fell terribly upon them. And so great was the terror that, when they had retained the Ark in their possession for seven months, the Philistine princes of the towns of Azotus, Gaza, Ascalon, Geth and Acaron, which were the capitals of the five Philistine provinces, gathered together and agreed upon returning the Ark of the Covenant to the Israelites. When they had placed the Ark upon a cart drawn by oxen, they sent the cart off towards the limits of the town of Bethsames, to the west of Jerusalem, the Philistines observing how the oxen, having started on their way, went on ahead by themselves straight along the road, turning aside neither to the right nor to the left. On reaching the town of Bethsames, the cart bearing the Ark of the Covenant stopped. All the citizens, when they became aware that it was the Ark, rejoiced exceedingly that the People of God had recovered that holy and precious Tabernacle, which they believed they had lost forever. The Ark of the Covenant was lowered down from the cart by the priests of the Lord of Israel, to Whom they offered the two oxen in sacrifice. But the Bethsamites, prompted by vain curiosity, drew back the veils that covered the Ark, and gazed upon it uncovered; for which irreverence the Lord fulminated eight priests and seventy-two other persons, male and female.

3. The priests of Bethsames sent messengers to High Priest Achitob, who was in Ain Karem with the other priests and with Samuel, to say to them: *"The Philistines have returned the Ark of the Lord, come and take it with you."* The High Priest, the other priests and Samuel, journeyed to where the Ark rested; and with great solemnity it was borne on

the shoulders of the priests to the town of Ain Karem, where it remained until a few days prior to Samuel's election as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel.

Chapter VI

Samuel, thirteenth Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of the People of Israel

1. In the year 4057, when the Ark of the Covenant was to be found in Ain Karem, Judge Samson died in the city of Azotus when with his own hands he destroyed the temple of Dagon. After Samson's death there was a month's interregnum, during which High Priest Achitob assumed command. During this period the Ark of the Covenant was borne from Ain Karem to the city of Hebron. After this very brief interregnum, in that same year 4057, in Hebron God chose Samuel, thirty years of age and from the tribe of Levi, as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel. After Samuel was chosen, High Priest Achitob anointed him with oil in front of the provisional Tabernacle, in the presence of a great multitude from all the tribes, thereby transmitting to him the powers of government. Samuel was Judge for forty years, and had his official residence in Hebron, at that time capital and Holy City of Israel, from where he ruled and judged his people.

2. After he had been anointed, Samuel spoke to the whole multitude assembled there: *"If you earnestly prepare your hearts to serve the Lord, casting out of your midst all trace of idolatry, God Almighty will liberate the territories of Israel under Philistine sway from their dominion."* During the first twenty years of Samuel's Caudilloship, though part of the south-west of the People of Israel remained under Philistine sway, nonetheless, the whole of the extensive territory of the People of God outside that part dominated by the enemy enjoyed great peace and prosperity; for Samuel, being a holy man, banished all trace of paganism and idolatry from the extensive territory under his rule; so that the children of Israel dedicated themselves to the service of the Lord with great ardour.

3. In Hebron Samuel raised a Temple to God which, though not as sturdy and durable as that of Shiloh, given that it could be dismantled and transported, possessed a certain sumptuousness despite its provisional character. To Hebron came all the tribes of Israel on the feasts prescribed by the Law of Moses in order to offer sacrifice in the temple erected there. For eighty-three years Hebron was to be capital and Holy City of Israel.

Chapter VII

Samuel puts an end to Philistine dominion in the People of Israel.

The whole Sinai peninsula is conquered. Fresh census of the People of Israel

1. In the twentieth year of his rule, the Prophet, Judge and Caudillo Samuel said to his army chiefs: *"Assemble all the valiant soldiers of Israel in Hebron, and I will pray for the triumph of the armies of the Lord."* Samuel, then, in the city of Hebron recruited a powerful Israelite army in order to wage war on the Philistines and put an end to their dominion in the south-west of Israel, which is the part they continued to usurp. The Israelite soldiers, in their encampment at Hebron, prepared for the great battle by three acts of penance: firstly, as a symbol of purification, they washed their bodies with water; then, as a sign of contrition, they asked God pardon for their sins, saying: *"We have often sinned against the Lord"*; and, finally, they fasted for a whole day.

2. When the Philistines heard that the Israelite army, assembled in Hebron, had set out to fight them, they went out to meet it. The soldiers of Israel's army, however, fearful of confronting the Philistines, said to Samuel: *"Cease not to cry out for us to the Lord our God, in order that He save us from the hands of the Philistines."* And Samuel, who was in the vanguard of the army, exhorted them to trust in divine protection and courageously stand up to the enemy; and he sent animal victims to the Temple to be offered in sacrifice for the resounding success of Israel's armies. The Lord heard Samuel's prayer, for scarcely had the battle begun, while the holocausts were being offered up, the sky was covered over by dark clouds, and a furious tempest was unleashed with terrifying thunder and lightning which so appalled the Philistines that, terror-stricken, they gave themselves up to flight deeming themselves already vanquished. The Israelites, heartened by the prodigious signs of divine favour, with great firmness and courage pursued the Philistines as far as the city of Bethar, near Bethlehem, where the army of the People of God inflicted so great a slaughter on the enemy forces that they were completely annihilated. Samuel slew the Philistine king, running him through with his sword. Afterwards, in gratitude, so as to leave to posterity a sign of the divine favour, Samuel took a huge stone and raised a monument to God, and from then on that place was called 'Stone of Succour', for he said: *"Here the Lord succoured us."* After this great battle of Israel's, the Philistines were compelled to abandon the dominions they possessed within the territory of the People of God, which regained her former possessions and complete independence.

3. Following the Philistines' defeat, at the conclusion of the twentieth year of Samuel's Caudilloship, Most Holy Ananias said to him: *"Take your powerful army, head for the territory of Sinai and conquer the remaining quarter part, to add to the parts previously conquered by My servants Caleb and Tola."* Samuel did exactly as the Lord had commanded him. By this victorious reconquest, the whole territory of the Sinai desert came completely under the dominion of the People of Israel. Samuel returned to Hebron. The reconquered part of Sinai was distributed among the tribes.

4. On the first day of his twenty-first year as Caudillo, Samuel, at the command of Most Holy Malachias, conducted a census of the inhabitants, male and female, of the People of Israel, both Israelites by birth as well as those who were Israelites solely by Faith. The total came to one million seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand persons. From the house of Joseph, one hundred and forty-four thousand: from the tribe of Ephraim, seventy-two thousand, and from the tribe of Manasses, seventy-two thousand. From the tribe of Ruben, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Dan, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Nephtali, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Simeon, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Levi, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Judah, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Gad, one hundred and

forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Asser, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Issachar, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Zabulon, one hundred and forty-four thousand. From the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and forty-four thousand. The number of the children of Israel, according to the census carried out by Samuel, surpassed by five hundred and seventy-six thousand persons the number of Israelites in the census carried out by Caleb three hundred and seven years before.

5. During the final twenty years of Samuel's Caudilloship, great peace and prosperity reigned in Israel, and the neighbouring pagan countries evinced great respect and fear for the People of God.

Chapter VIII

The Israelites ask for a king

1. In the year 4097, Samuel, when seventy years of age, having now grown old, constituted his sons to be his delegates, in order to assist him in the government of Israel in nonessential matters. His firstborn son was called Joel, and the second Abia. However they did not follow the upright ways of their father, but allowed themselves to be drawn by avarice, accepting gifts and perverting justice. When Samuel found out he rebuked them most severely and deposed them from the posts they occupied as his delegates; furthermore, he banished them from Hebron, so that they went to live in Beersheba, near the Pharan Desert.

2. But the elders of Israel, using the villainous pretext that Samuel was now an old man and that his sons had been deposed for their iniquitous behaviour, came to South Ramah or Bethlehem, which Samuel was visiting, since it was the city of his birth, and said to him: "You can clearly see that you are now too aged to rule, and that your sons do not follow your upright ways. Establish a king to rule over us, like all the nations have as well." Since this petition was displeasing to Samuel, he prayed to the Lord and consulted Him concerning the matter. And the Lord said to Samuel: "I am greatly angered with Israel, for by their petition it is not you they have rejected but Me, in order that I may not reign over them. Nonetheless, listen to the voice of the People and accede to what they ask of you. But it is proper that the rights of the king who is to reign over them first be made very clear to the children of Israel, so that thus they know how different the treatment they receive from him will be compared with the treatment they have received from Me up till now through My paternal rule."

3. And Samuel related all the Lord's words to the People who had requested a king, saying: "These will be the rights of the king who is to rule over you: he will take sons of yours and make them his charioteers, to be his cavalry guard, and to run before his horse-drawn chariots. And he will take sons of yours to be his tribunes and centurions, to cultivate his fields and harvest his crops, and to forge his weapons and construct his chariots. He will also make your daughters his perfumers, his cooks and confectioners. Likewise he will take the best of your livestock, fields, vineyards and olive groves, and give them to his servants. And many of you will even become his slaves. And the day will come when you will cry out and groan because of your king whom you have chosen; and on that day the Lord will turn a deaf ear to you, because you asked for a king, rejecting the rule that the Lord now exercises over you directly." The People, however, did not want to listen to the arguments which Samuel proposed to them on God's behalf, but as one body said: "We wish to have a king over us, so as to be like the peoples of other nations. Our king will rule over us, defend us and lead us out in all our wars." And Samuel communicated to the Lord the fixed decision of the People. So the Lord said to Samuel: "Agree to their petition, and set a king over them. But they must all know that I accede to their request solely under the following conditions: that the People of Israel zealously guard the purity of their lives, rigorously respect holy tradition and unconditionally submit to Divine Law and to My dispositions through the prophets." Samuel communicated this to the elders exactly as God had told him. Then he said to them: "Return to your towns, each of you."

