

# **HILDEGARD of BINGEN**

## ***SCIVIAS***

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Cover art: MOTHER PLACID DEMPSEY, a Benedictine nun of the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem, Connecticut, is also a sculptor, painter, graphics designer and book illustrator. Regarding the cover and inside illustrations she says: "Doing art work for this volume became a unique personal experience in which I was struck by three things. First, I realized there has existed for centuries a body of illustrations of the Visions that are traditionally ascribed to St. Hildegard's 'direct supervision.' Despite their obvious differences in style, which suggest not merely different artists but entirely different historical periods, they have enjoyed a long history of commentaries by various spiritual writers and important scholars, including, in our time, Dr. Carl Jung. Recognizing their unique value in terms of tradition and their own intrinsic aesthetic beauty, I chose to represent them here in all their clarity and forthrightness. In so doing, I came to appreciate that, in a very real sense, they do proceed from her 'direct supervision.' Secondly, I came to understand directness and supervision as the marks of St. Hildegard, who looked upon the mystery of nature and mankind with the radical and comprehensive 'eye' of Faith, that is, through supernatural 'seeing' or, as one may say, through 'Super-Vision,' and this is what I have tried to express on the cover. Thirdly, I realized that her 'Super-Vision' includes the hidden bringing together of many persons to share and creatively carry out that Vision. In this regard I wish to express my debt to her and, through her, to the Abbess and members of my own community, to Sr. Mary Charles, R.S.M., Dr. John Farina, children's book illustrator Mercer Mayer, and to Jeanne Parr."

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DIV/CONT

# Declaration

## These Are True Visions Flowing from God.

And behold! In the forty-third year of my earthly course, as I was gazing with great fear and trembling attention at a heavenly vision, I saw a great splendor in which resounded a voice from Heaven, saying to me,

“O fragile human, ashes of ashes, and filth of filth! Say and write what you see and hear. But since you are timid in speaking, and simple in expounding, and untaught in writing, speak and write these things not by a human mouth, and not by the understanding of human invention, and not by the requirements of human composition, but as you see and hear them on high in the heavenly places in the wonders of God. Explain these things in such a way that the hearer, receiving the words of his instructor, may expound them in those words, according to that will, vision and instruction. Thus therefore, O human, speak these things that you see and hear. And write them not by yourself or any other human being, but by the will of Him Who knows, sees and disposes all things in the secrets of His mysteries.”

And again I heard the voice from Heaven saying to me, “Speak therefore of these wonders, and, being so taught, write them and speak.”

It happened that, in the eleven hundred and forty-first year of the Incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, when I was forty-two years and seven months old, Heaven was opened and a fiery light of exceeding brilliance came and permeated my whole brain, and inflamed my whole heart and my whole breast, not like a burning but like a warming flame, as the sun warms anything its rays touch. And immediately I knew the meaning of the exposition of the Scriptures, namely the Psalter, the Gospel and the other catholic volumes of both the Old and the New Testaments, though I did not have the interpretation of the words of their texts or the division of the syllables or the knowledge of cases or tenses. But I had sensed in myself



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wonderfully the power and mystery of secret and admirable visions from my childhood—that is, from the age of five—up to that time, as I do now. This, however, I showed to no one except a few religious persons who were living in the same manner as I; but meanwhile, until the time when God by His grace wished it to be manifested, I concealed it in quiet silence. But the visions I saw I did not perceive in dreams, or sleep, or delirium, or by the eyes of the body, or by the ears of the outer self, or in hidden places; but I received them while awake and seeing with a pure mind and the eyes and ears of the inner self, in open places, as God willed it. How this might be is hard for mortal flesh to understand.

But when I had passed out of childhood and had reached the age of full maturity mentioned above, I heard a voice from Heaven saying, “I am the Living Light, Who illuminates the darkness. The person [Hildegard] whom I have chosen and whom I have miraculously stricken as I willed, I have placed among great wonders, beyond the measure of the ancient people who saw in Me many secrets; but I have laid her low on the earth, that she might not set herself up in arrogance of mind. The world has had in her no joy or lewdness or use in worldly things, for I have withdrawn her from impudent boldness, and she feels fear and is timid in her works. For she suffers in her inmost being and in the veins of her flesh; she is distressed in mind and sense and endures great pain of body, because no security has dwelt in her, but in all her undertakings she has judged herself guilty. For I have closed up the cracks in her heart that her mind may not exalt itself in pride or vainglory, but may feel fear and grief rather than joy and wantonness. Hence in My love she searched in her mind as to where she could find someone who would run in the path of salvation. And she found such a one and loved him [the monk Volmar of Disibodenberg], knowing that he was a faithful man, working like herself on another part of the work that leads to Me. And, holding fast to him, she worked with him in great zeal so that My hidden miracles might be revealed. And she did not seek to exalt herself above herself but with many sighs bowed to him whom she found in the ascent of humility and the intention of good will.

