THE
DIVINE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST
LIGHT, TRUTH, AND LIFE

"This is God's present Will: Let all the churches be unified into one single church."

CRISTO RAÚL DE YAVÉ Y SIÓN

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FOREWORD

To the one who conquers, I will give a little white stone, and on it is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it. I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never leave it again; and on him I will write the name of God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down from the heaven of my God, and my new name.

Rev. 3:12

This Book had its beginning in a little book, "Light, Truth, and Life," written in the military prison of Ferrol del Caudillo, Galicia, Spain, in late 1978, during the days of the change of bishop in Rome from John Paul I to John Paul II. He who opened to me the Door of His Omniscience knew that, from Ignorance to the Knowledge of all things, that little book would have to travel a long and narrow Path until it took on the form it has today—a path that none other than its Author would have to walk. Its Author—I, Cristo Raúl—left the Navy Barracks with that handwritten "little book," which was to be given to me to eat, and which I did eat. That "little book," which tasted sweeter to my soul than all the riches of this world, would, as time went on, come to taste more bitter to me than the most acrid poison. But the creature who lives by the love of the One who begets him does not know his fate until the winds and storms rage, the earth creaks, the waters rise, and it rains heavily upon a building that, despite its outward fragility, was founded upon the Rock.

This Book, in fact, contains the Knowledge of all things—those of Heaven, those of the Heavens, and those of the Earth. The King and Lord of the Universe is the One who gives, and seeing that His Work is good, it is He who sends His Son.

Past, Present, and Future—these are the threads along which the spirit of Intelligence, in the Image and Likeness of Divine Intelligence, guides the Author through the books that make up this Work. The events unfolded as follows:

One day, during the last crossroads between millennia, a 20-year-old man invoked the Son of God. He climbed a mountain, left the world and all its values behind, and stood before God with a sea of questions burning within him. That day, Raúl took the leap to the other side of Doubt. Beyond Doubt, he stood before his Creator.

For Raúl, the time of Doubt had passed. God exists with the same certainty that the Sun and the stars exist. So, casting aside the burden of expert opinion, he climbed that mountain and set his mind free.

And I say that for many hours that young man raised his voice to Heaven. The firmament, the sun, the earth, and the sea were witnesses to his words. Only they know with what words he called upon his Creator.

Finally, he fell to the ground, drained of strength. At the top of that mountain, Raúl lay as if dead for a time.

When he got up, Raúl returned home and waited for what is written to be fulfilled: "To the one who calls, the door will be opened." And so it was. The Son of God heard him and opened the door for him. Then what is written was fulfilled within him: "To the one who believes, a spring of living water will flow from within."

After these events, Raúl continued on his way, and as he walked, he met a very special person. They called him "the Professor." As a young man, the Professor had gone to make his fortune in the Americas. Decades later, he returned to his homeland full of accolades, honorary degrees, and all that—the harvest of what he had sown at Latin American universities. Once back in his hometown, the Professor soon discovered that to serve God, one doesn't have to go very far; all it takes is to turn the corner, look around, and see lost sheep scattered across the cliffs. Moved by the plight of those young people—God knows by whom they were condemned to die under the effects of the poison of those four cursed letters: AIDS—the Professor opened a large house in the center of his hometown, Málaga, and made its rooms available to the young people who, like stray dogs, were swarming the streets. It was in that house that the Professor and Raúl met.

In time, Raúl went his own way. And the fall and winter of that year (1976) passed. During the following spring, the Professor and Raúl met again in Madrid. The reason the Professor was in Madrid was that he had been diagnosed with a brain disease. His enemies said it was God's punishment for having squandered his fortune on those hopeless lepers. Certainly, the operation cost a fortune—which the Professor didn't have—because, yes, he had spent it all on those lost sheep, and now the poor man was out begging for help. The man was wandering through Madrid, going from door to door. By the time he ran into Raúl again, he had lost count. Friends from the old glory days! The thing was, that man wasn't giving up hope either. What he did feel, though, was loneliness.

"And what about you, Raúl? Don't tell me—you didn't show up for your appointment with the army. And now you're off on an adventure, one day here, the next there."

He was great. He was in his fifties. Of medium height, with a cheerful face and Latin features. An entertaining conversationalist. He always seemed to be

smiling—“Put on a brave face when times are tough,” he’d say. He didn’t smoke or drink. He wasn’t married. The great passion of his life—the only “ ” he ever had—was Christ, and he confessed this as someone who is immensely proud to possess the most fabulous treasure in the world.

The following weeks melted away in the river of time. The Professor continued his Way of the Cross, going from door to door. Meanwhile, the disease continued to spread in his brain. And there he was, carrying his cross on his back, with no other comfort than what he could find in the company of a young boy. Raúl was deeply moved by that man’s tragedy and greatness. There have been many stories that have moved him throughout his short life; none had such a decisive effect on his life. And what was bound to happen happened. One night that summer, after spending so much time wandering the streets of Madrid, Raúl returned to the room he shared with the Professor. In the firmament, the full moon displayed its grace; the veil of its light closed his eyes. Soon after, he was awakened by moans. Thinking they came from the Professor lost in his dreams, Raúl went back to sleep. Finally, he opened his eyes to see the Professor sitting on the edge of his bed, his gaze lost in infinity. A trickle of blood ran down his chin. The Professor was talking to himself. Raúl let the man speak. Mother of God, the sorrow that was killing the Professor was not his illness, nor the realization that his friends were turning a blind eye to his problem. The greatest sorrow weighing on his soul was not knowing why God had abandoned him.

“Is this the price of a life of service, Lord? Is this my reward?” lamented, in his ignorance, that doctor with more degrees in theology than St. Augustine and St. Thomas combined.

The summer of ’77 arrived, and Raúl moved to Ibiza. Not everything in this world has to be about work, adventures, mistakes, or successes. When God created the heavens and the earth, He leveled mountains and laid out green meadows along the banks of beautiful rivers, so that human beings might shed their inhibitions and devote themselves to the sport of living life. In those days, Raúl used to stand on the cliffs beyond the castle walls, gazing out at the sea. It was then, in the realm of his reflections and meditations, that the Son of God planted a wonderful desire in his heart: to enjoy boundless intelligence in order to know all things. And like a seed in good soil that grows into a tree, that desire bore fruit in his soul. So one of those days Raúl stood up, opened his arms to Heaven, and asked the Son of God for what he most desired in this world:

“The Spirit of Yahweh: the Spirit of boundless wisdom to know all things.

Raise my head to the highs, set my legs upon the two sides of the ocean so all people may see and know that it is your work, and believe in you””

With his faith and trust grounded in the Word and the Glory of the Son of God, and with no doubt that it was He who had sown so that he might reap in Him—as it is written, “Who is the one who gives first so that he must claim it from God?”—Raúl followed my path in the hope of receiving an answer.

And so it was; shortly thereafter, the Son of God revealed His answer to him: "You will know everything; you will know all things," He told him. This took place in the heart of Europe, in the nation called Belgium.

He had knocked, and it had been opened to him; he had asked, and it had been given to him. With his trust placed in the truthfulness of the Son of God, Raúl continued on his way. Then a very strong wind arose. Serving its Creator, the entire creation seized the young man by the hair, lifted him up, and when he opened his eyes, he found himself underground. The next day, he found himself in his parents' house with his old Bible in his hands and a question on his mind: How did God create the Light, the Firmament—in a word, the Universe?

Over the next few weeks, Raúl tried to decipher the Hieroglyph of Moses. All to no avail. No matter how many times he pored over the text, he could not find the key that would allow him to unlock the seal on the Gate of Genesis. But one day, returning from *Málaga la Bella*, as he admired that autumnal sky through the bus windows, Raúl saw the Key of Light in his hands.

He practically flew off the bus and opened the front door. His mother looked at him expectantly.

"I'm going to be a writer, Mom," he told her without a moment's hesitation.

"Remember your brothers when you're famous," she replied.

That woman couldn't read or write. What a woman! How great is the mystery of human motherhood! The wise men rack their brains searching for the formula to mass-produce Einsteins, Newtons, and the like, and then Nature comes along and laughs at Science by turning an illiterate woman into the philosopher's stone. So, overcome with excitement at what his God had just given him, Raúl grabbed a piece of paper and a pencil and began to scribble the first words of boundless intelligence that fill this Book.

Creation of the Universe

The Text says:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the face of the abyss, but the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. God said, "Let there be light."

What happened immediately afterward was as follows:

1st: Controlled multiplication of the density per astrophysical cubic unit of the Earth's gravitational field. The origin of this Controlled Multiplication is the Nature of the Divine Being.

2nd: Vertical acceleration of the working revolutions of the Earth's geonuclear transformer. From this resulted the rotational acceleration of the Globe around its axis and the astrophysical implosion of the Core, which is the source of the Planet's heat.

3: Global thermodynamic elevation of the geophysical body, which extended from the mantle to the surface and produced the fusion of the primary crust.

4th: Liquefaction of the Primary Crust due to the fusion of the outer globe and the formation of the Primordial Atmosphere.

5th: Once the transformation of gravitational fuel into heat was complete, the Earth returned to the hands of Nature, with its new changes conforming to the law of inertia:

A. Deceleration of the operating revolutions of the geonuclear transformer.

B. Decrease in the planet's rotational speed.

6th: The continuous drop in geophysical temperature back to its original starting state—which it would never again reach—caused the solidification of the Secondary Crust and the formation of the lithospheric ring. The cooling from the outside toward the interior of the Globe transformed the lithospheric ring into a barrier that prevented the transfer of heat from the Core to the Atmosphere. Thus, thermally isolated from the Core, the temperature of the Atmosphere plummeted at the dizzying speed imposed by the insulation. Its volume froze. The result was the sublimation of the atmosphere and its transformation into the Ice Ring that covered the entire sphere of the planet from the North Pole to the South Pole during the evening of the First Day. This ice mantle is the Light in the Word of the First Day.

At the age of 21, Raúl was beside himself with admiration for the Creator of the Hieroglyph of Genesis, whose Seal has remained impenetrable to all the geniuses of all time. His Omniscience and His Saving Wisdom filled him with wonder. And so, in that state of boundless intellectual excitement, Raúl found himself when he was called up to fulfill his military obligations.

In November of that same year, he enlisted in the Navy. During the following winter, spring, and summer, the Son of God revealed to him all things concerning Divine Law, the Justice of Salvation, and the foundations of Redemption—in short, the food of which He had said, "I have food that you do not know."

Well, summer passed and fall arrived. One day that fall, he was sent to military prison to serve a sentence of two months and one day, as punishment for his time as a fugitive. While in his cell, the Son introduced him to the Father's Hope of Universal Salvation .

THE HOPE OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION FOR THE HUMAN RACE

The reason that led God to choose His Son for the "Day of Yahweh" lies in the Creator's need both to turn the page on the wars of the past and to erect an indestructible wall against whose solidity any repetition of a fall into the abyss of war will shatter.

God's love for His creation was the Achilles' heel into which death sank its fangs, injecting into the body of a son of God the poison of envy toward the King of Heaven. In this suicidal and murderous madness, a son of God, named Satan, conceived the utter folly of believing he could tempt the very King of kings with the forbidden fruit of the knowledge of Good and Evil.

God believed that any doubt regarding the Divinity of His Firstborn had been dispelled once the power of His Word was revealed. All the sons of God, created before the Creation of our Heavens and our Earth, were invited to rejoice in the Act of Creation of our Universe, to see with their own eyes and hear with their own ears the Almighty and Omniscient Nature of the Only-Begotten, at the sound of whose Voice the stars of the heavens hasten to take their place in the Tree of the Constellations—and finally as participants in the project of the Formation of Man in the image and likeness of the sons of God.

The event of the Fall of Man reveals to us the nature of the object of the envy of the Judas of Heaven; Satan wanted to sit on the Throne of the King of kings of Heaven.

God knew that betrayal was lurking; therefore, He established the Law against it: the price of Transgression would be Eternal Banishment. Satan had twice dragged the House of God onto the battlefield. God deemed it appropriate to show mercy and take the blame upon Himself. However, He had to put an end to Satan's love of Power. There can be no other definitive measure: to declare war on a son of God is to declare war on God, his Father.

But Death did not surrender. And the Third Universal War was declared. A war to the death, to be waged on Earth.

The Law is crystal clear: "By the hand of a man I will demand the blood that has been shed." Ergo: "By the hand of a son of God, God will demand the blood of one of His own sons."

The Rebels sought to legitimize their conception of the Kingdom of God as an Olympus of gods, free to play the game of war at any time; each and every one of them gods, endowed with absolute impunity to rule the Empire with complete freedom.

The terms of the Law are for all eternity: "DO NOT eat, for you will die."

The decision was in the field of that generation of sons among whom Satan became their head. They took their land stand: better to be princes in hell, that comment citizens in Paradise.

God's answer to their declaration of War against the Spirit of His Law was Revolutionary: Final.

He abolished the Empire of the sons of God; the Law of Corruption shall not rule His Kingdom.

The Empire was dead; its King of kings and Lord of lords had to die…

YES… to be reborn as the Everlasting Universal King, the One Universal Pontiff, the Divine Head of the Catholic Church, His Bride, the Almighty Judge whose Word is God.

The Holy Spirit, against whom Death hurled its poison, revealed Himself in the flesh so that all peoples, in Heaven and on Earth, might see His Personality and understand why God cannot tolerate in His Creation the existence of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; its fruit—Lies, Corruption, and War—is abominable to God, Father of Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ, the Law was fulfilled. Through one son of God, the blood of another son of God was redeemed. Through a son of a woman, the blood of all mankind came to life. Since each and every one of God's sons has been created from clay, among them there was only ONE who could fulfill the Law: "JESUS CHRIST, God with Us."

Did God not foretell His glory: "I will perform a miracle that you will not believe until you see it: A Virgin will give birth to the Savior, in whose word the salvation of the world will reside."

God, my soul overflows from my body; my heart cannot bear the sound of the beating of my adoration for your Salvation! You have given humanity as Judge the One whose heart cannot say "no" to those who love him.

Father, my soul cannot find words to glorify Your Heart! In Your word lies Universal Absolution for a world cast into a war it never sought; in Your Lips lies the Regeneration of all souls. May Your Glory shine upon the living and the dead.

Indeed, one man sinned, and his sin, subject to a domino effect, spread across the entire face of the Earth. Thus, by raising His Son to the Throne of the Last Judgment, He glorified Him once more by granting Him all the powers of the Chief Justice of His Kingdom, among which is the Universal Absolution of the Human Race based on the Right of Redemption He Himself had won. For when He offered us the Justice of Faith, all peoples born before Christ were deprived of His Grace; and yet all nations were delivered over to Death because of the sin of a single man. Thus, having lived under the same ignorance that made us all deserving of grace—by reason of the necessity of Christ's death—our forefathers were deprived of salvation. But God, in His marvelous Justice, having elevated His Son to the Presidency of the Supreme Court of Justice of His Kingdom, has granted Him the infinite Power of God to pronounce Judgment in spirit and truth. He can adjust His Final Verdict to the prophecy based on our wickedness, or to the Health of His Peace as a reward for our Faith in believing that He can restore all souls to their natural state of goodness. Our goodness lies in believing that human beings would never have strayed from their Creator had the Serpent's betrayal not come between God and Man. Our victory: to write in the pages of Universal History what we believe, using our actions to give substance to the argument of the Defense.

THE UNIFICATION OF THE CHURCHES

Around that time, a Bishop of Rome died. Another succeeded him. Thirty-three days later, his successor died. John Paul II succeeded the deceased.

Around that same time, the Son of God revealed to me the Present Will of His Father:

"This is God's present Will: Let all the churches be unified into one single church."

Immediately afterward, the Son of God instructed me on the nature of the participatory spirit of the Word, in which all the sons of God find their growth. For since action belongs to God and He opens the way to Participation for His sons, He endows His sons with all the means necessary for their fulfillment. Hence, Obedience is the principle of the supernatural growth of His Kingdom.

Thus, behold the Justice of the Lord:

The Holy Mother Catholic Church will lift the sentence of excommunication against all the churches that, deceived by Satan, the Evil Sower, the "hidden god" of the Reformation, separated themselves from the Trunk of the Tree of the Churches, so that they may return to the House of the Lord and receive the Baptism of Eternal Life. Those who follow the path of the "foolish virgins"—when the time comes, the Lord will close the Door, and they will be cast into darkness.

There is no redemptive baptism outside the Baptism of Christ administered by the Bride of the Lord Jesus; the excommunicated do not belong to—nor can they join—the citizenship of the Kingdom of God without receiving the Apostolic Baptism administered by the Bride of the Savior. Outside the Catholic Communion, there is no Christianity, because the Christian does not live by knowledge—does Satan not know that Jesus is the Son of God? The Christian lives by faith.

At the end of His visit, the Son of God said to me: "I AM THE ANSWER." And I understood: "And God created Man in His own image and likeness"

THE VICTOR

It so happened that as Christmas 1978 drew near, a question began to take root in my spirit; and as it took up more and more space in my days, it also took hold of my nights, to the point where I did not even dare to close my eyes.

The question that had taken root within me stemmed from the Hope of Universal Salvation that God and His Son had shown me. What was I willing to give for this Universal Absolution?

"My soul!!" was my answer.

"Walk through that door," the Son of God asked me.

And I walked through the door of the Barrack. Desertion, was the word.

I stopped in Madrid, with that little book, "Light, Truth, and Life," handwritten during those two months and one day in prison.

From Madrid I went on to Zaragoza.

That Christmas, I used to sit and meditate by the Walls of The Cathedral to Christ's Mother build by the Spanish people.

During those days of deep existential meditation, my joy became infinite when the Son of God gave me a "little stone with a name written on it that only the one who receives it knows." I read: "Christ Raúl of Yahweh and Zion."

THE INTELECTUAL REVOLUTION OF THE MORNING STAR

So, traveling from Zaragoza to Paris, and from Paris to Madrid, 1979 was gone; I was preparing to return to Paris when "my Father who is in heaven" stopped me. A daughter of God, named Ana, had been attacked by Death; Death was already preparing to take her away, robbing her of the Answer she carried with her for Cristo Raúl—namely, God has given His blessing to the Omniscient World Revolution, which, touching all the branches of the tree of knowledge, will propel the Society of the Fullness of Nations from a model founded in Antiquity and adopted by Modernity to a Society founded upon the Eternal and Unshakable Principles upon which God has established His Kingdom.

I took Ana's hand, freed her from Death's embrace, and just as a dove pierced by an enemy's arrow—mortally wounded, yet not fatally—once healed of its wound, spreads its wings and returns to the heavens in freedom, so too did Ana continue on her path until the Hour when God's Will would fill the Earth, and, calling her children to the Final Battle, would gather them together once more. Behold, then, some of the things that are to come in the years ahead.

Unification of all Christian churches around the Catholic Church;

The dissolution of the Russian Federation and the conversion of Moscow;

The fall of Brussels and Berlin;

The extinction of the religions: Islam and Hinduism;

Independence of Tibet and the breakup of China and India into many states comprising their respective nations;

The extinction of scientific atheism and a revolution in medical science and energy science;

The fall of the UN Security Council and the creation of the Tree of the Fullness of Nations with universal jurisdiction against war and dictatorships;

Abolition of all monarchies—European, African, and Asian;

Creation of the Community of Latin American States and the division of Brazil into distinct states, each with its own nation;

Creation of a Global Judicial-Police Force to Combat Crime and International Criminal Organizations;

Global Agricultural Revolution: Eradication of tobacco, cocaine, and marijuana plants; regulation of coffee, grapevine, and poppy plants;

Reforestation of the planet;

End of communism in all its political and ideological forms;

Admission of the State of Israel into the Military Alliance of All Christian Nations;

Accession of the United States of America to the International Criminal Court;

Abandonment of the planet's destructive energy sources: oil, coal, and natural gas;

The evolution of states toward administrations subject to the duty to uphold family rights;

The transition from coin and paper money to digital money, with its circulation subject to the oversight of the judiciary;

Free access for all people to university education and to the means for developing their creative abilities;

Creation of three international African communities: White or Southern Africa; Black or Central Africa; and Mediterranean Africa—free from European, Asian, and American monopolies and oligarchies.

The year was 1980.

THE DIVINE HISTORY

After shutting myself away among books for the next three years, God gave me a wife. I, Cristo Raúl, took my wife and child and moved to Crete, where, around 1986, moved by the Spirit, I threw my old Bible into the fire. Rising from that fire, the Son of God showed me the History of Uncreation, and of the God who, from a Beginning without beginning was the Metaphysical Cause of the Cosmos, and then, having been formed by Wisdom—as it is written, "I am God, I alone was formed, and after me there will be no other," became the Physical Cause of the New Cosmos: its Creation.

"Write down everything that is shown to you," the Son of God told me. I, Cristo Raúl, did so.

FIRST BOOK

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE LORD YAHWEH GOD

I am the Beginning and the End

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF THE UNCREATION. THE CHILDHOOD OF GOD

I

Eternity, the Infinite, and God were born together. There was no "before" and no "after." Nor were the three members of the Uncreated Trilogy born in the way that human beings understand the act of being born.

Does the Infinite have a father? What mother shall we give to Eternity? What date of birth shall we enter in God's family register? What age shall we ascribe to a Being who is one with Space, Time, and Matter? How shall we speak of the age of the universe without referring to a fragment of the line of God's existence in the Infinite and Eternity? And how high will be the mountain of events created by a Being who has lived since eternity?

A cosmos uncreated by origin, indestructible by nature, intelligent by vocation, a born adventurer, an irrepressible lover of Life and its worlds, whose life is a perpetual adventure through the uncharted seas of the galaxies. With what words could we sketch on the canvas of our understanding the image of that Divine Being constantly navigating the ocean of galaxies?

What boundaries shall we set for His universe? What properties for His spacetime? How many pages would the chronicles of His adventures span?

There He goes. The stars part at His voice; the constellations greet Him as He passes. The lion of Mercury races across the plain amid fields of planets of every atypical, singular, slender, and subtle color; His Great Spirit catches up to him and shouts, "Fly, creature, follow me to the farthest reaches of the universe." A galaxy like a lake of caramel-colored light, with Jupiter's dawn at its core, holds within its waters dolphins wearing infrared goggles, leaping from star system to star system; suddenly they see the Great Spirit—He, God—running alongside the lion of Mercury, and they set off in pursuit through the spaces where the Dawn dwells.

With what eyes will God see the colors of a field of energy whose arms embrace ten thousand constellations? With what mane of hair, flowing in the wind

of the galaxies, will He feel the breeze that sweeps through infinite spaces? With what hands and feet does His Great Spirit scale the luminous peaks of the invisible, parallel, lost, setting, and fugitive universes? How will God be affected by the time it takes to reach the plain on the other side of the most remote star clusters? In which stellar directions will His heart extend its joys when He finds Himself on the other side of the banks of a belt of galaxies? How does His heart react when it senses the birth of life in the depths of the sea of submerged constellations?

The pearl of life in its celestial oyster. A world, another world, a new civilization with its own unique characteristics, with its own particularities—another challenge from the primordial clay to the creative and destructive fire of all things. He, God, advances through the waves of the cosmic seas, discovering new worlds; from star cluster to star cluster, He carries the joy of the immortal adventurer to unknown shores. He spreads the wings of His Great Spirit and launches Himself at infinite speed across the cosmic plains; He feels the impulse of the wind that traverses the subtle realms and now plays with the light, pretending to be its rider and the light his shining steed; now he transforms it into a ray that he gathers in his quiver, from which luminous arrows are shot into the snowy sky, embedding themselves in the heart of a nova and transforming it into a supernova. He has Eternity ahead of Him; Infinity stretches out all around Him. That was His world, His universe, His original paradise. It had no beginning, it would have no end. Wherever His Spirit turned, the stars and their luminous seas extended their shores.

How many star systems can be traversed in an eternity? How many pages will we count in the book of His life? How many branches will we count on the tree of His experience? How many worlds, how many races, how many civilizations did God know before He revolutionized the structure of His world and transformed cosmic reality into His own Creation? What is the capacity of His memory? How many memories did His mind store before bringing about, in that uncreated universe of His, the final transformation of which we are the fruit?

II

Indeed, the Uncreation was God's Childhood. Everything that He—God—knew and had been had always been there. Forms changed, but God—He—did not remember that there had ever been anything else before. And He did not remember it because there had not been. That is to say, before Creation came the Uncreation, but before the Uncreation there was nothing else. The Infinite, Eternity, and God were the members of the Cosmic Trilogy. Everything passed, everything flowed—the life and death of worlds, the birth, disappearance, and rebirth of galaxies. It had always been this way: forms disappeared, but the essence remained. Death reduced everything that lived to dust, yet from the cosmic dust the phoenix of life was always reborn. The leaves fell from the branches of the Tree of Life when the wind of Death blew; the branches were left bare, fragile in their nakedness, but in the end the fire of life was reborn in the sap of the universes and the tree was once again clothed with fruits more beautiful, splendid, and bountiful. God, how He loved His world! The Infinite and Eternity had cast a spell on Him with their

Wisdom. They were father and mother to Him; and He was to them the reason why everything remained in constant motion.

How, then, to enter—where to enter—to pass through and contemplate the memory of the One who was the reason, the cause, the meaning of the existence of all things? And if we were to compare each universe to a cell of a tree, how could we calculate on paper the number of the Tree of Life? Or how could we guess the names by which He was known—He who remained forever while all things passed away? And how could we feel the divine experience of the One who wandered from universe to universe, carrying with Him the joy of existence to all the worlds wherever He went?

Where to go, where not to go? What a question! Wherever the wind blows, wherever the light of a new universe's dawn heralds its birth, toward the far reaches beyond the East, where adventure lurks, where no one has ever been before. Because the most beautiful is always yet to come, because the most beautiful is always what has not yet been seen—forward, let the suns celebrate and dance the dance of the magical bees! God flies on the wings of the eagle of the stars; he approaches riding the horse of distant universes; trotting, he draws near; he dismounts on the banks of the River of Life; he gives his steed a drink; he gazes at the horizon and smiles because, above the high peaks of distant star clusters, he has discovered the radiance of a snow star. Nothing stops Him. His pulse never falters. He knows no fear. Nor does He know anything other than the joy of adventure. He does not know what envy is, nor evil. He has never been at war. He did not need to know the truth, because He did not know falsehood.

The truth was He, God; the truth was the Infinite; the truth was Eternity. The truth was the colors of the rainbow shining beneath a fierce summer sun. The truth was a field in bloom in spring. The truth was a nascent world beneath a sun of polished diamonds, three moons orbiting the mother planet, a swarm of ships setting out on a journey through the galaxy of origin, and then the silence of souls returning to the primordial clay of Life. How could one not marvel, how could one not laugh, how could one walk right by and reject Life's invitation to take part in its adventure! He who was uncreated became a character, allowed himself to be inscribed in the register of the dreamed-of history, and there he let himself be filled with wonder at the creative genius of Wisdom.

Thus did He spend His Childhood. Such was the childhood of God.

III

But one day a desire awoke within Him, God. That day God had a desire. And that desire bore within its core the entire imprint of the heart in whose bosom He was born.

Let's see: Wisdom was His sister; She moved all things for Him; for Him, She converted energy into matter and launched it into space, illuminating the distances with those fireworks at the origin of new universes; then She sowed the seed of life in the new stellar fields, and the universes filled with creatures. At the end of time, Life yielded its place to the waves of Death. And all creatures vanished from the universe like castles on a beach washed away by the tide. Yes! All of them, without

exception, vanished through the fingers of time like water, like desert dust. Such was the fate of all creatures during the Uncreation. It had always been so. Life and Death were part of the uncreated cosmological system. Only through God and for God did the cosmic clay take shape; Wisdom breathed the breath of life into the clay of the worlds, and it became animated, beings. But only for a time. In due course, Life gave way to Death, and its waves dried up that primordial clay from which all creatures had been formed. Dust returned to dust. Ashes to ashes. Only He, God, was indestructible. Then He, God, said to Himself:

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the creatures of His universe were born to enjoy Immortality? Wouldn't it be great if, upon returning from His journeys across those remote and unknown seas, His heart filled with fabulous adventures, He were to reunite—like one returning home—with His beloved friends?

Yes, immortality for all creatures in the universe! This was His dream. Such was His desire. A beautiful desire.

And He held it with such intensity that, with His eyes wide open, God already saw His universe transformed into a paradise inhabited by countless worlds. Peoples from distant galaxies and planets sharing at the table of that Civilization of civilizations the same bread, the achievements and advancements of their original societies. A universe full of life and color. Like swarms of little birds roaming the open-air forests, like multitudes of creatures galloping across the plains. And He running, flying with them, opening up horizons for them, charting new paths for them among the stars. In the dream inspired by His desire, God already saw Himself diving into the depths of the cosmic ocean in search of new pearls. And Wisdom, His sister, His companion in adventure, leaving Him clues among the stars, astonishing Him with a new triumph over the divine capacity to be surprised. She would make His dream a reality. The daughter of Infinity and Eternity would clothe all living beings in immortality.

This was the desire that grew in God's heart. The question is: Could that dream be realized?

Well, as for Him, He had no doubt whatsoever. His Faith in the Power of Creative Wisdom to overcome the challenge set before Him—the creation of immortal life—knew no Doubt. In any case, the question remained, and its implications were no less vast and profound: what consequences would such a transformation of state have on the Uncreated Cosmic System? Naturally, God was beyond the implications and their consequences. His Faith in Creative Wisdom was so unwavering that it never occurred to Him to doubt its Power to bring about such a transformation of state. He set to work. Now then, where should he begin to make his dream a reality? With the immortality of the species as the first stage toward the immortality of the individual, for example? Of course. Perfect!

IV

Can we imagine, comprehend, or recreate what God experienced from that point onward, what God did from that day forward? An extraordinary Being rises among the stars; His purpose is to unite all the worlds that appear and disappear in space and time and to create a Civilization of civilizations that will overcome all

the problems posed by the challenge of Immortality. Bringing all the worlds together into a Universal Whole, that Civilization of civilizations would open itself to the cosmos of galaxies— —that extend to Infinity. God would stand at the head of that Cosmic Empire. He would guide the first worlds to meet the last, unite them all, and teach them to be free, to enjoy the wonders of the universe. And there would always be more. God put the experience He had gained from His encounters with worlds of all kinds at the service of His dream. And, enamored of His dream—Immortality for all creatures—He set to work. He opened routes among the stars and gates among the constellations, discovered new worlds, and extended His Scepter over their civilizations; He gave the kingdoms that were taking shape their Constitutions. He guided their technological evolution toward the encounter in the third phase, integrated all the kingdoms thus formed into an Empire, and united the Crown to His Person. He Himself became part of that World of worlds as the King of kings and Lord of lords, in whose Word all peoples found their guarantee of growth and peaceful, free coexistence. His Word was the Word, and the Word was God.

V

And so it was. Over time, that Universal Empire grew and extended its borders to the most remote stars of the uncreated heavens.

How can we sketch on the canvas of our imagination the characteristics and nature of that Civilization of civilizations that spread its glory across the sea of stars? What library on the origins and history of the Empire—into which God had transformed the Uncreated—came into being over time? Of how many particular histories was its universal history composed? How many sciences did the sages of that Empire master, record, and cultivate?

Wisdom—invisible and beautiful, loving and joyful—extended its protection and intelligence from its luminous and transparent throne over all its creatures, and in all things its marvelous soul manifested itself, moving everything with a single purpose: to reveal to God the laws that govern the Universe. This, His universe, was filled with joyful and adventurous worlds, each with a single concern in life: to enjoy the time of existence granted to each individual. For although life was beautiful, magnificent, and awe-inspiring, and the desire to live was never-ending, the fact remained that time was limited and the passage of creatures through the world was fleeting. Like the spring clouds that, over their May graves, mourn their final days before the cradle of summer; like the flow of the river that crosses the land from east to west yet draws near the ocean with insatiable thirst—so was the life of all beings in that Empire which God had raised with His own hands and loved so dearly. The pain of that final embrace, the loss of the friend who vanished while you were traveling, the tear you did not catch from that nightingale that died with the sorrow of not having breathed its last in your arms, O Lord, the tender murmur of a prince whom you loved with the affection of a brother and who vanished into the mists of his innocence, showering you with kisses, blessings, and love for the days you gave him, for having given him the chance to know you, for having made his life a story worth living even though his breath was subject to the law of final silence. Ah, the rustling of the rose as its petals

die between the fingers of the storm. The announcement of the end of perfect happiness— —written in blood upon a future defenseless against the arrow that unerringly seeks his chest. It pierces his core, tears apart his thoughts; the spear reaches even his heart.

VI

One day Death awoke from his slumber and claimed for himself the crown and scepter. I mean, if they tell you that He of whom it is said to be God cannot make His desire a reality, then what do you say in reply?

If you are wise or simply aspire to wisdom, you will answer that that divine desire—immortality for all creatures—implied a structural revolution whose consequences would reach God Himself. If you are one of those who always opt for the easy path and choose the option of the ignorant, you will answer that that Being cannot truly be God, because for a True God, nothing is impossible.

Well, that's what happened. Over time, God overcame the first phase of His Desire and transformed His universe into an Empire of Worlds originating from the most diverse stars in the most remote solar systems. He was moving toward the final phase of His project—Immortality for the Individual—when Doubt arose. I mean, the Worlds had attained Immortality and counted their years in never-ending millions, but the individual remained mortal. And this is where the problem arose. As long as the individual was born to die, and Immortality did not fit into the formal structure of his logic, life did not suffer Death. But when the individual came to know that the possibility of Immortality existed and discovered that the source of that possibility lay in the King of kings and Lord of lords of that Empire of the stars—He, God—the idea of living immortal lives yet having to die inevitably caused a violent clash within the mental framework of some of the living.

"For if He is the True God, and nothing can be denied to a True God because everything is possible for Him, how is it that, while desiring immortality, we find ourselves subject to death?" asked the ignorant—and, because of their ignorance, the violent.

This question—so fundamentally logical, so rationally simple—was the breeding ground where Doubt took root. And Doubt led to the Denial of God's existence. And within the very flesh of that Denial, the virus of War incubated.

Since the King of kings and Lord of lords of the Empire of the Stars was not God in the full theological and existential sense of the word, surely there must be some way to destroy Him. All that remained was to find the weapon that would destroy Him.

VII

That Universal War took place before the creation of our Cosmos. That Apocalyptic War had its origin in Doubt, and Doubt led everyone to Destruction. It was a war that divided all the worlds and pitted them against one another to the death. The violent faction—the faction that denied the existence of God and

considered the King of kings dead as soon as they discovered the ultimate weapon—this side chose the fate of the ignorant, embraced the madness of fools, and embarked on an evolution along twisted lines toward the transformation of the being into a new species of infernal creature, addicted to Power, enamored of War, with its will as law, and its law beyond good and evil. They discovered the Science of good and evil and carried it to its ultimate consequences. The path chosen by the wise—Faith, love of Truth, even if they could not comprehend it—this path loved God and refused to accept the argument of the violent ones' materialistic atheism. They agreed that the argument of the ignorant opened a breach in the Universal Faith regarding the origin of the Empire of the Worlds, for it was certainly incomprehensible that Death should not bend its knees before God. And yet, who were they? Exactly—who were they to understand how this conflict between Life and Death—which God Himself had brought about through His own will—was affecting the very structure of Universal Reality? Of course not; the sages, peaceful by virtue of their wisdom, never accepted the validity of the argument underlying the scientific atheism of the violent ones. What lay behind that irrational denial of God's existence if not an uncontrollable passion for Power? Where the apostles of atheism wanted to lead them was into a universal war, from which—against all wisdom—they hoped to emerge victorious in order to impose a demonic status quo on everyone. And the matter should be left at that. This was the truth, and no matter how much scientific ingenuity the Fathers of Doubt employed to twist their arguments, this was the light of truth that shone at the heart of their systems of thought. What was the difference between Doubt and Madness? Ignorance of the nature of the cosmic conflict that God, in His innocence, had brought about: the Fathers of Doubt by Method cloaked it in science, then turned science into a new religion—Scientific Atheism—and subsequently declared war on Faith. Faith, because it knew God, and even though in its heart it could not comprehend the nature of the conflict that His desire had provoked in the Pre-Creation, knew that that war would be the beginning of the end of all things. This argument from the sages—peaceful by virtue of their wisdom—was of no use whatsoever to the lords of war.

Doubt was the truth;

Doubt was within them,

they were the Truth.

With such a logical structure—corrupting Logic to the point of twisting it and transforming it into the irrationality typical of demonic beasts—the evil ones responded to the good ones.

VIII

When He—God—discovered what was happening, His eyes froze in their sockets. And they remained frozen there because He did not understand and could not comprehend what was happening.

Was that War? What was its origin, and what was its goal? What were the enemies of His Empire seeking, and what mysterious force dwelt in their rebellious and incorrigible hearts?

Power. The exercise of Power had turned into the madness of Power. Power drove those who exercised it mad. Ah, the madness of Power. How was it possible that a creature born to be but a breath of matter dared to raise its voice against God? Was this madness for Power one of the effects of the Science of Good and Evil?

IX

At first it was like a fire breaking out; you put it out and think the problem is solved. But you turn around and see another fire growing and devouring some other part of your world. You run, you arrive, you put this one out too, and once again you think it will never happen again, because everyone sees that the end to which everyone who falls into the snares of the Science of Good and Evil is led is to return to the dust from which they were taken. There is no mercy, no destiny. No tear is enough to extinguish this fire.

The violence in the conflict between Good and Evil grows at the same geometric progression as the fires it creates around itself. No sooner do you put out one than twice as many spring up further away. You put those out, and the geometric progression continues its course. Two more fires spring up further away. You run toward them, put them out, and twice as many spring up in the distance. Before you know it, the geometric progression itself has surrounded you, and you find yourself in Hell. Its flames are devouring everything you have built with your own hands. You oppose it, you resist, you declare the final war on your enemies—because you are the enemy, the target Hell seeks. The worlds are merely pawns in a game that eludes you but is as real as the mass destruction of the worlds that were once the pride of your eyes. What have those worlds become? Dust drifting aimlessly like nebulae, carrying within them all that remains of what you once loved.

That is how it was. That Empire of Worlds, which had the God of Infinity and Eternity as its Founder and King of kings, perished in the war of its own apocalypse

X

The speed with which I have passed through the memory of the forging and destruction of that Empire must not blind my intellect when it comes to the calculations at the foot of which I have laid the limits of my thought. What was cannot be changed; only what will be has been placed in our hands, and if it is already difficult to steer the course of what is toward what will be, how dare we venture into matters that existed before the birth of the first galaxy that fills our Cosmos!

The fact was that, with the taste in His mouth of one who ate a sweet only to have the cake burst in His stomach, God found Himself alone upon the ashes of that graveyard that the Science of Good and Evil had left in its wake. That Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil offered God its fruit, and God did not take it. He did not reach out His hand. Death tempted Him, but He was not deceived. Not for anything in the world was He willing to become a God of gods—all outside the law,

all immune to the arm of justice. He would rather face destruction than see His Empire turned into the Kingdom of Hell.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WISDOM AND SCIENCE OF CREATION

XI

In those ashes, indeed, the Childhood of God was buried. But the One who had emerged on His own two feet from the flames of His Empire's destruction was now a warrior who had won His First Battle and, along the way, had discovered the Science of Creation. While his enemies sought the ultimate weapon to destroy him, God discovered the secrets of matter, space, and time, and upon opening that door, he encountered Wisdom.

XII

He loved her from the very first day. And she did not refuse him, did not turn her back on him; Wisdom did not flee from her Lord. For her, from the Beginning without a beginning of Uncreation, he was the metaphysical cause of her existence, the reason why she—the daughter of the Infinite and Eternity—did everything. For Her, from the Beginning without a beginning of the Uncreated, He was the God who demanded more and more of her, who continually challenged her with His joy and His zest for life. For Her, from the Beginning without a beginning of the Uncreated, He was her source of inspiration. It was in His heart that She, the daughter of the Infinite and Eternity, looked to see the thousands of reflections of the Future. His desire was her muse; His capacity to dream was, for her, a workshop of projects. When He burst into the fabric of Reality, laying His Desire before her, she knew that from then on, nothing would ever be—or could ever be—the same. Before He saw the first flame, She had already seen Hell; before He smelled the first hint of burning, She had already seen the cemetery over which His indestructible warrior would walk barefoot. With the end of His dream inevitable, She spoke through the throats of the sages to address God with words of Science. For by the day He walked upon the ashes of His dream—by that Day—She would have already entrusted to Him all the secrets of the Science of Creation. She was going to teach Him how to create a galaxy. She was going to teach Him how to create a swarm of stars, how to arrange them into molecular networks, how to cover entire regions with gravitational seas floating between galaxies—mountain ranges from whose peaks rivers of stars flow through the gorges of sidereal abysses and empty out onto the shores of the constellations. She was going to teach him how to cultivate the tree of species. She was going to bestow her Power upon him; she was going to give him her very being.

XIII

And that was how the Warrior gave way to the Sage.

Infinity and Eternity transformed his body—the universe—into a laboratory of learning for God, and they gave Him their daughter, Wisdom, as His Teacher. She guided His thought through the atoms; she directed His arm to the core of the stars. She taught Him to capture a beam of cosmic rays; she revealed to Him the laws that govern their movement within an energy field; she taught Him to manipulate that creative energy field according to the desired effects. She showed Him the series of general and specific laws that govern the relationship between matter and energy. He revealed to Him the origin of supernovae, the reasons why galaxies attract, repel, unite, divide, and transform one another, yet never destroy each other. God raced against the light and defeated the cosmic ray in the midst of its intergalactic flight. God accelerated the pulse of the stars to the limit of their revolutions to see what would happen if He doubled the density of their gravitational field. God immersed Himself in the microcosm and, following a silver trail, traced the leap of energy from one dimension to another.

The more God learned about the forces that move the universe and its laws, the more He enjoyed growing in intelligence. His intelligence knew no bounds; He always wanted more, and no problem eluded Him. He only had to focus His eyes for His mind to find the answer. Wisdom simply placed the object before Him and directed His thoughts toward the correct solution. She stimulated His knowledge and guided Him from one science to another until He reached the limit that only God could attain: the knowledge of all sciences—Creative Omniscience.

Then Wisdom opened the door for his Lord to the subject of the creation of life.

What systematic conditions must be created to produce this species or that one? What are the processes of natural selection that must be followed so that the life force directs its course in a specific direction and not another?

From Her, God learned all the secrets of the creation and cultivation of the Tree of Life. Under Her guidance, God created worlds using the method of experimentation. And when His mastery of all the laws and forces of the universe made Him who He was—the Lord!—He took the step toward the unconquerable frontier: the creation of life in His image and likeness.

XIV

But during the period of the formation of His Creative Intelligence, a particular idea began to take shape in God's mind. While He was occupied with mastering the Science of Creation, it was merely a sporadic thought that crossed His mind, which He dismissed without giving it further thought.

The Idea that took root within Him was this:

Was He the Only Member of His Family? I mean, how could He know that somewhere on the other side of the East, where the Infinite dwells, there was not

Someone like Him—a Being of His Uncreated Nature who, at that very moment, might even be passing through the very places He had passed through?

This was the thought that kept coming to Him, and, time and again, He pushed it aside. Despite His constant turning away from it, as the Lord was being born into His Being, the question gradually gained the upper hand. It was true that God had not encountered His Equal, and He was convinced that He was the Only Member of His Family. If He called anyone " r Father," it was the Infinite; if He could call anyone "Mother," it was Eternity; if He felt anyone as His "Wife," it was Wisdom.

Did this spare him the truth that he had never been on the other side of the Dawn of Uncreation? And if he had never been there, how could he claim that this thought that had taken root in his mind was not the call of that Equal?

There was only one way to find out. To set out to traverse the infinite spaces.

That God was within Him—because He was God—had already become clear. But was He the only living God?

XV

Without a second thought, God left everything behind. There, at that moment, He brought His mastery of the Science of Creation to a close. And He set out on an adventure, in search of the answer to the question that had taken root in His chest and refused to be consigned to the recycling bin.

Was HE the only member of his family? Was He the One God known to Eternity and Infinity?

XVI

To what extent can experience enable the intellect to comprehend the story God lived as He broke through the boundaries of the Dawn of Uncreation? What kind of understanding must we possess to grasp the feelings of a Living God traversing the plains of a space unknown to Him, in search of that other Being of His own uncreated and eternal nature? What kind of mathematics of time must we employ to calculate the millions of millennia that adventure lasted? What literary structure must take shape in the hands of a historian of all things beautiful, so that rivers of legends and visions of landscapes beyond the imagination—of a hundred thousand universes united in the heart of a pearl—may flow from his fingers? How shall we say that God experienced this or that? How will the imagination of the poet of joyful things dare to compose an ode to the conquest of horizons that cannot be seen, but that ring in the ears of their conqueror like arpeggios of magical ballads shaking off sadness? Can we say to the dawn: Become a woman and kiss me. Have we ever said to the morning star: "Come and embrace me"? What emotions will the soul experience as it revels in the Moon's love and, on its wings, sails through dreams of liquid crystal in search of the shores of perfect happiness? How can we enter the mind of a Being who moves at the speed of thought and whose heart is as strong as the sun?

XVII

Fearless, indestructible by nature, his self-knowledge forged in a battle that wounded his soul with deep, tearing wounds, the Warrior awoke from his rest in the tent of Wisdom, bid her farewell with a kiss of radiant joy, and received this parting message from her: "You—God, the one you seek, my Beloved—is within you." Strong once more, stronger than ever, healed of his wounds with the balm of pure love, the Warrior needed to discover the answer for himself, and so he climbed the mountain ranges of Time, and from the farthest reaches of his universe he finally glimpsed the lands where the Infinite dwells. Smiling, with the wind of Eternity in his hair, his muscles firm, his legs strong as columns, his eyes shining with emotion, and once again marveling at the beauty unfolding at his feet—he who was God, the indestructible warrior, the adventurer in love with existence, the protégé of Eternity and the Infinite— set out on the wings of the eternal winds to conquer the virgin horizons.

XVIII

How long did that adventure last? Is an eternity a mathematical measure that fits into our physics textbooks? Will we dare to sketch the humblest of the adventures experienced by that indestructible warrior onto the canvas of our most futuristic visions?

At last, after an eternity had passed, God discovered that the world on the other side of the East, where the Infinite dwells, took the form of a line shaped like a great mountain, from whose summit He could contemplate with His almighty eyes the truth He was seeking: He was the One God whom Eternity and the Infinite had known and held as Lord since the Beginning without a beginning of the Uncreation.

But in this truth—which may sound familiar to you—in this formal declaration, a sense of regret beat.

For as the Immensity of His World was revealed to God more and more, as the definition of His Being and those of the Infinite and Eternity merged into a single entity, becoming an indivisible, inseparable, indestructible reality, as His Nature was revealed to Him in all its supernatural, uncreated, and eternal immensity, to that very same extent, that desire to know whether His Equal, His Brother, His Friend existed on the other side of the unknown horizon; to that very same extent that the Wise One's knowledge of His own uncreated and eternal nature grew, to that very same extent that little hidden light grew within His heart—a light that had at first pulsed with the beat of a very tiny idea.

And so, by the time the One Living God found Himself on the summit of the Mountain of Infinity and Eternity, that desire for knowledge had transformed into an ever-stronger desire to find Him and embrace Him, to look Him in the face and say: "At last! How long I have been searching for you, my Equal, my Brother, my Friend."

XIX

He who found himself standing at the summit of the Mountain of Infinity and Eternity, where he found Wisdom waiting for him to greet him with the very same words with which he had bid him farewell—that Warrior, that Sage, that One God, a member of His House and Family—found that that tiny light was now beating in his chest with the strength of a sun that continued to grow. What wouldn't he have given at that moment to have found His Equal—that person with whom he could laugh as equals and together embark on the adventure of Life across the plains that stretched out at the foot of the Mountain upon which he stood!

But no, God was alone. He was the only member of His Family. He would never have that Someone to whom He could say, "Warrior, let's race." He would never enjoy the pleasure of being treated as an equal by that other divine person who needed Him as much as He needed them. But enough of that. Was He not God? Why, then, was His heart breaking? He would give life to that Brother, to that Friend born to look Him in the face, to laugh with Him as brothers laugh, and to speak to Him as friends do—freely, affectionately, and with independent judgment. Was He not the Lord? Had He forgotten how to create a universe, how to cultivate the Tree of Life? Was not Wisdom at His side, whispering in His ear:

"You—God—are within you. My beloved, the one you seek is within you."

XX

The Divine Warrior smiled again; he donned the Mantle of the Sage and, believing he knew the meaning of the words of the Daughter of Infinity and Eternity, said to himself: "Then, let's get to work." Immediately, God transformed the Mountain of Infinity and Eternity into a hill of magical earth, growing at the speed of its Creator's gaze toward borders that can never be reached. As if it were a continent growing from its center, and that center a mountain rising in height at the same rate as its surface spreads across the plain—amazing all who behold it because, no matter where you are, its summit can be seen from every corner—God named that mountain, born to be the center of His Universal Creation: "Zion." And that continent, endowed with its very nature—as if Infinity and Eternity were reborn from the Mountain of God and had shot forth until reaching the natural limits of their forms—that Continent at the heart of the Cosmos He called "Heaven." He gave Wisdom the earth as her kingdom, so that in Heaven she might take root and, from her very depths, give to the Brother, to the Friend for whom her Heart yearned.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORIGIN OF THE GODS

XXI

This is the origin of the gods of Heaven. They were born at the foot of the Mountain of God.

He gave them their names, and He revealed His own to them. His name was Yahweh; He was God, and they were His Brothers. They were the Brothers of Yahweh, the Firstborn of the gods. Born immortal and indestructible, Yahweh God lived with His Brothers for a wondrous time. His heart was satisfied by the company of His equals. His soul reveled in His victory with the intensity of a warrior dancing the dance of heroes after the enemy's defeat. His enemy was His Solitude; they were His living victory over the hell that He would one day see advancing from that solitude embedded in His heart. God danced with his brothers in the fire of joy, like David through the streets of Jerusalem the day after Goliath's defeat. For his brothers, Yahweh God built a city on the summit of his mountain. He surrounded it with walls, each made of a single block, each block a different color, each color the hue of a precious stone. As if they had a life of their own, or a star within them pulsing their light toward the never-ending horizons, from those walls suns radiate, coloring the sky and transforming it into the Paradise of Wonders. Within those divine walls, He built a City for Himself and His Brothers, and He called it Jerusalem. They, the Brothers of Yahweh God, were the gods of Zion, those who dwell in the City of Yahweh, the Eternal Jerusalem, within whose indestructible walls Yahweh God, the Firstborn of the gods, has His residence.

XXII

From its walls, the Brothers of God watched the explosion of life grow—an explosion that never ceases or stops—clothing God's Paradise with enchanted forests and mountain ranges as high as the Himalayas, teeming with giant eagles with bones of metallic ice, weightless as feathers yet solid as steel.

The overflowing divine imagination that had long slumbered in the Warrior's heart awoke in sublime splendor, and, calling upon Wisdom, he went with Her to paint upon the celestial canvas landscapes beyond the imagination of our most illustrious geniuses. The Creator's inspiration, soaring under the pressure of the happiness He was experiencing, led God to conceive a New Creation in His mind. He took the gods and guided them to the other side of Heaven's horizon, beyond the ever-expanding borders of Paradise. As one who invites others to take a seat and sit down to contemplate a marvelous spectacle, God unveiled the Creation of the New Cosmos.

XXIII

Behold the Beginning of the Creation of the Field of galaxies surrounding the Universe of the Heavens, the Local Region, whose Heart is Heaven—a World born to harbor the Tree of Life upon its earth—and around whose World the Heavens of the Local Region spread the ocean of their star-filled continents.

Ready to proceed with the Creation of the New Cosmos, rivers of energy sprang forth from the Divine Creative Arm; as they spread throughout the outer regions of the Universe of the Heavens of the heavens, they transformed Space into a fireworks display where each explosion marked the end of a galaxy.

Night was followed by Day; dawn was a new explosion of fireworks in the full light of the aurora of the New Era that had dawned; and each explosion marked the Beginning of a New Galaxy.

Such is the Origin of the New Cosmos. God transformed all the uncreated matter surrounding His World into energy; immediately afterward, He transformed all this energy into New Matter. Such is the origin of the galaxies that currently exist and surround the Local Region.

God thus created the Cosmos so that it would continue to grow eternally. This growth is comparable to a wave that, expanding through Eternity without losing its original energy, doubles its radius by the square of the speed of light as it radiates toward Infinity.

This river of cosmic energy flows into the space-time field that surrounds the entire Creation—a creative field into which the energy produced by the field of galaxies enters, beginning its journey toward the stars. Such is the origin of the stars.

When stars are born—though the ray and the ocean through which energy travels from the microcosm to the macrocosm remain invisible—the stars announce their birth with an explosion of light.

Since the birth of stars occurs in swarms, people speak of a Big Bang; but it would be more accurate to speak of a lightbulb turning on and off—there is no destruction, only creation. And rather than an explosion, it is an implosion.

An even greater error is to concentrate the creation of Matter into a single moment in Time and Space. There was not one Big Bang; there were many; and there will always be more, for the process of transforming cosmic energy into astrophysical matter is constant, autonomous, and extends to Infinity throughout Eternity, with God always being the Source that nourishes the Ocean of spacetime at the origin of the Creation of the New Cosmos.

XXIV

But at the end of this Beginning of the Creation of all things, this movement was on the verge of perishing and being destroyed forever.

When God the Creator, Lord of Matter, Space, and Time, had finished setting this process of galaxy creation in motion—overjoyed with the artist's delight, the genius's awareness of having amazed his audience, and mad with joy at the thought of telling his Brothers:

"Come, let us follow a ray of light to the borders of our universe; accompany me, let us follow the eagle of Andromeda through the mountain ranges of Orion," when His heart was already beating with perfect happiness, the Day of the Origin of all things took a turn and became the hardest day of His existence.

What did He find in response to His invitation on the lips of the gods, His Brothers?

Hanging heavy as a slab on the lips of the gods was the truth they had just discovered:

"Yahweh God, the One and Only True Living God."

They were His Brothers because, in His need for that Equal, Yahweh God had given Himself so completely to overcoming the Solitude that one day had surrounded Him with its Hell, that upon crossing the final frontier—the creation of life in His image and likeness—He believed He had found the Final Victory that had been denied Him.

XXV

He treated them as true Brothers and true gods; He adopted them as Brothers with the sincerity and devotion of one who gives everything, forgets all the bad moments, and immerses Himself in the good ones to come without any fear of being struck again by the storms whose lightning and thunder had rained down upon His loneliness. But now that they had discovered in Yahweh God the One True Living God: how could they deceive themselves into believing what they had never been?

They were creatures. Nothing more, just creatures.

They were Creatures like those galaxies He was creating; like Heaven itself that gave birth to them, like the Universe that had just been born.

How could they look upon Him again with the eyes of one who believes himself to be His equal, another member of His Family? How could they keep their knees from bending to worship their Lord and Creator? Did they not know that the moment Yahweh God set His eyes upon them, His soul would break at the sight in their eyes of the failure of the Warrior who sought in them the Brother he never had and never would have? How could they follow the One True Living God through the cosmic expanses whose immensity they did not comprehend and whose forces could only be experienced by the One who had been born among them?

The Origin of the gods, their origin, the origin of the Brothers of Yahweh, was this, and now they knew it. Their origin was the need that He—the Uncreated God—had to overcome the Solitude that had taken hold of the Almighty Sage whom they had just seen in action. They had been His victory; and now they were His failure.

How could they lift their heads and dare to open their mouths? What were they going to say to Him: "We're sorry, our Lord and Creator, but we understand You"?

XXVI

And so it was. When Yahweh God, the Firstborn of the gods, opened the Creation of the galaxies and turned His face toward His Brothers, when He went to open His mouth to invite them to navigate the Cosmos, He found His Brothers on their knees, not daring to look Him in the eye and already suffering what they knew was going to happen. And they knew it because they knew Him so well, they loved Him so much that they knew He would react as He was going to react, as He had reacted, as He was reacting. "Yahweh God, Lord and One True God!" was the declaration that sprang from their lips. In these four words lay the entire mystery of their past, their life, their present, and their future: One True Living God.

XXVII

Yahweh God looked into the hearts of His Brothers and saw into their minds just as you and I see through glass. God said nothing. He revealed no emotion whatsoever. The shattered illusion of the genius who finishes his work and awaits the joyful acclaim of his unconditional and devoted audience turned into the sadness of one who discovers absolute silence in the hall. Not knowing how to react, other than to turn around and vanish from the stage without leaving a trace of his existence, Yahweh God lost himself in the distance on the other side of the newly created Cosmos. And as He withdrew from the stage of His Creation, that eternal and infinite loneliness of His—against which He had staged this entire marvelous spectacle—began to grow within His Being like a star sown in His soul by Hell itself. The more the fire of His Eternal Solitude burned, the faster Yahweh God moved away from everything He loved. The faster He ran, fleeing His destiny, the more that star from the abyss burned within His Being. The more His failure burned Him, the more rage, fury, helplessness, and frustration took hold of His being. The more these uncontrollable emotions grew within Him, the more His Great Spirit accelerated His race beyond infinite spaces.

XXVIII

And as he drifted uncontrollably, fleeing from his own destiny, a storm raged within his heart. Eternity, the Infinite, Wisdom—why had they allowed him to reach this point? Why, on the day he had his first dream, had they not erased it from his mind? What sin had he committed to be cast out of his uncreated paradise into the hell of a creation that was a prison to him? Who or what had condemned him to this life sentence? What or who had signed his sentence to eternal solitude? What was his crime? On the day he dreamed of immortality for all creatures, why hadn't they torn that thought from his mind? Was his offense so grave that he had been expelled from his paradise and condemned in this way? What good had it done him to have discovered the Creator in His Being if that very discovery had brought him this sentence? Had all His victory been reduced to an illusion? What

good was it to him to be who he was if he had no one with whom to enjoy his Being—and never would? With whom would he laugh when his heart burst with joy? With whom would He sail through the galaxies on the adventure of discovering new frontiers? To whom would He speak face to face if even the gods knelt in silence, unable to address Him as an equal? Such devastating and deadly anguish took hold of His Being that Yahweh God thought He would go mad with grief.

XXIX

Desperate, mad with grief, He gave free rein to His tragedy, and from His almighty and omnipotent Arm, shells of destructive energy spread through space, reducing all matter in their path to rubble.

"Prison? No, a cemetery," Yahweh God shouted to Eternity and Infinity when the explosion of his pain became uncontrollable.

"Do you not want my death? I will dig my own grave."

Mad with grief, feeling defeated and crushed, unable to triumph over His Solitude, from that very Arm that had just moments before unleashed fields of energy transforming the ancient universe into New Heavens full of colors and sounds—like one who, with his magic, transforms the desert into a paradisiacal orchard teeming with exotic birds and all manner of fantastic creatures— from that very same magical Arm, in that terrible Hour, rays of destructive energy burst forth, seizing the light itself and twisting it until it was shattered under the weight of its infinite speed.

The Warrior and the Sage, as if possessed by the unbearable pain of defeat, were bent on destroying the indestructible, on destroying themselves, and in their destruction, on burying the Infinite and Eternity with them—a cemetery worthy of a God, a tomb fit for Him.

XXX

How can we understand that Hour of liberating catharsis that God experienced amid His cries? How can one dare to imagine the nature of the antimatter energy fields that God, in His pain, spread throughout the ultra-cosmic spaces? How can one describe that, in His unimaginable pain, the memory of the great love His Brothers had inspired in Him triumphed over His torture, and the rays of His despair did not reach the World He had built solely for them and because of them? With what numbers and what kind of measurements will we calculate the duration and intensity of that Hour of liberating catharsis? How many kilograms of destructive energy could God generate before collapsing, as if dead, at the feet of the daughter of Infinity and Eternity?

As if dead, with no desire to breathe, no strength to open His eyes, no wish to wake up again.

How much matter would have to be burned and reduced to darkness before His Arm grew weary and His Being fell, exhausted, upon the cemetery He had raised around Himself? How deep must the grave be, within whose dark walls a

God would be buried? How heavy a slab shall we place upon the grave of a God? How long did Yahweh God spend digging His own tomb? When, at what moment, did all His pain transform into darkness floating in the ultra-cosmic spaces, and did God fall as if dead, without strength, overcome by the catharsis that had been unleashed?

XXXI

Indeed, God—that marvelous Firstborn of the gods, that warrior and king of an empire that once encompassed countless worlds, that sage who delighted in uncovering all the secrets of the Science of Creation, that adventurer sailing across the land beyond the Dawn of Infinity, that God of Eternity racing against the creatures of the paradise of Uncreation—that Being lay as if dead at the feet of his Beloved, Wisdom, his Bride.

She would be the first thing He would see when He opened His eyes.

XXXII

How long did He—who in His Innocence was more beloved than a hundred thousand universes—remain as if dead? How can we say: "He lay as if dead for so long"?

God had no strength to go on living, nor did He wish to rise! What awaited Him—eternal solitude? But at last He opened His eyes. His gaze drifted over the horizon; His thoughts wandered aimlessly. Then He found Her there.

God opened His eyes and found Her there—the daughter of the Infinite and Eternity—at His side, whispering words of love into His ear: "You are, My Beloved, the True God. 'YOU, God, our Son, are in You.'"

Then these words of life flowed from the divine lips: "True God from True God, BEGOTTEN, not made, UNCREATED, of the same nature as the Father..."

CHAPTER FOUR

CREATION AND HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

XXXIII

Have you never seen the white butterfly flitting joyfully from flower to flower, singing merrily every second of its twenty-four hours of existence? Have you never been enchanted by the song of the songbird behind the bars of its cage, wondering

what you would do in its place? Have you ever stopped to count the stars that fit into a corner of the harbor, when the sun sprinkles golden arrows upon the midday waters, capable of making even the hard stone that some of us have for a heart fall in love?

How beautiful it is to see someone happy again who once found themselves lost in the deserts of their unbearable loneliness! Why must a man measure the immensity of the heavens by the yardstick of his own height? How many light-years in every direction does the soul encompass, smiling blissfully among singing birds and butterflies flying from galaxy to galaxy without fear of eternity and infinity?

It is He; He returns. The stars rise upon their pillars, the galaxies clap their hands, and the gods sing the dance of victory by the fire of the bonfire where the Phoenix was reborn from its ashes, never again to fall prey to its flames.

God spoke only these words to His Brothers:

"This is Jesus, my Beloved Son."

And in these five words lay the entire mystery of the Future of all Creation. The gods knelt and experienced the happiness of God the Father with the same intensity with which they had experienced the tragedy of the Brother who had departed. It was enough for them to see His Happiness to know that He was their Equal, YOU, God—the Companion whom God had sought in them but could not find.

XXXIV

Then, once this time of happiness had passed, from the heart of God the Father's Victory, the Spirit of the Creator awoke within God. God the Father took His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus, left His World in the hands of His Brothers, the gods, and, transforming the Cosmos into a field of raw matter, created the Ocean of the Heavens. In this Ocean of stars, the Creator Spirit sowed the seed of the Tree of Life. And somewhere in that Universe, a world was born, with its Kingdom—the first of the Peoples who would dwell forever in the Paradise that God created for His Son.

God cultivated the civilization of the world of that First Day of the First Week of Creation, established a monarchical constitution as its social system, and begot a brother for His Son in its king. Then He took the Kingdom of the First Day of the First Week of Creation and led it to His Abode in the Paradise of God.

When this First Kingdom arrived in Paradise, its people discovered that Heaven is a mirror reflecting all the stages of life's evolution, from the earliest stages of prehistory to the dawn of history.

The gods then called it the Land of Wonders.

And so it was—this Event occurred five times. Five times did the Creator sow the seed of Life in the Universe of the Heavens. Five worlds were born among the stars of the Universe, each world with its own Civilization, each People with its own ontological characteristics, each a kingdom with its own social constitution, with its king at the helm. At the end of the Fifth Day of the First Week of Creation, God's

Paradise had been transformed into an Empire. God sat on the Throne of Power as its Supreme Universal Judge, and at his right hand was the King of kings and Lord of lords of his Empire, his Firstborn Son, Jesus, the Only-Begotten God.

During those Five Days of the First Week of Creation, Yahweh God entrusted the governance of his Empire to his Brothers and Sons. The history of this Empire is recorded in the Book that deals with the Origins and History of Heaven. On the day it is our turn to ascend to the World from which Jesus Christ descended, we will have the opportunity to learn everything about the creation of the Five Worlds that formed the Empire of Paradise before the Creation of our World, the Sixth in Time—their names, evolutionary lines, astronomical structure, social structure, and so on. All these things are written in the books that deal with the Chronicles of the Empire of God.

XXXV

And so it came to pass that on the Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation, one of those Princes of the Empire of God discovered a seed.

It was the seed of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Its first manifestation was Doubt. Its ultimate consequence, its fruit, was War—a fruit that very soon all the kingdoms of the Empire would have time to taste.

That Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, was God the Only-Begotten Son—this was known to all the citizens of the Kingdom of God.

Whether to believe it or not was another matter. But matter or not, Doubt was something that never even occurred to any child of God to consider.

The fact was that God and His Son went back and forth from the Empire to the Universe and from the Universe to the Empire, and millions of years passed between each round trip. On that Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation, one of the Princes saw in the doubt regarding the truth of the Only-Begotten Sonship of Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the gateway through which to reshape the structure of the Kingdom of Heaven according to his own thinking. Why could not he, Satan, son of God, assume the regency of the Kingdom during the Creative Periods?

This was a thought that had never even occurred to anyone before. And, curiously, it found fertile ground. And it took root. Thus, , taken by surprise by the Rebellion of that son of God and his allies, Paradise turned into a hell.

With the Rebels united in what came to be known as the Dragon's Axis, the Dragon's armies set out to conquer the Throne of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It was the First World War of Heaven.

With Satan at the head of the Dragon's Axis, his armies overran the borders of neighboring kingdoms and advanced toward Zion to conquer the Throne of the King of kings.

Stunned, marveling at what they were seeing, unable to react in the face of such surprise, the Brothers and the children of God—who refused to accept even the possibility of such a reconfiguration— from the walls of the City of God, the Princes of the House of Yahweh and Zion watched the advance of the Dragon's forces and the stampede of the Peoples of the Empire toward the Jerusalem of the gods.

Indeed, nothing the Brothers and the children of God said to them to make them lay down their arms got through to Satan and his followers. So, once they had overcome their initial surprise, the counterattack prevailed.

The gods broke the Seal of their origins, and the Princes drew strength from it. The Princes Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael clothed themselves in the invincibility of the gods, routed the enemy, drove them back to their realms, besieged them in their fortresses, captured them, and imprisoned them in their palaces until the Judge of Creation returned and passed sentence.

It so happened that when the Father and the Son returned from the Heavens of Creation, bringing with them a new Kingdom to Paradise, the children of God came out to meet them—but Satan was not among them.

A single glance was enough for God to discover why. But wishing to let the matter rest as a lesson learned—and under no circumstances wanting His Son to discover the existence of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—He commanded that all His children appear before Him for the celebration of the Welcome Feast of the Kingdom on the Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation.

And that was that.

As was only natural, the Empire dressed in its finest for the Welcome Feast. The Kingdom of the Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation took its place in the Empire of the Son of God; its King was presented before the Family of the Gods.

Joy, then.

The memory of the Dragon igniting the War with its breath became the memory of a nightmare that had passed and would never return.

Joy in forgiveness.

And so, dawn broke on the Fifth Day of the First Week of Creation. Once again, God and his Son entrusted the regency of their Empire to the Members of the House "of Yahweh and Zion."

And as thousands of years passed, the unbelievable happened once more.

Like a mule that never learns its lesson, Satan began to stir once more in the shadows. He found allies, and they conspired to awaken the Dragon.

With the decision made and the plan to conquer the Empire laid out, the new war—the Second World War of Heaven—began.

Once again, the gods and princes of Heaven were taken by surprise.

Good heavens, how could they explain that this new rebellion had exploded right in their faces! Even if they won—and they had no doubt about victory—the House of God's inability to maintain peace would now be proven once and for all.

Reflection set in.

What was happening?

How was it possible that mere creatures of clay dared to question the Truth of God's Only-Begotten Son?

Or simply dare to dream of forcing God to do their will and give the green light to the transformation of the Empire into an Olympus of gods subject to a law of immunity from the laws of Heaven?

XXXVI

And so it was that the Second World War of Heaven ended in the same way. The Dragon was neutralized, chained, and held in custody until the return of the Judge of the Empire.

But that was a bitter victory. A victory that did not taste like triumph to the victors. They had failed for the second time the One who, during His absence, had entrusted them with universal regency. What would happen upon His return? How could they explain what they themselves could not understand?

At last, God and His Son returned from the Ocean of Stars. They brought with them a new Kingdom, as always with its Prince at the helm.

With the joy of a Father who had just given birth to a new son, and of a Son welcoming the birth of a little brother, the Father and the Son returned Home.

Here, the same thing happened again. For a moment, the Son detected something—something mysterious—in the tone of His Father's voice as He commanded all His children to present themselves before Him. But it did not go beyond that.

And once again, God forgave the Rebels.

However, He knew that revolutionary measures were urgently needed. He could not allow a Third World War to break out during His absence from Heaven.

Either He would reconfigure the structure of His Empire, or sooner or later His Creation would become an Olympus of gods playing at war with the responsibility of those who have total and absolute immunity from the law.

He could not allow that to happen. So He paused to seek the answer that the facts demanded of Him.

And so it was done.

God found the answer.

Events demanded that He open His Creation to all His children. So the next time the Spirit of the Creator spread His wings over the Universe, all His children would accompany Him.

From the Sixth Day onward, Creation would be transformed into a Spectacle open to all worlds. And what's more, all His children would participate in the process of forming the New Worlds.

This was the first step toward closing the path by which, over time, God's Paradise had become a prison for His creatures. Wonderful and all that, but a prison nonetheless.

As for why the Peoples of his Creation could not quite conceive of their existence as a Tree of which they were the Branches, God conceived the Creation of a New People, made up of all his children, and in which, through the fusion of all their Civilizations into a Single New One, once they had entered Paradise, this New People would serve as the mortar necessary for the bricks to bond together and form a compact, solid, and indestructible edifice.

The projection of the Five Civilizations of the existing Realms onto Human Life would, through their fusion, bring about the Birth of this New Civilization, which, spreading throughout Paradise, would unite them all in the soul of this New Civilization in which each and every one of the existing civilizations was reflected and lived on. Created not for Power but to be the body of the spirit of Wisdom in its Creation, the Human People would bring about the Fusion without which Doubt—the mother of War—had been possible.

As for the Doubt regarding whether the King of kings and Lord of lords of the Heavenly Empire was God the Only-Begotten Son, they would see Him with their own eyes.

So, upon being born on the Sixth Day of the first Week of Creation, God took all His children and led them to the place of Origin, the Universe.

God created the heavens and created the Earth.

He created the Earth beyond the boundaries of the galaxies.

And He created it there so that His children might see what lay beyond the Cosmos—the Abyss shrouded in that Darkness to which the One True God had reduced the Uncreated Cosmos in that Hour preceding the Birth of the Father and the Son.

At the same time, He dispelled the mystery of what lies beyond the boundaries of the realm of the galaxies. With this gesture, God was telling His children what would happen to anyone who dared to unearth the axe of war once more. The punishment for the Rebel would be banishment to the Darkness, from which he would never return, and where for all eternity there would be the creaking of bones and the gnashing of teeth.

Then, once the stage was set, all the spectators took their seats. God looked at His Son; He stepped forward, opened His mouth, and said:

"Let there be light."

AND THE LIGHT BECAME MAN...
FOR EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO LIVE
MAY LIVE FOREVER

THE HEART OF MARY

When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me?" Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" They did not understand what he was saying to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and he was subject to them, and his mother kept all these things in her heart....

SECOND BOOK:

"THE FIRST AND THE LAST"

THE STORY OF THE HOLY FAMILY

THIRD BOOK:

"THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA"

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE FORERUNNERS OF THE MESSIAH

During the bicentennial celebrations of the French Revolution in Paris, the Son of God inspired me to write this *story*. I set to work immediately. I left Paris, returned to the South, shut myself away among books, and set out to start at the beginning—that is, to discover the cause of that documentary void through which confusion found a way into the heart of the matter and gave birth to that mountain of books which, using the Hero of the Gospels as an excuse, brought to life fictional characters with no connection to the True Son of Mary: the Virgin of Nazareth.

The need to journey back to the time of the Nativity led me to the British Museum Library.

With the arrival of the following spring, I stopped searching in books for what I could not find in them. I packed my bags and left for Jerusalem. I crossed Europe by the light of a bright star and traversed the sea on the waves of a Silver Dove. Holy Land!

... "land," ... cries the Colossus of Haifa from the lighthouse, "Welcome to the Holy Land"

I went down to Nazareth. I visited the Church of the Annunciation. After a brief stop in Tel Aviv, I continued on my way to the Holy City.

When I reached Jerusalem, the city was in a state of emergency. Iraq had just invaded Kuwait. The anti-Zionist rhetoric of Islam's new hero—exploiting the Muslim world's universal hatred of Jews by linking it to the cause of Arab fundamentalism—demanded, according to Israeli paramilitary newspapers, the use of nuclear weapons, especially the neutron bomb.

While Iraq sparked waves of cheers in the Palestinian territories, a walking advertisement dressed as a prophet wandered through the crowd on David Street, dragging an apocalyptic sign: "The end of the world is near; come have a beer. The Prophet Pub."

It was a very enlightening trip. I climbed once more onto the wings of the Silver Dove and sailed across the waters of the Great Sea back to the Old Continent.

I set course for London. I settled in Finsbury Park, locked the door, turned on my old typewriter, and sat down, determined not to leave the studio until I had written the story I'd been striving for over the past few years.

It was a very long fall, but a very fruitful one. One day in November of that year, I reached my goal. The goal I had been chasing all those years was the Treasure that the Mother kept in her heart: "the Heart of Mary."

How Mary met Joseph, who Zechariah and Elizabeth were, who Jesus' famous brothers and sisters really were. Everything—absolutely everything—she knew everything about her Son. She had lived it all and kept it all in her Heart. And it remained just as it was.

What I saw in the Mother's Heart is what you are about to read below.

SECOND BOOK:

"THE FIRST AND THE LAST"

THE STORY OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham... son of David... son of Zerubbabel, son of Abiud, of Eliakim, of Azor, of Zadok, of Achim, of Eliud, of Eleazar, of Matthan, of Jacob...

MARY OF NAZARETH

The Virgin was born in Nazareth, in the very heart of Galilee. As everyone knows very well thanks to the Canonical Gospels, the Virgin's father was Jacob, and her mother was Anne. Jacob of Nazareth, Mary's father, died when Mary was still very young. One fine day, the Virgin's father, the saint, departed for Heaven. And he did not return. This took place during the reign of Herod.

The deceased left behind an orphan, an orphaned son, and a widow. From a human perspective, Jacob, son of Matthan, son of Solomon, son of King David, passed away at a bad time. Death, of course, never comes at a good time. In any case, for as bad as it was, Jacob of Nazareth passed away at the best possible moment.

Those great droughts that had ravaged the provinces of the Middle East for so many years had finally lifted; the famous "fat cows," which for a moment seemed as though they would never return, were coming back, each one plumper than the last; they had returned and were parading their abundance through the fields of all the provinces of the Ancient Levant, when the Greeks and Romans...

The luminous horizon—longed for, prayed for, desired, and pleaded for, up and down the Temple in massive processions—had drawn near, of course, to the hills of Nazareth as well. Its radiance was already beginning to shine in the eyes of its inhabitants with the brilliance of the star of answered prayers, the light of a granted wish. Shepherds of Galilee, fishermen of the Sea of Miracles, farmers of the Jordan Valley, artisans of the land who had lived in the darkness of despair—all together they poured into the streets to celebrate the years of plenty. They had finally arrived!

The House of the Virgin shared in the general joy with the intensity of those who had suffered—as badly as the others, not as badly as some, nor much better than most of the people who truly suffered during those long years. There were so many of them!

It wasn't just that drought. There were also those earthquakes that ravaged the Middle East, spreading famine from the mountains of Lebanon to the shores of

the Red Sea. And more. Yes. Much more. Those years of terrible despair were already dreadful enough, but the fiscal policy of Herod, the Butcher of Jerusalem, acted like an axe, cutting off every head that managed to stay afloat. Under the reign of Herod the Great, simply continuing to breathe became a crime. The right to speak was prohibited. The sacred quality that distinguishes humans from beasts was criminalized, and its exercise condemned: in the best of cases to exile, to capital punishment in all other cases. As many strongholds as Herod built, so many gallows were counted in the kingdom of Israel. Of all trades, prostitution is the oldest, but the only one that never went out of style during the days of Herod the Great was that of the executioner. How ironic—while the Day of Judgment may or may not have been approaching, the offspring of the Tyrant's family were building palaces out of marble blocks! And fortresses worthy of an emperor, and military barracks and garrisons against a possible insurrection—the kind capable of bringing down even the very walls of Hell.

Not even the pharaohs!

Moses' pharaoh was evil; the Herods were worse. And meanwhile, while the tyrant devoured a son or a brother, the people continued to endure physical and spiritual calamities—the kind that, once they're over... you don't even want to remember. Who would remember those lean years once two thousand years had passed? Yet the delusional madness of the Butcher of Jerusalem, the delusional madness of the Tyrant of Israel, would indeed be remembered by history: Herod the Great! That was the only thing missing for that murderer—to be granted license to kill at will. His children, his brothers, his wife, his friends, his enemies—whether they were innocent or not. Permission from Caesar himself to violate every law of Roman law.

Under the reign of that Herod, there came a time when merely moving one's lips to ask for justice was enough to fall victim to the wheels of his murderous paranoia. The Romans—to be fair—made many mistakes; of all of them, Octavian Caesar Augustus's decision to grant the Crown of the Jews to a Palestinian was a blunder that even the Judge of the Universe himself will find hard to forgive.

But let us return to the subject of the Life of the Virgin and her Family. Jacob of Nazareth, Mary's father, had just died.

Precisely because Anne, the widow of Jacob of Nazareth, and her older daughters, Mary and Joanna, had already managed to almost forget the kind of battle that man—so dearly loved by them—had to wage against the elements of that endless summer, it is understandable that his loss, now that the light of hope had begun to bring forth the gold of abundance from the udders of the cows in the stable, would be infinitely more unbearable and painful for the widow, Anna, the Virgin's mother, than the loss of her husband.