4. The People of Israel were being ruled directly by God, Eternal King, given that it was a theocratic government. And all the temporal chiefs who represented God in the government of His people were monarchical in character, even though they made no ostentation of titles or royal pomp, since all temporal authority, according to the divine plan, is essentially monarchical. Therefore, if God was displeased by His People's proposition to Samuel that they be ruled by a king in the manner of other nations, it was because this would entail the introduction of pagan morals; whereas they were being governed by leaders, as in the case of Samuel himself, bearing the monarchical system in its most sublime and perfect aspect, since it was theocratic, and therefore implied a more direct intervention by God in the rule of His people through His representatives. And when God said to Samuel: "It is not you they have rejected but Me, in order that I may not reign over them," it was to place on record that, by the establishment of an official monarchy in Israel, according to the desire of the people, many of the kings would cease to represent God's authority; given that, by unbridled ambitions and courtly pomp, they would be drawn into idolatry and despotism; proof that those who acted thus did not exercise their authority according to the divine plan. However, despite God's rejection of the monarchy requested by the people with intentions not entirely upright, nonetheless the Lord established it in a manner like to that of other nations, though demanding purity of life, respect for tradition and unconditional submission to Divine Law and to God's dispositions through the prophets. Under these conditions, He accepted and desired the new monarchical system for His People of Israel.

Chapter IX

Saul is anointed king by Samuel

1. There was a man from the tribe of Benjamin called Cis, son of Abiel. Cis had a son called Saul, a virtuous, gallant young man of comely appearance. Saul had been born in the town of Ramatha or North Ramah, as opposed to Ramatha or South Ramah, also known as Bethlehem and Ephrata. And it came to pass that, in the year 4097, having lost some donkey foals, Cis said to his son Saul: "Take a servant with you and go in search of the donkeys." Saul and his servant, having crossed Mount Ephraim and the Salisa territory without having found them, then went through the land of

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Salim and that of Jemini, without finding them there either. Then crossing the Suf district, they arrived at Ramatha or Bethlehem. Here Saul said to his servant: "Let us head back, lest my father become more worried about us now than about the donkeys." In those days Samuel was in Bethlehem, his native city, to honour it by his visit, and for the occasion a great feast and banquet was being held for all the inhabitants. When Saul and his servant were preparing to return home, they saw Samuel coming towards them; for the previous day the Lord had revealed to Samuel: "Tomorrow, at this hour, I will send to you a man called Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, and you will anoint him king of My People of Israel." And when Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him: "This is the man of whom I spoke to you: he will reign over My people." And Samuel, coming up to them, said: "Saul, do not worry about the donkeys you lost three days ago, for they have come to light. But come with me now to the upper part of the city, in order to dine at my table, since tomorrow I will make known to you the lofty designs in store for you, as you and your house will be honoured above all Israel." Saul replied: "Am I not by chance a descendant of Benjamin, the last tribe of Israel, and my family one of the least of the tribe? Why have you come up to us and told me these things?" Samuel took Saul and his servant with him, and placed them at his side, at the head of the main table, thereby honouring them above all the more illustrious guests, who were some thirty in number. After having dined with Samuel, Saul slept at the house of the Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel.

2. The following day Samuel arose at dawn and called Saul, and they left the house accompanied by Saul's servant. On reaching the outskirts of the city, Samuel said: "Saul, tell your servant to go on ahead, and you enter this cave with me, for I wish to communicate to you alone what the Lord has said and disposed concerning you." Then Samuel took a vessel containing oil and poured the oil upon Saul's head, saying: "Lo! The Lord anoints you king of Israel, and you will free His people from the hands of their enemies who threaten them." Forthwith Samuel kissed the anointed head of Saul, who had received from the Spirit of the Lord the gift of prophecy and other extraordinary gifts, by which he would be assisted in order to fulfil his royal mission wisely and prudently. The cave in which Saul was anointed king was the one in which, one thousand one hundred and two years later, Christ, King of the Universe, would be born. In the year 4097, when Saul was anointed king by Samuel, the latter ended his mission as Prophet, Judge and Caudillo of Israel.

3. For Saul's official and solemn proclamation as king, Samuel convoked the People of Israel in Hebron. To this convocation came the elders and a large representation from all the tribes. Before the Temple of Hebron, Samuel, in the presence of the High Priest, presented Saul to the multitude as the anointed King of Israel. All were lost in admiration on seeing Saul, since he was a stalwart and gallant young man of excellent appearance. Then Samuel said to the whole People: "Here you see the one whom the Lord has chosen to be your king. Among all the people there is no one like him." And all cried out saying: "Long live the king!" Next Samuel explained to the people the fundamental laws of the kingdom, which he would afterwards put into writing.

4. After the public acknowledgement of Saul as king, Samuel addressed these words to the People of Israel: "You can see now that I have fulfilled your desires, giving you a king to rule over you and to lead you. Ask God that Saul rule over you with the uprightness, prudence and wisdom with which I have ruled over you. If you fear the Lord and serve Him and hearken to His voice, and do not rebel against His words, then you yourselves and the king who rules over you will be filled with happiness by the Lord our God." And all the people, when they heard Samuel's words, wept out of gratitude to that great prophet, who had done so much good for his people during his glorious Caudilloship, and who had now left them a worthy king to reign over them.

5. Though Saul had been acclaimed king very enthusiastically by the people, nonetheless there were some who did not agree with the choice, so that they contemptuously said: "Will this king by chance be capable of ruling us and saving us from possible enemy invasions?" But Saul, though he knew of this defiance, nonetheless, demonstrating courage, compassion and prudence, bore with them in the hope that they would soon change their minds and acknowledge him as king.

Seventh Part

The Book of Kings and their Chronicles

Book I

Saul, first King of the People of Israel

Chapter I

The first years of Saul's reign

1. King Saul began his reign in the year 4097, the seat of his throne being Hebron, at that time capital and Holy City of the People of Israel. Saul's reign, except for the initial period during which, owing to his faithfulness to God, he acted uprightly and well, was in general disastrous.

2. Saul's first military experience took place thirty days from his proclamation as king of Israel. It came to pass that Naas, king of the Ammonites, a country bordering on Israel and situated in the Arabian desert, with his army began to besiege the Israelite town of Jabes of Galaad, from the tribe of Gad, a town on the frontier with Ammon. The elders of the king Jabes sent messengers to Hebron to inform Saul of the danger of being invaded by the enemy country. When the king heard this, impelled by the Spirit of the Lord, he sent messengers throughout Israel for all men of the different tribes to take up arms and gather in the town of Bezech, situated close by that point of the Jordan which had to be crossed to reach Jabes. Thus Saul, leaving with his army to succour the Israelites of the town of Jabes of Galaad, which was in

7th Part: The Kings and their Chronicles – Book I: Saul, first King of the People of Israel

great danger, was received by its inhabitants most joyously. The next day, having divided the army into three corps, at the crack of dawn he fell quickly upon the camp of his enemies, almost completely annihilating them. In view of this glorious victory of Saul, many of the people said: "Who are those Israelites who contemptuously said: *has Saul by chance to be our king?*" And they requested that Saul hand these men over to them to be killed. But Saul said: "No one is to die this day, since the Lord has saved Israel." By his generous attitude of moderation and clemency, Saul not only won his people's greater esteem and consideration, but the very ones who had shown defiance acknowledged him as king.

3. Afterwards Saul married Achinoam, daughter of Achimaas, by whom he had three sons, born in the following order: Ishboseth, Jeshui or Abinadab and Melchisua; and two daughters, born in the following order: Merob and Michol. As for Jonathan, he was not Saul's true son, but the son of Isai and the king's wife Achinoam; for Isai, surnamed Jesse, despite his great age, still conserved extraordinarily fine looks and a youth-like virility. Officially Jonathan was the son of Saul, who adopted him as such; but in reality he was the son of Isai owing to the sin of double adultery between David's father and Saul's wife. Therefore Jonathan was David's brother on his father's side. Though aware that Jonathan was not his son, Saul had him brought up by his mother Achinoam from birth, and he was always considered Saul's son by the people, unaware of Achinoam's adultery with Isai. And Saul, though aware of the identity of the boy's true father, from birth always treated Jonathan as though he were his own son.

