

Book 5 "The Book of Questions"

Prologue

Book Five of the Heavenly Revelations of Christ to blessed Bridget of the kingdom of Sweden is rightly entitled the Book of Questions because it proceeds by way of questions to which Christ the Lord gives wonderful answers. It was revealed to the lady in a singular manner, as she and her confessors have often testified explicitly. Once it happened that she was going by horse one day to her castle in Vadstena along with several of her household who were also on horseback. While she was riding, she began to lift up her mind to God in prayer. Immediately, she fell into a spiritual rapture and continued on as though somehow outside herself and separated from her bodily senses, suspended in an ecstasy of mental contemplation.

She saw in spirit a ladder fixed firmly in the earth, the top of which was touching heaven. At its top in heaven she saw the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on a wonderful throne like a Judge in the act of judgment. At his feet stood the Virgin Mary, and surrounding the throne was a countless host of angels and a vast multitude of saints. Lady Bridget saw a certain monk midway up the ladder, a man whom she recognized and who was still alive, a learned scholar in the science of theology but full of guile and devilish wickedness. With his most impatient and agitated bearing he seemed more like a devil than a humble monk. For the lady could see all the inner thoughts and feelings of the monk's heart and how he disclosed them to Christ the Judge seated on the throne through his uncontrolled and agitated way of questioning, as follows below.

Lady Bridget then saw and heard in spirit how Christ the Judge, with a meek and gentle bearing, responded to those questions briefly one by one with utmost wisdom, and how the Virgin Mary, our Lady, spoke a few words now and then to Lady Bridget, as this book will explain below in greater detail.

In that one moment Lady Bridget received this whole book in her mind in one and the same revelation. As she was now approaching the castle, her servants took hold of the horse's bridle and then began to shake her gently and to waken her, as it were, from her rapture. When she came to herself again, she felt terribly sad over

the loss of such divine sweetness.

The Book of Questions remained thus effectively fixed in her heart and memory, as though it had all been carved on a marble tablet. She wrote it down in her own language straightaway, and then her confessor translated it into the literary language, just as he had been accustomed to translating the other books of revelations.

Interrogation 1

I saw a throne in heaven on which sat the Lord Jesus Christ as Judge. At his feet sat the Virgin Mary. Surrounding the throne was a host of angels and a countless multitude of saints. A certain monk, a great scholar of theology, stood high up on a rung of a ladder that was fixed in the earth and whose top reached up to heaven. With an impatient and agitated bearing, as though full of wickedness and guile, he put questions to the Judge:

First question. "O Judge, I ask you: You gave me a mouth. May I not say what I please?"

Second question. "You gave me eyes. May I not look at what I like with them?"

Third question. "You gave me ears. Why should I not listen to what I please with them?"

Fourth question. "You gave me hands. Why should I not do what I want with them?"

Fifth question. "You gave me feet. Why should I not walk where I wish with them?"

Christ's answer to the first question. Seated on the throne, the Judge, whose bearing was meek and gentle, answered him, saying: "Friend, I gave you a mouth in order rationally to speak words beneficial to your soul and body as well as words for my glory."

Answer to the second question. "Second, I gave you eyes that you might see the evils you must flee and the healthful things you must preserve."

Answer to the third question. "Third, I gave you ears that you might hear that which pertains to truth and goodness."

Answer to the fourth question. "Fourth, I gave you hands that you might use

them to do that which is necessary for the body but not harmful for the soul.”

Answer to the fifth question. ”Fifth, I gave you feet that you might leave behind the love of the world and go toward your soul's rest and love and toward me, your Creator and Redeemer.”

Interrogation 2

First question. Again the monk appeared on his ladder as before, saying: ”O Christ the Judge, you bore the most painful suffering by your own free will. Why then should I not possess honor and be proud in the world?”

Second question. ”You gave me temporal goods. Why then should I not own what I want?”

Third question. ”Why did you give me the limbs of my body, if I may not move and exercise them at will?”

Fourth question. ”Why did you give law and justice if not for seeking revenge?”

Fifth question. ”You let us have quiet and rest, but why did you arrange for us to experience weariness and tribulation?”

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: ”Friend, human pride is so long endured as to exalt humility and show forth my goodness. And since pride was not created by me but invented by the devil, it must be shunned, because it leads to hell. But humility must be kept, because it leads to heaven. I, God, taught this by my word and example.”

Answer to the second question. ”I have given and conceded temporal goods to people in order that they might make rational use of them and exchange created goods for something uncreated, that is, for me, their Lord and Creator, by praising and honoring me for my good creation and by not living in accordance with the desires of the flesh.”

Answer to the third question. ”A person is given the limbs of the body in order that the soul might see in them a certain likeness of the virtues and so that they might be the soul's instruments for duty and virtue.”

Answer to the fourth question. ”Justice and law were indeed established by me so that they might be fulfilled with supernatural charity and compassion and so that godly unity and harmony might be cemented among humans.”

Answer to the fifth question. "I gave people bodily rest and quiet in order to strengthen the weakness of the flesh and to endow the soul with fortitude and virtue. But because the flesh sometimes grows thoughtlessly insolent, one must cheerfully endure tribulations and all other such corrective measures."

Interrogation 3

First question. Again the monk appeared on his ladder as before saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why did you give us the bodily senses, if we are not to move and live according to carnal feelings?"

Second question. "And why did you give us the means of carnal sustenance, such as food and other delectable things, if we are not to live in order to sate the carnal appetite?"

Third question. "Why did you give us free will, if we are not to follow our own wishes?"

Fourth question. "Why did you give men and women the seed of intercourse and a sexual nature, if the seed is not to be spilled according to the carnal appetite?"

Fifth question. "Why did you give us a heart and a will, if not to choose that which tastes sweetest and to love the more enjoyable delights?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, I gave humans sense and understanding in order that they might meditate on and imitate the ways of life and shun the ways of death."

Answer to the second question. "I gave food and other carnal necessities for the moderate sustenance of the body and so that people might exercise the virtues of the soul with greater strength without growing weak from excessive consumption."

Answer to the third question. "I gave humans free will so that they might give up their own will for me, their God, and thus obtain a greater reward."

Answer to the fourth question. "I gave them the seed of intercourse so that it might germinate at the right place and in the right way and bear fruit for a just and rational cause."

Answer to the fifth question. "I gave humans a heart so that they might keep within it me, their God, who am everywhere and incomprehensible, and so that the thought of me should be their delight."

The first revelation in the Book of Questions made to Lady Bridget by the Virgin Mary, in which the Virgin Mary informs her of five virtues that she ought to have within herself and of five others without.

Revelation 1

The Mother speaks: "Daughter, you should have five attributes within you and five without. First without: a mouth pure from backbiting, ears closed to vain speech, chaste eyes, hands busy with good works, and the avoidance of dealings with the world. Within you should have these five: loving God fervently, desiring him wisely, distributing temporal goods reasonably with a just and upright intention, fleeing from the world humbly, and awaiting my promises steadfastly and patiently."

Interrogation 4

First question. Again the monk appeared on his ladder as before saying: "O Judge, why should I seek the wisdom of God when I have the wisdom of the world?"

Second question. "Why should I mourn and weep when I have worldly joy and honor in plenty?"

Third question. "Tell me: why or in what way should I rejoice in the affliction of the flesh?"

Fourth question. "Why should I be afraid, when I have the strength of my own power?"

Fifth question. "Why should I obey others, if I have control over my own will?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, whoever is wise concerning the world is blind concerning me, his God. Therefore, in order to obtain my divine wisdom, one must seek it diligently and humbly."

Answer to the second question. "Whoever has worldly honors and joy is troubled by various cares and gets entangled in bitter situations that lead to hell. In order not to be turned aside from heaven's way, one must be piously solicitous and pray and weep."

Answer to the third question. "It is also very profitable to rejoice in the

affliction and infirmity of the body, because my mercy comes to those who are afflicted in body, and by my mercy they approach eternal life more easily.”

Answer to the fourth question. “Furthermore, whosoever is strong is strong because of me, and I am stronger than he. Therefore one must be ever fearful lest strength be taken away.”

Answer to the fifth question. “Whosoever holds his free choice in his hands should be fearful and should realize in truth that nothing so easily leads to eternal punishment as self-will without a leader. Accordingly, anyone who relinquishes his or her own will to me, his God, in obedience to me, shall have heaven without punishment.”

Interrogation 5

First question. Again the monk appeared on his ladder as before saying: “O Judge, why did you create worms that are harmful and useless?”

Second question. “Why did you create wild beasts that are also harmful to humankind?”

Third question. “Why do you let sickness and pain into bodies?”

Fourth question. “Why do you endure the wickedness of wicked judges who scourge and harass their underlings like purchased slaves?”

Fifth question. “Why is the human body afflicted even at the point of death?”

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: “Friend, as God and Judge I have created heaven and earth and all that are in them, and yet nothing without cause nor without some likeness to spiritual things. Just as the souls of holy people resemble the holy angels who live and are happy, so too the souls of the unrighteous become like the demons who are eternally dying. Therefore, since you asked why I created worms, I answer you that I created them in order to show forth the manifold power of my wisdom and goodness. For, although they can be harmful, nevertheless they do no harm without my permission and only when sin demands it, so that man, who scorns to submit to his superior, may bemoan his capacity to be afflicted by lesser creatures, and also in order that he may know himself to be nothing without me - whom even the irrational creatures serve and they all stand at my beck and call.”

Answer to the second question. “As to why I created wild beasts, I answer: All things that I have created are not only good but very good and have been created

either for the use or trial of humankind or for the use of other creatures and in order that humans might so much the more humbly serve their God inasmuch as they are more blessed than all the rest. However, beasts do harm in the temporal world for a twofold reason. First, so that the wicked may be corrected and beware, and so that wicked people might come to understand through their torments that they must obey me, their superior. Second, they also do harm to good people with a view to their advancement in virtue and for their purification. And because the human race rebelled against me, their God, through sin, all those creatures that had been subject to humans have consequently rebelled against them.”

Answer to the third question. “As to why sickness comes upon the body, I answer that this happens both as a strong warning and because of the vice of incontinence and excess, in order that people may learn spiritual moderation and patience by restraining the flesh.”

Answer to the fourth question. “As to why wicked judges are tolerated, this is for the purification of others and also because of my patience, in order that, just as gold is purified by fire, so too, by the evil of scoundrels, souls may be purified and instructed and held back from doing what they should not do. Furthermore, I patiently tolerate the wicked so as to separate the devil's chaff from the wheat of the good, and in order to fulfill their wishes according to my hidden, divine justice.”

Answer to the fifth question. “As to why the body suffers pain in death, it is just that a person should be punished by means of that in which she or he has sinned. If she sins through inordinate lust, it is right for her to be punished with proportionate bitterness and pain. For that reason, death begins for some people on earth and will last without end in hell, while death ends for others in purgatory and everlasting joy commences.”

The second revelation in the Book of Questions, in which the Virgin Mary speaks to blessed Bridget and tells her that a person who wishes to taste divine sweetness must first endure bitterness.

Revelation 2

The Mother speaks: “Which of the saints had the sweetness of the Spirit without first experiencing bitterness? Therefore, a person who longs for sweetness should not run away from things that are bitter.”

Interrogation 6

First question. Again he appeared on his ladder as before, saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why does one infant emerge alive from the mother's womb and obtain baptism, while another, having received a soul, dies in the mother's belly?"

Second question. "Why do many setbacks occur to a righteous person, while an unrighteous gets everything he or she wishes?"

Third question. "Why do disease, hunger, and other bodily afflictions occur?"

Fourth question. "Why does death come so unexpectedly that it can very rarely be foreseen?"

Fifth question. "Why do you allow men full of deliberate wrath and envy to go to war in a spirit of vengeance?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, your inquiries are not made out of love but are made through my permission. So I answer you through the likeness of words. You ask why one infant dies in the mother's belly while another emerges alive. There is a reason. All the strength of the child's body comes, of course, from the seed of its father and mother; however, if it is conceived without due strength, because of some weakness of its father or mother, it dies quickly. As a result of the negligence or carelessness of the parents as well as of my divine justice, many times it happens that what was joined together comes apart quickly.

Yet a soul is not brought to the harshest punishment for this reason, however little time it had for giving life to the body, but, rather, it comes to the mercy that is known to me. Just as the sun shining into a house is not seen as it is in its beauty - only those who look into the sky see its rays - so too the souls of such children, though they do not see my face for lack of baptism, are nevertheless closer to my mercy than to punishment, but not in the same way as my elect."

Answer to the second question. "As to why do setbacks occur to the righteous, I answer: My righteousness is such that each righteous person obtains what he or she desires. However, that person is not righteous who does not desire to suffer setbacks for the sake of obedience and for the perfection of righteousness, and who does not do good deeds for his or her neighbor in godly love. My friends, reflecting on the things that I, their God and Redeemer, have done and promised to them, and observing what evil there is in the world willingly pray for worldly setbacks rather than for success as an act of prudence and for the sake of my honor and their own salvation and as a precaution against sin. So I let trouble befall them. Although some people endure it less patiently than others, still I do not let it happen without a reason, and I stand by them in their trouble.

It is like a son who is chastised by a loving mother in boyhood and little knows how to thank her, since he does not understand the reason for the reproof. However, when he reaches the age of discretion he thanks his mother because, due to her disciplining him, he was led away from evil ways and grew accustomed to

good manners and discipline.

I treat my chosen ones similarly. They commit their will to me and love me above all things. Then they experience troubles for a time and, although they may not fully understand my blessings at present, I am doing what is best for them in the future. On the contrary, because they do not care about righteousness and are not afraid to inflict injury on others, and because they pray for transient things and love earthly delights, the impious prosper for a time and are free from distress due to my justice so that they may not commit further sin should setbacks befall them. However, not all bad people get the things they desire, and this is in order that they may realize that it is in my power to give good things to whomever I want, even to the ungrateful, though they do not deserve it."

Answer to third question. "As to why disease and hunger come, I answer: It is written in the law that one who commits theft should repay more than he has taken. Since ungrateful people receive my gifts and misuse them and do not pay me my due honor, I therefore exact more bodily affliction in the present in order that their souls may be spared in the future. At times I also spare the body but punish people in and by means of that which they love, so that the person who would not acknowledge me when glad may receive knowledge indeed and understanding when afflicted."

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why death comes so unexpectedly, I answer: If someone were to know the time of his or her death, he or she would serve me out of fear and would succumb out of sorrow. Accordingly, in order that people may serve me out of love and always be anxious about themselves but sure of me, the hour of their departure is uncertain, and rightly so. When humankind forsook that which was certain and true, it was needful and right for them to be afflicted by uncertainty."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why I permit men to go to war full of wrath, I answer: Anyone who is wholly bent on harming his neighbor is like the devil and is a limb and instrument of the devil. I would do the devil wrong if I took his servant from him unjustly. Therefore, even as I make use of my instrument for whatever I please, so too it is right that the devil should act through the person who wants to be his limb rather than mine and should do what is in his right, either for the purgation of others or for the perfection of his own wickedness - yet only insofar as I permit it and as sin requires."

Interrogation 7

First question. Again the monk appeared on his ladder as before saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why are the words ugly and beautiful used in the world?"

Second question. "Why must I hate the beauty of the world, seeing that I am beautiful and of noble ancestry?"

Third question. "Why should I not exalt myself over others, seeing that I am rich?"

Fourth question. "Why should I not put myself ahead of others, seeing that I am more honorable than others?"

Fifth question. "Why should I not seek my own praise, seeing that I am good and praiseworthy?"