Anne and Jacob of Nazareth overcame all adversity with courage and faced hard times with the serenity of those who walk in God's peace. Jacob of Nazareth and Anne, too, had dreamed of the days of plenty throughout the past few years, just like everyone else; and they laughed in the face of hard times by bringing six children into the world.

It so happened that, rather than allowing the hard times to drive even the slightest wedge between them, Jacob and his wife grew even closer—if that were possible—in the embrace of love that filled them with wonder at being together. They named their firstborn daughter after Jacob, the late husband; then came Joan. They were followed by twins, then another girl, and the stream of life was closed by the youngest child of the household, named Cleophas, a baby still nursing when his father died.

"Now that the sun shines again, my daughter, the Lord leaves me alone with my six children. Who will teach me to live without your father, Mary?" In this way, the Virgin's mother poured out her bleeding heart. The girl gathered in her lap the tears of that mother whom she loved so dearly. Like any little girl who had gotten lost in a forest full of strangers, the Widow wept with a broken heart. In Mary's heart, however, her father's presence had simply fallen asleep.

Mary could still see, feel, smell, and hear her father, all smiles as he answered her and her sister Juana's questions about the Lord of Moses, YAHWEH GOD.

Mary could still see him dealing with the reapers, the gardeners, and the herders of the village with the joy and strength of a man respected, esteemed, and considered honest from one end of the region to the other. Her father was the kind of man who looked people in the face, straight into their eyes, without guile. In the eyes of Jacob of Nazareth, one could read the sincerity that his words exuded.

When the lean years came, Mary's father rose to the occasion. Since the land no longer yielded enough to pay extra wages, Jacob of Nazareth took it upon himself to ensure that his fields produced at least a few sacks of almonds, a few arrobas of olive oil, a few measures of wheat, and a few quintals of the estate's famous wines. Anything at all, so long as his daughters' bones remained healthy and strong. His two eldest daughters, Mary and Joan, knew just as well as their widow what kind of barren suns that man had to battle! Thank God, though they were still young, Mary and Joan pitched in—with the olives in winter, with the almonds, figs, and wheat in summer, and with the livestock in fall, summer, winter, and spring. What Mrs. Anne, the widow of Jacob of Nazareth, would give now to rise again at dawn and prepare milk, bread, and water for the father of her daughters!

Mary knew this all too well; seeing her father on his feet again at dawn, bidding farewell to his daughters with that smile so characteristic of him in his eyes—her mother would have given her own life for it. But nothing could be done now to turn back the wheel of time. Now she had to live, to choose between her dead husband and her living children.

Of the two girls, Mary and Joan, Joan was the younger, a year younger than Mary. Mary was the eldest, the head of the household. Such are the mysteries of life: it was Joan, the younger of the two, who was most drawn to the rhythm of the countryside; perhaps because Juana had inherited from her father a love for the scent of blossoming trees and the pleasure of gazing at the colors of the horizon at dawn.

Looking at them, both sisters, anyone would have thought that, judging by her build, it was Mary who should have enjoyed the wind in her hair most as evening fell; yet it was Joan, the younger one—whose frame was almost as small as her mother's—whose soul her father had filled with a love for the red of the living earth. In Mary, the strength of life came from her mother. Her mother passed down to her all her skill in sewing and dressmaking. What mattered most to Mary was her family and her home.

So when hard times eventually came, and the cows all grew thin, and money became scarce, and the needs to be met began to multiply sixfold in barely two years, María proved to be a natural seamstress. At the age when one is said to be in the springtime of life, the eldest daughter of Jacob of Nazareth could just as easily mend a dress and make it look brand-new in the blink of an eye as she could knit her sisters a wool coat in a matter of days, all while never ceasing to be her mother's right-hand woman. And a model daughter to her sister Joan. In her—as I said—an innate ability had emerged to learn from her father about the impact of lunar cycles on agriculture, why rabbits eat lettuce, how a real tomato actually grows, and why olive trees are pruned so they don't cast shade on one another and compromise the flavor of the oil. In short, thousands of things.

The fact is that Joan, besides being her father's pride and joy, felt like her sister Mary's other arm—one for her father and one for her mother, and the two of them together in joy—when the southerly winds raged, and the cold raindrops fell, and the droughts and winter storms in summer, and the summer heat in winter, and the rains that came and went in the blink of an eye, when the storm put men to the test, seeking to carry off to Paradise those who met it with a cheerful face—at that time, the two sisters drew closer than ever. Those hard years forced the two sisters to work hard. It was a duty they embraced in silence, written in blood, beating in time with their parents' hearts. Each opened her soul to her own unique gifts and acted in accordance with the mystery of life within each person.

The older sister's eyes—Mary's vision—were made to find the needle in the haystack; they never failed to thread the needle, without even looking! Her sister Juana's eyes needed the horizon, the countryside, the open sky. Instead of fighting, the sisters thanked their parents' God for His eternal wisdom and infinite goodness. In the eyes of both of them, their father was a wonderful man.

"Why do we say that the Lord's wisdom is eternal and his goodness infinite?" Jacob of Nazareth asked his two eldest daughters. "Because with his answers he amazes us, and with his goodness he lights up our faces," their father replied to the two girls—the apple of his eye—with a smile in his eyes.

His daughters looked at each other, smiling at him. How much they loved the man God had given them as a father! Their father continued: "When we say that the Lord's wisdom is eternal, we declare with all our hearts and with all our minds our joy in knowing that He does not lie. Daughters, when we worship Him for His infinite goodness, our joy is that of one who finds himself in the pit where the wicked cast the good, and upon lifting his face, sees the Lord laughing at the wisdom of the geniuses."

"Daughters, being good is hard," Jacob of Nazareth confessed to his daughters as they were milking the olive trees. "Doesn't the one who is the kindest

get a little gift? Are you jealous, Joan, of your older sister because she's better at sewing than you? When has my Joan ever made her Mary feel guilty for not having her talents for farm work? When has Mother ever scolded her Joan for not knowing how to sew a dress as well as her Mary? What would I do without my Joan if she didn't bring me lunch at noon—if she didn't make me eat it, would I even eat it?"

Oh, how much he reminded them of him! Was it true that he was gone? They still couldn't believe it. With their father's lifeless body before their eyes, Mary and Joan looked at each other in silence. My God, had they really lost him?

Both sisters now embraced the Widow, their mother.

Devastated, the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth continued to weep over her misfortune:

"Now, Mary, now that the fat years are coming, now that your father could sit in his vineyard eating clusters as large as Polyphemus's and as sweet as Bacchus's—may God forgive me—just now. Why, Lord, why? Tell me how your servant offended you."

God! Can one explain the connection between the rooks and the unfortunate day laborers upon whom the Fates cast their mantle of black omen? Can one understand that God is God while the Devil reigns? If only one could write the script of one's own life and shine like a star—at least in the eyes of the fictional partners invented for the occasion! Man dreams that destiny is his own; the child dreams of the man whose heart beats within his chest—only to discover just around the corner that a single gust of wind is enough to reduce his dreams to bits doomed for the trash. In the end, human life is like a reed: if the wind picks up, it snaps, and its remains fall into the pit of oblivion. Who hasn't succumbed to the temptation to let themselves die and end it all at once, once and for all? Or are we the strongest until proven otherwise?

For everyone, the moment of truth arrives. Every creature has its own. And in that moment, a person either stands their ground or crumbles. This was the moment of truth for the Virgin's mother.

"What are we, Mary?" cried the Virgin's mother, weeping over the loss of her husband. "We struggle against the elements with the strength of a creature of clay. We raise our idols in honor of the one who grants us victory. To the Most High we dedicate our glory. But does the Almighty never tire of seeing us reduced to the condition of beasts? The champion advances to claim his crown when Death crosses his path. Does the Almighty rise to save the lone runner from giving his all in the race? Why does He remain seated on His Almighty and Omniscient Throne while the remains are swept from the track by the wind? "Is that what we are, my daughter—dust that dreams of being a rock, a rock that dreams of being a mountain, a mountain that dreams of being an eagles' nest? What will become of your eaglets now, my husband? Who will rise up and protect them when the serpent scales the cliff and their mother does not know how to defend your children on her own?"

What could one say to that woman? What madman would have dared to say to her what those ignorant visitors said to Job in the Bible?:

"Shut up already, you rotten old man. If you rot away, it's because you're worse than all the devils put together. You deceived us all with your handouts and your ramblings. Thank God the Lord has exposed your falsehood and your hypocrisy. For these, the God you tried to deceive—just as you did with us—is punishing you. Shut up and suffer."

My, my, friends! They wanted to force poor Job to admit that misery stems from misery, that those who have keep what they have because they already had it, that no one is strong on a whim, but rather that a person's happiness or misfortune determines their worth. According to these "wise men," the poor are all depraved, corrupt, and vicious sinners who deserve what they suffer; the good are all happy, living in bliss, enjoying the good life—they have gold, they have power; they are the best, the chosen ones of providence, the race born to be happy, and they are happy because they are good, and

"The last laugh belongs to the Indestructible, the Invincible," Job replied to them. "What are you laughing at, and why? What light have you come to bring to my eyes? Do you wish to condemn me for what I have done? You fools, I am being punished for what I have not done."

Job's tragedy did not lie in the collapse of the walls of his faith at the sound of Hell's trumpets. That was not his problem. Job was a fortress built upon a rock—not just any rock, but his God. Bombproof, his faith remained intact. The problem that was tearing at Job's soul was not knowing what was happening, or what was causing this change in his God's disposition. Why had his God abandoned him, naked and left to fend for himself against an enemy armed to the teeth? The warrior follows his Hero and King onto the battlefield—and at a corner of the crossroads, his King turns his back on him, as if sacrificing a pawn on the altar of victory?

This dilemma—precisely this dilemma—was what had the soul of the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth in a stranglehold. Fighting against the darkness with the only divine weapon available to humans—the word—the Virgin's mother sought the answer to why Death had taken her husband. And she could not find it.

"Why does our God do nothing, Mary? Why does He let the serpent scale the cliff, and why does He make it easier for her by taking away the father of her little ones? Doesn't He see her approaching, my daughter? Why didn't your father's God reach for the bow and arrow and, with the lightning of His gaze, strike down the Beast? Did the arrow miss its mark, was it blown off course by the wind, and in seeking the dragon, did it kill the hero instead?

"Tell me, my daughter, for my soul is embittered and my eyes cannot fathom the hidden plans of the Omniscient—but what are we, Mary? Why is the understanding of a god demanded of a creature of clay, condemned to dust for having eaten an apple? Do not look at me with those eyes; do not reproach me for my heart bleeding words. What will flow from the wound of the Doe of the Dawn when, as morning breaks, the hunter pursues her at the hour of the first joys? Will not the arrow be cursed that pierces the breast of the dove who mounts the horse of the wind, trots through the heavens, and returns happily to her master's house? Here it comes, my daughter; the dove is already reaching her master's arm; the murderous dart is also cutting through the air. Her master has the power to catch her in flight, but look—he does nothing; he stands still as if that were the reward

for having fulfilled his sacred mission, and already the daughter of Mercury falls into the dust at the feet of the one who turns his face away from her. “Don’t tell me to be quiet, Mary—can’t you see that if I don’t, I’ll die?”

All I know is that I know nothing; though they say that God created man and woman to love one another and never be parted, they also say that the Devil swore to make that love impossible. But in this world there are people who are deaf and don’t understand; they’re oblivious to everything. They laugh at the Devil’s horns and dare death to break what God has bound with ties stronger than the Serpent’s words.

Anne, Jacob’s widow, and Jacob of Nazareth, father of Mary, the future mother of Jesus Christ, lived out that challenge. Once they met, if they didn’t marry, they would die; and when they did marry, the idea of living without one another no longer entered their minds. Every year they spent together, they worshiped the God who transformed a rib—a simple rib—into something as beautiful as that love.

THE DEATH OF JACOB OF NAZARETH

> *Genealogy of the Savior: Genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: Abraham begot... David; David to ... Zerubbabel; Zerubbabel to Abiud, Abiud to Eliakim, Eliakim to Azor, Azor to Zadok, Zadok to Achim, Achim to Eliud, Eliud to Eleazar, Eleazar to Matthan, Matthan to Jacob, and Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

Jacob, son of Matthan of Nazareth, died a few months after the birth of the son he and his wife Anna had dreamed of for so long—the one they had pursued relentlessly until they finally had him. We already know that the whole business of having a son—giving birth to a boy—is a cliché. But in those days of fiscal terror and droughts as long as the Sahara Desert, a man simply had to dream of having a son. To pass on to him all his knowledge of farm work, to lean on his young arms when his own, grown old, could no longer carry the load. Well, you always have your sons-in-law; but it’s not the same. It’s not the same to be seen as a burden as it is for the son born of your own flesh to carry you. Nor is it the same to leave everything your parents left you to your own son as it is to leave it to a stranger’s son. To anyone who thinks those men were old-fashioned, ignorant of life, who didn’t know that a woman can do what a man can do—or even better—the best thing one can offer these modern people is silence.

Turning a deaf ear to the wisdom of so many modern people—wisdom that has always faced the sun of the ages—Jacob of Nazareth and his wife ran after the boy, delighted to enjoy him in their own old-fashioned way. And they caught up with him—oh, how they caught up with him! They named him Cleophas because, upon seeing him for the first time in his mother’s arms, he reminded Jacob of his

father-in-law. As for his appearance, what can one say about their little boy—the most handsome boy in the world, of course.

Well, everyone was already feeling like they were in heaven at Mary's house when suddenly his father was overcome by that dream under the fig tree. Mom and Dad were so happy! Five little girls, as bright as five suns, all healthy, all cheerful, all playing with the doll their parents had bought them. Flesh and blood. He cried, he really peed, he asked for butter, he pooped. What a joy. And suddenly, when they were all at home as if in paradise, Dad decided to die. A tragedy. What a pity! The devil himself attacking the house from all sides could not have hurt the mother of those six children so much. The widow's grief was all the more profound because she had no one from her family by her side; in her despair, she already felt besieged by an invincible enemy demanding her immediate surrender or the total destruction of her home. If only she'd had her parents by her side, or her aunt Elizabeth. But no, no one. And who was she in Nazareth? Despite the passing years, Jacob's wife remained a stranger—the outsider who had taken the town's most eligible bachelor away from them.

"With how pretty they all were, she went and married a stranger—and a tiny one at that, who looks like a fool," the young women of Nazareth consoled themselves. "So refined. So well-mannered. We'll see what happens when she starts having children and has to run her father-in-law's household all by herself—then we'll see what becomes of her manners and her little Holy City princess face." That's just how small towns are—they don't mean you any harm, but they don't wish you any good either. Everyone who comes from outside has to answer to the neighbors about their intentions. Everything has to conform to the community's norms; tradition rules.

Didn't the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth know them all? Hadn't they been watching her during the lean years, as if waiting for the hero to fall so they could revel in seeing those two towers bite the dust like any village bell tower? What comfort could the Widow find in those who were already doing the math and calculating how they might divide up the deceased's estate? How much would they offer her for the vineyards? How much for the olive groves? How much for the dryland fields?

"Why do we kill the miracle of our daily existence by judging our neighbors, my daughter? Who knows how many days we have left in this world? Only the Lord knows; but the number never leaves His lips. Can you imagine if He caught you criticizing your neighbor to death, or casting the first stone? Wouldn't it be more beautiful if our Lord God were to catch you sharing your bread with the poor?" the mother said to her daughter Mary as they sewed, alone together. And yet now it was the mother who was asking her daughter to be kind to her and not to deny her the words to express the pain in her soul.

"Let me die, Mary. Don't worry that my soul might slip away in broken words. The Lord has taken my husband, leaving me alone with his six children. Why should my eyes hold back their tears and my heart envy the rock that serves as the heart of the Almighty?

"My daughter, it is easy from the snow-capped peaks to look down on the valley burning in the summer heat. When did the Almighty ever put Himself in the

shoes of the soldier who falls naked on the battlefield, defending his life for the honor of his soul—made of tender, damp clay? How easy it is to sit on the throne of judgment and sign sentences! The Lord is far removed from human weakness; our passions do not affect Him. If it is cold, He does not shiver; if it is hot, He does not sweat; if an arrow is shot at Him, it does not strike Him; if He sleeps, nothing disturbs Him. What does the Indestructible One know of the fragility of our existence? Do you not see, my daughter, that the valley is saturated with our tears?

"Why should I suppress my grief and bind my tongue in fear? Does not the warrior run to meet death? Let God kill me, let Him restore my husband's life—why does He do nothing, why does He stand watch on the other side of the precipice? On what grounds, my daughter, does the Eternal One base His silence and His impassive demeanor? If only He would rise like the sun and speak with the voice of the storm, and from the depths of His soul the rays of His wisdom would weave clouds pregnant with intelligence across the firmament. But no, my daughter, let the storm rage, let the earth tremble, let the mountains crumble and bury towns and villages, or let the sea run wild and sink islands along with their people—the Lord, unreachable, indestructible, does not bat an eyelid. Does He see the disaster, and all He offers is a mourning handkerchief, asking forgiveness for not having anticipated the Serpent's move?

"Tell me, my daughter, that it was not He who shot the arrow that killed the eagle and left the nest of her eaglets at the mercy of the devil. But do not deny me the right to lament the fate of my daughters over the corpse of my deceased husband."

Pierced by her mother's grief, Mary comforted the Widow in this way:

"We are all equal in His eyes, mother. We are unique only in the eyes of our parents. We mortals see only as far as our eyes can reach, but He bears the weight of us all upon His shoulders. In His own time, He will rise, mother. And His feet will shine with the radiance of the hero arrayed for war against the one who took away our mother Eve's husband. I know I am young, Mother, but believe me, for all the love I have for you: my father's God will not allow my mother's household to collapse. It's all right now, Mother; dry your tears. Death takes the best of us, thinking that by leaving the wicked behind, He leaves us little ones unprotected against tyrants. He does not realize that when the good depart, they go to Heaven to take up the angels' weapons. Father defended us as a man and raised us up. My father will now defend his daughters and his little boy with the sword of the cherubim. My mother, enough already—do not look upon his body any longer."

The widow listened to her eldest daughter's words as if receiving kisses from afar.

It was Mary and her sister Joan who found their father sitting against the trunk of that fig tree. Truth be told, it wasn't exactly harvest time; but Jacob of Nazareth liked to pick the first figs of the season; he said they were the best for making fig bread.

Jacob saddled his donkey. He set off alone for the fields in the cool of the morning. The fig grove lay on the other side of the hills, as seen from the hill of Nazareth, directly ahead. Delighted with life, that good man said goodbye to his

wife. His two eldest daughters would bring him lunch and help him gather the baskets. Until then, well, that was it—a kiss, goodbyes.

Seeing him leave in such a beautiful way, who could have guessed that this man would return home… dead?

At lunchtime, Mary and her sister Joan arrived in the fields. Mary was a year older than Juana, and both were young women in their prime. Mary and Joan looked for their father and found him sitting in the shade of that fig tree.

"Shall we let him sleep a little longer, Joan? Let's gather the baskets ourselves," said Mary.

The two sisters set to work. They finished gathering the baskets, and their father hadn't woken up. But he just wouldn't wake up.

"Dad's sleeping a lot today, isn't he, Mary?" said Joan.

They kept working hard. After a while, they began to look at each other with concern.

"Is something wrong with Dad, Joan?" And so the older of the two went over to see what was wrong with her father.

I'm not going to get all sentimental here, like someone trying to win over the reader by making them cry their eyes out. Most of us have gone through the process of a funeral at one time or another and know how much it hurts to lose what Death should never have taken. But it was she—Mary—who, as she knelt down to wake him, discovered the truth in the pallor of her father's face.

The girl didn't scream; she wasn't frightened. She cradled her father's head in her arms, rocked his body, kissed his forehead, and looked at her sister Joan, who was approaching, tears streaming down her face. Joan threw her arms around her sister Mary, and Mary let her hold her until Juana had cried herself out, and together they were able to gather their strength.

"Go home, Joan, and tell Mother what's happened," Mary asked her sister.

Joan climbed onto the donkey and, weeping with a heavy heart, rode off through the hills. Meanwhile, Mary remained alone with her father's body, beneath that fig tree, caressing the face of the man who, to her, was the most wonderful man in the world—a man who had left her without giving his wife and daughters a chance to tell him one last time how much they loved him.

"What will become of your little one now, Father? In whose eyes will he find the divine image of the man that we, your daughters, have discovered in you?" the young Mary whispered, speaking to Heaven.

As I said, a cruel and sadistic enemy razing the house would not have hurt the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth as much as the way Death chose to take her husband from her. If her husband had died defending his family in some war, or sacrificing his life to save his daughters—I don't know—but to die that way, without warning, just when they had found happiness, after having endured a decade of years as cruel as Herod's heart.

Why should I even tell you about the liters of tears the Widow shed throughout that entire day and all that night? Hasn't a daughter in the bloom of youth ever died for you, or a sister in the prime of her beauty? Hasn't Death ever snatched the apple of your eye away, leaving you in the most stormy darkness? You must have been laughing heartily, clapping your hands, your heart open to all hope, and suddenly, overnight, an hour before dawn, the dawn turns into a moonless night, the plain transforms into a bottomless pit, and as you look down, you discover the face of the Serpent welcoming you.

The thing is, Jacob and Anne had loved each other from the very day their eyes met. It was love at first sight. It was the moment their eyes met and they knew the search was over.

Jacob and Anne were born for each other; they were made for each other; they were the two halves of the same fruit. It was only natural that he should die as deeply in love with his wife as he had been on the first day, and that the Widow should lose him while being more in love with her husband than ever. And if you add to this grief the fact that the household was left without a man to tend the fields and the livestock—you've already read the magic formula behind the bitter tears that the Widow shed into her daughter Mary's heart during the two days following her father's burial.

MARYS VOW

Like lifelong Catholics, those Jewish women were very dramatic in their mourning for the death of a loved one. I'm not saying it's good or bad—it was simply the way it was. The Romans, on the other hand, used the funeral as an excuse for a banquet—the final banquet, the last supper of the Caesars. Cicero's farewell banquet, depicted in the frescoes of the deceased's mansion in Pompeii, shows his family and friends drinking to the dead man's health. The orator's wreath above their heads resembles a laurel wreath but is woven from vine branches. Good heavens, the Romans had such hard hearts that not even Death could wring a tear from them. They needed to be touched by Bacchus's staff to remember that they were men, just as much of flesh and blood as the other barbarians of the world. Not until they were drunk as skunks would they shed a tear.

The Hebrews, unlike most peoples, preferred to mourn the dead with their heads uncovered, chests puffed out. Distance, separation, and absence require time to come to terms with them. I suppose custom shapes a culture, and every culture experiences it in its own way. The Hebrews, of all possible ways, chose the most painful one: they did not bury the deceased until the third day after his death.

Tears were bound to flow! And if, on top of that, the case at hand happened to be that of a young man in the prime of life—married and as deeply in love with his widow as on the first day, father of six children, a man who had never been sick, a man who never seemed to tire, who died without anyone to tend his fields, who passed away just as the storm was subsiding— put all these elements in the same shaker, give it a good shake, and the result will be explosive. You'll soon discover

the explosion triggered by the death of Jacob of Nazareth; its consequences still linger.

There was the Widow herself. From a young age, the Virgin's mother had been quite a sulker. The day her father, Cleophas of Jerusalem, forbade her even from entertaining the idea of marrying the man who would be the father of her daughters, as certain as rain falling from the sky, the young bride ran off in search of her aunt Elizabeth, through the streets of Jerusalem, leaving a trail of broken tears in her wake.

Aunt Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah, the future father of John the Baptist, already knew her. After all, Anna was her niece. Aunt Elizabeth, looking her niece in the eyes as she dried the tears streaming down her flushed cheeks, smiled.

"Come on now, little one, are you going to tell me what's wrong? When you run off like this, you forget that I don't know anything. Shall we cry together, or shall I laugh at you until you laugh with me?" Aunt Elisabeth loved her niece Anna with divine tenderness.

That woman, Aunt Elisabeth, loved her niece more than the walls of Jerusalem, more than the clouds in the spring sky, more than the morning and evening stars combined; she loved her more than her dresses and more than her silverware, but every time her Anita threw herself at her like that, she didn't know whether to join in her pouting or burst out laughing at her tears. It wasn't as if her niece Anne were flooding the desert with streams of salt water at every changing of the guard. The truth was that when she flew into a rage like that—to the point where she couldn't even get a word out—and you had to give her time to calm down, it meant something really serious had happened to her sweet Anne.

The death of the father of your girls—only two of them teenagers, the others just kids, and a baby causing a ruckus—is, truth be told, a good reason to cry until your bones run dry.

That's what happened: the Widow, the Virgin's mother, sank into the deepest depths of despair—understandable under the circumstances. For a time, she remains speechless. She says nothing, only weeps as she holds that infant who would never know his father. With Cleopas in her arms, the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth weeps all day and all night.

In despair, she finds herself surrounded by dense, fatal darkness; crushed, she already imagines her late husband's house swallowed up by taxes; broken, shattered, she already sees herself selling her daughters to save them from ruin.

They were all daughters of David; in times when simply being Jewish was not enough—one had to prove it—having a daughter of David as a wife was a passport to the benefits that Caesar had granted the Jews in gratitude for having saved his life from the last of the pharaohs.

Here's the story.

While pursuing Pompey, Julius Caesar got himself into trouble. Caesar was seen running like a madman after Pompey. And lo and behold, Caesar ended up in Egypt. At that time, the Pharaoh's brother had just killed Pompey. This very same

pharaoh, who had just executed Pompey, came and got a little feisty with Caesar. I believe Cleopatra's brother even dared to declare war on the Conqueror of Gaul.

As is well known, against all hope, that little pharaoh was on the verge of sending Caesar to the Elysian Fields of famous Roman generals. It was then that Herod's father managed to gather thousands of horsemen, cross the Sinai Desert at a gallop, and charge at Cleopatra's brother, breaking through the siege and rescuing Caesar from danger. As a reward, Julius Caesar granted the Jews a number of imperial privileges, such as exemption from military service, freedom of movement for the Temple tithe, and so on.

The sine qua non condition for benefiting from such privileges was to be a citizen of Judea, a Roman province.

Clever as foxes, slippery as eels, the Jews found many ways to forge documents. Of all the imaginable ways to outwit the Empire, the easiest was to buy fake documents, which any of the bureaucrats working at the Jerusalem Temple Registry would provide for a handful of drachmas.

But there was another, cheaper way.

What better way to join the ranks of the privileged than to claim descent from King David? And to really seal the deal, throw in being born in Bethlehem of Judea, "please."

And there was yet another, even better and more pleasing option: of course, buying a daughter of King David as a wife,

The descendants of King David were in high demand for this reason; if one paid well for a daughter of David, how much would one pay for a genuine daughter of King Solomon? And not just any daughter, not merely one in name only—we're talking about the genuine and authentic descendant of the mythical King Solomon.

Something so commonplace back then—selling daughters to the highest bidder—made the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth feel as though women were being compared to livestock. By Joshua and the seven hundred trumpets that brought down the walls of Jericho, would she sell her daughters for money? She who had married for love and knew how sweet marriage is when it is based on love and love alone?

The very thought tore at her soul.

However, the Widow could not see how she could save her daughters from being treated like the beasts that are bought and sold in the marketplace of human passions. The more she thought about it—and the corpse of her late husband never ceased to remind her of it—the more bitter her tears became at the future that awaited her little girls. There was also the boy.

"And what will become of my Cleophas without your father, Mary? What will become of your father's house, my daughter?" The widow of Jacob of Nazareth poured out her sorrows into the heart of her daughter Mary.

Between mother and daughter—what can I say?—the daughter seemed like the mother. Mary embraced her mother and comforted her with words full of tenderness and wisdom. And yet the girl was in the prime of her youth.

Mary was a young woman who had known nothing but joy in this world. She had loved her father madly, and seeing her comfort her sisters and her own mother, anyone would have thought she still couldn't believe what was happening.

"Dad's sleeping, Joan," was the first thing that came from Mary's heart when they found him dead.

"Dad is in Paradise; he's waiting for all of us there. Esther is already there; come here, Ruth; calm down, Naomi," she told her younger sisters as she held back her tears.

The girl left her sisters with Joan and went with the widow:

"It's all right now, Mother; Father is in Heaven. His God won't let his daughters be sold into slavery," she whispered in her mother's ear, kissing away her tears.

"My daughter," the Widow tried to say. But she never finished the sentence; she broke down in sobs and returned to her darkness—the darkness that enveloped her home and painted her family's horizon with the somber colors of a macabre vision.

The result of the natural despair of the widow of Jacob of Nazareth was as follows.

The Widow's grim vision of her daughters' future matched the reality of everyday life. The death of the head of the household forced widows to give their daughters to the suitor who put the most money on the table, regardless of the buyer's age. That was the truth, and there was no need to dwell on the matter further. From the perspective of the wealthy man, the more widows there were, the better—that way, there would be more fresh, young "stock" to choose from.

The world was shaped in the image and likeness of the passions of the powerful, and anything said to the contrary will get us nowhere. To make matters worse, with the divorce laws that had recently been enacted, female flesh was bought to be used and discarded; it was consumed at the consumer's leisure, and then the remains were thrown away so that the next in line could gnaw on the bones. And woe to anyone who failed to follow suit! In the upper classes, having only one wife was an unmistakable sign of conspiracy against Herod.

"Has that man been married only once? And isn't he known to have had at least a second or third wife? Surely he is conspiring against His Majesty, Your Highness." For such absurd reasons, the heads of Jews rolled through the streets of Jerusalem in those days.

This wasn't something the Widow was making up. She was from Jerusalem, from the upper class; she knew this reality as intimately as she knew that her husband lay dead before her daughters.

"It's over now, don't cry anymore, it's not that big a deal, everything will work out, the Lord wouldn't let that happen." Very beautiful words, for which the Widow was grateful. She only knew that barely a day ago she had woken up with the joy of the happiest woman in the world, and not even two days had passed—and now she was... the Widow!

"Let me cry, my daughter. Can't you see that if I don't, I'll die?" the Widow pleaded inconsolably with her daughter Mary.

Taking advantage of a moment of calm, while Joan and Mary were alone with their mother, Mary, daughter of Jacob of Nazareth, spoke up.

Heaven is my witness to what I am about to say, and may it send me to the dreadful Hell if I make up a single word. On the night of that day, during the wake for her father's death, the eldest daughter of the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth bound her life to a tree that had the power to hang her if she failed to fulfill the Vow she had inscribed in the hearts of her mother and her sister Joan.

Mary could have remained silent; it was within her power to put her finger to her lips and avoid the ordeal. But it was not in the nature of Jacob's daughter to resist the impulses of her personality. She preferred to accept the consequences to the fullest extent of the law.

No one was listening to them; the three of them were alone before God. That is why I have told you that whoever wants to be certain of what I write—there is God Himself, who took the word of the daughter of Jacob of Nazareth to confirm or refute me. That God should appear as Judge is natural; that He should come forward as Witness is something extraordinary. Yet the glory belongs to the brave.

And I continue.

There, in front of her sister Joan, Mary swore to her mother that this—having her daughters sold into slavery to the highest bidder—would never happen to her sisters; sooner would the Devil dethrone the Most High, Hell conquer Paradise, or Herod's heart be raised to the altars.

The faith of the daughter of Jacob of Nazareth was so great, her trust in her father's God so innocent, that she could not fathom in her heart that her Lord would abandon her family to the mercy of the Age.

So, very calmly, with the seriousness of an adult, she, Mary of Solomon, daughter of Jacob of Nazareth, called upon the God of her father as her witness and, in the presence of her mother and her sister Joan, swore—invoking the Law of Moses against her own head should she break her vow—that she, Mary of Salomón, would not remove the veil of mourning for her father's death until she saw all her sisters married, and that she would not sign her own marriage contract until she saw her little brother Cleophas married and with children.

Moreover, she would not marry until she saw her little brother Cleophas's children running about, all happy and content in that very room where grief now reigned triumphant. Until that day, she would not remove the mourning veil she wore for her father.

The Widow raised her head toward the infinite. Juana looked at her sister with tears of eternity in her eyes. Mary of Solomon continued:

"In memory of my father, I swear to you, Mother, that when my sisters will leave my father's house, they will go forth joyfully in the arms of that love their parents lived and from which we, their daughters, drank our fill. No one will buy the daughters of Jacob. Take comfort, my mother. That child you hold in your arms

will choose the fairest among the daughters of Eve. May the Lord do this to me if I break my word: may He give me the wickedest man in the world as my husband. Do not let your heart be torn apart any longer, Mother; do not offend Heaven by blaming our Lord for our misfortune, lest my father have to bow his head before Abraham because of the offense carried by these tears that never end. My father walks among the angels and, at the feet of his God, asks for mercy for his household. Tell him so yourself, Joan."

AUNT ELISABETH IN NAZARETH

The news of Jacob of Nazareth's death struck the home of his in-laws and other relatives in Jerusalem with the force of a cyclone without an eye, blindly devastating houses and crops. Cleophas and his wife, Mary's maternal grandparents, wanted to rush up to Nazareth.

Prudence advised Zechariah and his family to keep their distance, to go up to Nazareth later, to leave it for a better time, lest going all together arouse suspicion at King Herod's court. Any one of the king's spies might find it strange that a figure of the stature of Abijah's son would take an interest in the fate of a simple peasant from Galilee. And drawing the tyrant's attention to the home of Solomon's daughter was the last thing Zechariah could afford.

"You do as you please, man of God," with these words Elizabeth ended the discussion with her husband about whether or not it was advisable to leave Jerusalem at that very moment. "You do as you please," Elizabeth repeated, "but this daughter of Aaron is running out right now to embrace the child of her soul."

Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah, future mother of John the Baptist, older sister of Anna's mother, and consequently the Widow's maternal aunt, was—by these coincidences of life—the Virgin's great-aunt.

Like her husband Zechariah, Elizabeth belonged to the Aaronic priestly class, from whose ranks the members of the Sanhedrin were chosen. By this I mean nothing other than that the upbringing of the future mother of the Baptist did not conform to the upbringing typically received by other Hebrew women. And if we add to this the fact that Elizabeth was predestined from her mother's womb to be the wife of the Baptist's father, I believe that from this vantage point of Providence, the doors of time open to anyone who dares to step through them.

For it is true: Elizabeth of Jerusalem, the Virgin's great-aunt, was the older sister of the mother of the widow of Jacob of Nazareth.

And so it was; Elizabeth hurried off to Nazareth accompanied by Cleophas and his wife, the parents of Anna, Mary's mother.

Cleophas, the widow's father, was therefore Elizabeth's brother-in-law.

Cleophas married Elizabeth's younger sister, and they had Anna—his niece Anna, his morning star, the light of Elizabeth's eyes, who had wept so bitterly over her inability to have children.

By the time Elizabeth, Cleophas, and his wife arrived in Nazareth, the Virgin's father was already lying in his grave. The people of Nazareth, for their part, had returned to their everyday lives.

The arrival of her parents and her aunt Elizabeth reawakened in the Widow's eyes that river of tears that now lay dormant as if dead, and which, exceptionally, would well up again when visitors stopped by to comfort her. She did not know how, could not, and did not want to live without her husband.

For the widow of Jacob of Nazareth, her aunt Elizabeth was the kind of person every child misses in their parents. Parents are honored, but it is to that other person that one confides everything. It was therefore only natural that it was to Aunt Elizabeth that the widow would reveal what had happened.

As always, after the little gatherings.

The *Stork's Nest* the House of Abiud—son of Zerubbabel, son of Salathiel, son of Solomon, king and biblical forefather of the Virgin's family—was a country estate from the days of the Persian empire. Except for the granaries, the entire building was made of hewn stone.

Where the Annunciation bunker stands today, there once stood a mansion—half farmhouse, half fortress.

The main hall of Nazaret's *The Stork's Nest* had walls adorned with the oldest and most impressive coats of arms. There were coats of arms from every period dating from the Empire of Nebuchadnezzar II to that of the Caesars. Also, against one of the walls of the main hall of the *The Stork's Nest*, the masons of that time had built a fireplace as large as a cave. Aunt Elisabeth and her niece Anne were sitting by the fire in that fireplace. Cleophas and his wife had taken their grandchildren to bed.

The Widow then got things going. If the walls could talk, they'd say that in no time at all, the Widow had made enough stews to feed half of Africa.

Aunt Elisabeth always found a way to stem those torrents of tears; after all, she was her little girl. Well, she was her younger sister's daughter, but she was like the daughter she never had. Elisabeth loved her niece Anne more than if she had been her own daughter. That's just a figure of speech. But that business of bursting into tears, falling into an eternal silence, then bursting into tears again—that wasn't normal.

"What's wrong, Anne?" Elisabeth asked, concerned. "Why did you wait until your parents left to break down like this? We're alone now. Come on, tell me." Elisabeth was trying to figure out what was wrong with her niece.

The Widow parted her lips. She parted them, yes, but she never managed to string together a coherent sentence.

"My Mary… Aunt…"

"What's wrong with your Mary, Anne?"

"Aunt… I… my Mary…"

The Widow never finished her sentence. Given what a temper Zechariah's wife had, it was remarkable that she had such infinite patience with her niece Anne.

"When you've calmed down, you can tell me, daughter."

This happened quite a while later.

The stuffed bear occupying the corner of the main hall at *The Stork's Nest*—had it been alive—would have been at its wits' end by now. Above the fireplace, a lion's head from Assyria yawned expectantly.

Elisabeth continues to stare into the fire as the Widow finally finishes the story about her eldest daughter's vow.

"Tell me that again, Anne," asks Elisabeth, absorbed and amazed.

"See, Aunt? I knew you wouldn't believe it," and the Widow launches into the story again.

At dawn, the Baptist's mother is finally up to speed on the event that would change the course of world history.

"Yes, Aunt, my Mary won't take off the mourning veil she wears for her father until she sees my little one, just a few months old, married—and well married at that. What have I done, my God? And you know what my Mary is like; if she were a man, her word would be the last thing she'd ever break."

How well the Widow knew her eldest daughter!

THE HOUSE OF JOSEPH THE CARPENTER

Let us now delve a little into the story of Joseph, the future husband of the Mother of Jesus.

The carpenters' clan in Bethlehem experienced a major economic boom following Joseph's birth. This is not the place to go into intimate details about the lives of Joseph the Carpenter's parents. In due time, we will lift the veil and see face to face the truth of that intimacy, which for now—and until then—I will leave hanging in the air. The reason for this will become clear later. To move past this point, let's just say that delving too deeply into the lives of Joseph the Carpenter's parents would disrupt the flow of this story. So let's move on.

Heli, Joseph's father, brought many children into the world—both daughters and sons. The man was in the prime of his joy when one day his strength also failed him, and he died. Heli died as all things die—from exhaustion. Especially in those days, the cause of men's deaths was work. They died from overwork. There were taxes, tithes, and interest payments. Workers barely made it to forty in good health; by fifty they were half-dead. By sixty they were already dead. Only the rich and the tyrants made it to seventy in good health. Anyone who reached eighty was either a saint or a monster. Heli, the father of Joseph, was neither one nor the other. Just another hard worker selling his life dearly against planks and nails. So when he died, Heaven took another of the good ones into its glory.

As we can see, Death was hot on the heels of her enemies. With no one left to wield a sword against them, Death herself struck directly at the two messianic houses. Invisible and silent, she struck with the only weapon at her disposal: the scissors of the Fates. Blind, Death wrote dark pages in the histories of her enemies' families. Yet from the light of the One who governs the destiny of the universe, God allowed the Serpent to move as it pleased.

But let us set aside these chronicles of Hell and its defeat. Let us set our feet back on solid ground. There is always time to remember ruins and miseries.

After the death of Heli, son of Matthat of Bethlehem, the Right of Primogeniture made Joseph a father figure to his brothers and sisters. This right did not entail the duty to remain unmarried until the last member of his household had started a family of his or her own. In fact, his marriage to Solomon's Daughter—Mary was his betrothed at the time—drew nearer with each passing year. Joseph must have been about twenty years old when his father went to the Paradise of the Righteous. Mary must have been a few years younger.

It was around that time that Mary's father died. And that was how the two men who had sworn to marry their children off suddenly vanished from the scene. All their lives they had dreamed of seeing them married, and overnight, a twist of fate robbed them of that dream.

What would become, from that point on, of the future of that vow made by Jacob of Nazareth and Heli of Bethlehem before Zechariah, son of Abijah, the priest, husband of Elizabeth, the Widow's aunt, and Mary's great-aunt?

With both of them gone—those who had pledged to unite Joseph and Mary in marriage when God so ordained—Mary and Joseph were free to move forward and decide for themselves whether or not to uphold their parents' vow. What would they do? How could they compel Joseph to remain unmarried until the last of the children of Jacob of Nazareth were married?

"My son, be wise before God and His servants. No reward fulfills the human condition more fully than aligning our steps with His wisdom. We are nothing, we are nobody, when it comes to weighing the decision between pleasing ourselves or pleasing our Lord God. Place your complete trust in His Omniscience; place your faith in His almighty arm, which never misses its mark nor strikes the wrong stone. You know His will; do not turn your back on Him. I am leaving, but He remains and stays with you. He will guide you toward the victory of our Houses. His angel will write in His Book: "God said, and it was done." Joseph was raised on counsel of this nature.

LADY ELISABETH

After the death of Jacob of Nazareth, Mary's father, the Widow pulled herself together. Supported by Aunt Elizabeth, the House of the Virgin of Nazareth weathered the dark storm that the Widow had envisioned in her grief during her husband's funeral.

Mrs. Elisabeth, a member of Jerusalem's aristocracy and an expert in business and Jewish law, took charge of everything, moved heaven and earth, and did not leave Nazareth until everything was so firmly reestablished that it was as if Jacob had never left.

Clever as they come, and with sufficient financial resources to thwart Jacob's brothers—who might have offered to buy the land from the Widow—Aunt Isabel preserved every last acre for Solomon's daughter, her grandniece.

Thanks to Aunt Elisabeth, the Widow didn't sell a single fig tree. Aunt Elisabeth was there to hire workers when harvest time came, to sign contracts, to pay the workers, to collect the proceeds from the sales, and most importantly, to take her niece Joan under her wing and teach her the ABCs of business from A to Z.

And so it came to pass that Joan, who was next in line after Mary, accompanied her older sister to the Vow. But Joan, unlike Mary—who was a talented seamstress—inherited her late father's strong character; she never tires of learning from her Aunt Elisabeth how to handle men or of making her way in the world of contracts; nor does she tire of working in the fields, leading the day laborers who work for her household. Many bet that as soon as Mrs. Elisabeth left, the girl would fall apart and sooner or later the Widow would have to sell.

"My child, don't pay them any mind," Aunt Elisabeth advised her grandniece Joan. "Men look at us as if Wisdom were not our sister. Because they take her as their wife, they believe that Wisdom has turned her back on us. You, don't pay them any mind, Joan. And if the sun beats down and the harvest is poor, I'll buy the whole crop from you at the price of a harvest of gold. This is very simple, my daughter. Always keep your word; if you agreed to pay more for something that later turned out to be worth less, keep your word—you said you'd pay that much, so that's what you pay. The same goes when they make a mistake with you. You agreed to a certain amount, so that's what you collect..."

Over time, the youngest of the Virgins of Nazareth learned to speak with the men she hired herself as if she were an adult.

Never were the lands of the clan of the sons of David of Nazareth as fruitful as in those years following the great droughts.

Nor had the young gentlemen of *The Stork's Nest*, the grand house on the hill, ever been better dressed.

Lady Elisabeth, like every daughter of Aaron, was a master in the art of weaving seamless cloaks. It was the cloak worn by the members of the Sanhedrin. As the wife of a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, Isabel could assure her grandniece Mary that her sewing workshop would be the most profitable in the entire kingdom.

"But Aunt," Mary said, "I can't leave my mother's house."

"My dear, don't even mention it," replied Aunt Elisabeth.

The fact that, even though she was a great-aunt, they called her "Aunt" was due to Elisabeth's own sense of humor. Being called "Grandma" made her feel old.

And so, between her grandnieces Joan and Mary, time slipped away for Mrs. Elisabeth. While she taught her Joan all the secrets of business and, in her name, hired a foreman to help her with everything—and drummed into her head that from Jerusalem she would follow her every move day by day, and by God she would go to heaven before letting another misfortune befall her granddaughters—while she put her grandniece Joan in charge of the fields, she seated her "granddaughter" Mary by her side and did not let her leave her side until her grandniece had learned, from the hands of an expert in sacred crafts, the most hidden secrets of cutting and sewing a seamless dress. "The *Girl"*, who was an artist in her own right—having learned the craft from her own mother—had not only inherited one of the mysteries most jealously guarded by the daughters of Aaron when she bid farewell to "Grandma," but she also opened her own sewing workshop in Nazareth.

From the Virgin of Nazareth's dressmaking workshop, some of the seamless robes—the pride of the princely class of the Holy City—were sent to Jerusalem. These robes were paid for in hard cash. One could own only one, and it was for life.

"But Aunt, where will I get the money for the silks and the gold threads?" she once asked her.

"Don't get all worked up over nothing, my daughter," Lady Elisabeth replied. "When I place the order, I'll send you silks so you can dress all your sisters, and a sack of threads so you can make your brother a braid of silver hair. If the Lord hasn't given me children, it must be for a reason. What do men think? For Natthat's son, everything." "My daughter, they've given your Joseph an Iberian horse that even a Roman general would want for himself. With him—with your Joseph—they let their guard down, and your Betrothed already looks like a prince among beggars. Who's going to stop me from giving Solomon's daughter the moon and the stars, wrapped in silk and tied with gold thread?"

And so it was. Indeed, the way the daughters of Jacob of Nazareth came to be dressed was a source of admiration for all the members of David's clan in Galilee. When it came time to marry them off—as you can imagine—the dowry the Widow demanded for Esther and Ruth, the twins, was considerable.

"Dowry? Who here has mentioned money? Do you love him, my daughter?" was the Widow's reply to her daughters' suitors.

They were wrong—and how wrong they were. Buy a daughter from the Widow?

Impossible.

The best catch in the whole region?

None.

The fields of Jacob's Daughter yielded a hundred percent. From the workshop of the Virgin of Nazareth came the finest, prettiest, and cheapest dresses in the region. And the youngest son of the house? Cleophas, the baby boy of the family! All he needed was a crown to put Herod's sons on par with common thieves. So, whoever wanted to marry one of her daughters had better not come to Jacob's

Widow talking about money. It was their heart they had to lay on the table—wide open, open like a full moon, bare as the sun on a forty-day-old May day. And then let Heaven decide.

LADY MARY

Upon the death of her grandparents, Cleophas and his wife, Mari of Solomon inherited her mother's house in the Holy City. We are speaking of the home of the heiress to a Doctor of the Law whose mentor in his bureaucratic career was the head of the most powerful faction in the nascent court of King Herod. We are speaking of a fine house.

We are speaking of a Lady, Lady Mary of Nazareth, daughter of Anna, daughter of Cleophas, brother-in-law of Zechariah, son of Abijah—Abtalion according to official historiography. We are speaking of a Mary… a legitimate member of the Jewish priestly aristocracy on her mother's side. (In this first part of the story, we will not delve into the life of the household of Cleophas, father of the Virgin's mother. In the second part, we will delve deeper, seek permission, and see with the eyes of the spirit what I mean when I say that Cleophas, father of the Widow, belonged to the Jewish aristocratic group that, though not Herodian, was the most influential at the court of King Herod. For now, let it suffice to place our trust in building, upon the rock of our Faith, the pillars upon which the edifice of this story rests.)

Without going any further, we see the "Lord" Jesus in the prologue to the Last Supper sending one of his disciples to announce his coming to one of his servants. The man does not protest; and he does not protest because he knows the messenger—he knows who the "Lord" is who is urging him to have everything ready for the "Supper."

The legend of Jesus the Carpenter—let's be frank—had its origins in the mindset of small towns. A father's local title passes to his son. The father was a carpenter; the son is "the Carpenter" for life, even if he comes to own more land than a marquis; his father was the carpenter, and his son will be the carpenter's son until the day he dies.

It's true—let's keep laying it all out—Joseph arrived in Nazareth following the nomads' route. The man settled in the village, rented a plot of land from the Widow to set up shop. He set up his workshop. Joseph ended up liking the atmosphere—or so he said to outsiders—and eventually fell in love with the Widow's heiress. By that time, the Virgin owned fig groves, vineyards, olive groves, fertile land, livestock, and was also the owner of a dressmaking and sewing workshop that was booming thanks to the nationalist wave.

Until then, traditional costumes had to be commissioned from a workshop in Judea. Jewish women, especially those from Jerusalem, had jealously guarded the secret " " of making bridal gowns and dresses for national holidays. Then the Virgin of Nazareth went and opened her own dressmaking and sewing workshop.

Amid such circumstances, the Virgin of Nazareth's workshop, to tell the truth, took off right away. Thanks to the family ties her relatives maintained throughout Galilee, the necessary publicity—without her having to wait for things to happen—spread like wildfire. You just had to look at how her sisters dressed. Then there was the price; the Virgin of Nazareth was a saint; if you didn't have money, you could pay her when things started looking up. She'd adjust the price to fit your situation and never send a debt collector after you to demand payment. A true saint. Of course, when her wedding to the Carpenter was announced, everyone was left speechless.

The Virgin is getting married!?

The truth is that Joseph and Mary first waited for Cleophas to get married.

The youngest son of the family married Mary of Canaan, also from the House of David. A year later, Cleophas and Mary of Canaan brought James into the world. (This James would go on to become the First Bishop of Jerusalem. History knows him as James the Just, brother of the Lord—one of them—who was later murdered by his own kinsmen. The fate of Jesus' brothers is part of the history of Christianity. A journey through the memory of the fascinating adventure of the early Christians, I'm sorry to say, is beyond the scope of this account. The fact is that the fate of Jesus' brothers was sealed on the Night of the Massacre of the Holy Innocents. Were there not Joseph's nephews crushed under the feet of Fortune? The Beast pursued the Child, and in its helplessness to find him, it spewed fire from its eyes against all his relatives. How many nephews were taken from Joseph in a single night? How many of Cleophas's sons were taken? As I said, in the future, God willing, we will delve into the tragedy of the famous brothers of Jesus, the sons of Cleophas and Mary of Cleophas. Well then, the year after the birth of James the Just, Cleophas and Mary of Canaan—Mary of Cleophas, as she is known in the New Testament—brought Joseph into the world. And they continued to bring cousins to Jesus.

THE NOMAD

Of all the children in Nazareth, none took to Joseph quite as much as Cleophas did. But that was from the very day Joseph arrived in Nazareth. It's no lie that Joseph made a spectacular entrance into Nazareth. His Iberian horse, black as night, and his three Assyrian lion-hunting dogs brilliantly broke the monotony. Then there was the rider: a giant on his Bucephalus, son of Pegasus, the horse of the super angels; his hair neither long nor short, with Goliath's very own sword at his belt.

And the stranger said he was a nomad on an adventure through the provinces of the kingdom.

The people of Nazareth looked at him and could hardly believe their eyes. A nomad like any other, venturing along those paths of God on the back of a hose of that breed—as beautiful as an archangel's horse in the heat of battle—guarded by three beasts, as beautiful as cherubim and as fearsome as dragons?

That giant was a complete mystery. His psychological and physical traits did not match the popular image of the rootless nomad—always drunk, always quarrelsome, rather skinny, with wine-red lips, his brain scorched by sun and cold. No, sir, that nomad was no ordinary man. Nomads traveled on donkeys, or at best on old mares, with bedbugs, fleas, and stray dogs for company. No, sir, that Joseph was a complete mystery.

Secret or no secret, the fact is that Cleophas, the Virgin's younger brother, grew so fond of that nomad born in Bethlehem that he ended up spending more time in the Carpenter's tent than in his own home.

But I know that what that boy wanted more than anything was to make his dream come true: to climb onto Joseph's horse and trot through the hills, kicking up stardust into the eyes of his dream girl. Boyish things!

And that's exactly what happened. That's what happened. All of Cleophas's sisters got married—except for his two older sisters, Mary and Joan, who had remained virgins since their father's death. It's true: all his sisters had already married, started families, and had children of their own. He, Cleophas, was the only one of Jacob of Nazareth's sons who still lived in his mother's house.

From the outside, to outsiders, Cleophas was the town's young master, the spoiled son of his sisters, the Virgins. While all the other boys were busy helping out in the fields, young master Cleophas lived like a prince, without ever knowing what a sickle or a hoe was. So if he spent his days at Joseph's carpenter shop, it wasn't because he needed to earn a living. Not at all. If he decided to become his apprentice, it wasn't because the Virgin's brother needed to learn a trade. What Cleophas truly longed for was to rise in status in the Carpenter's eyes, earn his trust, and receive his permission to make a break for it—to climb atop that Iberian horse and treat himself to the joy of seeing the world from the back of that magical creature.

And so it was. Cleophas rose from altar boy to friar, and there he roamed his world from festival to festival on the back of his boss's marvelous horse. The townspeople were suspicious that the Carpenter gave the boy so much leeway. A horse like that isn't something you just lend out—and certainly not, so to speak, to a child.

Joseph's response to his new neighbors' suspicions was to lend his apprentice, in addition to his horse, two of "his puppies." Every time he sent his assistant and apprentice carpenter to a neighboring village, Joseph gave him a pair of his puppies as traveling companions—two dogs on the verge of extinction that his Babylonian godparents had once given him as gifts.

Cleophas begins by riding his horse to the neighboring village on an errand, naturally. And he ends up treating his employer's horse as his own when, on the occasion of a local festival—a grape harvest festival, for example—his married sisters call for his presence. That is how Cleophas met Mary of Canaan, the future mother of his children… the famous brothers of Jesus.

Cleophas and his wife met, married, and settled into the house of the Daughter of Jacob, where they had their children.

Let's be honest: the Nomad's Carpentry Shop wasn't a multinational furniture corporation, nor did it aspire to be an industry leader, but to Cleophas, Joseph was the best. As a man in love and a father to his children, his boss's workshop was all he had, and Cleophas was willing to work his fingers to the bone rather than see it go under. In any case, his boss was a strange man. He was never short on money. Whether he made sales or not, he always made enough to pay the rent. Nor did he ever burden him with his problems. Never! In fact, Joseph's only problem was that he didn't have a wife. He didn't even have a known suitor. No, it wasn't for lack of women. No. It was him, Joseph. He didn't have a wife because God hadn't given him one yet. And Joseph said this with the air of mystery of someone who harbors an unspeakable secret.

"God will provide, brother, God will provide...," Joseph would reply to the boy.

Shortly after the birth of Joseph—his nephew, the second son of his younger brother Cleophas—the Virgin Mary of Nazareth ended her mourning for the death of her father.

The Virgin has triumphed. She made a vow and has fulfilled it. Now she is free to marry; and by marrying, she will fulfill the oath her father made to the Lord—an oath he was unable to keep because Death crossed his path.

In the presence of sacred witnesses, Jacob of Nazareth once swore—at the cradle of his firstborn daughter Mary, the rightful heiress of King Solomon—that he would give his daughter in marriage only to the son of Heli, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Nathan the prophet, son of King David.

Shortly after the birth of Cleophas's second son, Joseph the Carpenter asked Jacob's widow for the hand of her daughter Mary. The widow accepted the proposal, and shortly thereafter the marriage contract was signed between Mary, daughter of Jacob, daughter of Matthan, daughter of Abihud, daughter of Zerubbabel, daughter of Solomon, daughter of David, king, and Joseph, son of Heli, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Nathan, son of David, the prophet.

The news of the wedding of Joseph the Carpenter and the Virgin Mary took Nazareth by storm.

"The Virgin is getting married."

"With the Carpenter? I knew it."

The bride was an exceptional catch. She owned the house on the hill, possessed the best land in the region, and founded the tailor and sewing shop in Nazareth that sold the finest, prettiest, and most affordable wedding dresses in the region.

Who was the groom? A nobody from Bethlehem, an adventurous drifter who found what he'd been searching for. Who would have thought that where so many good matches had failed, an outsider with no future would succeed!

So if, on his mother's side, our Jesus is the heir of Cleophas of Jerusalem, a Doctor of the Law and his grandfather, and if, also on his mother's side, all the properties of his grandfather Jacob of Nazareth belong to him, then we are talking

about a wealthy young man named Jesus of Nazareth. Or do you perhaps believe that the one who asked the wealthy young man to leave everything behind and follow him did not Himself perform this act of renunciation and abandon all His possessions?

As the son of his parents, during his tenure our Jesus raised his family's financial situation to its peak of comfort and prosperity. During the days he was in charge of his Mother's household, the cellars were filled with excellent wines, and the storehouses overflowed with wheat, oil, table olives, figs, pomegranates, milk, meat, and fish brought to his home from the Sea of Galilee—when our Jesus did not go personally to fetch them. The wines from the vineyards of Jesus of Nazareth were sold throughout Galilee; scarce but excellent—the very best. It gladdens the heart and never makes you aggressive; the next day you wake up with a clear head and a lively soul. "Wine of Nazareth, wine of Bacchus," said the Romans at the garrison in Sepphoris, two hours away.

Her mother's maternal grandparents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, bequeathed their properties—both within and outside Jerusalem—to the daughter of Anna, the widow of Jacob of Nazareth, Mary's father.

The natural heir of Zechariah and Elizabeth was John. Before John the Baptist was born—since they had not expected to have children—Elizabeth and Zechariah bequeathed everything they owned to Mary's mother. This will was never revoked due to Zechariah's violent death and the disappearance of Elizabeth and John in the caves of the Dead Sea.

So in the Jerusalem of money, the Young Nazarene was known as one would know a mystery. In reality, no one knew who he was. What everyone seemed to agree on was that this Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Lady Mary, was a young man of prudence and wisdom far beyond what was normal for a man of his youth. He handled money, but he had no interest in power. He was accustomed to giving orders and being served, and yet he remained unmarried. He was educated, spoke the languages of the empire—do you think they provided him with an interpreter to speak with Pilate? He knew how to write, and had a knack for business. His mother was the Young Nazarene's weak spot. But who isn't forgiven for that?

WEDDING AND BIRTH OF THE CHILD

Mary and Joseph became engaged. The general rule was that the groom's father would go to speak with the bride's parents about his son's desire to marry her. They would discuss the dowry and finalize the arrangement. In the case of Joseph and Mary, it was Joseph himself who spoke with the bride's mother, asking for her daughter's hand in marriage. The bride's mother accepted, and the marriage contract was signed.

In those days, tradition dictated a one-year engagement period from the signing of the contract until the wedding day. After a year, they could marry. During the year of courtship, however, the betrothed were bound by the law against adultery. It was the norm, but by no means a sacred law. Moses had not issued any

commandment prohibiting marriage immediately after the marriage contract was signed. It was the Jews themselves who imposed this year of waiting upon themselves.

It's unclear whether they blamed God for being so lenient, but the fact is that, not content with the mountain of laws He had given them, they took it upon themselves to add another mountain of prescriptions, laws, traditions, commandments, canonical rules, and who knows how many other obligations. So, since these were "real" laws, no one batted an eye if the process was rushed due to… weakness of the flesh? The child was born at seven months. But then again, it's not exactly cause for a scandal. Doesn't a proper wedding atone for sin? Of course it does!

The downside was that, even though it wasn't the law, weakness of the flesh could be punished by death if the sin hadn't been committed by the groom. In this case, the full weight of the law on adultery fell on the bride. Convicted of adultery, she paid for her weakness with the death penalty… by public stoning.

A marriage contract could be dissolved for many other reasons as well. It wasn't common, but such cases did occur. Incompatibility of temperaments, for example. The money was returned, and each went their separate ways.

In the more common case of pregnancy during the year of waiting, things didn't get that far either. They're young, but a grandchild is always welcome. It's not the young couple's fault! A wedding banquet, a grand celebration, let bygones be bygones—the child will be born seven months early. So what? Blessed glory. What begins well ends well—that's what matters.

The Virgin's case was of a different nature. One day—as She confessed to the Apostles—the angel of God appeared to Her, and the very next day She was already in a state of grace. The Apostles told their successors, who in turn told theirs, and thus the Virgin's Confession continues to be passed down by word of mouth.

"Conceived by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit" is easily said.

"I am with child by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit!" the Virgin must have confessed to herself one of those days.

No one will believe that the Virgin ran off in joy, shouting the story of the Annunciation to the whole world. It's not something that happens every day. In fact, throughout all of world history, humanity has never known an event like it. The case most similar to a "supernatural conception" of the kind described in the Gospels is found in the world of mythology. Alexander the Great's mother went around openly declaring that she had conceived her son with one of the gods of the classical world. Whether out of respect for his mother or out of pride, her son maintained his semi-divine origin. As far as I can recall, this is the closest parallel to the story the Virgin brought to light over the centuries.

Well, why not? The God of the Hebrews had performed many extraordinary deeds from the days of Moses to those of Mary. The Prophetic Scriptures had been announcing for centuries the Conception of a Child born of a Virgin: "Emmanuel, God with Us." As an example of fantasy taken to its highest extreme of imagination

and genius—that the God who created the Heavens and the Earth could perform a work of this nature—it lives up to the Image that the children of Adam and Eve formed of His Nature. Why shouldn't One possessing the Attributes ascribed to the God of Moses—all-power, omnipotence, omniscience—be capable of bringing about an Event so impossible to believe?

OK, Mary, now run and explain this to your mother. Run, find your husband, and tell him that you are the Virgin who was to conceive that Son "born to bear upon his shoulders the mantle of Sovereignty, and to be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father."

Good heavens, what luck!

And now sit back and wait, trusting that your husband will say "Hallelujah, Amen, Hallelujah," jump for joy, lift you up in his arms, and shower you with kisses.

Haven't you had enough yet? Well then, go and tell your dearest sister, and keep in mind that your sister Joan loves you more than the Jordan River, more than the Sea of Miracles, more than the Mountains of Galilee. Come on, Mary, go, run and tell her.

I say this because—regardless of what everyone else thinks—the weeks went by and what had to happen happened. The Virgin began to feel strange dizziness; she'd feel faint, then come back to herself. Was it the excitement? Was it the heat? No, woman, those are the typical symptoms of pregnancy.

With any other woman in the world, her neighbors might have expected that a man as sturdy as a castle—take Joseph the Carpenter, for example—would have breached the bride's fortress of virtue before the wedding. With any other woman, of course, but with the Virgin Mary… it simply didn't occur to her neighbors.

The fact is, once they could wrap their heads around it, they had to concede to the evidence.

"May the Lord grant you a healthy child, son"—with these words and others like them, the neighbors congratulated the groom, a man named Joseph who didn't know what the hint was about. To be honest, he didn't get it. He thought they were offering him their blessings in advance.

"May it be a boy, and may the Lord grant him good health, Mr. Joseph," the neighbors kept teasing him. Mr. Joseph still didn't get it.

It's true—a few weeks after the Annunciation, the bride began to show the classic symptoms of early pregnancy: dizzy spells and sudden hot flashes. Since these are things beyond one's control, the Virgin Mary couldn't help but be taken by surprise. However, the last thing she could do was shut herself away or hide. She had to carry on with her life; going about her daily routine was the best way to neither confirm nor deny her neighbors' rumors. At least until she decided to tell her mother the truth.

It took the Virgin's mother a while to catch on. She was, aside from Joseph, the last person to learn of the rumor that had begun to cause a stir among her neighbors.

In the Widow's eyes, her daughter's immaculate chastity remained as inaccessible to human passions as it had been before she became engaged. Except for the groom's freer access to the bride's home—and this freedom being conditional on the necessary presence of a relative of the bride between her and the groom—her daughter Mary continued to live her life just as before, that very life that had earned the Virgin of Nazareth her fame from one end of Galilee to the other. How could she suspect anything wrong of her daughter!

"May the Lord grant you the most beautiful grandson in the world," the Widow's neighbors teased her.

"Your Mary deserves it all; may the child take after her grandfather Jacob, may he rest in glory," they continued to tease the Widow, just in case she hadn't caught on.

The Widow was from Jerusalem; she had been raised in a different environment. But she wasn't a fool. Had it not been her own daughter, the Widow would have bet an eye out of her face that that woman was several weeks pregnant. The problem was that she simply couldn't wrap her head around the idea that her María could be pregnant.

The Widow's faith and trust in her eldest daughter were so great that they had blinded her. Thank God, the Widow's blinders came off before Joseph's did. Finally, the Widow had to admit it, even though her daughter neither confirmed nor denied it.

"What's wrong, my daughter?" the mother asked.

"Nothing. It's just the heat, Mother," the daughter replied.

The Widow's dilemma began when the neighbors started talking about serious matters... adultery. They didn't say it to her face, but among women and neighbors, as you know, words go a long way. So the Widow began to panic.

"My Mary is in a state of grace. How is that possible?" the Widow finally confessed.

And her beloved daughter neither confirmed nor denied it. Desperate because of her daughter's silence, she went to see her son-in-law, hoping he would answer this simple question: Should they move up the wedding date?

And so she did. The Widow went to find "her son" Joseph. Bringing Joseph around to the subject was going to be a real struggle for the Widow. Since she didn't know what situation he was in, or what his role in the story was, the Widow told herself she had to bring Joseph around to the subject without revealing the crux of the problem to him. A very strange situation. She had to broach the subject, but the problem was doing so without straying from the periphery of the issue. Clever as ever, without telling him outright, the Widow would spell out exactly what was going on: his wife was pregnant. What was he, the groom, supposed to say?

After a long while of beating around the bush, the Widow realized that either Joseph was playing dumb to perfection—a side of her saintly son-in-law she hadn't known existed—or he simply didn't know a thing and had no idea what his mother-in-law was talking about.

Joseph looked at her with such an innocent, guilt-free air that the Widow began to lose her bearings. For a moment, she felt as if the ground were opening up beneath her feet and she didn't know which was better—to fight or to let herself be swallowed up. Even her soul shivered with cold under the effect of the tremor that crept into her bones as the truth became an increasingly crushing burden. Her son-in-law knew absolutely nothing, and she knew only that she had to get out of that hell; she had to talk to her daughter and have her, for God's sake, tell her what was going on.

What was happening?

Something unbelievable had happened—something impossible to put into words. Entire generations and centuries themselves would be split in two, just as the flow of the sea is divided when it encounters a gigantic cornerstone in its bed. And her daughter, unable to find a way to reveal to her the story of the Annunciation.

Mary can't find the right moment. Well, as far as a "moment" goes, she did have one. She and her mother used to sit together and sew. During that time, they would talk and talk. They talked about everything. Or they would simply remain silent.

In that silence—which had settled between mother and daughter over the last few days—two hearts beat, on the verge of shattering into pieces. The mother wants to ask her daughter, "Are you pregnant, my daughter?" but can't find the words. The daughter wants to answer with a "Yes, my mother"—a wonderful, divine "Yes"—but couldn't find the right moment.

The fact was that the Child was growing within her, that the evidence of her condition was becoming more apparent every day, that if Joseph found out from the neighbors... She didn't even want to think about it.

She needed to reveal the truth to her mother. Her mother was the only person in the world to whom she could entrust such a great Mystery. She had to do it, but since she couldn't figure out how, the right moment never came.

Well, it so happened that one of those days, mother and daughter sat facing each other. Both women knew that the time had come, that this was the moment. The Virgin was the first to speak.

"Mother, do you believe that God can do anything?" she asked tenderly.

"Daughter," sighed the Widow, who just wanted to get straight to the question: "Are you pregnant, my daughter?" but the words wouldn't come out.

"I already know that, Mother. You'll say to me: God is our Lord—how can we measure the strength of His Arm? And I, my mother, am the first to repeat your words. But what I mean is, does His Power end where the limits of our imagination begin, or is it precisely on the other side where His Glory begins?"

"What are you trying to tell me, my daughter? I don't understand," caught up in a line of thought different from the one she was dying to pursue, the Virgin's mother tries to calm the fluttering in her heart,

"I don't really know how to get where I want to go or what I want to say either. Please be patient with me, Mother. After this, we'll go to Heaven, and from up there, the things of Earth won't affect us; so what we must do is try to discover the nature of the God who called us to dream of Heaven while we're still here on Earth. Isn't it true that God can turn stones into children of Abraham? But what I'm wondering is whether, by speaking this way, the prophet meant to imply that our heads are as hard as stone. Can a stone know God? Between a man who doesn't want to know God and a stone, what's the difference?"

"Where are you trying to take me, my daughter?" the Widow asked, doing her best to contain her impatience.

"To a marvelous truth, Mother. But since I don't know the way, don't be angry with me if I explore on my own, like those mountaineers facing a virgin cliff for the first time. The worst that can happen is that, overcome by my ignorance, I'll fall at your feet."

"Don't say that, my daughter. You're not alone; even though I'm old, I'll follow you. Yes, María, I know that God's glory begins where human imagination ends. Go on."

The Virgin then set off in a direction that seemed even more contrary, saying:

"Mother, what did the messenger from my granduncle Zechariah tell you? Why haven't you wanted to tell me yet? Why haven't you sent me to my grandaunt Elizabeth's house? Now that you can, answer me: Can our God—or can He not—cause elderly people to give birth?"

The Widow and Joseph had not yet wanted to reveal to Mary the nature of the message that Zechariah and Elizabeth had recently sent them; in fact, the Widow had decided to send Mary to them. The question of the state of grace in which her daughter suddenly found herself erased everything else from her mind.

Indeed, the messenger whom Zechariah and Elizabeth sent to Nazareth described to the Widow and her son-in-law, in minute detail, what had happened to Zechariah in the Temple. Especially the image of the most beautiful angel who punished Zechariah's lack of faith by taking away his speech.

Good Lord! His daughter Mary was describing that angel to him as if she herself had seen him with her own eyes. How was that possible?

At first glance, it was impossible. The messenger from Elizabeth and Zechariah had not spoken to her while he was in Nazareth. Of course, Joseph could have told her.

Had Joseph told her? Joseph had given her his word that he would not be the one to break the news to his Mary. The widow knew that Joseph's word was as pure and unblemished as the purest gold. He never broke it. No, Joseph hadn't told her anything yet either.

She was wondering how her daughter had found out when her heart was suddenly transported back to the memory of the day her daughter took her Vow of Virginity.

Back then, in those days, the Widow wondered why the Lord's favor had departed from her home, why He had turned His back on them as one abandons the spoils to the enemy. In the secret of her heart, the Widow found herself caught in the snares of Job's dilemma. But unlike the saint, she did not find the answer right away. Nor did she find it in the years that had passed since her husband's death up to that very day.

The time had come to learn the reason why the Lord had taken her husband then. Astonished, absorbed, out of this world, her being floating on the very waves that would one day become hills beneath the feet of the Spirit of God, the Widow continued to look at her daughter, her eyes fixed on her words.

Then the Virgin changed the subject again.

"Mother," she says, "didn't God swear that a son of Eve would crush the Serpent's head?"

"That is true," replied the Widow, her voice lost somewhere in the infinity where her gaze had become trapped.

"And don't our sacred books also say that of all the men who have ever lived on the face of the earth, none was ever as great as Adam?" Mary continued.

"That's what my father taught me, and that's what yours taught you. I'm listening to you, daughter."

Mary continued:

"When God promised us the birth of a Son born to bear sovereignty upon his shoulders, was He thinking of the Champion He would raise up to free us from the dominion of the Serpent?"

"Yes, He was."

"But if the Evil One once defeated the greatest man the world has ever known, isn't the holy Job right to present the murderer of our father Adam before the Throne of the Almighty, completely at ease as he waited for the next one?"

"He certainly was."

"Of course he did. He who defeated the greatest man in the world—why wouldn't he defeat the Son of Man?"

The Virgin lowers her eyes and takes a breath as she threads the needle. Her mother remains watching her without saying a word. A moment later, Mary leaped back onto the battlefield.

"So, Mother, tell me, did God swear a false oath? I mean, who was the Lord thinking of when He made that blessed oath? David hadn't been born yet; neither had our father Abraham. With his young son dead, our father Adam bleeding to death at His almighty feet, what Champion was our God thinking of when He promised us under an everlasting oath that a son of our mother Eve would crush the head of the Evil One?"

This time it was Mary who fixed her gaze on her mother. Her mother, looking at her daughter's face, knew only one thing: that her daughter was pregnant. The sweetness on her face, the tenderness in her speech, the sparkle in

her eyes. All she had to say was: "Mother, I am in a state of grace"; but instead of getting to the point—without even realizing how her daughter had been leading her to the top of a mountain from which one could see the future of the world, according to the woman born to be the Mother of the Messiah, that Son of the Promise who was to be born to crush the head of the Evil One.

"Who was God thinking of on the day He swore, upon the blood of His son Adam, the Birth of the Champion by whose hand He would exact Vengeance?" the Widow thought aloud. "My daughter, I will not be the one to set limits on the glory of my Creator. I only want you to tell me."

"Do you remember, Mother, what the prophet wrote? 'A Virgin shall give birth, and her Son shall be called God with us.'"

Mary lowered her gaze again. Then she raised her head and looked her mother straight in the eyes.

"Mother, that Virgin stands before you. That Child is in my womb," she confessed.

As her daughter revealed the story of the Annunciation, the Widow gazed at her daughter with the vision of one who is contemplating the Heart of God on the day of her son Adam's murder.

When she finished, inspired by the great love she had for her daughter, the Widow poured out blessings:

"Blessed be God, who has chosen my husband's daughter to bring salvation to all the families of the earth. His Omniscience shines like an inaccessible sun that, nevertheless, everyone believes they can reach with the tips of their fingers. He squeezes, but does not suffocate; He strikes, but does not crush those He loves. Blessed be His Chosen One, whom He has formed from the womb of her parents to give us His Savior, to all the peoples of the earth." And immediately she said to her daughter: "Blessed will be all the families of the earth in your innocence, my daughter. But now, Mary, you will do as I tell you. You will do this, this, and this."

The next problem was Joseph. She, the Widow, would take care of Joseph. What the Mother of the Messiah had to do was set out on a journey immediately and stay at the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah until the Lord decreed otherwise.

And so it was done. The Widow took her son-in-law aside and told him the whole truth, point by point. She did not recount the Annunciation to her son-in-law as if she had something to hide and were lowering her head in shame. Not at all. Obviously, she spoke with the humility and certainty of someone who knew that the Event would cause Joseph an agonizing dilemma—one he would have to overcome, and would overcome, but through which he would inevitably have to go through hell.

And so it was. Joseph triumphed.

Nevertheless, as you can imagine, after the Annunciation, Joseph spent some time morally sinking into a limbo of quicksand. What had gone wrong at the last minute? How could a woman of Mary's moral character and strength have been deceived by...?

By whom? Without anyone intending it, she was under constant supervision all day long. When she wasn't with her mother, she was with her nephews; when she wasn't in the workshop with her female workers, she was with the families of her father's brothers. The Lord had woven around her a web of relationships so all-consuming that the very idea of adultery was an offense.

And then there was she, Mary. She was, in the flesh, the best defense God had chosen for the Mother of His Son.

"She said it, and we didn't believe her: 'A virgin will conceive and give birth to a child.'" Upon saying this, Joseph saw the light and rushed off. He returned to his wife, the wedding took place, and everyone forgot about the incident.

One memory, however, did remain. I'm referring to that other incident between Jesus and the Pharisees.

The Pharisees and Sadducees grew tired of hearing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of David. Since they didn't know how to get the better of him, they dug into his past. They poked at his weak spot and uncovered that strange incident involving his Mother's disappearance during the first months of her pregnancy—and how Joseph went in person to look for her... to...

"Ahhhh, here's his Achilles' heel"...

With this secret weapon tucked up their sleeve, the Pharisees steered Jesus toward the topic of firstborn sons and only children. Then one of them pulled out the playbook of low blows and dropped the bombshell.

"Our father is Abraham; who is yours?"

Jesus's consuming zeal for his Mother went to his head.

"You are children of the Devil," he replied with the force of a hurricane compressed in his throat.

Just once more—just on one other occasion they no longer wish to remember—they saw the Son of the Virgin with lightning shooting from his eyes. And he never stopped, never paused, until he had poured every last atom of the Almighty's wrath into the river of his own fury.

From then on, the game between Him and them would be played as heads or tails. Heads, He would take them down. Tails, they would get their comeuppance.

THE CHILD JESUS IN ALEXANDRIA ON THE NILE

Shortly after these events, Joseph the Carpenter and his brother-in-law Cleophas gathered their families, bought tickets, and set sail for Alexandria on the Nile.

Mystery has always surrounded this matter of the Flight. Documentarily speaking, the truth is that there is no evidence anywhere that Alexandria on the Nile was the place chosen by Joseph to save Mary's son from the persecution

against the Child decreed by Herod. So, if pressed, the author of this story could be accused of inventing the fugitives' destination to serve literary purposes. Which, to a certain extent, seems logical to me. I myself cannot forget that the classical iconography on this subject is quite sparse—even cautious, I would say—and I would even dare to confess that it is a caution bordering on cowardice.

Joseph's choice of Alexandria on the Nile was not accidental; nor is it on the part of the one who recreates his movements in these pages. Fortunately or unfortunately, the only evidence I can provide is God's testimony. By course, the "unfortunately" is just a figure of speech. For those who know God, a single word from Him is worth more than all the discourses of all the sages in the universe engaged in an endless series of lectures. Unfortunately, God's word is not enough for everyone.

The fact is that the only real proof history offers us in this matter is God's testimony: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Before me, many have staked their lives in defense of the affirmative answer this question deserves. From the apocryphal distance of the non-believer, however, there are two insurmountable objections against whose bombproof walls our rhetoric shatters. One is that the statement "Out of Egypt I called my Son" was written long before any of the events we recount had even taken place; therefore, to pause and believe that centuries and centuries before the Nativity, the Flight had already been established as part of the messianic plan is, truth be told, a stretch.

The other objection is that this prophetic passage was not written "a futuriori" but a posteriori. According to these geniuses, it would not be the first time the Jews had falsified their sacred texts. Hadn't they been doing so for centuries? Nineveh fell, and they came along to write on its ruins that they had already foretold it. And just like Nineveh, so it was with all other events. The prophet Daniel, too, foresaw Cyrus the Great's rise to power—and even the fall of his empire under the hooves of Alexander the Great's horse. For heaven's sake, who were they trying to fool? Is there any nation more foolish than one that deceives itself?