4. During the first eight years of his reign, owing to the very wise guidance of Samuel and the influence of those special gifts by which the Spirit of the Lord assisted him, the people were prosperous and happy under Saul's rule. But afterwards Saul became ever harder of heart, with the resultant diminution and final loss of those gifts of wisdom, prudence and strength so liberally and graciously granted to him by God. Saul's conduct, straying further and further from the right path, was one of the main factors inducing many of Israel's People to prevaricate from their Faith and sound morals, and even to fall into idolatry. In the year 4114, the seventeenth of Saul's reign, God allowed different pagan nations, among them the Philistines, the Moabites, the Edomites or Idumeans or Amalechites, and the Jebusites, to invade different parts of the land of Israel as punishment for the infidelity of many of His People. One of the great towns invaded was Jerusalem, which fell into the hands of the Jebusites. Saul undertook great battles against the invaders, emerging victorious in some and vanquished in others. For when the king obeyed the divine commands and put his confidence in the Almighty God of Israel, his army was invincible; but when he acted in disobedience to the divine commands, which happened frequently, he was vanquished, since God did not assist him in battle.

Chapter II

King Saul is unfaithful to God. Election of David as future King of Israel. Death of Samuel

1. In the year 4119, the twenty-second of Saul's reign, the Philistines, who had invaded some territories in the south-west of Israel, threatened to carry out considerable further conquests. And they having seized the town of Gabaa, it came to pass that a brave general of Saul's, having under his orders a squadron of a thousand soldiers, led them to victory and slew the Philistine garrison occupying the Israelite town, thereby liberating it. Saul commanded this victorious feat to be trumpeted throughout the country, saying: "Let all Israel come to know of it." The news that the Philistine garrison occupying the town of Gabaa had been annihilated was noised throughout Israel, with the result that the children of the People of God took heart and came crowding to cheer Saul.

2. So shameful a defeat exasperated the vanquished Philistines to such a degree that they assembled a large army of cavalry, chariots and infantry which, advancing, camped in Mechmas, near Bethel. In the part of Israel beleaguered by the enemy, the discouraged Israelites hid in grottos and in the mountains, while others crossed the Jordan, withdrawing to the lands of Gad and Galaad. At the time, Saul was in Hebron with his soldiers, who were terrified by the news of the large Philistine army. On this occasion the Lord wished to put King Saul's Faith and obedience to the test, directing him by means of the Prophet Samuel to wait seven days and not begin the battle until Samuel returned to tell him what he should do. But Saul, seeing that the seventh day was elapsing and that his soldiers, discouraged by the formidable preparations of the enemy, were leaving in groups, took the decision to begin the battle without waiting for the time limit to expire. Saul advanced with his soldiers and camped in Gabaa, while the Philistines had their camp in Mechmas. Both armies found themselves facing each other. They engaged in a tremendous battle which lasted several days. The Israelite army was to be defeated and almost completely annihilated.

3. Within the seventh day on which the time limit stipulated by God to Saul by way of Samuel expired, the prophet arrived in Hebron when the King of Israel had already departed with his army to combat the Philistines without waiting for his arrival, and therefore counter to what God had commanded. In view of this disobedient action, the Lord, exceedingly wroth, manifested to Samuel His regret at having chosen Saul as king; accordingly, the prophet wept for Saul, seeing him ever more obstinate in his regal conceit. Then the Lord said to Samuel: "How long will you weep for Saul? I see no signs in him that give hope of amendment; consequently, at this very moment, I have decided that none of Saul's descendants shall ever reign over Israel. So then, fill your flask with oil, for it is My desire to send you to the home of Isai in Bethlehem of Judah, since from among his sons I have provided Israel with a future king, for the house of Saul will be wiped out." Samuel asked: "How can I go? For when Saul hears of it he will kill me." The Lord replied: "Have confidence in Me, for nothing will happen to you. When you are at Isai's home, I will show you what to do, and you will anoint the one I indicate."

4. The day after Samuel had received God's command, while Saul was engaged in battle with the Philistines in the valley that lay between the enemy camp at Mechmas and the Israelite camp at Gabaa, the Holy Prophet went to Bethlehem. This unexpected visit surprised the city elders, who received him with great love and respect, among them Isai, surnamed Jesse, and they asked him: "Do you come in peace?" Samuel answered: "I do. Pray to God so that in all things His divine Will may be fulfilled." Samuel, accompanied by Isai, went to his home and expressed the desire to see his sons.

When they had entered, Samuel looked first on Eliab, and on seeing him said inwardly: "Is this the one chosen by the Lord?" And the Lord said to Samuel: "Do not look at his fine appearance, or at his great height, for it is not him I have chosen. I do not judge by what is apparent to the eyes of man, for man sees no more than the external, but I see into the depths of the heart." Isai then called his son Abinadab and presented him to Samuel, who said inwardly: "Neither is he the chosen of the Lord." Then came the third son, named Samna, of whom Samuel also said inwardly: "Neither is he the chosen of the Lord." And after Isai had presented to him seven of his sons, aware that none of them was the chosen of the Lord, Samuel asked him: "Have you no other sons?" Isai answered: "There is still one more, a young lad, who is out pasturing the sheep." Samuel said: "Send for him and bring him to me, for we will not sit down to eat until he has come." Isai sent for David, and presented the lad to Samuel. Now David was fair-haired, with gallant bearing and winsome countenance. And the Lord said to Samuel: "I have found David, son of Jesse, a man according to My heart, who will fulfil all My desires. Ea, anoint him, for he is the chosen one." Samuel, then, took the flask of oil he had brought and anointed David in the presence of his parents and brothers; and the heart of the Holy Prophet Samuel rejoiced at the unction. And from the moment of this anointing, the Spirit of the Lord assisted David with the gift of prophecy and other extraordinary gifts, in order to enable him to fulfil his mission as Crown Prince with rectitude, wisdom and prudence.

5. David, son of Isai and his wife Elizabeth, had been born in Bethlehem of Judah in the year 4107, the tenth of Saul's reign, and anointed by Samuel in the year 4119, when he was twelve years of age. David was a youth of singular piety, and used often to pray in the Cave of Bethlehem where the Messiah was later to be born. There he was favoured by many heavenly apparitions. Shortly before his anointing by Samuel, the Most Divine Soul of Christ, accompanied by the Divine Soul of Mary, appeared to David while he was praying in the Sacred Cave; and, placing the Sacrament of the Triple Benediction upon the head of His elect, sanctified him and anointed him to reign in the future over Israel. God wished, afterwards, to manifest David's divine unction outwardly by means of Samuel pouring oil over his head. Samuel anointed David, not as king, but as one chosen to be king later on, that is, as future king. Therefore, there were never two kings simultaneously, since David was not king so long as Saul lived. David, chosen as future king at the age of twelve years, is figure of the Child Jesus at the age of twelve in the Temple before the Doctors of the Law.

6. After he had anointed David, Samuel returned to Hebron, where he found Saul together with the few survivors of his army, for he had been vanquished by the Philistines. Samuel asked the king: "Saul, what have you done by disobeying the Lord?" Saul answered: "As I saw that some of my soldiers, being dispirited, left me, and that the seventh day of the stipulated time limit was passing and you had not come, I thought: 'If I don't go now to give battle to the Philistines, they will come down to Hebron against me, and I will not have enough soldiers.'" Samuel said to Saul: "You have acted foolishly in not fulfilling the commands imposed on you by the Lord your God. For if you had waited, besides winning the battle, God would have made your throne in Israel secure and would have assured the reign of your descendants forever. But now your reign will not last much longer. The Lord has chosen a man of humble heart according to His desire, who will be the future King of Israel, because you did not fulfil what the Lord commanded you." But Saul, far from acknowledging his disobedience to God's command, became more obstinate in his pride. Samuel, during the few remaining days of his life, endeavoured with all his might to convert Saul, and wept bitterly on seeing that the king did not collaborate in his own conversion, nor was his heart moved to any repentance at all. So painful was the dark night that the Prophet suffered because of Saul's obstinacy, that eight days after having anointed David, Samuel died a holy death in Hebron, where he was buried. So then, in the year 4119, the twenty-second of Saul's reign, Samuel, at the age of ninety-two years, died of sorrow at seeing the road to damnation followed by King Saul, whom God reproached for his evil conduct.

Chapter III

Further battles for Israel. David at the court of King Saul.

Jonathan and David meet for the first time. David's victory over the giant Goliath

1. After the crushing defeat of the Israelite army under Saul's command by the Philistines, they, emboldened, caused even greater damage in the towns by their incursions. The powerful and well-fortified Philistine encampment continued at Mechmas, and from there they would sally forth in groups to carry out acts of plunder in different parts. The Israelites, therefore, abandoned their towns and hid in the mountains, in caves and other safe places. So great was the oppression by the Philistines in those areas, that the children of God's People could do nothing without their enemies intervening, to the point that the Philistines seized the raw materials and greatly restricted the manufacture of arms by the Israelites. At that time Saul and his adopted son Jonathan, together with the entire Israelite army, were camped in Gabaa. And the scarcity of weapons was such that the Israelites abstained from waging war on their enemies.