Sixth question. "If I do other people favors, why should I not demand remuneration?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, ugly and beautiful in the world are like bitter and sweet. Ugliness of the world, which is adversity and contempt of the world, is like a kind of bitterness conducive to the health of the righteous. Beautiful to the world is its prosperity, which is like a kind of ingratiating sweetness, false and seductive. Whoever, therefore, flees the beauty of the world and spits out its sweetness will not come to the ugliness of hell or taste its bitterness but will instead ascend to my joy. Thus, in order to escape the ugliness of hell and attain the sweetness of heaven, it is necessary to pursue the ugliness of the world rather than its beauty. Although I made all things well, and all created things are very good, great caution should be used toward the things that could present an occasion of damage to the soul for those who make irrational use of my gifts."

Answer to the second question. "As to why you must not boast about your ancestry, I answer: From your father you received the ugliest filth and rot; in the womb of your mother you were as though dead and all unclean. It was not in your power to be born of noble or ignoble parents. Rather, my tenderness and goodness brought you forth into this light. So, you, who call yourself noble, humble yourself under me, your God, who let you be born of noble parents. Live in harmony with your neighbor, who is made of the same stuff as you, though by my providence you are of noble birth, as the world sees it, while he is of humble birth. In fact, O nobleman, you should be more fearful than the man of low birth, for the nobler and wealthier you are, the stricter will be the account demanded of you and the greater the judgment, inasmuch as you have received more."

Answer to the third question. "As to why you must not take pride in riches, I answer: The riches of the world only belong to you insofar as you need them for food and clothing. The world was made for this: that man, having sustenance for his body, might through work and humility return to me, his God, whom he scorned in his disobedience and neglected in his pride. However, if you claim that the temporal goods belong to you, I assure you that you are in effect forcibly usurping for yourself all that you possess beyond your needs. All temporal goods ought to belong to the

community and be equally accessible to the needy out of charity.

You usurp for your own superfluous possession things that should be given to others out of compassion. However, many people do own much more than others but in a rational way, and they distribute it in discreet fashion. Therefore, in order not to be accused more severely at the judgment because you received more than others, it is advisable for you not to put yourself ahead of others by acting haughtily and hoarding possessions. As pleasant as it is in the world to have more temporal goods than others and to have them in abundance, it will likewise be terrible and painful beyond measure at the judgment not to have administered in reasonable fashion even licitly held goods.”

Answer to the fourth and fifth questions. ”As to why self-praise should not be sought, I answer: No one is good in himself, except for me alone, God, and anyone who is good is good through me alone. Therefore, if you who are nothing seek praise for yourself and not for me from whom comes every perfect gift, then your praise is false and you do me, your Creator, an injustice. As all the good things that you have come from me, so all praise should be given to me. And just as I, your God, bestow on you all worldly goods - strength, health, knowledge, and discernment for considering what is to your advantage, and time and life - so too I alone should be glorified in everything, that is, if you make good and rational use of the things given you. However, if you make bad use of them, then the fault is yours and the ingratitude is yours.”

Answer to the sixth question. ”As to why temporal remuneration should not be sought for good works in the present, I answer you: Whenever someone does good to others with the intention of caring not for a human reward but only for such a reward as I, God, may wish to grant, then he or she will gain much in exchange for little, something eternal for something temporal. But a person who seeks earthly in exchange for temporal goods will get what he or she desires and will lose the everlasting good. Therefore, in order to obtain an eternal good for a fleeting one, it is more advantageous not to seek a human reward but one that comes from me.”

Interrogation 8

First question. Again the monk appeared on his rung as before, saying: ”O Judge, I ask you: Why do you permit gods to be placed in temples and receive honor as yourself, even though your kingdom is nobler beyond all else?”

Second question. ”Why do you not let people see your glory in this life, so that they may desire it more fervently?”

Third question. ”Since your saints and angels are nobler and holier above all

other creatures, why are they not seen by people in this life?"

Fourth question. "Since the punishments of hell are horrible beyond compare, why do you not let people see them in this life so that they may flee from them?"

Fifth question. "Since the devils are ugly and misshapen beyond compare, why are they not visible to humans, for then nobody would follow them or give them their consent?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "My friend, I am God, the creator of all, who does no more injustice to the wicked than to the good, because I am justice itself. It is in accord with my justice that entry into heaven must be gained through steadfast faith, rational hope, and fervent love. A person ponders more frequently and adores more lovingly that which the heart loves more and loves with greater fervor. So it is with the gods that are placed in temples - though they are not gods nor creators, since there is but one sole creator, I myself, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But the owners of temples and people in general love the gods more than they love me, seeking to achieve worldly success rather than to live with me.

If I were to destroy the things that people love more than me, and make the people adore me against their will, then I would certainly do them an injustice by taking away their free will and desire from them. Since they have no faith in me, and there is in their hearts something more delightful than me, I reasonably permit them to produce externally what they love and long for in their minds. Because they love creation more than me, the Creator, whom they can know by probable signs and deeds, if only they would make use of their reason, and because they are blind, accursed is their creation and accursed are their idols. They themselves shall stand in shame and be sentenced for their folly, because they refuse to understand how sweet I am, their God, who created and redeemed humankind out of fervent love."

Answer to the second question. "As to why my glory is not seen, I answer: My glory is ineffable and cannot be compared to anything in sweetness and goodness. If my glory were to be seen as it is, the corruptible human body would grow weak and fail as did the senses of those who saw my glory on the mount. Besides, because of the soul's joy, the body would leave off working and be incapable of physical activity. Since there is no entry into heaven without the labor of love, and in order that faith might have its reward and the body be able to work, my glory is therefore hidden for a time, so that through desire and faith it may be seen more fully with greater happiness forever."

Answer to the third question. "As to why the saints are not seen as they are, I answer: If my saints were openly visible and seen to speak, then honor would be given to them as to myself, and faith would have not merit. Besides, weak flesh would not be capable of seeing them, and it does not accord with my justice that such great weakness should behold so splendid a sight. Consequently, my saints are neither heard nor seen as they are, in order that I should receive all the honor and

so that people may know that no one is to be loved more than me. If my saints do at times appear, however, it is not in that form of glory in which they truly live, but rather in that form in which they can be seen without any confusion of the physical intelligence, with their full power remaining hidden.”

Answer to the fourth question. ”As to why the punishments of hell are not seen, I answer: If the punishments of hell were visibly to be seen such as they are, people would be completely frozen with fear and would seek heaven out of fear rather than love. Since nobody should desire the joy of heaven out of fear of punishment but out of divine love, the punishments therefore remain hidden for now. Of course, just as good and holy people may not experience exactly that kind of indescribable joy prior to the separation of body and soul, nor can the wicked experience their punishments. But once the soul is separated from the body, then they discover those experiences they were unwilling to probe with their intelligence while they were still able.”

Answer to the fifth question. ”As to why devils make no visible appearance, I answer: If their horrible ugliness were seen such as it is, the soul of the person seeing it would lose her wits at the very sight, and her whole body would quake and quail like someone trembling with fear, and her whole heart would fail and die of fright, and her feet would not be able to sustain the weight of her limbs. In order that the soul should remain steady in her senses and her heart watchful in my love and her body capable of laboring in my service, the ugliness of devils is therefore hidden - also in order to check their evil purposes.”

The third revelation in which Christ speaks to his bride, blessed Bridget, and teaches her through a parable about a true doctor who is a healer and a false doctor who is a killer, and about a man who only has an opinion. He tells her that a man who takes in sinners and gives them help or an opportunity for sinning, should they die in their sin, then God will exact the death of their souls at his hand. However, if he takes them in and they cease from sinning and are instructed by him in the virtues and improved by his teaching, both they and he will receive a great reward from God.

Revelation 3

The Son of God speaks: ”If there is a sick man in the house and an experienced doctor visits him, the doctor soon determines the nature of the sickness from the external symptoms. However, if he recognizes the patient's sickness but gives him medicine that results in death, then he is denounced as a murderer and not a true doctor. A person who knows how to cure but practices medicine for the sake of worldly remuneration will get no wages from me. But if he practices medicine for love of me and for my honor, then I am bound to give him his wages. If a person is not an expert in medicine but is confident that, in his opinion, this or that would be

good for the patient, and gives him it with a kindly intention, he should not be denounced as a murderer if the patient dies, but only as a foolish and presumptuous man. If the patient improves from the fool's medicine, then he should not get the wages of an expert but only of an opiner, since he gave the medicine according to his opinion, rather than knowledge.

Now I will tell you what these things mean. Those people you know are spiritually sick and inclined to pride and cupidity by following their own will. Therefore, if their friend, whom I compare to a doctor, gives them help and advice by which they grow in pride and ambition and die spiritually, I shall surely exact their death at his hand. Although they die from their own iniquity, yet he is the agent and cause of their death, and he will most assuredly not be immune from punishment. If, led by a natural love, he supports them and helps them to advance in the world for the sake of his own convenience and worldly honor, let him not expect any wages from me!

On the other hand, if he considers their situation like a good doctor and says to himself: 'These people are sick and need medicine. Therefore, although my medicine seems bitter to them, yet it is healthy and I will still give it to them so that they will not die a harsher death. Accordingly, while restraining them, I shall also give them food, so that they do not faint from hunger; I shall give them clothing, so that they can make a suitable appearance according to their state; I shall hold them to my treatment, so that they do not grow haughty; I shall also provide for their other needs, so that they do not become proud and perish in their presumption or have occasion to do harm to others.' Such a doctor as this will receive a great reward from me, for this kind of corrective treatment pleases me.

But if their friend thinks to himself in this way: 'I shall give them what is necessary, although I do not know whether it is beneficial for them or not. Nonetheless I do not think I am displeasing God or harming their health. Then if they die, or rather transgress, from what he gives them, their friend will not be declared a murderer. However, due to his good will and kindly affection, though their friend will not get a full recompense, insofar as he shows love for their souls, the sick will find relief and make progress toward health, which they would have obtained only with difficulty without the aid of his charity. However, one piece of advice is necessary here.

According to a popular proverb, a dangerous animal is not dangerous when caged in. If it is in a cage and has its needs met, then it grows just as strong and fat as an animal that roams free. Now, because these people are of the kind whose heart and blood seek lofty things, and because the more their will grows thirstier, the more it drinks, their friend should not give them any occasion for transgression, since they desire to inflame their appetites but are not strong enough to extinguish them."

Interrogation 9

First question. After this was said, the monk appeared on his rung as before saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why do you seem unfair in your gifts and graces in that you gave preference to Mary your Mother before every creature and exalted her above the angels?"

Second question. "Why did you give to the angels a spirit without a body and the state of heavenly joy, while to humankind you gave a spirit in an earthly vessel, a tearful birth, a toilsome life and a painful death?"

Third question. "Why did you give humankind a rational intellect and sense, but did not give reason to the animals?"

Fourth question. "Why did you give life to animals and not to other insensate creatures?"

Fifth question. "Why is there not light at night as during day?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, in my deity are contained all future things and everything that will be done as well as everything that has been done, all of them being foreseen and foreknown from the start. Just as the fall of humankind was something foreknown and permitted by God's justice but not accomplished through God nor something that had to happen due to God's foreknowledge, so too it was foreknown from eternity that the liberation of humankind would be accomplished through God's mercy.

You ask why I preferred my mother Mary above all others and loved her above every creature. This is because a special mark of virtue was found in her. As when several logs are piled up and a fire is kindled, that log which is most capable and fit for burning is more quickly set aflame and starts burning. It was the same with Mary. When the fire of divine love, which in itself is immutable and eternal, began to kindle and be seen, and the deity wished to become incarnate, there was no creature more capable and fitter to receive this fire of love than the Virgin Mary, for no creature burned with such divine charity as she. And although her love has been shown and revealed in the last age, yet it was foreseen before the beginning of the world. Thus it was predetermined in the deity from all eternity that just as no one was found like her in charity, so too no one would be equal to her in grace and blessing."

Answer to the second question. "As to why I gave the angel a spirit without a body, I answer: I created spirits in the beginning, before times and ages, so that they might rejoice in my goodness and glory according to my will and of their own free choice. Some of them became proud and turned good into evil for themselves,

making disordered use of their free will. They fell accordingly, because there was nothing evil in nature or creation except the disorder of self-will. Other spirits chose to remain in humility under me their God; accordingly, they earned a state of everlasting stability, for it is right and just that I, God, who am uncreated spirit and creator and Lord of all things, should have spirits serving me that are more subtle and swift than other creatures.

Since it was surely not suitable for me to have my heavenly host diminished, in order to take the place of the fallen angels, I created human beings who, by their free choice and good will, could win that same rank which the angels had abandoned. And so, if they had a soul without a body, they would not be able to win so great a good or to struggle for it. The attainment of eternal glory is the reason why the soul is joined to the body. Hardships also accrue to them so that they might make trial of their power of choice as well as of their weaknesses so as not to grow proud. Likewise, divine justice has also granted them a tearful entry and departure as well as a toilsome life, so that they might desire the glory for which they were created and make amends for their voluntary disobedience."

Answer to the third question. "As to why animals do not have a rational intellect as humans do, I answer you: All things, whatsoever have been created, are for the use of humankind, either for their needs and upkeep or for their formation and correction or for their comfort and humiliation. If brute beasts had a human intellect, they would surely cause trouble to men, and would be of harm rather than of benefit. Therefore, in order that all things might be subject to humankind, for whose sake all things were made, and in order that all things might fear them but that they might fear none but me, their God, for this reason a rational intellect was not given to animals."

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why insensate things do not have life, I answer: Everything that lives will die, and every living thing is in motion unless impeded by some obstacle. If insensate things had life, they would move themselves more against humankind than for it. Therefore, in order that all things should be a comfort to humankind, the higher beings or angels were given to be their guardians with whom they share reason and immortality of soul. Lower beings, both sensate and insensate creatures, were given to them for their use and upkeep as well as for their education and exercise."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why it is not always daylight, I answer with a comparison. There are wheels under every cart or wagon so that the load can be more easily moved forward, and the back wheels follow the front wheels. It is similar in spiritual matters. The world is a great load, burdening humankind with trouble and strife. This is no wonder, for when humans disdained the place of rest, so it was only right that they should experience the place of toil. In order that they might more easily bear the burden of this world, an alternation and change of times, that is, day and night, summer and winter, was given for their rest and exercise. When contraries meet, such as strong and weak, it is reasonable to condescend to

the weak part so that it can stand with the help of the strong; otherwise the weak would be destroyed.

So it is also with humankind. Although by virtue of their immortal souls, they could continue in contemplation and labor, they would nevertheless falter by virtue of their weak body. Light was made so that humans, who partake of both higher and lower natures, might be able to maintain themselves, laboring by day and recalling the sweetness of the eternal light that they had lost. Night was made for the sake of bodily rest, so that they might have the desire of reaching the place where there is neither night nor labor but perpetual day and everlasting glory.”

The fourth revelation in the Book of Questions, in which Christ beautifully praises every limb of the Virgin Mary his Mother, giving them a spiritual and allegorical meaning by comparing them to virtues; he also declares the Virgin to be most worthy of a queenly crown.

Revelation 4

The Son speaks: "I am crowned king in my divinity without beginning and without end. A crown has neither beginning nor end; thus it is a symbol of my power, which had no beginning and will have no end. I had another crown, too, in my keeping: I myself, God, am that crown. It was prepared for the person who had the greatest love for me. And you, my most sweet Mother, won this crown and drew it to yourself through righteousness and love. The angels and other saints bear witness that your love for me was more ardent and your chastity more pure than that of any other, and that it was more pleasing to me than all else.