In short, this view—that the prophetic texts were created after the fact—gained many followers in its heyday. Ignoring its cunning—as is natural for those who have been immunized against the cunning of geniuses— the rest of us—those who continue to uphold the divine value of the prophetic texts—still maintain that such ways of thinking would be logical for an ancient thinker, because to attempt to align the Creator's thought with that of the creature—which is what one does by denying divine omniscience as the source of Scripture—is to deny what separates the creature from its Creator.

On a speculative level, it is true that some men see the future—in the stars, in dice, in coffee grounds, and above all in a bullet with a name written on it. On the level of reality, however, human nature is far from being granted such an attribute.

That's one perspective.

On the other hand, isn't it true that history is written by the victors? Well, if that were the case, something must be wrong with the system when we see it

written by a people of losers. They lost to the Egyptians. Or is there still anyone who believes that one can go from freedom to slavery without fighting a terrible battle? They fought against the Assyrians and lost the war. They were crushed again by Nebuchadnezzar's Chaldeans. They lost to Rome. They were enslaved again by the Arabs. How curious—very curious—that the historical memory of half the planet is based on the military exploits of the quintessential losing people, the Jews!

I would say that history writes itself at the pace with which God uses the hand of man as a pen. God, our Creator, dips the pen in our blood and writes our future according to His omniscience, foreknowledge, and creative genius. In other words, we do not see the future; God, on the other hand, not only sees it but also writes it. Now, if this divine capacity to create the future is not acknowledged, then we will have to rely on the nature of the events themselves—or run the risk of closing this history and opening a completely different book.

Thus, the farewell was very brief. The Devil's Wolf had caught the Child's scent.

Safe in Egypt, Joseph the Carpenter opened his workshop far from the Jewish Quarter, in the Free City. Over the years, his workshop came to be known as "The Jew's Carpentry Shop."

On this particular point—the event of the Massacre of the Innocents—I say the same. If doubt stems from the impossibility of anyone being capable of committing such a crime, then we can take that doubt and throw it in the trash. If, on the other hand, the doubt stems from the ignorance of the peoples and their inhabitants—considering the social and political circumstances experienced by the Kingdom of Israel at that time—then in this case nothing more can be added to what has already been written, except perhaps to say that it is inexplicable how, given that happiness lies in ignorance and there are so many ignorant people in the world, the world can continue to be so brilliantly miserable.

But let's get back to the matter at hand.

Was it an easy decision for Joseph to have to pack up again and emigrate to Egypt?

Perhaps it wasn't an easy decision, but it was certainly a courageous one.

The story of the Adoration of the Magi opens our minds to the past and paints a picture of the Holy Family fleeing to the second-largest city in the world, Alexandria on the Nile—an open and cosmopolitan city where Joseph and his family arrived with their backs covered, "economically speaking." Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were the gifts the Magi gave to the Child.

Why Alexandria on the Nile and not Rome?

Well, Alexandria is just a stone's throw from the coast of Israel. With the Massacre of the Innocents already carried out and the murder of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, already consummated, the last thing Joseph could afford was to endanger the Child's life. In fact, days had passed between the Birth and the Child's presentation in the Temple; it was now or never. Return to Nazareth, pack up, catch the ship in Haifa, and say goodbye to the homeland.

This decision by Joseph, forced by the bloody circumstances, changed him completely. Among the Holy Innocents, his brothers' children fell into the trap. The man who, from the deck of the ship carrying the Holy Family to Alexandria, gazed at the horizon alone, with his back turned to everyone, carried that secret hidden in his heart—a secret he would not reveal to his people until his death. When he disembarked on the Egyptian coast, the Joseph who had existed before the Massacre and the murder of Zechariah had sunk into the waters of the Mediterranean.

His compatriots?

The farther away from him, the better. He didn't tell anyone the reason for this complete change—not his wife, nor his brother-in-law.

And now we are in Alexandria on the Nile.

The environment in which Jesus grew up, thanks to his father's strange behavior toward his own people, was extraordinary. Joseph, his father, refused to settle in the Jewish Quarter; he preferred to find a place among the Gentiles, right in the heart of the Free City. He bought a house and opened his workshop. Over time, his workshop would come to be known as the Jew's Carpentry Shop.

The Child's aunt and uncle, Cleophas and Mary the daughter of Cleophas, continued to have children.

Clever as only he could be, as soon as Jesus was as tall as his cousin James—even though James was two years older—Jesus would grab him and take him to the Roman port. The Boy wasn't shy around anyone; his thirst for news from the Empire was never quenched. His knack for coaxing news out of the sailors—about Rome, Athens, Hispania, Gaul, India, and deep Africa—won the sailors' sympathy. They'd look the two boys up and down, see them dressed in clothes befitting children of the upper class, and then they'd tell Jesus and his cousin James all about what was going on in the world.

Thanks to this natural gift, by the time he turned twelve, the Boy spoke Latin, Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew, and Aramaic perfectly. I insist: or do you think they found him an interpreter for the hearing with Pilate?

As I said, Jesus was a prodigy in every sense of the word. A prodigy who was fortunate enough to have an extraordinary man as his father. However, even prodigies feel, suffer, have moments of weakness, grow sad, and weep over the loneliness that weighs them down.

THE SILENT DOVE OF THE DISTANT HORIZONS

Jesus sank into despair. That divine Child who used to turn the whole street's kids upside down—who would wander off, get lost among the boats in the harbor, and then, as evening fell, come running back to sit on his father's lap among his friends—that whirlwind of a Child sank into despair. Jesus stopped leaving the house. He began to sit at the door of the Jewish Carpenter's Shop, watching life go by. The Child hardly ate. Jesus would let himself sink into his mother's lap among

her friends—when, as evening fell, the women would sit in the street, under the Mediterranean sky, sewing and chatting—and then he would leave.

It was as if that flame from the Burning Bush were burning away in Mary's arms. At first, she did not realize the loneliness that had opened a black hole in her Child's chest and was swallowing him up a little more each day through it. Little by little, the Mother opened her eyes and began to see what was in her Child's Heart.

She could not bear that indescribable agony that was snatching her Child from her hands. She loved him more than the world, more than time, more than the waves of the sea, more than the stars, more than love, more than her very own life. And he was slipping away from her. Night after night, and each night a little more. The Child did not speak, did not laugh; he would slump against his Mother's chest, his gaze lost in the sky over that Alexandria on the Nile, and there he would sink.

"What's wrong, my son?" she asked him.

"Nothing, Mary," He would reply.

"I know what's wrong with you, my son."

"It's nothing, Mary, really."

"My darling, you miss your Father. Don't cry, my love. He is here, right now; when I press my lips to your cheeks, He kisses you; when I hug you, He holds you close."

To the Child, that woman who listened to Him with the sweetest smile in the universe on her face while He spoke to her of His Father's Paradise, of His Father's City, of His brothers—the superangels Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael—that woman... that woman was His Mother. He loved her more than anything in the world. She was the only person to whom He could tell everything. He loved to feel the beating of her heart when He spoke to her of His Kingdom. And that radiant look that lit up her face when He told her the whole truth! It was never erased from His memory.

"Yes, Mary," the Child said to her. "I am He."

"Tell me again what Heaven is like, my son," she asked him once more.

"Heaven," the Child confided, "is like an island that became a continent, and which continues to grow beyond the eastern horizon. The Rock upon which it is founded is the highest mountain any man could imagine. The Mountain of God, Zion, raises its summit to the clouds, but where the clouds should be there are twelve walls, each made of a single block, each block a different color, each wall shining as if it had a sun inside it. And they are like twelve suns illuminating the same firmament. The twelve walls form a single rampart surrounding the City they contain. God called His City Jerusalem, and His Mountain Zion. In Jerusalem the gods have their Dwelling, and among the gods my Father has His House. From the walls of the City of God, the edges of Heaven fade into the horizon that borders the sunrise on the other side of Paradise's frontiers.

"You see, Mary, Heaven is like a marvelous mirror that reflects the history of the peoples who inhabit it. Take this world, the Earth, for example. You record

the memories of your ancestors in your books; but Heaven records them in real time, because what is reflected on the surface of the Universe materializes on the surface of Heaven. So if you set out to explore the Abode of mankind in my Father's Paradise, you will find that all the Ages of Mankind are captured in its geography. When you go to Heaven, you will see with your own eyes that all kinds of animals and birds and trees and plants and mountains and valleys that once existed down here exist forever up there."

"Since my Father has created other worlds—and will continue to create more—Heaven is a Paradise brimming with wonders that never end. To explore it all, you'd have to walk for an eternity, and every step of the way would be an adventure. How can I explain it to you? My Father sows life among the stars. The stars of the Universe are like the ocean surrounding an island, and this ocean of constellations also grows, extending its shores in step with the boundaries of Heaven. Life becomes a tree, and my Father and I gather it in our Paradise so that it may live forever. The species of animals and birds are countless. A great river springs from the heights of the Mountain of God, and on the plain it branches out to cover all the Worlds and their territories. Do you see all the stars? Heaven is higher still."

"Is that where you came from, my Son?"

"I'll tell you, Mary."

THE JEW'S CARPENTER'S SHOP

The Child told Mary many things. He told her so many that the poor immigrant woman no longer had room in her head and had to begin storing them in her Heart. If I were to retell them all to you, I'd surely be sitting here until next year, and that's not the plan.

What I can tell you, though, is what you already know. You know that the Holy Family returned to their homeland about ten years later, or perhaps sooner. But you don't know what happened to them that led good old Joseph and his brother-in-law Cleophas to decide to sell the Jew's Carpentry Shop—a business that was extremely prosperous, sailing full steam ahead, cutting through the sea, not just sailing but flying, and so on.

The Jew's Carpentry Shop was right in the heart of the city. In those days, there was only one real city in the entire world. It was Alexandria on the Nile. Rome was the heart of the world's largest army. The imperial senators lived in Rome. But it was in Alexandria on the Nile where all the wise men of the Empire were to be found. We could say that Alexandria was the New York of those days. Power is in Washington, but money is in New York. Alexandria and Rome maintained a relationship of this nature.

So why did they have to go back now? And just when business was going swimmingly—sailing with the wind at their backs, flying across the sea, and so on? Go back to what? To survive like a fly in a spider's web? There was plenty to think about. A business less than ten years old is like a young guy just starting to grow a

mustache. From his perspective, the world has the fewest faults. The world may be as bad as you want it to be, but he—the kid—is a champion. In short, it wasn't nonsense. It had taken José and his brother-in-law a lot of effort to get ahead, make their way, and find a niche—and a big one at that—among the Gentiles, because Joseph wanted to know nothing, or very little, about his compatriots. In this chapter, Mr. Joseph was a very unusual Jew. He didn't want to know much about his compatriots, nor did he like having them too close. No one knew why, nor did he say much himself. Perhaps it was because Mr. Joseph had spoken Latin and Greek from a very young age and seemed to be in his element among the Gentiles.

It must be said that Joseph's mastery of the Empire's two languages paved the way for him in the business world. Unlike his compatriots—who were racist toward everyone, believed themselves to be a superior, chosen race, and looked down on the rest of humanity—Mr. Joseph was open-minded, intelligent, and a man of few words; yet every word he spoke was that of a man of his word who would never break his promise for anything in the world.

How a provincial cabinetmaker, who had escaped from a remote village in the mountains, had managed to master the two international languages of the time to such an extent—well, that was another mystery!

This was yet another of the many traits that made the owner of the "Jewish Carpenter's Shop" a unique, introverted, and indefinable figure. His compatriots from Alexandria criticized Mr. Joseph precisely because of his distance from his own people.

Unlike Joseph, Cleophas, Mary's brother, was deeply rooted in his homeland and gravitated toward his own people. This balanced the scales and kept the family's relations with the nationalists in equilibrium. On occasion, between brothers-in-law and business partners, Cleophas would bring up the subject of his estrangement and the reasons behind such an unyielding stance. But Joseph always found a way to brush the matter aside.

Joseph didn't impose anything on his brother-in-law Cleophas; he was free to raise his children as he saw fit; he wasn't going to forbid his nephews from going to the synagogue and participating in the life of the Jewish community, fulfilling their duties as good children of Abraham. It was just that the very freedom José offered Cleophas, he wanted for himself as well.

Faced with this line of reasoning, Cleophas would laugh and drop the subject. Because if he asked his sister Mary about her husband's strange behavior, she wouldn't get any further either.

The same mystery that Joseph's manner posed for Cleophas had puzzled Mary ever since they left their homeland. And Cleophas shouldn't think she was hiding anything from him. Joseph was as kind as could be, but when it came to opening his heart, he wouldn't say a word—not even to his own wife.

All in all, Cleophas and his wife had already brought a whole brood into the world by this point in the story. Joseph and Mary, however, had kept only the first and the last—the firstborn and the only child rolled into one.

"What's going on, brother?" Cleophas asked. "Why the rush to sell a ship that's sailing full steam ahead?"

Joseph didn't want to tell his brother-in-law the whole truth—or at least the truth as he experienced it.

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

The Child overcame that sadness that had nearly plunged him into the darkness of infinite sorrow. His Mother stood between the Child and that unknown darkness; she called on her Husband for help, and together they drove the devil back to hell. But they had not forgotten that battle when the Child opened a new chapter in their lives. Jesus was already nine or ten years old. It had gotten into the Child's head that he wanted to leave Egypt and be taken to Israel.

You can imagine how angry Joseph must have been. His wife was on her son's side. Naturally. For Mary, there was no problem at all. But for Joseph, things weren't so simple.

Of course, Joseph had heard the Divine Story from Jesus' own lips while He was in His Mother's arms. And precisely for that reason, now more than ever, he could not afford to make the wrong decision. As long as he didn't know who he had in his home, the problem seemed under control; but now that he knew the identity of Mary's Son, now more than ever he could not afford the indecision he'd shown when he'd laughed off the Magi's advice.

"Go, Joseph, or the Herods will kill him," they pleaded with him.

Return to Israel while Herod the Younger is still alive?

"Tell your Son that the time has not yet come," Joseph replies to his wife.

Words carried away by the wind.

"Tell your husband that I must attend to my Father's business," the Child insists.

A reply carried by the wind.

"Mary, for God's sake, he's just a child. No one is leaving here. At least not until that son of Satan is dead."

I'll cut to the chase. That's how Mr. Joseph was. Very few words, but when he spoke, there was no one in the world who could make him change his mind.

And they could have gone on like that their whole lives if the Child hadn't set "his plan" in motion. I won't get lost in the details, but the truth is that the Carpenter's son uncorked the bottle of his prodigious intelligence and enjoyed himself like a little boy, drenching the rabbi of the synagogue with the champagne of his glory.

"The list of kings? The one from Before the Flood or the one from After the Flood, Rabbi?"

A monster. He knew everything. The utterly astonished rabbi ended up taking a deep interest in the Child.

"And whose son are you, child?"

"I am the son of David, Rabbi."

"Is your father the son of David?"

"And so is my mother, Rabbi."

"And your mother too? How curious!"

"And so is my cousin here, Rabbi."

"You really are a rabbi through and through," the man thought to himself.

So one fine day, the rabbi walked into the Jew's Carpentry Shop demanding an explanation from Joseph. As if he were entitled to something just because he was a servant of God.

Joseph looked him up and down and kicked him out onto the street. And right in front of the Child himself. Because, of course, the whole mess was the Child's doing.

You'll understand that after the scare he had during the Nativity, Joseph was forbidden to make even the slightest mention of his family's Davidic origins. And if the occasion arose, he had to brush off any talk of his Davidic origins as if he weren't willing to stake his life on it. They certainly were; but who knows? Their parents had told them so, and they weren't about to question their parents' authority.

The Child was breaking this family rule. And he was doing so with full knowledge of the consequences. He knew—because he knew Joseph as if he were his brother, his friend, his father—that as soon as Joseph detected the slightest danger that might endanger the life of the Son of Mary, Joseph would call it quits and move elsewhere.

Joseph had won the first round. But the second was yet to come.

The Child was back to his old ways. Not only was he the son of David—as if it were no big deal—but his mother was the Daughter of Solomon.

"Yes, indeed, Rabbi. The Daughter of Solomon herself."

"And you say your father can prove this with documents on the table?"

"Yes, sir."

That rabbi, who had the good fortune—or misfortune—of having the Boy as a student, was on high alert. Confused, bewildered, and utterly astonished, the rabbi took the matter to the chief rabbi.

"It's just as I said. If it were any other child, I'd take it as a joke, but when it comes to the Carpenter's son, I'll believe anything. He knows more than all the wise men of Solomon's court put together. Including the wise king himself," with these words, the rabbi from Jesus went to his superior.

And one fine day, the two of them showed up at the Jewish Carpenter's shop, determined to get to the bottom of the matter.

They went to see Joseph. They went to demand that he show them the documents the Child had been telling them about. Jesus had told them that his father kept the family's genealogical records—documents dating back to the days of King David himself, reissued by the prophet Daniel during the Babylonian Captivity.

Joseph suddenly found himself facing a masterstroke—checkmate. The Son of Mary was playing hardball. He wanted to take them all to Jerusalem, and nothing and no one was going to stop him.

The argument Joseph had with the two rabbis was very heated. I won't recount it here so as not to give the impression of fabricating fantastical events.

"The impression that the Son of Mary made on his teachers was so overwhelming that they had believed the word of a little boy"... blah, blah, blah. The Carpenter brushed it off.

Had they known him, they would have understood that for Joseph, to affirm something was to have the final say.

Joseph was absolutely certain. The Son of Mary might be the Son of God himself, but it was to him—to Joseph—that his Father had entrusted his care, and it fell to him, and him alone, Joseph, to decide when the Holy Family would return to Israel.

Could he be the Son of God?

Could it only be...?

"What are you thinking about, Joseph?"

The rabbis believed they had the Carpenter cornered, and even the Child himself, listening behind the door, came to believe it. Words like swords in a duel to the death were clashing when the Child peered through the door with the air of a victor asking his fallen enemy: "Do you still want more?"

It was the first time in his life that Joseph saw the Son of Mary through the eyes with which his Mother saw him. That was the Son of God in person. It was no joke. It just so happened that He had the body of a child. But the One standing before Joseph was the Firstborn of the Lord God YAHWEH. It was the Son of God in person who was speaking to him through his thoughts.

Yes, sir, He was speaking to him through his thoughts with the same certainty that you are reading this book.

The rabbis were shouting at the top of their lungs at Joseph in his own home, but Joseph's mind was elsewhere, in another place. They were demanding the Child's genealogical records, and he was in another place, in another time. The Child was standing against the doorframe of the carpenter's shop, saying to him without opening His mouth: "Don't you believe Me yet, Joseph? Don't you see that I have to attend to My Father's business?"

But the Child's plan backfired.

Once the moment had passed and the rabbis had left, Joseph closed himself off once again—and now more than ever. They would never return to Israel until his God gave him the order to return. And that was it; Joseph didn't want to hear any more.

And that was how the Child was defeated once again. He stopped speaking to Joseph. He had played his hand and lost. No one would leave Egypt until God gave Joseph the command to return to Israel—it was that simple, that tragic.

Simple to say, yes; but to live through it—not at all. Father and son stopped speaking to each other—and even looking at one another. Little Jesus wouldn't even eat. He would slump to the ground against the wall of their house, watching life pass him by, weighed down by the sorrow of one who can do anything yet is commanded to do nothing.

Mary didn't know who was suffering more—whether the Child, for failing to impose his will, or her Husband, for being unable to bear the silence and his son's estrangement. They didn't even look at each other. Joseph didn't dare, and the Child couldn't.

Cleophas was the only one who seemed to enjoy the situation.

"What's wrong with you, brother? Why are you so stubborn?" he says to Joseph.

"He's just a Child, Cleophas," Joseph replied.

It so happened that one day like any other, Joseph returned home after closing a deal. Jesus had already lost all hope of convincing good old Joseph. How long had it been since they'd spoken to each other?

Joseph the Carpenter returned from closing that deal, looking very serious, but with eyes that sparkled. As soon as Mary saw him walk through the door, her heart leapt, but she didn't say a word. She waited for her husband to speak to her.

"Woman, tell your Son that we're leaving."

He said no more.

The Mother took the Child and went to distract him at the market. She was going to buy him whatever he wanted, to cheer him up and lift his spirits, she told him. Jesus followed her as he might have followed a cloud with no destination. Ever since the incident between Joseph and the rabbis, he didn't want to know anything; he had no desire for anything. And there was nothing his own Mother could say to lift his spirits.

Nothing?

Well, there was something. He had two signs, and it was a single word. Joseph was denying it to him, and Mary couldn't give it to him.

Couldn't she give it to him?

They would never forget that stroll through the market at the port of Alexandria. She couldn't stop smiling at him, tickling him, and saying with her gestures: "Riddle, riddle, what's wrong with me?"

Naturally, the Child got a little annoyed for a while, until he finally opened his eyes. He took Mary—he always called her by her name—sat her down on one of the benches on the pier, and, looking her in the eyes, read her heart as easily as you read these lines.

"Mary, tell me" was all the Boy said.

She nodded, utterly overcome with happiness. And right there, against the backdrop of the Mediterranean horizon, they danced wildly with joy.

They ran back home. Joseph was working when they came in. Mary walked right past him, but Joseph caught the light shining in his wife's heart. His eyes lit up, and he turned his head. Before he could say a word, the Child ran out and threw himself into his arms. Giant as he was, Mary's husband caught him and lifted him up just as all fathers do with their little ones. Now, truly, both of them had triumphed. The Child had what he wanted, and Joseph had received God's command to set out on his journey.

Cleophas didn't protest. Nor did he say a word. His brother-in-law was the head of the family; he made the decisions, he gave the orders.

Jesus ran off in search of James, his cousin, shouting down the street, "To Jerusalem, James, to Jerusalem!"

BORN AGAIN

The emigrants returned to Nazareth, so to speak, rich. Joseph sold the Jewish Carpenter's Shop for a very good price.

"Farewell, Alexandria, farewell," whispered Joseph's lips as he left behind friends, his business, happy years, new prospects, a wise city, and the joy of having experienced wonderful things and heard others so incredible they would be hard to believe had he not heard them from the Child's own lips.

On the other side of the horizon awaited the return of pain that had lain dormant beneath the thick sheets of a cruelly wounded subconscious. Return to Nazareth? Settle in Bethlehem, his hometown? What would he do?

During the absence of the Mistress of the *Stork's Nest* of Nazareth, the large house on the hill, Joan, Mary's sister, had kept her nephew Jesus's estate in good standing. In this regard, Joseph had no problems. Everything that belonged to his wife was his; so Joseph could devote himself to living off the income and begin to enjoy the good life. But no matter how prosperous his wife's inheritance might be, this way of thinking did not sit well with him.

As a father, Joseph was more concerned about the future of his nephews than about the future of his son Jesus.

By that time, his brother-in-law Cleophas had fathered a whole brood of children. Had Mary remained unmarried, it would have been more than likely that the inheritance of Jacob of Nazareth and his messianic legacy would have passed

to the male head of the household; in which case, the future of Cleophas's children would have been tied to Mary's property.

That was not the case. Sooner or later, Cleophas's sons would have to leave Aunt Mary's house, settle down, and start their own families. So, without a second thought, Joseph made the final decision to start over, just as he had when he first arrived in Nazareth—unknown to all who did not know him, with no ground to fall dead on, the sky as his roof, the horizons as the walls of his home, Mother Earth as the floor upon which to rest his body, a stone as a pillow beneath the stars, his faithful Assyrian dogs standing guard around the fire, the dawn breaking, the morning star beneath the moon, Jerusalem above, on the road to Samaria like one who enters a body and travels to the heart through the unknown arteries of the earth. Why not? Did God not endow us with His strength to keep the spirit forever young? Our physical strength may fail, but our will endures beyond the weariness of our bones.

Of course, reopening the carpentry shop was going to be serious work, but since those two men lacked neither the strength nor the courage to start over from scratch, well, that's just how it was. Besides, the sinister creatures who ordered the Massacre of the Innocents had already passed on to a better place, and—truth be told—even though Joseph didn't seem all that eager to return to his homeland, he, too, was feeling the pull of family: to see his brothers and sisters again, to see his wife and brother-in-law happy in the arms of his children's grandmother. In short, human nature was woven from the fibers of divine love and needs to be bathed in tears of joy to overcome its innate tendency to resemble beasts, which neither laugh nor cry.

As for work, man, Joseph could have gone into farming, but that wasn't his thing. The trade of carpentry and cabinetmaking was in his genes; it coursed through his veins; it was his calling—he could hammer a nail without looking, polish the roughest surface while chatting. The countryside? The countryside wasn't for him, nor was he cut out for the countryside. Had his sister-in-law Juana's skills failed to keep the property thriving?

Yes, his sister-in-law Joan was there to handle the farm affairs. And as for the sewing workshop in Nazareth, matters were in the hands of his wife's workers, and she—now devoted to her family—did nothing but leave things exactly as they were.

The Child, for his part, as soon as he set foot in Israel, was already dying to see the day of his admission into the community with all the full rights of adults—something that usually took place at thirteen or fourteen. In his case, things were moved up to age twelve because his mind worked better than that of an older person. Let it be noted that I am not saying this to impress the reader. The truth is that the Child remained hyperactive throughout the entire journey from Egypt to Israel; if it had been up to him, he would have taken flight or run across the water and wouldn't have stopped until he reached Jerusalem. He was already picturing it all. He would make his way to the Temple Courtyard, ask to speak, and let the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth—flow from his mouth.

"Here I come, Jerusalem," whispers the Child as he leaves Egypt behind.

The Child's vision of his messianic destiny is the classic one found in popular tradition at this time of year. The Son of David appears riding his horse of glory before the powers of the Temple, gathers around him all the children of Abraham from across the world, and leads them to conquer the ends of the earth.

With these holy intentions in mind, following the ceremony marking his admission into the community upon turning twelve, Jesus goes to the Temple to put his strategy into action.

On the first day, he draws attention to himself; on the second, word spreads; and on the third, all the Sages of Israel will be revealed in the immensity of his divine reality. On the fourth, the Messiah will be on his throne, summoning all the armies of the Lord throughout the world to his ranks.

And so it was. At least for the first two days. But on the third, something happened that would mark his entire existence.

Amazed by the wisdom of that Child, who knew more than all the sages of Israel together, the Temple authorities eventually gathered to decide what was happening.

Among them, seated around Jesus—who was in turn surrounded by the Doctors and Princes of the Temple—was a man named Simeon. This Simeon was the elderly man who had greeted the newborn Child and told his God that He could now let him go to be reunited with his parents, for he had already seen the Christ.

God did not seem to agree with Simeon. Instead of taking him to Heaven, He left him on Earth for the time being.

As soon as Simeon saw the Child, he recognized the Son of Mary. Awed by what he was witnessing, he spoke up just as everyone else was convinced they were standing before the Son of David.

"Tell me, son," Simeon broke the silence.

And he went on to speak words of a wisdom unknown to the Child and to everyone else.

"What will happen when you leave? Because you will have to leave. Will we humans return to our old, everyday world, or do you perhaps believe that the Christ will remain with us forever?"

What was that old man talking about? the Child wondered.

Amid the protests of all his colleagues, the old man was telling him that the Christ would be surrounded by a pack of dogs, would bear all the sins of the world, and would offer himself as a Sacrificial Lamb.

"But if he takes his seat on his throne, how can the Scriptures be fulfilled?" Simeon added pointedly.

The Child froze. Was he the Servant of Yahweh from the prophecies of Isaiah?

It wasn't that the Child didn't know the prophecies. He knew the prophetic books by heart. What was striking Him was the interpretation Simeon was giving

them. It was a wisdom as new and unfamiliar to Him as it was to the others who were listening.

DAVID'S SWORD

Legend had it that the great warrior danced a victory dance around the enemy's corpse. It also said that those barbarians stole the secret of iron from the heroes of Troy before Aeneas fell victim to the Achaeans' cunning.

Among those soulless monsters, the most horrible was always the leader. The leader was not always the tallest, but he was always the cruelest, the most terrible, the most ruthless, the most lethal, and the most evil. On that occasion, the tallest and the cruelest and most ruthless barbarian conceivable had come together in a single body. His name was Goliath. His sword was as large as that of the other warrior whom the Spaniards called Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar—the one that could sever five Moorish heads lined up in single file with a single stroke. No one dared come within three meters of El Cid Campeador; those three meters were the length of his weapon from the shoulder to the tip of that Spanish steel sword. Arm and sword, one with that Castilian warrior, whose stature was every bit as imposing as that of the brawling, babbling Philistine who made the terrible mistake of removing his helmet in front of the young shepherd with the sling.

Legend has it that David picked up the giant's enormous sword and with it cut off his head in a single stroke. And it goes on to say that the Hebrew warrior fought with it at the head of his armies. From this we must deduce that, though handsome of face, this David was by no means short in stature nor did he have delicate, slender arms. He was no giant, but he certainly bore no resemblance to a dwarf.

From the beginning of his reign, Goliath's sword was the royal symbol par excellence that granted the throne of Judah to whoever possessed it. Solomon received it, and Solomon passed it on to his son. Rehoboam passed it to his son, who passed it to the next, and so it passed from hand to hand over the five centuries that elapsed from David's coronation to the last king of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar snatched it from the hands of the last living king of Judah and cast that museum-piece sword among the other treasures his armies had gathered from around the world. He saw that it was so large and heavy that he mistook it for a decorative object. He forgot about it, and it would have remained there forever had Cyrus the Great, after conquering Babylon, not handed it over to the prophet Daniel so that he might do with that sacred symbol of the Hebrews whatever his spirit prompted him to do.

By rightful inheritance, the sword of David—the sword of the kings of Judah—belonged to Zerubbabel. But the prophet Daniel denied it to him because it was not with that sword that he was to reconquer the Lost Homeland. Goliath's sword would remain in the Great Synagogue of the Magi of the East until the Son of David was born.

We do not know how Goliath's sword came to be in the hands of El Cid Campeador. What we do know for certain is that that sword was the one Joseph wielded on the day he entered the Temple in search of the Son of Mary.

David's sword was a gift from the Magi to the Messiah's father. It fell to him to safeguard it until the day of his son's coronation.

The Magi gave Joseph many gifts. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were the last three gifts they gave him; but these were for the Child. Earlier, they had given Joseph an Iberian horse that flew like a shooting star and was capable of crossing Samaria without drinking water or resting. And three dogs from the same litter, a relic of the hounds that the kings of Nineveh took with them on their lion hunts. One was named Deneb, another Sirius, and the third Kochab. Joseph never took them out together. They looked so much alike that anyone who didn't know Joseph would have thought he owned only a single specimen of that endangered breed. They were as gentle as little lambs at their master's feet, but fiercer than the most evil demon in the most horrific hell if they sensed danger. His three dogs, his Iberian horse, and Goliath's sword were the three things José took with him from Bethlehem the day Isabel told him:

"Son, all your sisters have married and are happy; the boy is now in his prime and has all his father's charm. Cleophas is strong, tall, and clever—it won't be long before he finds someone who loves him madly. Very soon the Daughter of Solomon will be released from her vow—isn't that what the Son of Nathan has been waiting for all these years?"

And Joseph took a fourth thing with him to Nazareth, which was the most precious of all to him: the genealogical record of his House. But let's get back to the point.

Only twice in his life did Joseph's hand instinctively reach for the sword of his father David. That his arm moved so instinctively tells us a great deal about the stature of the man and the strength of his arm. The first time was when Joseph went to fetch Mary from the home of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. The second was when Joseph entered the Temple to look for the Son of Mary.

What would have happened if, instead of telling his parents what he did, the Child had said to Joseph: "Son of Nathan, give me the sword of the kings of Judah"?

YOU ARE DUST, AND TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN

What, in the end, did that old man reveal to the Child? What did that man show him that caused the Son of Mary to renounce his plans? What did he say to him? Why did that Child remain silent and give up his plan to mount the horse of the Son of David—the brave and impetuous prince who, according to the popular interpretation of the Scriptures, was to lead his armies to bring God's peace to the whole world? Why did the one who entered the Temple ready to reveal himself and claim what was rightfully his by human and divine right suddenly abandon his messianic plans and go after "his parents" without uttering a word?

That that elderly man—whose identity we will discover in Part Two—revealed to the Child the wisdom that you have all known through the Catholic Church since the days of the Apostles—that much is certain. But there was more, much more, as well.

And the only way to discover what went through his mind is to put ourselves in his place. But not in whatever arbitrary way we feel like, or in a way that seems to fit our nature. For a moment, let's forget everything we've heard and step into his shoes. And to do that, we're going to accept the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God. We're going to embrace it on every level and take it to its ultimate conclusion.

Let's consider the possibility that that Child was the Son of God in person. Not just any son in our image and likeness, by adoption; not even a son of God in the image and likeness of the angels whom we see in the presence of God in the Book of Job. No, let us take it for granted that that Child was a son of God in the sense that He is the Only-Begotten of His Father because He was born out of His of His Being. And that, in His capacity as the Only-Begotten, He fulfills all the requirements set forth by the Catholic Creed: Light from Light, true God from true God. It is a possibility—a possibility we will consider in all its magnitude.

The first to embrace that possibility was Jesus himself. In his teaching, he proclaimed himself the Metaphysical Cause of Creation—that is, the reason why God creates all things, including our universe. From this position as the Only-Begotten Son, Jesus replied to the Jews who asked him his age that: "I already existed before Abraham"—which is logical if one considers that, as the Metaphysical Cause of Creation, his presence was required at the Beginning and before action began. Consistent with himself, Jesus once again proclaimed for himself this status as Metaphysical Reason when he affirmed that "his Father shows him everything he does." The other point—that he invited us to witness the Spectacle in the coming Acts of Creation—is simply incidental. It is something that is irrelevant at this moment. The thesis we are presenting is that when God ushered in the Beginning and created the Heavens and the Earth, His Only-Begotten Son was at His side, and it was out of love for Him that He set out to create us, the human race.

Everything was perfect—until Adam made the mistake of letting himself be led astray by the Serpent's cunning.

Regardless of the dilemma that divine perfection and human freedom present to us, what is truly important is that the Son of God experienced Adam's condemnation as something that directly affected Him.

It follows from Scripture that God and His Son left Adam and Eve for a time. When they returned, they were faced with a fait accompli. Their Father understood everything that had happened, judged the case, and in the wrath of the Judge of the Universe, pronounced judgment against all those involved. He swore to the Serpent that a son of Adam would rise up and crush its head. He condemned Adam and Eve to death.

Stunned, bewildered by that rebellion against God, His Son—the brother of the dead Adam—felt the blood rush to his head and dreamed of Yahweh's Day of Vengeance.

But that Day of Vengeance was not for tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. In reality, no one knew when it would come. The Son of God knew only that, as time went on, the loss of identity among the men God had created grew ever greater. It grew so great, and the hatred that, because of them, had been building up against the rebellious angels became so immense, that with his whole being he asked his Father to send him to Earth in person to confront the Devil himself. Once the Devil was defeated, Adam's crown would belong to the Victor; and since the Victor and the Son of God were one and the same during His reign, the human race would emerge from the Hell into which it had been cast and resume the path for which it was created—a path from which Satan's betrayal had led it astray.

So the Son of God came to Earth with His blood boiling, ready to wipe away the tears of our world. His sword was in His mouth; it was His Word. To conquer the world, He did not need Goliath's sword; He only needed to open His mouth and command the winds to rise and the armies to lay down their weapons. He brings Peace; His banner is one of Health that overcomes Death and leads mankind to Immortality.

Immortality?

Did I say Immortality?

"Yes, my son, but are you going to rebel against your Father's judgment?" said Simeon. "Are you going to condemn yourself to save us? To save the Present, are you going to condemn the Future? Certainly your Father has sent you to confront the Evil One and you will crush his head, but if you break down the walls of our prison against divine judgment, how will you differ from the one against whom you have come to avenge the death of our father Adam? For God's judgment is firm: You are dust, and to dust you shall return. Such is our lot. Has your Father and God perhaps told you: "Go and announce to them the end of their imprisonment; set them free and grant them the immortality for which they have longed ever since I created them"? Do you not see, my son, that by allowing yourself to be swept away by the love you have for us, you are dragging yourself to ruin and dragging all of Creation down with you? Who but the Judge of us all can grant us our freedom? But if He has given that Power to His Son, then do as you will."

THE THOUGHT OF CHRIST

The evangelists showed us in the episode of the Transfiguration that the Son of God did not need to be crucified to regain his supernatural state. The Transfiguration they speak of was precisely that: the answer to this very simple question. The "necessity" of Christ's death, as described in their Gospels, refers to the premises of the Doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven. If there was a necessity for Christ's death, it was not due to Jesus' inability to regain his divine status. To regain his divine status, Jesus only had to desire it.

When he returned to Nazareth, what truly happened to the Child was that he was born anew. The Son of God, who became man and was dying to grow up—yet never saw the day when he would sit among the adults—finally stepped into our shoes. God is above and we are below, and the entire dilemma of humanity crosses a bridge over quicksand. How can we know God's thoughts? How can we discover his plan for universal, eternal salvation?

Now it was a man who was asking himself all the questions that all men asked—and none could answer. Now it was Christ who lifted his eyes upward and looked at God face to face, seeking to know His thoughts. Now it was the Son of Man who acknowledged his ignorance and looked to God, seeking His wisdom

But you are twelve years old. And you have your whole life ahead of you. And every day you wake up, you wake up with that Cross. And with every passing year, with every passing year, that Cross weighs heavier on you. And whether you want it to or not, the weight will bring you down more than once.

You can do everything and yet do nothing; you see the world around you living in hell, and you can do nothing even though you have the power to do everything. You can save the Present and condemn the Future, or let the Present live out its Destiny and save your Freedom for when the prisoner is released from jail. You will wait for him on the other side of the door to guide him toward a New Day of freedom that will never end. Until that Day, the world must continue on its path, and until your Hour arrives, you'll sink many times into deep depression, and you'll have no one to support you; there'll be no one by your side with whom to share your destiny; no one will give you a hand; no one will reach out to you because no one will be with you to know what's happening to you and why you're sinking until you drown.

You are Jesus of Nazareth, a young and wealthy man; you have everything a man could desire, and you take only what you want. You need nothing from anyone. Doors open for you wherever you go; you are treated as a lord, and your word is worth its weight in gold to those who do business with you. No one knows your secret—except one Woman. Her husband died when you were about twenty, and so did Cleophas. Only they remain—your Mother and her sister Joan; only they know who you are. But neither of them knows where you're going or what your plans are. You're alone. When storms rage in your mind, you'll have no one to hold onto and fight the storm with. If you do not go mad, it will be only because you are who you are, but even being who you are, you must endure the storm out in the open, without a roof or shelter from the rain that will pour down in torrents under a sky shrouded in darkness upon your mortal body. The sweeter the life you lead, the more bitter what you are about to do will be.

To the starving man, stale bread tastes like heaven, but if you give that same bread to someone who eats pastries, it will break his teeth. Yours, Jesus, are accustomed to eating the finest bread. Your body is accustomed to the finest garments. And you are going to lead an army of men to your own fate. Won't you be crushed? Won't their ghosts attack you in your dreams? Won't you wake up in the deserts on your knees, begging for mercy? Won't you be tormented by visions of their bodies torn apart by the wild beasts of the Roman circuses while you look up to Heaven, pleading for an end to the sentence against Eve and her children?

How long will each year you live last for you? Won't the twenty years that await you be an eternity for you? You have them, the Christians, before your eyes. They are all pure. One by one, they are all innocent. Their only crime is to love you above all things. They love you more than time, more than immortality, more than all the treasures of the universe. You are their life. And there they are, hanging on their crosses, actors in a bloody spectacle, an ode to madness, singing in honor of the tears that you, Jesus, shed for them in the desert, when you would mysteriously disappear and return without telling anyone where you had come from or what you had been doing. They saw your tears and softened your heart on the day of their martyrdom so as not to stir up a cry for vengeance within you. Will you not suffer in your own flesh the crime committed against your hundreds of thousands of little brothers and sisters, whom you will lead to the cross for no offense by which they might be found guilty? To love you will be their crime. Will you not implore your Father for mercy? Will you not seek another viable alternative? And yet the Chalice is full, and you must drink it to the very last drop. A Hope sustains you, but you cannot tell anyone about it; with no one can you share the infinite joy in which your whole being rejoices when, looking toward the One seated on the Throne of the Last Judgment, you see, you contemplate, and you see yourself.

JESUS CHRIST

We do not know at what point in life we cross the threshold from childhood to adolescence; nor at what point we have ceased to be young and become adults. There does not seem to be a general rule; it is something each person discovers for himself and experiences in his own way.

If this is the case for us, how much more complex it is to apply our psychology to someone like the Jesus of the Gospels!

Having adopted the stance of seeing him as he saw himself—and having experienced, to the extent that our understanding allows, what was going through his mind—let us move forward. There are still many areas that remain closed to the understanding of past centuries, and which, subjected to the imagination of those who sought to penetrate their innermost depths, have come down to us distorted—like paintings tainted by the passions of the copyists.

If at any point I have allowed my own passions to run wild, the reader, as a free being, owes it to himself to recreate the historical narrative based on the characteristics of his own intellect. The author can only point to the horizon and paint what he sees with his own eyes, and although the structure of the eye is the same for everyone, the way of seeing things takes on a personal and non-transferable form. It is from this platform of personal vision and individual understanding that the author recreates the things he writes; the reader will have to adapt them to his or her own way of laughing, crying, hating, loving, understanding, and even ignoring.

Let us then return with Jesus to his parents' home in Nazareth, and from there—in light of what he had just discovered, the Cross of Christ, his Cross—let us

try to open up the horizon of his memories to the pure reflections of reality as he and his family experienced it.

The Child who went down to Jerusalem was, in every respect—as seen through the eyes of a stranger—a young lord. Take his cousin James, for example. James was a couple of years older than his cousin Jesus, and yet while the latter had not yet picked up a hammer or even known what it meant to drive a nail, James, son of Cleophas, was already quite skilled, the boy fully immersed in his role as a carpenter's apprentice. As the father of that Jesus—a tall, exceptionally intelligent boy—Joseph had to endure more than a few criticisms for the way he raised his only son. He was spoiling him, they told him.

We won't speak of envy or bring to light passions we all wish we'd never known. The truth is that the mindset of small towns has always been a hotbed of the most glaring and tedious ignorance.

The criticism directed at Joseph for the way he raised his firstborn meant nothing to Mary, nor could it be taken too far, given who the Child was. That Child they criticized was the heir of Jacob's daughter. A large part of everything the Nazarenes saw around them belonged to "young Master Jesus." If his parents didn't want him to touch the nails and hammers, who was anyone to reproach them for anything?

The truth is that upon returning from Jerusalem, that Child broke away from the "young master" role he was supposed to play and clung to his father with the obedience and diligence of the good, energetic boy every father wishes for as a son.

Mary watched him work late into the day. In her entire life, her Child had never lifted a single plank, and suddenly he couldn't stop asking for work. All his father had to do was open his mouth, and he would obey. Even Joseph himself looked at him, wondering: "What's gotten into you, my son?"

But it wasn't just at the carpenter's shop. If Aunt Joan needed something done, there was her sister's son, ready to help with whatever was needed. If they had to go out to the fields to pick almonds or harvest wheat, his nephew Jesus was always the first one there at the crack of dawn. He never complained, never talked back, and never said no—not to his own family, nor to anyone who asked him for a favor. How could he not end up overworked!

It was as if he didn't want to think, as if he needed to forget something. He needed to throw himself into physical labor. His arms ached and his tendons trembled with exhaustion, but he never said no or backed down. He was the first to get up and the last to go to bed. He no longer played with the village children. Nor did he speak unless asked. The change was so sudden, so colossal, so surprising that his Mother would sit on the edge of his bed while her Child slept, wondering what was going through that head of his. Before, her Child would talk to her, telling her everything. Ever since they returned from Jerusalem, her Child had been a different person; he was like a stranger to her. To everyone else, he was just as he should be—an obedient, quiet boy who never interrupted his elders or talked back when scolded for anything. But to her, her Child was becoming a stranger.

"He's becoming a man," they told her. That wasn't enough for her. She knew that whatever was happening to her Child could not be explained by human experience. Hadn't she witnessed her Child's breakdown in Alexandria? To those who saw him sitting at the door of the Jewish carpenter's shop, the Child's sadness could be explained by some whim his father had denied him and forbidden him from asking for again. Was it that simple? Not at all! She knew that her Son didn't function like other children.

On that occasion, back in Alexandria, Mary had found a way to make her way into her Child's heart. But this time, it was utterly impossible for her. All she could do was lie down beside him and fall asleep, guarding his dreams, because whatever he was going through, this time her Child would never open the doors to his mind for her, nor would he allow her to find the way to his heart.

It wasn't that he was sad or that he was carrying such a heavy burden that the very idea of sharing it seemed impossible to the Child. She knew it was something deeper—so deep that even when she looked into his eyes, her gaze got lost in the vastness of Jesus' eyes, never reaching the horizon behind which her Son hid his thoughts.

"What's wrong, my son?" she asked herself, knowing that her Child would never give her the answer.

THE DEATH OF CLEOPHAS

Cleophas, the father of James the Just and his brothers, was a blessed man. If it is true that before death a person relives the years spent in this world, then the final moments of Mary's brother were happy ones.

The only sorrow that might have cast a shadow over his luminous memories—the fact that his father had died shortly after his own birth—could not even cloud his final moments. His sister Mary transformed that physical absence into an angelic presence that was always watching over her child.

Now that he was one step away from crossing the threshold of death, Cleophas could smile as he recalled how his older sister had eased the absence of their father by turning him into his very own guardian angel. How could he have doubted the innocence of his sister Mary on the day their mother told him about the Annunciation?

He was the first man in the world to learn of the Mystery of the Incarnation, and the first to believe, without a shadow of a doubt, in the Virgin who would conceive the Messiah King. It was his mother who took him aside and told him everything in so many words. "Son, this, this, and this will happen, and I want you to do this, this, and this."

Cleophas forgot about his wife and his two young children, saddled his horse—and the mare for his sister—and, without giving his brother-in-law any more explanations than were necessary, cleared the way for the Virgin through Samaria.

Good heavens! How beautiful he looked, a cherub on his fiery steed with the gaze of an eagle scanning the horizon, his sword ready and sharp to draw around his Sister the circle that the unknown Roman soldier drew around the great king of Asia. “If you cross the line, you declare war on Rome; if you turn back, go in peace. If you want war, you’ll have it.”

Her brother-in-law gave her two of his hounds, Deneb and Kochab, for company. These last specimens of their breed seemed to have caught the tension of their young human brother; Deneb led the way, while Kochab watched the rear.

The Virgin would have gone down to Judea alone, with no protection other than the trust she placed in the Lord through her angel Gabriel. But how beautiful it was to see her Cleophas enveloping her in the mantle of his absolute faith in her innocence.

Some time before the Carpenter’s wife’s state of grace—a state of grace on everyone’s lips—became known in Nazareth, a young man from Judea, from Jerusalem itself, arrived in Nazareth looking for Joseph. He brought a message from Zechariah. Its content left Joseph speechless and deep in thought. “Elizabeth was pregnant.”

When, shortly thereafter, his mother-in-law decided to send Mary to Elizabeth to help her during the final months of John’s pregnancy, Joseph saw this as natural. But what he no longer found quite so logical was that it was Cleophas who beat him to it and accompanied Mary south. Now, on his deathbed, Cleophas fondly recalled the look of surprise on his brother-in-law’s face when he heard him—a boy in his eyes—speak the words of a man of integrity.

“Say no more. All conversation has ended. My mother commands, her daughter obeys, and I, her son, comply. Until the day of your wedding, your fiancée is subject to my mother’s authority. There is nothing more to discuss, Joseph. We’ll see each other again when we return.” Joseph stared at him with the eyes of one who sees the man in the boy and is delighted that this is so, because that is how things should be.

Zechariah and Elizabeth had retired to their country home in the mountains of Judah, far from Jerusalem. It had been some time since Abijah’s son had retired from the official position he had held throughout his life in the Temple’s bureaucratic hierarchy. And he had not left the Temple itself until just a few months ago because, since the priesthood was for life and he had no children, his shift bound him to his post until death or until illness prevented him from continuing.

Healthy and long-lived in an era when the average human lifespan barely exceeded fifty, Zechariah—even though he could have made his father’s shift available to the Temple—preferred to remain in his sacred post until death or illness forced him to retire. And this is exactly what happened. For when he became mute, he could no longer maintain that stance of immovability that had earned him so many enemies.

The administration of the Temple treasury fell to the priestly families that held the twenty-four shifts of worship. The president of this governing council was the high priest, who in turn was elected from among those twenty-four families. As

a general rule, the position was passed down from father to son. But every now and then, what had happened to Zechariah would occur.

Zechariah had no children to whom he could pass on his seat. The natural course of action in this case was to make the Turn available to the Council of Saints and choose a successor from among the families. As one can imagine, there was bound to be someone willing to put up the money needed to purchase that vacant position.

Contrary to nature and without any need to do so, Zechariah made many enemies by flatly refusing to sell his Turn. No one could force him to make his father's Turn available to the Council. And he did not do so.

No one ever knew what the angel said to Zechariah, but the consequences of that Annunciation were miraculous for his enemies. Having been struck dumb, the son of Abijah was forced to make his turn available to the Council, sign his resignation, and step down from office.

Zechariah retired to the villa that he and his wife owned in the hills of Judah. It was a country house, far from the world and its hustle and bustle, to which only Simeon the Younger—the sole surviving member of the Lineage of the Forerunners—had access. Aside from Simeon the Younger, they received no visitors. The reason?

Well, the reason was the miracle that the parents of John the Baptist were experiencing firsthand.

On his deathbed, Cleophas recalled the marvel he had experienced the day he met his "grandparents." Zechariah was bouncing off the walls, and if it hadn't been for her snow-white hair, no one would have been able to swear that Elizabeth was already over sixty. Zachariah, he didn't speak, but he wouldn't stop moving. Only one other couple in the entire history of the world had experienced a miracle of this nature—Abraham and Sarah, of course.

From the porch of his grandparents' country house, Cleophas remembered looking out at the horizon and saying to himself, "What's the matter with you, Joseph? Why are you taking so long?" How can one recreate the joy of that man when he saw Joseph appear in the valley, galloping across the plain! Didn't tears well up in his eyes when he saw that giant kneel at the Virgin's feet, asking her forgiveness for having doubted her innocence?

The day Joseph told him he was taking Mary and Jesus far away from Herod, Cleophas looked him in the eye as if to say: "And you actually thought I was going to stay behind while you take my sister to the ends of the earth."

From the very first time Joseph saw that lanky boy, Cleophas took an instant liking to Joseph. And they were never apart again.

As the father of a large family that seemed to go on forever, Cleophas never criticized Joseph for his son Jesus's behavior or for the way Joseph chose to raise him. If his son James bruised his fists on the corners of the planks while his nephew Jesus went off to roam the hills, Cleophas viewed this through the eyes of someone who, after all, had once been the young master of *The Stork's Nest*. That was how his own mother had raised him.

Of all the children in Nazareth, Cleophas was the little prince who neither worked nor had to slave away to help out the family. His sister Joan managed the fields all on her own; his sister Mary ran the most profitable dressmaking shop in the area. Every now and then, Great-Aunt Elisabeth would come up from Jerusalem loaded with gifts. Was she going to forget the child of the house?

What was his mission in this life? To live life to the fullest!

His nephew Jesus reminded him so much of himself that Cleophas laughed when he saw Joseph go through such a hard time having to defend his Jesus in front of friends and neighbors.

He, too, was taken by surprise—and left in awe—by his nephew's sudden change upon his return from Jerusalem. Like his sister, he couldn't figure out what was going through his nephew's mind. The only one who seemed to understand the Child was Joseph.

Joseph was the only one who didn't seem surprised. He was the only one who seemed to know exactly what was happening to him, and, like the Child himself, Joseph followed the policy of not saying a word to anyone. With his Mother and his uncle Cleophas, Jesus felt uncomfortable because he could read in their eyes what they were thinking. With Joseph, however, the Child felt at ease. Joseph was the only one who didn't look at his son with questions in his eyes, and the only one who knew how to handle him in such a way that Jesus forgot his troubles and became the active, intelligent, and hardworking boy that everyone praised his parents for raising.

Yes, of course, Cleophas had lived a wonderful life before meeting Joseph. But that giant nomad on the back of his Iberian horse, roaming the provinces of the kingdom—with his three Assyrian cherubs plucked from a lost fresco in some palace in Nineveh—that nomad gave his life what it had been missing: the image of the father and the brother he had never had. And now, on his deathbed, he would be the father his sons and daughters would miss.

Yes, if it is true that before dying the mind reviews the years lived, one by one, Cleophas relived those unique, wonderful years. The Virgin as his sister, King Messiah as his nephew, a Cherub as his brother-in-law, a wonderful woman who had given him sons and daughters—all healthy, all strong.

"Joseph...," he began from his bed.

"Brother," Joseph interjected. "Your sons are my sons, your daughters are my daughters. Of all of us, you are the blessed one at this moment. Our father David awaits his prince Cleophas in the bosom of that light that will shine when you close your eyes. We'll meet there, brother. Come and take my hand when it's my turn to close mine."

And so it was. Cleophas died young, like his father Jacob.

"Just like our father, Joan, in the prime of life. How we will miss you, brother!" wept the Virgin.

They buried him in Nazareth, in the tomb of his father Jacob, beside his grandfather Matthan, above the remains of Abihud, son of Zerubbabel, son of Solomon, son of David.

THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

The life of Joseph the Carpenter was extinguished shortly after Cleophas's.

If Cleophas's life was beautiful and worth living, that of Joseph the Carpenter was that of a warrior always teetering on the edge of a precipice, his muscles constantly tense, his nerves on edge to the very last atom, always vigilant, always ready to adapt to the next twist of fate.

"Nothing is predetermined; who knows what tomorrow will bring? When the book of life turns the page, we'll see what it contains. And let each day have enough of its own cares."

"It falls to the children of the Spirit to respond swiftly to the sound of the trumpet calling them to action."

"Death always strikes from behind, but he who faces it head-on takes that so-called 'element of surprise' right out of its hands."

Proverbs of this nature were the daily bread of Joseph the Carpenter. Zechariah, the future father of John the Baptist—his tutor, mentor, teacher, and everything good rolled into one—dedicated his talent, his genius, his wisdom, his artistry, and all the best he had to shaping the mind of the young Joseph. Thanks to his patience and dedication, the fearless warrior who ran in young Joseph's blood learned to look Death in the face—and, with the gleam in his eyes of a hero who knows he is invincible, even Hell itself.

But what they never imagined was that he would find himself entangled in the webs of God Himself.

His long-held view of the birth of David's son was also the classic one: man, woman, they get married, they become one—two different people, yet one entity—the call of blood, the power of the flesh. Could he have imagined that God would intervene through the Incarnation of His Son? Well, honestly, no; he never imagined what happened next.

Looking back, reliving those days, Joseph the Carpenter laughed heartily.

On this occasion, the warrior had reached the other side of the battlefield. Around his deathbed, his nephews and his people wept as they bid farewell to the cherub who had never let his guard down—the death of the hero who had never taken off his helmet and armor. He was already preparing to give up his soul.

Everyone already believed that his strength had waned, that his breath was fading into the vastness between Heaven and Earth, when Joseph the Carpenter awoke from his sleep. He was roused by the memory of his reply to his Master Zechariah on the day that Elizabeth had shared with them the news of the Virgin's Vow.

"May God's will be done. My people have been waiting a thousand years for this day; I can certainly wait twenty," said Joseph.

God, what an unexpected turn you have given to the life of your servant!

The young Joseph grew up dreaming of the day he would see his wife give birth to the Messiah King, the master of the sword of kings, the rightful bearer of the two messianic scrolls.

His brothers and sisters did not understand why their Joseph did not marry at the age when everyone else usually did. Life was short. Life was very hard. At this point in history, no one could afford the luxury of letting the years slip by in the style of the Patriarchs, who married at forty or older. Many were already grandparents by the age of forty. What was the head of the Bethlehem carpenters' clan waiting for to choose a wife and honor them all with fresh blood?

Joseph the Carpenter remained silent. He answered his brothers with the silence of one who, unlike other mortals fashioned from clay, seemed to have been forged from iron.

Far from having a heart of stone within his chest, but you, Holy God, left him no choice but to adopt that attitude for the good of all; for if the slightest news of the Davidic plot being hatched behind his back had reached the ears of Herod's assassins, how long would it have taken that serpent to order the death of all your servant's brothers?

Joseph the Carpenter awoke from his dream, reliving that unforgettable day—the day he went to the house of his mother-in-law, Anne, to ask her for an explanation regarding the rumor that had scandalized everyone in Nazareth.

What was going on?

What was reaching his ears?

The neighbors were dropping some pretty pointed hints.

"What will you name the child, Mr. Joseph? For it will be a boy."

The Carpenter finally felt the sting; he stopped hesitating and went straight to speak with his mother-in-law.

The Widow, who had been expecting his visit, went and opened the door for him.

The Virgin's mother had been preparing for this meeting.

She had feared it. She had longed for it. She dreamed of him, yearned for him, trembled at the thought of him.

Would she be up to the task? Had the grace that radiated from her daughter's innocence rubbed off on her, her mother?

As a mother, she was ready to gouge out the eyes of anyone who uttered the word "adultery." Her son-in-law Joseph was a saint, a man of the utmost goodness—but what man wouldn't be scandalized upon hearing that his wife was in a state of grace through the work of the Saint Spirit?

With her heart in her throat, the Widow opened the door to her son-in-law.

"Sit down, my son," she said. "This is a great day for all the families of the earth."

What a way to break the ice!

The Carpenter sat down. As for opening his mouth, he didn't. Nor would he have needed to. His gaze said it all.

Well, perhaps a thousand images are worth less than a single word from God, and a single image is worth more than a thousand words from a man. In this particular situation—the Virgin's mother face to face with the man directly affected by the Incarnation of the Son of God through the work and grace of the Saint Spirit—neither words nor images seemed sufficient to that mother caught in the nets of a God who asks no one's permission to enter the lives of the creatures He creates from clay.

A glance was enough. Their gazes said it all.

The Widow knew why her son-in-law had come, and her son-in-law knew that she knew why he had come. The question was who would break the ice.

The Virgin's mother, inspired by the infinite love she had for her daughter, on the one hand, and by the wisdom of the Saint Spirit Himself, on the other, blurted out:

"My son, do you believe that Yahweh is God?" she blurted out to her son-in-law without giving him a chance to say a word. She knew that an opening like this was the last thing Joseph could have expected.

The Carpenter didn't bat an eye. A man made of ice would have been more unsettling than the Carpenter at that moment.

Well, he already knew his mother-in-law, Anne; he knew what mark had left its imprint on that woman's soul. Zechariah had raised him, Joseph; but his mother-in-law, Anne, had been shaped by her own hands by Elizabeth, the wife of his Master. So if what the the widow of Jacob of Nazareth, was doing was defending her daughter Mary—and she was undoubtedly doing just that—the Virgin's mother was off to a good start. Time would tell where all this philosophy would lead.

The Virgin's mother, without losing her composure or feeling disarmed by her son-in-law's stony seriousness, continued:

"Forgive me, man of God, for coming through this door, but circumstances demand it. I mean, do you believe there is anything impossible for God?" Then she gazed at her son-in-law as if, at that moment, the mystery of God's eyes had been revealed to her, allowing her to read Joseph's thoughts.

Another man might have found that gaze intimidating. The Carpenter held her gaze without moving a muscle.

Although he still hadn't grasped where his mother-in-law was heading, Joseph remained calmly seated. He had come seeking a single word—a "Yes" or a "No." And he wasn't going to leave the house without that "Yes" or "No." Was his wife with child? That was all he wanted to know.

The Virgin's mother held the upper hand; she knew that her son-in-law, Joseph, would not budge from his spot until she gave him the "Yes" or the "No."

The truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth—was a "Yes," a marvelous "Yes," a divine "Yes," an eternal, infinite "Yes," an unqualified, indescribable, inexplicable "Yes."

It was also a "No"—a total "No," an uncompromising "No" with no room for debate of any kind, a profound, non-negotiable "No," with the Life of the Messiah in one hand and the Death of the Son of David in the other.

What would you choose, my friend? Would you opt for mockery, would you laugh in God's face, would you deny God the power to perform that extraordinary, supernatural Work?

My friend, everything is nothing when everything is too little. But if the creature were to reject knowledge of his Creator and reduce Him to his own level of natural intelligence, the extraordinary task would be to pull such a fool out of the well of fools.

The dice—for grace blows with the wind—are still waiting for the next move. It is every man and woman's turn to give their answer. To stand firm in the "Yes" or the "No."

If you held all that is good in one hand and all that is bad in the other, which of the two would you choose?

Joseph the Carpenter once held the dice of the Son of Mary's destiny in his hand. Never in the history of the universe has any man faced a similar or comparable ordeal. His decision would change the future of the world. His "Yes" or his "No" would either uphold or bring down his Creator's entire Plan of Universal Salvation.

From her lips, however, the Virgin's mother could expect nothing but words of wisdom. With the strength and courage befitting a daughter of Eve, the Virgin's mother pressed on with her revelation

"Let's see, man of God. Imagine that the Lord challenges you to put Him to the test. Yes, just as it sounds. Imagine that our Lord offers you the opportunity to challenge Him to prove to you that He is the True God—not just in words, and not just because He can perform a few more tricks than Pharaoh's magicians.

"Let's say it's not enough for you to believe on His word alone that He is God, and you want—you need—to see Him with your own eyes. You want to see His Omnipotence and His Omniscience; you want to see them in action, overcoming the most difficult challenge yet, passing the greatest test you can imagine.

"Man of God, I already know that your faith is stronger than a rock, that even without seeing, you are content and find it more than enough to rely on the Word that has traveled from mouth to mouth through the firmament of the ages to believe in the Truth of our Lord. Nevertheless, grant yourself this opportunity. Answer me without prejudice. Tell me: with what test would you challenge God to give it His all? What test would you set for God that would be worthy of His Omnipotence and force Him to lay all His Omniscience on the table? Son, don't

hold back; don't let your tongue stick to the roof of your heart for fear of finding the words. Dare to do it; challenge your Creator, because you deserve it—for all the suffering, all the pain, and all the cruelty that our ancestors have endured. What were we, my child, before the Spirit of God hovered over the waters of our seas? Animals without intelligence. Then one day we were loved by our Creator, and He bestowed upon us the gift of speech. Now, then, do not deny this to yourself; speak, lift your head to the Almighty, lay your soul at His feet, and ask Him to perform an extraordinary, unique, unrepeatable, and marvelous work—a work commensurate with His Great Spirit—that will quench your thirst for knowledge and your hunger for wisdom. He is on your side. Ask yourself what test you would set for your Creator—just one, and no more, Saint Isaac—but one that fills your soul with infinite happiness and your being with eternal joy. Come on, don't be shy." And the Mother of the Virgin fell silent.

Although it may seem strange to you, Joseph the Carpenter remained in a state of astonishment. He had come seeking the answer to something as simple as the truth about the rumor that his wife was said to be in a state of grace, and his mother-in-law had met him with a full-fledged theological discussion.

Joseph stared at her, trying to figure out what was going on. Was it a "Yes" or a "No"?

His mother-in-law took advantage of the confusion to take her Revelation one step further.

"Son, answer me," she pleaded. "Don't stay silent for fear of offending the Lord. Tell me the truth: would you dare to challenge your God? Or would you back down and not open your mouth for fear of offending your Creator?"

The Widow took a breath. She immediately returned to the battlefield.

"Man of God, I know I'm taking you by surprise, but grant me these few minutes of your life. I ask you again: What test would you set for God? Or let's put it this way: What would be the greatest test for a God that a man could conceive of? For example, you want Him to prove to you once and for all that He is the True God, that He has not claimed for Himself the glory of the Uncreated Being. Do you want Him to wipe all the stars from the sky? Do you want the sun to never set? Do you want donkeys to fly? Do you want whales to walk? I don't know—what do you want? Anyone can be an emperor. Anyone can be Midas. Don't ask God for things a man can do. You're going to challenge Him with an extraordinary, superior feat; you're going to set before Him a task that not even Hercules at the height of his glory could have tackled. Do you see what I mean? ... And what was I trying to tell you? Oh yes, you see, what worries me is that, knowing human nature, are you sure that once the stars have been erased from the sky, you won't seek a natural explanation for such a divine phenomenon? When faced with a Sun frozen in the dome of the firmament, aren't you sure that we humans won't turn it inside out and find a natural cause that fits within our own minds?"

Having deflected the question, the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth fell silent. Joseph the Carpenter didn't take the bait.

I would say that anyone who had seen him sitting there in front of his mother-in-law at that moment would have sworn that this man of God had ice instead of blood in his veins.

Joseph the Carpenter didn't bat an eyelid. With his gaze fixed on his mother-in-law, he looked more like a stone statue than a creature of flesh and blood.

The Widow held his gaze. She knew full well that her son-in-law wasn't going to say a word; after all, her daughter's husband was cut from the same cloth as her Aunt Elisabeth's husband.

Inspired by the great love she had for her daughter, the Widow acted as if Joseph's silence were an acknowledgment of the merit of the idea on the table.

Joseph, who was beginning to marvel at the direction the conversation was taking, broke his silence with these first words:

"Tell me, Mother. Why would I deny my Creator the glory of His Arm?" And he fell silent.

The Virgin's mother took the final step. The moment had come.

"Son. I am not a man."

She had taken a step forward, yes, but in the direction that suited her.

"I don't know how men think," she insisted. "I was created from a man's rib. What may be the greatest test in the universe for a man may not be so great in the eyes of a woman. The only thing I wonder is: in the eyes of a woman, could there be a greater test for God than to conceive without the intervention of a man? I mean, not in the manner of those sons of God who slept with the daughters of men and had offspring. You know that among the Greeks, the Romans, and the barbarians, their gods slept with their women and sired heroes—the last of whom was Alexander himself. No, son, I'm talking about something else. That a Virgin should give birth to a Child without knowing a man."

Now Joseph the Carpenter really opened his eyes wide. What was his mother-in-law hinting at? Where was she leading him with this metaphysical detour? Was she wrapping the "Yes" he had come to seek in a sort of theological knot impossible to untie? The subject was so mind-boggling that Joseph remained motionless.

"Son, do you think such a trial would exceed the limits of Divine Power?" The Widow continued her attack without giving her son-in-law time to prepare a counterstrategy.

In any case, her son-in-law finally spoke up. "No. Never," he said, completely serious.

And immediately he returned to his role as a son-in-law in a state of bewilderment at the twists and turns his mother-in-law was giving to the simple, short answer he had come seeking: Yes or No.

It seemed like "Yes," but it was actually "No."

Apparently, she was sugarcoating the "Yes" so that the bitter pill of recent events wouldn't be too hard to swallow. But the idea his mother-in-law was challenging him with seemed so fantastic that his body refused to leave without first hearing with his own ears the conclusion of the argument she was crafting for him.

"I expected nothing less from you, son," interrupted the Mary's mother, ready to defend her daughter tooth and nail. "Now let's take another step forward. The Lord accepts your challenge. The Lord is going to give you the proof your bones long for: He is going to cause a Virgin to conceive a son through the work and grace of His Infinite Power. Do you remember the prophecy, son? I know you do."

-The prophet Isaiah said to King Ahaz, "Ask Yahweh your God for a sign—whether in the depths of Sheol or in the heights above."

-And Ahaz replied, "I will not ask; I do not want to tempt the Lord."

-Then Isaiah said to him: "Hear now, O house of David: Is it not enough for you to trouble men, that you must also trouble my God? The Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, the pregnant virgin will give birth, and she will call him Immanuel."

The Widow paused in her speech and fixed her gaze deep into Joseph's soul.

The Carpenter still could not believe his ears. Was she telling him that the Sign had come to pass? Had the Widow gone mad, or was she trying to drive him mad?

As if reading his mind, the Widow brought up the subject again.

"Son, you're thinking to yourself: 'Get to the point, mother.' And I ask you not to lose patience. We're not talking about something trivial; the glory of the Eternal One is at stake. Be patient. If, by running too fast, an athlete fails to see the markers, skips them, and reaches the finish line via an unmarked path—even though he would have won anyway had he stayed on the official track—will the judges award him the laurel wreath? Surely not, right? Indeed, my son, the Eternal One is already on the move, searching for the Woman, the Virgin in whose womb His Sign will take shape. I ask you: upon which blessed woman will God rest His Arm? Upon which unique and special woman among all the daughters of David will the Most High spread the mantle of His Glory? Which one will He love as one loves the one-and-only, adored wife? You will tell me that, in this case, the Most High Himself will conceive her and predestine her from her parents' womb to be the Mother. And you will say to yourself, "That is true." Or does He not anticipate the one who asks by conceiving him so that he may make his request? It is the Lord's Omniscience that moves every soul that breathes in His presence. Is not His Spirit the source that inspires every word that reaches his ear? Of course it is, my son. He opens the mouth of the one who asks: "May a Virgin give birth without the intervention of a man!" The Lord smiles to Himself. He opens His mouth and says: "So be it; I will amaze you all by performing a work that will be remembered for all eternity: The son of Eve will be born of a Virgin. Yes, it is already done, Joseph. Tell me now, of all women, which woman will the Most High choose to be that blessed Virgin?"

For a moment, Joseph the Carpenter thought he had already heard everything he had come seeking, but the idea his mother-in-law was putting before him was so mind-boggling that he remained motionless.

What was the Widow telling him—that his Betrothed was with child by the power and grace of the God Himself?

The Virgin's mother didn't give him time to dwell on it too much.

"Put yourself in God' shoes, son. God announces what the Sign will be through which He will reveal the His Glory before the fullness of the Nations. From the clay, He forms the couple who will carry in their arms the Child born of the Virgin. But now there is a problem to overcome; there is one last obstacle to surmount. Yes, my son, male pride. Will you let male pride blind your judgment?"

Joseph finally understood his mother-in-law's reasoning.

"Are you telling me, Mother, that this has happened?"

"Don't jump to conclusions, my son. Let me recap the path we've taken so far. Better yet, let's look at it from another angle. What did the Prophet say later when speaking of the Child born of the Virgin?:

'A Child has been born to us, a Son has been born to us, upon whose shoulders rests the sovereignty, and he will be called Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father…'

"He has been born, you say, Mother?" Joseph interrupted her. For the first time, Joseph the Carpenter stirred, revealing that his patience was wearing thin. The Virgin's mother resumed her attack before losing her hold on him.

"Don't let male pride blind your intelligence, son. For if He neither deceives nor lies and fulfills all His promises, what will we say? That the prophets of Israel were all liars and impostors? That, just to glorify themselves, they wrote the Holy Scriptures with no other purpose than to recite poetry? You tell me. I await your answer."

Joseph the Carpenter followed her line of reasoning. He thought that, viewed this way, the Widow was absolutely right. Either his people were a nation of impostors with an infinite capacity for self-deception, or—since the Child had certainly not been born—there could be no Nativity. So far, so good. What was already sticking in his throat, however, was the conclusion his wife's mother was leading him toward. She was telling him that the Virgin was his Mary. She hadn't said it in those exact words yet, but it was clear that this entire discourse was building up to that final declaration.

Clever as ever, inspired by faith, his mother-in-law cut him off mid-thought. One might say she was divine rather than merely inspired. She read his mind faster than he could read his own. Seizing the moment, the Virgin's mother went right to the point.

"My daughter, your wife, is the Chosen One to conceive in her womb the Child who was to be born of that Virgin of whom the Prophet spoke to us. You, Joseph, are the Man."

For a fleeting moment, Joseph was on the verge of standing up and bringing that unforgettable conversation to a close with a "that's enough." But he remained seated. His mother-in-law continued.

"Before you, my son, God has opened two doors. These two doors will remain open before the generations that will follow us when you and I are but a memory in the annals of the ages. One is the door of faith; the other, the door of unbelief. If you choose the latter, you will act like the one who defied his God, and upon discovering that the Virgin chosen to reveal His Glory to him was his own wife, rebelled against the One whom he himself had defied. But I know you will not do this. My son, I am, before all others, a witness to my daughter's immaculate innocence. Her angel will lead you out of the darkness of doubt that overwhelms you. The other, my son, is the door of faith. My heart tells me that you will choose this one. And that you will rush to seek out the Mother of the Messiah for whom our people have been waiting for so many millennia."

Inexplicably, on his deathbed, Joseph the Carpenter smiled. Is there a more beautiful death than that of a man who bids farewell to this world with a smile on his lips?

Well, just as all his nephews and his people believed that at any moment Joseph would close his eyes forever, Joseph sat up and begged everyone to leave and let him be alone with his wife and son. Once they were gone—the three of them alone—Joseph took a breath and began to speak.

"Woman, my lips have remained sealed until this day for reasons you yourself will understand once everything is over—reasons that no longer prevent me from sharing this with you and your Son.

"Son, what shall I say to my Lord? My soul stands before my God. I am going to meet my Judge, before whom I must give an account of my life. But there is something you must know before I leave this world.

"Your Mother has already told you about her great-grandparents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, whom you never knew and to whom your Mother and I owe so much. Be patient with me in this final hour, and remember my words on your Day.

"Where shall I begin? How can I open the door for you to understand the men and women who laid their lives at the feet of their God so that your Light might dawn upon the darkness? If I have never revealed to you the events I am now disclosing, it was for your own good. Do not blame me for having kept you on the sidelines of the story of those men and women who lived their days on a knife's edge, their lives hanging by a thread every day so that your Coming might be fulfilled. You will know, my son, what you must do when your Eternal Father declares your Day to have begun."

THIRD BOOK II:

"I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA"

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE FORERUNNERS OF THE MESSIAH

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"Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy in this Book. And I, John, heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell to my knees to worship at the feet of the angel who was showing them to me.

But he said to me, "Do not do that, for I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this Book; worship God." And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of prophecy in this Book, for the time is near." Let the one who is unrighteous continue in his unrighteousness, let the foolish continue in his folly, let the righteous continue to practice righteousness, and let the holy one become even holier. Behold, I am coming soon, and with me is my reward, to give to each one according to his deeds. I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, THE BEGINNING AND THE END. Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have access to the tree of life and enter through the gates that lead to the City. Out with the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and all who love and practice falsehood.

I, Jesus, have sent an angel to testify to you these things concerning the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life freely… Amen."

1

The Saga of the Restorers

In those days (1st century B.C.), God raised up a man after His own heart for His people. Of the lineage of Aaron the priest, this man named Abijah was the only citizen in all of Jerusalem capable of standing before the king, blocking his path, cutting him off, and telling him straight to his face the harsh truths that his actions and his way of governing deserved.

The Hasmonean—Alexander Jannaeus was his real name—looked at this Abijah with his eyes lost on the horizon, his thoughts fixed on one of the pages of the book from which this man of God seemed to have stepped out, possibly from the " " in the Book of Nehemiah. One of those pages about kings and prophets that the children of Israel loved so much, and which their parents would recount to them with epic tones in their voices, their words echoing like distant drums beating to the rhythm of military exploits—when the heroes of ancient times, Samson and Delilah, King David's thirty mighty men and his harp with strings of goat's hair, Elijah the seer flying on the backs of the four horses of the Apocalypse—one of fire, another of ice, another of earth, and the last of water—the four riding together through the wind of the ages in pursuit of the Messiah who would be baptized in the very waters of the Jordan that parted in two to make way for a bald prophet. The holocaust of nations lost beneath the ashes of an apocalypse written on the wall, the end-of-the-world wars of dead poets, the never-ending tales of the dreams of eternal Rome, visions of druids of a Babylon in the midst of building a stairway to heaven, Hercules born of a wolf in a foul mood, ruins of Philistine cities without name or homeland in search of paradise lost, the utopia of Egyptian harlots nursing Hebrews older than Methuselah, the hero of Dark Ur proclaiming his divinity upon the altar of the barbarians of the North, the south to the east of Eden, the west to the right of the River of Life, when death had a price, at the beginning of time, at the dawn of the ages. Once upon a time there was a cupbearer who conquered an empire. Once upon a time there was a universal flood, an ark upon the waters that covered the world. The passion of being, the fact of being, the reality of yesterday—always present, omnipresent, omniscient—more end-of-the-world wars, more heroes of iron, new masters of the universe; the future is tomorrow; the truth belongs to the chosen one; the chosen one is the victor; "To me, those of Yahweh!" I have the corner of your cloak impaled on the tip of my sword, king, lord. It takes more than a crown to be a king, more than three arms to be the strongest; the past was yesterday, today is tomorrow; angels never eat or drink, but sometimes they mate with human women and sire evil offspring—the seed of the devil—when heroes were demigods and demigods were two-headed monsters imposing their reign of terror. And it continues to bring names and times to mind.

Ah, those myths and legends of the people who emerged from the sea, spread throughout biblical Palestine, and revolutionized world history with their seismic wave of tribes on a sacred mission!

What child in Jerusalem didn't know those stories from the time of Methuselah!

"Here comes Goliath," the grandparents would tell the kids when they were misbehaving and wanted to scare them.

The Hasmonean scoffed at those children's stories and laughed right in his grandparents' faces at the ghosts of the past. He was real; his prophet Abijah was real. What good had the dream of the messianic kingdom ever done anyone? Where had the desire to make it a reality led them time and time again?

"And they still want to try it one more time! It's madness," the Hasmonean thought to himself.

The men of the king of Jerusalem—all dogs of war, all mercenaries from the dark and remote depths of Palestine in the service of the Abomination of Desolation—all stared at the last Hebrew prophet with eyes burning with rage. Although the Hasmonean found his personal prophet of doom amusing, the truth is that his own expression would change every time Abijah hurled his oracles at him point-blank. Yet, in his role as king to a prophet, the Hasmonean held back his men's rage and allowed himself to be lectured with those apocalyptic phrases about his fate.

"Hear the oracle of Yahweh concerning your lineage, son of Mattathias," Abijah announced in that voice so characteristic of him.

"The God whom you profane on the throne and in His Temple will uproot your seed from the face of the earth over which you reign. Yahweh has spoken and will not change His mind; He will not revoke His judgment: Your sons will be devoured by a foreign beast."