2. In the year 4125, the twenty-eighth of Saul's reign, it chanced that a large squadron of Philistines, sallying forth from their encampment at Mechmas, seized more Israelite towns. Since Saul was undecided whether to go out to give them battle due to the scarcity of weapons, it came to pass that Jonathan, twenty years of age, impelled by God, courageously said to his shield-bearer and a small number of soldiers of his confidence: "Come, let us go up to our enemies' encampment, since the Lord will fight for us and we will win, for it is just as easy for the Lord to give the victory to many as to few." And all responded: "Do what seems to you most fitting; we will follow you everywhere." And without informing King Saul, Jonathan and a small group of soldiers headed for the enemy camp without anyone knowing where they had gone. While they were climbing up a scarp in the direction of the enemy camp, Jonathan, whom God guided in that enterprise, said to his men: "See now, we are going to approach the Philistine encampment. When they spot us, if they say: 'Wait until we come to you,' we will stay put and not go up to them. But if they say: 'Come on up to us,' we will do so, because that is the sign that God will deliver them into our hands." When the Philistines spotted Jonathan and those with him, they said: "See over there those Israelites who have sallied forth

from the caves where they have been hiding.” And some of the camp guards said to Jonathan and his men: “Come on up and we will teach you a lesson.” Jonathan said to his shield-bearer and the soldiers accompanying him: “Follow me, let us go up, for the Lord will deliver our enemies into the hands of Israel.” Jonathan and his men, then, went up, and so great was the panic which God instilled into the Philistines, that among themselves they took each other to be enemies and slew one another in cold blood; and the rest fled in terror before the powerful sword of Jonathan and the reduced number of soldiers at his orders. The Israelites who had hidden in the mountains, seeing the Philistines flee, came to join Jonathan’s forces and inflicted great slaughter on the enemy army. All the adjacent Israelite towns, when they came to know of the happening, were moved to acknowledge that it was a miracle of God.

3. Meanwhile, the advance patrols sent by Saul from his army stationed in Gabaa, saw a large number of dead Philistines littering the ground, and others fleeing and escaping everywhere. Then Saul said to those with him: “Find out who has left our encampment.” And they found out that Jonathan, his shield-bearer and a group of soldiers were missing. King Saul, jealous of Jonathan’s victorious exploit, went with his army to the field of battle to combat the Philistines, so that thereby the victory might be attributed to him, and thus discredit the memorable feat of his reputed son. But on that day the Lord God of Israel gave the victory to His people under the command of Jonathan. Jonathan’s victorious exploit, far from causing the heart of Saul to rejoice, filled him with bitterness and desire for vengeance. The only pretext Saul could find to have his adopted son killed was to accuse him of desertion for having left the camp to fight against the Philistines without his royal assent; consequently, being in Hebron, Saul said to the High Priest and to the magnates of the people: “May God treat me with all the rigour of His justice if you, O Jonathan, do not die irremediably for desertion.” But the people, who were filled with enthusiasm at Jonathan’s victorious exploit, said to Saul: “Why must Jonathan die, who has just saved Israel in such a marvellous manner? Such a thing must not even be spoken of! As the Lord lives, not a single hair of his head is to fall to the ground, for he has acted this day with the approval and assistance of God.” In this way the people freed Jonathan from death, Saul desisting for the time being from his vengeful designs.

4. In that year, 4125, before Jonathan and David could find out by other means, the Prophet Nathan, at God’s command, made known to them both that they were brothers. To do so he first went to Bethlehem to tell David, and then to Hebron to inform Jonathan. The prophet told Jonathan always to be faithful to David and even be prepared to give his life for him; and he said to David: “You will have a great collaborator in your brother Jonathan, who will always be faithful to you.” Nathan remained for a few days at Saul’s court, for he desired to put the two brothers into contact with each other.

5. Owing to his infidelity to God, King Saul was tormented by the spirit of Satan, who agitated his bad conscience and at times plunged him into real delirium and fury. Nathan, observing Saul’s extreme melancholy, said to the king: “I see that, by divine leave, a malignant spirit torments you. But if you so ordain, I will seek a man who knows how to play the harp, so that by its melody you may experience some relief.” Saul responded: “Well then, find me someone skilled in playing and singing, and bring him to me.” Nathan answered: “Not long ago I saw David, the son of Isai, a native of Bethlehem, greatly favoured by the Lord. He is a prudent young man, of graceful appearance, brave and very skilled in playing the harp.” As a result Saul sent messengers to Isai, surnamed Jesse, saying: “Send me your son David.” Isai summoned David, who was with the livestock; and handing him some presents for the king, sent him to Saul. David presented himself before the king, who conceived great affection for him and made him his shield-bearer. And Saul sent a message to Isai: “Let David stay with me, for he has found grace in my eyes.” So, whenever the evil spirit assailed Saul, David took up his harp and played it, and sang hymns to the Lord, whereby Saul was entertained and experienced great relief; since God, for David’s sake, diminished the influence of the evil spirit over Saul. As a result of his arrival at the royal court, David had his first meeting with his brother Jonathan, who had been eagerly desiring to meet him. At the time Jonathan was twenty years of age, and David eighteen. From the very outset of their meeting, Jonathan’s soul became tightly bound to David’s, and David’s to Jonathan’s, so that each loved the other with a healthy and holy affection which emanated from their sublime brotherly intimacy. To honour his brother, Jonathan took off his own cape and gave it to David, giving him as well his sword, bow and even his military belt. David remained at Saul’s court for but a year, since he had to return to Bethlehem to the home of his very elderly father and take care of the livestock, given that his seven brothers had been recruited into the Israelite army.

6. In the year 4126, the twenty-ninth of Saul’s reign, the Lord commanded the Prophet Nathan to appear before the king and communicate to him that he should wage war on the Amalechites or Idumeans, who had partly invaded the south of Israel. By this command, God gave Saul a fresh opportunity of repentance and conversion. Nathan, then, went to Hebron, where the king was to be found, and said to him: “Listen to what the Lord commands you. Thus speaks the Lord God of Hosts: ‘I bear very much in mind all that Amalech did against Israel, and how he opposed My People entering Israel on the way up from Egypt. Go then, now, and put an end to the present Amalech or king of Edom, and destroy all he possesses. Do not spare him, nor desire anything belonging to his people, but kill the men, women, boys, babies at the breast, and all the animals he possesses.’” Saul transmitted these orders to his people; and reviewing his army, found that he counted with two hundred and ten thousand soldiers. Saul had as captain of his armies his first cousin Abner, son of Ner. When Saul and his forces arrived near the town of Amalech, in the Idumean desert, he set up blockades in the mountains. Saul proceeded to destroy the Amalechites from Hevila to Sur on the Egyptian frontier. He captured the Amalechite King Agag alive, and put the majority of his people to the sword, except for the few who managed to flee. But Saul, with the approval of his army, spared Agag’s life for lucrative ends; and the Israelite soldiers kept for themselves the best herds of sheep, cows and rams, the best clothes, and in general everything good they found among the booty, and did not destroy it. They only destroyed what was mean and worthless.

7. Then the Lord spoke to the Prophet Nathan and said to him: “Once more I repent of having made Saul king, because yet again he has forsaken Me and not fulfilled My commands.” And Nathan, saddened, cried out to the Lord

throughout the night beseeching mercy for Saul. The next day, before dawn, Nathan rose and went in search of Saul, who had gone to Galgala, close by Jericho. When Saul saw the prophet he said to him hypocritically: “May the Lord bless you. I have fulfilled the word of the Lord my God.” So Nathan said: “Well then, what is this bleating of flocks and lowing of cattle that resound in my ears?” Saul replied: “The army has brought them from the land of the Amalech, for it has preserved the best sheep and cattle to offer them to the Lord God, and killed the rest.” Then Nathan said: “Saul, allow me to speak, and I will make known to you what the Lord said to me last night.” Saul said: “Tell me.” Then Nathan went on: “The Lord sent you against the enemies of His People, saying: ‘Go, and put the perverse Amalechites to the sword, and fight them to their utter extermination. Why then have you not obeyed the Voice of the Lord, but have returned with booty, sinning in the eyes of the Lord?’” Saul replied very cynically: “That is not true. I have obeyed the Voice of the Lord, following the path He ordained me, and I have brought back the Amalechite king Agag a prisoner, and put his people to the sword. It is true that the people reserved the spoils of the enemy that should have been destroyed, sheep and cows, in order to immolate them to the Lord their God.” Nathan said: “By chance does not the Lord esteem obedience to His Voice more than holocausts and victims? Obedience is worth more than sacrifices, and to be docile is more important than offering the fat of rams, because disobedience to the Lord is a sin of idolatry. Therefore, since you have cast aside the word of the Lord, the Lord has cast aside your descendants from the throne of Israel.”

8. When Saul heard Nathan’s words, he said with hypocrisy and false repentance: “I have sinned against the Lord by breaking His commands and despising His dictates, out of fear and condescension towards the people. But I beseech you to have pity on my sin and obtain forgiveness for me, and come to Hebron with me to ratify my repentance before the people.” Nathan said: “I will not accompany you, because you have rejected the word of the Lord.” And when Nathan turned his back to leave, Saul grasped the hem of his cape, tearing it, Nathan understanding by this that God had broken with Saul. Therefore Nathan then said to the king: “In the same way, the Lord has this day torn the kingdom of Israel, and has wrested it from your descendants, in order to give it to another better than you. And this decision of the Lord is steadfast.” But Saul continued to feign repentance, and said to the prophet: “I have sinned; but I beseech you to honour me before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and to do so you are to come with me to Hebron, so that at your side I adore the Lord your God, so that thereby you ratify before the rest that I have repented of my sin.” The Prophet Nathan, though aware that the impious king’s repentance was a sham, nonetheless condescended to Saul’s petition and accompanied him to Hebron, where both prayed before the Lord, thus saving Saul’s reputation before the High Priest and the people. By his complaisance, however, Nathan committed a grievous sin contravening what was commanded by God, Who had already broken with Saul for his failure to repent. Though previously Nathan had not acted uprightly by accompanying Saul, now however, knowing that the king of the Amalechites was a prisoner there, moved by zeal for the glory of God, he courageously said to Saul: “Bring Agag, king of the Amalechites, here to me.” And they brought Agag to him, who was very fat, and was trembling. Agag said: “By such a bitter death am I to be separated from all my own?” To this Nathan replied: “Just as your sword deprived the women of Israel of their children, in like manner, among the women of your people, your mother shall be deprived of her son.” And with his sword Nathan personally cut Agag’s throat, this mission being his as prophet, whose authority was superior to kings and to all other authority.