Your head was like gleaming gold and your hair like sunbeams, because your most pure virginity, which is like the head of all your virtues, as well as your control over every illicit desire pleased me and shone in my sight with all humility. You are rightly called the crowned queen over all creation - "queen" for the sake of your purity, "crowned" for your excellent worth. Your brow was incomparably white, a symbol of the delicacy of your conscience, in which lies the fullness of human knowledge, and where the sweetness of divine wisdom shines on all. Your eyes were so bright and clear in my Father's sight that he could see himself in them, for in your spiritual eyes and in your soul's intellect the Father saw your entire will, namely, that you desired nothing but him and wished for nothing except as according to his will.

Your ears were as pure and open as the most beautiful windows when Gabriel laid my will before you and when I, God, became flesh in you. Your cheeks were of the fairest hue, white and red, for the fame of your praiseworthy deeds and the beauty of your character, which burned within you each day, were pleasing to me.

Truly, God my Father rejoiced in the beauty of your character and never took his eyes away from you. By your love, all have obtained love. Your mouth was like a lamp, inwardly burning and outwardly shedding light, for the words and affections of your soul were inwardly on fire with divine understanding and shone outwardly in the graceful carriage of your body and the lovely harmony of your virtues. Truly, most dear Mother, the word of your mouth somehow drew my divinity to you, and the fervor of your divine sweetness never separated me from you, since your words were sweeter than honey and honeycomb.

Your neck is nobly erect and beautifully held high, because the righteousness of your whole soul is directed to me and sways with my will, since it was never inclined to any sin of pride. Just as the neck inclines with the head, so too your every intention and act bends to my will. Your breast was so full of every virtuous charm that there is no good in me that is not in you as well, for you drew every good thing to yourself by the sweetness of your character, at the moment when it both pleased my divinity to enter into you and my humanity to live with you and drink the milk from your nipples. Your arms were beautiful through true obedience and endurance of toil. Your bodily hands touched my humanity, and I rested in your arms with my divinity.

Your womb was as pure as ivory and was like a space made out of gems of virtue, for your constancy of conscience and faith never grew lukewarm and could not be damaged by tribulation. The walls of your womb, that is, of your faith, were like gleaming gold, and on them the strength of your virtues was recorded, your prudence and justice and temperance along with perfect perseverance, for all your virtues were perfected with divine charity. Your feet were washed full clean as though with fragrant herbs, for the hope and the affections of your soul were directed toward me, your God, and were fragrant as an example for others to imitate. Your womb was a spiritual and physical space so desirable to me and your soul was so pleasing to me that I did not disdain to come down to you from the highest heaven and to dwell in you. No, rather, I was most pleased and delighted. Therefore, dear Mother, the crown that was held in my keeping, that crown that is I, myself, God, who was to become incarnate, should be placed on no one but you, for you are truly Mother and Virgin."

Interrogation 10

First question. Again the monk appeared on his rung as before saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Given that you are most powerful and beautiful and virtuous, why did you cover your divinity, which is incomparably brighter than the sun, with such a sack - I mean your human nature?"

Second question. "How does your divinity encompass all things in itself yet is

encompassed by none, and contains all things yet is contained by none?"

Third question. "Why did you wish to lie in the Virgin's womb so long and did not emerge as soon as you were conceived?"

Fourth question. "Given that you can do all things and are present everywhere, why did you not immediately appear with the stature that you had when you were thirty years old?"

Fifth question. "Given that you were not born of Abraham's seed through a father, why did you wish to be circumcised?"

Sixth question. "Given that you were conceived and born without sin, why did you wish to be baptized?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered him: "Friend, I will answer you with a comparison. There is a variety of grapes whose wine is so strong that it comes out of the grapes without the contact of man. The owner waits for it to ripen and then just puts a glass under it. The wine does not wait for the glass but the glass for the wine. If several glasses are placed under it, the wine runs into the glass that is nearest. This grapevine represents my divinity, which is so full of the wine of godly love that all the choirs of angels are filled up with it and all things, no matter what, partake of it. But the human race became unworthy of it through disobedience.

When God my Father wanted to manifest his love at a point in time foreseen from eternity, he sent his wine, that is, he sent me, his Son, into the nearest glass awaiting the coming of the wine, namely, into the womb of the Virgin, whose love for me was more fervent than that of any other creature. This Virgin loved me and longed for me so much that there was no hour in which she did not seek me, yearning to become my handmaid. This is why she obtained the choicest wine, and this has three qualities. First it has strength, because I emerged without the contact of a man; second, a most beautiful color, for I came down in beauty from heaven on high ready to do battle; third, an excellent taste, intoxicating with the highest of blessings.

This wine, then, which I myself am, was poured inside the Virgin, so that I, the invisible God, might become visible in order to liberate the lost human race. I could well have assumed another form, but it would not have been God's justice, if form had not been given for form, nature for nature, a mode of satisfaction adapted to the mode of the offense. Which of the wise could have believed or thought that I, God almighty, would want to lower myself to such an extent I should wear the sack of human nature, but for that unfathomable love of mine because of which I wished to live visibly among men?

And because I saw the Virgin burning with such fervent love, my divine

severity was overcome, and my love was shown in order to reconcile humankind with myself. Why are you surprised? I, God, who am love itself, and who hate none of the things I have made, arranged to give humankind not only the best of gifts, but even my very self as a ransom and reward so that all proud sinners and all the devils might be confounded.”

Answer to the second question. “As to how my divinity can encompass all things in itself, I answer: I, God, am spirit. I speak, and it is done. I command, and all obey me. I am truly he who gives being and life to all, who, before making the sky and the mountains and the earth, exist in myself, who am above and beyond all things, who am within all things, and all things are in me, and without me there is nothing. And since my Spirit blows where and when it will, and can do all things, and knows all things, and is swifter and more agile than all other spirits, possessing every power and seeing beforehand all things present, past, and future, accordingly, my Spirit, that is my divinity, is rightly incomprehensible, yet comprehends all things.”

Answer to the third question. “As to why I lay so long in the womb of the Virgin, I answer: I am the founder of all nature and have arranged for each and every nature a due measure and time and order of birth. If I, the founder of nature, had emerged from the womb as soon as I had been conceived, then I would have acted against the natural arrangement, and my taking on a human nature would have then been fantastic and unreal. Therefore, I wished to remain in the womb as long as other children, so that I, too, might fulfill my own wise arrangements of the natural order in my own case.”

Answer to the fourth question. “As to why I did not immediately assume the same stature at birth as I had in my thirtieth year, I answer: If I had done this, everyone would have been full of wonder and fear, following me more out of fear and because of the miracles they had seen rather than from love. And how then would the sayings of the prophets have been fulfilled? They foretold that I would be placed in a manger among animals, and adored by kings, and presented in the temple, and pursued by enemies. Therefore, in order to show that my human nature was real and that the prophecies were fulfilled in me, my limbs grew over intervals of time, although I was as full of wisdom at the start of my birth as at the end.”

Answer to the fifth question. “As to the question of why I was circumcised, I answer: Although I did not descend from Abraham through my father, yet I did so through my mother, although without sin. Therefore, because I established the law in my divine nature, I also wanted to endure it in my human nature, so that my enemies might not slander me by saying that I commanded what I myself was unwilling to fulfill.”

Answer to the sixth question. “As to why I wanted to be baptized, I answer: Anyone who wants to found or start a new way, must lead the way for others. The ancient people were given a way of the flesh, circumcision, as a sign of obedience

and future purgation. Among the faithful observers of the law, this brought about a certain effect of future grace and a promise before the coming of the promised truth, that is, before I, the Son of God, came.

With the coming of the truth, however, since the law was but a shadow, it had been eternally determined that the ancient way should fade and lose its effect. In order that the truth might appear, the shadow recede, and the way to heaven be more easily seen, I, God and man, born without sin, wished to be baptized as an example of humility for others and so that I might open up heaven for believers. As a sign of this, heaven was opened when I myself was baptized, and the voice of the Father was heard, and the Holy Spirit appeared in the likeness of a dove, and I, the Son of God, was revealed in my true humanity, so that all the faithful might know and believe that the Father opens heaven for the baptized faithful.

The Holy Spirit is present with the baptizing minister and my human nature is virtually present in the material element, but the action and the will are one and belong to the Father and to myself and to the Holy Spirit together. On the coming of the truth, that is, when I, who am Truth, came into the world, the shadow immediately disappeared, the shell of the law was broken, and the kernel appeared; circumcision ceased, and I myself established baptism by means of which heaven is opened to young and old and the children of wrath become children of grace and eternal life."

The fifth revelation in the Book of Questions in which Christ speaks to his bride, blessed Bridget, and instructs her not to be anxious about the care of earthly riches and teaches her to be patient in times of trouble and to have perfect self-denial and humility.

Revelation 5

The Son of God speaks to the bride saying: "Be sure to be on your guard!" And she answers: "Why?" The Lord says to her: "Because the world is sending to you four servants who want to deceive you. The first is anxiety about riches. Tell him when he comes: 'Riches are transitory, and the more they abound, the greater the account must be given concerning them. Therefore I do not care about them, since they do not follow their owner but abandon him.'

The second servant is the loss of riches and the forfeiture of privileges conceded. Answer this servant thus: 'He who gave riches has also taken them away. He knows what is best for me. May his will be done!'

The third servant is the tribulation of this world. Tell him this: 'Blessed be you, my God, who allow me to suffer tribulation. By tribulations I know that I am yours,

for you permit tribulations in the present in order that you may spare me them in the future. Grant me, then, the patience and strength to endure.'

The fourth servant is contempt and reproach. Answer them in this way: 'God alone is good and all honor is due to him. Why should there be any honor for me who have committed all kinds of bad and vile deeds? Instead I am worthy of all kinds of reproach, since my whole life has been a blasphemy to God. Or in what way is honor worth more to me than reproach? It only stirs up pride and lessens humility, and God is forgotten. Therefore may all praise and honor be given to God.'

So stand firm against the servants of the world, and love me your God with all your heart."

Interrogation 11

First question. Again the monk appeared on his rung as before saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Since you are God and man, why did you not reveal your divine as well as your human nature, and then everyone would have believed in you?"

Second question. "Why did you not let all your words be heard in an instant, and then it would not have been necessary for them to be preached over intervals of time?"

Third question. "Why did you not perform all your works in a single hour?"

Fourth question. "Why did your body grow over intervals of time and not in an instant?"

Fifth question. "As your death was approaching, why did you not reveal yourself in your divine power, and why did you not show your severity to your enemies, when you said: 'All is accomplished'?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "O friend, I respond to you and yet not to you. I respond to you in order that the evil of your thoughts may be made known to others. Yet I do not respond to you, because these things are not revealed for your benefit but for the profit and warning of present and future generations. Since you do not intend to change your obstinate attitude, you will not pass from your death into my life, because, while still alive, you hate true life. Others, however, who have heard about your life, or rather your death, will pass over and fly on to my life. Indeed, it is written that, for saints, all things work together unto the good; and God permits nothing to happen without cause. So I answer you, but not as those do who speak in a human manner, because we are discussing spiritual things, but in such a way that your thoughts and feelings may be communicated to others by way of similes.

You ask, then, why I did not show my divine nature openly as I did with my human. The reason is that my divine nature is spiritual but my human nature is bodily. Yet the divine and human natures are and were inseparable ever since they were first joined together. My divinity is uncreated, and all things that exist are made in it and through it, and every perfection and beauty is found in it. If such beauty and perfection were visibly revealed to eyes of clay, who would be able to bear the sight? Who could look upon the physical sun in all its brightness? Who would not be terrified by the sight of lightning and the sound of thunder? How much greater the terror would be if the Lord of lightning and the Creator of all things were seen in his splendor!

My divinity was not openly revealed for two reasons. The first reason is the weakness of the human body, whose substance is earthly. If any human body were to see the divinity, it would melt like wax before fire, and the soul would rejoice with such exultation that the body would be reduced, as it were, to ashes. The second reason is the immutability of divine goodness. If I were to show bodily eyes my divinity, which is incomparably more radiant than fire and sun, I would then be contradicting myself. For I have said: 'No one shall see me and live.' Not even the prophets themselves saw me as I am in my divine nature. Those who did hear the voice of my divinity and saw the burning mountain were terrified and said: 'Let Moses speak to us, and we shall listen to him.' This is why I, merciful God, in order to be understandable to humankind, revealed myself to them in a human form similar to theirs, which they could see and touch and in which the divine nature is concealed, so that people might not be terrified by a form unlike their own. Insofar as I am God, I am not bodily and cannot be portrayed in a bodily manner, but people can endure to see and hear me in my human nature."

Answer to the second question. "As to why I did not utter all my words in a single hour, I answer you: Just as it is materially impossible for the body to take in as much food in one hour as it could manage in a large number of years, so too it goes against the divine disposition for my words, which are the food of the soul, to be spoken all in a single hour. As the food of the body is taken in a small amount at a time so that it can be chewed and then ingested, so too my words had to be uttered not in one hour but over intervals of time in proportion to the understanding of those who were to profit from them, so that the hungry might have something to fill them and then be stirred to higher things."

Answer to the third question. "As to why I did not perform all my works in an instant, I answer: Some of those who saw me in the flesh came to belief in me, others did not. It was accordingly necessary for those who did believe to be taught by words over intervals of time and to be stirred at times by example and strengthened by works. For those who did not believe, however, it was right and just that their wicked disposition be disclosed and tolerated, as far as my divine justice could permit it. If I had performed all my works in an instant, everyone would have followed me from fear rather than from love, and, in that case, how would the

mystery of human redemption have been fulfilled?

Just as in the beginnings of the world's creation all things were accomplished at different times and in different ways - although all the things to be made were immutably present together in my divine foreknowledge - so too in my human nature everything was accomplished rationally and distinctly for the salvation and edification of all."

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why my body grew over a number of years and not instantaneously, I answer: The Holy Spirit, who is eternally in the Father and in me, the Son, revealed to the prophets what I would do and suffer when I came in the flesh. Accordingly, it pleased God that I should take such a body in which I could labor from morning to evening and from year to year until the last moment of death. Therefore, in order not to make the words of the prophets seem meaningless, I, the Son of God, took a body like Adam's but without sin so that I would be like those whom I was to redeem. In this way, man, who had turned away from me, might by means of love be led back and, having died, might be raised up, and having been sold might be redeemed."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why I did not reveal my divine power and my true divine nature to everyone, when I said on the cross: 'It is accomplished,' I answer: It was necessary that everything that had been written about me should be fulfilled. Accordingly, I fulfilled them all down to the last detail. Since many things had also been predicted about my resurrection and ascension, it was necessary that they, too, should be brought about.

If my divine power had been revealed at my death, who would have dared to take me down from the cross and bury me? And it would have been a small thing for me then to come down from the cross and lay low my crucifiers - but how then would the prophecy have been fulfilled or where then would my virtue of patience have been? And if I had come down from the cross, would everyone have believed then? Would they not have said that I had done it all by evil art?

Given that they had been indignant when I raised the dead and cured the sick, they would have said much more had I come down from the cross! Therefore, in order to set the captive free, I, who was free, made myself captive; and in order to save the guilty, I, who was guiltless, stood steadfast on the cross. By my steadfastness I steadied the unsteady and strengthened the strengthless."

The sixth revelation in the Book of Questions in which Christ speaks to his bride, blessed Bridget, and instructs her, saying that in the spiritual life peace of mind and eternal glory are won through vigorous struggle and perseverance and humble acquiescence in the advice of an elder and by bravely resisting temptations. He offers the example of Jacob who became a servant in order to win Rachel. He says that some people experience the greatest temptations at the beginning of a conversion to the

spiritual life, others in the middle or toward the end. It is therefore necessary to have a holy fear and humble perseverance in the virtues and in the struggle until the very end.