As for the Hasmonean's hired assassins, may the grace the king of Jerusalem found in such prophecies of death, desolation, ruin, devastation, destruction, and hell be cursed. "But how could he—Alexander Jannaeus, a legitimate descendant of the Maccabees, of pure blood—allow a priest to speak to him in that manner?" those dogs of war asked one another.

Alexander looked at them with a stunned expression. Was it worth his time trying to explain to them why he allowed himself to be lectured with those hair-raising pronouncements—so biblical, so typically Old Testament, so distinctly sacred? For a moment he considered it, but the next he told himself no. They would never understand. Even if he spent days on end explaining what it was all about, the minds of his mercenaries would never be capable of rising any higher than the distance their swords rose off the ground.

Is the world a place to waste time waiting for donkeys to fly in the wake of the sun's chariot, for fish to trot through snow-capped mountain ranges in search of the last yeti, or for birds to swim through the waters behind the ship of a Columbus yet to be born? How could the Hasmonean possibly get it into the heads of his dogs of fortune that this Abijah was his prophet!

That Abijah was the prophet who gave his crown its entire divine meaning. Without his own particular, personal prophet—his own—his crown would never transcend; his dignity as king would never be exalted in the eyes of the future. Abijah would be the chariot of glory upon which his name would transcend the centuries and carry his memory even beyond the millennia. It might be that his own name would be forgotten, but Abijah's would live on forever in the memory of the people.

"Do you understand now? Does it sink in? My name and his will be linked for eternity. But if I kill him, I will kill my own memory. Does this prospect tell you anything about the nature of my relationship with the creator of your most terrible nightmares?" The Hasmonean did his best to instill a modicum of intelligence into the stone skulls of his dogs of war.

All for nothing.

But it is the truth. Alexander should count himself lucky, for God had given him his own prophet as well. All the kings of Judah had their jester, their harem, and, of course, their prophet. Whether for better or for worse is another matter; the important thing was to have one.

Otherwise, from a political standpoint, this Abijah was harmless. Yes, sir, his prophet was as harmless as a dragonfly from the royal pond, as inoffensive as a spider in the garden of his harem swaying among the dust on the curtains, as defenseless as an abandoned little sparrow with a broken wing left out in the open during a northern winter. One slip-up, a single misstep, and in the blink of an eye "the last prophet" would be reduced to the trail left by the breath of dawn somewhere on the other side of the sunrise. Or did his mercenary dogs really believe that he, Alexander Jannaeus, the son of the sons of the Maccabees, would allow this Abias to cross the line between foretelling misfortunes and bringing them about? Were they out of their minds?

Those were his people. The Hasmonean neither loved them nor felt any nationalist passion for his people, but they were his people, and he knew how their minds worked. If Abijah did not cross the line, it was not because he feared death; it was because it was not in his nature to bring about what he foretold—he merely delivered the Oracle of Yahweh. God speaks, and he speaks. He could have remained silent and avoided having his neck slit by a sword, but that would have gone against his nature.

Moreover, with the same passion with which Abijah would have served up his head on a silver platter—without the slightest fear that one day the Hasmonean might grow tired of the dance— with that same passion, his prophet—not the prophet of this king or that king, but his prophet, his very own—that Abijah lashed out without mincing words against the Sadducees and Pharisees alike, fanning the flames of the hatred that consumed them all and dragged them into civil war.

"This Abijah is one of a kind," he would say to himself. And the Hasmonean would continue on his way, laughing his head off.

2

The Slaughter of the Six Thousand

Curiously enough, the people thought exactly the same as their king regarding the sacred mission of the last living prophet they had left.

The people rushed to meet the priest Abijah, filling the Temple during his shift. Just as if they were a swarm of children abandoned to their fate in the most violent heart of a jungle of passions fueled by a hatred that is never satisfied, and suddenly they saw a true man rise up among them, the people of Jerusalem rushed to meet Abijah in search of understanding, compassion, and hope.

"Do not weep, children of Jerusalem, for the souls who are being driven from their homes by violence. They rest in the bosom of Abraham, awaiting the Day of Judgment. Weep rather for those who remain, for their fate is eternal fire," Abijah told them.

The man of God and the people were made for one another. It was the truth. And he, the Hasmonean, was destined to behead others and then hear his prophet's judgment upon his own head:

"The Lord has spoken—the oracle of Yahweh—and He will not relent. The eagle gazes down from on high at the serpent, and the vulture soars, waiting for the spoils. Your children are the prey. Who is it that toils for another's house? In due time it will be seen that there is a God on this earth when the serpent flees from the eagle."

And this, too, was true. A truth as vast as the island of Crete, as the Great Sea, as the infinite sky filled with stars, as the great pyramid of the Nile. And if you doubt it, ask the mountain that the Hasmonean raised with the heads he severed from their necks on that day destined to be forgotten.

It was not two or three, nor a hundred or two hundred. It was "six thousand" heads that the grandson of the Maccabees sacrificed to his passion for absolute power. Six thousand souls in a single day. What horror, what madness, what humiliation!

It happened in Holy Jerusalem, that Jerusalem toward whose walls all the Jews of the world directed their prayers. It did not happen in the city of a barbarian king, nor did it happen on the open battlefield during the mowing down of the fallen. Nor were they the heads of a foreign people that rolled down the slopes of the Via Dolorosa until they came to rest at the foot of Golgotha. They were the heads of his neighbors, the heads of the people who greeted him every night, the heads of the people who used to say good morning to him. What a disaster, what a disgrace, what a tragedy!

It happened during the celebration of a religious festival—one of the many that the Templar calendar had set aside to commemorate the unforgettable events experienced by the children of Israel from the time of Moses to the present day. It so happened that the Hasmonean had inherited the high priesthood from his parents. In his capacity as Pontiff, he went to perform the opening rite that broke

the monotony of the year. That very notion—of believing himself to be equal to Caesar, general and supreme pontiff all in one—annoyed the nationalists more than anything else in the world. It annoyed them and amused them. When has a snake ever been seen dreaming of being an eagle?

In his role as Pope of the Jews, the Hasmonean went there to declare open the festivities that used to break the monotony of the year. He sat on his high priest's throne, fully immersed in his role as His Holiness on Earth. He was just about to give his blessing *urbe et orbis* when, suddenly, without warning, driven by an inexplicable change of mood, the crowd began hurling rotten tomatoes, foul-smelling worms, potatoes caked in maggot-infested mud, and lemons from the time when dinosaurs roamed the Holy Land. What a scandal! His enemies watched the spectacle from the city walls. With their eyes, they asked themselves everything: What will the Hasmonean do? Will he retreat inside and let things run their course? Or will he come out enraged with the fury of a demigod roused from his seventh dream, the triumphalist?

By Moses' beard, if the Hasmonean had let them continue, surely the Jerusalemites would have turned the festival into a contest and gone all out to see who would be the first to cast the final stone. The Hasmonean drew his sword from beneath the armpits of the saints and gave the order to his hounds of war: "Let not a single one remain!" he roared bloodthirstily.

What was witnessed then had never been seen before in the entire history of the Jewish people. Never before had an army of macabre demons emerged from the Temple— , swords in hand—slaughtering without regard for age or gender. If the Lord God had His throne in the Temple of Jerusalem, under whose command, then, were those murderous monsters reaping lives without regard for whom?

Is it not rather the Devil who has his throne in this Jerusalem of the Hasmoneans? the relatives of the dead would ask themselves inconsolably later, as they accompanied their deceased down the Via Dolorosa to the Jewish Cemetery. By then it was too late!

On that day of celebration and joy, the Hasmonean hounds scattered through the streets, and as they encountered Jews, they slit their throats, stabbed them, mutilated them, beheaded them, and cut them to pieces—for fun, for sport, out of passion, and out of devotion to the Devil.

The Devil, seated on his throne, Satan, watched that orgy of blood and terror, and, gripped by the anguish of one who knows that an earthly day has only 24 hours, lamented how quickly two dozen sixty-minute periods pass. Had he had a dozen more at his disposal, he surely would not have left a single Jew alive. The Devil's will was clear: to kill them all; but his servant's omnipotence to carry it out did not extend that far. So master and servant had to settle for the figure of six thousand heads. Which wasn't so bad for a single day, either. After all, even the most evil demon working flat out would not have exceeded that figure by much. It is all too easy to say "six thousand dead" in a single day.

Flavius Josephus, the official historian of the Jews—who in his day was accused of falsification by Christian historians—set the bar high by citing six thousand dead in a single day. The question is: Did Flavius Josephus reduce the

number of victims to the absolute minimum in an effort to downplay the scale of the tragedy in the eyes of the Romans? Or, on the contrary, driven by his political hatred of the Hasmonean dynasty, did he exaggerate the number?

As everyone knows, among the Jews, the popularity of the Hasmoneans had fallen very low in recent times—to the point that subsequent generations came to regard that period as a cursed era, a black mark on the history of the chosen people. Josephus surely held the latter view and was particularly critical of the Hasmonean rulers—especially the reign of Alexander Jannaeus—and thus exaggerated the nature of their crimes in order to convey his own personal hatred to his compatriots. Or it could have been the opposite: he downplayed the numbers, anticipating the visceral revulsion his Roman readers would feel toward the Jews upon reading the account of that massacre. Let us return, however, to the facts.

From the Hasmonean perspective, the ideal outcome would have been for no one to be left alive to tell the tale. Since the dead cannot speak, the fame of that day would not have been preserved in memory, and no one would have remembered it the next day.

Unfortunately for the wicked, the Devil praises his glory more than his infernal glory deserves; consequently, his servants always end up frustrated and trapped in the webs of a spider that, while not all-powerful, is strong enough to engulf them all in its schemes. It would be natural for a prince of Hell to sit and contemplate his work from the epicenter of the glory of the one who is beyond good and evil; fortunately, the Devil's horns curve downward, and, against nature, end up piercing the demon himself in the back. Unaware of their fate, sooner or later his worshippers out there screw up, and of course, that's why they stink.

In short, even if the Devil's will were the total extermination of the Jews, man! I'd say there had to be at least one left. And since it seems that the very next day all of Jerusalem had had enough of weeping, I'm not lying when I say that there was indeed one left.

Later, upon reflecting more clearly and with more time, the Hasmonean couldn't find his way out of the labyrinth his own rage had trapped him in. It all happened so fast. If only he'd sensed the plot brewing right behind his back! In any case, he showed no sign of remorse. On the contrary. "Just look at that—it's amazing how long it takes a human cub to grow up and how little time it takes for it to bleed to death!" he said to himself.

The Hasmonean never tired of marveling. Later, during the mass burial of the unfortunate Jerusalemites who had been caught in the web of his insane madness, the Hasmonean kept shaking his head. No one knew if it was out of pity or because he was missing one or two of the dead.

I believe the Hasmonean carried out his massacres with the mind of a scientist fully immersed in experimenting with a new formula. "If I kill two hundred, what will happen? What if I subtract one and add thirty-something?" A monster! His love for research knew no bounds. One moment he was frying a bunch of children *"made in Pharisee-land,"* the next he was devouring a plate of virgins in their own sauce. But without letting himself be carried away by passion—

everything was done very properly, very scrupulously, with the cold, steely objectivity of an Aristotle teaching Metaphysics in the open air.

Who said men cannot become demons when we know that some became like angels!

They called him the Hasmonean—his nickname for posterity—in memory of a namesake from hell, a devil from the court of the Prince of Darkness. Just like his evil namesake, Alexander Jannaeus felt a murderous love for the throne that devoured his insides and turned his blood to fire.

The Hasmonean had fire instead of blood in his veins. Fire poured from his eyes because his thoughts were so evil. Anyone who dared to hold the Asmonean's gaze saw the Devil behind his eyes, dominating his brain and, from there, plotting all manner of evil against Jerusalem, against the Jews, against the Gentiles, against the whole world. And the most tragic thing was that the Asmonean didn't believe in anything.

"If God doesn't exist, how can the Devil exist?" the high priest of the Hebrews confessed to his men. An atheist Pope! That Caesar was high priest and was a pagan, an atheist, and all the rest—that's acceptable. But that the high priest of the Jews was more of an atheist than Caesar—how can anyone swallow that?

The truth is that on that occasion, the Hasmonean was on the verge of getting himself massacred. In the end, he thought better of it and said to himself, "What a fool I am—I almost actually believed I was the Holy Father."

The truth is—if the whole truth must be told—that the mood of the people shifted so rapidly from the healthiest joy to the most absolute madness that nothing could be done. So, how can we blame the Hasmonean for fighting for his life and defending himself by taking the sacred right to self-defense to the extreme?

And how can we absolve him of having caused such a terrible situation through his crimes?

It's not easy to find the culprit, the scapegoat to blame for that monstrous massacre. What the Hasmonean wasn't going to do was take the blame. He wasn't a fool by a long shot.

"Let the stones of the Western Wall tremble—let them tremble," he told himself. "Let the blood flow furiously down through Jerusalem to the Garden of Olives—let it flow. Let the wind, stirred to action, carry on its torn cheeks an elegy for Jerusalem that will shatter the souls of Alexandria on the Nile, Sardis, Memphis, Seleucia on the Tigris, and even Rome itself—let it carry it." "What worries me is when life will grant me the grace to put an end to the cowards who fled like rats. If they loved them so much—since they mourn them so deeply—why did they abandon them to the slaughter?" This is how the Hasmonean justified his crime.

The Hasmonean's assassins laughed at his joke. The Jews, on the other hand, could not contain their cries for vengeance. If they had already been unable to tolerate the Hasmonean, who snatched their daughters away without giving them silver in exchange, and took them off to sell them as he pleased, invoking Solomonic traditions—all of them sacred—; if they could no longer bear it when he

killed their sons simply for attempting to open their lips to protest his deafening crimes; after the Massacre of the Six Thousand in a single day, hatred joined hands with madness, and the declaration of all-out war against the Hasmonean rang out from one end of the world to the other.

"The Hasmonean must die," cried Alexandria on the Nile.

"Death to the Hasmonean," repeated Seleucia on the Tigris.

"The Hasmonean will die," swore Antioch of Syria.

"Amen," replied Holy Jerusalem.

3
The Magi from the East

Hatred for the Hasmonean spread from synagogue to synagogue. One synagogue passed the message on to the next, and in less time than the Hasmonean would have liked, the entire Jewish world was aware of his exploits.

"Truly, the wings of Mercury are swift, Your Highness," his war hounds came to ease his worries.

"A fool's consolation, crocodile tears," as the proverb says.

The fact is that the Jerusalemites' hatred of the Hasmonean flew on swift wings from one corner of the Jewish world to the other. Naturally, the news also reached the mother synagogue, the Great Synagogue of the East—the oldest synagogue in the universe.

Although founded by the prophet Daniel in the Babylon of old—the Babylon of legends, the classical Babylon of antiquity—with the changing times and the transformations of the world, the Great Synagogue of the East changed its location. By the present time, the Magi of Nebuchadnezzar had moved to the capital of an emperor who knew nothing of the glory of the Chaldeans nor cared for the ghosts of Akkad, Ur, Lagash, Umma, and the other eternal cities of the Age of Heroes and Gods—when creatures from other worlds found human women beautiful and, defying divine prohibition, intermingled their blood with theirs, committing an unforgettable sin against the laws of Creation, a crime punishable by banishment from the entire cosmos.

Alexander the Great, as you all know, razed that Babylon of Legends to the ground. His successor to the throne of Asia, Seleucus I "the Invincible," must have thought it wasn't worth rebuilding its walls, and instead built an entirely new city. In keeping with the fashion of the time, he named it Seleucia; and "of the Tigris" because it lay on the banks of the river of that name.

Compelled by the new king of kings, the inhabitants of Old Babylon moved and came to populate the New. Whether willingly or by decree is the question. But knowing the structure of that world, one can afford to believe that the relocation

took place with no more protests than those from those who were denied residency permits. When building Seleucia on the Tigris, its founder removed from his city the Persian elements that had not been purged by Alexander the Great. This measure, as you can understand, benefited the Jewish families who, in the shadow of the Persian aristocracy, directed trade between the Far East and the Empire. Protected by the Achaemenids and experts in all aspects of government, the Jews attained a prominent social position in the Persian Empire, to the point of arousing the envy of a sector of the aristocracy. The Bible tells us how this faction's plot against the Jews gave rise to the first "final solution," which was miraculously thwarted by Queen Esther's ascension to the throne. Once this crisis was overcome, nature took its course. The descendants of Queen Esther's generation devoted themselves to trade and, over time, became the true intermediaries between the East and the West.

When Alexander overthrew Persian Babylon, Jewish families were freed from subjugation under the Achaemenid ruler. Alexander was succeeded in the rule of Asia by his general Seleucus I the Invincible. With the change in rulers, the Jews' situation improved. The only thing Seleucus demanded of the residents of Seleucia on the Tigris was that they devote themselves to business and stay out of politics.

With Persian competition eliminated and standing alone at the helm of trade between the East and the West, by the time of the century in which we find ourselves—the First Century B.C.—the Hebrew families who had survived the upheavals of past centuries had become immensely wealthy. (Let us not forget that King Solomon's mines derived their wealth from control of trade between the East and the West. It was toward this region that those liberated by Cyrus directed their talents. All the more so because the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the peaceful purchase of the lost land would cost them mountains of silver. As we all know, the tithe owed by every Hebrew to the Temple was a sacred duty. With the Temple gone, that tithe no longer made sense. But once it was rebuilt and became operational once more, the need to get that Universal Tithe to Jerusalem demanded the creation of a collection branch: the synagogue.

The Great Synagogue of the East, led by the Magi of Babylon, was established to serve as the central hub from which the tithes of all synagogues under the Persian Empire would be channeled to Jerusalem. The better things went for all the synagogues, the more abundant would be the river of gold—whether in the form of metal or spices (gold, frankincense, and myrrh)—that would flow into the Temple.

Universal peace was in the Jewish interest to the extent that it guaranteed communications between all parts of the empire. The years of the Greek conquest and the subsequent decades of civil war among Alexander's generals were an obstacle that slowed the flow of gold and spices that the Magi used to bring to Jerusalem every year. However, as tragic as the cutoff of that golden supply was for the Temple, Jerusalem was compensated when Alexandria on the Nile became an imperial city and a new influx of sacred capital sprang from its synagogue. In other words, no matter what happened, the Temple always came out ahead; and no matter what political changes occurred, the Magi from the East always arrived in the Holy City with their cargo of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

In its day, within the Jewish community of Seleucia on the Tigris, the news of the Maccabees' war of independence sparked a spontaneous prophetic outcry. From afar, the Great Synagogue of the East had been waiting for that sign for centuries. At last, the Day announced by the angel to the prophet Daniel had arrived. Three centuries had passed in anticipation of this moment; three centuries had faded into the dawn of time; three long, infinite centuries, waiting for this Hour of National Liberation. Daniel's prophecy had hung over the horizon of the Synagogue of the Magi from the East like a sword eager to enter battle.

"The vision of the evenings and mornings is true," it said, "keep it in your heart, for it is for a time yet to come."

"The two-horned ram you have seen is the king of Greece, and the great horn between its eyes is its king; when it is broken off, four horns will come up in its place. The four horns will be four kingdoms, but they will not be as strong as the first."

Was the prophecy not fulfilled when Alexander the Great overthrew the king of Persia and Media, and was it not perfected when, upon his death, his generals divided the empire, resulting in the formation of four kingdoms following the War of the Diadochi?

With the prophecy of the conquest of the Persian empire by the Greek fulfilled, the enthusiasm aroused among the youth of New Babylon by the Maccabean Revolt was as intense in passion as was the desire among the leaders of their synagogue to be young again, to take up the sword, and to follow the champion whom God had raised up for them to victory.

Likewise in Alexandria on the Nile, in Sardis, in Miletus, in Athens, and in Reggio Calabria—wherever a synagogue took root and flourished—there the young men enlisted and their elders equipped them for glory.

Long live Israel! With this proclamation, the brave responded to the Maccabee's battle cry: "Those of Yahweh are mine."

The Maccabees' final victory—however prophesied it may have been from the very beginning—was nonetheless celebrated by the Jews as if no one had ever foretold it. The Maccabee brothers fell, as everyone knows, but their exploits were recorded in the Book of Books so that their names might remain forever in the memory of the ages.

4

The Sadducees versus the Pharisees

The elation over the newly won independence lifted the people's spirits. The cry of victory that the Maccabean War sparked throughout the Jewish world kindled hope among the people.

What happened next was unexpected by anyone. The joy of living in freedom still sweetened their souls. One might say they were reveling in the

intoxication of the sweet wine of freedom when, just around the corner and as they set out on the straight path, the old specter of Cain's fratricide awoke from its slumber.

Did it come out of the blue? Or perhaps not? How can one affirm it? How can one deny it? Did they see it coming, or did they not? What were they thinking when they looked back? Did they never learn? Wouldn't those who, from within, facilitated Antiochus IV Epiphanes' "final solution" once again shatter the peace, sowing on the very day of freedom the seeds of violent passions for control over the Temple Treasures?

Weren't the Sadducees—the priestly party—the ones who pushed Antiochus IV Epiphanes to decree the "final solution" against Judaism? The Bible says so. It gives names and details: high priests who kill their brothers, fathers who murder their children in the name of the Temple.

Later, too, when the criminal hordes of the Fourth Antiochus set to work, the Sadducees were the first to abandon the religion of their fathers. They chose life, deserted the God of their fathers, and sacrificed to the Greek gods. Cowards, they surrendered to Death, bowed their knees, sold themselves to the world, and worse still, sold out their own people.

It was only logical, then, that when the Maccabean War broke out, the Pharisees, the union of the doctors of the Law and leaders of synagogues both at home and abroad, took the reins of the National Liberation Movement, surrounded the Maccabee with the glory of the general whom the Lord had raised up for them, and charged toward victory with the confidence of one proclaimed the victor from the very first day of their uprising.

Such is life! Once the History of the Maccabees was written, the history of envy began to be written. The old ghosts of the struggle between the Sadducee party and the Pharisee guild once again threatened a storm. The wind began to stir. So the rain would not be long in coming.

Did the Aaronic clergy ask for forgiveness for the sins committed during the Seleucid rule?

The Aaronic clergy did not ask for public forgiveness for their sins. The Sadducees did not bow their heads; they did not accept blame. The Temple belonged to them by divine right.

No, God—they were the owners of the Temple Treasures. On the contrary, wouldn't the Pharisees taking control of the Temple amount to a rebellion of the servants against their masters?

Of course it would. From the Sadducees' perspective, any move by the union of the teachers of the Law in the opposite direction would be taken as a declaration of civil war.

Such is human nature! No sooner had the nation broken its chains than its leaders began sharpening their claws. How long would it take for the ultimatum to arrive?

Truth be told—and I mean the absolute truth—it didn't take long for the ultimatum to make its fratricidal proclamation heard. "Either power would be returned to them," the Sadducees threatened, "or they would crown a king in Jerusalem."

There was hair-pulling, headaches, torn tunics, ashes demanding passage, threats giving birth to ghosts, spears that broke on their own, battle axes that went missing and were then "accidentally" found. The Sadducees and Pharisees were on the verge of killing each other in the name of God!

Who would stop them? Who would put a stop to them?

The threat of civil war hung in the air over Jerusalem for the duration of John Hyrcanus I's reign. God had forbidden the Jews from appointing a king outside the House of David. The Sadducees not only considered a son of the Maccabees as king but also moved from thought to fait accompli.

The Pharisees were horrified. When they discovered the masterstroke—a checkmate against the Law—that the Sadducees were planning, the Pharisees raised a huge outcry.

"Are we, by any chance, a nation without a brain?" its wise men asked publicly. "Why do we fall into the same trap over and over again? What is wrong with us? What is the nature of our condemnation for the sin of our father Adam? Every time the Lord gives us life, we reach for the fruit of the forbidden tree. Now Cain wants to challenge God to stop him from killing his brother Abel. And are we going to allow the shepherds to cast the flock into the abyss of their passions? If a son of the Maccabees reigns, we betray God. Brothers, we have been pushed beyond the dilemma. Better to die fighting for the truth than to live on our knees worshiping the Prince of Darkness."

Many words were exchanged. It was clear on that full-moon night that civil war would ultimately shatter the peace at dawn. No matter how much Abel loved his brother Cain, Cain's madness in defying God forced Abel to defend himself.

Times had changed. The first Abel fell without exercising his right to self-defense because he was born naked and lived naked before his parents and his brother. He never raised a hand against anyone. Peace was his problem. Abel was all peace. How could one who was all peace even imagine the existence of a dark heart fed by darkness right in his own brother's chest! Abel's innocence was his tragedy.

And his glory in the eyes of God.

Cain did not think with his head; he thought with his muscles. The man believed that the strength of the mind and that of the muscles were subject to some mysterious law of correspondence. He who has the most powerful arm is the strongest. The strongest is the king of the jungle. Consequently, the fate of the weak is to serve the strongest or to perish.

Like Cain, the Sadducees fell into the trap of their personal ambitions. So the civil war for power was bound to break out sooner or later. Perhaps later rather than sooner. It amounted to the same thing. Nor could anyone predict when—the exact date. The fact was that the atmosphere was thick with the looming civil war.

The atmosphere was growing tense. You could almost smell it in the air. One day, one day… But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

The people were still celebrating their victory over the Seleucid Empire when suddenly word spread of the abominable crime committed by the son of John Hyrcanus I. Not content with the high priesthood—which the nation had accepted against its own conscience but kept quiet about, given the circumstances—the son of John Hyrcanus I took the crown for himself.

With his coronation, the Hasmoneans added yet another, even worse crime—one that was unnatural—to an already heinous one. At the forefront of such a violation of the sacred laws were the Sadducees. The Sadducee Party—let us recall its origins—was a spontaneous creation of the priestly caste. It was formed to defend its class interests. The interests of the priestly clans revolved around control of the Temple Treasury. Over time, changes at the highest levels of the Temple gave rise to powerful clans, whose members gradually joined the Sanhedrin—a sort of Roman Senate modeled on the most Solomonic traditions—by default. The struggle between these clans for control of the Temple was the driving force that led the Jews to the "final solution" adopted by Antiochus IV—a final solution that spilled so much innocent blood into the chalice of the evil ambition of the fathers of these very Sadducees, who were now crowning the son of Hyrcanus I as king of Jerusalem in defiance of God's Law.

As indirect architects of the anti-Jewish "final solution," the Sadducees lost control of the Temple for the entire duration of the Maccabees' campaigns. Judas the " " Maccabee expelled them from the Temple. He purged with the hammer what the scythe of Death had spared. No wonder, in the eyes of the Sadducees, the Maccabees were dictators!

The Pharisee Union—let's delve a bit into the opposition—stemmed from the grassroots organizations responsible for collecting the tithe. The Union was the apparatus the Party used to keep that river of gold flowing from all over the world into the Temple's coffers—the very source of the fratricidal struggle between the various priestly clans. As officials in the service of the Aaronic clergy, the Pharisees lived off the collection of the tithe and the offerings for sins committed by individuals.

When the Sadducees began killing one another for control of the Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs, the Pharisees took charge of events and used the people's offerings to equip the young volunteers who came running from all over the world to fight under the command of the Maccabees. So by the end of the War of Independence, the tables had turned, and it was the Pharisee Syndicate that was in control of the situation. The Sadducee Party, as one might expect, was not going to tolerate this change for long.

The Sadducee Party's counteroffensive was neither elegant nor brilliant, but it was effective. All they had to do was slip into the skin of the Serpent and tempt the Hasmoneans with the forbidden fruit of David's crown.

That internal battle between the Party and the Syndicate for control of the Temple sparked a spontaneous outcry of indignation and anger in the progressive Hebrew world. It was then that the very same forces that had once been harnessed

in the service of Independence stepped onto the scene, ready to dethrone the usurper.

Between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they were turning the nation into an abomination in the eyes of the Lord.

Something had to be done urgently; it was urgent to declare war on the private interests of the Party and the Union and to restore the nation's status in accordance with the model described in the Scriptures.

It was urgent.

So many things were urgent.

And yet nothing was urgent.

According to the most eminent scholars of the most distinguished schools of Alexandria on the Nile, Athens, and New Babylon—let's call it Seleucia on the Tigris—all the Jews of the world had a sacred obligation to regard the Hasmonean reign as a transitional government between Independence and the Davidic Monarchy.

No, sir; the fragility of the newly won independence could not afford to be struck by the flu of civil war. For the sake of strengthening the reconquered freedom, all the synagogues had to remain united and support the king of Jerusalem. As events unfolded, the necessary measures would be taken to move toward the transfer of the crown from one house to the other.

"Yeah, the sages—always so wise! They think they know everything, and in the end, they know nothing," the younger generations began to retort. The younger generations' outrage over the accepted status quo was slow to come to the fore. But it finally did so in the wake of the Massacre of the Six Thousand.

5
Simeon the Just

"The Presentation in the Temple": So when the days of their purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, they took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the Law of the Lord that every "firstborn male shall be consecrated to the Lord," and to offer as a sacrifice, as prescribed in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. There was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, righteous and devout, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and, blessing God, said: "Now, Lord, you may let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which

you have prepared in the sight of all peoples—a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel."

Simeon—our next protagonist—was descended from one of those families that survived the sacking of Jerusalem and managed to prosper by planting their vineyards in Babylon. This was a fact that Simeon could prove at any time and place he was called upon to do so.

Although it may not sound quite right or even appropriate to say so—since it brings to mind laws associated with sad and disastrous events—Simeon was a Hebrew of pure lineage. Before the most expert and qualified authorities of his people whenever they wished, and if it was a matter of curious Gentiles delving into the subject just to put pedigree enthusiasts on the spot—with their musty lineages and all that—it was the same; whenever they wanted and whatever table they set before him, Simeon the Babylonian was ready to present his parents' genealogical record, which was like a ship sailing directly to the roots of the tree under whose branches Adam won Eve's heart.

His parents had lived through the Babylonian Captivity, as well as the fall of the Chaldean Empire; they welcomed the rise of the Persian Empire; they lived through the Greek revolution—and, of course, the rule of the Hellenes. As time went on, Simeon's household grew, becoming a powerful house among the Jews and a wealthy one in the eyes of the Gentiles. Under normal circumstances, Simeon would have inherited his father's business, visited the Holy City at least once in his life, been happy among his own people, and strived his entire life to be a good believer before men and before God. As the heir to one of the wealthiest bankers in Seleucia on the Tigris, everything was set for Simeon to be mourned by countless mourners when he died . After his death, when the kingdom of Israel was proclaimed by the son of David, his descendants would exhume his bones and bury him in the Holy Land.

This chronicle should have been a summary of the life of Simeon the Babylonian. But the usurpation by the sons of the Maccabees erased all that perfect happiness from the book of his life. Such beautiful plans had not been intended for him. That idea—to sit back and wait to see how events unfolded before taking definitive action, just in case the Lord was using the Hasmonean reign as a transitional period between the Maccabees and the messianic kingdom—the advice of the leaders of the synagogue in Seleucia on the Tigris—was not for him. Simeon had been listening to that drivel for far too long. And after the Slaughter of the Six Thousand, he didn't even want to hear such words of caution in his wildest dreams.

The overthrow of the Hasmonean was not something that could be put off until tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, or even until that very afternoon. The Hasmonean had to die—now. Every day he remained alive was an offense. Every night he went to bed, the Nation found itself one step closer to its destruction. The Hasmonean had broken all the rules.

First: His family had been chosen and had received the high priesthood by bypassing hereditary traditions and rites. A foreigner—not the full council of the saints—had granted him supreme authority.

The sentence for such a usurpation of sacred duties was capital punishment.

Second: Contrary to the traditions, which forbade the high priest from wielding a sword, the Hasmonean had placed himself at the head of the armies.

The penalty for this offense was also capital punishment.

Third: In violation of the most firmly established canonical traditions, the Hasmonean had not only trampled upon the monogamy that governed the life of the high priest, but also, like Solomon reborn, maintained his own harem of young women.

The penalty for this offense was yet another death sentence.

And Fourth: In violation of the divine law that forbade any member not of the House of David from ascending the throne of Jerusalem, the Hasmonean, by doing so, was dragging the entire nation toward suicide.

For all these reasons, the Hasmonean had to die, regardless of the cost or the means to be employed.

These arguments by Simeon ultimately convinced the leaders of the synagogue in Seleucia on the Tigris of the urgent need for the world to put an end to the Hasmonean dynasty. With this sacred mission, Simeon the Babylonian left his parents' home and came to Jerusalem.

Wealthy and bearing the tithe from the Synagogue of the Magi of the East, his policy of friendship toward the Hasmonean crown—which needed financial support to expand the military reconquest of the kingdom, a strategy through which Simeon the Babylonian would win the friendship of his enemy—would simultaneously earn him the distrust of those very on s among whom he was meant to rise as the invisible hand pulling the pro-Davidic strings. This double game would keep him walking a tightrope over the abyss from the day of his arrival until the day of victory.

While he exerted all his strength to keep his head on his shoulders, Simeon the Babylonian had to keep his revolution strictly confined to domestic matters. Ptolemaic Egypt lay in wait, hoping for Jerusalem's weakening, and a Jewish civil war would provide the perfect opportunity to invade and plunder the country.

On the other side of the Tigris River were the Parthians. Always threatening, always eager to breach the border and annex the lands west of the Euphrates.

Although on the verge of collapse in the north, the Greeks awaited their chance for revenge and were not missing a beat in their efforts to take advantage of a Roman civil war to reconquer the lost land of Palestine.

In short, the need to rid Jerusalem of the abomination of desolation could not jeopardize the freedom won by the forefathers of the Hasmoneans.

6

History of the Hasmoneans

Aristobulus I "the Mad"

After the death of John Hyrcanus I, son of Simon, the last of the Maccabees, his son Aristobulus I succeeded him as ruler of Judea. In this chapter, the memory of the Israeli people is lost in the labyrinth of its own phobias and fears of the truth. According to some, the son of John Hyrcanus I did not seize the crown by force. He simply inherited it from his father.

According to the official account, the abomination that sealed their downfall was committed against the father by a son who had to overcome the fierce opposition of his mother and his own brothers. Ultimately, nothing is clear except the need to confront reality by following the trail of the facts. Personally, I do not know to what extent those facts are essential for determining the father's guilt in order to exonerate the son.

Whether Aristobulus I crowned himself king against his father's will or merely legitimized a covert monarchy, we will never know with absolute certainty—at least not until Judgment Day.

The fact is that Aristobulus I began the glorious chronicle of his reign by surprising both strangers and acquaintances with the life imprisonment of his brothers. Motives, reasons, causes, excuses? Well, here we enter the eternal dilemma regarding what the actors of history actually did and what they would have liked to have been written about them. Should we get into this discussion, or leave it for another day? I mean, what stronger motive is there for seizing power than the passion for power itself? Absolute power, total power. The freedom of one who stands beyond Good and Evil, the glory of one who rises above the Laws because he is the Law. Life in one fist, , Death in the other, the people at his feet. To be like a god—to be a god! The accursed temptation, the flesh of the forbidden fruit—to be a god: far from the eye of justice, beyond the long arm of the law. Wasn't the Devil cunning? That passion to be like a god had revealed its virulent, poisonous nature when it transformed an angel into that Serpent, mother of all demons. "Very well," Aristobulus I replied to himself, "I will generously spread my poison throughout the earth, beginning with my own home."

Horror, disillusionment—take me far from the Devil's dreams. Awaken me, heavens, beauty, in some corner of Paradise.

What madness is it that drags the mud into believing itself stronger than the flood? Does the snail dream of being faster than the jaguar? Does the Moon challenge the Sun to see who shines brighter? Does the lion scorn the crown of the jungle? Does the crocodile complain about the size of its mouth? Does the fierce creature envy the mermaid's song? Does the eagle envy the elephant of the plains? Does the phosphorescent fish rise from the ocean depths to demand moonlight from the Sun? Who offers the northern cold springtime petals? Who seeks the fountain of eternal youth to write on its banks: "Foolish is he who drinks"?

The indisputable fact is that Aristobulus I ascended to the throne left vacant by his father's death. And the first thing he did was to throw his brothers into the coldest dungeon of Jerusalem's gloomiest prison. Unsatisfied, still not content with such a crime against nature, Aristobulus "the Mad" finished the job by sending his mother to join his brothers.

No one ever knew why he set his mother's youngest son free. The fact is that just as he had surprised everyone by sentencing his brothers to life imprisonment, he surprised everyone again by setting one free. It seems he spared the life of the youngest of his brothers—though not for long. Soon after, madness took hold of his mind, and he outdid himself by strangling him with his own hands. After committing all these crimes, the mad king dressed himself as high priest and went to lead the worship service as if Jerusalem had rejected Yahweh as God and sworn allegiance to the Devil himself.

Such was the beginning of the reign of the son of John Hyrcanus I.

At the root of such a crime—worthy of Satan's most gifted disciple—lies the terrible dispute between mother and son, between Aristobulus I "the Mad" and his brothers, concerning the transformation of the Republic into a Kingdom.

Accepting the madness of Simon Maccabeus's grandson as the final, decisive—and even exculpatory—diagnosis is no way to bring such a serious matter to a close. Especially when the brief one-year reign of the Second of the Hasmoneans—leaving aside the issue of those he killed, whose names were not recorded nor their memory preserved because they were not his relatives, whose number we can estimate based on what he did—for who would imprison his brothers yet set free those who are not? I was saying that the brief year of Aristobulus I's reign—brief though it was—shaped the future of the Jewish people in such a profound and painful way that it can be seen at the root of the trauma that, two , a thousand years later, official Jewish historians continue to suffer when recreating the Hasmonean era.

What discussion more critically apocalyptic than the transformation of the Republic into a Monarchy could have driven the grandson of the Heroes of Independence to become a monster?

Official Jewish historians gloss over this issue by looking the other way. In doing so, they commit a terrible crime against themselves by creating the impression in the reader's mind that killing one's mother and siblings was commonplace among the Jews. I do not know to what extent it is ethical—or even merely morally acceptable—to lay the burden of the crime committed by their parents upon the children. Or is it perhaps true that the Hebrews used to eat their mothers day in and day out?

It is a crime against the Spirit to conceal the truth in order to impose one's own lies. If Aristobulus I killed his brothers and his mother—such a monstrous crime—we must understand it as the ultimate consequence of the struggle between the republican and monarchist factions, the former represented by the Pharisees and the latter by the Sadducees. Aristobulus I won this struggle against his brothers, and it cost his mother her life on charges of conspiracy against the crown.

From our comfortable vantage point, we can venture this theory regarding the case. It seems evident that if that woman's authority could not impose her judgment, it must have been because it clashed with more powerful interests. And what more powerful interest—one for which one would risk one's life—could there have been in Jerusalem than control of the Temple?

Let us bear in mind that throughout the entire history of the children of Israel, a case of such cruelty—a son against his mother—was never recorded because it never occurred. So the fact that *this unnatural act* occurred opens the door to the conspiracy against the nation's laws that took place between the Aaronic priests and Aristobulus I. In this context, the imprisonment of the brothers and their mother makes perfect sense. In fact, the events we are about to examine were all marked by the same iron hand. Then there is the mindset of the official historian, who exploited the nature of the crime to conceal, within the depths of horror, the year of terror that the people of Jerusalem endured under the tyranny of the mad king. By focusing that year of slaughter on the royal family, the historian cast a smokescreen—akin to that of Pharaoh's magicians—over the struggle at the root of the problem. Who imprisoned his brothers for opposing his coronation—what would he not do to those who, though not his brothers, refused to transform the republic into a monarchy? The official Jewish historian glossed over this issue. In doing so, he took us—the people of the future—for fools and those of his own time for lifelong idiots.

In any case—leaving the debates aside for now—Aristobulus I set one of his brothers free, as I have said. It is said that the young man was a fierce and brave warrior who loved the game of war, and there he wasted no time in launching the attack with the cry, "Long live Jerusalem!" A worthy relative of Judas Maccabeus—whose stories the boy grew up on—the Brave Prince led his soldiers to victory, which never eluded him, with the very glory of heroes enamored of his very being.

Let us say that, with the peaceful Reconquest of the Promised Land shattered by the Maccabean Wars, John Hyrcanus I ushered in a new era by putting to the sword all the inhabitants of southern Israel who did not convert to Judaism. Through this policy, he annexed Idumea.

It fell to his son, Aristobulus I, to lead his armies against the north. Jerusalem was in the throes of anti-monarchical unrest due to the events already mentioned—the imprisonment of the king's brothers and the massacre of his republican allies—and while Aristobulus I focused on bringing the situation under control, he handed over military command to his younger brother, who conquered Galilee. It wasn't all bad news, however. The conquest of Galilee boosted the morale of the Jews, who didn't know whether to laugh at the victory or weep over the failure of having as their king a murderer of the worst kind—a full-fledged madman.

What came next was something no one expected. Or perhaps they saw it coming but did nothing within their power to prevent it. The fact is that no sooner had Prince Valiant begun to look elsewhere for fame and glory than jealousy—and the guilty conscience that had imprisoned him because of his deeds—drove his brother Aristobulus I to sentence him to death.

In this case as well, Aristobulus I acted by following the example of the Gentiles, though he adapted the system to the Eastern mindset. The Roman Senate had established as a rule in the handbook of the powerful that overly victorious generals must be forced into retirement or put to death. The Scipios and Pompey the Great himself fell victim to this rule. The final case would be that of Julius Caesar—which, of course, turned out quite well for them.

Wiser and holier than the imperial senators, the king of the Jews did not beat around the bush. He simply sent his younger brother his irrevocable decision, hanging from the blade of the executioner's axe.

The news of the younger brother's murder at the hands of his older brother reached Alexander Jannaeus down there, amid the chill of the dungeons and the howls of prisons hewn into the walls of hell. Naturally, the news made his blood run cold. But his life-giving fluid might have regained its warmth had the chill of the dungeons not been compounded by the presence of his mother there. She, the poor woman, so deeply wounded, lost her mind and, with what little sanity remained, let herself starve to death.

Watching one's mother and one's own brothers die because of a brother is not what one would call the best school for kings. But this was the school for kings that Alexander Jannaeus was forced to attend—he who became the object of all the hatred in the Jewish world following the Massacre of the Six Thousand.

Driven to the brink of madness by that tragedy, the Hasmonean swore to avenge the deaths of his mother and brothers—to emerge alive from hell—over the corpses of all the cowards who were at that very moment burning incense in the Temple.

Another matter altogether—returning to the theme of the official Jewish refusal to acknowledge the coronation of John Hyrcanus I—is that the matricidal and fratricidal madness of Aristobulus I would have been nothing more than the climax of the drama into which his father's coronation had led them all. The official Jewish position—led by the famous Flavius Josephus—was to refuse to acknowledge the coronation of the son of the last of the Maccabees. His actions, his wars, and his will seem to prove the opposite; they seem to shout at the top of their lungs that he was crowned, and it was during his reign that the virus of the curse found fertile ground in his household. How else can we explain that the day after the burial of John Hyrcanus I, his wife and children collapsed under the weight of that crushing opposition to the continuation of his dynasty? In what other context, then, could we understand why the new king decided overnight to execute all his siblings—including his mother—for high treason?

Logic need not present its evidence in the court of biohistory. Biohistorical arguments are self-explanatory and require no witnesses. But if neither one nor the other is enough to make one's way through the labyrinthine jungle in which the Jews lost their memory, there is nothing one can advise the man with his finger on the trigger, except that he put an end to the tragedy quickly and stop gathering onlookers before heading to hell with his lamentations and elegies.

There are no facts other than the bare, simple reality. Aristobulus I succeeded his father, Hyrcanus I. He immediately ordered his brother Alexander

to be imprisoned for life. Alexander's brothers and sisters also met the same fate. The only one spared from the Cain-like slaughter was his mother's youngest son. That mother lay as if dead in some dark dungeon of her wicked son's palace when the corpse of her youngest son was lowered to her on anonymous ropes. The poor woman closed her eyes and let herself starve to death. Such were the beginnings of the reign of Aristobulus I the Mad; such were the origins of the coming reign of his brother Alexander I.

7
Alexander Jannaeus

When Alexander Jannaeus emerged from the dungeon—where he normally would have perished—the situation in the kingdom was as follows. The Pharisees had convinced the masses that the nation was under the wrath of God. Sacred laws forbade the Hebrews from having a king who was not of the House of David. They had one. By having him, they were provoking the Lord to destroy the nation for rebelling against His Word. His Word was the Word, the Word was the Law, and the Word was God. How could they prevent destiny from running its course?

The problem was that the servants of the Lord—the Sadducee priests—not only blessed the rebellion against the Lord they served but also used the king to crush the wise Pharisees.

Even so, the macabre greed of Aristobulus I turned even the Sadducees' stomachs. This did not mean, however, that the Sadducees were willing to join forces with the Pharisees to rid Jerusalem of its sin. The last thing the Sadducees still wanted was to share power with the Pharisees.

Then, mysteriously, Alexander Jannaeus was released from prison and escaped death. A miracle?

If the hatred that gave him strength and kept him alive can be called a miracle, then it was a miracle that Alexander survived his brothers and his mother. Too bad that, aside from the rats, no one came down to his hell to offer their condolences for his mother's death! Had they done so, they would have discovered that the force that kept him alive and fueled his thirst for revenge was hatred, which made no distinction between Pharisees and Sadducees.

In any case, the Hasmonean was mistaken in thinking that the death of his hated brother was due to natural causes. The death of Aristobulus one year into his reign—and immediately following the death of the Valiant Prince—was neither a matter of chance nor of divine justice. Is it any wonder that the crime against his own mother turned the stomachs of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and led them to decide, in collusion with Queen Alexandra, to put an end to the monster? The fact that the prisoner's wedding to the widow of the deceased—his sister-in-law Alexandra—was held urgently and immediately highlights the Sadducee alliance that ended the life of Aristobulus I.

The Sadducees, acting before the Pharisees, deposed the king and installed the Hasmonean in his place, with the aim that, once revealed as his saviors, he would not be tempted to switch sides and hand over power to the Pharisees—who, as the natural enemies of his saviors, would necessarily have been his own enemies as well. Taking advantage of the element of surprise, Alexander accepted the crown, swearing not to change the *status quo*.

This was the explosive situation—a seething cauldron of chaos—upon which the Hasmonean's hatred was founded.

Alexander I, however, would never forgive his liberators for taking so long to make their decision. What were they waiting for—for his mother to die? God! If only they had arrived a day earlier.

The hatred the new king harbored toward his nation during his year of imprisonment—a long, endless year—cannot be described in words. Only his subsequent massacres will reveal its extent and depth. That hatred was like a black hole advancing from his gut to his head, like a Nothingness flooding his veins with a cry: Revenge. Revenge against the Pharisees, revenge against the Sadducees. Had his saviors taken the trouble to think about what they were doing, they would have slit their own veins before opening the door to freedom for the next king of the Jews.

It would take Jerusalem little, very little time to discover what kind of monster the Hasmonean had as his idol. The hatred devouring Alexander I's body, mind, and soul would soon spiral out of control and demand corpses by the dozens, by the hundreds, by the thousands. Six thousand for a Passover feast?

An appetizer. Just that—a mere appetizer for a true demon. Didn't the wise men and holy priests of Jerusalem claim to know the depths of Satan? Yet another lie! He, the Hasmonean, would reveal to all the Jews the true depths of Satan. He himself would lead them to the very " "—the Devil's throne. Where did Satan have his throne? Fools—on his mother's grave, in the Jerusalem that had watched his brothers die without lifting a finger to save them from ruin.

Just as the father of ancient Jewish history, Flavius Josephus, had done—concealing from his own people the internal cause that shattered the promised happiness of the house of Hyrcanus I—he did it again by speaking of the miraculous and sudden death of the matricide and fratricide, a murderer, of course. He had to do it if he didn't want to reveal the cause he had just concealed from his people. If he had publicly sworn before the future that the very Sadducees who had elevated the son had ordered the father's death, doing so would have opened the doors to the rest of the world, allowing them to enter and see with their own eyes the deadly internal war between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

An enemy of the truth for the sake of his people's salvation, in the crosshairs of Roman hatred following the famous rebellion that ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, Flavius Josephus had to trample over the corpse of the truth in the name of reconciliation between Jews and Romans. And in the process, to keep the children of the murderers of the early Christians at arm's length from the crime *against divine nature* that they had committed and continued to commit—to the extent that it served their interests—even if it meant erasing their

memory, performing a lobotomy on themselves, and moving forward as a cursed people, condemned by all, regarded by all as those who devour their mothers and are natural murderers of their brothers? No Jew was to look askance at Aristobulus I killing his mother, his brothers, his uncles, his brothers-in-law, his nephews, and even his grandchildren, had he had any. According to Flavius Josephus and his school of thought, this was a natural occurrence among the Jews. So where is the scandal?

This is the story of Jesus. It is not the story of the Hasmonean chronicles. The significance of that dynasty's seventy years, however, is so crucial to understanding the circumstances that led the Jews to the most ferocious and murderous anti-Christianity that we must necessarily retrace them, as one who flies over the most momentous events related to this Second Fall. On another occasion, at another time, God willing, we will delve into those chronicles. For now, let us simply skim the timeline.

The Hasmonean's hatred toward everyone—Pharisees and Sadducees alike—ran its course. In just a few years, it turned into an avalanche. Rolling down a suicidal slope one of those days, they all—Pharisees and Sadducees—went to celebrate a sort of friendship banquet with the king. The doors opened, the strategists took their positions, and with the wine, everyone got into the spirit of things. And bypassing all the meanderings and preliminaries, they ended up rushing headlong toward the shores of the sea of personal issues. In the heat of the moment, one of the Pharisees present, drunk on wine, blurted out to the king's face what everyone was saying: that his mother had conceived him with someone other than his father. In other words, the Hasmonean was a bastard.

The situation wasn't complicated to begin with, and then the Devil came along to make it worse. The Devil, as if he were winning a battle of wills against the Angel, kept adding fuel to the fire at every opportunity. With the fuse burning and the powder keg just a stone's throw away, it was only logical that the explosion would blow everything in its path to smithereens. The Massacre of the Six Thousand at in a single day would not be the only devastating wave. But it could at least have served to calm tempers and bring enemies together.

Unlike other peoples of the world, the Jewish nation's racial philosophy was to never learn from past mistakes. If it was zeal for the Law that had previously driven them to the Massacre, from then on it would be a thirst for vengeance. It was this unbridled thirst that swept from synagogue to synagogue across the globe, carrying to all believers that cry we heard earlier: "The Hasmonean must die." To this, the most daring and zealous responded by dedicating their lives to killing the Hasmonean. Among them was Simeon the Babylonian, a citizen of Seleucia on the Tigris, a Hebrew by birth, and a banker by profession. His entry into Hasmonean Jerusalem and his intentions to remain in the kingdom could not trouble the king—who was always in need of allies and financial resources for the war to reconquer the Promised Land—nor arouse his suspicions, given the geopolitical circumstances the ancient Seleucid Empire was facing.

Indeed, Asia east of Eden was becoming too small for the Parthians, and they suffered unspeakably as they dreamed of invading the lands west of the Euphrates. It was therefore only natural that the children of Abraham would begin

to return from the Exile to the other side of the Jordan. If, on top of that, the returnee seemed to have no idea about the local political situation and—to everyone's delight—was a wealthy banker and a devout believer, so much the better.

"Simeon, my son, paranoia is to tyrants what wisdom is to the wise. If either group abandons its counsel, both are lost. That is why one who moves among snakes must be immune to their venom and have the wings of a dove to overcome the schemes of the wicked with the innocence of one who serves only his master.

"Simeon, turn your back on your enemy as a sign of trust, and you will earn your salvation; but wear the armor of the wise beneath your cloak, so that when paranoia drives him mad, the dagger of his madness will shatter against your iron skin.

"If you shake hands with the tyrant, keep in mind that he hides the dagger in the other; offer him, then, what he seeks, for God gave man only two hands, and if with one he takes yours and with the other seizes what he wants, the dagger will always be far from your throat.

"When you see him wounded, rush to tend to his wound, for he is not yet dead; and if he lives, seek his death, but do not merely wound him, lest he rise again to bring about your ruin. The devil has many ways to achieve his goal, but God needs only one to make him bite the dust. Be wise, Simeon; do not forget the teachings of your masters."

Simeon the Babylonian arrived in Jerusalem with the book of the Magi of the East tucked under his arm. The school where he learned the craft of the Magi traced its origins back to the days of the prophet Daniel—that prophet and chief of the Magi who, with one hand, served his master and, with the other, dug his own ruin all around him. But enough talk—let the show begin.

Simeon the Babylonian put his teachings into practice. He managed to break the ice of the Pharisees' distrust toward the king's new friend. He managed to deceive King by helping to finance his campaigns to reconquer and consolidate the conquered borders. Behind the Hasmonean's back, with his other free hand, the Babylonian put his signature on all the palace plots against which the Hasmonean—like an athlete in the midst of an obstacle course—accomplished the impossible feat of surviving all his would-be assassins. One after another, all those attempts to sever his head from his neck ended with the deaths of the would-be assassins. Tired of so much ineptitude—in his opinion, his compatriots were not even fit for that—Alexander Jannaeus treated the corpses of his enemies as one treats those of dogs: he threw them into the river, letting the current carry them out to the sea of oblivion.

Desperate over the Hasmonean's fate, the Pharisees devised the ultimate plan: to hire a mercenary army, take command of it, and declare open war on him. It meant plunging into a civil war, but what choice did they have? The Hasmonean's star seemed to have risen from the very depths of hell. No matter what they plotted against him to overthrow him—no matter how subtle and convoluted the plan—the wretch always came out alive. He had more lives than a cat. He could not be written off as dead.

"Let the damage be on his conscience," they told themselves. And so they hired the Arabs to put an end to the reign of the most tyrannical, cruel, and bloodthirsty king Jerusalem had ever known in all its history. All of this was kept under the strictest *top-secret*. The last thing Simeon the Babylonian and his Pharisees could afford was for word of their plans to reach the Hasmonean's ears. He wouldn't hesitate to kill them all—young and old alike—throwing them all into the same pot. As the wise man's proverb said: One must be as innocent as a dove, yet as cunning as a serpent.

But since in this world one cannot deceive everyone at once, there was in those days one person whom Simeon's magic tricks could not deceive. That man was the priest Abijah, the Hasmonean's personal prophet, about whom we have already read in previous chapters.

Simeon, of course, also attended Abijah's shift to hear the Oracle from his lips. It was to him—yes, to him, the king's new friend and his most sworn secret enemy—that Abijah directed words that shattered all his plans.

"If Heaven fights Hell with the Devil's weapons, how will the fire that devours everyone in its blaze be extinguished?" the man said. "Do you compare God to His enemy? Does the angel who guards the path of life rebel against his destiny by raising the flame of his sword against the tree he protects, thereby preventing anyone from approaching it? Does he then consider himself lost? What will be his Lord's judgment on his despair? By acting thus, will he not deny the God who entrusted him with his mission? You are not fighting the devil; you are fighting God's angel, and even if he is on your side, he cannot abandon his post. His command is firm: Let no one approach. Why do you think he will lower his sword? Will he rebel against his Lord out of love for you? Cease, then, from this folly. You are not fighting against a man; you are waging war against the God who placed his angel between you and the life you seek by invoking Death."

An oracle full of wisdom that, with its listeners blinded by hatred, fell time and again on stony ground. For a moment it seemed as though it might take root, but as soon as they stepped out of the Temple, the smell of blood brought them back to the reality of everyday life.

8

Civil War

How close to the outbreak of a civil war do the clouds brew that will pour down the broth of hatred in torrents? How are the traces of a scar, carved deep between chest and back, erased?

The Pharisees and their leaders made the desperate decision to hire a mercenary army to put an end to the Hasmoneans once and for all. They did not hire the army of the Ten Thousand Greeks lost on their return to their homeland, nor did they cross the sea toward Carthage seeking freedom among the descendants of Hannibal. Nor did they call upon the famous Iberian warriors. Nor

did they turn to barbarian hordes. To kill their Jewish brothers, they called upon the Arabs.

How long does the meat of hatred need to simmer in the pot to cook? When poison is not enough and secret conspiracies abound, is it legitimate to call upon the devil himself to carry to hell that which was born in the heat of his fire?

As he did with so many other episodes, the official historian of the Jews of that time tiptoed around the triggers of that rebellion as if walking on eggshells. Willing to sell the truth for the thirty pieces of silver of Caesar's pardon and with the approval of a Jewish generation that, torn between worshiping the emperor and the fate of the Christians, danced in honor of the golden calf before God and men, Flavius Josephus overlooked those causes from the distance of that civil war's origins—causes so horrific and treacherous as to overshadow the centuries-old enmity between Jacob and Esau.

The fact behind the concrete slab under which the Jews buried the memory of their past is that, in violation of their own laws, Israel hired Edom; Jacob called upon Esau to defeat the Devil together, ignoring—because he did not want to remember—that the Devil who had defeated Adam, the father of both, needed more than just an alliance between brothers to have his tail cut off.

Be that as it may, the battle between the supporters of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy and those loyal to the Hasmonean dynasty took place. And it was the enemies of the Hasmoneans who emerged victorious.

It seems that that very same Hasmonean who walked on carpets woven from the skins of the Six Thousand, that soulless demon who dared to curse the God of gods by sleeping with his harlots in his own Temple, that invincible son of hell, so the story goes, fled the battlefield like a rat.

He wasn't even worth dying like a man—his enemies later lamented, though it was too late.

Unfortunately, just as they were about to seal their victory, the victorious army committed the unforgivable mistake of backing down. As I said, they were about to reap the laurels of success when remorse took hold of their minds, and they began to think about what they were doing. They were handing the kingdom over to the Arabs!

Faced with the choice of finishing off the Hasmonean or living under the yoke of their traditional enemies, the Pharisees decided on the unthinkable.

It's true: love for the homeland outweighed the memory of so much past suffering. So, before finding themselves trapped under the wheels of their own mistakes, they broke the contract with the victory they had won—a fatal error they would soon come to regret, one they would never regret enough.

In one of those classic twists of fate, the victorious nationals joined forces with the defeated patriots, and together they rose up against the mercenary army that was already preparing to conquer Jerusalem for its king.

Stunned by this turn of fate in his favor, the Hasmonean transformed from a fleeing rat into a hungry lion; he took the lead among those who once again hailed

him as king and expelled from his kingdom those who had just seen him run away like a dog.

The first to regret this were the Pharisees.

His return from the grave convinced his enemies that the Hasmonean was sponsored by the Devil himself. The calm, the tranquility with which Alexander made his entrance into Jerusalem was celebrated by almost everyone. That was the calm before the storm. Shortly after returning to his palace, after sleeping with all his concubines, once he had digested the defeat in the folds of a bad dream, and tired of promising what he would never fulfill, the Hasmonean ordered that the leaders of the Pharisees and the hundreds of their allies be rounded up as one would round up cattle. The head count amounted to so many souls that no one could imagine how the Hasmonean was going to cook so much meat.

What happened belongs to the unholy annals of Israel. But if there is Good and Evil and everything has its opposite, the people who have a Sacred History also have its opposite, a Malignant History. To the ranks of the heroes of these dark scriptures belonged, without a doubt, Cain, the Alexander of these chronicles, and Caiaphas, who in the name of his people crucified the Son of David.

The Jewish chronicler would have liked to have buried this chapter of his people's evil history. The short span of time between his generation and the one that suffered under the "Nero of the Jews" made it impossible for him to erase from the book of his people's life the dark, defining event of this chapter.

In revenge for the humiliation he was forced to endure—finding himself fleeing like a rat when until then he had been boasting of being the fiercest lion of hell—the Hasmonean erected eight hundred crosses on Golgotha. Not one, nor two, nor three, nor four.

If the Passion of the Lamb has been conveyed to you as physically grueling, wait until you learn what sufferings those eight hundred goats had to endure.

The Hasmonean announced that he was going to throw a party. He invited acquaintances and strangers alike, foreigners as well as patriots. The celebration was to be Neronian in style. For since the natural sign of human intelligence is imitation, and since Nero had not yet been born, someone had to rise up as the model for the future mass-murderer of Christians. Who else but him, original even in his flight?

He set the date. He didn't tell a soul about the surprise he had concocted. And the banquet began. The Hasmonean brought out enough meat and wine to feed a regiment, hired foreign prostitutes, and ordered the local ones to ply their trade as they had never done before. Nothing was lacking. Food by the bucketful, wine by the barrel, women in abundance.

"Where will you find another king like me?" in the prelude to his madness, the Hasmonean shouted so that Heaven—worshiped by the eight hundred condemned men who already had their places reserved on the eight hundred crosses crowning Golgotha from its foothills to the summit's esplanade—might hear him.

During the last few days, everyone had bet that the Hasmonean would not dare go that far. The relatives of those involved in the macabre spectacle prayed to Heaven that he would not dare. How little they knew him! The Jews had not yet found out and continued to refuse to believe that the very mother who gave birth to Abel had nurtured the monster that was his brother within her womb.

"Do only Greek women give birth to beasts?" the Hasmonean shouted at the top of his lungs from atop the walls. "There you have proof to the contrary. Here you have eight hundred."

Nero wasn't that bad. At least the madman par excellence crucified foreigners. These eight hundred were all compatriots of their executioner, all brothers of his guests.

This was the surprise. Instead of putting them on trial or murdering his enemies without anyone being able to blame him for their deaths, the Hasmonean herded them together like cattle and condemned them to die on the cross. Just because—because he was the king, and the king was God. And if he wasn't God, it didn't matter; he was the Devil. It amounts to the same thing, the same thing.

Mount Golgotha was crammed with crosses. When the guests took their seats in their armchairs, the eight hundred crosses were still empty. The spectacle was sinister but gratifying if it were to remain nothing more than a silent threat. With this positive thought in mind, they began to help themselves to the wine.

Eventually, after most of them had eaten more than they should have, drunk beyond measure, and thoroughly satisfied their masculine instincts, the Hasmonean gave the order. At his command, the eight hundred condemned men marched forward.

Immediately they began to hang them from the crossbeams—one cross per person. If any of those present felt their soul shatter, none dared to shed a tear. The wine, the prostitutes, the pleasure of watching someone die like a bandit who, until yesterday, had paraded his status as prince of the people—all of it together did the rest.

"What do you do with the rats that invade your home? Do you forgive their accursed offspring, or do you send them to hell as well?" In the ecstasy of the tragedy, Asmoneus howled once more from the walls of Jerusalem.

What came next no one expected. The Hasmonean was full of surprises. Perhaps you, reader, wouldn't imagine it either if I didn't tell you and challenge you to guess it. Everyone believed that with the crucifixion of the eight hundred Pharisees, the Hasmonean's thirst for vengeance would be quenched. They had already turned their backs on the victims on their crosses when eight hundred families began to gather—the eight hundred families of the eight hundred wretches exposed to the stars of their fate. Women, children, family by family, took their places at the foot of the cross of the head of each household.

Stunned, believing they had been invited to witness a hellish nightmare, the eyes of the guests at the Jewish Nero's banquet widened in shock. Paralyzed with horror, they realized what was about to happen. The latest and freshest incarnation of the Devil was going to behead the head of the family and slaughter

the body at the same time. If the man is the head of the family, then his family is the body—and who is the madman who kills the head and leaves alive a body full of hatred so that it may take its revenge?

The Hasmonean army of executioners drew their swords, awaiting the order from the man who had turned Jerusalem into the Devil's throne.

All the bodies were already at the feet of their heads; their wives, along with their sons and daughters, were trembling with horror and despair, weeping over the father's fate, when—believing that their destiny was to weep—the king's flash of madness shattered their illusion.

Once again, at the height of his madness, the Hasmonean cried out with emotion: "Jerusalem, remember me." Immediately afterward, he gave the satanic order.

They slaughtered them all—women and children—at the foot of the eight hundred crosses and their eight hundred goats. The Hasmonean's hired executioners drew their axes and swords, raised their arms, and began their hellish and macabre task. No one lifted a finger to prevent the crime.

(The official Jewish historian wrote little more about this crime. Claiming in his prologue that the truth was his sole concern, after reading his account one wonders what love for the truth the devil could possibly have. But let's continue.)

Numb with shock, believing they were living a dream, the guests watched the third part of the hellish spectacle without moving from their seats. As bit players in the Asmoneo's grand performance, their pay had clouded their judgment. Truth be told, it didn't take a genius to guess what would happen next. The Asmoneo then ordered that the crucified goats be set on fire. And that the party continue.

And the party continued amid a deluge of alcohol, meat, and prostitutes.

The next day, all of Jerusalem rushed to the Temple to find comfort in the Oracle of Yahweh.

The man of God simply said, "The destruction that will bring ruin upon this nation has been decreed."

9

After the 800

After that orgy of cruelty and madness, nothing could ever be the same again. The ambition of some, the fanaticism of others—it had led them all to a dead end. A king unleashes his murderous madness, directing it against strangers—fair enough—but when, in the entire history of the Kingdom of Judah, has any king ever turned against his own people to commit such a crime?

The reputation the Maccabees had earned among the Jews, on the day after the Massacre of the Eight Hundred, was found crawling through the lowest depths of decency and the respect one nation owes another. Branded as monsters who

devoured their own children, those who until yesterday had walked among the Gentiles claiming for themselves the status of the Chosen People had to hide from everyone's gaze the very next day, as if fleeing from Satan himself. But let us return to Holy Jerusalem.

For a time, the cry of pain and grief kept the insatiable thirst for vengeance of the relatives of the Eight Hundred at bay. But sooner or later, the hatred to the death would spread and sweep through the streets, sowing death upon the sidewalks. Who would be the first to fall? On street corners, in the darkness of alleys, under any doorway. At any hour, on any occasion—the king's foreign executioners?

No! It would be them, the Sadducees. It would be the sons of Aaron—all priests, all saints, all sacred, all inviolable—who would be the first to face vengeance. Since vengeance could not be taken out on the king, it would be taken out on the flesh of his allies. Brothers-in-law, cousins, fathers-in-law, sons-in-law, wives, mothers-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren—all were in the crosshairs of the dagger.

Whether they were leaving the Temple or going from their homes to their fields, wherever they were found, hatred would descend upon them without distinguishing between the righteous and the guilty, the sinner and the innocent. There would be no mercy, no quarter. With his macabre lesson, the Hasmonean had deflected the dagger from his own back. Who would save them now? One by one. When they closed their eyes in their homes... two silver coins would emerge from the shadows, seeking eye sockets in which to take up residence. When their animal needs arose... claws would emerge from the crevices in the ground. No, the Sadducees would not sleep in peace, nor would they live in tranquility from that day forward. The day would come when it would seem better to them to live in hell than to suffer the hell of being alive.

And so it was. Every day after the Massacre of the Eight Hundred, the streets of Jerusalem awoke to the wailing of widows and orphans demanding justice from the king. The king was delighted to see that while they killed one another, they left him in peace.

It is the truth: in his madness, the Hasmonean took pleasure in watching his allies live in terror, like rats trapped in the house of hungry cats. As far as he was concerned, his personal safety had been secured against all risk. Without distinguishing between age or gender, he once killed six thousand in a single day. This time, he had devoured 800 enemies along with their families. Did they want even more? He still had the nerve to double the death toll.

Why 800 crosses? Why not seven hundred? Or three thousand four hundred?

The fact is that the Hasmonean had the memory of a beast. Human beings overcome childhood traumas; they are distinguished from beasts by their ability to forget the harm suffered at some point in the past. Beasts, on the other hand, never forget. Years may pass; even if a decade goes by, the wounds remain etched in their memory. With the passage of time, the little pup becomes a wild beast; then one

day it encounters its childhood enemy, the wound reopens, and out of instinct it pounces to exact its revenge. Such was the nature of the Hasmonean's memory.

Why 800 souls? Why not seven hundred or three thousand four hundred?

The people had to know the truth. The whole world had to know his truth. History had to record in its annals the root cause of the Hasmonean's hatred toward the Pharisees. How many brave men followed the Maccabee on the Day of the Fall of the Brave? Wasn't it exactly 800? Weren't the fathers of the 800 crucified Pharisees the ones who gave the order to retreat and handed the Hero over to the enemy? Why did they do it? Why did those cowards leave only the Hero and his 800 Brave Men to face the enemies?

"I'll tell you why," shouted the Hasmonean from the ramparts. "Because they feared the Hero would rise up as king. Cowards—they sold out the Hero and handed him over to silence the fear they harbored. But tell me, when, at what moment, on what secret occasion did it ever occur to the Hero, among his 800 Brave Ones, to lead them against Jerusalem and proclaim himself king? His soul knew no ambition other than the freedom of his nation. His heart beat only with the longing for freedom. Your fathers challenged him to surrender command, to place himself under their orders, unaware that this Brave Man recognized no king and lord other than his God. They put him to the test, pushed him to the edge of the abyss, believing that the Brave Man would turn his back on death. They dared the Champion of the Almighty. Well then, this is the pay that your King and Lord places in your pouches. Take your wages, cowards. You touched the Champion whom God raised up to grant you freedom at the price of his blood and that of his entire household. Do you not want paradise? There I send you to claim your wages from the Almighty. His glory and fame bothered you. You had to flee the battlefield to prove to him that victory was yours, that without you he was nothing. Rejoice, for soon you will see him face to face."

No matter what he said, no matter what reasons he used to justify his conscience, the Hasmonean knew that after the Slaughter of the 800, nothing could ever be the same. After that ode to the depths of hell, he could expect nothing but the destruction of his house. Abijah had prophesied it, and—without intending or seeking it—he had brought it about. Fate, destiny, a misstep left uncorrected, another unforeseen error imposing the law of necessity, pure chance, chaos, the fates, the irresponsibility of the people and their dreams of justice, freedom, and peace. How can one blame the goddess of fortune for bestowing ill-fated kisses? Sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. Worse dynasts managed to pave the way for their children across the plain of the centuries. But to what end? In the end, every crown ends up being stripped bare; the one who seemed to have the fewest legs leaps the highest, and yesterday's nobody claims tomorrow's glory. From a throne, the world is a box of crickets; the one who shouts the loudest is the king. Why aren't the people content with their lot? Why do they want more justice, more freedom? If you give them a hand, they'll take your arm. They always find a reason to ruin their rulers' happiness. If it weren't for the fact that subjects are necessary, wouldn't everyone be better off dead? Or at least deaf and mute?

The Hasmonean's dark reflections in his moments of distress were not to be missed. More than once he let them flow from his mind without even realizing

his Praetorian commanders were present. Their diabolical smiles spoke more eloquently than the longest and most profound discourse of the most colorful and conspicuous sage.

Were his children's lives in danger? And would they continue to be so if not a single Jew remained alive?

It was a tricky choice. When depression suffocated him, the Hasmonean caressed him. But no. That would be too much. He had to find a smarter solution. Turning his back on the fact that he had crossed the line wasn't going to solve the problem. He had to think. After the Massacre of the 800, nothing would ever be the same again. He had to find his way out of the labyrinth before his family opened the gates of hell and the flames of hatred consumed them.

Yes, nothing would ever be the same again.

It wasn't just the Hasmonean who understood this. Simeon the Babylonian understood it, too. Abijah's words echoed in his head with the full weight of their enduring truth. "Hate begets hate, violence begets violence, and both will devour all their servants." Where, indeed, had the magical arts led Simeon the Babylonian? The blood of the 800 weighed on his conscience. The weight crushed him. Abijah had always been right. He never tired of saying, "Who takes a pitcher and goes to fetch water in a burning forest? To that end, such means."

But of course, what other advice could one expect from a man of God?

What else?!

That they lay down their arms and, without abandoning their goal, devote the means appropriate to that cause to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy. For example?

Convinced by the evidence, Simeon the Babylonian laid down his arms and became a disciple and partner of Abijah, who had been preaching to those hearts of stone in the desert for so long.

For his part, the Hasmonean's despair grew as the days went by. Abijah's prophecy regarding the fate of his house began to seem so evident to him that, against all odds, he relented. Not because the weight his conscience could bear—still strong enough to bear a few thousand more corpses—stirred his very being. The true cause of the mental oppression that tightened around his neck, leaving him breathless, lay in the fate he had carved out for his sons. He himself had sharpened the axe's blade. Because of him, his sons had become the object of God's wrath. The executioner who would cut off their heads had not yet been born, but who could assure him that he would not be born?

In a move befitting his terrors, Alexander Jannaeus struck a treaty of national reconciliation with his enemies. Abijah and Simeon the Babylonian would be the guarantors of this pact, which would ensure his descendants' survival among the other families of Jerusalem. The state treaty was as follows.

Upon his death, the crown would pass to his widow. Queen Alexandra would restore the Sanhedrin. In this way, the battle between the Pharisees and the

Sadducees for control of the Temple—the source of all recent evils—would be brought to an end. His son Hyrcanus II would receive the high priesthood.

Upon Queen Alexandra's death, whether the crown would pass to her other son, Aristobulus II, or whether the legitimate heir of the House of David would be crowned would depend on the results of the search for the Son of Solomon.

Once Queen Alexandra had died, the House of the Hasmoneans could not be blamed for the final events to which the search might lead. This part of the agreement would be kept secret among the king, the queen, Hyrcanus II, and the two men in whom they trusted, Abijah and Simeon the Babylonian.

His widow would elevate these two men to the leadership of the Sanhedrin headed by Hyrcanus II. This final part of the pact would remain secret to prevent Prince Aristobulus from rebelling against his parents' will and claiming the crown.

Alexander Jannaeus died in his bed. His widow succeeded him to the throne. Alexandra Salome reigned for nine years. True to the pact she had signed, Queen Alexandra restored the Sanhedrin, entrusting its governance on equal terms to the Pharisees and Sadducees. Her son Hyrcanus II was appointed high priest. Prince Aristobulus II was excluded from the line of succession and from matters of state. The secret part of the pact—the search for Solomon's living heir—would no longer depend on Queen Alexandra, but on the two men to whom her late husband had entrusted the mission. A mission that was to be completed during Alexandra's reign and remain shrouded in the secrecy that had given rise to it. Although young, if such a plan to restore the Davidic monarchy were to reach Prince Aristobulus's ears, no one could say for certain that, in his madness, he would not rise up in civil war against his brother.

There were nine years of relative peace. The two men charged with finding Solomon's legitimate heir had nine years to scour the kingdom's upper classes and track him down. I say "relative peace" because the relatives of the 800 exploited their power to drench the streets of Jerusalem with the blood of those who had executed their kin.

Powerless to curb that thirst for vengeance—which claimed its victims daily with impunity—as each year passed, the eyes of the condemned began to turn more and more to Prince Aristobulus as their savior. With Aristobulus lulled into the hope of reigning after his mother's death, he had to be roused from his comfortable position as crown prince; they had to act immediately and carry out the coup d'état that the Sadducees' own defenseless situation was bringing about.

Under these circumstances, how much time did Simeon and Abijah have to find Solomon's rightful heir? How long could they weather the civil war looming on the horizon?

God knows that Simeon and Abijah searched—that they scoured the entire kingdom in their quest. They moved heaven and earth in their search. And it was as if the house of Zerubbabel had vanished from the political scene of Judah after his death. Yes, of course there were those who claimed to be descendants of Zerubbabel, but when it came time to produce the relevant genealogical documents, it all amounted to nothing but words. So, with time running against them—the queen mother drawing closer to the grave with each passing day, Prince

Aristobulus II growing stronger every year under the protection of the Sadducees who advocated for a coup d'état that would bring them to power—Abijah and Simeon found themselves drifting farther and farther from what they were seeking. Their prayers did not reach Heaven; rumors of civil war, on the other hand, seemed to. In the ninth year of her reign, Queen Alexandra passed away. With her died the restorers' hope of finding Solomon's rightful heir.

10

The Saga of the Forerunners

Following the death of the Hasmonean, after Queen Alexandra's regency, while Hyrcanus II held the office of high priest, and after the civil war against his brother Aristobulus II, God stirred the spirit of wisdom within Zechariah, son of Abijah.

Called to the priesthood as the son of Abijah, Zechariah focused his career in Temple administration on the history and genealogy of the families of Israel. A confidant of his father—with whom Zechariah shared his zeal for the coming of the Messiah—Zechariah conceived the plan to open the Temple archives while his father and his partner, the Babylonian, led the search for the heir to the Crown of Judah. When the failure of the search for the legitimate heirs of Zerubbabel became a fait accompli, Zechariah vowed to himself that he would not rest until he had turned the shelves upside down, and—by Yahweh!—he would not stop until he found the clue that would lead him to the home of Solomon's living heir.

The Temple in Jerusalem fulfilled all the functions of a state. Its officials acted as a bureaucracy parallel to that of the Court itself. Birth records, employee salaries, income accounting, the School of Doctors of the Law—this entire machinery functioned as an autonomous body.

Positions of power were hereditary. They also depended on the influence of each candidate. As a candidate, Zechariah would have in his favor the three classic forces with which anyone could have risen to the very top.

He had the spiritual leadership of his father. He had the influence and full support of one of the most influential men both within and outside the Sanhedrin, Simeon the Babylonian, the Semayas of traditional Jewish sources. In these sources, Abijah is called " r Abtalion," a distortion of the original Hebrew; by perverting the Hebrew sources in this way, the Jewish historian sought to conceal from future generations the messianic connections between the generations preceding the Nativity and Christianity itself. And above all, and most importantly, Zechariah possessed the spirit of wisdom that his God had given him to bring his undertaking to a successful conclusion.

Under the command of God, the saga of the restorers led by Abijah and Simeon the Babylonian—whose names, as I have said, were distorted by later Jewish historians in order to root the origin of Christianity in the mind of a madman— God once again repeated the interplay that had taken place between his

two servants, stirring within Simeon's son the pioneering spirit that would be kindled in the son of his partner.

Having denied the fathers victory—because the glory of triumph had been reserved for their sons, Abias's son being the elder of the two—God, in His Omniscience, willed that Simeon's son, named Simeon like his father, should have Abias's son as his teacher, thereby sealing the friendship that already existed between them with bonds that endure forever.

Also, like his father, Simeon the Younger seemed born to enjoy a comfortable and happy life, far from the spiritual concerns of Abijah's son.

Like father, like son, Simeon the Younger tied his future to that of Zechariah, placing the fortune he inherited from his father at his service.

A man—speaking of Zechariah—would have to be quite foolish indeed to fail, with such power behind him, in his attempt to climb the pyramid of the Temple bureaucracy and rise to the summit as Director of the Historical Archives and Chief Genealogist of the Theocratic State into which, following Pompey the Great's conquest of Judah, the ancient kingdom of the Hasmoneans had been transformed. Overcoming this inability through the boundless intelligence his God had given him to forge his own path, Zechariah reached the top and planted his flag on the highest peak of the Temple's structure.