9. In that same year, 4126, the Philistines, anxious to enlarge their territories in Israel, prepared for war. At the same time King Saul and the soldiers of his army also made preparations to confront the Philistines. Both armies were encamped facing each other across the intervening Terebinth Valley, near Bethlehem.

10. Among the forces of Israel’s enemies, there was a giant Canaanite Philistine called Goliath, a native of Geth and descendant of Cam, who was almost three and a half metres tall. He wore heavy, stout copper armour: helmet on his head, plates over his body, and boots on his feet; upon his shoulder he carried a great shield and in his hand a heavy lance. For forty days, morning and evening, he placed himself between the two camps and from there blasphemously insulted Saul’s forces, challenging any Israelite to engage him in hand to hand combat, saying: “Why have you come out to give us battle? I am a brave Philistine and you the cowardly servants of Saul. Choose one from among you to come out and fight against me man to man: if whoever is brave enough to do so kills me, we Philistines will become your slaves; but if I kill him, you will become ours.” Moreover, with great guffaws, boasting of his great size and strength, he cried out in a loud voice: “Today I have challenged the battalions of Israel, saying to them: Send me a brave soldier out here to pit his strength against me in hand to hand combat.” When Saul and his whole army heard the challenge of this giant Philistine, they were terror-stricken.

11. After thirty-eight days of Goliath’s repeated challenge had transpired, David happened to arrive at the Israelite camp by order of his father, to bring food to his brothers and find out how they were faring; for David had left Saul’s court a few months previously to return to Isai at Bethlehem and take care of the flocks. While in the Israelite camp, David saw the giant Goliath again leave the Philistine camp to make his challenge, repeating the same insults as always. One of the Israelite soldiers informed David: “That man there making a challenge to combat, comes out every day to insult Israel.” David said: “Who is that Philistine thus to insult with impunity the squadrons of the living God?” And as by his words he let it be surmised that he was resolved to take up the challenge, his eldest brother Eliab, attributing David’s courageous decision to vanity and arrogance, severely reproached him and ordered him to return to his father’s home as soon as possible to take care of the few sheep they possessed. But David’s courageous attitude came to the ears of Saul, who called him into his presence. David said to the king: “Let no one be dismayed by the insults of this Philistine. I, your servant, will go in person and fight against him.” Saul said to David: “You are not strong enough to resist this Philistine, nor to fight him, for you are still young and he is a giant and a veteran warrior.” David responded: “When I shepherded my father’s flocks in Bethlehem, first I killed a lion and later on a bear; when they attempted to seize livestock. And I will do the same to this giant Philistine. Right now I will go out against him and

wipe away the dishonour from our people. For who is that scoundrel to dare to curse the army of the living God?" And impelled by God, David added: "The Lord who delivered me from the claws of the lion and the bear, will likewise deliver me from the hands of that Philistine." When he heard David's courageous words, Saul said to him: "Go then, and may the Lord be with you." Saul commanded that the young man be clad in a suit of armour; but when David found that soldier's armour, for lack of practice, impeded him to the extent of being unable to walk, he decided to set out from the camp and face Goliath with no other weapons than his staff, his sling and five pebbles which he took from a stream. Goliath came towards him, walking with a solemn step and holding his shield before him. When the giant perceived David's humble and simple aspect, his youth and height, his fair hair and comely appearance, the shepherd's clothes he wore, as likewise the type of weaponry, namely the staff and the sling, with which he presented himself for combat, despising the youth Goliath said to him ironically and in a mocking tone: "Am I by chance a dog so that you come out against me with a stick?" whereupon the Philistine cursed David and swore to kill him. But David responded forcefully and serenely: "You come against me with sword and lance and shield, but I go out against you in the Name of the God of Israel's legions, which you have insulted. The Lord will deliver you into my hands and I will slay you and cut off your head, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and all be aware that the Lord saves without sword or lance, for He is the arbitrator of war and will deliver you into my hands." As the Philistine approached closer, David made haste to combat him; and reaching his hand into his shepherd's pouch, took out a stone which he shot from his sling, and struck the Philistine on the forehead, where the stone remained embedded. Goliath fell, face to the ground. Then David took the sword the giant wore and cut off his head, which he took in his hands and displayed in the sight of the Philistine and Israelite armies. When the Philistines saw that the giant Goliath, whom they considered their bravest, had been slain, they turned and fled in terror. But the children of Israel, with a great outcry, pursued them along the valley as far as the gates of Acaron, inflicting great slaughter on the enemy army. The children of Israel then plundered the Philistine camp. Taking Goliath's head, David brought it to the Israelite camp as a valuable trophy of his heroic feat. The giant Goliath was also one of the principal beasts of the Earth, and after having been slain by God by means of David's unerring aim, was cast into the eternal fire of Hell in body and soul.

Chapter IV

David in Saul's army. David's marriage to Michol. Saul schemes to kill David, who flees.
Saul commands the killing of High Priest Achimelech and seven of his priest sons

1. After his heroic feat against Goliath, David remained at Saul's court, for the king did not permit him to return home. Shortly afterwards, in the year 4127, when David turned twenty, he joined the Israelite army. David went out on all the expeditions on which the king sent him, and conducted himself with such discretion that Saul gave him command of a squadron of soldiers. The People of Israel conceived great affection for David, especially the servants at court. But the affection and gratitude which Saul had also shown towards him, began to cloud when the People of Israel acclaimed David more enthusiastically than they did Saul, as they both passed through the towns, saying: "Saul has slain a thousand, and David ten thousand!" This expression so rankled Saul that he thought to himself: "David, ten thousand, and I only a thousand! It only remains for him to be acclaimed king!" And from then on Saul, blinded by envy, no longer looked kindly upon David; moreover, he was aware that God was with his young officer, who acted with great discernment, for he counted on God's special assistance.

2. In that same year, 4127, in which David was twenty years of age, it happened that one day while leaning back against a wall playing his harp for the king, Saul, frenetically agitated by the spirit of Satan, seized a lance and hurled it at David with the intention of piercing him through and impaling him to the wall. But the young man managed to avoid the lance by a quick movement of his body. Despite the irresistible envy which corroded Saul's heart, he avoided making his criminal intentions plain to the people, since all Israel loved David for his uprightness, consummate prudence and military valour.

3. In that same year of 4127, Saul and his court moved for a time to Nob. Saul's refined malice even reached the point of offering David a wife from among his own daughters, with the aim of drawing David closer to him and giving the king the chance to kill him. When David was twenty-one years of age, the king said to him: "Here is my eldest daughter Merob; I am going to make her your wife. You, above all, be very brave and fight in the service of the Lord." David responded: "Who am I and what is my family, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" But it happened that when the time came for Merob to marry David, Saul gave her as wife to Hadriel, since he knew that his elder daughter was more difficult for him to manage; above all when he observed that his younger daughter Michol had become very fond of David, and she easier to dominate. Saul said to himself: "I will give Michol to David as wife, so that she, guided by me, be the cause of his ruin." When the courtiers communicated to David that the king wanted to give him his daughter Michol as wife, David said: "Does it appear to you a light matter to become the king's son-in-law? For I am poor and of humble condition." The courtiers responded: "The king requires no dowry for his daughter, but only demands of you the heads of one hundred Philistines, so that he orders you to go out with your army and make war on them." What Saul intended by this was that David perish at the hands of the Philistines. David, consenting to become the king's son-in-law, set out with his soldiers, and fighting against the Philistines killed two hundred of them, handing over the two hundred heads to the king. For this the king gave him as wife his daughter Michol, who loved David dearly.

4. Saul's attitude was unaffected by the brilliant achievements acquired day after day by the discerning and courageous David, whose fame ever increased in the eyes of the army and the people; quite the contrary, all this was a fresh motive for the king's wrath to increase all the more against his son-in-law, whom God assisted with special providence. Since Saul had decided to put an end to David at all costs, he spoke to Jonathan and to all his courtiers with the object that

they kill him. However, since Jonathan, Saul's adopted son, loved his brother very dearly, he warned David saying: "Saul seeks some way to kill you. So I beg of you to keep away from his fury, and that tomorrow you go to a hiding place where you can lie concealed. In the meantime I will contrive to be with the king and speak to him in your favour, and will keep you informed of all I observe."