“O human, who receives these things meant to manifest what is hidden not in the disquiet of deception but in the purity of simplicity, write, therefore, the things you see and hear.”

But I, though I saw and heard these things, refused to write for a long time through doubt and bad opinion and the diversity of human words, not with stubbornness but in the exercise of humility, until, laid low by the scourge of God, I fell upon a bed of sickness; then, compelled at last by many illnesses, and by the witness of a certain noble maiden of good conduct [the nun Richardis of Stade] and of that man whom I had secretly sought and found, as mentioned above, I set my hand to the writing. While I was doing

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it, I sensed, as I mentioned before, the deep profundity of scriptural exposition; and, raising myself from illness by the strength I received, I brought this work to a close—though just barely—in ten years.

These visions took place and these words were written in the days of Henry, Archbishop of Mainz, and of Conrad, King of the Romans, and of Cuno, Abbot of Disibodenberg, under Pope Eugenius.

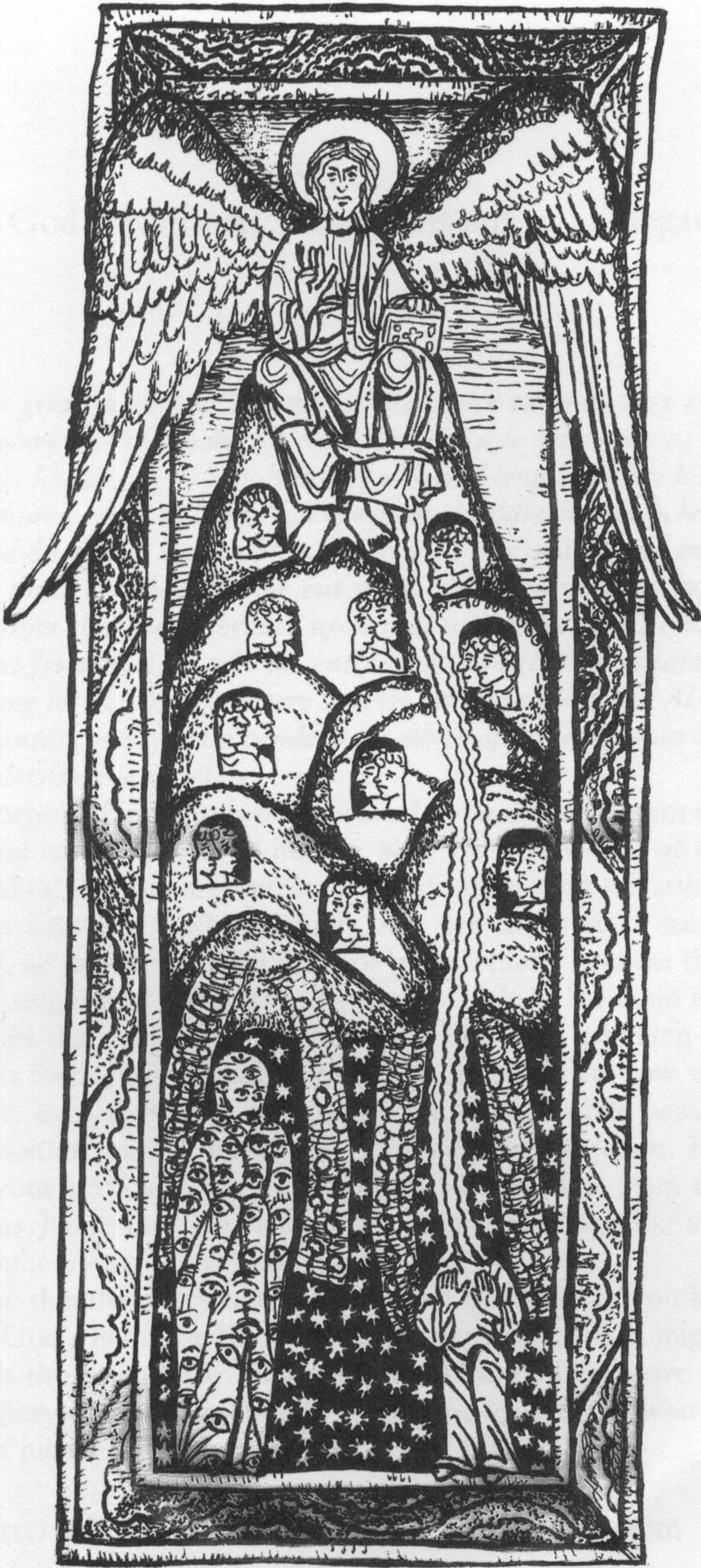
And I spoke and wrote these things not by the invention of my heart or that of any other person, but as by the secret mysteries of God I heard and received them in the heavenly places.