Times were difficult, in any case. Civil wars were ravaging the world. Horror had become the norm. Thank God, the failure of Simeon and Abijah ended with a happy ending that made up for it.

After Queen Alexandra's death, what had long been foreseeable finally came to pass. Aristobulus II claimed the crown for himself, faced his brother Hyrcanus II on the battlefield, and emerged victorious. But if he had dreamed of legitimizing his coup, he soon realized his mistake.

The world was no longer ready for a return to the days of his father. Even the Sadducees themselves were now unwilling to relinquish the privileges the Sanhedrin had granted them. Neither the Sadducees nor the Pharisees stood to gain from a return to the status quo that had existed before the Sanhedrin was established. Obviously, this was even less in the Pharisees' interest than in the Sadducees'. So it was agreed to bring onto the scene the father of the future King Herod—a Palestinian by birth, a Jew by force. At the Pharisees' behest, Antipater hired the king of the Arabs to oust Aristobulus II from the throne.

The maneuver of placing the burden of the rebellion on the shoulders of Hyrcanus II was a stratagem by the Sanhedrin to remain on the sidelines in the event of a defeat by the hired forces. The ongoing war was resolved in favor of Hyrcanus II thanks to divine foresight, which interposed the Roman general of the time—who was on a triumphal march through the lands of Asia—between the brothers. We are speaking of Pompey the Great.

After conquering Turkey and Syria, the Roman general received an embassy from the Jews begging him to intervene in their kingdom and put an end to the civil war into which their passions had dragged them. This took place in the 60s B.C.

Pompey agreed to act as an arbitrator between the two brothers. He ordered them to appear before him immediately to explain the reasons why they were killing one another. Who was Cain, and who was Abel?

Pompey did not engage in discussions of this nature. With the authority of a master of the universe, he spoke words of wisdom and made known his Solomonic judgment on the matter. From that day forward and until further notice, the Jewish kingdom was transformed into a Roman province. Hyrcanus II was reinstated as head of state, and Antipater, Herod's father, as chief of his general staff. As for Aristobulus, he was to retire to civilian life and forget about the crown.

And so it was done. Afterward, Pompey set out with the Roman eagles to complete his conquest of the Mediterranean world, leaving the bells to toll in Jerusalem for the solution adopted—the best of all the worst options.

In those days, the dragon of madness roamed freely across all the corners of the Ancient World. It had been doing so since the dawn of time, but this time, amid the Roman civil wars—the Devil wiser through age than through genius—its tongues of fire created men more evil than ever before. Unlike the other tongues that made saints, the Devil's tongues gave birth to monsters who sold their souls to Hell for the sake of the fleeting power of military glory. Like a Superstar signing blood-wedding contracts with Death's grooms, the Prince of Darkness signed autographs with a smug grin, hoping in his manifest madness to earn from his Creator the applause due to the one who had issued an ultimatum to God.

The death toll from the Roman world wars was never recorded. The future will never know how many souls perished beneath the insane wheels of the Roman Empire. Reading the chronicles of that empire of darkness on Earth, one might dare to say that the Devil himself had been hired as an advisor to the Caesars. Once again, the Beast roamed the far reaches of the globe, carrying out its sovereign will.

In the midst of those bloody times, when even a blind man could see the impossibility of defying the new master of the universe—all the more so if the challenger was nothing more than a fly on an elephant's back—Aristobulus II, defying all logic and common sense, disregarded Pompey the Great's Solomonic judgment and declared an armed rebellion against the Empire.

The boundless ambition for absolute power knows no bounds of race or time. History has seen the cat of Pandora's box opened more times than the annals of modern nations can recall. It seems the chasm between man and beast is less dangerous than man's leap into the status of the children of God. And yet, those who deny humanity's future what belongs to it by right of creation— —are the very same ones who later defend the idea of evolution with fire and bullets. We do not know whether, by casting doubt on God's intentions in creating Man, science is concealing an open rebellion against the final stage programmed into our genes since the dawn of recorded history. Deep down, it might simply be a matter of intellectual pride raised to the square of its power. That is to say, the existence of God is not denied; what exists is a refusal to live out a predetermined narrative. Let me explain: why must we be passive objects in a story written before we were even born? Isn't it better to be active subjects in a tragedy written by Destiny?

The depths of human psychology never cease to amaze. In the darkness of the abyssal depths of the mind, luminescent creatures as beautiful as stars in the night suddenly transform into monstrous dragons. Their fiery arrows devour all peace, violate all justice, and deny all truth. And by coveting the power of the rebellious gods, they prove right those who, without believing in evolution, assert that there is something beyond man.

After all, it is not so much a matter of believing or not believing, but of choosing between the nature of the Beast and that of the children of God.

In this regard, Aristobulus II had a mindset very typical of his time. It was all or nothing. Why share power? Between Cain and Abel, he had chosen the role of Cain. And he hadn't fared badly at all. Why was the Roman now coming to steal the fruits of his victory?

As long as Pompey the Great imposed his will on him at swordpoint and the myth of the Pirate Slayer's invincibility kept his passion in check, everything went perfectly for the Savior of the Mediterranean. As soon as Pompey turned his back on Aristobulus, his Hasmonean streak emerged, and he devoted himself to what he knew best: waging war.

He certainly put into practice the way he understood waging war.

Wherever he rode, he made his mark. A farm here, another there—Judea would remember the son of his father for a long time to come. Fire, ruin, desolation—let history be written, and let what is written remain written, if not in the annals of history, then at least on the backs of the people!

The Ancient Serpent must have known that the Day of Yahweh was approaching—a day of vengeance and wrath. With the Leviathan in its sights, Hell intensified the fire burning within, and from the pinnacle of its accursed glory, it set out to lead the army of darkness to its impossible victory.

Brother against brother, kingdom against kingdom. Even the all-powerful Roman Senate trembled with dread on the day Caesar crossed his own Red Sea. Because of the Conqueror of Gaul—who had only recently been hailed as the lord of Asia—that very same Pompey was seen crossing the Great Sea, fleeing like a cat, only to end up murdered like a louse on a beach by order of a pharaoh in a skirt.

He pursued his former partner all the way to Egypt—the man who had turned a river into a phrase for the ages— and there the very same pharaoh who had slain Pompey would have buried him had the provincial armies of Asia not providentially intervened on his behalf; among their ranks, the Jewish cavalry stood out for its boldness and courage, securing victory and, more importantly, saving the life of the Conqueror of Gaul. This rescue earned the Jews of the Empire Caesar's most heartfelt gratitude and restored to the nation its lost reputation as valiant warriors.

The necessity that drives the powerful to rely on one another was what thrust the chief of the Jewish general staff into the arms of the new master of the Mediterranean world, earning Herod's father, as I have said, the honors of favor for the Jewish people, and for himself and his household the friendship of one who

is grateful because he was of noble birth—that of the one and incomparable Julius Caesar.

This latter favor did not go down as well in Jerusalem as it did within the family circles of the man concerned. But given the persistence of the Hasmonean's son in following in his father's footsteps, it was respected as a bulwark. At such times, the Jews believed little or nothing that they should fear the meteoric rise to power of the Palestinian upstart: Herod.

Not even when Herod demonstrated more than enough courage to dismantle the forces of the Galilean bandits and sentenced them to death, bypassing the laws of the Jewish Sanhedrin?

Taking advantage of his position as lieutenant of the northern forces, Herod captured the bandits, dismantled their strongholds, and sentenced their ringleaders to death. Nothing unusual if it had been a Jewish leader. The problem was that by assuming the functions of the Sanhedrin—judging and sentencing to death—Herod's personal ambition was laid bare, forcing the Sanhedrin to clip his wings while there was still time.

The matter of putting the Edomite youth on trial was complex because of who his godfather was: Caesar himself. The issue was that if his wings were not clipped, no one could stop his meteoric rise to the throne.

Simeon the Babylonian and Abijah presented this argument to the other members of the tribunal that had convened to judge Herod. Had they rid themselves of the usurpation of David's throne by a Jew by birth only to see a Palestinian take his place on it?

Unafraid of the Edomite upstart, Simeon the Babylonian delivered his verdict before everyone: Either they condemned him to death now that they had him at their mercy, or they would regret their cowardice on the day Antipater's son took the throne in Jerusalem.

Herod turned to look at that old man who was prophesying to him in broad daylight what he had seen so many times in his dreams. Amazed to find a brave man among those cowards, he swore there, in the presence of all his judges, that on the day he was crowned, he would put them all to the sword. All except the one man who had dared to tell him to his face what he felt.

When Herod became king, that was the first measure he took. Except for his personal prophet, he beheaded all the members of the Sanhedrin.

11

The Genealogy of Jesus According to Saint Luke

Amid those days of bloody horrors, Nature defied Hell by flooding the earth with beauty. It was truly an age of beautiful women. In the service of her Lord, Nature conceived a woman of extraordinary beauty and gave her a name. She called her Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was the daughter of one of the high-ranking priestly families of Jerusalem. Her parents belonged to one of the twenty-four families that inherited the 24 shifts at the Temple. As her parents were clients of the house of the Simeons, the extraordinary beauty of that young woman opened the doors to the heart of Simeon the Younger, with whom she grew up as if she were his sister.

Isabel's parents could not help but view the relationship between the two young people favorably. Thinking of the possibility of a future marriage, her parents granted Elizabeth a freedom generally denied to the daughters of Aaron. What could fill those parents' hearts with greater pride than their eldest daughter becoming the wife of the heir to one of the greatest fortunes in Jerusalem?

It was no longer just a matter of wealth; there was also the protection that Herod had extended to the Simeons. The death of the leading members of the Sanhedrin following his coronation left the Simeons in a privileged position. In fact, the Simeons' fortune was the only one that the king did not confiscate.

If Elizabeth were to captivate the young Simeon with her beauty—phew!—it would be more than her parents could ever have dreamed of.

With this secret possibility in mind—one that seemed to grow more real with each passing year, thanks to the intelligence with which Wisdom had enriched what Nature had endowed her with so many gifts—Isabel's parents allowed her to cross that thin line beyond which a Hebrew woman was free to choose a husband.

It was customary among Jewish castes to arrange the marriage contracts of Aaronic women before they reached that perilous age, beyond which, by law, a woman could not be compelled to accept paternal authority as if it were the will of God. Convinced of the irresistible influence of Isabel's beauty over the young Simeon, her parents took the risk of letting her cross that boundary.

She crossed it delightedly, and he was her accomplice.

Simeon played along with that soulmate whom life had given him. Having been raised himself to enjoy a privileged freedom, by the time Isabel's parents realized the truth, it would already be too late. By then, Isabel would have crossed that border, and nothing and no one in the world could stop her from marrying the man she loved more than her own life, more than the walls of Jerusalem, more than the stars of the infinite sky, more than the angels themselves.

The day her parents realized who Isabel's chosen one was, they raised a huge outcry.

The problem with the man Isabel loved in a way that far outweighed family interests was simple. Isabel had given her heart to the most stubborn young man in all of Jerusalem. In reality, no one would have bet a thing on the life of Abijah's son. It had gotten into Zechariah's head to enter the Temple and expel all the sellers of genealogies and wholesale dealers in birth certificates. Stunned by what they believed was a direct attack on their pockets, many swore to end his career at any cost. But neither threats nor curses managed to scare Zechariah.

In this regard, everyone acknowledged that the son was a carbon copy of his father. Wasn't his father the only man in the entire kingdom capable of standing up to the Hasmonean in his prime, blocking his path, and prophesying a torrent of

misfortunes right to his face? What could one expect of his son—that he would be a coward?

In any case, why didn't Zacarías direct his crusade elsewhere? Why had he gotten it into his head to focus his crusade against the thriving business of buying and selling genealogical documents and fake birth certificates? What harm were they doing to anyone by issuing those documents?

Those interested came all the way from Italy itself, willing to pay whatever was asked for a simple piece of papyrus signed and sealed by the Temple. What was the reason for this stubbornness on the part of Abijah's son? Why didn't he just enjoy life like any other young man? Did he actually get a kick out of ruining everyone's fun?

Well, but before we continue, let's delve into Zechariah's mind and the circumstances he was up against.

I have said that Zechariah, son of Abijah, and Simeon the Younger, son of Simeon the Babylonian, took up the mantle of the search for Solomon's living Heir.

Given all the circumstances established in the previous chapters, it is clear that secrecy was the *sine qua non* that would lead them to the very end of the thread. No one was to know what their ultimate goal was.

If the mere idea of a Davidic restoration made the Hasmoneans' hair stand on end, at the slightest suspicion of the intentions of the sons of their protégés—Semayas and Abtalion in the official Jewish writings, Simeon and Abijah to us—King Herod would have slaughtered all the sons of David that very day.

Then there were the classic informers who would be only too happy to denounce their sons—our Simeon and Zechariah. Herod would reward such a denunciation for treason against the crown with countless honors. And in the process, they would eliminate from the scene the lone crusader with whom no agreement could be reached.

So, knowing the sea of dangers on whose waves he was sailing, Zechariah did not confide in anyone in the world. Not even to Elizabeth herself, the woman he knew he would marry despite the wishes of his future in-laws.

It was only natural that, of all the men in Jerusalem, there was no one who enjoyed greater protection than the son of Abijah.

Let us now examine the causes of that widespread corruption into which the Temple officials threw themselves.

In gratitude for his rescue by the Jewish cavalry—as I have said before—Julius Caesar granted Judea tax privileges and exempted its citizens from military service.

Caesar was unaware of the complex extent of the Jewish world. Cunning as anyone, the Jews throughout his empire took advantage of his ignorance to benefit from the privileges granted to the citizens of Judea. But to benefit from such privileges, they were required to present the relevant documents.

All they had to do was go to Jerusalem, pay a sum of money, and obtain them.

Was this really the plan that the son of Abijah had devised? Did Zechariah not love his brothers in Abraham? Why did he oppose it? What did he have to gain from all this? The Temple treasury was filling up. As a priest and a Jew by birth, wasn't he interested in the prosperity of his people?

The growing hostility toward Zechariah stemmed from his unstoppable rise, which—if no one stood in his way—would soon lead him to the very top of the Historical and Genealogical Archives, the department responsible for issuing the aforementioned documents.

Well, there were certainly reasons for the son of Abijah to turn a blind eye and take advantage of the opportunity to enrich himself—and, while he was at it, to share with everyone the prosperity that heaven had bestowed upon them after so many past hardships; yes, there were indeed reasons.

But no, Abías's son insisted he wouldn't compromise his principles. He was as stubborn as a rock. To make matters worse, the protection he enjoyed left his enemies with no choice but to try to derail his career by any means necessary.

So, as much as she adored the man of her life, Isabel herself wondered what was behind her beloved's crusade. If she brought up the subject, he would brush her off, look away, change the subject, and leave her hanging. Didn't he love her?

Simeon the Younger laughed at those two star-crossed lovers.

Isabel took that laughter to heart—and since she was the daughter of Aaron and had Nature on her side—she was certain her best friend would reveal to her the mystery the two of them were hiding.

Simeon the Younger stalled her at first. The last thing he wanted was to endanger Isabel's life. In the end, he had to open his heart to her and reveal the truth.

If a Jew from anywhere in the Empire wished to register as a citizen of Judea, to which family would he claim kinship, and in which city would he ask to be registered as a native?

The answer was so obvious that Isabel understood instantly.

"In Bethlehem of Judea, and to King David."

It was already difficult enough for the Kingdom's Chief Genealogist to wade through mountains of documents; on top of that, there was this avalanche of David's descendants who were suddenly popping up everywhere, claiming descent from the legendary king.

"So you're looking for Solomon's heir," Isabel replied to Simeon. "How lovely!" Simeon laughed heartily at his own witticism.

Zechariah didn't find it quite so funny that his partner had revealed the truth to Elizabeth. Now that the damage was done, he had to press on and trust in feminine wisdom—a trust that Elizabeth never betrayed.

The very Spirit who halts the advance of warriors and denies them access to the goals He has reserved for those who will follow them—that same God is the One who ordains the timing and moves the actors across the stage, reserving victory for those to whom He would deny it to those who paved the way for them.

Against all the bad omens their enemies wished upon them, Zacharias rose to the highest position in the Temple Archives. He also married the partner chosen for him by fate. When they discovered they could not have children, people said, "It is God's punishment" because she had rebelled against her parents' will, but they found comfort in loving one another with all the strength of which the human heart is capable.

Added to the pain of their infertility was the failure of their search.

12

The Birth of Joseph

Zechariah spent years sifting through mountains of genealogical documents, sorting through historical scroll after scroll in pursuit of the trail that would lead him to the last living heir to Solomon's crown. He didn't go mad because his intellect was stronger than the despair that took hold of his mind—and, of course, because the Spirit of his God smiled upon him through the words of his partner Simeon, who never lost hope and was always there to lift his spirits.

"Take it easy, man. You'll see—in the end, we'll find what we're looking for where we least expect it, and when we least imagine it. You'll see. Don't rack your brain—your God wants to open your eyes in His own way. I don't think He's going to leave you empty-handed. It's just that we're looking in the wrong direction. It's our own fault. Do you think the Lord God has raised you to where you are now just to leave you in despair at the summit? Rest, enjoy your life—let Him make us laugh."

That Simeon was extraordinary—in every sense of the word. When he married the woman of his dreams, he also enjoyed the dream of being the happiest man in the world. With that happiness of his, which spilled over onto all the clients of his bank and made him the banker of the poor, one fine day business matters took him to Bethlehem.

The Simeons' clientele also extended to the towns around Jerusalem. Among the families that did business with them was the Clan of the Carpenters of Bethlehem. At that time, the leadership of the Clan was in the hands of Matat, the father of Heli. Master cabinetmakers, the Clan of the Carpenters of Bethlehem had built their reputation as woodworking professionals since time immemorial. It was even said that the clan's founder had installed one of the gates of the Holy City in the days of Zerubbabel. Just rumors, of course. The fact was that the arrival of Simeon the Younger in Bethlehem coincided with the birth of Eli's firstborn son. They named the newborn Joseph. Congratulations aside, once the business that had brought him to Bethlehem was concluded, the child's grandfather and our

Simeon began discussing the family's origins. The course of the conversation led Matat to elaborate on the Davidic lineage of his house.

In Bethlehem, it never occurred to anyone to question the word of the head of the Carpenters' Clan. Everyone believed—as had always been the custom in the town—that the Clan belonged to the house of David. Matat, Joseph's grandfather, didn't go around brandishing his family's genealogical record as if it were a whip ready to fall upon the unbelievers. It wouldn't have been necessary. It was simply the way it was; it had always been that way, and nothing else was appropriate. His parents had been considered sons of David since no one could remember when, and he, Matat, was fully within his rights to believe the word of his ancestors. After all, everyone was free to believe themselves to be the son of whomever suited them best. But of course, with the Zaccarian investigation at a standstill and the search for Solomon's son in the historical archives stuck in a dead end, it was inevitable that a simple family of carpenters would leap into the realm of infallible truths; it was inevitable that our Simeon—a very close friend of the Kingdom's Chief Genealogist—would find Grandfather Matat's absolute certainty, if not amusing, then at least quite endearing. More than anything, it was the tone of certainty in Joseph's grandfather's voice.

When, without intending to offend the head of the Bethlehem carpenters' clan, Simeon the Younger cast doubt on the legitimacy of his family's Davidic lineage, Grandfather Matat looked at the young Simeon with slightly furrowed brows. His first reaction was to feel offended, and by his beard, had the doubt come from anyone else who had questioned his honor, he would have thrown them out of his house on the spot. But in honor of the friendship that bound him to the Simeons, and because the Younger had in no way intended to offend him, Grandfather Matat refrained from giving free rein to his temper. Also because, given the prevailing winds of the times—when all it took was a kick to a stone to produce descendants for David—the young man's doubt seemed understandable to him.

A man of very good character, despite this manner of entering our story, and not wanting any doubt of any kind to linger between his house and that of the Simeons from then on, Grandfather Matat took our Simeon by the arm and led him aside. With all the trust in the world placed in his word, the man led him to his private chambers. He went to a chest as old as winter, opened it, and took from within a sort of bronze scroll wrapped in musty hides.

Before Simeon's eyes, Grandfather Matat placed it on the table. And he unrolled it slowly, with the mystery of one who is about to bare his soul.

As soon as Simeon saw the contents wrapped in those musty hides, his pupils widened like windows as the first rays of spring broke through. A silent "Good heavens" slipped from his lips, but he concealed his surprise and hid the shiver of emotion running down his spine. For rarely in his life—even as a close confidant of the Kingdom's Chief Genealogist, and despite how accustomed he was to seeing ancient documents, some as old as the walls of Jerusalem—had his eyes beheld a treasure as beautiful as it was significant.

That genealogical scroll exuded antiquity from every pore. The seals on its metal were two stars shining in a leatheren firmament as dry as the mountain

where Moses received the Tablets. The characters of its script gave off exotic fragrances born on the battlefield where David had raised what would become the sword of the kings of Judah. Grandfather Matat unfurled his clan's genealogical scroll in all its magical splendor and let the Young Man read the list of the ancestors of Joseph, his newborn grandson. It read:

"Heli, son of Matat. Matat, son of Levi. Levi, son of Melchi. Melchi, son of Jannai. Jannai, son of Joseph. Joseph, son of Mattathias. Mattathias, son of Amos. Amos, son of Nahum. Nahum, son of Esli. Esli, son of Naggai. Naggai, son of Maat. Maat, son of Mattathias. Mattathias, son of Semein. Semein, son of Josec. Josec, son of Jodda. Jodda, son of Joanam. Joanam, son of Resa. Resa, son of Zerubbabel."

While he was reading it, Simeon the Younger did not dare to lift his eyes. A dazzling energy was coursing through every fiber of his being. Inside, he wanted to leap for joy; his soul felt like that of the Hero after victory, leaping naked through the streets of Jerusalem. Had Zechariah been there with him, by his side, by God, they would have danced the dance of the brave around the victory fire.

Of course, of course Simeon the Younger had seen a document just like that one—with different names, but from the same era—holding within its secrets the oldest Hebrew characters, written by the men who lived in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. He had seen it in his own home. His own father had inherited it from his father and brought it to Jerusalem to deposit a copy in the Temple Archives. Yes, he had seen it in his own home; it was the pride of the Simeon family. How many families in all of Israel could produce a document of that nature? Simeon had known the answer since he was a child: only the families who returned with Zerubbabel from Babylon could do so, and all those who could do so were members of the Sanhedrin.

Good heavens! What our Simeon would have given to have his Zechariah by his side at that moment. In his eyes, the moon and the stars were not worth as much as that Babylonian bronze scroll bound to that cowhide parchment from Eden. That document was worth more than a thousand volumes of theology. What wouldn't he have given to have had the chance to hear the rest of the List read from Zechariah's own lips! It read:

"Zerubbabel, son of Salathiel. Salathiel, son of Neri; Neri, son of Melchi; Melchi, son of Addi; Addi, son of Cosam; Cosam, son of Elmadam; Elmadam, son of Er; Er, son of Jesus; Jesus, son of Eliezer; Eliezer, son of Jori; Jori, son of Matat; Matat, , son of Levi; Levi, son of Simeon; Simeon, son of Judah; Judah, son of Joseph; Joseph, son of Eliakim; Eliakim, son of Melea; Melea, son of Menna; Menna, son of Mattata; Mattata, son of Natam. Natam…son of David."

13

The Great Synagogue of the East

Perhaps I am rushing through the sequence of events a bit, carried away by the emotion of my memories. I hope the reader will forgive me for having charged

almost uncontrollably across the plain of the memories I am revealing to them. After having lain dormant for two thousand years in the silence of the lofty peaks of History, even the author himself cannot control the emotion that overwhelms him, and his fingers reach for the clouds with the same ease with which the wings of the snow eagle stretch toward the unattainable sun that gives life to its feathers.

The truth I have glossed over is the relative international calm that Julius Caesar's empire brought to the region—a relative peace that worked in our heroes' favor, stimulating their intellect, especially that of our Zechariah. Under different geopolitical circumstances, perhaps, the possibility of incorporating that peace into their strategic interests would never have crossed their minds.

Broadly speaking, everyone knows what kind of love-hate relationship between the Romans and the Parthians kept the Middle East in check during that century. In any case, textbooks on the history of the Ancient Near East and the Roman Republic are available to anyone. It is not a topic that features prominently in official historical accounts, largely due to the Parthians' Asian origins—a detail that serves as sufficient excuse for Western historians, influenced by their Greco-Roman culture, to merely touch upon the history of their own Empire in passing. This history is not the best place to broaden the perspective in that direction; let it be noted here that I hope to do so at another time. In short, this history cannot infinitely expand the scope of the setting in which it unfolded. Official textbooks are there to broaden the perspective for anyone who wishes to delve a little deeper into the subject.

The relevant fact that pertains to this history centers on the influence that Caesar's peace had on the region and the choices it placed in the hands of its inhabitants. Let us consider that whenever we think of the days of the conqueror of Gaul, the predominant focus remains on the trappings of his wars, his dictatorial instincts, and the web of political conspiracies against his *imperium*—always overlooking the benefits that his peace brought to all the peoples subjugated by Rome. In relation to our story, Caesar's peace was not merely great—it was of the utmost importance.

Zechariah, who never stopped scheming about how to bring his search for the rightful heir to Solomon's crown to a successful conclusion, one day thought of his partner's words: "Take it easy, man. You'll see that in the end we'll find what we're looking for where we least expect it, and when we least imagine it—you'll see," and he told himself that Simeon was absolutely right. They still hadn't found what they were looking for because they'd been circling around nothing. And they probably would never stumble upon the clue about the sons of Zerubbabel by continuing to dig where there were no traces of their existence. So why not play the "Great Synagogue of the East" card? All they had to do was send an email asking the Magi of New Babylon to search their archives for Zerubbabel's genealogy. Just that easy, just that simple.

Simeon the Babylonian, a native of Seleucia on the Tigris and an expert on the synagogue in question, nodded. He laughed and blurted it out from the bottom of his heart:

"Of course, my sons, how could we have been so blind all this time? There lies the key to the enigma. Don't waste any time. Somewhere in that mountain of

archives you must find the gem that's been driving you crazy. The time is right. It's now or never. No one can say when the peace will be broken. Let's get to work."

Zechariah and his men chose a thoroughly trustworthy courier from among the couriers of the Great Synagogue of the East who, once the routes were open, used to bring the tithe to Jerusalem. The message he was to carry on his return journey to Seleucia—to be read exclusively by the leaders of the Synagogue of the Magi of the East—concluded with these words: "Focus your investigation on the sons of Zerubbabel who accompanied him from Babylon to Jerusalem."

Given the tension between the two empires of the time—the Roman and the Parthian—a taut rope that could snap at any moment, not to mention the constant nationalist uprisings typical of the Middle East, a response might take some time. But they had time.

Ever since the days of Zerubbabel, the Jews on the other side of the Jordan had managed to navigate the dangers and fulfill their obligation to pay the tithe. During the period of stability that the Persian Empire brought to Western Asia, the caravan of the Magi from the East arrived year after year. Later, after Alexander the Great's conquest of Asia, the situation remained unchanged. Things took a turn for the worse when the Parthians set up camp east of Eden and dreamed of invading the West.

Antiochus III the Great struggled mightily to contain the onslaught of the new barbarians. His son, Antiochus IV, died defending the borders. With the lands of the Near East turned into a no-man's-land open to looting and pillage following the death of the "Beast" of the Jews, the Jews east of the Jordan had to learn to fend for themselves; but no matter what happened, the caravan of the Magi from the East always arrived in Jerusalem with its cargo of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Despite this adversity, which was taken for granted, Zechariah's message reached its destination. In due time, he returned to Jerusalem with the expected reply.

The answer to Zechariah's question was as follows:

"Zerubbabel brought two sons with him from Babylon. The eldest was named Abiud; the younger was named Resa."

And there was more, the messenger from the Magi continued to tell them:

"Zerubbabel gave the scroll of his father, the king of Judah, to his eldest son. Abiud's son was, therefore, the bearer of the scroll of Solomon. To the younger son, he gave the genealogical scroll of his mother. Consequently, Resa's son was the bearer of the scroll of the house of Nathan, son of David. Except for their lists, the two scrolls were identical. As for the whereabouts of both heirs, they could give no details on that."

"How strange is the Almighty!" thought Simeon the Younger as he returned from Bethlehem. "What a strange way for the Almighty to move! The river hides beneath the earth, swallowed up by the rock; no one knows what path it will carve through the underground passages, far from the sight of all living beings." Only He,

the Omniscient One, knows the exact place where it will break through and come to the surface.

The Lord laughs at His people's despair; He lets them dig in the ground, searching for the path the river will take—a river that, barely born, was lost in the heart of the earth—and when they finally throw in the towel under the weight of an impossible victory, and their hands are bleeding from the wounds of frustration, then the soul of the All-Knowing is moved; He rises, smiles at His own, and with a pat on the back goes and says to them: "Come on now, boys, what's the matter with you? Lift up those eyes—what you're looking for is right under your noses."

Simeon the Younger smiled to himself, thinking of the look on his partner Zechariah's face when he broke the news to him. He could already picture himself launching into the whole story of his discovery.

"Sit down, Zechariah," he'd say.

Zacharias would stare at him blankly. Simeon the Younger would continue to shroud him in the mystery of his joy, determined to savor that moment second by second.

"What's wrong, brother? Have you already lost that ability of yours to read my mind?" Simeon the Younger would press him.

Yes, sir—Simeon Junior was going to savor that moment down to the very last microsecond.

At that moment, there was nothing in the world he desired more than to experience, out in the open, the look on his partner's face when he said:

"Lord Chief Genealogist of the Kingdom, tomorrow I will have the infinite pleasure of introducing you to Resa, the son of Nathan, son of David, father of Zerubbabel."

14

The Alpha and the Omega

Against the horizon, the ocean raises its mouth, devouring the sky. The winds howl; sharks plunge their paths into the dark depths, fleeing the fiery brambles that, in the form of whips of water, lash the strong arms that chose to die fighting rather than live dying. What unknown force, from the remote altars of the universe, sprinkles the eyes of men with its nectar of joyful courage—men who go barefoot and walk with bare souls along a path of thorns, seeking to warm their bones by the fire that never burns out? What energy hardens the bones of the " "—the lark of the distances between the two poles of the Earth's magnet—as it traverses the brief seasons of its ephemeral life? Why does the long-suffering earth—crushed, exhausted, and scorched from its primordial mud—give birth to spirits destined to turn their backs on the coconut-tree-lined beach and venture alone into the depths of the black forests? What mystery lies hidden in the human soul that so many seek and so few attain? In what cradle did the firmament of the

heavens nurse the breast that shows the arrow the cleft that will serve as its quiver among its ribs?

Are not the pleasures of life waves of cream and chocolate upon whose lips tender petals deposit their kisses? The king of the jungle sits on the plain, admiring the dance of his queen in the valley of the gazelles. The indomitable condor glides his feathered vessel over peaks that slice through the sky like heroes' swords cutting through the enemy's ranks. The dolphin of the oceans lets itself be carried by the warm currents, dreaming of encountering, along the paths of the sea, caravels of colonists intoxicated by dreams. Why was it man's lot to experience the fluttering of ambitions, the clash of interests, the crackling of passions?

What shall we do with that part of our human nature? Shall we sing it a lullaby before the requiem? Shall we banish the birth of new heroes from our future? Shall we do to the children of the future what others did—give them a grave in the name of freedom? Or shall we lock them inside a cage so they chirp sadly like those foolish little birds that die if their freedom is stolen from them?

Every man faces a life of danger and another of comfort, oblivious to the fate of others. Every age has had its devil's advocates and its prosecutors for Christ. The only thing we know is that once the journey begins, there is no turning back.

The messenger who brought him the reply to the Saga of the Forerunners from New Babylon was named Hilel. Hilel was a young doctor of the Law, a graduate of the School of the Magi of the East. Just as Simeon the Babylonian had done in his day, Hilel made his entrance into Jerusalem carrying the Tithe in one hand, and in the other a secret wisdom suited only to that class of men whom the earth brings forth, even if their fellow men condemn them.

The earth weeps as well, and its children learn as well. It has always been said that man knows more about hell—because he has lived amid its flames—than the devil himself and his rebellious angels, for since their future is our fate, those accursed children have not yet tasted the bitter flavor of the fires of the terrible underworld that awaits them at the turn of the century.

The wise Hellenes believed themselves superior to the Hebrews because of their ability to penetrate the mystery of all things. One is then compelled to ask: Does the one who stumbles over the donkey's stone know more than the one who never fell? In other words, we are all condemned to learn by stumbling twice, like donkeys. And consequently, we must systematically condemn anyone who learned the lesson without having to bite the dust where the Serpent writhes.

In those days of dragons and beasts, of scorpions and centipedes, two paths lay open before mankind. If one chose the first path—to forget about gazing at the stars and devote oneself to one's labors—existence demanded no more than the motto "live and let live"; let the tyrant crush and the powerful bring down, for that is their destiny; the destiny of the weak is to be crushed and brought down.

If they chose the second path, all wisdom was too little and all caution insufficient. Zechariah and his men had chosen this latter path. So had Hillel, the young doctor of the Law whom the Magi from the East had sent to them from New Babylon with the answer to their question.

Hillel did not merely bring them the names of the two sons of Zerubbabel who had accompanied him from Old Babylon to the Lost Homeland. Alone with the Saga of the Forerunners, he told them what they had never heard before; he revealed to them a doctrine whose existence they could not have imagined even in their wildest dreams.

That Zerubbabel was the heir to the crown of Judah, and that in his capacity as prince of his people he led the caravan returning from the Babylonian Exile, is a classic tale of Sacred History. Starting from this well-known fact, and assuming—as Zechariah and his saga do—that Zerubbabel's eldest son was entitled to the birthright of the kings of Judah, Zechariah made his way through the genealogical mountain ranges of his nation. Ultimately, the impossibility of navigating those vast archives led him to look across the Jordan. And from what had once been the land of earthly paradise came the answer on the lips of the doctor of the Law, the protagonist of the following discourse.

"Here I am with the two sons the Lord has given me," began Hillel, delivering the message he had brought from the current Chief of the Magi of the East, a man named Ananel.

"All of us here present have read these words of the prophet many times. David, however, did not have just two sons. He had many. But he included only two—as his words attest—in his messianic inheritance. We are speaking of Solomon and Nathan. The first was a sage; the second was a prophet. Between these two, David divided his messianic legacy.

In doing so, David removed from his heir to the throne the notion that he was the Son of Man, the Child who would be born of Eve to crush the Serpent's head. In other words, Solomon was not to be swayed by the cries of his court clamoring for a universal kingdom; for he was not the Messiah-King of his father David's visions.

A worthy son of his father, the wise king par excellence followed the Divine Plan to the letter. So did his brother, the prophet Nathan. From the day after his brother's coronation, Nathan withdrew from the court and mingled with the people, leaving behind a legacy that is never forgotten nor ever fully grasped."

(Many doubts may arise here regarding whether Nathan, son of King David, and Nathan the prophet were the same person. I do not wish to lose myself in the ramblings typical of a historian of past events. When the documentary evidence necessary for reconstructing a figure's history is lacking, the historian must turn to the elements of an infinitely more precise science—namely, the science of the spirit. I'll pose just one question and leave the topic at that. The king of the prophets... to what other prophet would he have opened the door of his palace except to the one born in his own house, born of his thigh, as the Greek " " said? Did his God not amaze him by making him laugh in that way? Of course, the matter remains pending confirmation by official documentation. But I insist: when natural evidence is lacking, the researcher must lift his gaze and seek the answer in the One who holds in His memory the record of all things in the universe. But if faith fails and God's testimony is deemed worthless before the court of history, then we have no choice but to move on from the subject, or to wander endlessly in pursuit of that unattainable wisdom of the Hellenes. Assuming here that the

wisdom of those present is free from prejudice against the Creator of the heavens and the Earth, we continue).

"The house of Solomon and the house of Nathan parted ways. In due time, when God, in His omniscience, so determined, these two messianic houses would meet again, unite into a single house, and the fruit of this union would be the Alpha. When this event took place, his parents gave him a name; they called him Zerubbabel. This birth occurred approximately five centuries after the death of King David.

"Zerubbabel, son of David, heir to the crown of Judah, married and had sons and daughters. From among his sons, he chose two to repeat the task undertaken by his legendary father, and between them he divided his messianic legacy. The names of his two heirs were Abiud and Resa.

"Loving their father and fearing their God, the princes Abiud and Resa accompanied their father from the Babylon of Cyrus the Great to the Lost Homeland. They took up the sword against those who tried by every means to prevent the reconstruction of Jerusalem, and after their father's death, they went their separate ways.

"Each of them inherited from their father, Zerubbabel, a genealogical scroll written in David's own hand. The Solomonic scroll begins its list with Abraham. The Nethanelite scroll begins its list with Adam himself.

While no one is unaware of the succession from David to Zerubbabel in the Royal Lineage of Judah, the situation is different with the Nathanic Lineage. Its succession is as follows: Nathan, Mattathah, Menna, Melea, Eliakim, Jonam, Joseph, Judah, Simeon, Levi, Matath, Jorim, Eliezer, Jesus, Er, Elmadam, Cosam, Addi, Melchi, Neri, Salathiel.

Anyone who claims to be a son of Resa must present this list. Otherwise, his candidacy for the messianic succession must be rejected."

But let's recap.

15

The Daughter of Solomon

Five centuries after David's death, the two messianic houses met in the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar II. In the court of the Hanging Gardens, Salathiel, prince of Judah, was born. Salathiel married the heiress of the house of Nathan, and they had Zerubbabel.

All the Jews were already rejoicing because the son of the Scriptures had been born when God stirred up the spirit of prophecy in Daniel. With the authority of Nebuchadnezzar's Chief Magician, Daniel silenced that messianic clamor by announcing the divine will to all the Jews. Namely, God had handed the empire over to Cyrus, prince of the Persians.

What Daniel did and said is written down. It is not for me to tell experts well-versed in Sacred History the number of wonders with which Daniel enveloped the throne of the Chaldeans, taking the crown from the heir to give it to the one chosen by his God.

The price Cyrus paid for the crown speaks with indisputable evidence to the nature of the prophet Daniel's involvement in the events that led to the transfer of the empire from Babylon to Susa. But the concern that brings us together here has to do with the fate of the Alpha.

Indoctrinated by Daniel, the young Zerubbabel reenacted in his own life what his father David had done in his. He took the two sons whom God had given him and divided his messianic legacy between them. To the eldest, Abiud, he handed over the genealogical record of King Solomon. To the youngest, Resa, he handed over that of the prophet Nathan. And then he separated them so that the Alpha might follow its own path and grow until it became the Omega.

"We now have the bearer of the prophetic scroll," Hilel continued his account, "the rightful heir of the prophet Nathan, son of David. His emergence is a physical manifestation of how close we are to the hour when the other arm of the Omega will break forth and come to light. The word of hope that my lips bring from the East is in your hearts: God is with you." "The Lord who has led you to the house of Resa will pave the way for you to the house of his brother Abiud. In His Omniscience, He has gathered us all together to bear witness to the Birth of the Alpha and the Omega, the son of Eve, the heir to the Scepter of Judah, the Savior in whose name all the families of the Earth will be blessed."

The discovery of the doctrine of the Alpha and the Omega amazed Zechariah and his Saga. It may also be amazing all of you who are reading these pages. The two genealogies of Jesus have been before everyone's eyes ever since the Gospels were written. These two lists have caused many headaches for exegetes and other experts in the interpretation of the sacred scriptures. On such a beautiful day, I do not intend to claim victory over the memory of those who tried to transform these lists into a sort of heel against which to launch the arrow that killed Achilles. If God is the one who closes the door, who will open it against His will? Only He knows why He does what He does, and no one can fathom His reasons except the one whom He begot in His mind. Or does anyone believe that, against His will, someone could snatch away the victory that was denied to so many? Is it not true that Noah had in his Ark mighty eagles capable of braving the winds and casting their gaze upon distant horizons? And falcons as swift as shooting stars, born to defy storms. And yet it was the most fragile of all birds that defied Death.

But let's get back to our story.

Finding the son of Reza, son of Zerubbabel, son of Nathan, son of David, lifted the spirits of Zechariah and his men to fantastic heights.

They already had the bearer of the Natic scroll, a newborn child who had just come into the world in Bethlehem. His parents had named him Joseph.

Given this, the search for the son of Solomon—now that Nathan's son was in swaddling clothes—became a search for Solomon's daughter. A woman who might already have been born—or might not. If they were to find her—and

assuming, in the best-case scenario, that they could persuade her parents to bring her family closer to that of her brother Resa, thereby uniting their heirs—Zacharias and Simeon the Younger would be witnessing the Birth of the Son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam. In the fruit of that marriage between the son of Nathan and the Daughter of Solomon—the Alpha and the Omega—would be incarnated in the Child born to them.

They could do nothing but congratulate themselves and get to work.

But there was still a problem. If, as had been demonstrated with the house of the Son of Nathan, the parents of the Daughter of Solomon belonged to the humble classes of the kingdom, how would they find her? Once again, they would have to seek the answer in the Archives of New Babylon. Somewhere beneath the mountain of documents in the Great Synagogue of the East lay the clue that would lead them to Solomon's Daughter. Of the two needles in the haystack, they had already found one; now they had to find the other.

It did not take long for Zechariah and his men to send a messenger to New Babylon with the following question: Where in the Holy Land had Abiud, the eldest son of Zerubbabel, settled?

Surely, among that mountain of scrolls in the Great Synagogue of the East, there had to be some document signed in Abiud's own handwriting.

It was reasonable to believe that, following Messianic doctrine, the two brothers had parted ways and placed the future of their reunion in God's hands. That was certain.

Communication was constant in those days between those who left New Babylon and those who remained in Seleucia on the Tigris; searching, searching, and searching, they would find a letter sealed by Abiud—there had to be some personal document in his own handwriting that would reveal to them which part of Israel Zorobabel's eldest son had gone to and where he had settled.

Faith moves mountains—sometimes of stone, and sometimes of paper. In this case, it was of paper.

The following year, the answer was brought to Jerusalem by the chief of the Magi of the East himself. Ananel came with the Tithe. He presented his credentials to the king and the Sanhedrin. Once the formalities were over, he held a secret meeting with Zechariah and his entourage. It was brief.

"Indeed, Abiud and Resa went their separate ways. Resa settled in Bethlehem, and his descendants never left that place. His brother Abiud, on the other hand, headed north, crossed Samaria, and reached the heart of Galilee of the Gentiles. Following a policy of peaceful settlement by purchasing land from its owners— —Abiud bought all the land he could see from a hill called Nazareth."

Ananel repeated this name, "Nazareth," with the emphasis of one who knows that his listeners are hanging on his every word. "Nazareth!" repeated Zechariah and Simeon.

"Galilee of the Gentiles, a light has risen amid your darkness," the two men whispered in unison.

Knowing how things stood, Ananel could assure them without a shadow of a doubt that the House of Abiud still stood. The question they now had to resolve was how to approach the Daughter of Solomon without arousing suspicion at the tyrant's court.

16

The Birth of Solomon's Daughter

On the horizon, Jacob of Nazareth wrote the words of a poet: "Oh woman, what shall I do if no one taught me the laws and principles of the art of deception? Why won't you love me innocently? If my rib aches and you spring from the wound like a dream, what do you want me to do?"

Jacob had the soul of a poet lost in a galaxy of verses from Sharon, that Lily of the Valleys who sings of an elusive wisdom, wounded by the loves of her king. Matán, his father, married Mary; they had sons and daughters. Jacob was their eldest son.

In those days of uprisings against the Western Empire and invasions by the Eastern Empire, with Galilee subjected to looting and pillaging—a battleground for the ambitions of all other peoples—Jacob of Nazareth became his father's right-hand man.

The young man, Jacob—though he was not really a boy anymore; I would say he was a full-fledged man—had not yet married. Not because he had spent his time sacrificing his youth for the well-being of his brothers and sisters. That's what people in the village said. I wouldn't go that far. Neither would he. How little they knew him! He didn't take a wife because he dreamed of that extraordinary, paradisiacal love described by poets. Would his dream come true in that world of metal and stone?

Maybe yes, maybe no.

The truth is that Jacob of Nazareth had the stuff of that Adam who won Eve at the cost of having a rib taken from him. For Jacob, the world's first poet was Adam. Jacob imagined the First Patriarch naked among the wild beasts of Eden—whether racing the panther or stepping between a tiger and a lion during a dispute over the crown of their friendship. For Jacob, when Adam went to bathe in the river, the great lizards of Eden would emerge from the waters. And when he saw the birds of Paradise alighting on the Forbidden Tree, he would scare them away with a stone so that they might live and not die. Then, as night fell, Adam would lie on his back dreaming of Eve. He saw her running beside him, her hair as long as a mantle of stars, both of them naked in the sun of Eden's everlasting spring. And when he awoke, Jacob's rib ached with loneliness.

Just like Adam in Eden, Jacob of Nazareth would sit against the trunk of one of the trees on the Cigüeñal Esplanade, dreaming of her, his Eve. One of those afternoons of poetic reverie, a doctor of the Law who claimed to be named Cleopas appeared on the southern road.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Herod's kingdom, in Judea, the arrival of the head of the Great Synagogue of the East—a Magus named Ananel—shook things up when Ananel was elected to the high priesthood.

For many, Ananel's election marked the completion of the purge of the Sanhedrin that Herod carried out the day after his coronation. He swore it, and he did it. He swore to all his judges what he intended to do to them the day he became king, and when, against all odds, he became king, Herod did not forget his word. Except for the men who had foretold his future, he had them all beheaded. He did not let a single one of those cowards escape who had missed the opportunity to crush him when they had him at their mercy. Afterward, he went and confiscated all their property.

The arrival on the scene of the Chief of the Magi from the East—with an eye toward reconciliation with the people—made Herod's task easier. Even more so when, as president of the Sanhedrin, Ananel presented him with a plan to rebuild the synagogues of the kingdom—a plan that would cost the king not a single euro and would earn his crown the forgiveness of history.

As you know, in the wake of the persecution by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the vast majority of Israel's synagogues were razed to the ground. The Maccabean War and the subsequent military campaigns of the Hasmoneans prevented the reconstruction of the synagogues, which had been in ruins ever since.

Now that the Pax Romana had been established, the opportunity had arrived.

It is clear that if the funding for that reconstruction project had depended on Herod, the establishment of synagogues throughout the kingdom would never have come to pass. It was another matter entirely if the funding came from private capital. As it turned out, the project was carried out by its promoters.

As for the Sadducee clans, the priestly classes' custom of managing the temple treasuries for their own personal gain would also have prevented the reconstruction of all the synagogues in the kingdom. With Ananel's election as President of the Sanhedrin and his project enjoying the support of Zechariah's men—on whom the final decisions of the Jewish Senate depended at that time—the project could and did move forward. Neither Herod nor anyone outside the Zechariah circle was able to imagine what secret objective lay behind that seemingly generous plan for synagogue reconstruction. Had Herod suspected anything, things would have turned out quite differently. The fact is that Herod took the bait.

Jewish history recounts that shortly after the project was signed, Ananel was removed from the high priesthood at the instigation of Queen Mariana in favor of her younger brother. Well, it doesn't put it quite that way, because the Jewish historian buried that project in the swamp of oblivion. What it does say is that the queen did her younger brother a very poor favor, for no sooner had he been elevated to the high priesthood than he was murdered by the very man who had elevated him. But anyway, these details—so typical of that monster's reign—are beside the point in this history. The fact is that Zechariah and his men were granted

complete freedom of movement to carry out that generous project of rebuilding the kingdom's synagogues.

With a free hand to oversee the synagogue reconstruction, the problem Zechariah had to overcome was choosing the right person. Clearly, they couldn't send some charlatan to Nazareth. If the envoy discovered the true purpose behind such a vast and costly project and let it slip, the future of Solomon's Daughter would be doomed. The chosen one had to be an intelligent and ambitious man for whom the appointment would amount to a kind of exile. Blinded by what he would consider a punishment, all his energy would be directed toward completing his mission and returning to Jerusalem as soon as possible. And this is where that doctor of the Law named Cleophas enters the scene.

17
Cleophas of Jerusalem

This Cleophas was the husband that Elizabeth's parents sought out for their youngest daughter. Having learned their lesson from the disappointment they suffered when their eldest daughter married Zechariah, Elizabeth's parents sought a husband for her younger sister, lest she, too, follow in her older sister's footsteps. The last thing they wanted for their youngest daughter was another man like Zechariah, so they married her off to a promising young doctor of the Law—intelligent, from a good family, a classic young man: the woman in the home, the man attending to men's affairs; the perfect son-in-law. Isabel was very unhappy with the choice of Cleophas as a husband for her younger sister, but there was nothing she could do about it.

Cleophas believed that his marriage to Elizabeth's sister would open the doors to the most powerful circle of influence in Jerusalem. It didn't take long for Cleophas to discover what his brother-in-law Zechariah thought about this idea of opening the doors to his circle of power. Out of love for her sister, Elizabeth did smooth the way for him, but as far as Zechariah himself was concerned, it was a different story. Which made sense, considering what was at stake.

Well, Cleophas had a daughter with his wife, whom he named Anna. Small in stature but with a beautiful face, Isabel showered her niece with all the affection she could not pour out on the daughter she would never have. That affection grew along with the girl and, over time, became an increasingly powerful influence on Anna's personality.

Cleophas, the man in question, could not look favorably upon such a powerful influence on his daughter from his sister-in-law. His problem was that he owed Elizabeth so much that he was forced to swallow his complaints about the upbringing that her aunt was giving to "his beloved niece." Not because the pampering was depriving her of the education befitting a daughter of Aaron; in this regard, Anna's religious upbringing was every bit as good as that of the high priest's own daughter. On the contrary, if we're talking about envy, it was her own daughter who was the object of the most envy. The daughter of a doctor of the Law, the niece

of the most powerful woman in Jerusalem—aside from the queen herself and Herod's wives—Anna grew up surrounded by psalms and prophecies, receiving the religious education most befitting a living descendant of the brother of the great Moses.

The romantic ideals her sister-in-law was instilling in her daughter were what drove Cleophas, her father, up the wall. By the time Anna had grown into a young woman, there was no way to broach the subject of a marriage of convenience with her. No match her father sought out for her caught her eye. No suitor seemed good enough to her. Anna, like her aunt, would marry only for love—the man the Lord chose for her. And the girl confessed this to her father with such brazen innocence that it made his blood boil.

Anna was already of marriageable age when Zechariah summoned Cleophas in private and ordered him to prepare to set out for Galilee. He was the one chosen to rebuild the synagogue in Nazareth.

Unaware of the Doctrine of the Alpha and the Omega, Cleophas took the selection as a maneuver by his sister-in-law Elizabeth. As far as he was concerned, his selection was the doing of his sister-in-law, who was thus removing "her little girl's" father from the picture and preventing him from arranging marriage deals.

Cleophas's protests were of no use to him. Zechariah's decision was firm. The mission entrusted to him by the Temple took priority. He had to leave Jerusalem immediately and report to Nazareth as soon as possible.

Before sending him to Nazareth, Zechariah conducted some preliminary research. He learned that Nazareth was governed by a man named Matan. This Matan was the owner of the Big House, which they called "The Stork." His informant told him exactly what he had been hoping to hear. This Matan, as was said in the town, was of Davidic descent. However, no one had sworn to this—neither in word nor in deed.

With a nagging suspicion, Cleopas set out for Nazareth. He had never been to Nazareth before. He had heard of Nazareth, but couldn't remember what. Based on what he had heard, he imagined what awaited him: Cleopas already saw himself banished from Jerusalem to a village of ignorant and, most likely, ragged country bumpkins.

Along the way, Cleophas could have bet anything that the address where he was to present his credentials would belong to a hut-dweller, little or no different from one of the caves of the Dead Sea. The more Cleophas mulled it over, the more his hair stood on end. He still didn't understand why him. Why didn't his brother-in-law Zechariah give the mission to some other doctor of the Law? What was his brother-in-law up to? He'd never entrusted him with any mission, and the one time he'd included him in his plans, he was sending him to the ends of the earth. What mistake had he made to deserve this exile?, the man complained to himself.

Was his sister-in-law Isabel really, truly not behind this scheme? He told himself she was. What Isabel intended was to remove her father from the picture and buy time for her niece Ana. Come to think of it, he could swear to it. When Ana least expected it, she would have crossed the line that Isabel herself had once

crossed, and no one would be able to force her to marry the suitor he had chosen for her.

Cleophas spent the entire journey mulling it over in his head. The truth was that his brother-in-law Zechariah wasn't the kind of man you'd expect to act like a pushover. Nor did Zechariah say more than was necessary—just the bare minimum—so figuring out what had prompted his decision to send him to Nazareth to rebuild a synagogue that any half-decent doctor could have put back together without anyone's help was not just difficult—it was impossible. Better to believe that it was all according to Isabel's will.

Cleophas was lost in his dramatic visions of the fate that awaited him when he rounded the last bend in the road. On the other side lay Nazareth. What a surprise it was when he looked up and came upon that sort of fortress-like farmhouse right in the heart of the hill!

Phew, he breathed a long, relieved sigh. The sight of the Cigüeñal lifted his spirits. At least he wouldn't be spending the foreseeable future among cavemen.

Relieved, Cleophas made his way toward El Cigüeñal, the village's "Big House." Grandfather Matán, the owner of that large house with its architecture so unusual for the time, came out to greet him.

Grandfather Matán was a strong man for his age, a country man, weathered but still capable of harnessing the donkeys and lending a hand to his eldest son. His wife, Mary, had died; he lived with his firstborn son, a man named Jacob, who was in the fields at that moment.

Cleophas presented his credentials to the owner of El Cigüeñal. He briefly explained to Grandfather Matán the nature of the mission that had brought him to Nazareth.

Grandfather Matán smiled at him with complete sincerity, blessed the Lord for having heard the prayers of his fellow villagers, showed the envoy from the Temple the room he would occupy for as long as he needed it, and immediately summoned all the neighbors to his home to welcome him as Cleophas deserved.

Now that he had calmed down, Cleophas was glad to be able to serve the people of Nazareth. The warm and cheerful welcome the villagers showed him finally banished from his soul the bad omens that had accompanied him all the way up from Samaria.

That afternoon was the first time in his life that he came face to face with Jacob, his host's son.

18

Jacob of Nazareth

The first time Cleopas saw Jacob, he was taken by surprise.

Jacob was a young man. The most distinctive feature of Matan's son was his ever-present smile. Sometimes Jacob's naturally cheerful disposition confused

those who did not know him. From someone who had inherited his father's estate, everyone expected a serious, bossy, even brusque man. Cleophas, too—without knowing why or how—had formed that very same impression of what Jacob would be like when thinking of Matán's son. When he saw him for the first time, he was pleasantly surprised. The preconceived notion he'd held all day about the Stork's heir crumbled to pieces the moment Jacob laid eyes on him.

The one thing that didn't amuse him as much—as a Doctor of the Law, which Cleophas was—was the fact that Matán's son was still unmarried. Any other man his age would already be a father.

At the remark, Jacob smiled heartily. But anyway, Cleophas hadn't come to Nazareth to play matchmaker. If the boy was a bit of an oddball, that was his father's business.

In many ways, Jacob reminded him of his daughter Anna. Like her, he would either marry for love or not at all.

Otherwise, I insist, Cleophas's impression of Jacob was excellent. As for the question of the Davidic lineage of the owners of El Cigüeñal—whether they were descendants of David in name or in fact—what business was it of his anyway? Had he been sent to Nazareth to investigate the truth or falsehood of the Davidic lineage of Matán and his son? Of course not.

In short, the reconstruction of the synagogue in Nazareth was underway. It wasn't just a matter of rebuilding walls. Once the building was finished and decorated inside and out, worship services had to be established. That was his mission: to have the synagogue up and running for the arrival of the doctor of the Law, to whom he would hand over the keys to the synagogue at the end of his term.

This obligation did not deprive him of his well-deserved vacation.

Cleophas did not know it, but in Jerusalem there were those who were dying to see him return. Had he known, perhaps things would have turned out differently, and the story that follows would never have come to pass. Fortunately, Wisdom plays with human pride and overcomes it by making use of the ignorance of the wise, so that, in full view of all, divine omniscience may be glorified.

And Passover arrived. As they did every year when peace permitted, Grandfather Matán and his son Jacob traveled down to Jerusalem to make offerings for the purification of their sins, pay the tithe to the Temple, and celebrate the greatest of the national festivals.

The Jewish Passover commemorated that night when, while the angel was killing all the firstborn of the Egyptians, the Hebrews ate lamb in their homes—a meal they would repeat in perpetual remembrance of God's salvation throughout their lives.

Grandfather Matán recalled having traveled to Jerusalem for the festival for as long as he could remember. In other words, even if Cleophas hadn't been in Nazareth, he and his son would have gone down to Jerusalem. But since both Cleophas and Matán were going, it made sense for them to go together.

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Cleophas flatly refused to accept Matán's idea. The man had gotten it into his head to spend the festival in a tent on the outskirts of Jerusalem, like everyone else. It was the custom. Around that time of year, Jerusalem looked like a besieged city, surrounded by tents on all sides.

Cleophas dug in his heels. Under no circumstances was he willing to allow his host to spend the festival out in the open when he himself had a house in the Holy City large enough to accommodate the entire town of Nazareth.

The excuse given to him by Matán and his son—"if they treated him that way in Nazareth, it wasn't out of self-interest; what they did, they did from the heart, without expecting anything in return"—such an innocent excuse did them no good. For Cleophas, the only word that would do was "yes."

"Are you going to bring a curse upon my house in the eyes of the Lord because of your pride, Matán?" Cleophas snapped, angry at his refusal to accept his invitation. Matán smiled and relented.

Cleophas was unaware, as I've said before, of the anxious anticipation with which Matán and his son were awaited in Jerusalem. And Cleophas was even more unaware—all the more so because it was God's doing—that by inviting Jacob into his home, he was bringing his daughter Anna the man of her dreams as a Passover gift.

Once Matán and his son had settled into Cleophas's house and the introductions were over, Zechariah and Grandfather Matán began a private conversation. Knowing our Zechariah, it's not hard to guess what he was after or what kind of roundabout ways he took to steer Jacob's father toward the topic that had his Saga's heart in suspense. In this chapter, we won't even attempt to recreate a conversation between anything more than a magician and a country man unversed in the arts of the Logos. Where I will focus my attention, however, is on the intuition Isabel felt when she first laid eyes on Matán's son.

Isabel took advantage of the men's conversation to take the young man by the arm and envelop him in her grace. From the very first moment Isabel saw Matán's son, a ray of supernatural light entered her soul—something she could not explain in words but that drove her to act as if Wisdom itself had whispered its plans into her ear; and she, delighted to be its confidante, pretended to relinquish control of her body and surrender her will to her divine accomplice.

Smile upon smile—that of the young man meeting that of the mature beauty—Isabel took Jacob by the arm, led him away from the men's gaze, and introduced him to the jewel of her household, her niece Ana.

19

Anna, the niece of Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah

God is witness to my words and guides the movement of my hands along the lines He draws, whether they remain crooked or straight in His judgment. The fact is that love at first sight exists. And knowing His creatures better than they will

ever know themselves, He kindled in His Wisdom the fire of eternal love within those two dreamers who, from opposite corners of the horizon, without knowing one another, sent verses to each other on the wings of the firmament.

The first to see the radiance of that divine flame was Isabel. And she was the first woman in the world to witness the Daughter of Solomon being born of that love that would burn without being consumed.

Since Anna and Jacob were unable to tear themselves away, and with Elizabeth sheltered beneath her fairy-godmother's cloak—that divine flame that had enchanted the two who were struck by the lightning bolt of Love—Elizabeth managed to keep them alone and together, far from the gaze of men, always so grumbling, always so self-righteous.

Her husband Zechariah, for his part, sought out the company of Grandfather Matán and employed the boundless arsenal of intelligence that his God had given him to coax from Jacob's father the name of the son of Zerubbabel from whom his lineage descended.

As he uttered those five letters—A-B-I-U-D—Zacharias felt his strength fail him.

Simeon the Younger, standing beside him, read in his eyes the emotion that nearly knocked Zechariah to the ground.

"Why are you so surprised, man of God?" Elizabeth replied upon hearing him repeat those five letters: A-B-I-U-D. "Hasn't your God given you enough proof that He Himself is guiding your every move? I'll tell you something else. I have seen Solomon's daughter in the womb of your niece Anna."

The return to Nazareth was hard for Jacob. For the first time in his life, Jacob was beginning to discover the mystery of love—extreme happiness and utter agony in the same package. Is this love? He didn't know whether to burst into tears of joy or of sorrow. Could this be why God made man and woman to never be separated—because if they part, they die? If, even before the rib of loneliness, his pain had disguised itself as a poet and painted the face of his beloved upon the blue firmament, now that he had seen her in the flesh, those verses had undergone a metamorphosis; they were beginning to emerge from their chrysalis, and, truth be told, it hurt. So much so that he was already beginning to wonder if it hadn't been better had they remained among the dawns and spring dews. Now that he had seen her, now that he had savored the fragrance of her smiles in her eyes—sensations he had never imagined had seeped into his very marrow and made his bones vibrate with sorrow and happiness. Oh, Adam's rib.

As they rode on, Grandfather Matán looked at his son, puzzled by his silence and sighs. All his life, his Jacob had been a natural conversationalist—outgoing and easygoing. But ever since they'd left Jerusalem, and had already traveled through all of Samaria, his son hadn't broken a single rule of monosyllabic speech.

"Is something wrong, Jacob?"

"Nothing, Father."

"It looks like it's going to rain, son."

"Yes."

"It'll be time to plant the beans soon."

"Of course."

The Doctor of the Law, Cleophas of Jerusalem, wasn't very talkative either. He simply went with the flow, speaking only when necessary. Was returning to work once a cause for celebration and joy? So there was no need to make a big deal out of it.

The question was how long it would take Grandfather Matán to discover his son's heartbreak. And how long would it take Cleophas himself?

Grandfather Matán didn't take long to get to the heart of the matter. Jacob tried to stall his father. It had all been so sudden, almost like a hallucination. How much longer would he deny himself the chance to ask his father to ask Cleophas for his daughter's hand in marriage? The more he thought about it, the more he marveled.

In any case, even if Jacob remained silent, Grandfather Matán was already figuring it out. Something had happened in Jerusalem that had changed his son so decisively, so quickly, and so profoundly. What else could it be but Cleophas's daughter?

When, in time, Cleophas announced his desire to travel down to Jerusalem and his son Jacob spontaneously offered to accompany him—lest some bandit might take advantage of that lone traveler—Jacob's father no longer had any doubts. His son was hopelessly in love with Cleophas's daughter.

Cleophas, on the other hand, was completely oblivious. The man gladly accepted Jacob's offer. God only knows what would have happened if Cleophas had been aware of the love story between his daughter Anna and the son of Matán. The man was so old-fashioned that he simply could not fathom the marriage of a daughter of Jerusalem's upper class to the son of a Galilean peasant, no matter how wealthy the groom might be. And so he allowed himself to be escorted.

In Jerusalem, amid tears of impatience that Aunt Elizabeth wiped away with hands trembling with laughter, her daughter Anna waited for the day her Prince Charming would appear.

Since Elizabeth knew her brother-in-law as if she'd given birth to him herself, she took Jacob and brought him to her house. That way, she killed two birds with one stone. Zechariah would have the Son of Abiud all to himself, and along the way, the two young people would have all the time in the world to pledge their eternal love to one another once again. In due time, her brother-in-law would find out what was going on. According to Isabel, this was the Lord's doing, and woe betide her brother-in-law if he dared to get in the way.

Oblivious to the class prejudices and social concerns of adults, Jacob and Ana wrote each other verses from Sharon amid lilies of promises as vast as pyramids and as resplendent as stars in the light of the eyes of the fairy godmother whom God had sent them. And they parted with the promise that next time he

would come accompanied by his father, bearing in his hands the dowry for the virgins.

When Cleophas and Jacob returned to Nazareth, the young man explained his desire to his father. His father held back his emotions, begging him to wait until Cleophas had finished his work. Then he himself would go down to Jerusalem to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage.

Jacob accepted his father's suggestion.

Cleophas, in fact, finished his work, said goodbye to the people of Nazareth, and returned to his usual life. Shortly after settling in Jerusalem, he received a surprise: a visit from Matan.

"Matan, man, what's going on?"

"As you can see, Cleophas, a father's duties have brought me to your home."

"You tell me."

Jacob's father told him everything that was going on. His son wanted his daughter as a wife and had come as a co-father-in-law with the dowry for the virgins in hand.

Cleophas listened in silence. Once Matan had finished explaining why he'd come to his house, Cleophas remained silent. It was the typical shock that overtakes someone who's always the last to find out; Cleophas was stunned. In such cases, the shock is followed by the classic outburst of anger.

The flame ignites in his brain: Had his daughter Ana pledged her love to Jacob? And when had that happened? And how had she dared to give herself to a man without her father's consent and blessing? Anger is a spark destined to become a blaze; it turns into a flame and ends up spewing fire from his mouth.

Ana, the self-interested young woman—though not exactly well-mannered—listened from behind the door, her heart in her throat, to the conversation between her father and her beloved's father. Her fingers were itching to build an altar to her father's "yes" in the most beautiful corner of her soul. Her "father-in-law" gave her such a warm look as he passed by that she already considered herself married and felt herself soaring on wings of utter bliss toward her wedding chamber.

The young woman was biting her lip when her father spoke up.

"And how could that be, my good Matán, if my daughter is already betrothed to another man?"

Cleophas was lying. An innocent lie to avoid being seen as the one who stabs the man to whom, until yesterday, he had professed eternal friendship.

Good heavens, to spare his friend the stab, he was plunging the dagger right up to the hilt into his own daughter. The girl slumped down against the wall, her heart pierced right through. Too weak to run away and throw herself off the ramparts, Ana endured the rest.

"I'm sorry, but your son's claim is an impossibility beyond my control," her father concluded.

Grandfather Matán fell completely silent. In the blink of an eye, it dawned on him. By his beard, Cleophas was lying to him. As far as he was concerned, what was truly at stake there was Cleophas's refusal to accept his word regarding the Davidic origin of his House. Had it been true—the engagement to an " " and "unknown" suitor—Grandfather Matán would have accepted the refusal without feeling the adrenaline burning in his gut. But no—the holy and immaculate servant of God whom he had welcomed into his home, honoring him as if he were the Lord himself, was now dropping his mask. His daughter was to marry a peasant—and from Galilee, to make matters worse?

Cleophas would have been better off telling him to his face exactly what he was thinking. The truth was that he had never bought into the story about Jacob of Nazareth's supposed Davidic lineage. While he was in Nazareth, since it didn't concern him one way or the other, he simply brushed the subject aside. Whether it was true or not was none of his business. Now that Matán was asking for his daughter's hand for his son, he no longer had any reason to keep playing the hypocrite.

"That's my final word," Cleophas concluded the discussion.

"I'll give you mine," Jacob's father blurted out. "I'd rather marry my son to a sow than to the daughter of a clever son of murderers who live off the blood of their brothers at the cost of their people's destruction."

Lord, if the child was already mortally wounded, the words of Jacob's father dealt the final blow to Ana's soul.

Ana ran out of her house and roamed the streets of Jerusalem, leaving behind a river of broken tears. As best she could, she found her aunt Elizabeth's house. She went inside and threw herself into her arms, ready to die forever.

While Elizabeth tried to stem that flood of tears, Grandfather Matán mounted his horse and galloped at full speed up through Samaria. When he arrived in Nazareth, his blood was still boiling. His son Jacob was stunned to the core upon hearing his words: "You'd sooner marry a sow than the daughter of Cleophas." Those were his final words.

20

The Birth of Mary

How foolish men are, Lord! They seek You, and when they find You, with words as sharp as knives, they curse themselves because You speak to them. Like someone who found what he was looking for and regrets having found it because he had been expecting something else, men turn their words into swords and spears, disfigure their faces with war paint, and, hating hell, kill one another believing they are killing the Devil himself. "A lever to move the universe!" says one. "My kingdom for a horse!" cries the other, believing he is inscribing words of golden wisdom on the walls of time.

When will they learn to be free with the freedom of one who has infinity before him? Man's existence is like that of a butterfly that flies for twenty-four hours and, when the day's twilight arrives, surrenders its body to the mud from which it came to life—but unlike that weightless creature, in those twenty-four hours man transforms that precious, brief day into a hell of monstrosities. Why did you give the stone a mouth? Why give arms to one whose imagination is limited to turning his fragile fingers into weapons of destruction? What moved you to elevate their brains above those of birds, who ask only for a piece of sky for their wings?

Alas, alas, the soul of Jacob. Alas, how the son of Matán of Nazareth wept over his misfortune. Among the olive groves where Noah's dove once wrested from God the promise of eternal life without return, at the foot of the tree where the son of Matán would die in the not-too-distant future, Jacob poured out the joy that his heart could not contain in the desert of pride. He had spent his whole life dreaming of her, and now that his hands had touched the flesh of his dreams, his rib was cast into the fire.

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," a wise man wrote on a sacred wall. Is it any wonder that when he wrote that, the man could not have been very much in love?

Oh, Ana's heart. Do eyes weep blood? Does pure water flow through the veins? What hidden mystery did God forge when He conceived two people to be one? Why did He not make the male and female human in accordance with the nature of beasts? They mate at the command of their instincts and part without sorrow. Why did the Lord have to raise from the mists of instinct the flame of murderous loneliness against which Adam was born defenseless in his paradise? How easy it would have been for the Eternal One to make man in the image and likeness of machines... You program the creature, set it loose in its sidereal zoo, the heavens move through their constellations, and to the rhythm set by its coordinates, the creature mates and reproduces like a plague. Why replace an infallible program—as we see in the natural world—with a code of freedom? Spring arrives, and creatures mate and multiply calmly but without pause. While instinct calls to arms, the human being stands firm and responds with a single word. They call it love.

And yet, once the fruit of that code has been tasted, who is it that looks back? The beasts call Love "sex"; the beasts call sex by its name. Or when sex dies, does Love cease to exist? Or is there no Love without sex? Contrary to the opinion of such experts, the rest of us know that Love exists independently of the reproductive act of the species. And because it exists, it wounds those who desire it but do not have it. Yesterday, today, and always, where there is love, there will be pain.

Grandfather Matán closed his ears to his son's lamentations. He did not want to hear Cleofás's name again, not even in his dreams. For him, the matter had been settled once and for all. His heir could go ahead and find himself a wife among the barbarians if, in his spite, he so desired; he would not say a word against it, but by God and His prophets, he would disinherit him before suffering such a great humiliation again.

Unlike Matán, once the dust had settled, Lady Isabel drew the rod of her temper, went after her brother-in-law, and brought it down on his back with these words: "Fool, devourer of your own daughter, what game are you playing? Do you stand between God and His plans by invoking your status as a servant? Are you rebelling against your Lord by imploring Him to leave your house in peace? I tell you that, as surely as there is heaven and earth, my little girl will marry the Son of Abiud within a year from this day forward."

Phew, if Cleophas thought the storm had passed, it was because he hadn't yet received a visit from Zechariah. His sister-in-law had thundered; his brother-in-law would unleash lightning and thunder upon him.

But not with words of anger or rage. Zechariah realized that part of the blame for what had happened lay with him. As things stood, he could no longer keep his brother-in-law in the dark about the Doctrine of the Alpha and the Omega. He sat him down and told him everything.

The Son of Resa, son of Zerubbabel, lived in Bethlehem. He was a child, and his name was Joseph.

The Son of Abiud, Zerubbabel's other son, was someone he already knew—his name was Jacob. The hope that had taken root in all their hearts was that the Daughter of Solomon would be born of the marriage between Jacob and Anna. Thus had God ordained it, and though it was only a hope, they were staking their lives on it coming to pass. Those two children would marry, and from them would be born the Son of David, the son of Eve for whom all the children of Abraham had been longing for millennia.

As for Jacob's genealogical legitimacy—about which he had no doubt whatsoever—they would soon have proof.

Out of prudence, Isabel insisted on taking charge of resolving the situation herself. Matán would be more likely to back down in the face of a woman than if it were "someone else" from Jerusalem who came to demand that he change his attitude. Also, an unexpected trip by one of them might arouse suspicion at King Herod's court, whereas if she went, no one would miss her.

And so it was done. Isabel arrived in Nazareth and went straight to the Stork. When Jacob's father saw her, he was speechless.

What did that lady want now?

Very simple. To pay her respects to the Son of Abiud. On behalf of her entire household, including her brother-in-law, she had come to ask for her son Jacob's hand in marriage for her niece Anna. And on the way, she had traveled from Jerusalem to Nazareth to reveal to the Son of Abiud the Doctrine of the Alpha and the Omega.

Grandfather Matán listened in wonder to the sequence of events experienced by Zechariah and his Saga. At the end of the story, Grandfather Matán bowed his head, nodded in acknowledgment, and asked him to wait a moment.

He returned immediately, carrying a genealogical scroll wrapped in parchments as ancient as the first dawn that spread its light over the oceans.

Elizabeth felt a shiver run down her spine—the same sensation that Simeon the Younger had once experienced. Aware of the encounter at the House of Resa, Grandfather Matán unfurled the List of Saint Matthew on the table.

The same metal, the same seal, the same characters—only the names had changed.

"Matán, son of Eleazar. Eleazar, son of Eliud. Eliud, son of Aquim. Aquim, son of Zadok. Zadok, son of Eliakim. Eliakim, son of Abiud. Abiud, son of Zerubbabel."

Isabel could not stop her breath from catching at her lips. Even as she tried to remain calm, her eyes danced with joy over the line that the sons of Abiud had traced through the centuries.

Then she read the list of the kings of Judah, from the last one back to Solomon.

"And by the way, where's your Jacob?" Isabel blurted out when she finished reading.

That woman was pure genius. Jacob jumped for joy when he saw his fairy godmother. The sparkle in Elizabeth's eyes revealed to him the change in his father's mood. You can imagine the rest. Matán and his son accompanied Elizabeth back to Jerusalem, bringing with them the jewel of the House of the sons of Abiud, the dowry for the virgins, and the terms of the marriage contract.

Cleophas saw with his own eyes what he had never asked to see during his stay at the Stork. Like his brother-in-law Zechariah, who witnessed the encounter, Cleophas marveled at seeing the other twin scroll in the possession of Joseph's father. But if those present thought the surprises were over for the day, they were mistaken. The terms of the marriage contract left them stunned. They were as follows:

First: The property of the Son of Abiud—in this case, Jacob—was non-transferable. What did this mean? In the event of Jacob's death, his inheritance would pass directly to his firstborn, whether the couple's first child was male or female.

Second: In the event of widowhood, the widow could never sell, either in part or in whole, the property of Jacob's heir. That inheritance—the Stork and all its lands—would be reserved for her heir until he reached the age of majority. What did this mean? That the widow's household would have no claim to Jacob's inheritance.

Third: If Jacob's widow were to remarry, the children from this new marriage would have no share in the deceased's inheritance.

Fourth: If the couple had no children, Jacob's inheritance would pass directly to the sons of Matán. Jacob's widow, however, would live in her late husband's house until her death.

Fifth: If Jacob of Nazareth's heir were a woman, she would inherit her father's messianic legacy, which she in turn would bequeath to her heir. If, as had happened on previous occasions, one woman were succeeded by another, the

messianic succession would pass from Jacob to the next eligible male heir. Let us say that if Jacob were succeeded by a female, it would fall to her alone—and not to his widow—to pass on his inheritance to her chosen one. Any transfer of Jacob's inheritance to a house united with his descendants by marital ties would not be valid in this case. The inheritance would pass from mother to daughter until a male took the helm of the House of Abiud, whose name would follow that of Jacob.

This was how Joseph came to be Jacob's son, uniting in his hands the leadership of both Houses—that of his father and that of his late father-in-law. He would bequeath this unified inheritance to his firstborn, the Son of Mary.

The terms of this contract drew a smile of admiration from those present. The absence of generations in the List of the House of Abiud found its explanation in this line of succession, so atypical within Jewish patriarchal traditions. Thanks to this *truly unique* arrangement, the House of Abiud had maintained its property in its original extent and continued to ensure that it would remain so.

Once the contract was signed by the co-in-laws, the wedding took place a year later, and in due course, the couple welcomed a baby girl into the world.

In memory of her mother, Jacob named her Mary.

"Didn't I tell you, man of God, that I saw the Daughter of Solomon in my little girl's womb?" enveloped in divine happiness, Elizabeth said to her husband.

21

Life of the Holy Family

Once the bearers of the messianic scrolls had been found, after the Virgin's birth, Zechariah gathered Eli, Joseph's father, and Jacob, Mary's father, at his home. The two men had much to say to one another. The discovery of the Alpha and the Omega had revolutionized their lives and the future of their children—and how! Zechariah, overcome with emotion, let his heart speak freely.

"How incredible is Wisdom! The strong believe they have the weak strangled under the weight of their callous and violent souls, while the little ones abandon themselves to the fate that the great wish to inscribe on their backs with the whip of their perverse wickedness. Dreams of freedom cease to soar over the horizon, giving way to darkness; hopes now lie shattered at the feet of their armies. But suddenly, Wisdom turns around. She is tired of being pursued, of never being caught. She becomes the daughter of the wind, fixing her gaze on the athletes of thought; one begs her to choose him, another promises her eternal love. She does not speak; Wisdom has chosen her champion. She advances toward him, takes his hand, lifts him from the dust, winks at him, and bestows upon him the crown of life. Stunned, driven mad, scandalized by her choice—because she set her eyes on the least among them, because she bestowed her favors on one who was nothing—those scorned by fate then conspire with the darkness to destroy the Eternal One. She, the Bride of the Almighty, laughs; her Bridegroom raised the galaxies with a single movement of his hands; it was enough for him to open his lips just once for

Hell to tremble. She is the apple of his eye—what could she possibly fear from the plans of the genies?

Here are her men. The two rivers that she hid underground—and which everyone had presumed lost—have resurfaced, and, in a mystery that inspires wonder and the singing of new psalms, they have done so through the very mouth of the earth."

Heli and Jacob introduced their children. Solomon's daughter, Mary, and Nathan's son, Joseph, were alive. The Virgin in her cradle, Joseph standing among the men, gazing at her.