5. At nightfall, Saul immediately sent guards and posted them at David's house, to keep watch on the doors to make sure that he did not flee, and so be able to kill him come morning. But Michol found out and informed her husband David telling him: "If you don't escape tonight, tomorrow you will die." Since the doors of the palace were guarded, David, aided by Michol, let himself down from a window and, accompanied by his regiment, fled from Nob for Hebron to speak with High Priest Achimelech, surnamed Abiathar, for the Temple of God was in the city of Hebron. After her husband had fled, Michol laid a bundle covered with a goatskin representing the head in David's bed, thus simulating that he was sleeping in it. In the morning Saul sent guards to his son-in-law's room, they found that he was to the king that David was sick. However, since the king sent guards to his son-in-law's room, they found that he was not in the bed, but only a bundle which simulated a body. Angry with Michol, Saul said to her: "How can you trick me in this way, allowing my enemy to escape?" Lying, Michol responded: "Because he said to me: 'Let me go or I will kill you.'" Saul kept Michol in his palace under strict vigilance, to prevent her leaving in search of David, thus compelling him to come for her, and thereby have a fresh opportunity to kill him. And in order to force David to come sooner for Michol, Saul made the sham promise to give his daughter in marriage to Falti, causing this news to reach David. But the marriage of Falti and Michol never took place.

6. Saul then asked Jonathan if he knew where David had gone. Jonathan said to the king: "Do no harm, O king, to your servant David, since he has done nothing evil against you; on the contrary, he has rendered you great services risking his life against the Philistines. And thanks to his courage, the Lord has given the victory to Israel. You yourself saw this and were filled with joy. Well then, why do you now want to sin by killing David, who is not guilty of anything, and shed his innocent blood?" At Jonathan's reasonings, Saul, with sham piety and a false oath, said: "As the Lord lives, I will not put an end to David's life!" For Saul wished in this way to deceive Jonathan so that he, trusting in the king's word, draw David back to court again, and Saul then kill him. But Jonathan did not believe what the king told him.

7. After his flight from Nob, David hid in Hebron, first making contact with the Prophet Nathan, telling him everything that had happened. The prophet sent a secret message to Jonathan to come and see his brother. And when Jonathan came, David said to him: "What have I done wrong? How have I sinned and what is my offence before my king that he pursues me thus in order to kill me?" Jonathan replied: "Fear not; you will not die, because the king will do nothing without informing me first." And Jonathan, after again swearing to David that he would even give his life in his defence, returned to Nob. In the meantime, Saul, availing himself of certain solemn feasts, adopted a new strategy against David; so that he organized a banquet, to which he invited all his courtiers; and as the king suspected that Jonathan knew David's whereabouts, with pretended goodness he told Jonathan to seek out David and bring him to the house to take his place at table. As reply to the king's perverse scheme to kill David, Jonathan astutely remained silent. When the hour of the banquet came, and Saul was surrounded by his courtiers in the expectation of seeing David, the king observed that he was not there; so that he asked Jonathan: "Why has David not come to dine?" And since Jonathan gave no answer at all, Saul, indignant with him, said: "Son of a woman out to hunt men, do I not by chance know that you love the son of Isai inordinately, to your dishonour and the confusion of your adulterous mother? Know that while David lives your life will not be safe." By these words Saul not only cast in Jonathan's face his condition as son of adultery, but moreover calumniously accused him of sodomy with David. However the indignant Jonathan answered Saul: "But why must David die? What evil has he done?" When Saul heard this, he seized his lance as if to pierce him through; but Jonathan, greatly distressed, left the place and went to where David was to be found; and when both brothers were together they embraced and wept. Jonathan, after counselling his brother to hide in a very safe place, since his life was in danger, returned to Nob.

8. When Jonathan had left, David went in secret to see High Priest Achimelech, surnamed Abiathar, who was surprised and said to David: "How is it that you come alone without anyone accompanying you?" David, resorting to a lie, said to the High Priest: "The king has entrusted me with a mission, saying: 'Let no one know why I have sent you, or the orders I have given you.' For that reason I have even commanded those accompanying me to await me in a wood outside the town." And since David felt the pangs of hunger, he said to Achimelech: "If you have something at hand, though it be no more than five loaves, give them to me, or anything else, for we are in great need, since we have not eaten for three days." To this the High Priest responded: "I do not have at hand ordinary bread, but only the holy loaves of proposition." David said: "Then give them to me." Achimelech responded: "I will give them to you so that you and those accompanying you may eat." And for lack of any other food, the High Priest gave him the sacred loaves that had been removed from the table of proposition in the Temple, having been replaced by fresh ones as commanded by the Law. These sacred loaves could only be eaten by the priests, but since this was a case of extreme necessity, David took them for himself and his regiment to eat, without profaning them thereby. Though David, moved by God, requested High Priest Achimelech to give him the loaves of proposition, which would afterwards be miraculously multiplied, nonetheless he sinned grievously by lying to the High Priest, Minister of Divine Worship, and by not trusting in God's Providence. As David had presented himself before Achimelech without lance or sword, he said to the High Priest: "Give me Goliath's sword." David had previously donated this weapon to the Temple to record that his splendid triumph when he decapitated the giant had been won by the special favour of God. The High Priest handed the sword over to David, who at once left Hebron.

9. In Hebron there was a servant of Saul, Doeg by name, who was a converted Idumean, that is, Idumean by race but Israelite by religion. And since Doeg saw David speaking with High Priest Achimelech, he went to Nob to inform

the king, saying: "I saw the son of Isai in Hebron at the home of High Priest Achimelech, who consulted God on his behalf, and gave him food and including the sword of the Philistine Goliath. I suspect that they are plotting against you." Saul, whose life was deeply embittered by envy and other inordinate passions, commanded the Idumean to go to Hebron and bring High Priest Achimelech, surnamed Abiathar, and his eight priest sons to Nob. And when they were in Saul's presence, he said to Achimelech: "Why have you plotted against me with the son of Isai, to whom you gave the sacred loaves and Goliath's sword, and consulted the Lord for him in order that he continue to rise up against me and set snares for me?" And as there had been no such plot or uprising against the king by Achimelech or by David, the High Priest responded: "Who is there among your servants as loyal as David, your son-in-law, prompt to obey your orders and respected by your entire household? Is this by any chance the first time that I have consulted God for him? Banish from your mind, O king, this evil thought that we have plotted against you, and therefore do not suspect such a thing either of me, or of David, or of my sons." The priest Abiathar, however, High Priest Achimelech's firstborn, seeing that the king was of a mind to kill them, with the intention of saving his own life and inheriting the High Priesthood before time, ratified and confirmed what the Idumean had told Saul about the interview in Hebron between David and the High Priest; and, moreover, calumniously stated as true a conspiracy of High Priest Achimelech, his brothers and David against the king. Therefore Abiathar betrayed his father and brothers to save his own life and usurp the High Priesthood.

10. Immediately after the Priest Abiathar had calumniated his father and his seven brothers, the king said: "This very day you will die without fail, Achimelech, and also the seven of your sons who have co-operated in the plot against me." And Saul said to the guards surrounding them: "Fall upon the High Priest and the other seven sons of his and kill them, for being in league with David against me." Though a large proportion of Saul's servants refused to kill Achimelech and his seven sons, nonetheless another part of those servants, headed by the Idumean Doeg, led them to the high part of the woodland situated on the outskirts of the town of Nob, where they carried out the sacrilegious execution. Following the death of High Priest Achimelech, his perverse son Abiathar automatically became High Priest. But Abiathar would at a later date be removed from his post by Solomon, thereby paying for his terrible sin, and by this means the house of Heli would be extinguished, since never again would one of its descendants occupy the High Priesthood.

Chapter V

David marries the maiden Achinoam. David overcomes the Philistines in Ceila. High Priest Abiathar speaks with David. Saul persecutes David, who spares his life. Achinoam reveals to her son Jonathan three adulteries committed by Saul.

1. After his interview with Achimelech, David left Hebron and with his army took refuge in a cave by the town of Odollan, near Bethlehem where his parents and brothers lived, who came to him when informed by one of his soldiers. At the news of David's stay in Odollan, many more of his partisans attached themselves to him, so that his regiment increased greatly in number, among them being his seven brothers. In the year 4128, in Odollan, David married Achinoam, a beautiful maiden from South Jezreel. After David's wedding, his very elderly parents Isai and Elizabeth returned to their home in Bethlehem, where they died holy deaths shortly afterwards.

2. In the same year, while David was still in Odollan, some supporters of his came to warn him: "Be advised, the Philistines are besieging the town of Ceila and destroying all the crops." So David consulted the Lord, asking: "If I go, will I be able to overcome the Philistines?" The Lord answered: "Go, for you will defeat the Philistines and liberate Ceila." But those whom David had with him said: "You can see that we are few in number. How can we give battle to the Philistine battalions?" David again consulted the Lord, who replied: "March with your men to Ceila, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hands." So David left his wife Achinoam in the town of Odollan and set off to give battle to the Philistines, vanquishing them with great slaughter, and liberated the town of Ceila, where he then remained with his army.

3. When the traitor Abiathar, who was now exercising the office of High Priest, found out that David was in Ceila, he went in secret from Nob to speak with him and gain the friendship and confidence of the future King of Israel. When in David's presence, the perverse Abiathar, falsifying the truth, related how his father High Priest Achimelech and his seven priestly brothers had been done to death at Saul's command, and how he had been able to escape the slaughter, fleeing to Ceila to seek his protection. David responded to Abiathar: "I had good grounds to suspect that the Idumean Doeg would inform Saul of my interview that day with your father in Hebron. It is all my fault, for if I had not visited Achimelech, your father and your seven brothers would not have perished." And David added: "Stay here with me and do not be afraid; if someone makes an attempt on your life, they will also make an attempt on mine; and being in my company, if I am safe, so are you."