Revelation 6

The Son speaks: "It is written that Jacob became a servant for the sake of Rachel, and the days seemed short to him due to his great love, for the greatness of his love made his work easier. True, when Jacob thought he had obtained his desire, he was defrauded. Yet he went on working, because love does not make excuses for itself until it has got its wish. It is the same way in spiritual matters. Many people struggle on bravely in prayer and deeds of piety in order to gain heaven. However, just when they think they have reached the peace of contemplation, then they get entangled in temptations, and their troubles multiply, and they find themselves to be quite imperfect precisely on those points where they had thought themselves to be almost perfect. But this is nothing strange, because temptations exist that put people to the test in order to cleanse and perfect them.

Temptations accrue for some of them at the start of their conversion to the spiritual life, and such people are rendered completely sound and stable in the end. Others are more gravely tempted in the middle or toward the end, and such people should carefully examine themselves and never be presumptuous but struggle all the more vigorously. It is as Laban said: 'It is the custom to wed the older sister first,' which is to say: 'Toil and struggle first and then you will have the rest you desire.'

Therefore, my daughter, do not be surprised if temptations accrue in your old age. While you still live, you can be tempted, because the devil never sleeps and because temptation is an opportunity for perfection and keeps you from presumption. Look, I show you the example of two men. One was tempted at the beginning of his conversion but he persevered and went ahead and attained what he sought. The other experienced grave temptations in his old age that he scarcely had known in his youth. He became so entangled in these that he almost forgot everything he had known before. However, he persevered in his resolution and kept on struggling, despite feeling cold and lukewarm. Because of that, he gained his desire and peace of mind, realizing that God's judgments are hidden and just, and that, if it had not been for those temptations, he would hardly have gained eternal salvation."

Interrogation 12

First question. Again the monk appeared standing on his rung as before and

saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why did you prefer to be born of a virgin rather than of another woman who was not a virgin?"

Second question. "Why did you not show with a visible sign that she was a mother and a pure virgin?"

Third question. "Why did you hide your birth so that it was known only to a very few?"

Fourth question. "Why did you flee to Egypt because of Herod and why did you permit the innocent boys to be killed?"

Fifth question. "Why do you permit yourself to be blasphemed and falsehood to prevail over truth?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "O friend, I preferred to be born of a virgin rather than of a woman who was not a virgin, because that which is purest befits me who am God most pure. While it remained in the order of its creation, human nature had no deformity. But once the commandment was transgressed, there immediately arose a sense of shame, just as happens to people who sin against their temporal lord, who are even ashamed of the very limbs with which they have sinned. Along with shame over the transgression, there also sprang up a disordered impulse, especially in the reproductive organs. Yet, in order that this impulse might not be unproductive, it was by God's goodness turned to good, and the act of carnal union was established by divine commandment in order that nature might bear its fruits.

However, since it brings greater glory to act above and beyond the commandment, adding whatever good one is led by love to make, it pleased God to choose for his work the institution tending to greater purity and love, and that is virginity. For it is more virtuous and generous to be in the fire of tribulation and not to burn than to be without fire and still want to be crowned.

Now, since virginity is like the fairest path to heaven while marriage is more like a road, it befitted me, God most pure, to rest in a virgin most pure. Just as the first man was created from the virgin earth, not yet polluted by blood, and because Adam and Eve committed their sin while they were still in a sound state of nature, so too I, God, wished to be received in the purest vessel so as to transform everything by my goodness."

Answer to the second question. "As to why I did not show by open signs that my mother was mother and virgin, I answer: I intimated all the mysteries of my incarnation to the prophets, so that these mysteries might the more firmly be believed the longer ago they had been foretold. To prove that my mother was truly a virgin before and after childbirth, Joseph's testimony was sufficient, inasmuch as he was the guardian and witness of her virginity.

Even if her chasteness had been shown by a more evident miracle, unbelievers would not out of wickedness have yielded in their blasphemy. Such people do not believe that a virgin could conceive by divine power, because they do not realize that it is easier for me, God, to do this than for the sun to penetrate glass. And, of course, divine justice kept the mystery of God's incarnation hidden from the devil and from men to be revealed in the time of grace. Now, in fact, I affirm that my mother is truly mother and virgin. Just as wonderful as the divine power was in forming Adam and Eve, and just as their dwelling together was delightful and virtuous, so too there was wonderful goodness in the coming of my divinity to the virgin, for my incomprehensible divinity descended into a closed vessel without its violation. And there was a delightful cohabitation with me there, inasmuch as I, God, who am everywhere in my divinity, was there enclosed in humanity.

Wonderful, too, was the power shown there, for I, unembodied God, left the womb embodied, yet her virginity remained intact. Therefore, since humankind is difficult about believing, while my mother is a friend to all humility, it pleased me accordingly to conceal her beauty and perfection for a time in order that my mother might deserve to be more perfectly rewarded and so that I, God, might be glorified all the more at that time when I should wish to fulfill my promises to reward the good and to punish the wicked."

Answer to the third question. "As to why I did not disclose my birth to people in general, I answer: Although the devil lost the dignity of his first state, still he did not lose his cunning, which belongs to him for the trial of the good and for his own shame. In order that my human form might grow and reach its determined age, it was necessary to hide the mystery of my religion from the devil, because I wanted to enter hidden into combat with the devil, and because I resolved to be despised in order to overthrow human pride.

Indeed, the very teachers of the law, which they read about in their books, despised me because I came as a humble man, and, because they were proud, they did not want to hear about true justice, which comes from the faith of my redemption. They shall therefore be confounded when the 'son of perdition' comes in his pride. If I had come in the greatest power and glory, would the proud then have been humbled? Will the proud now enter heaven? Certainly not! I came as a humble man in order that the people might learn humility. And I hid myself from the proud, because they wished to understand neither my justice nor their very selves."

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why I fled to Egypt, I answer: Before the commandment was transgressed, there was just one road to heaven, broad and bright. It was broad in the abundance of virtues and bright in divine wisdom and in the obedience of a good will. Once that will was changed, two roads came into being. One led to heaven, the other led away from it. Obedience led to heaven, disobedience led astray. And as the choice between good and evil lay in the human will, that is, to obey or not to obey, people sinned whenever they willed something

other than what I wanted them to will.

In order to save humankind, it was just and right that someone should come who was able to redeem them, someone who also was perfectly obedient and innocent, someone towards whom those who wished could show love and those who wished could show malice. However, it was not right for an angel to be sent to redeem humankind, because I, God, do not give my glory to others. Nor could any human person be found to appease me for his or her own sake, let alone for others. So I, God, the only Just One, came to make all just. My flight to Egypt revealed the frailty of my human nature and fulfilled a prophecy. I also set an example for those to come, because persecution should at times be avoided for God's greater glory in the future. My escape from my pursuers shows that my divine plan surpassed human plans, for it is not easy to fight against God. Furthermore, the slaying of the infants was a sign of my future passion, and a mystery of vocation and divine charity.

Although the infants themselves did not bear witness to me with their voice and mouth, yet they bore it by their death, as befitted my own infancy. Indeed it had been foreseen that the praise of God would be fulfilled even by the blood of innocents. And although the malice of the unjust fell upon them, yet my divine permission, which is always just and kind, did not expose them to it with injustice but so as to disclose human malice and the incomprehensible purpose and kindness of God. Thus, where unjust malice erupted against the boys, there merit and grace justly abounded, and where there was no verbal testimony or proper age, there bloodshed brought them the highest good."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why I permit myself to be blasphemed, I answer: It is written that when King David was avoiding his son's persecution, a certain man cursed him along the way. When his servants wanted to kill the man, David forbade them for two reasons: first, because he had a hope of returning; second, because he was mindful of his own weakness and sin and of the ignorance of him who had cursed him as well as of the patience and goodness of God. I am David, figuratively speaking.

People persecute me with their wicked deeds, like a slave who chases his master, and they throw me out of my own kingdom, that is, out of the soul that I created and that is my kingdom. Then they find fault with me, like a criminal finds fault with his sentence, and they even blaspheme against me, because I am patient. Because I am mild, I suffer their foolishness. Because I am the Judge, I wait for them to convert until the very last moment. Finally, since people in general believe more in falsehood than in truth, and love the world more than me, their God, it is no wonder if the wicked are tolerated in their wickedness, for they wish neither to seek the truth nor to recover from their wickedness."

The seventh revelation in the Book of Questions, in which Christ speaks to his bride,

blessed Bridget, and praises frequent confession, in order that people may not lose the grace of God that they have.

Revelation 7

The Son of God speaks: "When there is fire in a house, a venthole is needed to let out the smoke and allow the inhabitant to enjoy the heat. Likewise, for anyone who desires to keep my spirit and my grace, habitual confession is useful in order to let out the smoke of sin. Although my divine spirit is in itself unchangeable, nevertheless it quickly withdraws from the heart that is not protected by the humility of confession."

The eighth revelation in the Book of Questions in which Christ speaks to his bride and says that the prayer of people who take their pleasure in carnal and earthly delights, neglecting heavenly desires, charity, and the memory of his passion and of eternal judgment, is like the sound of colliding stones, and they will be thrust away with loathing from God's sight like an abortion or an unclean menstrual cloth.

Revelation 8

"That man was singing: 'Deliver me, O Lord, from the unrighteous man!' His voice is in my ears like the sound of two stones struck together. His heart calls to me as if with three voices. The first says: 'I want to have my will in my own control, to sleep and to rise and to talk of pleasant things. I shall give to nature what it craves. I want money in my purse, soft clothes on my back. When I get these and similar things, I count them a greater happiness than all other gifts and the spiritual virtues of the soul.'

His second voice says: 'Death is not too hard, and the judgment is not so severe as is written; harsh threats are made as a warning, but mild punishments are given out of mercy. Therefore, so long as I can have my will in the present, let my soul make its passage as best it can in the future.'

The third voice says: 'God would not have redeemed us, if he had not wanted to give us heavenly things, nor would he have suffered, if he had not wanted to bring us back to our fatherland. Indeed, why did he suffer? Or who compelled him to suffer? Of course, I do not understand heavenly things except by hearsay, and I do not know for sure whether I should trust the Scriptures. If I could only have my will, I would have it instead of the heavenly kingdom.' You can see what that man's will is like and why his voice is like the sound of stones in my ears.

But, o friend, I answer your first voice: Your way does not tend toward heaven,

nor is the passion of my love to your taste. Therefore hell lies open for you, and, because you love the low things of the earth, you will go to the regions below. I answer your second voice: Son, death will be hard for you, judgment unbearable, and flight impossible, unless you mend your ways. I tell your third voice: Brother, I did all my works out of love in order that you might become like me and so that, after having been turned away from me, you might return to me. But now my works are dead in you, my words are burdensome, and my way is neglected. What awaits you, therefore, is the torment and company of demons, because you turn your back on me, you trample underfoot the signs of my humility, and you do not consider how I stood on the cross in your sight and for your sake.

I stood there in three ways for your sake. First as a man, whose eye a dagger would penetrate; second, as a man whose heart would be pierced by a sword; third, as a man whose every limb would shake with the pain of pressing affliction. My passion indeed was more bitter to me than a puncture in the eye; yet I suffered it out of love. My mother's sorrow moved my heart more than my own, yet I bore it. All my inner and outer parts, too, shook for a long time from pressing pain and suffering, yet I did not give up nor retreat. Thus I stood in your sight, but you forget and neglect and scorn it all. You will therefore be thrust away like an abortion and a menstrual cloth."

Interrogation 13

First question. Again the monk appeared on his rung as before saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why is your grace withdrawn quickly from some people while others are tolerated in their wickedness for a long time?"

Second question. "Why is grace given to some people in youth, while others are deprived of it in old age?"

Third question. "Why do some people suffer excessive hardship, while others live more or less free from hardship?"

Fourth question. "Why is intelligence and an extremely quick mind given to some people, while others are like mindless asses?"

Fifth question. "Why are some people exceedingly hardened, while others enjoy wonderful consolation?"

Sixth question. "Why is more worldly success given to the wicked than to the good?"

Seventh question. "Why does one person receive his or her calling at the

beginning, while another toward the end?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, all my works are from the start in my foreknowledge, and everything that has been made was created for the comfort and solace of humankind. However, since people in general prefer their own will to my will, the good things gratuitously given them are therefore justly taken away from them, so that they may know that everything concerning God is rational and just. And because many people are ungrateful for my grace and grow less devout the more gifts are given to them, the gifts are therefore soon taken away from them so as to reveal my divine purpose more quickly and so that people may not abuse my grace and receive a harsher sentence.

The reason why some people are tolerated in their wickedness for a long time is that many of them do have something tolerable to show in the midst of their evildoings. They act either as a benefit or a warning to others. Saul, for example, when he was reproached by Samuel seemed only to have sinned slightly in human eyes while David seemed to have sinned more. Yet, in that test, Saul turned disobediently from me, his God, and consulted the sorceress, whereas David grew more faithful in temptation, patiently enduring what happened and thinking it to have befallen him in return for his sins. Both Saul's ingratitude and my divine patience were revealed in my patient forbearance with him. Both my foreknowledge and David's future humility and contrition were revealed through my election of him."

Answer to the second question. "As to why grace is taken away from some people in old age, I answer: Grace is given to all in order that the giver of grace might be loved by all. Because many people are ungrateful for my divine grace toward life's end, just as Solomon was, it is right that the gifts that have not been carefully maintained before the end should be taken away at the end. The gift of my divine grace is taken away sometimes due to the recipient's negligence, because he does not consider the greatness of the gift nor what he should give in return, and sometimes as a warning to others, so that everyone in a state of grace may be ever on guard and fearful about the fall of others. Even the wise have fallen through negligence, and even those who seemed to be my friends have been brought low because of their ingratitude."

Answer to the third question. "As to why greater hardships are given to some, I answer: I am the maker of all things. Thus, no hardship comes without my permission, as it is written: 'I am God creating woe,' that is, permitting hardship. Hardship does not befall the heathen without me and without a reasonable cause. Indeed, my prophets made many predictions about the adversities of the heathen in order that those who had neglected and abused reason might be taught by suffering, and in order that I, God, who permitted it all, should be known and glorified by every nation. Therefore, if I, God, do not spare pagans from suffering, even less will I spare those who have tasted the sweetness of my divine grace more plentifully.

There is indeed less hardship for some and more for others in order to turn people away from sin and so that those who suffer hardships in the present might be comforted in the future. All those who are judged and who judge themselves in this age will not come into future judgment. As it is written: 'They shall pass from death into life.' There are also some that are protected from suffering, but this happens so that they do not incur a harsher judgment by grumbling at their sufferings. Many there are who do not deserve to suffer in this world.

There are also some people in this life who are afflicted neither in body nor in spirit. They pass their lives as carefree as though God did not exist, or as though God is sparing them for the sake of their righteous works. Such people should be filled with dread for fear that I, God, who spare them in the present, come suddenly and condemn them more harshly as being without contrition.

There are also those who enjoy health of body but are troubled in their soul about the contempt of God, while others enjoy neither health of body nor inner consolation of soul and yet persevere as far as they are able in my service and honor. There are others, too, who are always sick, from their mother's womb up until their death. I, the God of all of these, regulate their sufferings so that nothing happens without cause or reward, for many people, who were asleep before their trials, have their eyes opened by suffering."