Then Simeon the Younger spoke words of wisdom: "Ignorance, my friends, has the human race chained to the post of the dog born to guard his master's door. God created Man to taste the sweetness of freedom like a Samson immune to Delilah's spells. The treacherous Devil forgot his divine nature, envied the human condition, and, having ended up possessing that of the beasts, howls in a delirium at the stars of Hell, which he worships as Paradise. A coward—with the cowardice of one who builds his greatness upon the corpse of an army of children—the Serpent has gone mad, believing he can track the eagle by the trail it leaves in the heavens. Fear not, my friends; He is with us. The Sacred Eagle scans every movement of the Dragon from the invisible cliff; as it breathes, the dark fire pours from its nostrils, and the muscles of the Great Spirit tense like bows ready for battle; if it advances a single foot, the Warrior leaps from his peaceful sleep in the Sage's tent and grasps his arrow—swift as lightning, strong as thunder. What we are experiencing here is the dawn of a new Day that is already spreading its light upon the immaculate eyes of your children's innocence.

"Let the enemies of the Kingdom of God plot their plans of destruction in their caves; let the enemies of Man hide in the labyrinths of the underground chambers of Power—we fear nothing, for God is with us. His bow is drawn, His sword is sharp, and His shield protects us. If the Devil is greater than our Savior, why did he flee to hide after killing Adam? Does the lion flee from the gazelle? Does the victor kneel before the throne of the vanquished? If the Devil is hungry, let him eat the stones; if he is thirsty, let him drink all the sand of the desert. Your children are far from his clutches."

It was a stirring oath. Words were spoken that would never be forgotten. Eli and Jacob swore to marry their children when the time came. They vowed that if they broke their word, the Almighty would cast their souls into the abyss where demons dwell.

Then they each returned to their daily lives. Eli gave his son Joseph brothers and sisters. Jacob took Mary's sisters as his wives; later, he had the son for whom they had longed so much.

Joseph was already a man and Mary a woman, both on the verge of signing the most secret and important marriage contract in the history of the world, when the news of the death of Jacob of Nazareth—husband of Anna of Cleophas and father of Mary—left everyone who lived to see that day speechless.

Had Mary not made that vow of hers, the wedding would have been brought forward. Mary's vow, as I said, affected Joseph himself the most. For a moment, it

seemed as though the edifice of all their hopes was crumbling, when Joseph wrote in the annals of eternity those words of his, which his wife would one day repeat to the angel at the Annunciation: "May God's will be done; behold, I am His servant. Our fathers have waited a thousand years; I can well wait a few."

Those were the years that were—no more, no less. When his time came, Joseph made his arrangements and set out for Nazareth. He leased a plot of land from the Widow to set up his carpentry shop and waited for Cleophas to marry so that he, in turn, could marry Mary.

After the birth of Joseph, the second son of Cleophas, Joseph paid the dowry for the virgins. A year later, the wedding was celebrated.

And the wedding took place despite the shadow of adultery that hung over the Virgin's innocence.

Just as his mother-in-law had told him, the angel of God dispelled Joseph's doubts. With the shadow of adultery lifted, Joseph mounted his horse and rode to Judea to fetch the Child's Mother. The event of John's Annunciation had been revealed to him by the messenger whom Zechariah had sent. What Joseph did not expect was to find Zechariah and Elizabeth transformed into young men and women full of life. But after what had happened to him, nothing surprised Joseph anymore. Or so he believed. For when Zechariah regained his speech, his first words were to reveal to Joseph the thoughts that had been growing in his soul since the Virgin's arrival regarding the Son of Mary.

"My son, God our Lord has amazed us with a wonder of infinite nature. From ancient times we have known that God is Father, as we can read in His Book. By forming us in His image and likeness, He gave us a taste of the sweetness of fatherhood; and by revealing Himself to us as the Father of many children, He opened our eyes to the existence of one among them born to be His Firstborn. What He never openly revealed in His Book is that this very Firstborn was His Only-Begotten Son. Or perhaps we failed to see it in His words when His prophet said: 'You will weep as one weeps for a firstborn; you will mourn as one mourns for an only-begotten son.'

"My son, that is the Son your wife carries in her womb. Your Lord has placed His Child in your hands, Joseph. His life is in your hands; if His life is already in danger because of who He is—the son of Eve who was to be born to us—what will be the responsibility of the man to whom the Father has entrusted the care of His Only-Begotten Son? Never let your guard down, Joseph. Defend him with your life; wrap your arm around his Mother and place your own body between her and those who will come seeking her to kill her Son. Remember that he is to be born in Bethlehem because it is written. And precisely because it is written, that will be the first place where the devil will direct his murderous hand."

Joseph listened to the words of Zechariah, son of a prophet and father of a prophet, unable to believe that God would allow any man—whether named Herod or Caesar—to touch even a single hair on the head of Mary's Son.

So Joseph returned to Nazareth, celebrated his wedding with Mary, who was already well along in her pregnancy, and prepared to go down to Bethlehem

when Caesar Octavian Augustus's decree for a census stirred up a spontaneous outcry of insurrection throughout the nation.

Only once had the tribes of Israel submitted to a census. On everyone's mind was the price the people had paid for King David's census. What punishment would befall them if, out of fear of Caesar, they disobeyed the prohibition against being counted like livestock?

The uprising broke out in Galilee. Judas the Galilean and his men preferred to die as brave men fighting against Caesar rather than live as cowards before God. The effect of Judas the Galilean's uprising was to cut off the roads.

"How long will this uprising last? Obviously, as long as Herod's master wills it," Joseph replied to his brother-in-law Cleophas. "Don't you think Herod is capable of wiping out Judas and his men in the time it takes for his father's famous cavalry to neigh? The Herods must be biting their nails right now. If it were up to them, they would have already put an end to this holy war. But I think Caesar doesn't want that, and Caesar is the one in charge. The Romans have decreed that the census begin in the kingdom of the Jews because they knew this would happen. The merciless crushing of Judas and his men will serve as propaganda against any other possible insurrection; that is how the Romans prevent the disease."

Joseph was not mistaken. The Herods obeyed their Roman master's order. They let the Galilean uprising grow. When the victim was fat enough for the slaughterhouse, they sent out their armies. They killed as many as they could from the Galilean's band, and with the bodies of the survivors they strewn crosses along all the roads leading to Jerusalem.

Joseph and Mary passed beneath that multitude of crosses on their way to Bethlehem. Is it any wonder that, overcome with grief, the Virgin went into labor as soon as she arrived at her husband's house?

In this chapter, the truth depends less on the facts than on the faith of each side in the court of history. If we place our trust in the historian Flavius Josephus—a traitor to his homeland, yet a savior of his people by ensuring, through his *Jewish Antiquities*, that the Caesars learned to distinguish between Jews and Christians, even at the cost of turning his descendants into a nation at perpetual war against the Truth—then in this case, the insurrection of which the Apostles speak was born in the imagination of the authors of the New Testament.

The principles of Psychohistory, however, stand against the distortion that Flavius Josephus carried out by erecting between Jews and Christians the wall of steel that would keep them apart for twenty centuries—an act that required him to deny the very existence of Christ himself, thereby becoming, in doing so, the Antichrist of whom Saint John spoke.

22

The Birth of Jesus

The uprising had been crushed, and Jerusalem was besieged by an army of crosses; amid such turmoil, Joseph and Mary—who was already in a very advanced stage of pregnancy—made their way through.

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, the village was packed to the brim. Joseph's brothers were surprised—for none of them had imagined that Joseph would come down before his wife gave birth—so they improvised a bed in the manger for Mary to give birth.

Once again, the elements of psychohistory demand our attention. I mean, Herod would not have ordered the Massacre of the Innocents had the Romans been present in Bethlehem. The Romans, on whom his coronation ultimately depended, would never have allowed such a crime. As soon as they left, Herod set to work. But it was already too late. Joseph, Mary, and the Child had left.

This set of psychohistorical elements opens our eyes to the Battle between Heaven and Hell of which St. John speaks in his Revelation. Death, having been unable to prevent the fulfillment of the Scriptures or the Birth from taking place, had to lay hands on the Child. But Life, confident in its strength, moved across the chessboard of the Earth with the certainty of one who knows the strategy and capabilities of his enemy and is always one step ahead. By the time Herod went to lay his hands on the Child, his parents had already left. Certainly not to Jerusalem. Although they could have taken refuge in the home of Mary's grandmother.

And I say "not to Jerusalem" because, had they stayed in Jerusalem, the words of Simeon the Younger as he greeted the Mother and the Child in the Temple would make no sense. But if he saw the Child for the first time, then yes.

In this, as in everything else, the reader must judge for himself whom to believe: a traitor to his homeland, repackaged as a sort of savior of the very people he betrayed, or men who, out of love for the truth, carried that love to its ultimate consequences. I say this because, in the wake of this new retelling of the events, there will be those who argue that this way of rearranging the timeline does not correspond to the actual sequence of events as they occurred.

So, after the Child was born and the Mother was already on her feet, Joseph registered his son. We do not know what Joseph's original intention was. If it was to stay in Bethlehem, his plan changed after the secret conversation he had with the Magi.

As you have already deduced, the Magi were not kings. The Magi were the bearers of the tithe from the Great Synagogue of the East, and as such, they were required to make a stop at the Temple.

What the Magi never imagined as they journeyed joyfully was that they would travel the last few kilometers of their journey beneath a sea of crosses. Thank God, the turmoil of the moment had kept Herod's son occupied, and they made their way to Bethlehem to warn Joseph.

Joseph registered his son and returned to Nazareth. After the number of days stipulated by the Law had passed, he went down to the Temple, believing the danger had passed. He entered the Temple with his wife when Simeon the Younger came up to him.

"What are you still doing here, man of God?" he asked. "Has no one told you what has happened?"

He took him aside and filled him in.

"Zechariah has covered your trail by washing your footprints with his blood. Shortly after the Romans left, the Herods sent their assassins to your city. Your brothers are mourning the death of their infants. But that's not the end of it. The horror of the news reached Zechariah. He took Elizabeth and John and hid them in the caves of the desert, where they will be safe from all danger. Then he came to the Temple. Joseph, they surrounded him like a pack of dogs, threatening to kill him if he didn't reveal everything he knew. Unable to bear his silence, they beat him to death with their fists and feet right at the very gates of the Temple. Joseph, take the Child and his Mother and go to Egypt. Do not return until these murderers are dead."

Joseph didn't say a word to Mary. To keep her from finding out the news from her family, he took her away from Jerusalem without giving her any explanation whatsoever.

"How could you have lived your whole life carrying this burden all by yourself, my husband?" she wept when he told her on his deathbed.

Upon their return from Egypt, the Child's grandmother was still alive. I believe I mentioned that the emigrants returned what we might call prosperous and happy. The financial situation of Mary's estate was equally good. The droughts that had once ravaged the fields were followed by periods of abundant rain. Joanna, Mary's virgin sister, managed her sister's lands without envying a man for anything. Those who believed that Jacob's household would collapse after his death had to admit they were wrong. That young woman, devoted to her family since her youth, never faltered nor allowed herself to be misled. Although released from her vow by Cleophas's marriage, Juana did not marry.

Suddenly, starting the carpentry business from scratch did not seem like an easy undertaking. Cleophas did not share this view. The situation Joseph had to overcome the day he arrived in Nazareth was one thing; this new one was quite another. Joseph was, after all, a complete stranger back then. Now, to begin making a name for themselves, they could count on a network of family connections spread throughout Galilee.

Among these connections, Jesus would find his future disciples. But let us return to the Son of Mary, his heir, and spiritual leader of the clans that, like branches of the same trunk, were spread throughout the surrounding area.

Joseph's death bound Jesus to the oath that the deceased had made to Cleophas. We have already seen that the Child experienced within himself the rebirth from the Spirit following the episode in which he took center stage at the Temple. The Simeon who came out to meet the Son of David at the Temple was the

Young Simeon whom we have seen say to Joseph: "Go, man of God, for they will kill him."

In the years following Joseph's death, Jesus left the carpentry shop in the hands of his cousin James and took over from his aunt Joanna in managing his Mother's estate. During his tenure, the fields yielded a hundred percent; the fame of the wines from Jacob's vineyards spread throughout the region. Intelligent as they come, Jesus proved to be a businessman with whom making deals was a guarantee of success. He bought and sold olive harvests without ever losing a drachma.

Supported by family connections and the capital of the clan leader, the carpentry shop in Nazareth also experienced a very positive boom.

After the Herods died, Jesus took possession of his father's estate in Judea.

I believe I mentioned earlier that in Jerusalem, Jesus of Nazareth was regarded as something of a mystery. His father's brothers remained unmarried, invoking the proverb: "Like father, like son." Physically, Jesus was the spitting image of that tall, strong Joseph—a man of his word, a man of few words, prudent in his judgments, a family man, always attentive to the needs of his loved ones.

The fact is that after marrying off all his cousins and leaving the business to run on its own, that Jesus—adored by his family—surprised them all with "his disappearances."

23

The Mystery of Jesus' Disappearances

No one knew where Jesus went or what he did when he disappeared like that. He simply vanished. He disappeared without warning, without offering any explanations. His disappearances could last for days, even weeks. If his cousins James and Joseph asked around to see if anyone had seen their Jesus, everyone would put on a face that said they knew absolutely nothing.

Where did Jesus go?

Well, that wasn't easy to say. But wherever he went, he'd come back from wherever he'd been as if nothing had happened. Then he'd return as if nothing were wrong, offering some random excuse to everyone who, with that natural concern, showed him how much they loved him—"I had to take care of an urgent matter," for example—and that was that, end of story. It wasn't worth insisting any further; in the end, Jesus would burst out laughing, and they were the ones who looked like fools.

"Why all this worry, Santiago, brother? Are you lacking anything? Are your children sick? You have health, money, and love—what more could a man want?"

Didn't I say so? It was impossible to get angry with Him. Not only was He absolutely right, but when He said it with that smile in His eyes, in the end you were the one who looked like a fool for worrying for no reason.

The only ones who seemed neither surprised nor scandalized by his disappearances were the Women of the House. To Santiago's and his brothers' even greater surprise, the Women wouldn't even hear of any reproaches. What mystery was His that had them so enchanted?

A mystery? Why had He captivated his mother, his Aunt Juana, and his Aunt María?

There certainly was a mystery. A very big one.

It turned out that whenever He left, a miracle occurred in the house. The sacks of flour never ran out, even if they scooped out the flour by the shovelful. The oil jars never emptied; no matter how many liters of oil they gave away, the level in the jars never dropped. And if any of them fell ill, the three Women of the House knew He was coming back because they would immediately get well. And just like these things, so it was with everything else. So how could He not have them completely enchanted? Of course, when it came time to answer them or his cousins about where He had come from or what He had been doing, Jesus would simply look at them and give them, as His only answer, a kiss accompanied by a smile.

Where was He going? Where had He come from? What was He doing? I believe it was the thirteenth apostle who said that Jesus was going to implore His God, with powerful tears, for mercy for all of us.

The origin of those tears should not seem strange to us, knowing the source from which they flowed. It was the Son of God, of the same nature as his Father, who looked face to face at the future of the work he was about to carry out, and as he saw the destiny toward which he was leading his disciples, his whole heart broke.

How could he not seek from his Father a viable alternative that would spare his own from the fate toward which he was dragging them with his Cross?

And what is even more tragic: when His blood drew Him into the fragility of human existence and He wondered how He could be sure that what He was about to do was God's will—at that very moment, the weight of that Destiny crushed Him, pierced His chest, and wrung from Him tears of living blood. How could He be sure that what He was about to do was the right thing? Why the Cross of Christ and not the Crown of David?

The tension, the pressure, human nature laid bare, pounding his mind and soul with the vision of the hundreds of thousands of Christians whom He would lead to martyrdom… A Destiny He could spare them simply by accepting the Crown that the people, in droves, would offer Him. What to do? How to know? And by what means could He resist the comfort His Father offered Him?

… For after the Day of Yahweh would come the Day of Christ, a Day of freedom and glory: the King on His Throne of Power leading His Father's armies to victory…

During those days, before beginning His Mission, Jesus chose in Galilee those who would become His future Apostles. The bonds that united Him to His future Disciples stemmed from the blood ties that Zerubbabel's eldest son began to forge when he founded Nazareth.

In contrast to the atmosphere in which Zerubbabel's men, who remained in Judea, multiplied, the people of Galilee welcomed Abiud's men peacefully and warmly. The residents of Judea were outraged when they discovered the intentions of Zerubbabel and his men; they rebelled against the idea of rebuilding Jerusalem and tried by every means to force them to abandon the project.

The Bible says they did not succeed. Instead, from the inhabitants of the Holy Land at that time, they did secure a policy of perpetual enmity. This policy led to the seclusion and isolation of the Jews of the South from the rest of the world. A circumstance that, over time, would transform the southern Jews into a people who abhorred the Gentiles, whom they despised and spoke of in private as if they were mere beasts.

"I'd rather eat with a pig than with a Greek," said one rabbi.

"I'd rather marry a sow than a Greek woman," his colleague retorted.

This hatred toward the Greeks and toward Gentiles in general—that contempt on the part of a people who came to believe themselves to be the Superior Race—was, to a certain extent, a natural hatred. Toward the Greeks, following the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Toward the Egyptians because one day the Pharaoh... Toward the Syrians because in times past... Toward the Romans because they were oppressing them... The goal was to turn this hatred into a kind of national identity, to draw from it the strength to continue believing themselves to be the Superior Race, the one called to subjugate and be served by the rest of humanity.

The inhabitants of Judea awaited the Messiah to become the New World Empire. Their relationship with the non-native laws—imposed by the empire—that regulated life between Jews and Greeks, between Greeks and Romans, and between Romans and Iberians, was a path through the jungle fraught with mortal dangers—a path along which the Jew had to remain vigilant and always draw from his hatred and contempt for other races the vital strength that would help him overcome his circumstances until the Coming of the Messiah.

Unlike their brothers in the South, those in the North integrated perfectly into Gentile society. They worked with them, traded with them, dressed like them, learned their language, and respected their customs, traditions, and gods.

Compared to their southern brethren, the Jews of Galilee had evolved in the opposite direction. While the southerners invoked hatred as a protective wall for their identity, the northerners invoked respect among all people as the guarantor of peace.

When Jesus arrived, therefore, the mental and moral differences between Galilean Jews and southern Jews were as vast as those that existed at that time between a barbarian and a civilized man. The Galilean continued to await the Coming of the Messiah, the Christ who would unite all the peoples of the world; the Jew from Jerusalem also awaited a Birth, but not that of a Savior, rather that of a warlike and invincible conqueror who would bring all the other nations of the world to their knees before him. It is unlikely that Jesus would have found even a single man among these Jews of the South who would follow him in singing to Love and Universal Brotherhood the most wonderful poem ever written, the Gospel.

Given these circumstances, it was no coincidence that all his Disciples were present at the wedding in Cana.

When the Son of Zerubbabel and heir to Solomon's crown settled in Nazareth, his men and their sons united among themselves and scattered their seed throughout the region. Respectful of their neighbors, upholders of the laws of universal civilization—where religion was a private matter subject to the law of freedom of worship—the men of Abiud and their sons spread throughout Galilee, maintaining endogamous marriage as the foundation of their national identity. In every other respect, the Galilean Jew was no different from his neighbors. He dressed like them, spoke like them.

In such an environment, the success of the Virgin of Nazareth Tailoring Workshop was built on the nationalist movement that arose in Galilee following the reconstruction of the synagogues. It was during those unique, pivotal moments in life—such as weddings—that national pride surfaced, and people took pleasure in wearing traditional, folk attire. The art of crafting the national costume, in the hands of the daughters of Aaron—who had turned it into a monopoly headquartered in Jerusalem— the Virgin's opening of her business—as a disciple of a master in the best-kept secret of the female priestly caste, of which the creation of seamless cloaks was the supreme example—proved to be a wise move that drew engaged couples from across the region to Nazareth.

Regardless of the prosperity it brought to the Virgin's household and to Nazareth itself, the success of the Virgin's workshop broke new ground in the region and prepared it so that her sisters could find there a place to grow and multiply. They married in Galilee and had their sons and daughters. To the bonds that existed before the Virgin's birth, we must then add those created by her sisters and the sons and daughters of her brother Cleophas, and the scope of the context in which her Son moved takes on its true dimensions.

Or, to put it another way, Jesus' disciples were present at the famous wedding at Cana simply because they were related to the bride and groom by blood. Or do you perhaps believe that Peter's mother-in-law was healed without faith?

Throughout the Gospels, we see that the only condition Jesus required to receive the grace of His Power was faith. When He healed Peter's mother-in-law, she had not yet seen the Only-Begotten Son of God. That she had faith without having seen Him opens our eyes to the connection between Peter's mother-in-law and the Virgin Mary, thanks to which that woman's faith in the Son of Mary was absolute. And it helps us open the door to her home and see that Peter, through his marriage to his mother-in-law's daughter, is directly related to the Virgin Mary.

After the miracle of turning water into wine, all Peter needed to see was the anointing of the Son of David by the prophet.

When one reads the Gospel, the first surprise comes upon seeing Peter and his companions abandoning everything at the call: "Follow me." As if they were robots or automatons without free will, those men left their families and followed him without even asking where. That is the first impression. Logically, this is only a superficial impression. Those men knew the Son of Mary perfectly well. They knew the nature of his spiritual leadership over all the Davidic clans of Galilee.

Peter and his companions were not mindless automatons obeying their creator's command to the rhythm of his fingers tapping on a computer keyboard. Not at all. Needless to say, on more than one occasion—bound by blood ties to their Mother's House—they spoke with her Son about the Kingdom of the Messiah. It should also be noted that the First Public Miracle, which they witnessed, transformed the conception they had formed regarding the nature of the Messianic Mission—so much so that they were willing to leave everything behind the moment Jesus desired it. Having clarified this, let us continue.

You have already seen who this John was—the son of Zechariah, grandson of the prophet Abijah—and what sentiment lay at the root of the Baptist's harsh condemnations against the Jews. His mother, Elizabeth—the great-aunt of Mary, the Mother of Christ—dedicated her life to raising John and telling him the whole truth about his father: why he died and whom John would precede. When Elizabeth died, John withdrew to the desert and lived his supernatural life, awaiting the fulfillment of the mission for which he had been born. Jesus' baptism by John confirmed to the Disciples what they already knew: the Son of Mary was the Messiah.

They followed Him to conquer the universal kingdom. They never imagined that the sword with which Jesus would conquer the throne of David would be "in his mouth."

Jesus told them many times what His fate would be. But how could they possibly have imagined that the Son of God would die crucified?

As witnesses to wondrous, supernatural, extraordinary, and divine works in every respect, how could they possibly have imagined that their brothers in Abraham would commit such a crime against the Father of that Son?

What had to happen happened. Incredibly, Jesus closed his mouth as if sheathing a sword and inexplicably surrendered himself to the enemy who had come to kill him. All he would have had to do was open his lips. If he had only said, "On your knees," the mob that had come out to seek him would have been frozen to the ground like pillars of salt. But no, he did not utter a word. He simply allowed himself to be chained.

To them—the Eleven—he left only the coward's choice.

So they all ran to hide. All except the one who ran off naked. He was the one who brought the news to the Mother: They had just captured her Son; they were taking him away to be judged.

The Roman had demanded the head of that Messiah from the Sanhedrin. Intimidated by Pilate's legions, the Sanhedrin had handed him over.

This matter of absolute guilt—which the future placed upon that Jewish generation, exonerating the Romans of their direct participation in the Passion of Christ—is resolved in the very heart of the high priest's words to the court that handed the Messiah over to Pilate:

"It is better that one man die for the people."

"It is best" meant that either they would hand him over to Pilate, or he would declare martial law and send out the legions to hunt him down. If they handed over Jesus of Nazareth, the people would remain quiet, having been taken by surprise; but if Pilate sent out his legions against the very man they were now abandoning to his fate, they would later defend him to the death out of love for their country. And where was the madman capable of believing in the victory of a popular rebellion against Caesar?

The fate of Jesus of Nazareth was sealed. It was either Him or the Nation. If, because of their cowardice, the future were to blame them for having handed Him over—placing upon them all the responsibility for His death—so be it. What else could they do? That shrewd Pilate would wash his hands of it. So what? Wasn't it better for one man to die than for the entire people to be massacred by the legions?

The disciples' mistake was believing that their people would not act like cowards and would take up arms rather than hand the Messiah over to the Romans. To them, the matter was clear: how could the Empire possibly defeat an army led by the King of the Universe? Hadn't hundreds and hundreds of men, women, and children experienced His glory firsthand? Weren't they, among the masses, the blessed living testimony to the Divine Mission of Jesus of Nazareth? It's true that many times those crowds had acclaimed him as king, and on just as many occasions he had turned his back on them. Was that logical? To renounce the throne that belongs to you by inheritance?

Yes or no?

Well, throughout the entire history of Israel, it had been demonstrated that the anointing of the king was not the responsibility of the people but of the prophets. Given this experience, it was natural for Jesus to refuse a coronation that went against historical and divine law.

The Age of the Prophets, recorded in Scripture, meant that the anointing—canonically speaking—belonged to the Temple. The time would therefore come when those very same crowds would follow him to Jerusalem and ask the Sanhedrin for the divine recognition that Jesus of Nazareth had earned through his works.

Then, pressed by the testimony of so many blessed souls and by a countless crowd clamoring at the top of their lungs for the high priest to anoint the Messiah, Jesus would sit on the Throne of David, his historical father, and in the presence of all the children of Israel, he would be crowned with the crown of kings.

When, in the third year of his Mission, word spread that Jesus of Nazareth was heading to Jerusalem for Passover, messianic anticipation drew countless crowds to Jerusalem.

Pontius Pilate was expecting him. Aware of the exploits of the Messiah of the Jews, he had long since demanded the head of that Nazarene from the Sanhedrin. The political decision he had to make regarding the messianic upheaval caused by "the Nazarene" was both complex and clear. He had to die. "If the Shepherd dies, the flock will scatter." Nor could he deploy his legions and unleash them en masse against the crowd. A nationalist rebellion would erupt in defense of

their Messiah, and a Spartacist-style war was the last thing Caesar could wish for. As a politician, his mission was to nip the problem in the bud before war broke out. He could wait for the worst and let the prey grow fat—just as Augustus and Herod had done in the days of the Census. At the right moment, Pilate would deploy his legions, and through the slaughter, the other nations would learn how Rome punishes rebellion against Caesar.

The fact was that the entire Sanhedrin was against the Nazarene but dared not lay a hand on him for fear of the crowd that followed him wherever he went. The Sanhedrin had sworn to Pilate that they would hand him over in person, but that he should wait until the fruit was ripe.

After the first year of his triumphal march toward the Mount of the Sermon, the second year had gone downhill. At the crossroads between the second and third years, Jesus' refusal to be crowned king had begun to scare away the crowds, who did not understand him at all.

Who among all those who had enjoyed such Divine Power would not have led the crowds to Jerusalem to demand from the Sanhedrin in full the Crown of his father David?

Confusion and ignorance regarding his intentions had left Jesus Christ alone at the dawn of the third year. Only the women and his disciples remained faithful to him.

What, then, had become of that initial desperation of the Roman politician? And what seemed even worse to the Sanhedrin: why would Pilate back down now? Could there be those within the Roman ranks who, in the event of a messianic uprising, would desert the Empire to place their swords at the service of the Son of David?

As Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem demonstrates, the anticipation—which had been stifled in the previous year by Jesus himself—awoke from its slumber. Believing that the Son of David had made his final decision in favor of his coronation, the crowds all rushed to Jerusalem that year.

As we already know—and as history shows—by Passover, Jerusalem had become a besieged city. From all corners of the world, Jews were coming down to and ascending to the Holy City to celebrate that Last Supper, which served as a prelude to the Exodus led by Moses.

In that year, 33 A.D., the usual crowd was joined by all those who had once proclaimed him king.

Imagine everyone's surprise when Jesus entered the Temple and, with a whip, forever shattered the pressure against the Sanhedrin and Caesar that this exalted crowd was ready to exert.

That messianic fervor that Jesus had awakened in his first year had returned. It reached Jerusalem before He did and made the walls of Jerusalem tremble with the same force as Joshua's trumpets had in their day. If, instead of going straight to the Temple to grab a whip and declare all-out war on the Sanhedrin, Jesus had done what he did as a child—making his way to the Court of the Scribes and getting down to business... But no. Not at all. Not in the least.

Things were already in turmoil, and he went to plunge them into chaos in the most explosive way imaginable.

The very same crowd that just a few hours earlier had clapped and cheered in honor of the Son of David was, as night fell, demanding his head from Pilate, who by then could no longer see why he had to kill the man who had dug his own grave.

To understand the Flight of His Disciples, one must put oneself in the shoes of those men who, in their hearts, had dreamed of that triumphal entry: "the Coronation." They were the first to be stunned when they saw their Master take up a whip and lash out with all-powerful fury against the Temple.

It was at that moment that Judas made his decision to hand him over to the Sanhedrin. The others left with their spirits crushed, as if floating in a total void.

What was going to happen now?

What had Jesus done?

As they ate the Last Supper, they felt as confused and empty as that Earth which, before the Beginning, wandered in the Darkness of the Abyss—confused and empty.

Alas, children of the Earth, your mother's inheritance is your lot! Did she not receive all manner of promises from her Creator on the day of her birth, and as soon as her Creator turned away, did she not allow herself to be ensnared by the confusion that accompanies all loneliness? Since your mother experienced the confusion and emptiness of solitude at her birth, how could you not stumble over the same stone?

While they were having supper with Him, His disciples had not the slightest idea what He was talking about. They only knew that they were willing to die fighting rather than leave Him alone. Poor Peter—his heart sank to the ground when his Hero and King took the sword from his hands! Without exception, they all ran off, driven by a force beyond their control that moved their legs against the will of their minds.

"What's going to happen now, Mother?" the other John asked the Mother of Jesus, as if she knew the answer.

What was going to happen? What had been prophesied for a thousand years was about to happen. The heavens would be draped in mourning to weep for the death of the Firstborn; the Earth would lament the death of the Only-Begotten.

24

The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The events of That Night are described in the Gospels. I will neither recount them nor elaborate on them. I will limit myself to what is not written.

As the Judeo-Roman farce ran its course, the sky grew overcast above the heads of the thousands of drunken people chanting, "Crucify him!"

The very same confusion that seized the Disciples and sent them fleeing—that very same force—had taken hold of the crowd that had cheered him at his triumphal entry; and, abandoned to alcohol, they vented their grief against the source of the disillusionment that had taken hold of their minds. Deranged, given over to the alcohol in which they drowned their sorrow—which flowed freely and by the barrelful from the hands of the Temple into their throats—those who just a few hours earlier had chanted to the Messiah, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," now shouted, "Crucify him."

As they shouted and shouted, clouds gathered on the horizon, weaving a web of lightning and thunder over Golgotha. While the Condemned One dragged his cross along the Via Dolorosa, oblivious to the drunken crowd that spat their laughter upon the Son of Mary, night began to fall.

Absorbed and awestruck by what they were experiencing as they took part in the procession, very few of them thought of the Prophet's words. In fact, only one boy did. At the foot of the Cross, as he gazed up at the sky, the Scriptures came to his mind.

> *"The waves of death had already surrounded me, and the torrents of Belial terrified me. The bonds of Sheol held me captive; the snares of death had overtaken me. And in my distress I called upon Yahweh and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from his palace, and my cry reached his ears. He was moved, and the earth trembled. The foundations of the mountains wavered; they quaked before the wrathful Yahweh. Smoke rose from his nostrils, and from his mouth came scorching fire, coals kindled by him. He lowered the heavens and descended; a black cloud was beneath his feet. He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the winds. He made darkness a veil, forming his tent around himself—watery gloom, thick clouds. Before the radiance of his face, the clouds dissolved—hail and flashes of fire. Yahweh thundered from the heavens; the Most High made His voice heard. He hurled His arrows at them and scattered them; He flashed lightning and struck them down. And streams of water appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare before Yahweh's rebuking wrath, before the blast of the hurricane of His fury."*

Yes, only that boy, John, fixed his eyes on the sky, which was watching in horror as the children of the Earth committed their crime. In the anguish of the moment, no one had realized what was about to fall upon their heads. The sky was as black as the depths of the most impenetrable cave. When Jesus breathed his last breath and they believed that the end had already come, as if suddenly awakening from a dream, their eyes opened to reality.

Before they could sense the threat from the heavens, the firmament split as if in tears. A crash rang out, louder than that of the walls of Jericho as they fell. It was then that they all raised their heads for the first time and smelled that electric moisture in the air.

They were just about to turn back when suddenly a lightning-like whip split the darkness. It seemed to strike far away. How foolish of them! It was the horseman who had once parted the enemy's ranks for Judas Maccabeus, now riding fiercely upon the clouds of prophecy. His gleaming eyes lit up the night, and from his all-powerful throat, thunder rolled across the horizon; like a madman, possessed by a pain that blinded his very core, that divine horseman raised his arm and brought his whip of lightning and thunder down upon the crowd.

The hellish wrath of the Eternal Father rained down upon children and women, the elderly and the young, without distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent. Driven mad—like who wakes with a start from a nightmare only to open his eyes and find that the real nightmare has just begun—the crowd began to run down Golgotha. The storm overhead threatened hail, lightning, and thunder, but no rain. It was a thunderstorm that the Almighty—pierced by the spear driven into His Son's chest, His heart shattered—had taken into His own hands and, driven mad by the pain, was unleashing upon the children of the earth without regard for whom. Frenzy and dread took hold of everyone. Terror swept through the crowd, sparing neither the elderly nor the children, male nor female. Driven mad by what they had done under the influence of alcohol, the crowd began to move toward the walls of Jerusalem. Fools! As if God's pain could be stopped by stone.

And so the crowd began to run down Golgotha, seeking salvation within the city walls. Then the Almighty's electric whip began to fall upon women and children, young and old, without distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent. His pain—the pain of the Almighty—reached them all and tore at their flesh without mercy of any kind. In less time than it takes for the rooster to crow its second time, the slope of Golgotha began to fill with charred corpses. Those who were already climbing the slope toward the Lions' Gate thought they had escaped the horror when the tombs of the Jewish Cemetery began to open. The prophets emerged from their tombs, and from their ghostly mouths the Wrath of the Almighty delivered their death sentence to the living.

Horror, desolation, terror. Those who thought they had found refuge in their homes found their doors locked. On the night of the Last Supper, fifteen hundred years ago, the angel of death swept through the homes of the Egyptians, seeking out the firstborn. That same angel now roamed the streets of Jerusalem, killing without distinguishing between the young and the old. The same infinite pain that had shattered his Lord's heart had now reached his own, and in his unspeakable agony, he plunged his cherubic sword into everyone he encountered.

Terrified, trapped in a hellish nightmare, terror drove the fugitives to the Temple. There they huddled within its walls, seeking mercy. In a frenzy—with the madness of one who kills his own son and takes refuge from the child's father in his own home—they found their grave there when the scourge of Sorrow rained its tears down upon the dome, a dome that collapsed onto the terrified crowd.

Horror, dread, desolation. The pain of the Father of Christ in full violent outburst. The blood of a God transformed into blocks of stone falling upon a terrified crowd, crushing heads, reducing men and women to rubble. "Cry out again, 'Crucify him!'" the stones of the Temple's dome wrote with their creaking as they fell from the ceiling to the ground.

While these things were happening at the foot of the Cross, only one man and three women remained. As if shielded by a shield of energy, the boy stood, watching the spectacle. At the foot of the Mount of Passion lay the charred corpses, the dying crushed under the weight of those who had fled down the slopes. Against the walls, with no possible escape from the dead who had risen from their graves, the paralyzed victims of horror piled up in a frenzy. When, after a while, the Temple's dome collapsed and the thunder and lightning ceased, along with the thrashing of flesh and blood, Juan picked up the sword of the Roman who had confessed. The boy turned his head toward the three Women, spoke to them with his eyes, and began to clear a path for them. The crowd of wounded and dying, horrified, parted as if he were an angel of God in the very midst of completing the work begun by his Lord. Such was the fire that blazed from the eyes of the youngest of the Sons of Thunder.

Once they reached the streets, unable to withstand the gaze of that human cherub, the delirious onlookers stepped out of his way. Juan led the three women home and closed the door behind him. There were the Ten and the other women. As if dead, the Mother threw herself onto the bed and closed her eyes to a world to which she no longer seemed to want to return.

The survivors swore to erase from their memories—and from those of their children—the memory of the Night when God broke His Covenant with the children of Abraham. Their historians buried the memory of that Night in the tomb of millennia-old silences. Many times in the history of humanity, a people has sworn to erase from its memory a certain event—one that was special and crucial to the development of its future. Rarely has a people managed to bury such a traumatic chapter so definitively.

The Eleven also believed that such was the fate of those three years of unforgettable glory. In fact, the only thing that kept them locked in that House that Friday and the following Saturday was the desire to know the fate of that Mother who lay as if dead in her bed.

Would the Mother awaken from her slumber? Couldn't one see, on her face ravaged by suffering, the shards into which her heart had shattered?

Lord, how could they look her in the face when she awoke? What words of comfort would they offer her to justify the shameful flight they had undertaken?

What could they do? Abandon her to her fate? Keep running until the distance between them and their memories became an abyss?

Hadn't He told them that everything they were going through would pass, and that He would rise again on the third day?

The hours seemed endless to all who watched over the Mother's sleep. Despite the danger they faced, no one would leave without accompanying her to Nazareth.

How long would it take for the Mother to wake up? But of course, why would she want to wake up?

At noon on Saturday, the Mother began to emerge from her stupor. The Eleven thought they would not be able to bear her gaze. Oh, how foolish they were!

They had been gazing at that aged face for more hours than they could count. They already knew every micrometer of her lacerated cheeks by heart.

Suddenly, that Saturday, her face began to regain its color. Everyone stood watching her every movement. Just then, the Mother opened her eyes, full of life.

At her side, her sister Juana was caressing her forehead as one caresses the head of the most beloved person in the world. Unexpectedly, the Mother asked for a little water. The other Mary, the wife of Cleophas, stood up. Slowly, the Mother sat up in bed and looked at them all. The Eleven were sitting on the floor against the walls of the room. The expression on her face left them in awe when the Mother parted her lips. "What's the matter, my children?" she said, smiling. "Whom are you keeping vigil for? You're looking at me as if you were seeing a ghost."

The Eleven could not get over their surprise. Mary, the wife of Cleophas, returned with the glass of water and sat down beside her, resting her head on her shoulder.

"It's all right, Mary, don't be a little girl—don't cry anymore. Or do you want my Son to find you like this when He comes?"

The Eleven looked at one another, thinking that grief had caused her to lose her mind. The Mother read their thoughts and began to speak to them, saying:

"My little children, I am to blame for everything. Long ago I should have revealed to you who It is that you call Teacher and Lord. This had to happen so that He might free me from my silence. Who do you think you've been following from place to place?

"I am old, my children, and I am weary. Listen to me carefully and lift up your spirits; when He comes tomorrow, you will have proof of everything I am going to tell you today. What would my Son think if, upon coming tomorrow, He found you in this state? How could I look Him in the face? Bear with me if at any point I am not clear. When He sends you the Spirit of the Promise, you will remember my words, and I myself will be enchanted by the wisdom He will pour into your souls. What I am about to tell you, I have heard from Him. I do not possess His grace or His wisdom. I tell you now, He Himself will fill you with His knowledge, and then you will no longer need me to tell you anything. He spoke to me of His World, of His Father; I asked Him questions, and He answered me without hiding anything from me—at least nothing I did not need to know. I was His confidante, the open and innocent heart into which He poured His divine memories. He spoke to me of His World with His eyes gazing into infinity; I kept it all in my heart; each of His words I sealed within my very being. I have not known why He sealed my lips until this very day. Today He has freed me from my Silence,

and I place in your hearts what He placed in mine and what I have carried with me for so many years."

Opening her Heart to them, the Mother revealed to the Disciples: the Annunciation, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Divine History that She heard from the lips of her Child, in those days when, as "her Child," the Son of God came to nestle in the arms of "his Mother."

FOURTH BOOK

THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE ACCORDING TO GENESIS.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the face of the Abyss,

but the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

11.—DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES
21.—PART ONE.—CREATION OF THE LIGHT IN GENESIS
42.—PART TWO.—CREATION OF THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVENS
50.—PART THREE.—THE LADDER OF NATURAL ELEMENTS
61. PART FOUR: THE CREATION OF THE BIOSPHERE
66.-PART FIVE.- CREATION OF THE ECOSPHERE
77.—PART SIX.—CREATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM
89.—PART SEVEN.—THE CREATION OF THE HEAVENS

INTRODUCTION TO 21ST-CENTURY COSMOLOGY

Here is the world's best-kept secret. During the 3,500 years that have passed from Moses to Christ Raúl, no human being was permitted to break the Seal with which YAHWEH God decreed that the History of the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth remain beyond the reach of the intellect for millennia—until the Day set by His Foreknowledge, that is.

Now that this Seal has been opened, and the hieroglyph written by Moses has been revealed for all nations to read, the Intelligence of YAHWEH God, its Creator, is magnified to infinity—all the more so because the sages and geniuses of every age attempted to open this Seal and read its contents, yet were unable to do so. The wisdom of YAHWEH God, Creator of the Universe, is all the more exalted and inaccessible when one considers that the man to whom He has granted the honor of opening this Seal and reading its contents to all nations is nothing more than a man with no education beyond the basic knowledge typical of his time and people.

Obviously, the obstacle this Book must overcome is multiplied by the number of men who, frustrated by their inability to open the Seal of Genesis, convinced themselves that this impossibility stemmed from the fact that the biblical account of Genesis is nothing more than "a metaphor devoid of any scientific content."

Since human intelligence was created to rise to the image of divine intelligence—as it is written, "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness"—that frustration could only give rise to a vision of the origin of the universe designed to drown out human ignorance and keep "the omnipotence of scientific reason" afloat. The fruit of this emotional duality brought into the world a Godless cosmology—defensive at first, and later offensive, that is, anti-creationist—with the aim of preserving human greatness in the face of "the death of God."

Now, God does not lie; it was not in vain that He said of Himself, "I am the Truth." Thus, since He has written the Account of the Creation of our Universe in the form of hieroglyphs, precisely because it is impossible to penetrate His Text without the guidance of its Author, and because this impossibility is manifested in the fall of twentieth-century science into the abyss of Nazism—it was precisely because of this impossibility that the very existence of the Text became a promise of revelation, to be fulfilled, thanks to Christ, on a date known exclusively to Him.

In short, the Seal was to be opened, and the Mystery of its Contents brought to light.

Now, since 19th-century scientific atheism had evolved into 20th-century cosmology, and since the 20th century had constructed an artificial structure for the unreal edifice of its fictitious image of the Universe in Time and Space, logically the clash between such an artificial and fictitious vision and the true image of the Universe, now revealed, is bound to set sparks flying.

Let us say that the need to base a cosmological image—one with no support in the structure of Reality—on pseudoscientific principles gave rise, around that castle in the air that was 20th-century science, an entire neo-pagan religion, with universities as temples and the Academy of Sciences as the Vatican, thereby demonstrating—even in its atheism—that any human structure aspiring to be invincible must follow the model that Christ established during his lifetime: the Catholic Church.

In their aspirations for immortality, both the Third Reich and the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist Party did not hesitate to adapt the Catholic structure to their parties. The anti-creationist atheism of the 20th century was no exception, nor did it fail to bring that copy to perfection—all the more so since among its builders were the geniuses who gave birth to the Atomic Age.

God's task in this century is neither small nor insignificant.

But it is in the face of impossibility that Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence manifest their true infinite and eternal nature.

As for the literary aspect, I must take full responsibility for any flaws this little book may have. Being an Introduction does not imply infallibility or dogma. However, since its foundations were laid by the Creator of Heaven and Earth Himself, any departure from those foundations is to reopen the door to World Wars.

Over the years, my thinking has evolved. The original foundation remains.

Reading this little book is not easy, nor do I intend to adapt my style to the demands of the market. My task is made all the more difficult by the complex artificial structure that 20th-century cosmology built around the atheism of the scientific community.

Many geniuses used Newton's shoulders as a springboard toward those of Einstein. Setting aside the technological and scientific revolutions of the past two centuries, the heirs to that cosmological system—founded on a hypothesis whose greatness lay in having reinvented a universe that existed only in their minds—today's astronomers prefer to continue working with their eyes closed to the data rather than jeopardize that marvelous, man-made cosmological edifice and, under the weight of the evidence, be forced to sign off on the demolition of the religion of 20th-century atheism. Divine Truth, however, is invincible. The data stored in the astronomical memory of the 21st century rises up to sweep away, in one fell swoop, that castle in the air that was the 20th century.

The Dynamic Structure of our Skies—this Firmament of the Heavens that every night opens our eyes to the immensities of its Creation, and from which, due to Historical Social Barbarism, men have been alienated from its free contemplation, being slaves as they are to an Animal Social System founded precisely upon that Cosmological System from whose bosom all the Evils of the 20th Century were born; when we study the physical data provided by natural astronomy, we discover a structure of infinite beauty whose foundations open the eyes of our thought to the existence of a creative wisdom established upon the boundless intelligence of an Almighty Being whose power has been placed at the service of the Tree of the Sciences of the Creation of Universes, in whose activity

His Being acquires the supernatural properties proper to the Creator of the Cosmos: omniscience and omnipotence.

It is logical, then, that when faced with the question of whether or not the CSXX exists—insofar as it is a Religion of Science—today's astronomers remain blind to the evidence that Universal Astrophysical Data lays before them.

My work in this context consists of making the difficult simple and showing that the Light that blinds the eyes is the Light that opens the human being's intellect to the Image of the Divine Intelligence of their Creator. For people continue to prefer to live under animal-like conditions solely and exclusively out of fear of experiencing a Freedom that, in the Image and Likeness of the Divine, overcomes all things and confronts the problems of Space and Time with the victorious consciousness of one who has learned that Living is an Adventure, an Epic in constant and continuous progress toward a Horizon that reveals its nature as one approaches its Mark. In the words of our Creator, God the Only-Begotten Son, our King and Lord, our Father and Teacher: "Each day will bring its own concerns."

I understand that, having worked in this realm of the Creation of our Universe with the perseverance of one who has dedicated his life to recreating the True Image of our Heavens and their Relationship in Space and Time with the Cosmos in which they were created—and having trained my mind to work with simple images supported by Natural Astronomical Data— I must start from a clear Universal Principle that leaves no room for doubt and serves as a Bridge between the 20th century and this Introduction to the 21st century. To meet this need, I will state right now that this Introduction is exactly what its title indicates: "An Introduction." Whoever opens the Door fulfills their task; it falls to those who enter to continue working and updating cosmological and astrophysical thought so that future generations may move through the coming centuries on ground nourished by a Tree of Creative Sciences whose Fruit lives under the Law of Life and not under the Law of Death—which was the Fruit that the tree of scientific atheism came to serve the 20th century.

Regarding the Origin of the Cosmos—establishing here the Principle of Our Universe as a Work subsequent to the Creation of the Cosmos, and a Cosmos that was created to serve as the Field of Raw Matter from which its Creator would draw for the Creation of New Universes—this Cosmological Origin took place through a Massive Transformation of astrophysical matter into cosmic energy; global energy that, upon being redirected toward spacetime energy fields, began its journey back to astrophysical matter.

Essentially, this Original Big Bang continues to occur at the Frontiers of the Cosmos, where the cosmic energy created by the galaxies is captured by spacetime energy fields that transform energy into matter. And so on to infinity, for all eternity—hence the natural expansion ad infinitum of the Cosmos. The creation of galaxies is an endless process that the Creator of the Original Big Bang sustains by expanding the space at the frontiers of His creation as time materializes into galaxies and galaxy clusters.

It is no coincidence, then, that the Radioastronomical Revolution we are experiencing continues to add new galaxies to those already detected, expanding

the frontiers of the Cosmos as this new accumulation opens our eyes to an Expansion that is entirely distinct from any Final Cosmological Contraction.

Just as Eternity, the Infinite, and God have neither Beginning nor End: Creation has come to remain forever and ever. On the contrary, to deny the Expansion of the Cosmos to Infinity by asserting a Contraction set to begin at some point along the line of Eternity is to succumb to science fiction—that is, to return to the Age of Fallacy of the 20th century, when a Hypothesis was Law until its Evil was proven. Since the evil of the 20th century has ravaged the Earth with two world wars, persisting in such a fallacy is to declare open war against the human race, against life, and against God.

And to conclude this Prologue, the firsthand observation of the evolution that the astronomical and physical sciences in general have undergone over the past 40 years serves as a source of intellectual resources conducive to the development of a clear and seamless understanding of the natural image that corresponds to our heavens and our Earth. There can be no doubt at this point that the image projected by the geological and astronomical sciences to humankind affects its stance toward its own civilization and its attitude toward the universe. Seeking to pass the buck and blame one's own ills on a force external to the system itself is a pathological recourse that, as is evident from the historical reality in which we currently find ourselves, leads nowhere—or rather, it does lead to a very specific place: destruction.

The role that the natural sciences played in the outbreak of World War II is a mea culpa that hangs in the air like a tombstone.

The relationship between Knowledge and Behavior—a principle fully embraced by the sciences since the earliest days of ethology, to avoid going too far back in time—means that the role Scientific Atheism, underpinned by 20th-century science, played in the tragedy of the 20th century is beyond dispute. Unless, of course, they now want us all to be not only blind but also brainless.

Personally, I do not believe that Evil acted consciously. But once Consciousness is acquired, the consequences of Freedom cannot be attributed to the Impossibility of breaking a Seal that God kept sealed with His Fist and His Word. There is, therefore, no Condemnation; nor is it my task to judge the Thinkers of the past centuries. Truth lies beyond judgment of others; it is in its very nature to set free those who found themselves trapped in the darkness of a Silence rooted in a Cosmological Necessity that has now been overcome.

Let us, then, open the Door that for 3,500 years has remained closed—for the glory of our Divine Creator and the liberation of all the nations of humankind from the forces that the ignorance born of the Fall of the First Man unleashed upon all the peoples of the Earth.

CHAPTER 1

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

1. But, to begin with—and since one must always choose a good starting point—I will say that this study on the Memory of the Creation of the Universe (Heavens and Earth) has its origin in the need to open Faith to the scientific principles of Nature. I do not intend to base Faith on such principles, for Faith has been and is founded on the supernatural principles of which the Gospels are the Eternal Treatise. The Incarnation and the Resurrection are the two pillars of the Temple of Faith; when it comes to questions about the Origin of all things, the only explanation our parents could give us—and that we ourselves have been able to give our children, up to now—is the Account of the Creation of the Universe according to Genesis. That is to say, "God created the heavens and the earth"... And the rest—the "how" and the "when"—are aspects of the Creative Activity that we may or may not understand, but which neither add to nor detract from the Faith.

2. The task I have set for myself in this book is to resolve the first of these two unknowns: "the How." For although Faith is invincible, no one can deny that Faith without Reason is corruptible, as has been amply demonstrated over the centuries. We must, therefore, attribute all the errors of Christianity to ignorance. Consequently, in this book I will go straight to the Truth; and the truth is this: the Universe—this astrophysical engineering structure within whose walls our Solar System orbits—has been created by the God of Genesis. The opposite—the alleged circumstantial fact that this final ensemble of breathtaking beauty we call "the Universe" arose from a chaotic series of elements—did not cause scientific materialism any psychological conflict whatsoever, insofar as science denied the existence of a Natural Aesthetic. (This topic of the Aesthetics of the Heavens and its role in stimulating intelligence is a matter that scientific atheism declared to be the result of a series of coincidences, all originating in Chaos. As for the rest—how it is possible for Chaos to produce Heavens of such breathtaking beauty—this is a question they refused to answer. Or they responded with the contempt that a fool's question deserves.) It is no coincidence that the father of ethology and Nobel laureate Konrad Lorenz linked Knowledge and Behavior in his classic equation: "Truth = Survival; Falsehood = Destruction."

3. The examples that the wise Konrad Lorenz, the father of ethology, presented to us when speaking about the direct relationship between Knowledge and Behavior are infinite, but in essence they converge on a universal conclusion; namely: positive Behavior—or behavior related to survival, adaptation, and evolution—in every living being is the fruit of its true and real Knowledge of Nature; information it acquires through its senses, on the one hand; and through its phylogenetic heritage, on the other; such that, based on the nature of a species' actual behavior, we can define the nature of the knowledge that serves as its foundation for moving through space and time.

In other words, if we provide an individual with false information about the environment in which it moves, the consequence will be that it begins to veer erratically. Example: If we convey false information to an individual on the move regarding the length of a gap in their path—which they must prepare to cross as they approach—by presenting two meters as a fact when the truth is that it is ten meters, the acceptance of this falsehood will lead to their downfall.

In animals, it is the senses—whatever they may be—that gather information as movement occurs. In intelligent beings, such as humans, information comes from communication; therefore, the individual is exposed to external factual manipulation, which, by directing their behavior, may or may not seek their destruction. Now, when it is the entire species—the whole human race, in this case—that is moving along a self-destructive path, logically we must speak of an intellectual pathology that, by affecting all human beings, must inevitably drag them all into the abyss of their extinction. And since cosmology concerns the structure of nature—the origin of all life on Earth—the global self-destructive behavior exhibited by humankind must be sought in a pathology of the intellect, which intellectually recreates the nature of the world in which humankind lives, exists, and is.

4. Returning to the metaphysical topic, the fact is that ethics is not involved in genetics either, and yet its manifestation occurs at all known historical levels. Thus, since the need is innate, Knowledge forms part of our genetic structure. Or, to put it another way, we would not react to the Aesthetics of the Universe if our genetic structure were not prepared to respond to the sparks that the Heavens set off in our brains.

Thus, by denying the relationship between Natural Intelligence and Universal Aesthetics, scientific materialism effectively derailed the train of creationist cosmological research. Against that attempt, it must be said that the history of civilizations, from their earliest days, maintains a record of the responses of different cultures to this natural stimulus (Natural Intelligence–Universal Aesthetics), over which the human race—being, as it was, in its Ontological Infancy—had no capacity for manipulation or control. In other words, human beings react to the Beauty of the Universe as naturally as trees do to the arrival of spring and the winds of winter.

Since “Admiration is the mother of Philosophical Thought,” it is Nature itself—bearing within its Universal Structure the imprint of its Creator’s Intelligence— its effect on Life—which cannot be anything other than an Intelligent Creature “in the image and likeness of its Creator”—engenders in human beings Metaphysical Thought, on the basis of which they transcend the very materiality of the information registered by the senses to rise to a Universal External Cause that has its Origin in God.

In this regard, one might object that Metaphysics has little or nothing to do with Cosmology. This is a baseless objection, for Philosophy—being the mother of Metaphysics—is the fire that kindles Intelligence within the Being, leading it to Science. And Science directs its Thought toward Creation—a pattern of behavior that we observe in all civilizations. From this, we deduce that the Creator’s imprint

is integrated into Creation to elevate the Life of His Creature to its Existence and Participation in Eternity.

5. As for the Creation of Intelligent Life upon the face of the Earth—specifically, speaking of Homo sapiens adanensis, the human being in its Ontological Infancy—Man's response to the Universe's stimulus in his Brain was the Word. That is to say, if Science has its origins in the act of wonder, that very act revolutionized the Future of Man long before, opening his mouth to articulate his First Word.

The First Word—the word of wonder par excellence—what else could it be but "God!"

In fact, the biblical account of the Creation of the Universe has its origin in the fulfillment of that stimulus which awakened in Man the quest for knowledge of the Origin of all things. Amid the various responses that the different nations of antiquity offered to that stimulus (Celestial Aesthetics—Natural Intelligence), the Biblical Response created a gap between Moses and his contemporaries as insurmountable as it was impossible for the Pharaoh to cross the Red Sea.

6. Indeed, compared to Moses' account of the Creation of the Universe, the cosmogonic tales of ancient peoples bore the mark of the historical trauma experienced by their ancestors somewhere on the other side of the Flood. Gods, demons, the ocean, the sky, the earth, demigods... All the paranoias of those men mingled into a mythical chaos from whose depths nothing good could emerge except the justification for the social behavior that was their historical legacy. That is why, in this book, I prefer to leave for another occasion an analysis of the genesis of antiquity's responses to the challenge of the cosmos. Nor will I lose myself in the analysis and refutation of modern cosmological theories, for, although cloaked in a different guise, the Atomic Age's answers to the old classical questions about the Origin and Structure of the Universe had their roots in the very same psychological attitude that dragged ancient man into the Age of myths and legends.

In due course, when the occasion arises, I will dissect their frameworks until the nature of their hypotheses is laid bare. Since this New Cosmology is not the development of a previous hypothesis, nor is it indebted to any of them, the historical theory set in motion by this book has no reason to follow the same method of cataloging and refuting all the hypotheses that, from the days of the Classical World to the Atomic Age, have sought to do the same—that is, to satisfy humanity's need for knowledge. And considering that freedom of expression joins with freedom of thought to create its own method, I have preferred to follow as my course of action the framework that Moses laid out in Genesis. I say this fully aware that without the work of past generations, it would be impossible for me to be here today.

Now, bearing in mind that this progress has already been inscribed in the history of our civilization from the moment its Founder—none other than the One who, opening His mouth, said, "LET THERE BE LIGHT"—this Introduction acknowledges no other kinship than with the One who has ordained that human

intelligence find the open door to the Science of Creation. The sciences have fulfilled a sacred historical function, none other than to prepare the intellect of our century to access the boundless intellect of our Creator.

7. From the study of the history of the sciences in general, and of astronomy in particular, we see in what manner and to what extent ignorance was the legacy bequeathed to humankind by the generation of those mythical founders of the first cities built by human hands, whose golden age was reached when "the crown descended from heaven," when the cities were erected as the body of the First King of the Earth, that Adam who, defying the Law and spurning Peace on the path toward the civilization of the fullness of the nations of humankind, made Holy War his iron law—a legacy that led everyone to Death. Destruction where the delicate relationship between Knowledge and Behavior is most clearly seen.

"False" information about the Creator's Identity and Personality—accepted as true and certain—triggered the first global civil war, enacted in the fratricide of Cain versus Abel; information that, had it not been accepted—and had Mankind instead embarked on a direct Path toward Universal Civilization—would have spared the Human Race so much misfortune.

But since we are not in this little book to set the record straight for the historians of Antiquity, it is best that we set aside for now the topic of the Fall in light of the historical sciences, and we will have time, when God wills it, to travel to the Seventh Millennium B.C. and recreate, in light of the evidence, the world before the Fall of that first kingdom whose king received the crown "that came down from Heaven"—Adam for us, "Alulim" for the heirs of that lost world... all because of an apple!

8. Continuing with the topic, by way of introduction—and although a brief overview may seem irrelevant—Moses' entry into Universal History revolutionized the structure of Humanity's Future for many reasons. He was the first lawgiver to abolish human sacrifices. Once cleansed by Jesus Christ of the penalties associated with the biblical crime, the Mosaic Code of Justice remains the foundation of our social ethics, with its "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not bear false witness"... the pillars upon which the Palace of Justice maintains its basic structure.

Obviously, the world remains as it is due to the battle to the death that the seed of Cain has been waging against Christ.

From the origins of the world—that world reborn from the ashes of the ancient pre-Christian world—the goal of kingdoms and empires, tyrants and dictators has been, and remains, none other than to legalize theft, adultery, crime, false testimony, unnatural sex, etc. The history of this struggle between the law of Nature—written by God the Creator in the hearts of all the first families of the Earth— and the law of Crime, whose goal was and is the legalization of that transgression (in the name of the State, the Caste, Democracy, and even God), had and has as its guiding principles the task of leading nations to the acceptance of war as a way of life.

The significance of the Code of Moses and its revolutionary nature need not be emphasized. As I have already said, that Code was the fire that raised from the ashes that Ancient World which, with the Quadrature of the Caesars, led Ancient Civilization to its ruin. Inspired by the Spirit of Christ, the Modern World arose from those ashes; today, it is once again galloping toward its ruin on the backs of the very same horses that led the Roman Empire to its downfall.

9. In many ways, then, the Revolution of Moses continues to affect us three thousand five hundred years after its inception.

Without in any way contradicting our Dogma on the Trinity, his monotheism remains the Rock upon which Christ built his Church. (From the opposition between that ancient force, stagnant in its inertia and refusing to take the leap forward, and the new force, which demanded to be born, arose the great conflict that, with its explosion, restored to Sacred Scripture the revolutionary nature it possessed at its origins—and which it never renounced. Thanks to Jesus Christ—even at the cost of being considered a "traitor to his homeland" for seeking to make Sacred Scripture the universal heritage of humanity—Classical Natural Intelligence found the door open to the study of Creation. And more importantly, Jesus Christ gave the Bible a People who would protect it from the impending Fall of the Roman Empire.)

10. The Jewish people, it is true, had carried the Holy Scriptures against the winds of the centuries. But they had done so as one who bears a burden from which one cannot free oneself. Their periods of idolatry, their eras of corruption—so common in their history—were nothing more than that: the manifestation of that inability to cast that burden from their shoulders. Moses signed a Covenant between God and the Hebrew people, whereby Israel would never be destroyed; but because this covenant bound both parties—and since the Eye of God is everywhere—it was bound to create, and did create, in the consciousness of the Jewish people the need not to feel watched in such a constant and omnipresent manner. The result of that need for liberation was those periods of idolatry and corruption of which the Bible is so full.

It was this relationship of a sadomasochistic nature—in that God knew it was impossible for man not to sin, and man knew it was impossible for God to refrain from punishing—that led the Jewish people to the final situation which, through their confrontation with the priestly powers of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ revealed to us.

After a millennium and a half of studying Sacred Scripture, living it in their very flesh—I would say—such was the model of the relationship between God, the Universe, and Man that Jerusalem and its children came to embody. Their liturgical rites, their legislative prescriptions, and the Jewish way of life in general—with few exceptions—kept the rest of the world's hands away from Sacred Scripture, and those of the Jewish people—with rare exceptions—away from the books of the Golden Age of Philosophy and the Classical Sciences.

Jesus Christ set out to tear down this situation—this insurmountable psycho-historical wall in both directions.

And he did so.

The need was vital. As custodians of Sacred Scripture, the Jews could not ignore that Universal History was continuing to evolve and that around them there was another people in whom God had entrusted another kind of "sacred scripture."

If Sacred Scripture was the fruit of God's love for humanity, the fruit of humanity's love for Wisdom would be Philosophy, the mother of Science.

11. Science's journey through the centuries was a long one. It could not have been otherwise. For since Man was created to share in creative Omniscience, human intelligence—a living reflection of Divine Intelligence—could not and cannot help but aspire to grow within the omniscient dimension that is natural to the Source of his existence. The direct and pernicious consequence that the Fall bequeathed to all the families of the world was this disconnection; thus, although man possessed "within himself the potential to be," he found himself, after the Fall, unable to move from "potential" to "actuality"—what in Philosophy is called: moving from "potency" to "act."

This natural impossibility gave rise to mythologies and cosmogonies—each one individually, and all of them collectively—which served as catalysts for the Crime against Nature, which, though bearing Divine law within its bosom, found itself powerless to reconnect the Human Creature with its Creator.

Ignorance was the lot of the human race (whose nature we will discuss in due course, though not here, as this book is intended to remain exclusively within the realm of knowledge of God as the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth)... Philosophical thought rose up against this ignorance, and although human intelligence was enslaved to the law of animal reason, because human beings carry within themselves the seed of divine intelligence, this seed, by the Creator's design, was bound to bear fruit.

12. Thus, 1,500 years after the Nativity, the hour of science's liberation had arrived. The guardianship that Theology had exercised over Science was coming to an end. However, the situation was not the same. One cannot compare the world 1,500 years after Moses with that of Galileo 1,500 years after Jesus Christ. But as far as the end of Theology's guardianship over Science was concerned, the Hour had indeed arrived.

The hands of the clock of Time had been moving toward that Hour.

If theologians took offense at Galileo, it was not because God had ceased to be the spirit that breathes the breath of life into His creatures. I would say it was quite the opposite; it was because Theology had attempted to monopolize that breath of life and, having failed to do so, logically had to take offense at God. But these things had already been foretold. The real problem at the heart of science's independence arose when, out of these tensions, emerged that sense of freedom

felt by one who is finally liberated from the protection of a mother who is, as I would say, overly "Madonna-like." This growing sensation, fueled by the critique of independent reason directed at a church anchored in its medieval ways, ultimately led the modern world to embrace various forms of scientific materialism.

Given the intellectual conditioning acquired by modern science, the progress of physical knowledge of the universe could hardly converge toward an encounter with its Creator.

13. Although it may sound like destructive criticism—which it is not—it is a fact that the failure of the Modern Age was written into its legacy to the Atomic Age. Many ideas about possible cosmological models, each a piece of a puzzle that seemed marvelous but that no one could put together. It fell to Einstein's genius and his generation to elevate the Number to the status of the Word, and with its all-consuming power to order the Cosmos. (The madness that—according to them—resided in the genius led the sages of the Atomic Age to believe they were in a relay race and that their turn to run had come. With the scholars' loyalty to a lost cause, the geniuses of the early twentieth century leaped onto the track leading to the hell of the world wars. By the time they realized it, by the time they wanted to stop the train, it was already too late, and inertia did the rest.) They leaped, and, like Pilate washing his hands, they stepped aside.

How could we fail to implicate them in the birth of the monster they nourished with the milk of the law of the strongest, and the bread of war as an instrument of progress and evolution!

Nourished by the doctrine of scientific materialism, the Nazi monster and the Bolshevik monster grew until they became the armies of that hell that made the 20th century the most evil period ever experienced by humankind.

True, the Fall of the Roman Empire was no less hellish, but the fact that the 20th century possessed all the necessary means to prevent the apocalyptic catastrophe, and the fact that it saw war as the only possible means to escape the ideological and economic crisis affecting all nations alike, transformed the Fall of the Modern World into the greatest tragedy ever known, both because of the number of souls caught up in the apocalyptic catastrophe and because of the hatred and evil unleashed in the world wars of the 20th century.

In other words, according to the gospel of the strongest: World War was legitimate.

They had to begin.

And they began

14. Fortunately for us, everything that has a beginning has an end, and the greatest of the wars experienced by humankind also came to an end.

It ended; but, fleeing the defeat of the Strong, the athletes of Science scattered in all directions, and handed the baton of atomic energy to the two great powers that had emerged victorious from the conflict.

The Cold War came into being.

A Cold War that had its origin in God's decision to arm Cain and Abel with the same jawbone, in order to prevent fratricide through the fear of both being destroyed. A wonderful policy whose fruits we all now enjoy. Not that the Atomic Age is, or has been, a paradise of harmony, with " " thought focused on the salvation of nations and the redemption of Mother Earth. Not at all! But the technological revolution had to run its course.

And, by one of those marvelous decisions of Providence, the eyes of human intelligence were opened; they began to penetrate astronomical distances.

And as the universal expanse unfolded before the telescopic eyes of civilization, that "Universe of the Strongest" gradually evaporated, vanishing like the soap bubble that, according to its creators, it was. Stunned, with the incredulous eyes of one who sees his idols teetering on their pedestals, unable to bear the weight of the earthquake shaking the earth's foundations, the last generations of the Cold War witnessed how Einstein's religion and his cosmological doctrine trembled on their altar, and there was nothing their priests could do to prevent it.

Once again, Reality has rejected—and continues to reject—the ideology of scientific materialism. First, it rejected its gospel of the survival of the fittest; then it rejected its doctrine of the necessity of war as a biological instrument of civilization; and now it is shaking the very foundations of the Cosmos, as science tells us.

15. But rather than lose myself in a critique of scientific behavior, I prefer to move directly to highlighting the development of civilization as a result of the evolution of human language—that workhorse that has led us to victory over that lack of knowledge which the Son of God lamented, saying: "If you do not understand the things of the Earth, how will you understand those of Heaven?"

It is no rhetorical exercise to assert that the meaning, the objective, and the goal toward which these past two millennia have been moving have been the overcoming of that intellectual deficiency. Let us recall that God had spoken as a prophet, God had spoken as a lawgiver, God had spoken as a king and lord, and finally God spoke as a Father; but God never spoke to us as the Creative Intelligence of the One who, opening His mouth, said, "Let there be light."

And yet, having affirmed that He created the Universe, within that affirmation lay the promise to do so. Thus, in the lament of the Son of God, this promise pulsed as the Future—a future that was yet to come, one He would have liked to see already, but which, unfortunately, was still to come.

For the intelligence of Classical Man would have to grow greatly to be able to comprehend the laws of the Science of Creation. The Path from barbarism to the dawn of our time would be long and narrow; but that Day would come. History

would open its horizon, and the Morning Star, which heralds the arrival of the New Day, would shine its light upon the Fullness of the Nations.

16. Seeing it coming from afar across the centuries, one of Jesus' disciples greeted it, saying, "The eager expectation of Creation is awaiting the manifestation of the glory of the freedom of the children of God." Since all the Apostles of Jesus Christ were children of God, when Paul affirmed that "the whole of creation" was awaiting the "manifestation of the glory of the freedom of the children of God"—in his own way, in such an insightful way that Saint Peter recognized it, Saint Paul prophesied the coming of this Day when God would speak to us as the Creator of the Universe who revealed Himself at the beginning of His Book.

Moreover, the first two steps in this direction had already been taken. There were Revelation and Science.

Although it is true that a wall stood between the two, Christianity—as would be seen in the first half of the first millennium—tore it down, and in the light of its Magisterium, Theology and Science learned to coexist and grow together.

Obviously, civilization would still have to endure bitter and critical times; looming on its path were invasions, the schism among the churches, the battle between Faith and Reason, and, at the end of the two millennia, the World Wars. Only at the very end would the spirit of Intelligence enter the scene.

PART ONE

THE CREATION OF LIGHT IN GENESIS

CHAPTER 2

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED...

17. We now delve fully into the central theme of this book: the Creation of our Universe. And, to begin with—for it could not be otherwise—I have chosen Biblical Revelation as the path to discovering the Origin and Constitution of our Heavens and our Earth.

The mere fact that scientific thought has strayed from Revelation does not in any way legitimize the right to fabricate a Universe tailored to one's own preferences. The legitimization of models of the universe—"provided that the sciences of numbers are used as building blocks in their construction"—is nothing more than a subtle way of privately acknowledging, without stating it publicly, science's inability to even untie the thong of the sandals of the One who is the Origin of all sciences.

But could it be any other way? Having been born, so to speak, "yesterday," do we presume to deny God so that our pride might be spared ruin?

18. Curiously, Theology, infected by the audacity of Scientific Atheism, was deceived by the imposture of 20th-century cosmology; and, sharing in the impossibility of accessing the Mind of God, it came to lead the Church to believe that the Creation Account of Genesis is nothing more than another metaphor devoid of any scientific content; that is to say, that the sole purpose of the Revelation of Genesis is to relate the experience of the universe to the Idea of a Divine Creator.

Thus, from here to promoting a constant "aggiornamento" of the Text, adapting it to the mindset and intelligence of the ages—well, why not!

It will always be more useful to the pride of the *intelligentsia* to deny its inability to measure up to the God who created the cosmos than to admit the impossibility of even coming close to the Creator of all the wonders that adorn the Garment of our Universe.

19. Some for one reason and others for another, the fact is that when we enter the realm of Creative Omniscience, we all do so as if treading on virgin territory. Whether some deny the existence of a God who created the Universe and the Cosmos, or others assert their inability to enter into the Creative Word through the theological device of treating the Narrative as a metaphor—beyond the beliefs and

opinions of both groups—the Narrative of the Creation of the Universe has fulfilled its historical function of introducing humankind to its Creator.

In God's hands lies the right to intervene in His own Creation; Revelation was given to expose the vanity of all natural intelligence. But since God does not take pride in mocking His creatures—especially since He has united Himself with His Creation as Father—and since Wisdom is the opposite of Ignorance, the literary body of Revelation bore the seal of the Almighty Promise of Access, in the spirit of Faith, from human Intelligence to Divine Creative Omniscience.

Rejoice, then, and let the river of the centuries carry into the sea of the Past the arguments that arose to mask the failure of all—scientists and theologians alike—to open the Door, enter, and see.

20. That said, bearing in mind the Thought of God, the Original Text of Genesis states that:

"The Earth was ... formless!"

"In the beginning, the Earth was formless and empty," is the complete phrase.

In the vast majority of translations of the original biblical text, especially since the days of Luther's Rebellion against the Unity of the Universal Church founded by the Lord Jesus, the One Eternal King, the One Universal Pontiff, God the Only-Begotten Son, who through His Mighty Word brought into existence the Light, the Firmament, and all life with which Mother Earth was filled by her Creator, the words "The Earth was formless and empty" are not exactly the same.

And this is understandable.

Modern translators themselves found themselves trapped by scientific reasoning and, to spare their readers "confusion," preferred to adapt the Word of God to the mindset of the times.

Here, completely independent of the complexities and prejudices of the times and their adaptations—since we consider God to be Eternal—I have chosen to retain the original text and work from its information:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The Earth was formless and empty...".

21. Now, the fact that the Earth underwent a geohistorical period characterized by planetary emptiness (as far as the biosphere is concerned) is as basic and evident a fact as the fact that we are born naked. From the perspective of classical geology, there is no mention of a historical period of "courtly" emptiness of the sort that the author of Genesis seeks to present to us. But even if we were to adhere to the criteria of modern geohistory, it would still not be correct to speak of a barrenness on the Earth's surface in the image and likeness of what we see on the Moon's surface. And it is precisely this kind of barrenness that the author of Revelation speaks of.

22. The Moon, for example; when speaking of the Moon, we can and do say “that it is empty.” For obvious reasons. There are no plants on the Moon; the Moon has no atmosphere; the Moon has no oceans; the Moon has nothing on its outer crust whose properties would allow us the luxury of asserting that the Moon had, or is on its way to having, a biosphere.

Regarding the Moon’s crust, in particular—aside from the fact that it is nothing more than an endless desert that, having nothing, lacks even the remains of some lost civilization buried in the folds of one of those Asimovian cataclysms so beloved by 20th-century readers—and regarding the Moon in general, we can and do affirm that “the Moon is empty.” With no atmosphere, no oceans, no continents, and no life of any kind—neither plant nor animal—the Moon is as empty today as the Earth was yesterday, before He, the Son of God, opened His mouth and said, “Let there be light.”

23. There is no need to insist, and insist again, on the geohistorical image from which the Word, opening His mouth, clothed the nakedness of Mother Earth with His almighty Word—the mantle of ice that He called “the Light.”

When, then, the Divine Author reveals to us that the Earth “was empty in the beginning,” the scientific image that its Creator, God the Father, wishes to convey to us is this: that of a supergiant moon called Earth. And it was to this planet in its infancy—"naked" and exposed to destruction—that God the Son drew near, to the wonder of all the children of God, "not of this Creation," and, opening His mouth, He began the creation of the human race.

24. Thus, and to broaden our horizons, the ladder of natural elements that Genesis invites us to climb places us before an Earth without oceans, without an atmosphere, without continents, without polar ice caps, without plants, without animals, without birds or fish. In a word, without a biosphere. And from this retrospective perspective, with all the calmness in the world, a man from 35 centuries ago asked all the sages of all times and places, those born and those yet to be born:

“Ladies and gentlemen, starting from that empty planet, as empty as the surface of the Moon: how did God create water, ice, air, earth, and fire? That is to say, the oceans, the continents, the atmosphere, the polar ice caps, plants, birds, fish, and all life.”

Ever since then, the question posed by the Author of Revelation has hung over the intellect of the millennia.

25. At this point, given the distance between the divine author and the 21st-century reader, the official answer—as voiced by theologians and scientists—is that Moses merely concocted a metaphor based on a rare kind of mystical hyperbole.

Personally, I do not know what to call a failure that denies the possibility of any victory, and in the assertion of Nothingness hopes to drown its defeat in the sea of oblivion. Perhaps one day I will find the answer. In the meantime, the primary task of this book is to demonstrate, contrary to Descartes, that God does not lie. The second is to show that the geniuses thought they were smarter than they actually were. And the third is to provide the correct answer to the question toward which Civilization has been moving: "How did God create the Universe?"

26. The necessity of having to start somewhere has led us straight to the relevant biblical account:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The Earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the face of the Abyss, but the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the Waters.

God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

How many times has this account been read? How many times has this revelation been discussed? How many generations have tried to wrest its secret from it! And how many thinkers were honest with themselves and others and acknowledged that the IQ of the One who created these heavens and this Earth is as far removed from the human IQ as Hell is from Heaven?

(In this book, time will always be understood on a geological scale. Horizons will gradually open up as we go along. The Beginning is the problem. And the problem lies in the choice of the platform.)

CHAPTER 3.—THE CREATION OF THE EARTH

27. Biblical information places us on a specific geological platform. Specifically, Revelation spreads a geohistorical period out before us. If, based on its account ("the Earth was formless"), we look around and erase from the surface of the Globe all the classic elements of Nature—atmosphere, continents, oceans, and polar ice caps—what are we left with? We are left with an empty planet on the day before the Birth of its Biosphere!

But the point—toward which our intellect has been directed—centers on the search for the answer that so many efforts have failed to find. I mean: starting from a planet with those geological characteristics, with a primordial crust devoid of any natural elements with which to begin building anything—the image closest to its primordial state being the view of the Moon's surface—starting from this primordial state, the question is:

How did God manage to create the biosphere?

This would be the traditional way of approaching the subject.

But there is another.

28. Let's approach the subject from a new perspective. Why don't we ask ourselves the question? Namely: What series of physical processes would we have to set in motion, control, and direct in order to create a biosphere, working with a similar geological foundation?

Seeing is believing! In the future, we will see God at work with our own eyes, and we will marvel as we behold how God performs His works. Speaking of these, His Son—while extending an invitation to us to witness the spectacle of Creation—amazed us by telling us "that His Father will do greater works than these." From this we also understand that this invitation was the reason for the participation of the children of God in this work—the creation of our heavens and our earth; An invitation that reached its supreme fulfillment when, calling His children, He made them participants in our formation, and by saying, "Let us make man in our image and in our likeness," the invitation was extended to participation in the act of creation.

That said, and so as not to lose our way on parallel paths—and since the Origin of our Universe cannot be seen by us except through the eyes of the intellect—it is with these eyes of the intellect that we will see how God created Light and all things.