4. King Saul, however, informed of the Philistine defeat by David and of the liberation of Ceila, said: "God has put David into my hands, for he is trapped, since he is inside the town." And he commanded his troops to go in secret to Ceila and surround it, and thus capture David and his army. But warned that Saul plotted his downfall in this manner, David made prayer saying: "Lord God of Israel, the news has reached Your servant that Saul is preparing to come to Ceila to destroy it, because I am inside the town. Will Saul in effect come, as I have heard speak? Will its citizens deliver me into the hands of the king for fear that he will destroy the town and slaughter them all?" The Lord answered: "Yes, he will come." David insisted further: "Will the people of Ceila deliver me and my men up into Saul's hands, and thereby avoid being killed?" The Lord responded: "They will deliver you up." In view of the Lord's warning, David left Ceila with all his men. Before Saul arrived, High Priest Abiathar left in secret for Hebron, without anyone in Ceila knowing that he had been there with David. When Saul arrived, to gain the confidence of the inhabitants, since the town's liberation had been due to David, he pretended to be very grateful for what David had done for the benefit of that Israelite town.

5. After his flight from Ceila, David and those with him wandered from one part to another without any fixed abode, until they made their encampment in the mountainous woodland of the Zif desert, near the Dead Sea. In the meantime, Saul did not cease to search for him, but the Lord always freed David from the king's criminal hands. Since David had sent a message to Jonathan to inform him of his whereabouts, Jonathan came to the Zif desert and related to David that, because of Abiathar's ambitious betrayal, his father Achimelech and his other seven sons had been slaughtered at Saul's command. This news saddened David exceedingly, and he felt untold pain at the ignominious death of High Priest Achimelech and seven of his priest sons, and at Abiathar's perverse conduct in order to usurp the High Priesthood. Jonathan consoled and encouraged his brother, and reminded him of God's promise, saying: "Fear not, David, because Saul, my adoptive father, however much he tries, will not be able to capture you: You will become King of Israel, and in your kingdom I will be your most faithful collaborator; even Saul himself is convinced of this." And when both brothers had reaffirmed, in the Lord's presence, the close alliance there was between them, David remained in the woodland and Jonathan returned to court.

6. But some of the inhabitants of the region went to Saul to inform him of David's whereabouts; and the king commanded them to scout diligently ahead of him and then double back to inform him with certainty. For Saul said: "Even if David hides in the bowels of the earth, I will search for him and draw him out from where he is hidden." And the emissaries went to Zif ahead of Saul; but David and those with him were by then in the Maon desert, on the plains to the right of Jesimon, near the Dead Sea. Learning that Saul was coming with his army, David hid among the rocks of the desert; but Saul knowing where he was to be found, went in pursuit of him, in such a way that the king climbed one side of a mountain, and David and those with him the other side, without then having any hope of escaping from Saul's hands; for the king and his men had encircled David and his followers so as then to close in on them. But God did not permit David to be seized by the king, for a messenger arrived and said to Saul: "Come in all haste, the Philistines have irrupted into your territories." Because of this, the king desisted from his pursuit of David for the time being, and turned back to fight the Philistines.

7. In the year 4129, David, again free from Saul's clutches, went with his men to dwell in the safest places of the hills of Engedi, along the Dead Sea. As Saul had returned from pursuing the Philistines, they advised him of David's whereabouts. Saul, with three thousand men, went in search of him, scaling the steepest crags of those hills. Once when the king felt the need to open his bowels, he entered a cave to do so. Now David and those with him were concealed in the innermost part thereof. One of David's soldiers informed him that Saul was alone in the cave; and David, without being perceived, cut off the fringe of Saul's mantle. When David returned to his men, they asked why he had not killed Saul, and David responded: "God forbid that I should ever do such a thing against my king, against the Lord's anointed." And he forbade his men to fall upon Saul. When the king had left the cave and gone his way in search of David, the latter went out after him, and once outside the cave called out to Saul saying: "My king and my lord." Saul turned his head, and David, prostrating himself to the ground, made him a profound reverence and said: "My king Saul, why do you listen to those who tell you that I go about plotting your downfall? See now with your own eyes that the Lord put you into my hands in the cave. And although the thought of killing you rose to mind, I refrained from doing so, for I said to myself: 'I will not raise my hand against my king, because he is the anointed of the Lord.' Observe, O Saul, in my hand, the fringe that I cut from your mantle, without daring to stretch my hand out against you. Now then consider, and persuade yourself that I am not guilty of having done anything against you. And, nonetheless, you go about contriving to kill me. Let the Lord judge between you and me. And let Him do me justice with respect to yourself. But I will never lay my hand on your person. To the iniquitous pertain iniquitous deeds, so may God deliver me from stretching my hand out against you." David, by his magnanimous conduct towards the king, and by his kindly words, wished rather to draw Saul to God than to himself, endeavouring to obtain his repentance and conversion. When the king realized that it was David who spoke to him, with great weeping he cried out to him loudly: "You are more upright than I, David, because you have done me nothing but good, and I have repaid you with evil. You have demonstrated the good you have done to me, since the Lord delivered me into your hands and you did not take my life. For what man, catching his enemy unawares, leaves him unharmed? May the Lord reward you for what you have done to me today." But despite the fact that David heard these sincere words of sorrow, praise and gratitude from Saul's lips, issued from his vehement heart and unstable character, nonetheless he did not trust the king, for he was aware of his changeable moods; therefore he climbed up with his men to even safer places in the hills of Engedi. Saul desisted from pursuing David, above all because he was afraid of being punished by the Lord, who protected David.

8. That year 4129, on Jonathan's twenty-fourth birthday, his mother Achinoam revealed to him that prior to her adultery with Isai, her husband King Saul, in the space of a month, had committed three adulteries: the first with his majordomo's wife; the second with the wife of one of his generals; and the third with the wife of a chief priest. Achinoam knew of Saul's three adulteries before she committed hers with Isai in retaliation for her husband the king's infidelity. After these three adulteries, Saul began to stray from the upright path.

Chapter VI

David marries Abigail. David's victory against the army of the Philistine king Achis. David is again pursued by Saul and once more spares his life.

1. In that same year, 4129, shortly after his unexpected encounter with Saul in the cave of Engedi, David went down into the Pharan desert, close by the town of South Carmel, near the Dead Sea. In those parts there lived a very wealthy man called Nabal, Abigail's husband. During the time that David and his soldiers remained in that region, not only did they never do the slightest harm to Nabal's numerous flocks or molest his shepherds, but quite the contrary, since David's soldiers protected them from the attacks of thieves and from wild beasts. One day, having heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, and on such occasions was accustomed to give banquets and feasts, David sent ten of his men

to greet him in his name and to request some provisions for himself and his soldiers; for David believed in good faith that he would be attended to, for the services that he and his men had been rendering him in the desert. But Nabal, who was a wicked and hardhearted man, received them harshly, saying: "*Who is this David, and who is the son of Isaac, that I should offer him gifts? Every day more slaves are seen wandering as fugitives from their masters. I am not going to take a portion of my loaves, my water, and the flesh of the sheep that I have slain for my shearers to eat and give them to feed some unsavoury persons.*" When David learnt of this he said to his people: "*Let every man take up his sword,*" and about four hundred men followed David, prepared to avenge the perverse Nabal's cruel insolence. By this desire for vengeance David sinned grievously.

2. The beautiful and prudent Abigail knew nothing of what had occurred. But she was warned by a servant, who said to her: "*David has just sent some messengers to greet our master and request him some food for his people, but your husband Nabal has rejected them contemptuously. David and his men have been very good to us, and have defended us from those who have attempted to harm our livestock. Consider then what you must do, because a great calamity is about to befall your husband and your household on account of this.*" After Abigail had heard out her servant, she prostrated herself before God and besought Him to enlighten her as to what to do. And the Lord revealed to her that David would be the future King of Israel, and commanded her to take gifts to him in order thereby to repair the outrage inflicted on him by her husband. Hastily Abigail took two hundred loaves, two skins of wine, five cooked rams and other provisions, and loaded all this onto donkeys. She said to her servants: "*Go on ahead of me, and I will follow on behind.*" And without a word to Nabal she set out to meet David and his men, who were already on their way intent on punishing Nabal and those of his household; for the indignant David had said to his soldiers: "*Since he has returned me evil for good, after today nothing that belongs to Nabal will remain alive.*" As soon as she saw David, Abigail immediately dismounted from her donkey and made him a profound reverence, prostrating her face to the ground, and said to him: "*Let fall upon me, my lord, the punishment due to my husband's iniquity. I beg you to permit your slave to address you, and that you deign to listen to what your servant shall tell you. My lord and my future king, take no notice of Nabal's injustice, because he is a foolish man. But I, your servant, did not see the attendants that you sent. As God lives and as your soul lives, it is the Lord Who, causing me to go forth, has restrained your hand from shedding blood. Receive, my lord, this gift which your slave brings you, and share it among the people you bring with you. Forgive your servant, lord, for that sin of my husband Nabal, for it is certain that God will raise up a secure House for you, since you, my master, fight for the Lord. And when the Lord God has given you, O my master, all the good things that He has foretold you, and has constituted you King of Israel, you will not feel the remorse of having returned evil for evil or for having shed blood in vengeance. And so, O David my lord, when God has filled you with good things, I beseech you to remember your slave.*" David was lost in admiration at the woman's virtue and holy wisdom. Hence, deeply repentant of his desire for vengeance, he said to Abigail: "*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for having sent you out to meet me, blessed be the counsel you have given me, and may you be blest for having prevented me from shedding blood and from taking vengeance into my own hands; for had you not come in haste to meet me, by tomorrow there would not have remained a living thing in Nabal's house, not even a dog.*" David received Abigail's gifts from her hands and said to her: "*Go home in peace, for you can see that I have done what you have asked of me, out of respect for you.*" Abigail returned home, and ten days later Nabal died, struck down by the hand of God. When David came to know of this, he said: "*Blessed be the Lord, Who has avenged the outrage inflicted on me by Nabal, and preserved His servant from the evil he was about to do.*" A year after Nabal's death, David, who desired to marry the virtuous Abigail, sent some servants who said to her: "*David sends us to you in order to take you as his wife.*" Abigail mounted her donkey, and accompanied by five of her maidservants, followed David's envoys. When in his presence she prostrated herself to the ground and said to him: "*Behold your servant, who as a slave would be happy even to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.*" And David married Abigail in the year 4130.