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why some people are more intelligent, I answer: With regard to eternal salvation, abundant wisdom does not benefit the soul, unless she also shines with goodness of life. It is in fact more useful to have less knowledge but a better way of life. Accordingly, reason is measured out to all persons in such a way that they can gain heaven, if they lead godly lives. Yet the reasoning faculty differs in many people according to their natural and spiritual dispositions.

Just as one person succeeds through virtue and Godsent zeal in perfecting the virtues, another can likewise fall into vanities through bad will and nature's bad disposition as well as an immoral upbringing. One's nature is often damaged when one sins and struggles against nature. Therefore, it is not without cause that some people have a greater reasoning faculty but to no use, as in the case of those who have knowledge but not a corresponding way of life. Other people have less knowledge but make better use of it. In some people, moreover, there is harmony between their knowledge and way of living, while still others display neither reasoning nor a decent way of life. This variation derives at times from my ordinary divine permission (either for people's benefit or humiliation and edification), but at times it is the result of ingratitude and temptation or of a natural defect or of secret sin. Sometimes, too, it occurs in order to avoid the occasion of a greater sin or because of limited natural capacity.

Whoever, then, has the grace of greater understanding should beware of the danger of a harsher judgment if he or she is negligent. Whoever lacks understanding

and intellectual brilliance should take advantage of the little he has and do what he can - for he has been saved from many occasions of sin. In youth even Peter the Apostle was forgetful, and John unlearned. Yet they grasped true wisdom in old age, for they sought the source of wisdom. Solomon was quick to learn when young, and Aristotle had a subtle mind. However, they did not grasp the origin of wisdom, for they neither glorified the giver of wisdom, as they should have, nor put into practice what they knew and taught, nor studied in order to improve themselves but to improve others.

Balaam, too, had knowledge but did not practice it, which was why the she-ass rebuked him for foolishness. And young Daniel was the judge of his elders. Since, therefore, it is not scholarship that is pleasing to me but a good way of life, it is necessary to correct those who abuse their reasoning faculty, for I, the God and Lord of all, give knowledge to humankind, and I correct both wise and unwise."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why some people are hardened, I answer: Pharaoh's hardness of heart was his own fault, not mine, because he did not want to conform himself to my divine will. Hardness of heart is nothing other than the withdrawal of my divine grace, which is withdrawn when people do not give me, their God, their free possession, namely, their will.

You can understand this by means of a parable. There was a man who owned two fields, one of which lay fallow, while the other bore fruit at certain times. A friend of his said to him: 'I wonder why, although you are wise and rich, you do not take more care to cultivate your fields or why you do not give them to others to cultivate.' The man answered: 'One of the fields, no matter how much care I take, does not produce anything but the most useless plants that are seized by noxious animals that ruin the place.' If I fertilize it with manure, it only insults me by growing wild because, though it does produce a small amount of grain, even more weeds spring up, which I refuse to gather in, since I only want pure grain. The better plan, then, is to leave a field like that uncultivated, since then the animals do not occupy the place or hide in the grass, and, if any bitter herbs do sprout, they are useful for the sheep, because, after tasting them, the sheep learn not to be fastidious about sweeter fodder.

The other field is managed according to the nature of the seasons. Some parts of it are stony and need fertilizer; other parts are wet and need warmth, while still others are dry and need watering. Thus I organize my work according to the different conditions of the field.' I, God, am like this man. The first field represents the free activity of the will given to man, which he uses more against me than for me. Even if man does do some things that please me, yet he provokes me in more ways, since man's will and my will are not in harmony. Pharaoh also acted in this way when, although he knew my power by means of sure signs, nevertheless he set his mind against me and continued on in his wickedness. Therefore, he experienced my justice, because it is only just that a person who does not make good use of small things should not be allowed to rejoice proudly in greater ones.

The second field represents the obedience of a good mind and the denial of self-will. If such a mind is dry in devotion, it should wait for the rain of my divine grace. If it is stony through impatience and hardheartedness, it should bear chastening and correction with equanimity. If it is wet through carnal lust, it should embrace abstinence and be like an animal alert to its owner's will. I, God, can proudly rejoice in a mind like that. The human will acting in opposition to me causes people to be hardhearted. I desire the salvation of everyone, but this cannot come about without the personal cooperation of each and every person in conforming his or her will to mine.

Furthermore, as to why grace and progress are not granted equally to all - that belongs to my hidden judgment. I know and measure out what is beneficial and appropriate to each one, and I hold people back in their designs so that they do not fall more deeply. Many people have received the talent of grace and are capable of working but refuse to do so. Others keep themselves from sin out of fear of punishment, or because they do not have the possibility of sinning, or because sin does not attract them. Thus, some are not given greater gifts, because I alone understand the human mind and know how to distribute my gifts."

Answer to the sixth question. "As to why the wicked sometimes have greater worldly success than the good, I answer: This is an indication of my great patience and love and a testing of the righteous. If I were to give temporal goods to my friends alone, then the wicked would despair and the good would grow proud. Instead, temporal goods are granted to all, so that I, God, the giver and Creator of all things, may be loved by all and so that good people who become proud may be taught righteousness by means of the wicked. It is also in order that everyone may realize that temporal things are not to be loved or preferred to me, God, but are only to be possessed for the sake of sustenance, and in order that they may be all the more zealous in my service the less they rely on temporal possessions."

Answer to the seventh question. "As to why one person is called at the beginning and another toward the end, I answer: I am like a mother who, seeing the hope of life in her children, gives stronger medicine to some and lighter medicine to others. And to those for whom there is no hope, she also shows compassion and does as much as she can. But if the children just get worse from her medicine, why should she take further pains? This is the way I treat my human children. The person who is foreseen to be more fervent in resolution of will and more steadfast in humility and perseverance receives grace in the beginning, and it continues to the end. A person who struggles against vice and yearns to be better deserves to be called toward the end of life. An ungrateful person, however, does not deserve to be admitted to his mother's breast."

The ninth revelation in the Book of Questions in which Christ speaks to his bride, blessed Bridget, and shows her how she has already been rescued and delivered from

the house of the world and of vices, and that she has already been brought to live in the mansion of the Holy Spirit. And he warns her to conform herself to that same Spirit by ever persevering in purity, humility, and devotion.

Revelation 9

The Son speaks to the bride: "You are a woman who was raised in a poor home and entered the company of the great. In a poor home there are three things: stained walls, harmful smoke, and soot everywhere. But you have been brought to a home where there is beauty without stain, heat without smoke, charm that is everywhere and never fails to please. The poor home represents the world. Its walls are pride, forgetfulness of God, abundance of sin, lack of forethought for the future.

These walls leave a stain, because they ruin good works and hide God's face from humankind. The smoke represents the love of this world. It harms the eyes, because it darkens the understanding of the soul and makes her anxious about trifling vanities. The soot represents lustful pleasure, because, though it may provide temporary enjoyment, it never satisfies or fills anyone up with the everlasting good. You have been taken away from these things and brought to the mansion of the Holy Spirit, who is in me and I in him, and who also encloses you within himself. It is he who is purest and fairest and most stable, for he upholds all things. Conform yourself, therefore, to the inhabitant of the house by remaining pure, humble, and devout."

Interrogation 14

First question. Again the monk appeared on his rung as before, saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why do animals suffer disease, though they will not obtain eternal life nor have the use of reason?"

Second question. "Why is everything born in pain, though sin is not involved in every birth?"

Third question. "Why does an infant carry the sin of its father, though it does not know how to sin?"

Fourth question. "Why do unforeseen events happen so often?"

Fifth question. "Why does a bad person die in a good death like the righteous while a righteous person sometimes dies a bad death like the unrighteous?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, your questioning

does not come from love; however I answer you for the love of others. You ask why animals suffer infirmities. This is because there exists a disorder in them as in the rest of creation. I am the maker of every nature and have given to each its own temperament and order in which each one moves and lives. However, after man, for whose sake all things were made, set himself against his lover, that is, against me his God, then disorder entered all the rest of creation, and all the things that should have been afraid of man began to set themselves against him and oppose him. Because of this defective disorder many troubles and difficulties befall humankind as well as animals.

Besides, sometimes animals also suffer because of their own natural immoderation or as a curb to their ferocity, or as a cleansing of nature itself, or sometimes because of human sins in order that human beings, who have a greater use of reason, might consider how much punishment they deserve, when the creatures they love are plagued and taken away. But if human sins did not demand it, animals, which are under human charge, would not suffer in so singular a manner.

But not even they suffer without great justice. Their suffering occurs either to put a quicker end to their lives and lessen their wretched toils that consume their strength or on account of a change in seasons or out of human carelessness during the process of work. People should therefore fear me, their God, above all things, and treat my creatures and animals more mildly, having mercy on them for the sake of me, their Creator. I, God, accordingly decreed the Sabbath rest, because I care for all my creation.”

Answer to the second question. ”As to why everything is born in pain, I answer: When humankind rejected the fairest pleasure, they immediately incurred a life of toil. And because the disorder began in and through humankind, my justice causes there to be some bitterness even for other creatures, which exist for the sake of humans, so as to temper their pleasure and foster their means of nourishment. For this reason, people are born with pain and make toilsome progress in order to render them eager to hurry to their true rest. They die naked and poor in order to make them restrain their disorderly behavior and fear the coming examination.

Likewise animals, too, give birth in pain in order for bitterness to temper their excesses, and so that they may be participants in human toil and sorrow. For this reason, insofar as humankind is so much nobler than are animals, people should love me, the Lord God, their Creator, all that much more fervently.”

Answer to the third question. ”As to why a child carries the sins of his father, I answer: Can anything clean come from that which is unclean? When he lost the beauty of innocence due to disobedience, the first man was thrown out of the paradise of joy and was enveloped in unclean things. There is no one to be found who can regain this innocence by himself. For this reason, I, merciful God, appeared in the flesh and instituted baptism, by means of which a child is freed from perverse uncleanness and sin. Because of this, a son shall not carry the weight of his father's

sin, but each shall die in his own sin.

However it often happens that children imitate the sins of their parents. Sometimes, too, the fathers' sins are punished in their children, not because their fathers' sins go unpunished in the fathers themselves, although the punishment for sins may be put off for a time. Rather, each shall die in and be punished for his own sin. As it is written, the sins of fathers are also sometimes visited upon the fourth generation, because it is my divine justice that, when sons do not try to placate my wrath either for themselves or for their fathers, they should be punished along with their fathers whom they followed against me."

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why unforeseen events often happen, I answer: It is written that a man shall be punished by the very things in which he has sinned. Who can fathom God's purpose? Given that many people seek me not in accordance with knowledge but for the sake of the world, some of them having more fear than is right, others taking too much for granted, still others being proud in their own counsel, I, God, working for the salvation of all, sometimes bring about that which people fear most. At times that which is loved more than is right is taken away, while at other times things that are sought and desired overanxiously are delayed, so that people may fear, love, and acknowledge me as their God always and above all things."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why a bad person dies a good death like the righteous, I answer: The wicked sometimes have some good to them and perform some works of justice, and for these they must be rewarded in the present life. Likewise, the righteous do bad things at times, and for these they must receive punishment in the present or they must expect it. As everything in the present life is uncertain, and all things are left to the future, and as there is only one entrance for everyone, so there must also be only one exit for everyone, though it is not the manner of their exit but that of their life that makes people blessed.

When wicked people make the same kind of exit as the righteous, it is because of my divine justice, because they themselves desired that exit. Sometimes the devil, foreseeing the exit of his friends, announces to them beforehand the time of their death with a view to their vainglory and presumption and deception (as one finds in the so-called apocryphal books) so that they may receive the fame of righteousness after death.

On the other hand, a sorrowful death sometimes occurs to the righteous with a view to their greater reward in order that those who were always concerned about virtue in their lifetime might be free to fly to heaven through an ignominious death, inasmuch as no offscourings to cleanse can be found in them.

It is written that the lion killed the disobedient prophet but guarded the corpse without eating it. That the lion kills the body - what else does it imply if not my divine permission that allows the disobedience of the prophet to be punished? The

fact that the lion did not eat the body was a proof of the good works of the prophet, so that, purged in the present, he would be found righteous in the life to come. Let everyone therefore be wary of analyzing my decisions. For, even as I am incomprehensible in virtue and power, so too I am terrible in my judgments and counsels. And, indeed, some people, wishing to comprehend me in their wisdom, have been cut off from their hope."

The tenth revelation in the Book of Questions, in which Christ speaks to the bride and warns her not to be disturbed if the divine words he has given her in revelations sometimes seem obscure or doubtful or uncertain. This is due to certain reasons explained here or because of God's hidden justice. He advises her, however, always to await the results and promises of his words with patience and fear and perseverance in humility, in order not to lose the promised grace because of ingratitude. He also says that many things have been expressed in a corporeal fashion that will not be effected corporally but spiritually.

Revelation 10

The Son speaks to the bride: "Do not be disturbed if I express one thing more obscurely, and another more plainly; or if I now call someone my servant or son and friend and then he turns out to be the opposite. My words can be interpreted in diverse ways: just as I told you of one man, that his hand would be his death, or of another, that he would no longer approach my table. These things are said either because I am going to tell you why I said it or because you will see how the truth turns out in actual fact, as is clear from the two cases just mentioned. Sometimes I also say things in an obscure way, so that you may feel both fear and joy - fear in case they should turn out differently because of my divine patience (for I know how hearts change) but also joy because my will is always fulfilled.

So too, in the Old Law, I said many things that should be understood spiritually rather than corporally, for example, concerning the temple and David and Jerusalem - in order that carnal men might learn to desire spiritual things. In order to test the constancy of faith and conscientiousness of my friends, I said and promised many things that could - according to the different effects of my Spirit - be understood in different ways by good and bad.

This was also done so that individuals in different states of life might have occasion to be trained and tested and formed by me. It is due to my justice that some things have been said in an obscure way, in order that my plan might remain hidden and so that each person might patiently await my grace and avoid becoming lukewarm while waiting - which might have happened if my plan had always been indicated with a definite date. I have also promised many things that have been taken back because of human ingratitude. Many things, too, have been expressed

corporeally but effected spiritually, for example, concerning Jerusalem and Zion. For, as it is written, the Jews are the blind and deaf People of the Lord."

Interrogation 15

First question. Again the monk appeared on his rung as before, saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why are many things created that seem to be of no use?"

Second question. "Why are souls not commonly seen either remaining in the body or going out of it?"

Third question. "Why are the prayers of your friends not always heard?"

Fourth question. "Why are many people who want to do evil not allowed to do it?"

Fifth question. "Why does evil happen to some people who do not deserve it?"

Sixth question. "Why do those who have God's Spirit sin?"

Seventh question. "Why does the devil stay close to some people and is continuously with them but never with others?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, just as my works are many, so they are also wonderful and unfathomable. Yet none of them, many though they are, is without a purpose. Truly, humankind is like a child brought up in a dark prison. If he were told of the existence of light and stars, he would not believe it, because he has never seen it. Likewise, after the human race had abandoned the true light, it did not delight in anything but darkness, as the saying goes: 'a person who grows accustomed to evil learns to like it.' Therefore, while human intellect may be darkened, yet there is no shadow or change in me. I arranged and continue to arrange all things in so orderly, wise, and honest a fashion that nothing has been made without cause or use - not the highest mountain nor the desert or the lakes, nor even beasts or poisonous reptiles.

Just as I provide for humanity, so I provide for the needs of other creatures. I am like a man who reserves some places for strolling, others for the storage of utensils and tools, others for keeping both tame and wild animals, others for fortifications and secret councils, others adapted for the proper use of land, still others for the correction of humankind. Thus I, God, have arranged all things in a rational way, some for human use and enjoyment, others for the various haunts of wild beasts and birds, some to discipline and curb human greed, others for the meeting of the elements, some for the admiration of my works, others for the

punishment of sinners and the meeting of higher and lower beings, and still others for a cause known and reserved to me alone.