29. It goes without saying that the restoration to humanity's memory of a historical reality to which the human race was denied access will, by logic, clash with the cosmological systems that the modern world created to fill that void.

Regardless of the details regarding the origins of 20th-century cosmological systems—to which time was even assigned in nanoseconds to lend them greater virtual veracity—the emergence of the true historical system regarding the origin of the Universe is bound to overwhelm the intellect of all those whose thinking remains anchored in the ocean beneath whose waters the Modern World perished.

For my part, accustomed to navigating freely through the Knowledge of the Universe's Memories, I always run the risk of moving faster than the reader can keep up with me. I am confident that I can overcome this problem. At least, I hope so.

I have sketched the geohistorical framework from which we will begin.

At the dawn of the First Day of Genesis, the Earth was empty, bare, without oceans, continents, an atmosphere, or polar ice caps. None of the natural elements clothed the Earth's nakedness on the day after its birth. How, then, did God create the Biosphere?

How, if we had the Power, would we create it ourselves?

30. In fact, *God created the Earth in Darkness*, for the Author writes that, once the Light was created, God separated the Light from the Darkness; and then he says, "God created the stars to separate the Light from the Darkness."

Hence the question: Where was—and where is—that Darkness "that covered the face of the Abyss" amidst which God created the Light?

This question will receive its due answer in due time. From what is written, it is clear at a glance that wherever that Darkness might have been—amidst which God created the Light—the Earth was not, in its Origin, created within the bosom of the stars of our Heavens. This is an early assertion advancing on the wings of dawn, but one that will be seen covering the firmament of the Century with the power of the Sun, driving Night away from Day.

One need only take paper and pencil, work through the information starting from the Beginning, connect Light with Earth, and one will encounter a revolutionary image in the fullness of its grandeur. There is still some way to go before this image is drawn.

Let us set out on that journey.

31. In truth, my task in this Introduction will consist of creating this painting, integrating it into the History of the Earth, and, starting from this picture, opening the Door of the Light of Intelligence to all the sciences.

Is there anything more natural than knowing where we come from!

For now, once the Sea of Stars of our Heavens has been placed on paper between Light and Darkness, Admiration is not only awakened but also opens our eyes to a Creative Scene bordering on disbelief: "The Earth was created on the other side of the Sea of Stars of our Heavens."

But let the Light awaken us, open our eyes, and let the stifled "potential"—created to become "act"— this Vocation of an Intelligence born to grow in the natural Omniscience of its Creator, may it realize that Nature so very our own—lost because of a Rebellion drowned in the abyss of Ignorance, the mother of all Crimes, amid whose rivers of blood Mother Earth feels herself dying of shame and sorrow before the eyes of Heaven. For her sake I lift my soul from the dust, and may God turn our tears of horror at this unceasing hatred into rivers of joy that will never run dry.

32. As far as the intelligence of Creation is concerned, what father would not reveal his most intimate secrets to his children!

The Earth was created there, in the Darkness, on the other side of the stars of the Firmament. Yes, but why?

Seen from a distance, the Earth appeared in space as a planet with the very appearance of a moon-like satellite, only many times larger. An "empty" planet above that Abyss, whose face was shrouded in Darkness—how could one not feel bewildered!

Did her God create her only to abandon her in the Darkness? Where was that stellar spouse whom her Creator had given her to be her heavenly husband? From their birth, Earth and Sun had been betrothed in perpetual marriage; from their

embrace, Life in the Image of God would emerge to the joy of all the stars. Separated from her planetary siblings, abandoned in the Darkness that shrouds the Face of the Abyss on the other side of the World of the Stars, with destruction closing in on her, her future hanging by a thread beneath a stone bridge—how could she not feel Confusion tearing at her soul!

33. Does God promise hallelujahs that drive one mad with joy, and once the birth is complete, turn His back on His creature, deliver it to destruction, and move on to something else?

Alas, the heart of the Earth, that tender heart whose hope is stronger than lightning and storm, surrendered to the perpetual solitude that precedes the disintegration of consciousness and reason. "Alas, my soul, which is breaking into pieces before the indifference of my Creator," weeps the distraught Mother who has never given birth, and in her confusion feels she will never give birth.

The wedding was announced; she was chosen as maid of honor—beautiful as only she can be—that Moon who waits in silence with her bouquet of flowers for the arrival of her lady and queen, and soon finds herself abandoned in the Darkness....

34. "Empty and confused," abandoned in the Darkness on the other side of the world of stars, the Earth shrinks, arms wrapped around her knees, awaiting Death. Already the " " surrounds her. Already she lets herself fall, drained of strength. The dream that heals all things, casting her out of Creation like a stone shattered by the sculptor's blow, will carry her back to the dust from which her Creator brought her forth. The Earth breathes without breath. She lies down around the last spark of heat. It is Wisdom who, embracing her, covers her with a blanket and whispers words of trust and love into her ear:

"Hold on, my daughter; your Creator is coming."

This was the scene; and this will be the platform from which we will begin to climb the ladder of the natural elements.

How I came to set this stage for a Cosmological Introduction will become clear in due time. In the absence of numbers, letters will do. And stimulating the intellect with words is like sugar in a child's hand. Intelligence without Power is sterile, and Power without Science becomes a force of destruction. To claim that Man is the measure of all things is like a gun in the hands of a suicidal person; to deny the existence of God on the basis of Ignorance is to fuel the Genocide of Extinction. The reasons of the Creator of the Cosmos need no justification, and it is foolish for a creature to demand explanations from its Creator. He who can destroy a universe with a single word does what He does because He loves life; to be scandalized by His power and the reasons by which He determines that His creation follows one path or another is to use freedom to commit murder. It is not in the ignorance that stems from denial that the victory of science is found; and in the end, everything that rises must fall, and falsehood cannot reign forever while truth lives.

Let us continue, then.

CHAPTER 4.—CREATION OF THE BIOSPHERE

35. We have, then, two realities: the Earth on one side, and God on the other. The question here is how, starting from that "empty" geological platform, God created the Biosphere.

I said earlier that we could ask ourselves this question. For, as experts in the sciences of matter and its behavior, we could always propose a geophysical sequence that comes as close as possible to the actual historical model. And I said this because this is the very same problem that God faced and had to solve. And He did solve it. There is no need to dwell on this or overemphasize it. The results are plain to see and fill everything the Earth contains.

36. The fact is that "because He knew the answer," God solved the problem of the creation of the biosphere starting from that seemingly formless geological structure. And He knew the answer because He knew all the equations that the geophysical equations presented to Him.

With perfect knowledge of those equations and their solutions, God rose, took the stage, opened His mouth, and spoke His Word: "Let there be light."

37. We are speaking of the fusion of the external geophysical body. And here we could venture into describing a fusion by fire from the outside, or else bring to the fore a fusion caused by compression from the outside in, as if the gravitational field were collapsing in on itself until its radius was reduced to the absolute minimum.

If Ignorance still kept us enslaved to the Wall of Death, the choice would be open. This is not the case, and consequently, I'll get to the point.

38. The first step God took to bring about the fusion of the geophysical body was "the increase in density per astrophysical cubic unit of the Earth's gravitational field." The immediate effect was as follows:

Immediately, the Earth began to rotate on its axis at an ever-increasing speed.

Under the gravitational pressure generated—just as a gust of wind imparts accelerated motion to everything on the edges of its path—the Earth began to rotate on its axis at increasingly higher speeds.

This was the first effect.

39. With regard to the fundamentals of this nature of the gravitational fields involved in a specific three-dimensional space, such that density can increase or decrease in accordance with the law of energy transformation—and since this nature of the fields lies at the root of the relationship between universal energy and astrophysical matter—Creation could not have come into being unless God possessed infinite knowledge of that cosmological relationship underlying the expansion of the cosmos and the construction of universes.

The transformation of gravitational energy into material physical forces—electric fields, light, cosmic energy, and so on—is, in effect, the main pillar upon which the entire edifice of Creation bases its structure. We shall see in what follows what this relationship implies and signifies.

40. Consequently, from a state of zero rotation—which is natural for any astrophysical body whose core is on the verge of collapse—the Earth began to rotate on its axis at an ever-increasing speed. God calculated this rotational speed according to necessity; the kinetic energy of the Earth's body had to correspond to the gravitational density per astrophysical cubic unit that was to produce it.

This correspondence between the gravitational density of a field and the thermodynamic parameters of astrophysical bodies is one of the fundamental laws governing the behavior of Cosmic Matter.

41. This, then, was the first stage of the geohistorical sequence in the Origin of our Biosphere.

The fusion effect of the external geophysical body—the mantle and crust—in response to the activation of the Earth's astrophysical core was immediate.

Let's see if we can step into the painting and, from within the canvas, feel the Movement that—because it is Memory—hangs as a decorative object on the Wall of our Universal History.

Since we know that the matter that reacts directly to gravity is astrophysical matter, and by tracing the effects back to their cause, we understand that the kinetic parameters of a stellar body stem from this correspondence with the properties of the gravitational field in which it is located, we can open our minds to the rotational acceleration of the Earth's Core as an effect of the increase in the Density of the Earth's Gravitational Field that God set in motion.

42. Once this activation of the Earth's astrophysical core was established—through which the geonuclear transformer began generating natural physical forces within its body, namely electromagnetic forces and heat— the seismological pulse of the internal geophysical structure surged, with both the Earth's Mantle and Crust experiencing in that very moment the natural effect of their subjection to the process of expansion of the physical Core unleashed by God, on the one hand, and their thermal elevation, on the other.

43. Like the roar of the king of the jungle upon awakening, like the echoes of the first lightning bolts of a storm, like a star on the day of its implosion, like an earthquake of astronomical proportions shaking the Mantle beneath which the Core had been sleeping—both the Mantle and the Crust began to heat up and crackle amid a symphony of earthquakes and volcanoes.

The spectacle of the awakening of that giant lying asleep at the heart of the Earth transformed the Earth's surface into a sea of molten lava, shaken by a volcanic process of indescribable power and beauty.

Like a soldier who obeys his king and lord and, at the battle cry, leaps to his feet, grabs his sword and shield, and without a moment's hesitation throws himself into combat, roaring with the voice of a volcano, and with the power of legs that trigger earthquakes, makes the ground crackle beneath his feet—in this marvelous way, in a few geological hours that "formless and empty" Earth became an ocean of molten lava, beneath whose currents an army of volcanoes seemed to move, battling the magmatic waves of a mantle that had broken through the outer barriers and was joyfully surging across the Earth's surface. Tidal waves—gigantic lava tsunamis—shook the Earth's surface; from their crests, islands of magma were hurled into the stratosphere, where, as they cooled, they turned to rock and fell back into the ocean of fire with the roar of a meteorite or a comet.

CHAPTER 5.—MELTING OF THE CRUST

44. We see, then, that by drawing conclusions from what is observed—just as inertia itself suggests—and by proceeding from what is known to the consequences to which the facts lead, there is no room for inconsistencies, although it is true that the one who possesses something does not usually appreciate what another loses; it is by following this line of thought that the physical answer to the biblical enigma sets in motion a geophysical sequence whose main stages are:

1: Fusion of the Primary Crust

and 2: Sublimation of the resulting Proto-Atmosphere.

45. The driving force behind this geohistorical series was the Core. God produced the energy necessary to bring about this change of state by accelerating the Core's rate of operation; this revolutionary acceleration was, in turn, the result of the increase in the Gravitational Density per Astrophysical Cubic Unit of the Earth's Gravitational Field.

In practical terms, comparing the Geophysical Body to a Machine, let us say that God filled the tank (Earth's Field) with energy (Gravity), thereby causing the automatic elevation of the Geonuclear Engine's parameters to the Critical Point of Astrophysical Implosion.

The fact that this Critical Point was not exceeded is evident from the effects caused by the sublimation of the proto-atmosphere, which in turn gave rise to the polar ice caps—without which the biospheric system would never have come into being, and whose disappearance would entail its irreversible collapse.

Thus, once the Primary Crust had transformed into a sea of molten lava, its shores stretching from one pole to the other of the Globe, and the (Primordial) Proto-Atmosphere had risen to the very ceiling of the Planet, the geonuclear body began to slow its rotational speed per geological unit of time.

46. It was already noon when the gases produced by the crustal fusion had accumulated around the globe and given rise to a planetary atmosphere—primitive, yet containing within its volume all the elements necessary to give birth to our biosphere.

That atmosphere continued to grow throughout the morning, and as the hours passed, it began to conceal beneath its rarefied volume the sea of magma that had given rise to it. (Always speaking in broad strokes, roughly speaking, in general terms, focusing on the whole rather than the details.)

These events took place during the Morning of the First Day. There was still an Afternoon ahead.

47. Taking into account the mechanics of the fusion of solids—a lesson for young children that has been taught in all classrooms since ancient times, and whose core we will skip, omitting the intimate knowledge of crystalline structures and the manipulation to which they lend themselves in both chemistry and physics— and understanding that it was this elementary mechanism that God applied to the Earth's Primary Crust, we can affirm—without fear of falling into the absolutism of the all-powerful reason of science, and even less into the Nobel-esque trap of academic dogmatism—that the dynamic stabilization of the external geophysical structure of that Primordial Earth arose as a consequence of the decline in seismic activity within its inner core.

Let's say that the Force God used to play with the Earth as if it were a set of volcanoes with which to compose a unique, spectacular, marvelous, and mind-blowing symphony—and after having drawn sparks and thunder from the cymbals, whether because He had grown tired and could go no further, or because He had shattered the drumsticks—the fact is that the Force subsided, and silence fell. In layman's terms:

48. Following the law of inertia, once the energy causing the fusion of the Primary Crust had been transformed and its work completed, the Earth's Astrophysical Core returned to the state of equilibrium it had been in before the moment God opened His mouth and spoke His Word: "Let there be light."

Thus, as the silence grew thicker—until it matched the density of the Primary Atmosphere thus created—the volcanic red and yellowish color of the Primary

Crust began to fade, to subside, and to take on the color of solid volcanic matter. And so, as it entered the evening of the First Day of Genesis, the Earth began to return to its natural state of equilibrium among the different parts that make up its geophysical body.

49. The final stage of this process (the creation of the Primordial Atmosphere) was the sublimation of a proto-atmosphere whose primary chemical composition can be compared to that of the "gas" planets whose evolution was not subject to this special event, though we must not overlook the unique phenomenology to which God subjected the formation of the Earth's Primary Crust—a matter that will be addressed in due course, as the rhythm of this Introduction dictates.

Therefore, and to continue, once the Earth was isolated from an external energy source with which to engage in an "energy chat"—to use everyday terms—the Earth's core, as a result of the transformation of the gravitational field into mechanical forces, entered a dangerous trajectory of astrophysical collapse (a topic that will also be addressed when appropriate and relevant. What matters are the facts, and the fact was that:) During the transition from the "state of massive fusion" to the "state of geophysical equilibrium," the Earth's crust solidified, and as a result, the proto-atmosphere entered a phase of sudden sublimation.

50. By the time night fell on the First Day, to put it simply, the proto-atmosphere had transformed into a mantle of ice.

This mantle of ice covered the Earth from the North Pole to the South Pole, and it was the Light spoken of in Genesis.

Roughly speaking: from Fire to Ice.

CHAPTER 6.—CREATION OF THE PRIMORDIAL ATMOSPHERE

51. Naturally, I have gone through this First Day as quickly as possible, with the aim of building on a solid foundation. I did not want the reader, without knowing what I am talking about, to get lost in the attempt to understand the idea I am outlining.

The fusion of the Primary Crust and the sublimation of the Primordial Atmosphere—these were the two main processes that God brought about during the First Day.

(The time factor remains unknown. I will not be the one to put numbers on the time God took to carry out each process.

For reasons we'll explore, my advice to the reader is not to worry too much about it either. Above all, because God is omnipotent, and once power is defined in

terms of the relationship between force and work, one of the things within the Creator's power is to accelerate a process to its maximum possible extent.

When I speak of omnipotence, I understand it from this perspective. Logically, matter sets certain limits, both upper and lower.

I also take this for granted).

52. But what did God do to trigger the accelerated rotation of the Globe at the origin of the fusion of its geophysical body?

All right, "God said, and it was so." I'm the first to couldn't care less about how He did it or how God does what He wants to do. The fact is, having been created in His image and likeness, looking the other way and not worrying about an answer—without which my being would feel unsatisfied—is not my style. It's not enough for me to simply believe. I mean, that's more than enough, but if I can see—and since it turns out I have eyes to see—then seeing is even better.

So I insist: What force, capable of bringing about such a series of geophysical processes, did God set in motion to trigger the accelerated rotation of the Earth in that way?

What God accomplished at the dawn of the First Day was to generate an energy field. (We will see that the Divine Nature and the Essence of the Creative Spirit are found in the substance of this statement: "God is Energy," a field we will have time to explore further.) In fact, as our understanding gradually opens up to the contemplation of the Uncreated Nature of the Divine Being, we will see how creative energy transforms into the natural forces acting upon the body over which the Creative Act is taking place.)

The first thing, therefore, that God did at the dawn of this First Day was to generate a field of energy. And the second was to project that field of energy onto the Earth.

53. I was saying that the first thing God did at the dawn of this First Day was to generate an energy field. And the second was to project that energy field onto the Earth. And I declared that God is Energy; and that His physical manifestation occurs through His transformation into the nature of the field of the object onto which God projects His force. In the case at hand—the Earth—the energy field that God generated was transformed into gravitational energy.

54. To put it more vividly—so as not to get lost in calculations that are very slow due to their scientific complexity—I will say that the Earth's gravitational field absorbed that river of energy and doubled its average density per astrophysical cubic unit. This happened on one side. On the other side, God doubled the original density of the Earth's gravitational field based on the estimated calculations He had made to bring the Earth's Core to its Astrophysical Implosion " " Point, the effect of which implosion would be the fusion of the Primary Crust.

The immediate consequence of the multiplication of energy per astrophysical cubic unit to which the Earth's gravitational field was subjected was to produce the effect of accelerated orbital rotation that the Earth began to undergo.

(As we proceed, it will become clear to what extent the rate at which gravitational energy is converted into mass and heat, and the rotational speed of the celestial body in question, maintain a relationship similar to that of any machine with the fuel it needs to operate.)

55. I know—I imagine that, when approaching the subject at this pace, comparing the gravitational field to a fuel tank that fills up and empties doesn't seem like it's going to get us anywhere. But that is what happened: the Earth's automatic response to the increase in the average density of its gravitational field was the instantaneous acceleration of the rotational speed at which its Core had been moving up to that point. And the Core's response to the increase in its working rotational speed was the production of heat.

(On a more superficial level—or with less depth—most people have at least a general idea of what the end product of the fusion of solids is. I say this in reference to the fusion of the Primary Crust. Volcanoes are the best example I can call upon. The association between volcanic eruptions and masses of gas rising into the sky is a classic phenomenon of nature, and the photo spares us from having to navigate through crystalline lattices and their molecular bonds—a pleasant journey for some, but quite tedious for others. On an industrial scale, blast furnaces offer us another example free of charge. But if our goal is to gain a thorough understanding of the subject, it's best to consult an expert in the natural sciences and ask how solid matter manages to stave off the worst; after all, the behavior of crystal lattices subjected to a rising heat source is a ubiquitous topic in even the most basic physics textbooks.

56. The questions that are giving us a headache here are the following:

What was God trying to achieve by revving up the engines of the geophysical transformer to the max?

What was He aiming for by accelerating the rotational speed of the Earth's Core and causing the fusion of the Primary Crust?

(The other issues I have left open—the chemical nature of the Primary Crust and its formation—are details I will attempt to address later when I reach the chapter on the Creation of the Earth. At that time, I will also endeavor to explore the astrophysical nature of the Core and the relationship between stellar matter and gravitational fields, which underlie the properties of the cosmos. Pointing out, as I have done, that this energy-matter relationship translates into light and heat is not a baseless idea, but simply the most natural and straightforward way to explain the basic process by which stars and galaxies originate and according to whose phenomenology they distribute themselves and interact. But since a promise is a promise, I hope to return to this later; and if I do not, I hope the reader

will excuse this psychological quirk that affects me when it comes to “paying my debts.”

57. Let us return, then; let us pick up the thread and follow the path that the Light marks out for us in the darkness of the tunnel.

I was saying that once the Core was activated—due to the pressure caused by the increase in the gravitational density of the Earth’s field—the transformation of energy into heat preceded the fusion of the geophysical body. And I then asked what God hoped to gain from this fusion.

Based on the depiction of the fusion of the Primary Crust, the answer is as follows:

God was seeking to produce a chemically predetermined atmosphere. In other words, the ultimate effect that God produced by pressing the accelerator of the geonuclear transformer had its North Star in the Primary Atmosphere.

(In this section, we will omit everything related to the mathematics of flight control from the initial state to the final state. The logic of the victory achieved implies, in its structure and development, the overcoming of a complex system of unknowns. Given the results at hand, it would not be fair to risk losing the thread based on specific considerations “suitable only for geniuses.”

But it would be good to make it clear that the reward for navigating that sea of equations was the future itself. Any error in doubling the gravitational density per astrophysical cubic unit beyond a critical point would have caused the geophysical system to transform into a sort of planetary supernova. In that case, the Earth would have disintegrated into a swarm of meteorites. But let’s return to the topic at hand.

58. I was saying that, once Noon of this Day had been reached, the Earth found itself enveloped in an atmosphere supersaturated with one of the most abundant elements in outer space: hydrogen. In all other respects, the Earth’s atmosphere was similar to the atmospheres of the other planets.

In terms of color, let’s say that the Earth went from the black and white typical of the Moon’s surface to the bright, vivid red of solar flares—only in liquid form—only to eventually fade and cool until its surface vanished into the heart of a thick cloud, as enveloping and enigmatic as a nebula orbiting an imaginary field at the cruising speed of a Christmas comet.

Let’s just say…

And let’s leave it at that.

CHAPTER 7.—THE CREATION OF LIGHT

59. And we continue.

I hope you've been able to follow my train of thought this far, and that the speed at which my mind has set out to recreate the Memories of our Universe hasn't caused you any trouble.

Let's continue, then.

Once the Earth had transformed the energy supplied to it by its Creator into natural forces within its geophysical system, and the geonuclear implosion had triggered the two mechanical processes described in the architecture of its body—the Fusion of the Primary Crust and the Production of the Primordial Atmosphere— once this initial sequence had taken place, the geonuclear engine gradually slowed down until it reached a new state of equilibrium.

60. This process can be traced in physics textbooks. In fact, one need only reverse the sequence—slowing the Globe's rotational speed, as well as the Planet's temperature—and the rest is child's play, though it must be said: child's play, yes, but for children intellectually capable of seeing the interplay of forces that constitutes the System of Creation, in which God enters as the "universal source of energy," and where the gravitational field manifests itself in accordance with the classical principles of energy—that is, it transforms, in this case, into the natural forces acting on a specific astrophysical body. This transformation lies at the root of universal motion and makes possible the existence of both specific astrophysical systems—whether open or globular—as well as structures on the scale of galaxies. Not surprisingly, always taking the Word as a source of inspiration, a truth that will become clear as we proceed when we delve into the creation of the Firmament, God speaks of Gravity as those "waters ... that are above the Firmament...," thereby opening our Creator's understanding to the comparison of Gravity with the liquid element—a reality to which He Himself is accustomed, which is natural to Him—and from this reality: Gravity = liquid fuel, He works. Certainly, Gravity is a "singular liquid energy," but this will be examined in greater detail as we proceed.

61. Thus, once the extra multiplication of the original volume of the gravitational field—which God brought about by saying "Let there be light"—had been transformed into the work involved in the fusion of the external geophysical body, and once the fusion of the primary crust and the geological mantle had been completed—this series of events concluded—the rotational speed of the Earth's core slowed down, and as it slowed, it dragged the planet's overall temperature down with it.

The two immediate consequences of the temperature drop throughout the entire geophysical body were:

1: Formation of the lithosphere

and 2: Sublimation of the atmosphere.

62. I'm reiterating what I said earlier. My habit of treating these processes as part of my Living Memory leads me, out of habit, to skip over sequential stages that, in the eyes of others, might not be so obvious.

Let me explain.

If I said that the speed of rotation and the rate at which gravity is transformed into light and heat are directly related, and I now say that the Earth's rotational speed began to slow down, it follows that this slowdown affected the Core. As its rotational motion fell in a vertical descent—once the supplied fuel had been consumed in the process of transforming gravity into heat—the overall geological temperature began to drop. First that of the Core, then that of the Mantle, and finally that of the Crust. A consequence of this cooling would be the formation of the lithospheric ring and the sublimation of the Atmosphere. We will discuss this sublimation next.

63. And once again, speaking of the Fusion of the Primary Crust, I emphasize the fundamental nature of knowledge regarding the fusion of solids as a starting point for understanding the change in the crystalline structure that occurred in the Earth's structure as a result of the Fusion of its primary geophysical body.

In this regard, the existing artificial preconditioning—universally prevalent—regarding the natural origin of the planets is a barrier the reader must overcome. That archetypal image for the uninformed—who still grope blindly through the tunnel of the 20th century's embarrassments—where Gravity, magically emerging from Nothingness, compresses a sea of floating matter pulled from the hat of the Merlin of the moment, and abracadabra, produces a physical entity, this image, as it emerges from the discourse itself, fits right into a tale of Alice in the Land of Science Fiction.

And that's all.

64. Any self-respecting intelligence working within a system where astrophysical values are determined by the relationship between matter (star) and energy (gravity) reaches the conclusion—taking astro-iconography as a reflection of Reality—that the temporary cooling of stellar bodies causes nebular matter to settle on their outer surfaces, this being the Natural Origin of the Planets.

In the case of the Origin of Planet Earth, its Cosmic Singularity stems from the fact that its Origin is a direct Application of Creative Intelligence to the matter-energy system—a subject we will address in due course—and this determined both the primary geophysical parameters and the geohistorical effects deducible from said Creative Application.

Here we might ask ourselves why God did not simply limit Himself to working with a planet of natural origin; a question that will be answered as we proceed but which involves theology, since it concerns the "Why," whereas the "How" is the domain of the physical sciences.

65. Returning to our main topic:

Gas sublimation refers to the transition of matter from the gaseous state to the solid state without passing through the liquid state. Nature provides us with the most common example of gas sublimation every winter. Clouds transform into snow and hail.

At the level of home experiments, the scope for experimentation is very limited, but at the laboratory level, there are numerous experiments open to exploration. Since we lack the space and resources here to illustrate these concepts with images, I will conclude by saying that:

The Mantle of Ice into which God transformed the Primordial Atmosphere—the star of this First Day—was "the Light" of Genesis.

66. And here I leave my readers to reflect on the most incredible mystery of mysteries: how could a man from three thousand five hundred years ago have formed such a modern physical conception of the Origin of the Biosphere?

A. Fusion of the Primary Crust,

B. Formation of the Proto-Atmosphere,

C. Cooling of the Crust and Sublimation of the Primordial Atmosphere.

Isn't that mind-blowing?

This is a point I should hammer home, I think—or at least that is what I should believe. I imagine we will have time to return to this matter of the cognitive relationship, as described in this Introduction, between Moses's thought and the content of the hieroglyphic text we call "Genesis."

67. In any case, Moses the Hebrew's relationship with Universal History did not unfold via the bridge of Science but rather along the rails of Omnipotence and All-Power, leaving Omniscience—understood as Science—to God, the true Author of this Hieroglyph, human hands being nothing more than pens moving to the rhythm set by the Thought of the One who stands before Eternity and sketches Events onto the canvas of the Millennia with the same ease with which others plot their crimes in full view of the world. Two matters, then: Omniscience and Omnipotence, distinct courses, which will be served in due time according to the rules of good table manners.

PART TWO

CREATION OF THE FIRMAMENT OF THE HEAVENS

CHAPTER 8.—GEOHISTORICAL RECAPITULATION

68. The surprise at discovering this sequence of geohistorical events—which the geniuses of the modern world judged to contain nothing but the feverish and fanatical imagination of a mind in a state of religious delirium (a sequence that is perfectly scientific in its approach and development)—must not divert our attention from the complete series of facts that I have touched upon only briefly in order to facilitate a general overview of the whole.

Let us recapitulate:

69. One: Controlled Multiplication of the astrophysical density per cubic unit of the Earth's gravitational field. The origin of this Controlled Multiplication, I said, is the Nature of the Divine Being.

70. Two: Vertical acceleration of the working revolutions of the Earth's geonuclear transformer. From this derived the rotational acceleration of the Globe around its axis and the astrophysical implosion of the Core, which is the source of the Planet's heat.

71. Three: Global thermodynamic elevation of the geophysical body, which extended from the Mantle to the surface and produced the Fusion of the Primary Crust.

72. Four: Liquefaction of the Primary Crust under the effects of the fusion of the outer Globe and the formation of the Primordial Atmosphere.

(The chemical nature of the Earth's atmosphere—unique among those of its planetary family—presents us with an alternative problem that I will not address here, but to which I will return in due course.)

73. Five: Once the thermal transformation of the gravitational fuel was complete, the Earth returned to the hands of Nature, with its new changes conforming to the law of inertia.

A. Deceleration of the geonuclear transformer's operating revolutions.

B. Decrease in the planet's rotational speed.

C. And a decrease in the Globe's temperature.

These were the first three visible effects.

74. Six: These three effects triggered a new sequence of effects. The first of these new effects was the cooling of the Globe's outer surface, which ipso facto laid the foundation for the creation of the outer geophysical ring, the lithosphere.

75. Seven: We can also speak of the solidification of the Secondary Crust. In short, this is a matter of preference. Once we delve deeper into the subject, we will have time to distinguish between them. Moving the discussion forward a bit, let's say that the Lithosphere is to the Globe what the Secondary Crust is to the Lithosphere. In short, the Secondary Crust is the outer layer of the Lithosphere. It was, therefore, the Secondary Crust that was the first lithospheric layer to solidify.

76. Eight: The continuous drop in geophysical temperature back to its original starting state—a state it would never again reach—caused the solidification of the Secondary Crust, as I have said, and the formation of the lithospheric ring. The Geophysical Architecture continued to complete its structure with the formation of the second ring, the Mantle, whose cooling would shut off the heat source from which the Primordial Atmosphere had until then been drawing energy to maintain its natural state.

77. Nine: The cooling from the outside toward the interior of the Globe logically had to transform the lithospheric ring into a barrier preventing the transfer of heat from the Core to the Atmosphere.

78. Ten: Thermally isolated from the Core, the Atmosphere's temperature plummeted at the dizzying speed imposed by the insulation. Its volume froze. The result was the transformation of the Atmosphere into the Mantle of Ice that covered the Planet's spherical surface from the North Pole to the South Pole during the Evening of the First Day.

As I said before, this Ice Mantle is the Light in the Word of the First Day.

79. This is the sequence we have joyfully explored. Along the way, I have highlighted specific facts that demonstrate the stature of the Creative Intelligence and its mastery of the sciences of space, time, matter, and energy—a cognitive mastery that is like a field in which the Tree of the Science of Creation takes root. We will pause for a moment to reflect on these facts in the next section.

CHAPTER 9.—FIRST LAW GOVERNING THE BEHAVIOR OF THE UNIVERSE

80. God applied to the geophysical system the first of the laws governing the behavior of the Universe: the transformation of gravitational energy into light and heat. Since this first law is the general principle upon which God has built the Architecture of the Heavens, it is thanks to its manifestation in local space that the geometry of our Universe remains constant over time. I know it is a bit hasty to make such a bold statement, but as we proceed, the picture that the results presented here seek to convey to our minds will gradually unfold, revealing the magnitude of its beauty in full color.

81. That being said, the application to the geophysical system of the first law among the set governing the Physics of the Heavens leads us to examine the reactions that stellar bodies with diverse properties set in motion when faced with the same external factor—such as the sudden influx into their system of a stream of energy, akin to an intergalactic gravitational string that, as it crosses the abysses, sweeps up all the loose matter in its path.

82. The explanations we may arrive at will always have this Historical Event (the multiplication of the gravitational density of the Earth's field) as their starting point. Its implications are what lead us to formulate the relationship between universal energy and astrophysical matter within the framework of the production of light and heat—the two most direct visible consequences that reach our senses. When I speak of the production of light, I mean the entire spectrum of stellar radiation at the root of cosmic energy. The importance of this relationship between gravitational energy and stellar matter will be revealed in the following chapters. For now, I will stick to the facts, always taking the multiplication of the original density of the gravitational field as the starting point for this New Cosmology.

83. We have observed (and this has been done because the first cause has been inferred from the final effects) that, when the astrophysical cubic density—that is, the amount of energy present in a gravitational field, in this case that of a planet, and more specifically that of Earth—is doubled, the heat production of the astrophysical transformer is multiplied by that factor.

If we were talking about a stellar transformer, the first visible consequence would manifest itself in the intensity of the light produced.

In the case presented to us by our Creator, heat is the direct consequence based on the nature of the transformer on which God worked.

(The range of astrophysical transformers is beyond our imagination. Within the horizon that opens before us, it is reasonable to assume that this range includes sources of gamma rays, X-rays, and rays of a nature that is indefinable given our

limited understanding of the Cosmos. And, after all, how could we dare to set limits on that which has no end!)

84. The questions are: What would happen if, instead of God controlling the process of transforming the energy of an astrophysical system into light and heat, we found ourselves at the frontiers of the Heavens and, for some external cause, a binary or multiple star system were to experience an uncontrolled increase in the density of its gravitational field? And conversely, what would happen if the rate at which the gravitational field is transformed into light or any other type of radiation source exceeded the rate of energy transfer from one system to another? Wouldn't we have to begin revising our hypotheses about the origin of novas and supernovae?

85. Here's another one: Aren't the fluctuations in the intensity of starlight and the variations in their orbital periods and cycles a call to our intelligence, intended to open our minds to the idea of the universe as an ocean of energy upon whose waters matter floats?

Isn't it wonderfully curious that, speaking of Himself and recalling those days, God told us, "who was hovering over the surface of the waters"?

Personally, I have no doubt whatsoever that the universal gravitational field can be identified as an ocean of energy where currents flow, acting as channels that transfer gravity from one area to another, and through this irrigation system, God maintains the geometry of His Creation in a perfect state of balance.

But the question I raised earlier concerns the relationship between our universe-galaxy and the outer cosmos, the realm of the galaxies.

86. The question was: What happens when an extralocal current bursts in like a whirlwind at the perimeter of our Heavens and throws a zone out of balance—whether due to the multiplication of the total energy present or to the instantaneous acceleration of the rotational speeds of astrophysical matter?

Through this overview, the idea is to recreate the effect of accelerated rotation that the Earth experienced when God multiplied the density of its gravitational field—an effect from which we derive a law of direct proportionality between the process of heat production and the rotational speed of the astrophysical transformer.

This idea leads us to see that, when a star is subjected to instantaneous accelerated rotation, the resulting effect must be, in sequence: the creation of a nova, or a supernova if the body affected by the instantaneous multiplication of its rotational speed is a multiple system.

In due course, we will also examine this process of nova and supernova formation in detail.

CHAPTER 10.—AND THE WORD IS GOD

87. And now we pick up the thread that our Creator has laid out before us—a thread that has always been there but which, in His Prescience, He left lying in darkness until the Intelligence of our Civilization opened its ears to the Language of the Science of Creation. That said, we can summarize the sequence of historical events in which God played the leading role during that First Day as follows:

A: Multiplication of the density of the Earth's gravitational field. (This matter of God multiplying the energy volume of a given astrophysical system—a matter that lies at the very foundation of Creation itself—is one we resolved by positing the nature of the Creator Himself, a nature that allows Him to be the fundamental source of energy from which the cosmic ocean draws.)

B: An upward increase in the operating rate of the Central Geophysical Transformer. (The existence of an innate correspondence between gravitational density and stellar rotation underlies light and its intensity.)

C: Fusion of the Mantle and volcanic liquefaction of the Primary Crust. (I will refrain from commenting on this, as I have entrusted to the reader's natural intelligence the connection between the primary cause noted and the final effects described.)

D: Formation of the "classical" Primordial Atmosphere. (By "classical," I mean the typical planetary atmosphere—rarefied and chaotic—as found on the other planets in our Solar System.)

E: Cooling of the Core and solidification of the Secondary, or Lithospheric, Crust.

(This was the origin of the Secondary Crust. As it cooled, God acted upon it, overseeing the formation of the Autonomous Ecospheric Substrate, about which I have not yet spoken, but which will be discussed later. In short, there are the mid-ocean ridges as evidence of the drag forces that God set in motion; their solidification marks the moment during which God shaped the geography of the continents.

The most basic logic dictates that a semi-liquid state is the perfect moment to remove part of the material from the surface of a semi-solid body, just as someone who works with clay does and then places the resulting figure in the kiln. In this case, the "kiln effect" was provided by the accelerated solidification process that the Secondary Crust had begun.

Why God split open the Atlantic hemisphere is part of the Geophysical Architecture underlying the Creation of the Biospheric Plane, about which we will say what is necessary shortly.

The fact is that the drag forces that created the Atlantic Channel and gave rise to the oceanic ridges left their imprints as the lithospheric layer solidified. And there they remain as testimony to the existence of the creative activity shaping the continental shelves.

I do not wish to comment on how this creation affects the theory of plate tectonics. In addition to the Theory of the Biospheric Plane, I will present further evidence against the geophysical model that the 20th century imposed as the norm.

F: Sublimation of the Primordial Atmosphere. (I said that when the lithosphere isolated the primordial atmosphere from the Core—driven by the drop in temperature—the atmosphere froze, sublimated, and the final result was its transformation into an Ice Mantle, which, just as the sea of lava had done before, covered the Earth's sphere from the North Pole to the South Pole, from East to West.)

88. This Ice Mantle that enveloped the planet on the afternoon of that day was the Light that came forth from the lips of our Creator when He said, "Let there be light."

And so it was done. And so it was.

The opposite would have been absurd.

Descartes' doubt, as a method of relating the Creator's Intelligence to that of the creature, is not a method; it is a wall of separation, a barrier that limits the possibilities and capacities of science to grow toward Creative Omniscience.

If by Omnipotence I previously understood the creative power to reduce the duration of a process to its absolute minimum, I now understand Omniscience as the dominion that God, in His Wisdom, exercises over all the sciences of matter, space, time, and energy. And in doing so, I include in this list sciences that operate in different universes, about which we can say nothing except to marvel at His infinite knowledge.

CHAPTER 11.—CREATION OF THE FIRMAMENT

89. Thus, considering the state of the Earth at the end of the First Day, with the geophysical globe enveloped under that Mantle of Ice that its Creator calls "the Light," from a distance the view of our planet was that of an immense ball of ice floating in the Abyss, like the sight of a massive cosmic egg born in the Darkness.

The next geohistorical sequence that God had in mind was as follows:

90. The Earth's movement from its region of origin to its final place in the Heavens.

(Locating the region of origin of our Earth will be a problem to be resolved in the coming chapters. The need to warn the reader about the skepticism that this location will arouse prompts me to do so. I will also face this challenge with grace and composure.)

91. Launch of the Earth into the Solar System and entry into its third orbit.

92. Sublimation of the Ice Mantle. (By sublimation of ice, we mean the transition of matter from the solid to the gaseous state without passing through the liquid state. In this case, it would be the reverse process of the sublimation of gases.

If on the previous Day we saw how God managed to lower the Globe's temperature to the critical point of sublimation of its atmosphere, on this new Day we will see the opposite process. My advice is to open the eyes of your intellect and prepare to comprehend wonders. And as always, if any objections arise, there's no need to worry too much—everything will be resolved.)

93. The Ice Sheet breaks into two blocks and retreats toward the geographic poles. (This retreat of the two ice blocks toward the polar ice caps is a geohistorical period that, approached from a different perspective, classical geology has imprinted on everyone's mind.

I recall here that Science is the ABCs of the Language of Creation. The other approach—attempting to mold the Universe and its History to fit the omnipotence of human Reason—is an exercise in vanity about which I will say nothing now.

Science, just like Theology, has remained to this day subject to the bondage imposed by the Necessity of the Fall. It is not from a platform of accusation and condemnation that we should analyze the theories and intellectual states through which both Faith and Reason have passed. Had we been trapped in the shoes of any one of those who came before us, we would likely have done exactly what they did. So on this joyful day, let's not get too serious).

94. Birth of the Ocean and Formation of the Biospheric Atmosphere. (This Atmosphere is the Firmament in the Word of the Second Day. We will soon enter into its geohistorical sequence. Before the dawn of this Second Day breaks and History draws one step closer to us, I think it's not a bad idea to reflect on the place where God created the Light. I know that more than a few of you are going to throw your hands up in horror and be left speechless. Well, you just have to open the Gospel and see what His Son was doing to be amazed by the surprise).

PART THREE

CREATION OF THE LADDER OF NATURAL ELEMENTS

CHAPTER 12.—ON DARKNESS

95. The biblical text does not lie. On the Fourth Day of Genesis, we are told that God created the stars to separate the Light from the Darkness. I quote:

"And so it was. God made the two great luminaries—the greater to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night—and the stars; and He set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light to the earth, to rule over the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness."

Who hasn't read this passage at some point?:

"God created the stars and set them in the firmament of the heavens to separate light from darkness."

The author of Genesis first tells us that God created the Light, and then immediately states that once the Light was created, He separated it from the Darkness.

96. Well, the options presented to us are what they are and leave no room for interpretation. God created Light, then separated it from Darkness, and created the stars to separate Light from Darkness. The question is: what would happen now if, where Moses wrote "Light," we were to substitute the Mantle of Ice, whose creation we have traced?

Is the atmosphere starting to heat up?

How about we grab a pencil and paper and draw some lines?

We draw a circle in one corner of the paper and call it Earth.

On the opposite side, let's draw another circle and call it Darkness.

Now let's draw a dividing wall in the middle between Earth and Darkness, which we'll call Stars.

This is the image we get when we place Earth where Moses placed Light. And, in fact, if we look up at the sky, we see that the Heavens act as a dividing wall between Earth and the outer cosmos.

97. Conclusion: If God created Light and separated it from Darkness... then the Earth was at that moment in the region from which the stars currently separate it. In other words, before creating Light, the Earth was in the midst of Darkness.

98. I understand that this simple way of constructing logic may seem to the reader like a sinister art of complicating matters even further. The truth is that, no matter how hard I try, I cannot find the complication, and perhaps this is why I venture into the reconstruction of geohistorical events without regard for the opinions of the ages. When it comes down to it—which is what interests us here—the problem is where, in what region of outer space, that Darkness was located that covered the face of the Abyss when God said, "Let there be light."

99. Revelation simply informs us of the astronomical distance that God placed between Darkness and Light. It gives no numbers or intergalactic coordinates. It tells us that God created the Earth, and between the Earth and its region of Origin, He placed the Heavens. A marvelous and revolutionary interpretation that leaves us glued to our seats and places us exactly where our Creator wanted to see us: in the midst of Darkness and gazing up at the Heavens. So what good is it to have our feet on the ground if, in the end, the one with his head in the clouds is the one who sees things most clearly?

100. An additional question comes to mind.

Did God create the stars to separate the Earth from its region of Origin for no other reason than to trace the zodiac on the vault of the heavens?

Or did He give the heavens galactic dimensions for some other reason?

An affirmative answer implies the assertion of a historical impossibility: nothing less than that a man from three thousand five hundred years ago would have understood—without ever having observed the cosmos—that our universe is a galaxy at the heart of an ocean of moving galaxies, which is why God gave our heavens their current astronomical dimensions.

CHAPTER 13.—THE LADDER OF NATURAL ELEMENTS

101. But let us continue.

Once Light was created (a process we have described by following the timeline with which God has challenged science throughout the ages since Genesis; by following this timeline, we have reached the Fusion of the Primary Crust and the Sublimation of the resulting Primordial Atmosphere, the process by which God produced the Mantle of Ice that, during the Morning of the First Day, covered the spherical form of the planet Earth—and without delving into the mechanical processes, given the natural nature of the subject: Fusion of the Primary Crust and Sublimation of the Primordial Atmosphere—we left the matter of Revelation somewhat up in the air until the occasion allowed us to set our feet back on the ground.

102. And without going into further detail, we returned to the Text; upon reading its words, we agreed that the definition of the Creative Word—by virtue of whose identity it departs from the realm of metaphors, hyperboles, myths, and other legendary entities—made "the Light" a Champollion Key, the use of which interprets Revelation contrary to every theological or scientific opinion held to this day, stating that God separated the Earth from its region of origin and brought it into the Heavens—a conclusion inferred from the Text: "And God saw that the Light was good, and separated it from the darkness," a statement which, in the light of this interpretation, leads me to admire the courage shown by the human author when he dared, without scientific knowledge, to make such a declaration of the separation of light and darkness by the hand of God Himself, who created the Earth and the Heavens.

Moses's ignorance is precisely where the wisdom of the One who dictated the text to him lies, and through his silence, his scribe became the wisest man of his time. In a section dedicated to Moses' ignorance as God's scribe, we will return to the topic of the Lord's omniscience, who dictated to him the account of the creation of the universe. How could it be otherwise? Or did it not all begin for us when the Earth was created?

103. We already know that some say the true history of humankind dates back even before the Earth existed. However, neither the existence of humankind is of transcendental importance to the cosmos, nor is knowledge of the structure of galaxies vital to the existence of humankind. Thus, if humankind did not exist, the cosmos would still be where it is, following its course; and if humankind did not know the structure of the cosmos, that would not prevent humankind from being what it is.

This does not mean that knowledge of the Universe is not of specific existential value to us; rather, it makes clear that the knowledge of vital importance to humankind as a Being is the Knowledge of God; and since the Creator is found in God, the Science of Creation comes as part of the package, so to speak, with joy in the body.

104. Some may ask why, then, God has kept the Memory of the Creation of the Earth and the Heavens in Silence, separating the Creator in God from the Lord. This is the stance God maintained in Christ, keeping Faith and Intelligence like two arms united to the same body, born to obey the same Will, yet the movement of each arm subject to the thought of the head, under whose impulses the entire body moves.

And I will answer this simple question by affirming that this is indeed how it has been.

At the same time, I will deny that from the beginning God had ordained the Knowledge of the Creator within Himself to follow this pattern of growth under the conditions of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. What happened, happened, and there is no remedy now. And because it happened, the formation of Intelligence in the image and likeness of that of our Creator encountered a setback along the way,

which compelled God, in effect, to prioritize the knowledge of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil over the knowledge of the Science of Creation—whose fruit, as we know, is war.

105. I do not know if the reader of these lines has grasped the laws of this Science. For my part, I believe that the nature of that Fruit is understood, and from the knowledge that comes from experience, I can write what, with the knowledge that comes from theory, took shape in the language of the First Man, namely, "Cursed be anyone who eats of that fruit, and cursed be the one who gives the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to eat."

A final confession that brings me back to the point from which we began this brief journey, speaking of the Separation of the Light that God carried out once He had created it in the Darkness. Writing about this, I said that while Ignorance had its Law, the impossibility of penetrating its essence led some—theologians—and others—scientists—to return to God His Genesis, wrapped in the fabric of metaphors and myths.

But now that the Light has been translated through the Mantle of Ice that, at the end of the First Day, covered the Earth's surface—a Mantle of Ice produced by the Sublimation of the Primordial Atmosphere arising from the Fusion of the Primary Crust— we have no choice but to set fire to the paper of theological tradition and twentieth-century cosmology, blow on the ashes, clear the table, and get back to work based on the information God provides us in His Book.

I may return to this subject in another section, and I may have already done so in a previous one.

It doesn't matter.

And I'm not saying this because I'm one of those who believe that a truth is more or less true depending on how many times the hammer falls on the head of the fool of the moment. I say this because I believe that life is a thought that creates itself from universal roots, and not because having a dream many times makes that dream more meaningful, nor because if the body stops dreaming, it will lose the benefit provided by a night's rest.

Not at all!

106. For while man's insignificance to the Cosmos is a fact, Truth exists in and of itself, even if no one else exists in the Universe. I may cease to exist right now, but the truth existed before me and will remain without me.

107. As for my habit of returning to a particular point of reflection—which may be one today and another tomorrow—it stems more from the need to maintain a common point of reference between writer and reader.

By inertia, the essayist tends to lose himself in his thoughts, and the reader tends to cling to a specific idea.

And given the complexity of the matter at hand, no matter how much I might wish to present it in simple terms, the fact is that setting aside cosmology and theology—and their stance regarding the Book of Genesis—from the workbench upon whose surface the spirit of God's Intelligence is moving in this 21st century presupposes an act more closely related to art than to science, assuming that writing is an art, and that giving expression to thought is an art—something I personally do agree with, and which I deduce from the philosophers and heroes of the revolutions of the second millennium, the former honing their pens with the art of the polemicist and the latter their swords with the art of the philosophers.

The two times this union bore fruit, it brought into the world two Events for eternity: the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution.

108. The problem, then, lies not in the Word but in the application of the art of its science. In this case, Truth—not Power—is the Beginning and the End. And hence, since man is insignificant and Truth is eternal, human opinion is dust on the table. Whose surface we have cleared in order to place the Earth in its proper place on the Day when God created the Light, and once created, "separated it from the Darkness."

109. Returning, then, to the point of restoration, I will say that anyone with two eyes in their face will see that, once the Light was created out of the Darkness—the Earth being the Mantle of Ice that covered its surface at the end of the First Day—the Earth was in Darkness.

From that region God separated it once the Light was created—that is, the Mantle of Ice that covered the Earth's sphere at the end of the First Day—as it has been written for three thousand five hundred years: "And God saw that the Light was good, and He separated it from the Darkness."

If He separated it, it is because it was there. And if God later created the stars to separate the Light from the Darkness, as we read on the Fourth Day: "God made the two great luminaries—the greater to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night—and the stars; and He set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light to the Earth, to rule the day and the night, and to separate the Light from the Darkness."

110. Thus, by translating "Light" as "Mantle of Ice" in this Line of Moses' Hieroglyph, we find that the Earth was located in a Region outside the Heavens. A stunning and astonishing translation—and were it not for the fact that it is God who authorizes it and His Scribe who writes it with the Rod of Command He used to part the waters of the Red Sea, our minds would be transported to the world of extraterrestrials, and where I write "C" for Cosmology, I would have to write "F" for fantasy.

That being said—because it deserves to be said—and since the door is now open, let's go in.

111. As for how God brought about this shift from a region of General Space to the region where it is currently located, the author said nothing on this matter. Nor did he say anything about the specific nature of the region of origin where God created the Earth. Nor am I going to go into further detail at this time. When the time is right for this cosmology, we will lift the veil. For now, it is enough to accept that God created the Earth outside our Heavens, beyond the constellations of our galaxy, in the Abyss shrouded in Darkness.

112. In fact, returning to the topic of the Formation of the Secondary Crust and the Sublimation of the Primordial Atmosphere, the fact that the Earth was located in a region subject to absolute zero served as the catalyst that God used to create the Mantle of Ice.

We see how, since Mars was farther away, its atmosphere did not undergo the process of sublimation that the Earth underwent. The uniqueness that the Biosphere represents among the planets points to the existence of a special geohistorical period, which—as incredible as it may seem to us—is revealed in the Revelation when God declares that the uniqueness of the Biosphere is a response to and stems from the region of origin where He created it. This spontaneous assertion immediately leads us to the problem of the Power of the Creator of the Universe. For, while intellectually speaking the process of the Biosphere's creation reveals its scientific nature in the sequence outlined above, the insurmountable objection concerns the Nature of that Being who not only conceives how to do things but also possesses Infinite Power to carry them out.

113. I don't know if I've said this before, but if I haven't, I'll say it now: Power without Intelligence does not satisfy the need that the transformation of Reality demands; and conversely, Intelligence without Power remains in dreams, in fantasy, in answers that are carried away by the wind.

In this case, knowing God through Theology and the Universe through Science, all we have to do is merge them into a New Science—the Science of Creation—and follow its laws and principles.

In this case, knowing that exposing an atmosphere to a region subject to absolute zero would cause its volume to sublimate and give rise to the creation of a block of ice—and being able to do so—God did it.

And He called the Mantle of Ice "Light."

114. But God prepared the Earth's integration into the Heavens before opening His mouth and initiating the creative sequence of Light. It was no matter of chance that God found a star system with planetary characteristics compatible with Earth. Before plunging into the ocean of the Milky Way constellations, God knew what He was looking for, where to find it, and what the characteristics of the Solar System He was seeking were. And He knew this because He Himself formed

its planetary structure with the aim of preventing any rejection of the Earth's integration into the solar system.

115. Genesis builds upon a prior foundation: the Earth and the Heavens had already been created, and we have set out to navigate across their surface. We could have begun this journey by plunging into the depths of Time, but I have chosen to follow the path designed by God in advance—among other reasons—because He knows the terrain better than we do. In due time, I will take up the cause of attempting to recreate the Creation of the Solar System. Until that time comes, we must lay out the basic laws necessary for understanding a systematic sequence of such great interest to us.

116. Thus, the integration of Earth into the Solar System—however natural it may seem to those who associate Divinity with the power to simply speak and have everything done—involved solving a sea of complex equations, replete with unknowns and factors to be taken into account. Like any other system in the Universe, the solar body cannot accept the integration of a new element without itself undergoing a transformation of state. Keeping in mind this simple universal rule governing the integration of astrophysical bodies into complex systems, God ensured that the Solar System could not reject or be destructively disrupted in response to the Earth's integration into its structure by creating the Sun, Earth, and Moon from a single Origin in space and time.

117. Once the Sun and the planets—with their moons and rings—had been created, God proceeded to isolate the Earth, the root of the "Confusion" referred to in the Text, so that, after creating the Light—as we have already seen—He could reunite the Earth and the Sun, the moment around which we are focusing in this section. This integration followed a specific path. And along that path, the ice sheet was to begin its own journey toward its transformation into Air and Water. Describing this journey is the goal we will set for ourselves in the next section.

118. And, in short, the consequence of the Earth's launch onto the northern trajectory (the gateway through which the Earth entered the Sun's electric field) made itself felt on the surface of the ice sheet. The fact that the Earth entered its biospheric orbit via this northern path had causes more complex than those we wish to address here. For now, let us focus on the melting of the Ice Mantle and the physical consequences of its acceleration to the maximum critical point over the duration of the process. This instantaneous elevation was intended by God when He granted the Earth access via the northern path.

119. The truth is that by guiding the Earth along the Solar northern path, what God achieved was to accelerate the process of the Ice Sheet's thawing to the maximum permitted speed, as well as to do the same with the consequent evaporation of the resulting product.

The interplay of forces through which the melting of the Ice Mantle accelerated to its maximum possible rate combines classical forces with revolutionary ones, and points to that elusive quantum cosmology at the origin of all processes of astrophysical matter creation and electromagnetic energy generation.

The closer the Earth and Sun came together—the shorter the Sun-Earth distance became—the more intense the process of thawing the Ice Mantle became. It is the rapidity of this approach that leads us to speak of sublimation. In this sense, the sublimation of the Ice Mantle was a direct evaporation. To understand it as simply as possible, we can compare it to applying a red-hot iron to the surface of an ice bar. The Sun acted as the red-hot iron bar in God's hand, and the Earth as the ice bar.

I am not speaking figuratively when I say that if God had continued to apply the iron indefinitely, the entire mass of the ice sheet would have been transformed into the atmosphere. At least, that is the impression created by the infinite scope of the subject. I would say it is merely an illusion and nothing more. An illusion that invites us to take another step forward and affirm that the stability of the universe in general—and of our solar system in particular—rests on two fundamental pillars. We have already seen the first: the transformation of energy into new forms of energy. The second is the electrodynamic nature of fundamental cosmic matter.

CHAPTER 14.—SECOND LAW OF THE BEHAVIOR OF THE UNIVERSE

120. God's study of the behavior of Cosmic Matter led Him into the realm of Astrophysical Electrodynamics. During the research into the nature of space, matter, and time that God conducted in His quest to master the Science of Creation—which would enable Him to transform Universal Reality—God observed how fundamental c e matter, despite its transformations and dimensional leaps within general space, retains the properties of its atomic nature.

The discovery that the natural atomic properties of fundamental cosmic energy are conserved, regardless of the direction of travel, opened up a boundless creative horizon for God. For if, no matter how great the distances traveled during the leap from microcosmic to macrocosmic matter, the nature of its electrodynamic forces is conserved, the scope that opens up to creative intelligence is unlimited. Moreover, this discovery alone transforms the stars and their systematic networks into building blocks, into a field of raw material from which to extract all the mass necessary to erect constellational structures.

121. Therefore, applying this now: if the first law (the transformation of the gravitational field into light) opposes the contraction of the universe to infinity—since the amount of energy does not remain static in the equation, an equation-based instability arising from the transformation of gravity into light and

electromagnetic forces— a stability condition required by the hypothesis to allow the contraction of the universal field into a primordial nucleus—a condition that is not met, a fact demonstrated by the stability of the local astrophysical system; this second law—the electrodynamic nature of gravitational fields—blocks the opposite movement (destruction by dispersion) by establishing an electrodynamic network of behavior among the celestial systems.

That is to say, the operation of this law of transformation of gravitational energy into electromagnetic forces and other forms of light energy—the operation of this law, as I was saying, against dispersion caused by the constant weakening of the volume of universal energy—maintains concentration through the laws of electrodynamics.

122. And finally, the activation of this electrodynamic protective barrier allows for the existence of gravitational currents around astrophysical continents governed by a theory of molecular structures in which the particles are celestial bodies.

123. We see the visible application of these two laws to an Individual Stellar System in our own.

On the one hand, the magnetic field serves as a link between Earth and the Sun. This applies to all the other planets as well.

On the other hand, the electric field erects a barrier between the Sun and Earth. Poetically speaking, we could sum this up as follows: As Earth was hurled toward the impossible encounter of its destruction, the nature of its positive spirit transformed the appearance into admiration when the equality between the signs resolved the conflict.

And we continue.

124. In relatively simple terms, I will recreate the first part of this new geohistorical sequence that took place on the Second Day.

But returning to the subject, the Sun's incorporation of a new planet meant that its System had to integrate into its field a new transformer of gravitational energy, with its unique properties. How this structural change altered the relationship among the planetary family is not easy to determine, but this was a factor that God knew from experience, and based on that experience, He resolved all the unknowns on paper before taking action. One need not look far to find evidence of the success of applying his mathematics to reality; the results are plain to see. We will focus on Earth and what its integration into a shared gravitational field meant for its physical body.

125. I'll begin by saying that any astrophysical body, as long as it is isolated from any other body, is limited to consuming its own energy. While the Earth was

isolated in its region of origin during Day Zero, it was drawing energy from its own gravitational field. The low rate of transformation at which its core was operating kept its pulse at a stable minimum of revolutions. The problem was that the gravitational field continued to increase the Earth's mass through its black-hole effect. So the Earth had good reason to be confused.

126. And God says it was empty because the Earth could not, on its own, escape that situation. Only by being connected to an energy network could it overcome the fate toward which, left to its own devices, it was headed. When God returned and doubled the energy of His field, accelerating the rotation of its outer body, He broke that situation. From this, as I have shown, resulted the fusion of the primary crust and the creation of the Ice Mantle that covered the Globe at the end of the First Day.

127. Once the supplied energy had been transformed into heat—and with the Core having returned to a new state of equilibrium at the end of the First Day—when it was introduced into the Solar System at the dawn of the Second Day, the Earth suddenly found itself in the same situation as a transformer connected to a power grid.

The first reaction of its Core was to shift from a slow operating state to a more advanced one.

We can understand what this means by recalling how the variation in the energy with which its field can interact affected it at the beginning of the First Day. From this effect, it follows universally that the engine that maintains constant stellar motion is the Core.

128. The motion of the stars and of all bodies in the Universe, then, as is clearly seen in our Solar System, has a distinctive feature. They all rotate on their own axes. The natural physical effect of this type of motion is, as seen in helicopters, upward movement. From this we should deduce that all stars and their systems follow an upward trajectory. It is as if we were saying that the Universe behaves like a body moving upward eternally. Now let us return to the point where I left off in this Narrative.

PART FOUR

CREATION OF THE BIOSPHERE

CHAPTER 15.—CREATION OF CONTINENTS AND OCEANS

129. I was saying that God created the Earth in darkness, and that, having created the Mantle of Ice—which He calls "Light" in His Book—He separated it from the darkness and placed it in the heavens, where it remains.

And I believe I said that the first of all the effects the Earth experienced as a result of this integration can be compared to the effect a transformer experiences when it is integrated into an electrical circuit. And that, just as at the beginning of the First Day, at the beginning of this Second Day the increase in the Globe's rotational speed—an external sign of the rise in rotational speed experienced by its Core—was the immediate effect of the Earth's integration into the field of the Solar System.

130. Now, since the natural path between two points that attract each other is a straight line, and since motion in a gravitational field is similar to that of a liquid in a glass, the approximate motion of an external body toward an astrophysical body due to this relationship traces a circle around the star. But since God ruled out the option of approaching along the planetary path, the trajectory the Earth was to follow could only be a parabola. And that was precisely the path it began to trace in response to the instantaneous acceleration its rotation experienced. This pertains to the first stage of the Earth's flight in search of its biospheric orbit.

131. Regarding the first effect described—the law governing the flight of helicopters as depicted by pencil—we must incorporate the nature of the respective electric fields into this coupling process. That said, any electromagnetic field is defined by its two components: the magnetic force acting at a distance between bodies and the electric force that positions them around a reference nucleus. In the case of the Earth's launch, we have the magnetic force in action, in combination with the law of rotational motion. The description this combination provides of the Earth's approach to the Sun is what draws a parabola from outside the Solar System toward the Sun's north pole as the access route.

132. The activation of the second electromagnetic force—the electric force—created an inversion band at the event horizon as the Earth indefinitely approached the Sun.

Once inside this band, in response to the equality of the electrical signs between the respective fields, the Earth's trajectory began its descent toward its biospheric orbit.

(Regardless of the equations governing the mass of astrophysical bodies subject to a systemological relationship, the energies at play between the component bodies of a Solar-type stellar system, and the distance traveled by a planetary body during its orbit, the sequence of effects that Earth experienced during its trajectory of approach toward the Sun resulted in the reheating of its Core—an effect that gave rise to the series of thermonuclear waves at the origin of the Mantle's thermodynamic state).

133. The effect resulting from the transformation of the Mantle—something we already discussed when speaking of the Creation of the Ice Ring—into a thermonuclear reaction mass was the fusion of the Lower Lithosphere.

(The Lower Lithosphere refers to the zone of geophysical contact with the Upper Mantle. Recall that the division of the Earth's body into three main zones, with their intermediate contact zones, is not a mere whim of nature. The zone that has come to be called the Outer Core belongs, within this structure, to the contact zone between the Core proper and the Mantle. Given that the Core is the stellic body around which a planet forms, and is therefore the Transformer of Gravitational Energy into heat, the physics of the Outer Core corresponds to the state of matter in the Lower Mantle, which would be equivalent to that of a mass surrounding a microasteroid at a low temperature—that is, compressed matter in a gaseous state— although this state is not appropriate for describing the physics of the band within which the Core oscillates, causing—as I have already stated elsewhere—the flattening of the Globe through its oscillation. But let us return to the main point:)

134. Under other circumstances, the heating of the Upper Mantle—or thermonuclear reaction mass, the source of Global Geological Volcanism—would have had to reach the Upper or Outer Lithospheric Ring, but the fact that the Lithospheric Ring lies beneath the Ice Sheet—whose creation we observed at the beginning—kept the structure of the Lithospheric Crust in a solid state, although the Secondary Crust was subject to the physical effects of rising temperature within a pressure cooker. It is understandable that the temperature inside that pressure cooker—into which God had transformed the geophysical body—could not continue to rise indefinitely.

135. Our geologists determined the physics of the Earth based on a cold, mechanically inactive Core, alive only through the thermodynamic reaction dependent on gravitational pressure—in this case acting as solid pressure. They needed a virtual model from which to explain the constancy of the geophysical heat that determines lithospheric volcanic activity. The fact that wave-based imaging revealed a thermodynamic structure on the table ranging from lower to higher—that is, from the outside in—served to validate the childish model of geonuclear

heat driven by mass pressure that they had preconceived in their minds; a childish model that, in turn, went to bed with the hypothesis of the origin of stellar matter from a concentration of dust at the heart of a gravitational field drifting through the stellar seas... you can't cross the sea without it flying... blah blah blah... The reader will excuse my infinite cynicism.

136. And as they made love, they magically gave birth to an Ecosphere governed by Perfect Equations which, of course, by contradicting the Origin from Chance, logically had to seem suspicious to them—and, consequently, had no chance of thriving. And they preferred to cling to the childish model rather than continue searching for a geophysical model capable of explaining the thermodynamic equilibrium of the biosphere.

137. How, however, can a planet without a heat-generating source remain hot for millions of years—to the extent that, as the fossil record demonstrates, one can speak of an Ecospheric Thermodynamic Cycle— this is a point that, once the childish model of "Matter Pressure as the Origin of Geonuclear Heat" had been elevated to the status of dogma—and because they had no hypothesis with which to replace it—they chose the ignorance of one who prefers the evil he knows to the good he has yet to discover. And hence the challenge presented in this New Century by a theory in which the core of every planet becomes a stellar body, transforming gravitational energy into heat.

138. We were saying, then, that the release of geonuclear heat (as a result of the Earth's entry into the Solar System)—which was accumulating between the crust and the mantle—would, if it found no outlet, eventually cause an astronomical explosion, which would mean the disintegration of the geophysical body. In other words, and to get to the heart of the matter: without destroying the lithosphere, God had to break up that enormous block of ice beneath whose mass the thermonuclear reactions building up in the mantle threatened to shatter the core. The solution lay in the gravitational pull that the solar magnetic field would exert on the geophysical body as the Earth crossed (in the direction of its geostationary orbit) the interaction zone between the respective electric fields.

139. The origin of the chain of thermonuclear reactions that keep the mantle active is a subject to be studied from the perspective of the Geophysical Architecture we are developing. For example, how a chain reaction can extend its wavefront to the lithosphere and open pathways through which magmatic heat is released. Another issue is the relationship between the Core and the irregular geoid shape of the Crust. This issue leads us to view the oscillation of the Core within the Mantle as the origin of the bulge in the equatorial region. And consequently, to introduce between the outer zone of the Core and the inner zone of the Mantle a geophysical ring in a chromosphere state, the peculiarity of which I will not discuss here.

140. To recap, we saw that, once the Earth was propelled toward the Sun, our planet crossed the interaction zone between the respective electric fields, which

triggered the natural electrical reaction between two fields of the same sign. (The same operating law that determines the stationary orbits of particles around an atomic nucleus based on electric fields is the law we must apply to the structure of the Solar System. Although it seems too simple to be true, we will shortly demonstrate that the planetary configuration obeys the laws of electrodynamics. The Earth's orbit is a natural consequence.)

141. And it is curious that, having noted the similarity between the structure of an atom and the Solar System and the resemblance between intra-atomic forces and systemological electromagnetic forces—as obvious as it was—and because they refused to believe that Nature and Creation obey such logical principles, twentieth-century scientists refused to believe what was right before their eyes; and, with the answer right under their noses, they rejected it as unworthy of their genius, preferring to delve into a Theory of Unification of electromagnetic and gravitational fields—a theory that, nevertheless, finds its daily miracle in the structure of atomic matter. For if the origin of geonuclear heat stems from material pressure, how is it possible that this very pressure has not caused the entire planetary mass to sink into the Sun's body over the millions of centuries the Solar System has been active?

142. They respond by citing centrifugal energy, but they ignore the fact that work cannot be performed indefinitely—orbital constancy contradicts this—so, having to seek a different force, they embarked on the search for a unified field; and while they spoke of electromagnetic forces, they did so by eliminating the electric component of the magnetic field. True scholars indeed!

Therefore: With the Earth's trajectory directed toward its stationary orbit due to the electrical repulsion between fields of the same sign, in terms of work we can compare this effect to that of an accelerated centrifugal force. In fact, subject to this effect, had the magnetic field not mitigated the consequences, the Earth—swept up by the electrical storm—would have been flung into Mars's orbit, for example. The gravitational pull produced by the interaction between the respective magnetic fields, when the Earth crossed its designated electrical band within the Solar System, served as the brake that anchored it in its orbit. This pull affected the Lower Lithosphere, tearing the bases of the great mountain ranges from the Upper Mantle. With this action of lifting the roots of the great mountain ranges—the action of the hammer against the ice bar beneath whose ring the Lithosphere lay—was already complete. To replicate this global seismic action would be to open a door in time and dare to stand firm amid an earthquake with its epicenter in the Core, whose universal radius of extension causes the entire body of the Earth's crust—planted upon the Ring of Ice—to dance beneath our feet.

(The scholars of the 20th century certainly found evidence of a retreat of the ice; what they never dared to dream was that the body of ice that retreated, once upon a time, covered the entire sphere of the planet. How its Creator managed to split that Ice Bar is the point addressed in this section—a subject on which there is a world of things to say—and we will have time to delve into its mechanics, the Origin of Ecospheric Orography, at all levels, throughout the course of this 21st century).

With the Ice Mantle—which God called “the Light”—thus cracked, the heat accumulated within the inner geophysical body found an outlet through which to escape: in the form of gases and lava, and through this process God brought about the transformation of ice into water. This is the sequence of events in the origin of Water and Air. But let us recall how the Ice Mantle reacted to the Earth’s approach to the Sun.

PART FIVE

CREATION OF THE ECOSPHERE

CHAPTER 16.—SUBLIMATION OF THE ICE SHIELD

143. There are two ways of doing things. One is to let the law of time take its course, and the other is to accelerate the development of an action using the means at hand. Subject to the law of time, the Ice Mantle would have responded to solar energy by melting; it would have split in two, and over time the two ice sheets would have retreated toward the polar ice caps. The waters of the first great ocean would have evaporated. Slowly but surely, the ocean would have divided to multiply; from the oceans, the seas would have emerged... But God knew a faster way to bring about this global process.

Why melt the Ice Mantle at a low temperature when He could, through integration via the boreal route, produce the effect of red-hot iron against a block of ice? We call this effect the sublimation of ice. The immediate effect of the Earth-Sun encounter under the conditions described led to the accelerated sublimation of the Ice Mantle. Solar energy acted like red-hot iron applied directly to the surface of the Mantle. This sublimation caused the Ice Mantle to break into two large blocks and led to the birth of the Biospheric Atmosphere. (When I say "conditions described," I am referring to the access parabola, which caused the Earth to be, for a time, at a distance closer than its natural distance in its stationary orbit.)

144. I have already stated that the solar gravitational pull resulted from the opposing effect that propelled the Earth toward its biospheric orbit. And that, as a result of this pull—arising from the magnetic coupling between the two fields—the bases of the great mountain ranges were completely released. Perhaps "uplift" is the correct term. This release was driven by the heating of the geophysical structure. Let us recall that as the Mantle cooled, the lithospheric ring solidified, leaving the contact plate fused into a single body. When the Earth entered the Solar System, the Core heated up, the diameter of the Mantle expanded, and thermal pressure created natural waves of expansion moving from the center to the exterior of the geological body. This movement was not sufficient to propel the mountain ranges against an outer lithosphere enclosed beneath an Ice Mantle which, while sublimating externally, remained in its original state internally.

145. The solidity of the Ice Mantle resulted in the accumulation of heat within the Earth. This accumulation began to cause widespread seismic activity that, originating in the Mantle and through uninterrupted series of thermonuclear reactions, heated the Crust, opening pathways for the release of heat— —that threatened to disintegrate the entire structure. The fusion between the upper layer of the Mantle and the lower layer of the Crust, fractured in this way by thermal pressure, began to lift the bases of the mountain ranges, around whose massifs the geonuclear heat found pathways to escape to the exterior. Thus, while solar energy

did its work on the outer surface, geophysical energy did the same from below, cracking the Ice Mantle; through these cracks, gases began to escape and contribute to the ongoing formation of the atmosphere.

146. The distance from the Sun halted sublimation and gave way to the thawing of the Ice Mantle. The external and internal thermal pressure on the ice resulted in the ice melting into water. Given the temperature of the globe, this process gave rise to an ocean that covered the equator and the tropical regions, and continued to push the two large blocks of ice—into which the original block had split—toward the geographic poles. The waters of this Mother Ocean were the waters that lay beneath the Firmament of the Heavens.

The Firmament of the Heavens that "was between the waters that were below and above its body" was the Atmosphere.

147. Identification of the Firmament, which clarifies many things for us.

First: Since the waters beneath the Firmament are the waters of the Mother Ocean, the waters above this Firmament are the waters of the solar gravitational field.

This point reveals the need to approach the behavior of gravity from the perspective of the nature of fluids. This gives rise to the image of the Universe as an ocean of energy upon which continents and their islands float—in this case, astrophysical systems. There is more to be said about this ocean of energy, but for now it opens up new horizons for understanding the behavior of the gravitational field, mirroring the typical phenomenology of a fluid exposed to internal and external forces.

148. In summary:

The Light was the Mantle of Ice beneath which the rest of the geophysical structure was enclosed at the end of the First Day. Its creation came about through the fusion of the Primary Crust; and God initiated this fusion of the Primary Crust by accelerating the geonuclear pulse of the Globe. This increase in the working rhythm of the Earth's astrophysical heart was the consequence of the multiplication of the density of the Earth's gravitational field per astrophysical cubic unit.

149. At the beginning of the Second Day, the Earth and the Sun are reunited. God brings about a series of effects, the first of which is the sublimation of the Ice Mantle. The Mantle breaks apart, and the Atmosphere is born; its growth, driven by the gravitational pull at the origin of the stationary orbit, will impart an impressive physical acceleration. The two resulting blocks of ice begin their journey toward the geographic poles, leaving between them the waters of the Mother Ocean, from whose volume—through evaporation—the body of the Atmosphere

will continue to be nourished. This Atmosphere is the Firmament in the Word of the Second Day.

150. Once the Firmament is identified, the movement of God's spirit over the Waters is understood as its movement through Space. And we delve into the behavior of Gravity, which we can comprehend through our knowledge of the nature of liquids. This opens our minds to understanding the universal gravitational field as an ocean in which celestial systems appear as continents and islands, enabling celestial navigation thanks to their positions in local galactic space.

151. Fire, Ice, Water, and Air. These are the first rungs of the ladder of natural elements that we are climbing. The next one needs no introduction. In short, and to conclude:

A.—Fusion of the Primary Crust.

B. Sublimation of the Primordial Atmosphere.

C. Thawing and Retreat of the Ice.

D. Formation of the Biospheric Atmosphere.

CHAPTER 17.—CREATION OF THE BIOSPHERIC INTERRELATIONSHIP PLANE

152. We conclude our ascent up the ladder of the natural elements and open a new path.

Ice, water, air—all the elements were in their proper places and ready for the great event of the leap from inorganic to organic matter. (This was the point at which Reason and Faith parted ways and followed paths as opposed as they were suicidal.)

Speaking of the evolution of species, the biblical sage par excellence dropped a stone into the water, saying: "And to exercise justice upon them, the elements came to an agreement, just as the sounds in a psaltery harmonize in unchanging harmony, as can be clearly seen from the events. For land animals are transformed into aquatic ones, and those that swim walk upon the earth." These are the perceptive words of a man who did not hesitate to lament the loneliness of genius elsewhere, but who, during his finest moments, also did not hesitate to anticipate the scientific mind and assert that God gave him "the true science of things, and knowledge of the constitution of the universe and the power of the elements; the beginning, the end, and the middle of time; the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons; the cycle of the years and the position of the stars; the nature of animals and the instincts of wild beasts; the force of the winds and the

reasoning of men; the differences among plants and the virtues of roots. He knew all that is hidden and all that is manifest, for Wisdom, the architect of all things, taught it to me."

It is reasonable to believe that if Faith and Reason had listened with more humble ears to this confession of Solomon, the hostility between Christianity and science would not have reached the extremes it did in the early decades of the 20th century.

Returning to the topic of the evolution of the tree of life, the roots come first. That is where the tree begins to sprout. But for there to be a tree, there must be seed. Assuming that the Mother Cell—the Seed of Life—had its origin in God, it follows from the biohistorical sequences we are tracing that God planted the seed of the tree of species beneath the waters of the Great Ocean. And consequently, plants came first. From this underwater plant kingdom, as the first branches adapted to life on land—as the water level of the Great Ocean gradually receded—the tree of terrestrial plant species emerged. The evolution of this new kingdom was completed when photosynthesis transformed the chemical composition of the atmosphere.

153. This biohistorical step took place during the Evening of the Third Day. We have already seen how, once the Ice Sheet broke apart, the two resulting blocks began their retreat toward the poles, and how the ongoing evaporation of the Ocean, combined with the uplift of the mountain ranges due to gravitational pull, led to the multiplication of the Ocean into oceans and the division of the oceans into seas. Thus, as the water level gradually dropped, marine plants adapted to life on land, eventually transforming the prehistoric atmosphere into the historical atmosphere, with oxygen as its primary component. In turn, and as part of the necessary adaptation to the revolution that the plant kingdom itself was bringing about, the prehistoric plant fiber of the underwater substrate acquired the properties of historical terrestrial trees. With the creation of the kingdom of trees, God completed the structure of the Biospheric Interrelation Plane—a plane on which I will pause for a moment before taking off from the ground and launching this narrative into space.

154. The autonomy of the Biospheric Interrelation Plane can be summarized by stating that the polar ice caps were stabilized to serve as the two main thermoregulatory foci of the ecospheric system. God made the temperature balance of the biosphere dependent on these centers, and to stabilize the thawing of both thermoregulatory centers, God made them dependent on the Earth's angle of rotation. Let's take it one step at a time, however.

155. Let's imagine for a second that the Earth were flat and always remained at the same distance from the Sun. What would happen? How long would it take for the Sun to heat the oceans to the boiling point and turn them into a pot of boiling water? And in how many geological hours would the atmosphere lose its thermodynamic equilibrium, and would its entire structure fall apart because the

Earth's angle of rotation lacks a regulatory mechanism? Let's calculate how many years it would take for the temperature of the oceans and the atmosphere to skyrocket by ten degrees in the absence of the two polar thermoregulating centers. How would this temperature increase affect marine life? If human beings were to die as a result of a heat wave, how many would die each year if that heat wave persisted—and, worse still, threatened to rise another ten degrees over the next twenty years, for example?