3. In the year 4131, when David was residing in the town of South Carmel with his wives Achinoam and Abigail, he came to learn that Achis, the Philistine king of Geth, was sending squadrons of his army to make incursions into Israelite towns, which he sacked, slaughtering the citizens and laying waste to the fields. Though King Achis reckoned on a powerful army, David, encouraged by the Lord, made ready with his soldiers to give the king battle, relying on His Divine Hands for victory. When both armies were facing each other, the Israelites, under the command of the valiant David, inflamed with holy courage by the zeal of God, inflicted so great a slaughter on the Philistines that scarcely any survivors remained, and King Achis was pierced through by David's sword and killed. The future King of Israel, besides assuring by his victory the independence and tranquillity of the Israelite towns threatened by the Philistines, waged a great campaign, seizing the town of Geth, as well as the other Philistine towns of Gesuri and Gerzi, and in his conquests managed to take possession as well of the town of Sicheleg, all these towns once again coming to belong to the kingdom of Israel. David, then, laid waste all these Philistine territories without leaving any man or woman alive who did not accept the true God of Israel. David established his residence in Sicheleg for the time being, and there his two wives Achinoam and Abigail stayed while he went out on campaign in other territories.

4. By this great victory over the Philistines, David's fame as a courageous warrior grew still greater throughout Israel. And Saul's envy of David was inflamed in such fashion that he again felt the impulse to persecute him; which he put into effect at the instigation of the perverse Abner, general of his army. Since Saul knew that David was again to be found in the Zif desert, he went out secretly in search of him, accompanied by Abner and three squadrons of troops. Hearing that Saul had followed him there, David sent some of his guards for information. David, then, having ascertained the king's presence in the desert, secretly approached the enemy camp one night, accompanied by Abishai, a soldier of his confidence. Saul's entire army was fast asleep; thus David and Abishai were able to approach, without being noticed by anyone, up to the king's own bed. Saul was fast asleep, his lance and a pitcher of water by his headboard. Abner and the troops slept round about Saul's tent. The opportunity being so propitious, Abishai manifested a vehement

desire to transfix Saul's chest with a single lance-thrust. But David opposed this resolutely, saying: "*By no means will you kill him, for who can raise his hand against the Lord's anointed without sinning? As God lives, unless the Lord slays him, or he dies a natural death, or perishes in some battle, I am not going to kill him. Now then, take the lance he has at his bedside, and the pitcher of water, and let us be off.*" And both left without having been seen by anyone, for all were in a deep sleep which the Lord had sent upon them.

5. David and Abishai left the enemy camp; and when dawn broke, David, from the heights of the mount, loudly rebuked Abner because, being general of Saul's troops, he had given himself over immoderately to sleep, without troubling to guard Saul, and had thereby given David and Abishai the opportunity to enter the king's tent and kill him, though they had no done so. To Abner's astonishment, from the heights David showed him the lance and the pitcher of water which he had taken from Saul's bedside. The voices of the two awoke the king, who, realizing that David had again spared his life, once more manifested his gratitude, inviting David to return with him and offering all kinds of security. But despite such promises, David did not give him any credit, so that he at once left that place with his men.

Chapter VII

David's victory over the Amalechites

In the year 4134 the Amalechites, who had already invaded part of the territory of Idumea, in one of their forays into other territories of the People of Israel seized the town of Sicheleg, setting it on fire, killing many of its inhabitants and bearing away a proportion of its women, excepting Achinoam and Abigail, David's wives, who providentially managed to escape and take refuge in the town of South Carmel. At that time David was in Hebron, availing himself of Saul's absence. There David received the news of the conquest by the Amalechites of some of the towns to the south, Sicheleg among them. Great was David's desolation at those moments, for he had left his two wives in Sicheleg. But putting his confidence in the Lord God of Israel, David said to High Priest Abiathar: "*Put on your ephod, enter the Tabernacle and consult the Lord as to whether it be the opportune moment to pursue these bandits, and whether or not I can overtake them.*" The Lord answered him through the High Priest: "*Pursue them, for you will overtake them and recover what they have seized.*" So David set out with his army and camped beside the Besor Torrent. From there David continued on, and when he and his men reached the town of Sicheleg and saw it burnt down and filled with corpses, they raised their voices in great weeping. And without wasting time they went in search of the Amalechite army, not knowing where it might be camped. Along the way they came across an Egyptian, to whom David gave food and drink, for he had taken no nourishment for three days. David asked the Egyptian: "*To whom do you belong, where do you come from and where are you going?*" He answered: "*I am an Egyptian slave in the service of an Amalechite. My master abandoned me because I fell sick the day before yesterday.*" Then he added: "*The Amalechites have made a foray to the south and set Sicheleg on fire.*" David asked him: "*Are you able to guide me to where the Amalechite army is camped?*" The Egyptian answered: "*Swear to me that you will not kill me nor deliver me up into the hands of my master and I will lead you to the troops 'whereabouts.*" Guided, then, by the Egyptian, they came to a hill from where they could devise the camp of the Amalechites, who were stretched out on the ground all over the camp, eating and drinking and celebrating a feast day for all the booty and spoils they had seized in Sicheleg and other Israelite towns. When David saw them, impelled by the fire of God's wrath, he and his men stormed the enemy camp, slaughtering a large proportion of them, with the exception of some who took to flight. David freed the kidnapped women, who told him that his wives Achinoam and Abigail had managed to flee. He also recovered the booty the Amalechites had seized, and likewise carried off all the enemy's livestock and riches, so that his soldiers said: "*These are the spoils David has taken.*" From there David sent to the Temple of God in Hebron the gold and silver seized from the enemy.

Chapter VIII

The Prophet Samuel appears to Saul. Saul's war with the Philistines. Deaths of Saul and Jonathan

1. In the year 4137 the Philistines assembled their armies to prepare for war against Israel, camping in Sunam. Saul likewise, gathering his troops, camped on Mount Gelboe; but when from there he beheld the huge army of the Philistines, he was afraid and exceedingly dismayed at heart. And as Saul dared to consult the Lord, receiving no reply at all, he said to one of his servants: "*Find me a fortune-teller through whom to consult the spirits.*" And they said to him: "*In Endor dwells a sorceress who makes use of spiritism for her answers.*" But Saul, though tempted, decided not to go to the woman's house. Amid his bitter confusion, he went in search of the Prophet Nathan, who, turning to prayer, to the woman's house. Amid his bitter confusion, he went in search of the Prophet Nathan, who, turning to prayer, to the woman's house. Amid his bitter confusion, he went in search of the Prophet Nathan, who, turning to prayer, to the woman's house. Amid his bitter confusion, he went in search of the Prophet Nathan, who, turning to prayer, to the woman's house. Amid his bitter confusion, he went in search of the Prophet Nathan, who, turning to prayer, to the woman's house.

Saul prostrated himself face to the ground and made him a profound reverence. Samuel asked Saul: "*Why have you called me?*" Saul responded: "*I find myself in a terrible predicament, for the Philistines have declared war on me and God has withdrawn from me, disdaining to answer me. For that reason I have called you, so that you counsel me as to what I should do.*" Samuel responded: "*Why do you consult me when the Lord has forsaken you? For the Lord will proceed with you in the way I told you on His behalf: He will wrest the Kingdom from your hands because you did not obey His Voice, and will give it to another, who is David your son-in-law; furthermore the Lord will permit you and your army to fall into the hands of the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will be dead, and your encampment will be delivered into the hands of the enemy.*" Finally Samuel exhorted Saul to repent of his sins in order to obtain divine mercy and save his soul, given that his hours were numbered, and that he would have to give a very strict account of his waywardness before the tribunal of God. Terror-stricken at these predictions, Saul fell to the ground in a faint.

2. The day following Samuel's predictions, Saul could not decide whether to go out with his army to confront the Philistines. But they came in search of Saul's army, and so great was the Israelites' fear that they fled without standing