Look, a small, puny bee knows how to draw on many sources for the making of honey; so too other tiny or large creatures surpass human beings in cleverness both in recognizing herbs and in considering their own advantage; and there are many things that are useful for them but harmful for humans. What wonder is it then that man's wits are slow to discern and understand my wonders, when he is surpassed even by the least of creatures? Look, what is nastier than a frog or snake, or what is more contemptible than a burr or a stinging nettle or the like? And yet those things are very good for those who can understand my works. And so whatever exists has some usefulness in it, and every thing that has motion understands how its nature can survive and grow strong.

Therefore, given the wonder of my works and how all things praise me, human beings, who are so much more beautiful and so much more highly placed than other creatures, should accordingly realize that they are that much more obliged to honor me. If the onrush of the waters were not repressed by the mountain boundaries, where would people dwell in safety? And if animals had no place of refuge, how would they escape insatiable human greed? And if people got all their wishes, would they then yearn for heaven? If animals did not toil or live in fear, they would grow weak and perish. Thus, most of my work is hidden, so that people will recognize and honor me, God, wonderful and unfathomable, out of wonderment at my wisdom in creating so many creatures."

Answer to the second question. "As to why one cannot see souls, I answer: The soul is far better by nature than the body, because it is of my divine power and is immortal, having fellowship with the angels and being more excellent than all the planets and nobler than the whole world. And because the soul is of a most noble and fiery nature, giving life and warmth to the body, and because it is spiritual, it can in no way be seen by bodies except through bodily images."

Answer to the third question. "As to why my friends who ask me for something in prayer are not always heard by me, I answer: I am like a mother who sees her son asking for something against his health and puts off granting his request, checking his tears with a display of indignation. This indignation is not anger but great mercy. In the same way I, God, do not always hear my friends, because I see what is needful to their health better than they do themselves.

Did not Paul and others pray efficaciously and yet were not heard? But why? It is because my friends have defects in the midst of an abundance of virtues and aspects that need to be cleansed, and, therefore, their prayers are not heard. This is in order that they might grow all the more humble and zealous toward me the more lovingly they are kept unharmed and are defended by me in temptations of sin. It is therefore a great sign of loves that my friends are not always heard in their prayers, since it is for the sake of their greater reward and as a test of their perseverance.

Just as the devil tries, if he can, to spoil the life of the righteous through sin or an ignominious death, in order to weaken the perseverance of the faithful, so too it is not without cause that I permit the righteous to be tested, in order that their steadfastness may become known to others and so that they may receive a more sublime crown. And just as the devil is not ashamed to tempt his own people, when he sees that they are very quick to sin, so too, for a time, I do not spare my chosen people when I see that they are ready for every good action."

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why some who wish to do evil are not allowed, I answer: If a father has two sons, one obedient and the other disobedient, he opposes his disobedient son as much as he can so that his son does not sin in his wickedness. He tests the obedient son, however, and encourages him on to greater things in such a way as to encourage even the disobedient son by the example of the other son's readiness. And so I often do not allow the wicked to sin, because, in between their wicked acts, they do some good, and either benefit themselves or others. Justice accordingly demands that they should not be immediately handed over to the devil nor always be allowed to carry out their wishes."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why bad things happen to people who do not deserve them, I answer: I alone, God, know all who are good and what each one deserves. Many things seem indeed to be beautiful but are not. Moreover, gold is tested by fire. Consequently, the righteous sometimes experience difficulties so that they may give good example to others and earn their crown. Job was tested in this way, for he was good before his afflictions, but during and after his afflictions he was recognized as even more so. Yet, as to why I afflicted him, who can examine it? Who can know it but I myself, who blessed him early on and kept him from sin and sustained him in his trials? Just as I blessed him beforehand with my grace without any merits of his own, so too I tested him with justice and mercy, for no one is made just in my sight except by my grace."

Answer to the sixth question. "As to why those who have my Spirit sin, I answer: The Spirit of my divinity is not tied down but blows where it will and withdraws when it will. It does not dwell in a vessel that is subject to sin but only in one that has love. I, God, am love and where I am, there is freedom. Accordingly, those who receive my spirit can still sin, if they want, for every human being has free will. And when people set their will against me, my Spirit, which is in them, withdraws from them, or otherwise they are rebuked in order that they may correct their will.

Balaam wished to curse my people but I did not let him. Although he was a bad and greedy prophet, yet sometimes he said something good, not of himself but through my Spirit. Often the gift of my Spirit is given to both the good and the wicked. Otherwise, those great and eloquent teachers would not have been able to dispute of such high things if they had not had my Spirit; and they would not have raved on so foolishly, if they had not turned their senses against me and fell into

pride, wanting to know more than they should.”

Answer to the seventh question. "As to why the devil stays closer and is always with some people, I answer: The devil is like an executioner and a tester of the righteous. By my permission he torments some people's souls, darkens the conscience of others, and torments even the bodies of others. He torments the souls of those who, sinning against reason, subject themselves to every kind of impurity and infidelity. He disturbs the consciences and bodies of those who are tormented and cleansed for certain sins in this world. These torments also occur to children of either sex, both to pagans and Christians, either due to the carelessness of the parents or to a defect of nature or to instill fear and humility in certain people or because of certain sins. But my justice mercifully disposes that such as these who do not have occasion to sin either are not harshly punished or receive a more sublime crown.

Many such things also occur to brute beasts either for the punishment of others or for a sooner end to their lives or because of some imbalance in their nature. Therefore it is by my permission that the devil sticks closer to some people and is nearer to them, either for their greater humility and as a warning, or because of their greater crown and their solicitude in seeking me, or in order to purge sins in the present life, or because some people deserve a punishment that begins in the present and lasts forever.”

The eleventh revelation in the Book of Questions in which Christ speaks to his bride, blessed Bridget, and tells her why and when he began to give her and pour into her the words of the divine revelations in spiritual vision. And he tells her that these words of the revelations, which are contained in these books, have principally these four virtues: they are spiritually satisfying to anyone thirsting for true love, they warm the cold, they cheer the troubled, and they heal sick souls.

Revelation 11

The Son of God speaks: "A wholesome drink can be made with natural means, such as cold iron and hard stone, a dry tree and a bitter herb. But how? Well, if steel were to fall heavily upon a sulfurous mountain, then fire would come out of the steel and ignite the mountain. Its heat would cause an olive tree planted nearby, which is dry on the outside but is full of oil inside, to begin to flow so abundantly that even bitter herbs planted at the foot of the olive tree would grow sweet, and then a wholesome drink could be made from them.

This is a spiritual allegory of what I have done for you. Your heart was as cold as steel toward my love, and yet a small spark of love for me was stirred up in it when you began to think of me as worthy of all love and honor. But that heart of

yours then fell upon a sulfurous mountain, when the glory and delight of the world turned against you and when your husband, whom you loved above all others in the flesh, was taken away from you in death.

In truth, lusty pleasure and worldly delight are well compared to a sulfurous mountain, since they have within themselves the swelling of the spirit and the stench of concupiscence and the fire of punishment. And when your soul was gravely pierced with disturbance at the death of your husband, then the spark of my love, which lay as though hidden and enclosed, began to go forth, for, having considered the vanity of the world, you surrendered your whole will to me and desired me above all things. Because of that spark of love, you developed a taste for the dry olive tree, that is, for the words of the Gospels and the discourse of those learned men of mine, and abstinence so pleased you that everything that previously seemed bitter began to become sweet for you.

And when the olive tree began to flow and the words of my revelations came down upon you in Spirit, somebody standing on the mountain cried out, saying: 'By this drink thirst is slaked, the cold are warmed, the troubled are cheered, the infirm recover.' I myself, God, am the one who cries out. My words, which you hear from me frequently in spiritual vision, are like a good drink satisfying to those who thirst for true love; second, they warm the cold; third, they cheer the troubled; fourth, they heal those who are weak in soul."

Interrogation 16

First question. Again the monk appeared as before standing on his rung and saying: "O Judge, I ask you: Why does the gospel say that the goats are placed on your left, the sheep on your right? Do you really delight in such things?"

Second question. "Since you are the Son of God, equal to the Father, why is it written that neither you nor the angels knows the hour of judgment?"

Third question. "If your Holy Spirit has spoken through the evangelists, why is there so much variance in the Gospels?"

Fourth question. "Since your incarnation was so important for the salvation of the human race, why did you delay so long in becoming incarnate?"

Fifth question. "Since the human soul is so much better than the world, why do you not send your friends and preachers always and everywhere?"

Answer to the first question. The Judge answered: "Friend, you do not ask in order to know but so as to let your wickedness be known. There is surely nothing of

flesh or represented by flesh in my divinity, for my divinity is Spirit. Nor can the good and the wicked live together in me, no more than light can coexist with darkness. There is neither right and left in my divinity, as the physical image portrays it, nor are those on my right happier than those on the left, but this is all said figuratively.

By 'right hand' is understood the sublimity of my divine glory, by 'left hand' the lack and privation of all good. Furthermore, sheep or goats are not to be found in that wondrous glory of mine, where nothing is found that is bodily and soiled or changeable. Rather, human characters are often described by means of comparisons and by symbols of animals; for example, innocence is signified by sheep, impurity by goats. In other words, the incontinent man is signified as placed on the left, where there is a lack of all good. You should understand that I, God, sometimes make use of human words and similes so that the little child may have something to suck on, and so that the perfect may become more perfect. It is also to fulfill the Scripture that says that the Virgin's Son has been placed as a sign of contradiction so that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed."

Answer to the second question. "As to why I, the Son of God, said that I do not know the hour of judgment, I answer: It is written that Jesus progressed in age and wisdom. Anything that progresses and regresses is changeable; but the deity is unchangeable. Thus I, the Son of God, coeternal with the Father, progressed in the sense that I did so in my human nature. What I did not know was what my humanity did not know, but, according to my divine nature, I both knew and know all things. For the Father does nothing unless I, the Son, also do it. Can the Father know anything unknown to me, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Of course not. But the Father alone, with whom I, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one substance, one deity, and one will, knows the hour of the judgment, and not the angels nor any other creature."

Answer to the third question. "As to why, if the Holy Spirit has spoken through them, there is so much variance among the evangelists, I answer: It is written that the Holy Spirit is various in his operations in that he distributes his gifts to his chosen people in varied ways. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is like a man with a balance in his hand, measuring and balancing the scales until the balance reaches equilibrium and comes to rest. A balance is handled in different ways by a person who is used to it and by one who is unused to it, by one who is strong and by one who is weak.

So the Holy Spirit now rises like a balance in human hearts, and then sinks again. He rises when he uplifts the mind through keenness of understanding and through the soul's devotion and through the inflaming of spiritual desire. He sinks when he allows the mind to fall into difficulties and to be anxious about trifling vanities and upset by tribulation. Therefore, just as the balance cannot reach equilibrium unless the weights are adjusted, and it is controlled by a guiding hand, so too measure and a good life, a simple intention, and discretion in works and virtues are necessary for the operation of the Holy Spirit.

When I, the Son of God, visible in the flesh, preached different things in different places, I had different kinds of followers and listeners. Some followed me out of love, others in order to have an occasion for fault finding or out of curiosity. Some of my followers had a keener intellect, others a simpler. Accordingly, I spoke simply to instruct the simple. I also spoke deeply to awaken the wonder of the wise. Sometimes I spoke darkly in parables, which gave some people an occasion for commenting. At other times I repeated things said earlier and sometimes added to or simplified them. So it is no wonder that those who arranged the gospel narrative recorded different but still true things, for some of them wrote it down word for word, others captured the sense but not the exact words. Some wrote things they had heard but not seen; others placed earlier events later; others wrote more about my divinity; yet all of them as the Spirit gave them to speak.

However, I want you to know that only those evangelists are to be accepted whom the church accepts. Many people attempted to write who had zeal but not in accordance with my knowledge. Recall what I said in today's reading: 'Destroy this temple and I shall rebuild it.' Those who testified to what they heard were truthful regarding the words they heard, but they were false witnesses because they did not consider the sense of my words, for I spoke concerning my body. Likewise when I said: 'Unless you eat my flesh, you shall not have life.' Many hearers went away, because they did not consider the conclusion that I added: 'My words are spirit and life, that is, they have a spiritual meaning and force. It is not remarkable that they went astray, inasmuch as they did not follow me out of love. Thus the Holy Spirit rises in human hearts like a balance, at one time speaking corporeally, at another spiritually. And he sinks when the human heart is hardened against God or falls into heresies or worldliness and is darkened.'

At that moment the Judge said to the monk who sat questioning him on the rung of the ladder: "Friend, you have posed subtle questions to me several times already. Now, for the sake of my bride who is standing here, I ask you: Why does your soul, which can understand and distinguish between good and bad, love perishable things rather than heavenly ones and does not live in accord with its understanding?" The monk replied: "Because I act against reason and allow my bodily senses to prevail over reason." And Christ said: "Then your conscience shall be your judge."

Then Christ said to the bride: "See, daughter, how great the effects in the man are not only of the malice of the devil but also of a deformed conscience! And this comes about because he does not struggle against temptation as he ought. But the master known to you did not act in this way. Indeed the Spirit sank in him, tempting him to such an extent that it seemed as if all the heresies stood before him and said with one mouth: 'We are the truth: But he did not trust his thoughts and did not think beyond himself. For that reason he was rescued and became knowledgeable all the way from 'In the beginning' to the 'alpha and omega: just as it was promised to him.'"

Answer to the fourth question. "As to why I delayed so long in becoming incarnate, I answer: My incarnation was indeed necessary, for through it the curse was lifted and all things were reconciled in heaven and on earth. Yet it was necessary for people to be instructed first by natural law, and then by written law. Through natural law it became clear what human love was and how much it was worth. Through the written law humankind understood its weakness and wretchedness and began to seek medicine.

It was right for the doctor to come just when the sickness was raging, so that where disease abounded, the medicine might even more abound. There were also many righteous people under the dispensations of natural law and of written law, and many who had the Holy Spirit and made many predictions and instructed others in all virtue, and awaited me, the Savior. These approached my mercy, not everlasting punishment."

Answer to the fifth question. "As to why, given that the human soul is better than the world, preachers are not sent always and everywhere, I answer: The soul is indeed worthier and nobler than all the world, and more lasting than all things. The soul is more worthy, because she is a spiritual creature like the angels and made for eternal joy. She is more noble because she was made in the image of my divinity, both immortal and eternal. Because humankind is worthier and nobler than all creatures, the human race should live more nobly as having been endowed with reason beyond all the rest. If they abuse their reason and my divine gifts, what wonder is it if, at the time of judgment, I punish that which had been overlooked in the time of mercy?

So preachers are not sent always and everywhere, because I, God, foreseeing the hardness of many hearts, spare my chosen ones the trouble, so that they need not work in vain. And because many, deliberately sinning with full knowledge, decide to persevere in sin rather than to be converted, they are not worthy to hear the messengers of salvation.

But now, my friend, I shall end my response to your thoughts here and you shall end your life. Now you shall see what good your wordy eloquence and human favor can do for you. O how happy you would have been if you had attended to your profession and vow!"

Then the Spirit said to the bride: "Daughter, this man, whom you saw asking so many questions - and such questions - still lives in the flesh but will not remain alive for one day more. The thoughts and affections of his heart were revealed to you in likenesses, not for his greater disgrace, but for the salvation of other souls. And now his hope and life shall be ended together with his thoughts and affections."