And again I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me, “Cry out therefore, and write thus!”

# Book One

## THE CREATOR AND CREATION





THE ONE ENTHRONED



## VISION ONE

### God Enthroned Shows Himself to Hildegard

*I saw a great mountain the color of iron, and enthroned on it One of such great glory that it blinded my sight. On each side of him there extended a soft shadow, like a wing of wondrous breadth and length. Before him, at the foot of the mountain, stood an image full of eyes on all sides, in which, because of those eyes, I could discern no human form. In front of this image stood another, a child wearing a tunic of subdued color but white shoes, upon whose head such glory descended from the One enthroned upon that mountain that I could not look at its face. But from the One who sat enthroned upon that mountain many living sparks sprang forth, which flew very sweetly around the images. Also, I perceived in this mountain many little windows, in which appeared human heads, some of subdued colors and some white.*

And behold, He Who was enthroned upon that mountain cried out in a strong, loud voice saying, "O human, who are fragile dust of the earth and ashes of ashes! Cry out and speak of the origin of pure salvation until those people are instructed, who, though they see the inmost contents of the Scriptures, do not wish to tell them or preach them, because they are lukewarm and sluggish in serving God's justice. Unlock for them the enclosure of mysteries that they, timid as they are, conceal in a hidden and fruitless field. Burst forth into a fountain of abundance and overflow with mystical knowledge, until they who now think you contemptible because of Eve's transgression are stirred up by the flood of your irrigation. For you have received your profound insight not from humans, but from the lofty and tremendous Judge on high, where this calmness will shine strongly with glorious light among the shining ones.

"Arise therefore, cry out and tell what is shown to you by the strong power of God's help, for He Who rules every creature in might and kindness floods those who fear Him and serve Him in sweet love and humility with the glory of heavenly enlightenment and leads those who persevere in the way of justice to the joys of the Eternal Vision."

#### 1 The strength and stability of God's eternal Kingdom

As you see, therefore, *the great mountain the color of iron* symbolizes the strength and stability of the eternal Kingdom of God, which no fluctuation of



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mutability can destroy; and *the One enthroned upon it of such great glory that it blinds your sight* is the One in the kingdom of beatitude Who rules the whole world with celestial divinity in the brilliance of unfading serenity, but is incomprehensible to human minds. But that *on each side of him there extends a soft shadow like a wing of wonderful breadth and length* shows that both in admonition and in punishment ineffable justice displays sweet and gentle protection and perseveres in true equity.

### 2 Concerning fear of the Lord

*And before him at the foot of the mountain stands an image full of eyes on all sides.* For the Fear of the Lord stands in God's presence with humility and gazes on the Kingdom of God, surrounded by the clarity of a good and just intention, exercising her zeal and stability among humans. And thus *you can discern no human form in her on account of those eyes.* For by the acute sight of her contemplation she counters all forgetfulness of God's justice, which people often feel in their mental tedium, so no inquiry by weak mortals eludes her vigilance.