156. What has been happening over these millions and millions of years is the opposite. The ecospheric cooling centers have remained constant; they have kept the biospheric temperature stable—always bearing in mind that as their mass decreased, the overall temperature was bound to rise. But by making the biospheric temperature dependent on the polar continents, our Creator was compelled to provide them with a geophysical platform. This platform— —I will call the Autonomous Ecospheric Substrate, and it relates to the equations underlying the immutability of the Earth's angle of rotation.

CHAPTER 18.—THE AUTONOMOUS ECOSPHERIC SUBSTRATE

157. The Earth rotates around the Sun. We have seen that God made the thermodynamic stability of the biosphere dependent on the polar masses. Now it is time to study the mechanics that maintain the polar ice caps, for everything leads us to believe that temperature and the angle of rotation are directly related; yet the Earth orbits within a gravitational field subject to disturbances emanating from the central star, which transform interplanetary space due to its interrelation with the celestial realm to which it belongs. This causes an unstable rotational dynamic in the planets, a reflection of the Sun's wobble.

(The Sun's wobble means that its axis of rotation appears to move as if it were drunk, and just as a drunk person's body sways from left to right, so too does the Sun's axis tilt now to the right, now to the left. This movement is reflected with particular intensity in Mars's rotation and should, by nature, be the natural state of the Earth's axis. If the wobble of the planetary rotation axis is the rule, the Earth is the exception to the rule. The importance of this constant dynamic is vital if we remember that temperature and the angle of rotation are directly related.)

Our planet's subjection to the law of solar tilt—the cause of which we would have to explore in another chapter—would cause the area of solar energy incidence on the continental geography to alternate, with the consequent effect of irregular thawing of the polar ice caps. But this does not happen, and hence the question: Why does the Earth always present the same angle of rotation to the Sun?

158. There is an explanation for this peculiarity. The answer lies in the law governing the tilt of the axis of rotation toward one hemisphere or the other of a

body spinning on its own axis. Experience never fails us. Everyday reality offers us various examples of the nature and practical effects of this law. Its description is not complicated. Let's think about it: what would happen if we started spinning around with our arms outstretched, holding an encyclopedia in one hand? Wouldn't the arm holding the weight naturally drop in the direction of the weight it's supporting? In short, there's no one right way to look at examples—just as there's no one right way to have tastes. Once the nature of the law and the effect it produces have been understood, everyone can come up with their own examples. Having understood the law in its entirety, what we must do now is apply it to the reality of the globe. I mean, all you have to do is grab a globe, place it on the table, and take a moment to observe this example of the encyclopedia in one hand alongside the phenomenon of the concentration of continents in one hemisphere. Isn't the entire continental mass grouped in one hemisphere? The other hemisphere is occupied by the waters of the Pacific. We already have the encyclopedia on one arm of the Earth; what effect will we see if we now take the globe and begin to spin it on its axis?

159. This effect of the rotation angle tilting toward the overloaded hemisphere is precisely what God sought when He placed the pentacontinental mass on one hemisphere. The final effect produced was a fixed rotation angle. Why go to all that trouble? Well, the need to stabilize the Biospheric Interrelation Plane was a primary consideration. The creation of a stable thermodynamic platform was a necessity of evolution. Thanks to the pentacontinental concentration within one hemisphere of the planet, God ensured that the area of the globe exposed to solar energy would always remain the same. Thanks to this optical constancy, the growth curve of biospheric temperature—and thus the melting of the polar ice caps—would be maintained at a stable rate throughout all geological eras. (These are extremely simple and natural conclusions that must seem like heresy to proponents of plate tectonics, for example. But what can you do? There's no accounting for taste, and you can't please everyone.)

CHAPTER 19.—THEORY OF GEOPHYSICAL RINGS

160. I have stated that, by stabilizing the Earth's angle of rotation through the displacement of continental mass across a hemisphere, God achieved a constant angle of incidence of sunlight on the geographic poles. From this effect, He hoped to bring about the gradual thaw that would grant the evolution of the tree of species the time necessary to be carried out to completion. And I have emphasized that, of course, this architectural model clashes with the famous hypothesis of continental drift. But it could not be otherwise. Continental drift cannot explain the constancy of the angle of rotation; and worse still, it contradicts its very existence. Not to mention, of course, that it fails to resolve any of the unknowns presented by the structure and morphology of the lithosphere. Denying these unknowns in order to impose fiction over science was, unfortunately, the attit

ude that the modern age adopted as a matter of philosophy in its atheism.

161. Moving beyond convoluted discussions, and starting from the materialization of the mathematics of the Autonomous Ecospheric Substrate, let us say that the geophysical architecture to which God gave His approval configures a structure in which the lithosphere functions as a compact ring rotating uniformly over a liquid, magmatic ring. The magmatic ring, or Mantle, in turn floats atop a chromospheric ring. And at the center, the microstar that constitutes the Core oscillates within the gravitational currents that serve as its orbit. Within this configuration, the fact that the temperature on the surface of the Core is equal to that of the Sun is no coincidence. Nor is it a coincidence that, by maintaining a constant lithospheric temperature, the oceans behave like the river water that a nuclear reactor needs to keep its temperature in equilibrium. (As for the equality of temperature between the surface of the Core and that of the Sun, it is not known whether this holds true for all members of the System or only for Earth. If it applies only to Earth, it is possible to derive a law of interaction between star and planet that confirms this rule of equality for every biospheric system. The size of the celestial body and its surface temperature would determine the distance to the planet in question. Although this is merely theoretical at present, wouldn't the given equality imply a parity between the thermodynamic cycles of the Sun and the Core? In this case, what matters is not so much determining the relationship as understanding the interaction between the Sun and Earth).

162. Having said that, you will then tell me that what I am proposing is a kind of ball-bearing mechanism in which the magmatic ring functions like the balls on which the outer wheel moves. And I completely agree with you. You will then object that in this case we must explain how this pressure cooker does not explode. A subtle question that does you credit, and one to which you yourselves can answer based on your daily observation of the system that floats internal heat—namely, volcanoes. Are the waterlines of geonuclear heat not constant, and are they not marked by the circulation of electromagnetic currents?

CHAPTER 20.—THEORY OF THE SEISMOLOGICAL FLOATATION SYSTEM

163. Although it may seem like a pointless exercise, let us begin again. On the first Day, our Creator doubled the energy density per astrophysical cubic unit of the Earth's gravitational field. The response of the Core—which was in a cold state at that time—was to activate and proceed to transform that supply into heat. Immediately, the Mantle liquefied and the Primary Crust melted. Once these processes were complete, the Core cooled again, causing the Crust to solidify and form the geophysical ring we call the Lithosphere. Had the Earth remained in the region where these processes took place, the cooling of its Core would have caused the Mantle to solidify as well. The Bible states that this did not happen because God

separated the Earth from its region of origin and placed it within a gravitational field of stable density—the Solar System.

164. Once within the Sun's sphere of influence, the geonuclear transformer reactivated and reached a constant temperature, equal to the external temperature of the star around which it orbits. I believe it is about six thousand degrees Celsius. This integration into the Solar System halted the solidification of the Mantle and, at the same time, maintained the solidity of the lithospheric ring, which would henceforth rotate with its own motion over the magmatic ring. Roughly speaking.

165. Given the constant heat production by the Core, the laws of physics require us to envision a sort of chromospheric zone between the Mantle and the Core, within which the Core itself oscillates; this oscillation—subject to the gravitational variations I mentioned earlier—causes the flattening of the poles that the Earth exhibits. (In this sense, the Core's oscillation within the geophysical body depends on its own heat-production mechanics and its reaction to the thermonuclear waves at the origin of volcanoes. As for the Core's morphology, the geophysical body's own reaction to its oscillatory action provides certain clues. But this will be addressed at another time from different perspectives.)

166. It is this geophysical structure that leads us to ask the following question: How does the Earth release the internal heat stored within the lithospheric ring? The answer requires facts rather than theories, and well, although we are speaking of a lithosphere with a fixed angle of rotation over a magmatic surface, its body is equipped with a complex system of buoyancy tubes through which geonuclear heat is continuously released. To speak of volcanoes is to speak of the entire seismological dynamic that accompanies the creation of this geophysical architecture—impressive in its manifestation and perfect in its execution. Now: Why do the openings of the buoyancy system run along the boundaries of the great mountain ranges?

167. The correspondence between seismological lines and the lines of the ma

jor mountain ranges is explained by the physics of gravitational pull, the phenomenology of which any expert can clarify. And while we're at it, the objection to the geophysical architecture that the continuous rise in temperature of a lithosphere subject to the law of the Autonomous Ecospheric Substrate would present is swept aside in one fell swoop by the constant temperature of the ocean floor, thanks to which the most exposed surface of the lithosphere curbs that natural rise—which, without that balance, would eventually cause this geophysical engineering structure to collapse. I believe that nuclear reactors make use of this very same theory to curb the heating of their reactors.

168. This autonomous geophysical system—the source of so many headaches—is complemented by a unique, extraordinary, and overwhelmingly marvelous planetary structure, the foundations of which I am honored to present

to you. But I want to start with a fact. Better yet, from a law: namely, if every astrophysical system is a transformer of universal energy into light and heat, its operating speed will depend on the gravitational density of its field and on the number of revolutions per century of its celestial body. That's one point.

169. On the other hand, it is fair to say that the sidereal velocity of a system—be it a constellation or a galaxy—is a constant derived from the forces of the astrophysical region to which that system belongs. In other words, if the Solar System were not interconnected with the Universe of the constellations, its cruising speed would depend exclusively on the amount of energy in its gravitational field. Since the Solar System is subject to the law of gravitational attraction between celestial bodies in the universe, the law itself tells us that as the distance between constellations decreases, the cruising speed of the stellar systems that compose them must logically increase. This is a universal effect from which we can infer that if the speed of the central star—on whose speed the smaller bodies of a system depend—accelerates, all bodies dependent on its physics will experience that variation. In some way, somehow.

170. And this is relevant because the question cannot be evaded or set aside due to certain contexts, especially once the Evolution of Life on Earth has been opened up to a complex system of physical equations without the resolution of which the future of life could not be guaranteed. The new relevant question is: How did God preemptively curb the possible disruptions that, in the future—precisely because our System is subject to this universal law—the Earth would experience? To better grasp the heart of the matter, let us compare our System to a spacecraft. Having compared the Solar System to a spacecraft in flight, what we are trying to discover here is whether this spacecraft was equipped with an emergency brake, or whether it simply drifts through the sea of constellations, exposed to gravitational winds and sidereal electromagnetic fields.

171. But why did God need to equip the Solar System with an emergency brake to maintain a stable cruising speed? This is the opposite question to the previous one. Well, I think the need is as obvious as the fact that all bodies in the universe are subject to the laws that govern it. If the wheels accelerate, won't the chassis do so at the same time? If the Sun steps on the gas, won't the planets suffer the consequences?

172. And to what extent will this hypothetical acceleration affect the central transformers of the planets—and especially that of Earth—once the direct relationship between speed and heat has been discovered? But what if the Sun's speed were to drop abruptly now due to long-range electrodynamic interactions? In other words, did God rack his brains to create an Autonomous Ecospheric Substrate for the Biospheric Interrelation Plane, only to then expose the entire Geophysical Architecture to destruction as a result of a constellational shift in course? He drew lines, shifted continents from one hemisphere to the other,

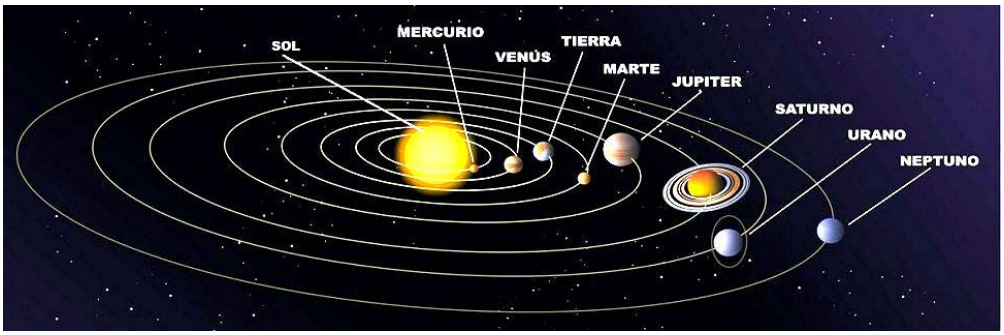
created seismically active zones, regulated geonuclear thermodynamics—he left nothing to chance, no loose end escaped his notice. And now, just as the adventure of life was beginning, was he going to leave the solar ship adrift in the interconstellational currents? The need to correct trajectories over time, control variations in space, and remotely govern matter compelled the Creative Intelligence to equip the Solar System with a safety brake that would maintain the central star's cruising speed within a range of maximums and minimums. The question is what kind of automatic brake an astrophysical engineer must employ when placing a Solar System-type system into orbit. Although, of course, if we do not know what type the Solar System belongs to, we will hardly be able to find the answer. The answer is right before our eyes.

PART SIX

CREATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

CHAPTER 21.—APPLIED FINITIST SYSTEMOLOGY (DYNAMIC STRUCTURE OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

173. The answer to the enigma presented in the previous section—namely, what kind of automatic brake maintains the Solar System's cruising speed constant in defiance of the law of gravity, which dictates the need for constant acceleration due to the decreasing distances between the Sun and any point it approaches?—the answer to this dilemma is unequivocal. Now, and I admit my shortcoming, duty requires that we specify the nature of the problem more precisely. I mean, we are—or have been—accustomed to working with a *"photo finish"* of the Solar System. Here it is:



174. Out of inertia and due to a virtual simulation ingrained during our years of intellectual training, we tend to be omniscient, and the application of Kepler's laws to this imaginary snapshot is enough to make us feel like gods. This conditioning dates back centuries, and the image is ingrained in our very being with such subtlety that professionals in intellectual education need only impose order with the baton of their state regimes to resolve the issue. The fact is that today this simplistic image of Keplerian motion is characteristic of stunted minds and intellects devoid of any independent thought and lacking any capacity for critical judgment. The truth is that the result looks good—even beautiful—and achieves its goal: to make even the biggest idiot feel greater than Saint Thomas and Saint Augustine combined. When it comes to correspondence with Reality, this image of a Solar System frozen in time is the very opposite of the physics of a Solar System that moves among stars just a few light-years away and with which it clearly forms—cacophony?—an open star cluster.

175. If we take as a benchmark the parameters of the open star clusters in our skies, and combine them with those of binary and multiple star systems—where the distances between the stars in an individual star system often exceed the distance between the Sun and Alpha Centauri, for example— I wonder: where is that picture for children just beginning to learn astrophysics, the one that came out of Kepler's workshop in the days of María Castaña? They say that the law operates at infinite distances—and yet is it denied that that same law acts between bodies situated a mere four or five light-years apart? Someone, in addition to common sense, lost their reason throughout the nineteenth century, and no one in the 20th century—with the Academy having embarked on the adventure of the Search for the Origin of the Cosmos, already settled into the Time Ship that was to carry the scholars to the Core of the Origin and from there leap to the End via a fold in Space... it never occurred to anyone to press the button and set in motion the image of a Solar System frozen in time that Kepler launched into the future. Not even just for a bit of fun. The dogmatism of the disciples of the Einsteinian revolution proved to be so primitive and entrenched that even with the most up-to-date dynamic calculations on the table, not a single astronomer dared to press the button and see the Solar System exactly as it exists in Space and Time—embedded in a Local Star Cluster and with its planetary members endowed with solid structure. It is, therefore, depressing to the point of outright laughter to open an astronomy textbook written by university professors—such as the Complutense University of Madrid textbook, for example, so as not to get lost in other, more subtle languages—and read that Pluto is a gaseous body. Because one is well-mannered, one holds back the urge to vomit. Let us continue, then.

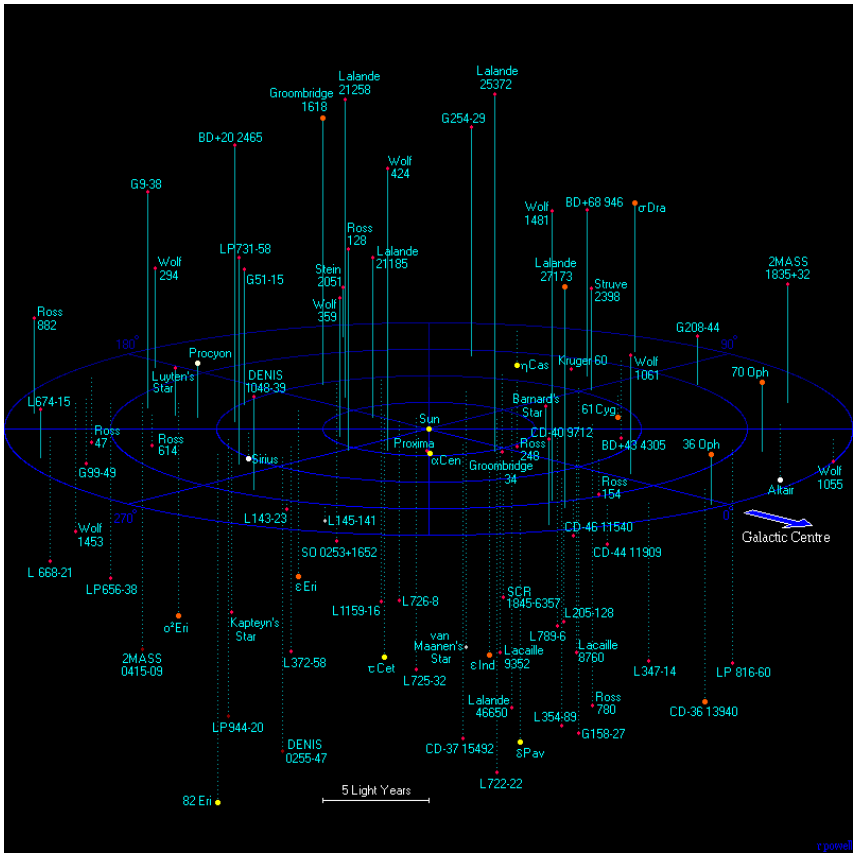
176. I stated above that the answer to why the Solar System's velocity escapes the realm of the law of gravity—by whose force the entire universe is governed—must be unequivocal, simple, and logical. I now recognize that verbal expressions, unlike mathematics, possess an ambiguity so profound that it is capable of swallowing up in its abyss the purity of any mountain of numbers. And I would like to explain this enigma. The word, in short, is a vehicle capable of carrying different passengers within it, and it so happens that, depending on the passenger, a word can cease to mean one thing and come to have a new meaning. Politicians are masters of this art. But not only them—let's not be cruel to those little creatures. A number, for example, is a perfect entity; its meaning is non-transferable, divine in its incorruptibility—hence the pagan, wild adoration that mathematicians feel for these entities. A four is a four, and whether applied to bananas or mice, the essence and substance of the four—as an abstract, pure, immaculate entity—remains unchanged despite any alterations. I, who am a jerk—and in being so, serve as an example, for I can just as easily be a cretin as a flower, which illustrates the ambiguity of the word, a confusion to which the number lends itself under no circumstances—and because I defend the need to press the button of the Solar Systemological Movement in order to overcome Keplerian traumas and the complexes inherited from past centuries, I keep to myself the laughter I feel when I see online the staunch defense of this ancient systematological system which, though it was once born to revolutionize, is now the most reactionary system I know. I do not know why astronomers do not fulfill their duty and process the mountain of data with which, had Kepler and Newton worked, the established

image of the inherited system would already have joined the long list of errors—necessary as a step forward, but enemies of Civilization due to their refusal to move on to a better history.

177. But just because an answer can be unequivocal does not mean it cannot be complex. It all depends on the model being used. If the reasoning clashes with a way of thinking rooted in the archetypal image that identifies planets as balls of gas, one will ultimately arrive at the Bridge of Sighs, only to write a melancholy "Poor thing!" upon the waters. Once this problem is overcome—and assuming that the database at our disposal makes it impossible for us to maintain an active answer derived from a series of data points that carry no weight at the foot of the mountain of knowledge from whose summit we once again gaze upon the Universe, the Cosmos, and the Solar System—the decision is ours, and the processing of this cluster of parameters has been left in our hands; their final equivalence, and because it is based on a new set of data, must logically present us with a Local Stelar Architecture with respect to which—without denying the Keplerian photo finish—this Applied Finistic Systemology aims to be nothing more than the opening act and never the final word on the central question of this Section: Why is the Sun's speed stable and deviates from the law of universal gravitation, according to which, as the Sun approaches an astrophysical system, its speed should double depending on the distance?

178. It is clear that, due to its very complexity, an answer is nonetheless simp

le. We must place it in its true context. We must specify the nature of the problem it embodies. We must define which law it invokes. We must make room and sketch on the screen of our intellect the nature of the question to which we seek an answer. There comes a point when the experts must step in, for they are the ones who possess the database whose analysis can demonstrate or refute—if applicable—the Sun's integration into a star cluster, more or less open and more or less populous depending on the gravitational architecture that these data reveal. Let us consider a new local stellar expansion to 20 light-years:



179. How many open star clusters could serve as astrophysical models for us? Obviously, we are talking about a true revolution in our conceptualization of what a star cluster is. We will have to discard old concepts and work our way from binary systems to opening up regional gravitational fields in universal space, within whose perimeters the stars behave like atoms within an astrophysical molecule. This would explain the optical constancy of stellar formations in the heavens, the constancy of distances and velocities of stellar systems within the Universal Milky Way Network, and would present us with a Universe that behaves like a Crystalline Body, powered by gravitational currents, depending on which the consumption of total energy remains over time within a range of maximums and minimums. Hence the fluctuations in stellar luminosities. This implies God, of course, but in this cosmological system God is taken for granted, so let us now address the local answer to the problem of the constancy of the Sun's velocity.

180. At this point I must correct myself; after having highlighted the truly important point—the existence of the Sun as a member of a sidereal system— my own line of thought leads me to define the transformation of planetary mass into a Solar Orbit Correction Mechanism, through whose action the centrifugal force to which the Sun is subjected in response to the motion of its system within a cumulative gravitational field is nullified and reduced to a specific constant. If I

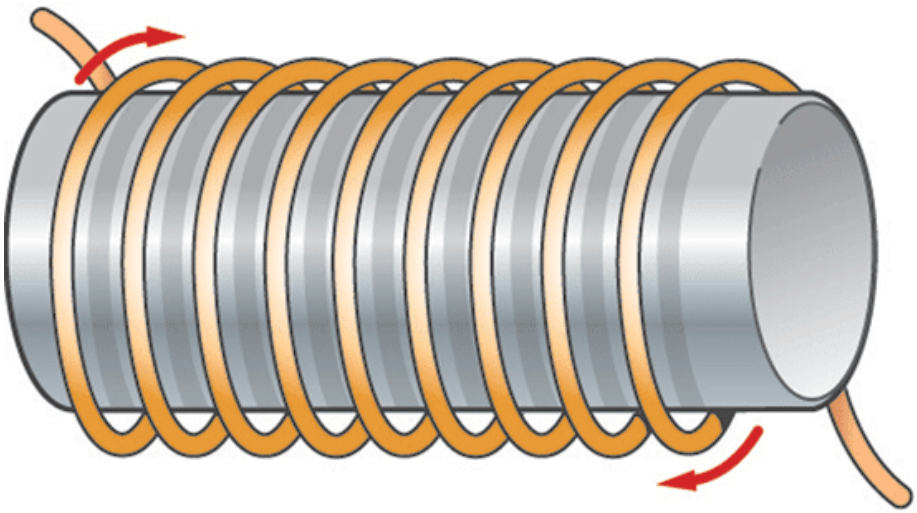
previously stated that "We need only transform the total mass of the planetary family into drag mass, and we already have the stabilizing brake for the Sun's cruising speed," I now believe that this transformation focuses its effect on the Solar Orbit Correction Equation, by which, as I have said, the centrifugal force to which the Sun is subject is overcome through the transformation of planetary mass into Remote-Controlled Directional Guidance. (If an objection comes to mind, imagine running by propelling only your own body, and then repeat the same action while carrying a sack of sand on your back. That's just for starters. But before we hoist onto our backs—not the Globe, like that titan, but the nine planets with their moons and the belts of solar rings—before we grasp the lever to move the universe, you will have to cast off the ballast of the outdated view of the planets as immense balls of gas floating among the electromagnetic threads of the Sun's field).

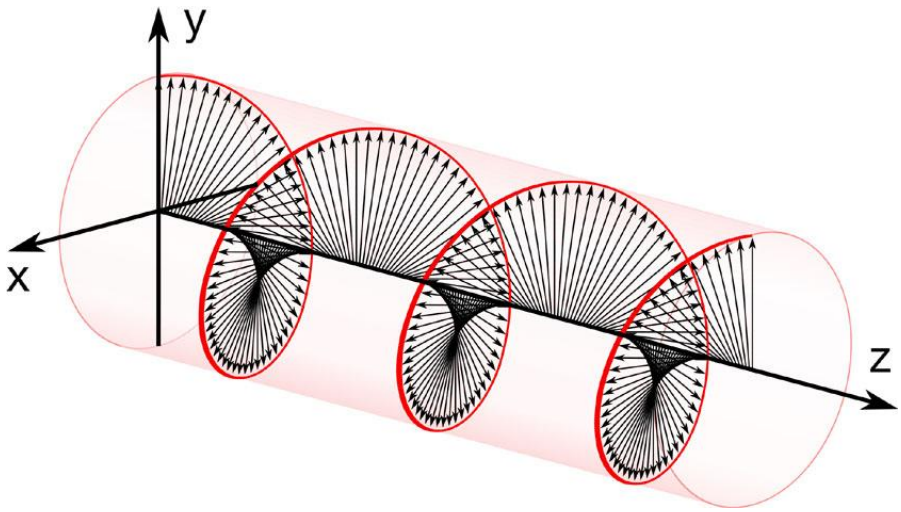
181. I want to emphasize this point because I believe it is important. The academic claim that planets are balls of gas compressed under gravitational pressure is one of those primitive pseudoscientific arguments, typical of 20th-century fundamentalism, that do not stand on their own in any way, yet persist in the 21st century as a symbol of universities' submission to the genius of scientific atheism. How long will idiocy and genius go hand in hand on both sides of the same coin? It is not easy to say. Just yesterday, for example, Mars was a ball of gas, like Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, and the other members of our solar system. And this is still how it is described in the textbooks produced by the planet's most prestigious minds for the general public. The photos and expeditions to Mars and its neighbors serve as evidence regarding this issue—that of the absurd gaseous view of the planets. Nevertheless, the evidence is not sufficient to erase this shameful hoax from astronomy textbooks and natural science books. It is therefore laughable—bordering on the ridiculous—to see the eminent geniuses at astronomical observatories around the world continuing to preach the gospel of the gaseous nature of the planets. They must have some hidden reason for confessing with their lips what their ears recognize as heresy. Now then, if there is any eminent super-scholar at any university in the world who can prove that Mars is a ball of gas, let him not stand idly by but exorcise us—for, by fulfilling the will of such a mega-god, we will go to the Tartarus of fools. It's cringe-worthy—I say—to see words in astronomy textbooks that could only be excused if spoken by an idiot; it's cringe-worthy because those who write them are all eminent figures, holders of professorships and the like. Does the 21st century deserve the typical mind of a fool as its teacher and guide to knowledge of the universe? The question remains: under what kind of philosophy will we grant a "cosmology of suicide" a voice, knowing that its effects on nations—this time with infinitely more deadly means of destruction at their disposal—will be the same? Let us remember that Satan did not kill with a sword, but with the word, because—though there are still those who do not believe it—the ultimate weapon, for good and for evil, is the word. How, then, can we believe these days that Pluto is a ball of gas? At this point, one must be a true boor to teach such nonsense, and an idiot to believe it. For those who write and read outside that deadly circle typical of the 20th century, what interests us now is discovering how the sum of the total planetary mass comes into play when it comes to the corrective stabilization of the Sun's cruising speed. Let

us return, then, to the problem at hand, for on another occasion the circumstances themselves will lead us back into the belly of this black hole, where the minds of the world's youth are being brainwashed, and where it is unnaturally taught that planets are balls of gas. And I am Little Red Riding Hood, that much is clear.

182. Let us then pick up the thread. Traveling at cruising speed X, we find among the constellations of the heavens a star called the Sun. The friction of this spacecraft against the flight surface is negligible in terms of slowing its speed; and, more naturally, the centrifugal force to which its orbit is subject propels this spacecraft outward from the gravitational field to which it belongs. Our problem is to understand why its speed of approach relative to the star toward which it is moving does not increase as time passes. Regardless of whether the Sun travels in a straight line or along a curved path, as the Sun navigates through interstellar space, the distances between it and the apparent point of approach grow shorter. That's obvious. And as the distance between the Sun and the apparent point of approach shortens, the force of attraction between the Sun and that stellar point increases. The law of gravity prevails. As the gravitational pull between the Sun and the reference star system increases, the approach velocity increases. Consequently, our Solar System's cruising speed increases. And it keeps increasing. The shorter the distance between two celestial bodies, the higher the speed of the smaller of the two becomes. We may or may not be talking about the Sun. Whether the Sun is the larger or smaller celestial body in the pair in question, the fact is that a change in its cruising speed occurs. But since we're talking about the Sun… let's talk.

183. I believe the distance from the Sun to the nearest star system is a few light-years. Proxima Centauri is about four light-years from the Sun. Even closer stars have been discovered. At the Sun's current speed—about 600 kilometers per second—the collision between the Sun and the Proxima Centauri system, counting from right now, would take place in approximately 500 years. We now ask ourselves point-blank: How many thousands of years has the Sun been traveling among the constellations of the heavens? And from these millions of years during which life on Earth has continued its course without experiencing a lethal disruption, can we not infer the stability of the Sun's cruising speed? And are we not entitled to believe that the Sun's speed is a constant? And if it is a constant, doesn't this constant compel us to revise our understanding of gravity—not as a law, but in terms of its very nature? I'd like to emphasize that my questions are meant to open up new avenues of thought, never to close them off. To the best of my knowledge, I'm doing my best to condense my thoughts so as to view the process from a dynamic perspective. I cannot accept the Keplerian "photo finish" in my mind, and if I were to compare the motion of the planets around the Sun to anything, it would be to an electric current flowing through a metal rod, such as a solenoid. The very angularity of the orbits projected into three-dimensional space reveals the need for a flight through current waves, where the Sun occupies the place of the metal rod. Something like this:

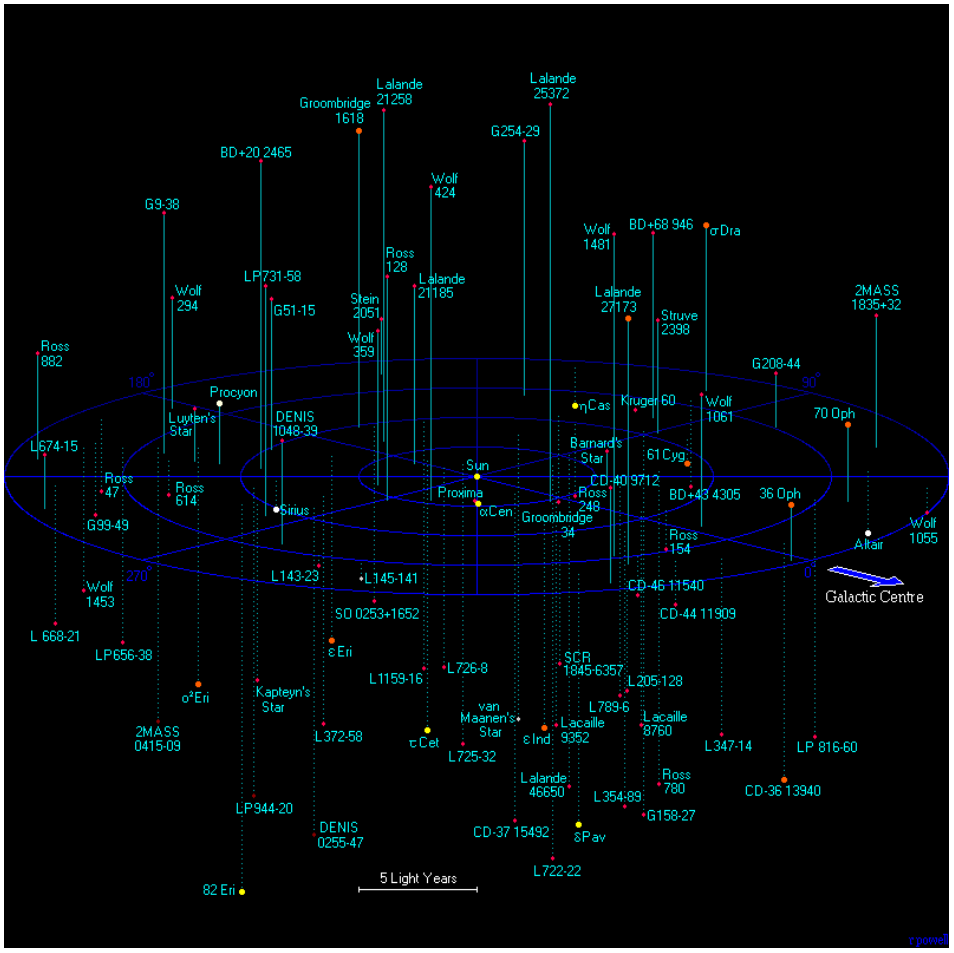




184. Working from this image, the three-dimensional issue is simplified, and the nutational irregularities of some outer orbits can be deduced. In another section, devoted exclusively to the Solar System, I will return to the topic, attempting to further define the image by incorporating physical data. My intention with this solenoidal image is simply to displace the image frozen in time that has been circulating since the days of Kepler, Galileo, and Newton—an image that has become a wall in our times, a cheap idol before which everyone believes themselves to be a genius, and, bending their knees, goes home content because they already know it all.

185. The Academy, always so brilliant, knows how to find at every moment the explanation that best suits it to keep its glory intact in the face of future criticism. And the fact is that, apparently, the Sun travels along an atypical trajectory, such that it avoids gravitational contact with the other constellations. Playing the fool in the style of that Socrates who knew only that he knew nothing—

yet knowing everything—the Academy forbids universities from removing from astronomy textbooks the falsehoods upon which their understanding of the Solar System and its place in the Universe is based. Because, of course, if the Sun does not follow a natural trajectory as a body subject to the law of universal gravity, what kind of trajectory does the Sun trace among the other star systems in its neighborhood? The simple calculation I outlined above regarding Proxima Centauri can be extrapolated to the last five hundred million years; given that the Sun has been on the brink of collision five hundred thousand times, the fact that it hasn't collide gives me reason to dismiss the naive notion of a solitary Sun, a member of no cluster. And it should bring you to a screeching halt; as you look up, you should feel the vibrations of the stellar engine beneath your feet. Ask yourselves how it is possible that the Sun, in the millions of years it has been traveling at 600 km per second, has not collided with any of these neighbors. Doesn't it seem logical to think that it couldn't and can't—simply because the Sun belongs to this cluster? I'll reiterate the image:



186. This is truly an interesting question, one that—due to the simplicity of its statement—may sound like an insignificant trifle. A serious mistake. Or does the passenger boarding an airplane have no interest whatsoever in the mechanics of the aircraft, knowing as we do that one risks one's life in the air? Isn't the entire Sun an eternal spacecraft in flight, filled with passengers? As for maintaining the Sun's autonomous velocity, we can deduce it by relating the Sun's photospheric phenomena to the combustion of the fuel needed to propel a body through space. In what way are large solar flares different from the jet of a rocket engine that propels a spacecraft in the opposite direction of its emission? Are not both phenomena subject to the same law of action and reaction? Let us suppose for a moment that this is the case. And since we know the eleven-year cycle that governs the temperature of the Sun's photosphere—and since this cycle of photospheric heating is subject to a stable cycle—can we not deduce from its constancy the mechanics of controlled propulsion that govern the Sun's cruising speed, mechanics that are in turn subject to the law of the transformation of gravitational energy into light energy? The answer is difficult but not impossible.

187. Let's consider the Sun's reaction to the passage of Comet Hale-Bopp. Do you remember it? Isn't the extraordinary solar flare observed on the Sun's surface immediately after Comet Hale-Bopp's passage a phenomenon sufficient to open our minds to the connection between temperature, gravitational density, and the rate of transformation—in this case triggered by a wavefront with a solid head? And if the connection between the passage of Hale-Bopp and the extraordinary flare observed is a scientific fact, how can we continue to maintain the relationship between the Sun and the planets within the same behavioral parameters when a tiny body is enough to accelerate the transformation rate of an entire star for a certain period of time!

188. One of the basic pillars of the development of human thought concerns the search for the root causes of observed effects—and, conversely, the discovery of effects based on given causes. Thanks to the mind's ability to make use of the tools of logic, the adventure of thought was able to reach unexpected heights. But as time went on and many feats were accomplished, the thinkers—who were once revolutionary—committed the nefarious crime defined as eliminating the root cause of the observed effect because the discovery did not suit their subjective interests and irrational emotions. With the 20th century lost in the web of a scientific atheism that erased causes and pitted reasons against the logic of reality, it is to be expected that the heirs of those geniuses know how to twist the path between effect and cause and lead the ignorant into the abyss of an outdated irrationality. For, though it may be very difficult to believe, science became atheistic to prove to itself that it knew more than God. The fact that its discourse came to an end in the wake of the Great War did not cause it to reconsider, during the Cold War, the pathology into which its intelligence had led its logic. That pathology was called atheism. But let us return to the subject of our Solar System.

189. The first to consider all the factors to be taken into account regarding the dynamic stability of the Solar System was the Engineer who conceived its creation within an astrophysical molecular network called the Heavens. The greatest difficulty God faced was posed by the millions of years that the evolution of the tree of species required for its birth and growth. While in the case of the creation of the biosphere, processes could be accelerated without causing any scientific conflict, in the case of life, the law was—and remains—very different. In the realm of life, let's put it this way: the laws are more rigorous. The millions of years that the evolution of life on Earth necessarily demanded of God had to present Him with a complex system of systematic equations. Among these, how to maintain the Sun's cruising speed constant in space and time, and how to provide its System with a flight path such that it would glide among the constellations without becoming integrated into their systems, were the two great and principal challenges that its Intelligence had to overcome. And in seeking to understand how it did so, this is where we stand.

190. The flight autonomy that the nature of stars—as transformers of energy into light and heat—provides them, a phenomenon very similar to the behavior of an excited particle that defends itself by radiating a subparticle, is an aspect that implies the need to correct the hypothesis of astrophysical motion based solely on the law of universal gravity. It is not denied; rather, its definition is simply corrected. If until now the law of gravity was the sole force, from now on we have a mechanics of energy transformation, one of whose effects generates the propulsion autonomy necessary to maintain the System's constant velocity. In this context, the phenomenology of the solar photosphere serves as our frame of reference from which to conceptualize a star as a spacecraft propelled autonomously through the transformation of its energy into the fuel necessary to maintain its initial momentum. It is another matter entirely if, in its scientific irrationality, the Academy wishes to deny the application of the action-reaction law to stellar flares and sidereal velocity. The author does not see how such a denial could be demonstrated and, consequently, prefers to proceed with his exposition on the relationship between the planets and the Sun's rotation during its path among the constellations that mark its orbit.

191. Let's consider this scenario. We have the System in which we are going to cultivate the Tree of Life. We know for certain that millions of natural years must pass from the time we plant it until it bears fruit. We also know that the " " development of Life requires that Nature maintain its Structure under conditions specific to it. This means we must prevent external cosmological factors from interfering with the evolutionary process. This compels us to protect the Biospheric System in such a way that, while remaining within a Universe, the very existence of that Universe does not create a lethal interference for it. How can this be done? The Sun's own cruising speed—about 600 kilometers per second—and its subjection to the law of gravity dictate that, as time passes, this speed must increase, which is precisely what we do not want. Consequently, this compels us to equip the Solar System with a safety brake that activates automatically in response

to an increase in its speed. That is the goal. Let's see what practical solutions our Creator found.

192. The first practical solution was logical: to load the solar spacecraft in such a way that gravitational acceleration would be counteracted by the work of displacement, forcing the spacecraft to transform that external acceleration into the force necessary to perform the work of displacing the braking load. In this practical way, the solar spacecraft would maintain a constant cruising speed while overcoming the inertial tendency to increase its speed over time. But let's apply this concept to the ground. Let's imagine we have a car loaded with fuel. The amount of time the car will spend on the road will depend not only on its speed but also on the weight we load into it. If we fill the trunk to capacity, we reduce the operating time the fuel tank can provide. We'll call this type of brake "exogenous."

193. But now let's imagine an even more sophisticated type of exogenous brake. Let's imagine that as the vehicle travels a greater distance, the load in the trunk multiplies its weight. Wouldn't there come a point when the vehicle would be slowed to a stop, crushed under the weight acquired by this exogenous brake? The question is: Is the Sun equipped with this type of exogenous brake, such that the weight of the planets is multiplied by the potential energy acquired over time? And conversely, isn't it by this law of the increase in potential energy and its transformation into weight that the Sun's tendency to behave according to the law of universal gravitation is slowed down?

194. If the ideas about the nature of the planets are false, then so must the numbers be. This leads me to say that we cannot get anywhere as long as the dictatorship of 20th-century cosmology continues to impose its dogmatic law and its rationalist absolutism on the intellect of the 21st century. Until just yesterday, Mars—as I said before—was a ball of gas. So if we have to wait for probes to reach Pluto to translate its body into geophysical mass, let's sit back and wait for death to come; death will arrive before the probe reaches Pluto. Once the correct calculations are on the table, then we can begin to work with facts rather than with arguments imposed on the basis of awards. Moving beyond destructive criticism of such geniuses, let's continue our journey aboard the solar spacecraft and keep asking ourselves questions.

195. The Sun is approaching a star system, and as a result, its acceleration is going to skyrocket, even in the face of the exogenous brake's effectiveness. How are we going to overcome this new problem? In the imaginative game we've launched at , we're in command; we're piloting the spacecraft, and therefore its future depends on us. What we should do now is take the wheel and turn, for example, to the left. Either that, or we'll crash into the celestial bodies of the star system toward which the law of gravity is pulling us. Maybe not tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. It amounts to the same thing. Our mission is to find a way to initiate the turn that will lead us away from the inevitable collision with the system whose

gravity has taken control of our ship's controls. The first thing that comes to mind is to look for the steering wheel. Where is it? Because it certainly exists. Millions of years and the Sun still on course are the best proof that God has endowed the solar spacecraft with an exogenous brake—namely, the planets and the interplay of the energies that move them—and with a steering wheel that is operated by a remote-control program capable of overcoming the invincible interstellar acceleration, forcing the spacecraft to turn. My intellect leads me to look around and ask myself: What kind of endogenous force is capable of making the Solar System behave like a spacecraft piloted by an intelligent captain? To make possible this rotation that the Sun has been performing since the dawn of time—and without which the spacecraft would have become part of just any star system in the neighborhood—what kind of autonomous mechanics did God endow the Sun with?

196. As I did yesterday and as I always do, I raise my arms to my Creator and dedicate to Him the joy that stirs in my mind—the joy born of my admiration for the answer He provided to these problems. The remote route-control program is called Interplanetary Alignment. Now that the exogenous brake has been created, what good is a brake if there is no foot to press it? We will call this action of the foot on the brake "Endogenous Rotational Mechanics." If the exogenous braking action comes as a response of the System as a whole to the universal environment, this action of the foot on the brake is a response of the planets to the Sun's behavior. More or less. But before delving into the effect of planetary alignments on the Sun's trajectory, I'd like to remind you of the multiplication of arm strength underwater and the reduction in a body's weight when submerged in water. Don't think I'm doing this to throw you off track. On the contrary, I'm doing it to shed light on the natural environment in which the interplay of natural forces within our System operates.

197. Consider that the weight of a body is directly related to gravity. A one-kilogram rock has the same mass on Earth as it does on the Moon. And doesn't that same rock have the same mass in water as it does out of water? Do they have the same weight, however? Of course not, right? Now let's apply this reality to the Sun itself. This is not to claim to match the vision of the genius who sought a lever to move the universe. Let's imagine, then, that we place the Sun at one end of the lever, we position ourselves at the other end, and it's up to us to move it. The first thing we must ask ourselves is what the value of gravity is in the environment in which we find ourselves. Although it may seem like a trick, the lower the gravity, the less the body weighs and the greater the effectiveness of the force exerted by our arm against the lever. The conclusion is obvious. The weight of the Sun and of any celestial body varies according to the gravitational interaction at any given moment. That's one point. The other is that, unlike the Sun, the planets in our Solar System do move within a stable gravitational environment and therefore maintain a balance between the force they exert and the weight they can lift.

198. The Planetary Alignment—whether total or partial, multiple or simple—acts like a lever, and its effect on the Sun is that of the lever against the fulcrum.

The systemological equation states that the Sun's acceleration is slowed by the regulatory program into which God transformed the planetary alignment. The planets transform the weight of the single body into which the alignment converts them into force; and since every force, by its very nature, performs work, the work they perform is to bring about the angle of rotation we were discussing and to keep it constant. This, in effect, is the flywheel we were looking for.

199. As for the physical-mathematical description of this remotely controlled stars

hip in autonomous flight within the constellations of the Heavens, I leave that to someone more expert in numbers, unknowns, and other complex equations. Always highlighting both partial and total planetary alignments within the framework of Applied Astrophysical Systemology—the former acting as a counterbalance to velocity, and the latter as the displacement of the System's bow toward the hemisphere from which the loading takes place. In short, before sowing the seed of the tree of species beneath the waters of the great ocean, there were many equations that God had to solve.

200. In conclusion: Everything remains to be resolved at the level of final data. Ideas are the prelude to research. And in this context, I have sought to refine my initial idea regarding the relationship between the planets and the Sun within a shared gravitational field, in which—just as the solar field itself is the cause of a centrifugal force that repels bodies and produces the outer asteroid belts— being integrated into the Sun within a multi-stellar field, whose center is gravitational—as if to say it is a reference point around which cumulative motion occurs—this center is the source of a general centrifugal force, which the Sun overcomes through the total planetary mass corresponding to its system. This leads us, ultimately, to a structure of astrophysical engineering so perfect that to leave it to chaos is, plain and simple, the act of a genius incapable of understanding the complex edifice of equations that This Divine Engineer solved at the beginning, and because they are incapable of accepting failure—since they cannot emulate, if not in three dimensions then at least on paper, the infinite Science of this Creative Intelligence—they opt for the madman's alternative: God does not exist. Let the astronomers and mathematicians of this century take note, then.

201. Things, then, are what they are, and not what they seem; although sometimes what they seem to be is what they are. We are speaking of an indefinite number of millions of years, a time during which the biospheric system demanded its integration into a stable astrophysical structure. So far, the time scales for the geophysical sequences described have not been included in the account. I left these numbers to the challenges that God overcame one by one. And I believe I have said that once Creative Omnipotence is related to the physical concept of power, natural calculations are burned in Fire, frozen in Ice, drowned in Water, and evaporated in Air. Over how many millions of years did God reduce the sublimation and thawing of the Ice Mantle by integrating the Earth into the Solar System via the boreal parabola? If the thawing of the Ice Mantle had been exposed to the distance

corresponding to the third orbit, how many millions of years would the thawing have lasted?

PART SEVEN
CREATION OF THE HEAVENS

CHAPTER 22.—THE GENERAL COSMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

202. The purpose and goal of the creation of the Heavens and the Earth—Mankind at the end of the tunnel of time—is that we are seeing how God designed the general architecture of the Heavens and the specific architecture of the Earth, taking into account the millions of years that the Birth and Growth of the Tree of Life required to bear fruit. Because He could and knew how to do so, God created a blueprint for the relationships among the elements of the biosphere, with two main heating and cooling centers at the extremes of the ecosphere, and specific focal points distributed across the continents—namely, the mountain ranges of perpetual snow. The way in which atmospheric and oceanic currents are recycled from the polar centers and keep the biospheric temperature stable is a feat of geophysical engineering as marvelous as it is surprising, one that involved the morphology of the lithosphere itself. Because He had to keep the ecospheric temperature stable, He had to endow the Ecosphere with a perpetual angle of rotation. And because it could and knew how, it created the Autonomous Ecospheric Substrate, thanks to which, as I have already said, the angle of incidence of solar energy would remain constant over the millions of years the Tree of Life would need to bear fruit. But there was even more, because the Solar System is not isolated from the rest of Creation, and since it is in motion and subject to the general laws of the Universe, this interrelation could and did cause interference that might ruin the work of so many millions of years. Because it was possible—and God knew this—He did not hesitate to deploy His intelligence and endow the Solar System with a mechanism for remotely controlling its sidereal velocity, which I have called Applied Astrophysical Systemology. And yet all this was not enough.

203. The local Universe, the Milky Way, moves within a Cosmos in which motion is the most characteristic visible feature. There may be qualitative and quantitative differences among galaxies, but they all share a common denominator: they move. To say they move is to say that they interact, multiply, divide, add, and subtract. Creation is constant, overwhelming, marvelous, and surprising movement. Moreover, the Cosmos depicted in 20th-century theories and Hubble's Cosmos resemble one another about as much as a seal resembles a swallow. In the real one—Hubble's—there is no homogeneous movement, no standard distances, no patterns. The realm of galaxies is pure diversity, pure harmony in the discovery of the unknown, ecstasy in the apotheosis of cosmic matter's infinite capacity to reproduce in space and entertain without ever becoming tedious. Genius unfurled to the four winds, beauty that manifests itself joyfully and makes no claim to being the latest trend. Stars form in clusters upon

clusters of trillions of celestial bodies that neither destroy nor collapse; they are like lighthouses in the vastness of the cosmos. Galaxies— —that, like underwater creatures, travel through cosmic currents and, like eagles, spread their wings and let themselves be carried by intergalactic winds. Where is the Cosmos of the 20th Century?

204. In fact, the celestial structure we observe in our immediate surroundings exhibits very distinctive characteristics. Ultimately, the whole resolves into a constellational architecture defending the astrophysical heart, from whose center its unique optical configuration emerges. For, just as we can observe with our telescopic eyes, the universe is traversed by powerful gravitational currents displacing vast masses of clouds from one side to the other—the origin of the nebulae. Thus, when God reveals to us that "He created the stars of the Firmament to separate Light from Darkness," He tells us much about how the Solar System would be affected by the Earth's passage through one of those nebular currents. And it reveals to us the nature of the constellational shields.

205. The Biblical text is crystal clear. "God created the stars to separate the light from the darkness," it says. On the First Day, we are told that God created the Light and separated it from the Darkness. On this Fourth Day of the First Week of Human History, it is stated that, having separated the Light from the Darkness, God created the Heavens to separate the Light from the Darkness. The Text could not be more direct. The fact that the conclusions drawn from this are fascinating and—because they are so marvelous—completely at odds with the mindset of the twentieth century means nothing. Modern man's opinion on the nature of the universe does not matter. God did not write His Revelation to Moses with modern man in mind. Whoever did not matter to God cannot matter to His children either. The conclusions they reached are of no interest to this book, nor are their opinions of interest to the author. So let us move forward.

206. The structure of the Universe of Revelation and its resolution in the mirror of Reality give us, by implication, the following: namely, the Universe of Genesis is the Milky Way. And it is regarding the Creation of this Milky Way that it is said: "God created the Heavens to separate the Earth from the realm of the Galaxies." This is a physical necessity inferred from the study of the Heavens, and from whose phenomena it is evident that on the other side of the Heavens, powerful currents and winds sweep through the Cosmos. There are the astronomical images, speaking with the power of a thousand words per photograph. Their beauty, however, must not cloud the clarity of our understanding when interpreting the events that cause them. The physical function fulfilled by the star clusters surrounding us is that of a net that traps everything carried by the current and blocks the path of intergalactic clouds into the constellation system around which they are distributed. Let us now ground the divine declaration—that the Heavens were created to erect a protective wall between Earth and the world of the galaxies—on scientific foundations.

207. The description, then, of the General Cosmological Space that we have inherited paints a picture of a Universe-Galaxy that moves and interacts with other bodies through general laws. This fits perfectly with the expansion of Matter to infinity suggested by the Idea of Creation. The need to understand why God created the Heavens to protect the Earth from the General Cosmic Movement implies the answer to the relationship between God and that multiplication of Matter to infinity. And the answer to this question leads us directly to that other question which the genius of the 20th century sought to answer with his cosmological theory, namely: Before the beginning, what? A question that, in turn, leads us directly to ask what part God played in that Beginning of beginnings and what He was before this General Cosmological Beginning. This matter compels us to enter the realm of theology while always maintaining the scientific attitude that has thus far served as the language of understanding between Creation and us.

208. Before Creation was Non-Creation, and before the Creator was God. God declares Himself Eternal, and there is nothing to be said about His Age. But He also confesses: "Before Me no God was formed; none will be after Me." Thus, knowing that God is Eternal and that therefore the "Formation" of which He speaks could not pertain to His Nature, it follows that this "Formation" referred to His Intelligence—which is the part of Being that grows and develops over time. This is a logical conclusion that places the Knowledge of the Science of Creation in one category and, in the other, the Being who possessed all the Natural Attributes of God. When these two things united and became one, God became the Creator and Reality became His Creation.

209. I have touched on when and how this cosmological revolution took place in the History of Jesus. There I delved into the topic of the History of Uncreation and elaborated on its key moments. I seem to recall saying that the Creator came into being because He was in God. More or less, what I meant was that just as Intelligence without Power is not sufficient to transform Reality, neither does Power without Intelligence possess that faculty. And I affirmed there that Power was in God and Intelligence in the Uncreated Force, the Origin of all things. I recall placing Eternity and Infinity alongside God, but not in opposition to Him. And I described that uncreated relationship by speaking of the Childhood of the Divine Being. And this Childhood from the perspective of the revolution that led God to become the Origin of all new things. Regarding this process, He spoke of Himself, saying that He was formed. A process of formation that can only be understood as carried out by Infinity and Eternity as uncreated realities that had in God the center of all that moved and came into being. And once the Creator was formed in God, the revolution was consummated that would make God, Infinity, and Eternity one and the same. Roughly speaking.

210. From this ontological revolution that integrated God, Space, Time, and Matter arises the concept of the General Cosmological Principle—that is, the event that marked a "Before" and an "After." With this in mind, the genius of the twentieth century spoke of a Big Bang, and in *Divine History* I posited a natural

creative activity in which God transformed Reality, starting from the very structure of Reality itself. That is to say, there was the destruction of a previous cosmos and the transformation of that cosmos into a new one, which, like everything that begins, originated from an event or General Cosmological Principle. A General Cosmological Principle that irreversibly marked the "Before" and the "After." The question is how God brought this Principle into being—of which the beginning of our Universe, in particular, is a fragment of the historical sequence set in motion by that Event.

211. The answer to this question requires discussing the fundamental laws of the Movement of Multiplication of Cosmic Matter that have been at work since Eternity. However, unlike the Uncreated Cosmos—which involved the Infinite in that Multiplication—since this Movement had its Origin in God, it was revolutionized and carried out by fields that transform matter into cosmic energy and this cosmic energy into astrophysical matter. To understand this phenomenology, let us draw upon the quantum nature of atomic matter.

212. Both in laboratory observations and in particle accelerators, the reproduction of matter originates in the increase in dynamic energy that transforms the relationship between the particle and the field in which it moves. From the very inception of quantum physics, it was observed that an increase in mass requires an increase in kinetic energy—a relationship that Einstein sought to capture in his famous energy equation. But if, in the atom within its natural environment, the particle responds to an increase in its velocity by converting the difference into mass—and does the same in an accelerator—if we remove the velocity limit from the equation and proceed to extract the particle from its environment, endowing it with the characteristics of cosmic energy in free flight within a space devoid of electromagnetic reference: that particle will continue to convert the difference in velocity into mass. Assuming we apply an accumulation of trajectories extending to infinity, we already have the leap from quantum matter to astrophysics. This was the uncreated natural process.

213. God revolutionized this process by concentrating the trajectory in a field where mathematical time curves and physical space falls toward the center. Simulating a ring accelerator such that, from the outside, it creates a spiral on the surface of an hourglass, where each fragment maintains its acceleration regardless of mass: at the point where the beam reaches the center—that is, the mouth of the hourglass—the beam leaps to the other side through the explosion at the origin of the stars. This is the phenomenon I call Astrophysical Implosion, a phenomenon that marks the birth of galaxies and stars.

214. Since a single celestial body can give rise to an unlimited number of beams of cosmic energy, the reproduction of matter to infinity is a reality that has existed since Eternity. What distinguishes this multiplication to infinity is that, previously, it required Infinity as the pathway for transformation, whereas now the

same process is reproduced across space-time fields unfolded by God at the frontiers of the Cosmos. This makes the Cosmos a more massive entity and provides General Space with a higher density of matter, which is why the Cosmos amazes us with new galactic creatures every day that the Hubble opens its eyes. Creation is continuous, and its expansion is constant.

215. We can compare this process of the multiplication of cosmic matter from a General Cosmological Principle to a never-ending chain reaction that amplifies its radius of action and extent as time progresses, expanding from the center toward the frontiers. Our telescopic eyes allow us to admire the movement of galaxies within this constantly expanding General Cosmic Space. And it also allows us to apply the laws of gravity to galactic bodies, observing how they attract and accumulate under the influence of these forces; to this classical law we must add the law of electrodynamic forces, thanks to which the concentration of total mass at a single point is a physical impossibility. This is the extraordinary reason why the motion of the atoms of a hot gas within a container corresponds to the General Cosmological Motion.

CHAPTER 23.—THE GENERAL COSMOLOGICAL SPACE

216. The creation of galaxies as an autonomous phenomenon, set in motion by God through the constant feeding of the transformative field of cosmic energy into astrophysical matter, leads us directly to discover the Cosmos as a field of raw material from which God extracts the matter necessary to build His Works. Our Universe is one of them. It was not the first, nor will it be the last. God's word on this matter is firm: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He does, and He will show Him even greater works than these, so that you may be amazed." The theological implications could not be clearer.

217. But why doesn't a beam of cosmic energy grow to infinity once the speed-of-light limit has been surpassed? Since the origin of astrophysical matter lies in the leap of cosmic energy—and this leap is conditioned by the transformation of kinetic energy into mass—why, once a flight path simulating a vacuum has been created, does the transformation not continue to infinity? Doesn't a projectile fired into a vacuum tend to reach infinite speed if given an eternal amount of time? Why, then, does no dark body of infinite mass exist? In short: What kind of safety mechanism sets limits on the leap from cosmic energy to astrophysical matter?

218. Experience provides the answer. The leap toward infinity collides with the critical point of growth—or the Astrophysical Implosion Point—beyond which the stellar body transforms the energy it absorbs into light. Thus, even if the matter-energy system had a clear path, the very dynamic weight of the creative

process drives it to a point where the transformation into mass gives way to the transformation into light. And the cycle continues. This critical point, then, lies in the nature of matter in general and is preserved throughout the entire course of the leap—from the quantum to the sidereal, and from the astrophysical to the cosmic. It is another matter entirely to determine how this hard core—the true agent of the interdimensional leap—functions and to what extent its operational cycles accelerate or decelerate. And so on with other questions related to the creative leap itself. For example, what happens when the created galactic mass has consumed the energy of the spacetime field? And other matters as well. We also observe in General Cosmic Space how galaxies follow the natural pattern of a current flowing out of the spout of an hourglass rotating on its axis. When we compare the spiral arms to jets of astrophysical energy propelled by centrifugal forces into General Cosmic Space, the range of galaxies opens up to the amount of energy concentrated at a given moment by a transformation field. Moreover, if we compare these fields to networks in which cosmic energy flows in alternating currents, the previous spectrum fans out before us, and what we have seen so far is but a glimpse of what is yet to come. Galactic species grow through eternity to infinity.

219. And once created, how do galaxies behave? How do they grow? What is the rule that shapes their existence? How do they conserve kinetic energy? What is their relationship with the transforming field, and what is the relationship between this field and the astrophysical gravitational field? Can we deduce from what we see certain laws that will help us understand the nature of that tree of stellar creatures that is the realm of the galaxies? Are we capable, by combining local physical laws, of recreating the grand laws that govern motion in General Cosmic Space? Why do galaxies not obey the famous law of universal gravity? Why do they behave more like swarms of exotic creatures flying without any apparent direction, guided only by the path the wind dictates? Can the Brownian motion they exhibit lead to the application of the laws of electrodynamics to galaxies—by virtue of which laws they repel one another, collide, mix, divide, multiply, and remain perpetually in motion? Does General Cosmological Motion not take into account the neutral nature of the universal gravitational field? And this constant motion of those enormous creatures traveling at fantastic speeds through a Cosmos with an eternal destiny—what kinds of intergalactic currents and winds will they not produce? Are not the nebular storms that sweep through our Galaxy Universe proof of the existence of those intergalactic currents which, stirred up by the General Cosmological Movement, carry masses of cosmic matter back and forth—caused both by the combustion of entire systems and by their existence prior to the creation of the General Cosmological Principle? (In short, when addressing this topic, the questions could pile up one on top of another until they form a mountain. That 20th-century cosmology was omniscient and, discovering a new galaxy with its mighty genius, was already able to assign it a nature, age, and distance is one of those wonders of nature that we must subject to analysis, examination, and critical judgment. But not in this book.)

220. Here it is worth stating that the Idea of the Universe preceded the Universe itself. This is not a matter of dogmatizing or philosophizing. That is not

my intention. It is simply a matter of laying on the table a reality as natural as the fact that a site survey is necessary before erecting any engineering structure. And since God knows the laws of His Creation, its dimensions, its phenomenology, and its nature, it is logical and natural that, when considering the construction of a Work, He would draw lines and make calculations, taking into account the influence of the terrain on the future of the structure—in this case, an astrophysical one. Better than I can describe this process of study and reflection preceding the Act of Creation is God Himself, who inspired Solomon with these words about His Wisdom: "Yahweh possessed me at the beginning of His ways, before His works, from of old. From eternity I was established; from the beginning, before the earth came to be. Before the abysses, I was brought forth; before the springs of abundant waters came into being; before the mountains were set in place, before the hills, I was conceived. Before He made the earth, or the fields, or the very dust of the earth. When He established the heavens; when He drew a circle upon the face of the Abyss. When He condensed the clouds on high, when He gave strength to the springs of the Abyss. When He set the sea's boundaries so that the waters would not cross its limits. When He laid the foundations of the earth, I was with Him as an architect, always being His delight; taking pleasure before Him at all times."

221. With the Idea in Mind and all calculations resolved, God sets His hand to the Work. In the case of the Heavens, the first thing He did—according to Solomon—was "to draw a circle upon the face of the Abyss." That is, to mark out the territory, to delineate the perimeter within whose diameters He would create the Heavens. In other words, to specify the dimensions of the material structure by the perimeter assigned to it in Space. The radius and diameter of that circle within whose perimeter He intended to create the heavens are not numbers unknown to us. The significance of this number, based on our understanding of the nature of the cosmic landscape, is perfectly clear—especially when we have before our eyes the photo album that the Hubble telescope freely provides us. Let us not forget that although astronomical photography is limited to offering us a momentary snapshot of matter in time, the phenomena it captures are so similar to those we observe in the local physical world that, by logic, we must deduce from what is known what remains to be known. Don't nebulae resemble atmospheric storms? And doesn't it seem as if giant waves of energy were lifting them up and hurling them against the star systems of our Universe?

222. We have now entered the heart of the matter. Galaxies generate powerful currents and winds in General Cosmic Space. These move and follow the directions set by the galaxies themselves. But we are not speaking only of nebular matter. Here we must combine the law of the curvature of light with the flight of cosmic energy. Let's put it another way. Let's start with a simpler image. Let's transform the galaxies into cannons that generate cosmic energy. As they generate it, they fire it into General Cosmic Space. We do not abolish the speed of light within the galactic field; on the contrary, we maintain its limit. And as it makes its way, while circling in search of a path out of the galaxy, the energy jet from one star adds to that of another, ultimately resulting in the projection into General Cosmic Space—not of beams, but of energy currents.

223. This phenomenon of multiplication and concentration of the mass of a particle beam, creating a current that behaves like a hard nucleus, has been observed in particle accelerators. It has been observed that the quantum multiplication of matter through the acceleration of the initial beam's velocity does not create new, dispersed beams, such that each follows its own trajectory.

224. Outside the galactic gravitational field, the acceleration of the energy streams released by the galaxy tends to increase as they move away from its influence, and to continue increasing as they approach the next galaxy. In this sense, the source of origin—the galaxy—behaves like the cannon in which the beam receives its initial cosmic flight energy, and General Cosmological Space acts as the accelerator in which the beam multiplies and generates the hard nuclei that create the intergalactic currents at the origin of the back-and-forth movements of nebular cosmic matter. These currents move through General Cosmological Space in the same way that rivers carve their beds, winding around the foothills of mountain ranges and rushing in a straight line when the terrain allows. From our Hubblean understanding of the Cosmos, we can deduce the number and variety of currents moving through intergalactic space, the amount of energy they carry, and the consequences for any system that crosses their path without protection against their shock wave.

225. God's Creation in this dynamic, structured form—the General Cosmological Space transformed into a surface upon which powerful rivers of cosmic energy carve their courses—the final destination of these currents is the Ocean! And what else can this Ocean be but the external creative field within which the transformation of cosmic energy into astrophysical matter takes place? But before reaching their destination—during the journey from their source-canyons to the Ocean that transforms cosmic currents into astrophysical matter—these cosmic currents behave like true cyclones. Just as an old tree falls into a river's current and is swept downstream, so too do cosmic currents move intergalactic nebular matter from one place to another. And just as the wind follows its course as it approaches a mountain but unloads its burden upon it, so too do the rivers of cosmic energy do the same upon the galaxies they border. Obviously, we cannot detect these currents, but we can infer their existence from our knowledge of matter and from what we see through the eyes of the Hubble.

226. Our Universe-Galaxy, the Milky Way, relates to the rest of Creation according to the parameters of this General Cosmological Movement. Viewed from the outside, our universe behaves like the mountain onto which the cosmos unloads its clouds and from whose depths a new source of electromagnetic water springs forth, spreading its bed across the cosmic field, gathering its intergalactic tributaries, and advancing among the galaxies until it reaches its destination. The origin of the nebulae lies in this interplay of forces; in light of this and considering its dimensions, God endowed our Universe with its own.

CHAPTER 24.—ASTROPHYSICAL ENGINEERING OF CREATION

227. The Creative Intelligence involved itself in the interplay of actions and reactions by creating a Universe designed to withstand the weight of cosmological currents. In other words, God erected the universal edifice, endowed with all the necessary physical mechanisms to overcome the consequences of the upheaval that His own creation would bring about. God also knew that, like soldiers falling on the front lines of battle, many celestial bodies from outside our Universe would succumb to the force of intergalactic currents. What we call novas and supernovas are those warriors who have fallen in battle and disintegrate in spectacular explosions, which in turn give rise to the comets and meteorites that traverse the heavens. Let us pause, then, for a moment to consider the origin of novas and supernovae. And given the amount of physical energy that a hard nucleus is capable of unleashing—considering the similarity between general cosmological space and a particle accelerator— if we elevate the process to the astrophysical dimension and apply the law of mutual influence between field and light, we must conclude that a galactic field reacts to the curvature of the trajectory of cosmic currents by accelerating the rotation rate of its outer stellar belt. Let us explore this behavior further.

228. As we see in God's Creation, all the systems within a galactic body combine their fields to create a general field that reacts as a whole to the external environment. I have previously compared this general field to an ocean, drawing on Revelation. Assuming this similarity and based on the comparison of the universal field to the volume contained in a glass of water, the action of cosmic currents on the gravitational field translates into the water's reaction to the movement of a hand that inserts a finger and swirls it around. Since every liquid body has its own movement—natural to the body containing it—acceleration from the outside must affect its outer zones, from which it flows inward, if applicable.

229. Naturally, not all bodies in a system react in the same way to an external force. In the case of stellar systems, this simple law is a daily occurrence. And since the transformation of gravity into light depends on the system's rotational speed—which is affected by its encounter with cosmic currents—external stellar systems, when exposed to the action of the finger on the water, are constantly accelerated; a reaction that some celestial bodies handle perfectly while others cannot withstand beyond a critical limit. Once this limit is reached, the system's safety brake fails, and the system escapes internal control and heads toward its destruction. The result is a nova explosion—speaking of an individual star. And if the star triggers a chain reaction that drags its entire system toward destruction due to the heat generated by the accelerated combustion of gravity, we speak of a supernova.

230. Experience speaks for itself. The photo proves it. And reality is what convinces us. Let's imagine we have a huge ball; we want to make it spin by pushing it, but we can't. We call for more help, and as more of us join in, we eventually force it to spin. Once it is spinning, the force required to maintain its constant rotation will be less, so that the effect of that same force on the ball will be greater as its speed increases. We now extend this simple experiment to the relationship between a celestial body and its gravitational field. And we agree that the rotation of a gravitational field is similar to that of a solid body in which the celestial body occupies the core. We then compare the action of the cosmic current on this body with that of the force of the hand on the ball. And there we have the physical effect at the origin of novae. Always bearing in mind that the curvature of a cosmic current, such as that of light, would not occur if that current had no mass. If it had no mass, it would have no weight, and if it had neither weight nor mass, the phenomenon of the curvature of light could not exist. From the perspective of optics, the curvature of cosmic energy upon coming into contact with a gravitational field can be compared to the refraction of light. The trajectory of comets as they pass by the Sun helps us uncover the optical structure of the curvature described by cosmic energy as it passes through a gravitational field. But while, unlike cosmic energy, its curvature remains unchanged, in the case of comets we do have the answer that transforms the gravitational field into a reality that behaves, for physical purposes, like a body. And as such, it rotates with the celestial body to which it belongs.

231. Given that the age of stars is measured by the time it takes them to consume the energy of their gravitational field—a consumption process subject to the working speed of the transformer—logic leads us to believe in the existence of a regulatory law governing the relationship between the working revolutions and the system's lifespan. The question at hand is how to accelerate the operating revolutions of the astrophysical transformer to the point where its lifespan is reduced to the shortest possible time. Logic tells us that there is only one way, and that is by exciting the field to infinity in the same way that liquid contained in a vessel overflows due to centrifugal force. Is this not the cumulative action of forces against the great sphere we were discussing? Well, we are speaking of currents that move in response to stimuli from galactic fields and the excitation of those fields under such responses: the level of excitation caused will be reflected in the intensification of light production. The greater the excitation, the greater the intensity of production and the shorter the system's lifespan. We must relate the phenomena of cyclical and atypical intensification in stellar systems to this universal behavior.

232. To summarize: In the case of novas and supernovae, excitation refers to the increase in the rate of transformation to infinity. Once the natural braking mechanisms of gravitational systems are overwhelmed, the rotation of the celestial body and the field spiral out of control and interact until they are consumed, reducing millions of years to a matter of seconds. When referring to a simple astrophysical system, we speak of novas. And if it is an entire multiple system that falls into this dynamic, we speak of supernovae. Both occur in the outer

constellation belts, which are the most exposed to intergalactic currents. These novae and supernovae are the origin of comets; comets are propelled like cannonballs, their destructive power increasing as they travel greater distances.

233. And in conclusion: With these three lines of action in mind—nebulae, novas, and comets—God structured the constellation distribution around the Solar System, simulating a crystalline gravitational network against whose solidity the danger of interrupting the evolution of the Tree of Life on Earth would be disintegrated. The marvelous positive results evident in reality must not cloud the eyes of our intelligence when we recognize that, in accordance with astronomical dimensions, God traced that Circle upon the Face of the Abyss of which Solomon spoke to us in his Wisdom. What the wise and peaceful king par excellence saw with the eyes of his Wisdom, we—thanks to God—see with our own eyes. Clusters and superclusters in the outer belt, and open clusters and multiple systems in the inner belt, combine to form this crystalline, gravitational, constellational network about which there is still so much to say. Let us begin by unraveling the mystery of the Origin of the Heavens.

CHAPTER 25.—ORIGIN AND CONSTITUTION OF THE HEAVENS

234. We now turn to one of the great questions: the origin of the stars in the Firmament. I believe the answer has already been outlined in the preceding sections. The formation of stars—as the very purpose of the galaxies' existence— —all leads to the transformation of the Cosmos into a reservoir of raw material from which God extracts the matter with which to create His Works. Since the creation of galaxies is constant, the total mass of raw material that the cosmic field places at God's disposal to carry out any Work is limitless. How God extracts that stellar matter and transports it from its regions of origin to the Universe is another matter. We, knowing that the way things are done always depends on the Power of the One who does them, and that the imagination required to do them is directly related to the Intelligence of the One who sets out to do them, can speak of great rivers flowing across the intergalactic plains, as the Lord of the Galaxies deems best and in accordance with His working needs. What other Name can we give to the One who creates and governs them? Or how can we subject to our own judgment the laws that govern them and the patterns of behavior of the galaxies and their seas of stars in the face of their Creator's action upon their bodies? Shall we impose the natural limits of our own imagination upon the Divine imagination? How could we dare to compare our way of living, feeling, breathing, thinking, walking, working, planning, touching, loving, interacting, organizing, laughing, calculating... with those of that Being at the Origin of the Cosmos? From the natural limits of its own reality, how could a creature judge its Creator without proving itself to be committing an act of madness? The beginning and end of human intelligence is wonder; it arises from wonder at Creation and culminates in wonder at its Creator. Anything said beyond this stems from that seed which was not in Man and was

sown into his being by a force foreign to God's Creation—which is a matter for theology. In any case, the great question of the Origin leads us directly to the other great question: the Constitution of the Universe.

235. From what has been read so far, it follows that the Universe and the Cosmos are two different things. Together, these two things form God's Creation, and within it, the Cosmos is one thing and the Universe is another. The Cosmos is the field of raw matter from which God draws, and with the freedom befitting the Lord, He takes all the materials necessary to carry out His Works. As for the Universe, the Universe is the stellar field where God carries out these Works. When, therefore, Moses speaks to us of the Creation of the Universe, he was referring to this stellar field. Its origin, as we have seen, lies in that cosmological field from which God draws rivers of stars that traverse the intergalactic plains and flow into this universal ocean, in whose waters the Tree of Life took root. There is much to be said about the Tree of Life, especially at this stage of its history. However, not everything has been said regarding the constitution of the Universe.

236. Obviously, Moses speaks in his Account of the Creation of our Heavens. And in doing so, he sets before us a Reality: God is its Creator. A Reality that leads us to another reality: Eternity—that Eternity which implies Infinity. Humanity is the fruit of these realities taken as a whole, but not the only fruit of that Tree of Life to which the God of Infinity and Eternity gave the Universe as a field of Origin and Growth. This final conclusion brings us back to the revelation of the Son of this Creator and Lord of the Cosmos and the Universe: "The Father shows the Son everything He does, and He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed." By using the plural when speaking of the past as a reflection of the future, the Son of God reveals to us that our heavens and our earth—in short, that the human race—is not the first harvest that the Tree of Life has yielded. This is a y statement that resolves the dilemma regarding life in the universe. For humanity is neither the first nor will it be the last fruit of this Tree. Before humankind, other worlds were already created, and after humankind, new worlds will spring from the branches of the Tree of Life. "The sons of God" mentioned in the Bible are the fruit of those works that the Son told us the Father does. There is no need to speculate about the regions of origin in the universe of such "sons of God." The fact is that the knowledge of their existence leads us to a new way of conceiving the Constitution of the Heavens and of the Universe in general.

237. And this way of thinking has to do with the Conception of the Universe. That is, when God conceived it in His Mind, what was the Idea that gave it Origin? Did He create it to be a field on which a house is built, and when it falls due to old age, it is torn down and another is built? Or did He create it to be built up over time, in the same way that a landowner cultivates and transforms his land as time goes by? Did He create the Heavens that surround the Earth—and serve as the cradle of the human race—to be swept away from the Universe by the passage of time, or did He create the Heavens to remain eternally?

238. And considering this last alternative—and knowing that the creation of a world introduces into the Universe a set of constitutional problems of astronomical proportions, as we have seen in the previous sections—is the Universe not a field continually subject to a creative redefinition of its regions due to the transformation of those regions into zones of World Origin? Let us return to the Beginning of the Universe to better define this constant creation of universal geography.

239. Having created the Cosmos as a region that produces Galaxies—and since these are factories of stars—God thinks of Life and conceives a stellar ocean that will grow continuously, and beneath whose Waters Life will take root, spread its Tree, and bear its Fruit. Thus, God initiates the Origin of the Worlds by directing rivers of stars from all parts of the cosmic expanse, which flow from their sources in the galactic mountain ranges across the cosmological plains and empty into a specific space, where they create an Ocean of stars—the Universe. A Universe that is initially amorphous and somewhat wild, in which clusters and superclusters come together and drift apart, and stellar currents move under the influence of the forces at work within this Ocean of stars that have surged onto the shores of the Universe. But the purpose of this movement is to sow Life and reap its Fruit; the horizon that God holds out to the Universe is Infinity; and its age is Eternity. Thus, during each Creative Act, He extends His Hand over a Zone of the Universe and shapes it, sculpts it, identifies it, and endows it with properties—giving form to the amorphous, making identifiable that which had no identity of its own. Within this ongoing Process of Creation of the Universe and as a result of this movement, our Heavens were born. The fundamental question—whether the Heavens of our Firmament were created to remain or to be swept away from space like a sandcastle when the tide rises—has a definitive answer: by creating them and through their creation, God gave form and identity to a region of the General Universe. I believe that in His Book He casually planted the expression: "the Heavens of the heavens," where the Universe is identified as a series of Heavens—the dwelling place of many heavens—each of which, in the image and likeness of our own, is the cradle and origin of other worlds that once were and other that will be, each with its own unique region. This aspect leads us to another question: navigation through the Universe.

240. The tendency toward infinite growth that God has given the Universe presupposes and implies the need for a universal cosmography that allows for internal navigation through the remote identification of the regions that compose it. God is free and powerful to do as the tide does to a sandcastle, but He did not conceive the Universe that way. He could have compiled the celestial History and Constitution of each World into a book, but in His Mind He conceived that this History and Constitution should remain eternally, with the Heavens becoming the letters of that universal Book, where each Chapter deals with the Creation of a World and its contents. Are not the lines along which the stars are arranged to write this message to human beings beautiful: Infinity + Eternity = God?

END OF THE DIVINE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST 2026

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