The twelfth revelation in the Book of Questions in which Christ speaks to his bride,

blessed Bridget, and tells her that she should not be troubled by the fact that he does not immediately do justice in the case of a man who is a great sinner. For he defers the sentence of justice in order that the justice to be done in this case might be manifested to others. He also says that his divine words in this book of the Heavenly Revelations must first grow to full ripeness and bear fruit and, afterward, produce their effect and force in the world. These words are like oil in a lamp, that is, in a virtuous soul, in which the soul is steeped and made to burn and shine with a wonderful splendor with the coming of the Holy Spirit. He also adds that the words of the revelations shall first rise up and bear fruit elsewhere than in the kingdom of Sweden, which is where they began to be divinely revealed to the same bride.

Revelation 12

The Son of God speaks: "Why are you troubled because I put up with that man so patiently? Do you not know that it is a grave thing to burn eternally? I put up with him therefore to the very last moment so that through him my justice might be manifested to others. Wherever dye-plants are sown, if they are cut down before their time, they cannot be used for dyeing as well as when they are cut at the proper time. My words, which are to be manifested with justice and mercy, should in the same way grow and bear fruit until they are fully ripe, and then they will suit the object to which they are applied better and will color my virtue suitably.

But why are you troubled because that man does not put trust in my words without having the evidence of clearer signs? Did you give birth to him or do you know his inner life as I do? This man is indeed like a lamp that burns and shines. As soon as tallow is added to it, the wick joins and sticks to it. He is thus a lamp of virtues, a lamp fit to receive my divine grace. As soon as my words are poured into him, they liquefy fully and penetrate into his inmost heart. Is it any wonder that the tallow liquefies when there is a fire burning in the lamp that liquefies it and keeps the lamp burning?

This is truly the fire of my Spirit, which is within you and speaks to you, and this same Spirit is also within him and speaks to him, although in a more hidden and, for him, more useful way. This fire kindles the lamp of his heart to labor in my honor. It also kindles his soul so as to receive the suet of my grace and my words that sweetly sustain and more fully fatten the soul when it comes to deeds.

Therefore, do not fear but persevere steadfast in faith! If these words came from your own spirit or the spirit of this world, then you would be right to tremble. But because they are from my Spirit, the same as the holy prophets had, you should not fear but rejoice, unless you are more afraid of a vain worldly reputation than you are of the postponement of my divine words.

Listen further to what I say. This kingdom is mingled with great and long

unpunished sin. This is why my words cannot yet shoot up and bear fruit here, as I will explain to you by means of a comparison. If the kernel of a nut were planted in the earth and a heavy object were placed on top that prevented it from shooting up, then the nut, being of a good and fresh nature and unable to shoot up because of the weight on top that presses down on it, searches about in the earth for a less heavily weighed-down place where it can shoot up.

There it takes deep and stable root so as not only to produce the fairest fruit but also to break through every impediment with the strength of the trunk that grows up, spreading itself over everything that was weighing it down. This kernel symbolizes my words that cannot yet shoot up properly in this kingdom on account of the pressure of sin. They shall shoot up and bear fruit first elsewhere, until the hardness of the earth in this kingdom is broken up and mercy uncovered.”

The thirteenth revelation in the Book of Questions in which God the Father speaks to blessed Bridget and instructs her deeply concerning the power of the five sacred places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and about the grace received by pilgrims visiting those places with devout humility and true love. He says that in these places there was a vessel that was closed and not closed, a lion born that was seen and was not seen, a lamb shorn and not shorn, a snake placed that lay and did not lay, and where there was also an eagle that flew and did not fly. He explains all these images. There follows an explanation and clarification of the meaning of the imagery.

Revelation 13

God the Father speaks: "There was a lord whose servant said to him: 'See, your fallow-land has been plowed and the roots have been pulled out. When will the wheat be sown?' The lord answers him: 'Although the roots look like they have been pulled out, there still remain some old stubble and stumps that will be loosened in the spring by rain and wind. Therefore wait patiently until sowing time comes!' The servant answers: 'What shall I do then between spring and harvest?' The lord says: 'I know five places. All those who go to them receive fivefold fruit, if they come pure and empty of pride and burning with love.

In the first place there was a vessel closed and not closed, a vessel small and not small, a vessel bright and not bright, a vessel empty and not empty, a vessel clean and not clean. In the second place a lion was born that was seen and not seen, heard and not heard, touched and not touched, acknowledged and unknown, held and not held. In the third place there was a lamb that was shorn and not shorn, a lamb wounded and not wounded, a lamb crying and not crying, a lamb suffering and not suffering, a lamb dying and not dying.

In the fourth place a snake was placed that lay and did not lay, moved and did

not move, heard and did not hear, saw and did not see, sensed and did not sense. In the fifth place there was an eagle that flew and did not fly, came to a place from which it had never departed, rested and did not rest, was renewed and was not renewed, rejoiced and did not rejoice, was honored and was not honored.”

Explanation and clarification of the above images. The Father speaks: “That vessel about which I told you was Mary, daughter of Joachim, mother of Christ's humanity. She was a vessel closed and not closed: closed to the devil but not to God. Just as a stream desiring but unable to enter a vessel that stands in its way seeks other entries and outlets, so the devil, like a stream of vices, desired with all his stratagems to get near the heart of Mary. But he was never able to incline her spirit to the least little sin, for she was closed for his temptation, since the stream of my Spirit had flowed into her heart and filled her with a special grace.

Second, Mary, the mother of my Son, was a vessel small and not small: small and modest in the humility of her lowliness, but great and not small in my divine love. Third, Mary was a vessel empty and not empty: empty of every lust and sin, not empty but full of heavenly sweetness and every goodness. Fourth, Mary was a vessel bright and not bright: bright, since every soul is created beautiful by me, but the soul of Mary grew to such a perfection of light that my Son settled down in her soul, in the beauty of which heaven and earth rejoiced. But this vessel was not bright among men in that she scorned the honors and riches of the world.

Fifth, Mary was a vessel clean and not clean: truly clean because she is all beautiful, and there was not so much uncleanness in her as to fit on the point of a needle. But the vessel was not clean in the sense that she came from the race of Adam and was born of sinners, though she herself was conceived without sin in order that my Son might be born of her without sin. So whoever comes to that place where Mary was born and reared will not only be cleansed but will become a vessel for my honor.

The second place is Bethlehem where my Son was born like a lion. He was seen and held in his human nature, but was invisible and unknown in his divine nature.

The third place is Calvary where my Son was wounded and died like an innocent lamb according to his human nature, but remained impassible and immortal according to his divine nature.

The fourth place was the garden where my Son's grave was, and where his human nature was placed like a contemptible snake and lay there, though he was everywhere according to his divine nature.

The fifth place was the Mount of Olives from which my Son flew in his human nature like an eagle to heaven where he ever was according to his divine nature. He was renewed and rested according to his human nature although he was always at rest and always the same according to his divine nature.

Therefore, whoever comes clean and with a good and perfect intention to

these places will see and taste the sweetness and goodness of me, God.
And when you come to these places I will show you more."

Book 6

We don't have all chapters in Book 6 yet.

Our Lord tells Saint Bride by example that nothing pleases God so much as that he be loved above all things.

Chapter 50

The Mother of God speaks to the spouse of Christ, Saint Bride, and says: " Nothing pleases God so much as that man love him above all things. See, I shall tell you by the example of a heathen woman who knew nothing of the Christian faith; but she thought thus to herself: 'I know', she says, 'of what matter I am, and how I came to be in my mother's womb. I believe also that it is impossible for me to have a body, joints, bowels, and senses, unless someone had given these to me. And therefore there is some creator and maker who made me so fair a person of mankind, and would not make me as foul as worms and serpents.

Therefore it seems to me that though I had many husbands, if they all called me, I should rather go at one call from my maker than at the calling of them all. I have also many sons and daughters, yet if I see them with food in their hands and I know that my maker was hungry, truly I would take away the food from my children's hands and gladly give it to my maker. I have also many possessions which I dispose of at my own will. Yet if I knew the will of my maker, I would most desire to leave my own will and dispose of them according to his praise'.

But see, daughter, what God did with this heathen woman. Truly, he sent his friend to her, who informed her in the holy faith. And God himself visited her heart, and you may well understand by the woman's words, for when that man of God preached to her that there was one God without beginning and end who is the Creator of all things, she answered: 'It is well to be believed, that he who made me and all things has no maker above him. And it is likely true that his life is everlasting who could give me life'.

When this woman heard that the same Creator took mankind of a Virgin and preached with his own mouth, she answered: 'It is well to believe all virtuous works are of God. But, Friend of God, tell me what are the words that come from my Creator? For I will leave my own will and obey his according to all his words'.

Then, the Friend of God preaching to her of his Passion, Crucifixion and

Resurrection, she answered with weeping eyes and said: 'Blessed is that God who so patiently showed his charity on earth that he had for us in heaven. Therefore if I have loved him first, for he made me, now I am much more bound to love him, for he showed me the right way and bought me with his holy blood. I am also bound to serve him with all my might and all my limbs, for he bought me with all his limbs. And furthermore, I am bound to put away from me all my own will and desire that I previously had for my goods, possessions, children, family relations and friends, and only to desire my Creator in his bliss and in that life that never ends' ".

Then said the Mother of God: "See, daughter, this woman obtained a many fold reward for her love, and so is each day reward given to each one after that time that God had lived in this world".

This is a revelation sent to the holy spouse of Christ, Saint Bridget, in which our Lady Saint Mary reproached the pride of women in their stance, bearing, speech, dress, and other behavior, with the example of three wretched women: of which one was in Hell, another in Purgatory, and the third, alive.

Chapter 52

The holy spouse of Christ, Saint Bridget, spoke to our Lord Jesus Christ words of love and praise for the great grace that he shaped with her, and said: "Praise to you, almighty God, for all the things that have been made, and praise for all your virtues. Service be rendered to you by all creatures for your great love and charity. I, therefore, always unworthy and sinful from my childhood, thank you, my God, that you do not deny grace to any sinner who asks for it. But you spare and have mercy for all. O my sweetest God, it is truly marvelous that you work with me; for when it pleases you, you bring my body into a spiritual sleep, and then you excite and raise up my soul to see and hear and feel spiritual things.

O my most sweet God, how sweet have been your words to my soul, which swallows them as the most sweet food. And then enter with joy into my heart, for when I hear your words, I am both full and hungry; full, because nothing delights me except your words; hungry, because the more I hear them the more fervently I want them. Therefore, blissful God, give me help always to do your will".

Our Lord Jesus Christ answered and said: "I am without beginning and without end. And all things which are made by my power; all things are disposed by my wisdom and all things are governed by my judgement and will; and all my works are ordered by charity. Therefore for me there is nothing that is impossible. But that heart is over-hard which neither loves me nor fears me, since I am ruler of all things and Judge. And yet man fulfills the will rather of the devil, who is my tormentor and a deceiver, who gives out venom largely through the world, for which souls may not

live, but they are drowned down into the death of Hell. This venomous sin, which, though it is bitter to the soul, yet to many tastes sweet, and each day it is drawn out of the devil's hand upon many people.

But who ever heard any such things, that life is offered to all, and they choose death rather than life. Nevertheless I, God of all, am patient and have compassion on their wretchedness. For I do as a king who sends wine to his servants and says: 'Pour it forth to many, for it is wholesome. It gives health to the sick, mirth to them who are depressed, and a courageous heart to those who are whole.' But yet the wine is not sent but by an appropriate vessel. So I have sent my words, which are like wine, to my servants by you, who are my vessel, which I will fill and draw out after my own will. My Holy Spirit shall teach you where you will go and what you shall say. Therefore speak joyfully and without fear the things that I order; for there is no one who shall prevail against me”.

Then answered the spouse, Saint Bridget: "O king of all glory and bliss, giver of all wisdom and granter of all virtues, why do you choose me for such work, who has wasted my body in sins? I am like a donkey, unlearned and unwise and defective in virtues; and I have trespassed in all things and amended nothing”.

Our Lord Jesus Christ answered: "If money or other metal were presented to a lord, who should marvel, though he made of it for himself crowns or rings or coins to his own profit. So it is no marvel though I receive the hearts of my friends presented to me and do my will in them. And just as much as one has less understanding and another more, so do I use the conscience of each as is expedient to my praise. For the heart of a rightful man is my money; therefore be firm and ready to do my will”.

Then spoke the Mother of God to Saint Bridget, saying: "What do the proud women say in your kingdom?" Saint Bridget answered: "O Lady, I am one of them, and therefore I am ashamed to speak in your presence". "Though I know it better than you, yet I would hear it from you”.

Saint Bridget answered: "When", she said, "true humility was preached to us, we said that our ancestors willed to us and gave us in heritage great possessions and a good education as to behavior and class. Why therefore should I not follow them? My mother sat with the first and the highest and was clad and arrayed nobly, having many servants and educating them with praise. Why should I not also pass on such things to my daughter, who has learned to bear herself nobly and to live with bodily joy and to die with great praise from the world?"

The Mother of God answered: "Each woman who has these words and follows them in deed goes by the true way to Hell. And therefore such an answer is very difficult. What does it profit to have such words, when the Creator of all things suffered his body to live and dwell on earth in all humility from the time of his birth until his death, and never wore upon himself the clothing of pride. Truly, such women do not consider his face, how he stood living and dead upon the cross,

bloody and pale from pain; nor those who reckon nothing of the criticism which he heard, nor of his despicable death which he chose; neither have they in mind the place where he gave up the spirit, for where thieves and robbers had received many wounds, there was my Son wounded.

And I, who before all creatures, am most dear to him, and in me is all humility, was present there. And therefore they who did such proud and pompous things, and given other occasion to follow them, are like a sprinkler, which, when it is filled with a burning liquid, burns and befouls all of them whom it sprinkles. Right so do the proud give examples of pride and very grievously they burn souls by evil examples.

And therefore I will now do like a good mother, who, fearing for her children, makes them see the rod, which the servants also see. But the children, seeing the rod, fear to offend their mother, thanking her for threatening them but not beating them. The servants fear to be beaten if they trespass. And so from dreading the mother the children do more good deeds than they did before, and the servants do less evil.

So truly, because I am the mother of mercy, therefore I will show you the reward of sin, that the friends of God may be more fervent in the charity of God. And sinners, knowing their peril, flee from sin, at least, from fear. And in this way I have mercy on both good and evil; on the good people, that they may obtain and get more crowns and rewards in heaven, on the wicked, that they suffer less pain. And there is none who is so great a sinner, but I am ready to help him; and my Son to give him grace, if he ask mercy with charity”.

After this, there appeared three women: that is to say, the mother, and the daughter, and the niece, that is, that daughter's daughter. But the mother and the granddaughter appeared dead, and the daughter appeared to be alive. The said dead mother seemed to come creeping out of a foul and dark clay ditch; her heart was drawn out of her body, her lips cut off, and her chin trembled; her teeth, shining, white and long, ground and chattered together; her nostrils were all gnawn; her eyes were put out, hanging down on her cheeks between sinews; her forehead was hollow; and instead of her forehead there was a great and dark depth.

In her head the head pan failed and had fallen away, and the brain boiled up as if it had been lead, and flowed out like black pitch. Her neck turned about like wood that is turned in the instrument of a joiner, against which was set a blade of the sharpest iron, cutting and shaving away without any comfort. Her breast was open and full of worms long and short; and each of them wallowed hither and thither upon each other. Her arms were like the hafts or handles of a grinding stone. Her hands were like keys full of knots and long. The chines or vertebrae of her back were all dissolved, each from the other; and one going up, another going down, they never ceased moving. A long and large serpent came forth from the nether part of her stomach to the other parts; and joining the head and tail together as a round bow, went round about her bowels continually, like a wheel. Her hips and her legs

seemed like two rough staves of thorns full of most sharp prickles. Her feet were like toads.

Then this dead mother spoke to her daughter who was alive saying: "Hear you, altogether my tom and venomous daughter. Woe is me that I was ever your mother. I am she who set you in the nest of pride, in which you, made hot, grew until you came of age. And then it was pleasing to you that you had spent your time in that nest. Therefore I say to you that as often as you turn your eyes to look at, or see pride, which I taught you, so often cast you boiling venom in my eyes with insufferable burning heat. As often as you speak words of pride which you learned from me, so often swallow I most bitter drink. As often as your ears are filled with the wind of pride which the waves of arrogance and pride excite and stir up in you, that is to say, to hear praise of your own body and to desire praise from the world, which you learned from me, so often comes to my ears a fearful and dreadful sound, with blowing and burning wind.

Woe, therefore, to me, who am poor and wretched; poor because I have nor feel anything of good, and wretched because I have abundance and plenty of evil. But you, daughter, are like the tail of a cow which, going in foul clay, as often as she moves her tail, as often does she befoul and sprinkles those near her. So you, daughter, are like a cow; for you have no goodly wisdom, and you go after the works and impulses of your body.

Therefore as often as you follow the works of my custom, that is to say, those sins which I taught you, so often is my pain renewed, and the more grievously it burns upon me. Therefore, my daughter, why are you proud of your generation and parentage? For it would be honor and respect to you that the uncleanness of my bowels was your pillow, my shameful member was your birthing, and the uncleanness of my blood was your clothing when you were born? Therefore, now, my womb, in which you lay, is altogether eaten by worms.

But why, daughter, do I complain to you, when I ought more to complain about myself? Because there are three things which torment me most grievously in my heart. The first is that I, made by God for heavenly joy, misused my conscience and have disposed myself to the sorrows of Hell. The second is that while God made me fair as an angel, I deformed and misshaped myself so that I am more like the devil than an angel of God. The third is that in the time given to me, I made a very evil change. For I received a little thing, short and transitory, that is to say, delight in sin, for which now I feel endless evil, that is, the pain of Hell".

Then said this dead mother to the spouse of Christ, Saint Bridget: "You", she said, "who see me, see me not but by bodily likeness. For if you should see me in that form in which I am, you would die from fear; and all my members are devils. And therefore the Scripture is true which says that as rightful men are members of God, so sinners are members of the devil. Right so I now experience the devil's arms fastened into my soul; for the will of my heart has disposed me to so much filth,

deformity and misshapeness.

But hear now more. It seems to you that my feet are toads. That is because I stood firmly in sin; therefore now fiends stand firmly in me. And always biting and gnawing at me, they are never full. My legs and my thighs are as staves full of prickly thorns, for I had a will after fleshly delight and my own lust.

That each chine of my back is loose, and each of them moves against the other; that is therefore because the joy of my lust sometimes went too much upward for worldly solace and comfort, and sometimes too much downward because of too much depression, grouching, and wrath because of the adversity and disease of the world. And there as the back is moved and stirred after the motions of the head, so ought I to have been stable and moveable according to God's will, who is the head of all good. But because I did not do so, therefore I justly suffer these pains which you now see.

That a serpent creeps forth from the lower parts of my stomach to the higher parts, and standing like a bow turned about as a wheel, is because my lust and delight were inordinate; and my will would have had all the world's goods in its possession; and in many ways to have spent them, and indiscreetly. Therefore the serpent now searches about in my entrails without comfort, gnawing and biting without mercy.

That my breast is open and altogether gnawn with worms, shows the true justice of God, for I loved foul and rotten things more than God; and the love of my heart was all given to transitory and passing things of the flesh and of the world. And therefore as from small worms are brought longer worms, right so is my soul; for the foul stinking things which I loved are filled with devils. My arms seem as if they are beams; that is because I had my desire like two arms; that is to say, because I desired a long life, that I might have lived longer in sin.

I would also and desired that the Judgement of God had been easier than the Scripture said. Nevertheless, my conscience told me very well that my time was short and the Judgement of God insufferable. But again my desire and delight that I had in sinning stirred me to think that my life should be long and the Judgement of God bearable. And of such suggestions my conscience was subverted and turned upside down, and my will and reason followed lust and delectation. And therefore the devil is now lodged in my soul against my will, and my conscience understands and feels that the Judgement of God is right.

My hands are like long keys. And that is because the precepts and commandments were not pleasing to me; and therefore my hands are now to me a great burden, and lack any use. My neck is turned like wood which is placed against a sharp blade; that is because the words of God were not sweet to me to swallow and taste them in the charity and love of my heart; but they were too bitter, for they argued and criticized the delight and will of my heart; and therefore now a sharp blade stands at my throat.

My lips are cut off, for they were ready with vain, joking, and dishonest words of pride; but they failed and found it irksome to speak the words of God. My chin appears to be trembling, and my teeth grind and beat together; that is because I was wilful in giving food to my body, so that I might seem fair and desirable, whole and strong to all the delights and pleasures of the body. And therefore now my chin trembles and quakes without comfort, and my teeth beat together; for all that they wasted was but unprofitable work as far as being fruit for the soul.

My nose is cut off; because amongst you it is done to them who trespass in such a case to their greater shaming, right so is the mark of my shame set upon me for ever. That my eyes hang down by sinews upon my cheeks is correct for, just as the eyes joyed in the fairness of my cheeks for ostentation and showing-off from pride, so now from much weeping they are put out and hang down to my cheeks with shame and confusion. And right so is my forehead hollow, and instead of it there is a great darkness. For about my forehead was set the veil and array of pride; and I would appear glorious, and be seen of fairness, and seem fair. And therefore is my forehead now dark and foul, deformed and misshapen. That my brain boils up and flows out like lead and pitch, is well deserved. For as lead is soft and may be bent according to the will of him who uses it, so was my conscience, which lay in my brain, bowed to the will of my heart, although I understood well the things that I should have done.

And the Passion also of the Son of God was in no way fastened in my heart, but it flowed out like a thing that I knew well and took no heed of. And furthermore, of that holy blood which flowed out of the members of the Son of God, I took no more heed than of pitch, and fled, as if they were pitch, from the words of charity and of the love of God, lest they should convert me or trouble me from the delights of the body. Nevertheless, sometimes I heard the words of God to the shame of man; but as quickly as they entered, so quickly went they out of my heart again. And therefore now my brain flows out like burning pitch, with extremely hot boiling. My ears are stopped with hard stones, for words of pride entered in them joyfully, and softly and sweetly they went down into the heart, for the charity of God was closed out of my heart. And because I did all that I could for pride and for the world, therefore now joyful words have been shut out from my ears.

But you may ask if I did any meritorious or good deeds. And I answer you I did as does a money changer, who clips and cuts the money; and then reassigns or takes it again to the lord to whom it belongs. So I fasted and made alms and such other good works; but I did them for fear of Hell, and to escape the adversities and disease of the body. But because the charity and the love of God was cut off from my deeds, therefore such deeds were not valuable to me for obtaining Heaven, although they were not without reward. You might also ask how I am within in my will, when so much foulness and distortion is without. I answer: My will is as the will of a manslayer or of him who would gladly slay his own mother. So I covet and desire the worst evil to God, my Creator, who has been to me the best and most sweet”.

Then the dead granddaughter, that is, the daughter's daughter of the same dead Beldame, spoke to her own mother who was still alive, saying: "Hear, you scorpion, my mother, woe is me, because you have evilly deceived me. For you showed me your merry face, but you pricked me very grievously in my heart. Three counsels you gave me of your mouth, three things I learned of your works. And three ways you showed me in your process and going out. The first counsel was to love bodily in order to get carnal love and fleshly friendship. The second was to spend temporal goods over abundantly for praise from the world. The third was to have rest for the delectation and delight of the body.

These counsels were very harmful to me and a great hindrance. For I loved carnally, therefore I now have shame and spiritual envy. And because I spent temporal goods wastefully, therefore was I deprived of grace and the gifts of God in my life, and after my death I have obtained great confusion and shame. For I delighted in the quest and rest of the flesh in my life, therefore in the hour of my death began the unrest of my soul without comfort.

Three things also I learned of your works. The first was to do some good deeds, and nevertheless use them and not to leave that sin which delighted me: as a man should do who mixed honey with venom, and offered it to a Judge; and he, moved by that to anger, dropped it on him who offered it. So am I now expert in many fold anguish and tribulation.

The second is that I learned from you a marvelous manner of clothing myself; that was to conceal my eyes with a kerchief, to have sandals on my feet, gloves on my hands and the neck all naked in front. This kerchief concealing my eyes means the fairness of my body, which so obscured my spiritual eyes that I took no heed nor saw not the fairness of my soul. The sandals, which protect the feet underneath and not above, mean the holy faith of the Church, which I held faithfully, but there followed no fruitful works. For as sandals furthered my feet, right so my conscience, standing in the faith, promoted my soul. But because good works did not follow, therefore my soul was naked.

The gloves on the hands mean a vain hope I had; for I extended my works which are meant by the hands, into so great and large mercy of God, which is signified in the gloves, that, when I groped for the justice of God, I felt it not nor took any heed of it. Therefore I was overbold in sinning. But when death came, then the kerchief fell down from my eyes upon the earth, that is to say, upon my body. And then the soul saw and knew itself as naked, for few of my deeds were good, and my sins were many. And for shame I might not stand in the palace of the eternal king of bliss, because I was shamefully clothed. But then devils drove me into hard punishment, where I was scorned with shame and confusion.

The third thing, mother, that I learned of was to clothe the servant in the lord's clothes, and to set him in the lord's seat, and to praise him as a lord, and to minister

to the lord the reliefs of the servant and all things that were despicable. This lord is charity and the love of God. The servant is a will to sin. Truly in my heart where ought to have reigned godly charity was set the servant, that is, delight and lust of sin, whom I clothed then when I turned my will to all temporal things that are made. And the reliefs and parings and the most abject things I gave to God, not out of charity, but out of fear. So therefore was my heart glad of fulfilling and delight of my own will, for the charity and love of God was excluded from me, and the good Lord cast out and the evil servant closed within. See, mother, these three things I learned from your doings.

Three ways you showed me also in your going out. The first was bright. But when I entered in it, I was blinded by its brightness. The second was compendious and slippery as ice, in which, when I went one step forward, I slid again backward a whole step. The third was very long, in which, when I went forth, there came after me a sudden rushing flood and bore me over a hill into a deep ditch.

In the first way is noted the going forth of my pride, which was too much; for the ostentation and showing which proceeded from my pride shone so much in my eyes that I did not think about the consequences of it, and therefore I was blind.

In the second way is noted that disobedience in this life is not long; for after death a man is compelled to obey. Nevertheless, to me it was long, for when I went one step forward in meekness of confession, I slid backward a step. Because I would that the sin confessed have been forgiven, but after making confession, I would not flee from the sin. And therefore I did not stand firmly in the step of obedience, but I slid again into sin, as does he who slides upon ice; because my will was cold and would not get up and flee from the things which delighted me. So therefore when I went a step forward, confessing my sins, I slid a step backward; because I would fall again to those sins and delectations that delighted me, of which I had made confession.

The third way was that I hoped for a thing which was impossible; that is to do more sin and not have lengthy pain; also to live longer, and the hour of death not be near. And when I went forth by this way, there came after me a hasty rushing flood; that is to say, death, which from one year to another caught me and turned my feet upside down with pain of illness.

What were these feet, but when sickness comes about, I might take little heed of the profit of the body and less to the health of the soul? Therefore I fell into a deep ditch, when my heart that was high in pride and hard in sin burst, and the soul fell down low into the ditch of pain for sin. And therefore this way was long; for after the life of the body was ended, soon there began a great pain. Woe, therefore, to me, my mother; for all those things that I learned from you with joy, now I wail about them with weeping and sorrow".

Then spoke this same dead daughter to the spouse of Christ, Saint Bridget, who

saw all these things, saying: "Hear, you who see me. To you it seems that my head and my face as like thunder, thundering and lightning within and without; and my neck and my breast as it were put into a hard press, with long sharp pricks; my arms and my feet are as it were long serpents; and my womb is smitten with hard hammers; my thighs and my legs are as it were flowing water out of the gutters of a roof, and my feet are frozen together.

But yet there is one pain within that is more bitter to me than all these. Right as if there were any person of whom all the breaths of his living spirits were stopped and all the veins, filled with wind, pressed up to the heart, which for violence and strength of those winds should begin to burst; so am I disposed within very wretchedly for the wind of my pride, which was to me much cherished. Nevertheless, yet I am in the way of mercy, for in my most grievous sickness I was confessed in the best manner I could, for fear of pain. But when death came near, than came to my mind the consideration and vision of the Passion of my God, how that was much more grievous and more bitter than all that I was worthy to suffer for my sins and demerits. And with such consideration, I became tearful and wept and wailed that the charity and the love of God was so much to me and mine so little to him.

Then I beheld him with the eyes of my conscience and said: 'O Lord, I believe you, my God. O you Son of the Virgin, have mercy upon me for your bitter Passion; for now from henceforth would I amend my life, if I had time, very willingly'. And in that point of time was there lit and kindled in my heart a spark of charity, by which the Passion of Christ seemed more bitter to me than my own death. And so then burst my heart, and my soul come into the hands and power of devils to be presented to the Judgement of God.

Therefore it came into the hands of devils, because it was not worthy that the angels of fairness should come near the soul of so much foulness. But in the Judgement of God, when the devils cried and asked that my soul should be judged and damned to Hell, the Judge answered: 'I see', he said, 'a spark of charity in the heart which ought not to be quenched, but it must be in my sight. Therefore I judge the soul to Purgatory, until the time that it be so worthily purged and made clean that it deserve and have forgiveness'.

But now you might ask if I shall have part of all the goods and good deeds that were done for me. I answer you with a parable. Just as if you saw two balances hanging, and in that one were naturally bearing downward and in the other were some light thing going upward, the greater things and fair that were put in the empty balance, so much the rather should they lift up the other balance that is heavy and of great weight. It is so with me; for the deeper that I was in sin, the more grievously am I gone down into pain. And therefore what ever is done to the praise of God for me, it lifts me up from pain; and specially that prayer and good that is done by rightful men and the friends of God, and benefits that are done by well-gotten goods and deeds of charity. Such things, truly, they were that make me each

day become closer to God”.

After this spoke the holy Mother of God to the spouse of Christ, Saint Bridget, and said: "You marvel how I, who am Queen of Heaven, and you who live in the world, and that soul which is in Purgatory, and that other which is in Hell, speak together. This I shall tell you. I, truly, never go from Heaven, for I shall never be departed from the sight of God. Nor that soul which is in Hell shall not be separated from pain. Nor that soul which is in Purgatory, neither, until it is purged clean. Nor shall you come to us before the departure of your bodily life.

But your soul with your understanding, by virtue of the spirit of God, is lifted up to hear the words of God in Heaven: and you are allowed to know some pains in Hell and in Purgatory, for warning and amendment of evil livers and to the comfort and profit of them who are good. Nevertheless, know that your body and your soul are joined together on earth, but the Holy Spirit who is in Heaven gives you understanding to understand his will”.

EXPLANATION

After this, the third woman who was alive left all the world and entered into the religious life, and lived all her life after in great perfection and holiness.