### 3 Concerning those who are poor in spirit

And so *before this image appears another image, that of a child, wearing a tunic of subdued color but white shoes.* For when the Fear of the Lord leads, they who are poor in spirit follow; for the Fear of the Lord holds fast in humble devotion to the blessedness of poverty of spirit, which does not seek boasting or elation of heart, but loves simplicity and sobriety of mind, attributing its just works not to itself but to God in pale subjection, wearing, as it were, a tunic of subdued color and faithfully following the serene footsteps of the Son of God. *Upon her head descends such glory from the One enthroned upon that mountain that you cannot look at her face;* because He Who rules every created being imparts the power and strength of this blessedness by the great clarity of His visitation, and weak, mortal thought cannot grasp His purpose, since He Who possesses celestial riches submitted himself humbly to poverty.

### 4 They who fear God and love poverty of spirit are the guardians of virtues

But *from the One Who is enthroned upon that mountain many living sparks go forth, which fly about those images with great sweetness.* This means that many exceedingly strong virtues come forth from Almighty God, darting fire in divine glory; these ardently embrace and captivate those who truly

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fear God and who faithfully love poverty of spirit, surrounding them with their help and protection.

5 The aims of human acts cannot be hidden from God's knowledge

Wherefore *in this mountain you see many little windows, in which appear human heads, some of subdued color and some white*. For in the most high and profound and perspicuous knowledge of God the aims of human acts cannot be concealed or hidden. Most often they display both lukewarmness and purity, since people now slumber in guilt, weary in their hearts and in their deeds, and now awaken and keep watch in honor. Solomon bears witness to this for Me, saying:

6 Solomon on this subject

"The slothful hand has brought about poverty, but the hand of the industrious man prepares riches" [Proverbs 10:4]; which means, a person makes himself weak and poor when he will not work justice, or avoid wickedness, or pay a debt, remaining idle in the face of the wonders of the works of beatitude. But one who does strong works of salvation, running in the way of truth, obtains the upwelling fountain of glory, by which he prepares himself most precious riches on earth and in Heaven.

Therefore, whoever has knowledge in the Holy Spirit and wings of faith, let this one not ignore My admonition but taste it, embrace it and receive it in his soul.





MAN'S FALL



## VISION TWO

### Creation and the Fall

*Then I saw as it were a great multitude of very bright living lamps, which received fiery brilliance and acquired an unclouded splendor. And behold! A pit of great breadth and depth appeared, with a mouth like the mouth of a well, emitting fiery smoke with great stench, from which a loathsome cloud spread out and touched a deceitful, vein-shaped form. And, in a region of brightness, it blew upon a white cloud that had come forth from a beautiful human form and contained within itself many and many stars, and so doing, cast out both the white cloud and the human form from that region. When this was done, a luminous splendor surrounded that region, and all the elements of the world, which before had existed in great calm, were turned to the greatest agitation and displayed horrible terrors. And again I heard Him Who had spoken to me before, saying:*

I No unjust impulse takes the blessed angels from the love and praise of God

No impulse of injustice makes those withdraw in terror who follow God with faithful devotion and burn with worthy love through affection for Him, from the glory of heavenly beatitude; while they who serve God merely in pretence not only fail to advance to greater things but, by just judgment, are cast out from the things they erroneously suppose they possess. This is shown by the *great multitude of very bright living lamps*; they are the vast army of heavenly spirits, shining in the blessed life and living in great beauty and adornment, because when they were created by God they did not grasp at proud exaltation but strongly persisted in divine love. For, *receiving fiery brilliance, they acquired an unclouded splendor*, because when Lucifer and his followers attempted to rebel against the supreme Creator, they, with zeal for God in his and his followers' downfall, clothed themselves in the vigilance of divine love, while the others, not wishing to know God, embraced the torpor of ignorance. In what way? At the fall of the Devil great praise burst forth from these angelic spirits who persevered in rectitude with God, because with keenest sight they knew that God continues immovable, without any change of any mutability in His power, so that no warrior can ever conquer



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Him. And thus, burning in His love and persevering in righteousness, they despised all the dust of injustice.

### 2 Lucifer, for pride in his beauty and power, was cast forth from Heaven

But Lucifer, who because of his pride was cast forth from celestial glory, was so great at the moment of his creation that he felt no defect either in his beauty or in his strength. Hence when he contemplated his beauty, and when he considered in himself the power of his strength, he discovered pride, which promised him that he might begin what he wished, because he could achieve what he had begun. And, seeing a place where he thought he could live, wanting to display his beauty and power there, he spoke thus within himself about God: "I wish to shine there as He does here!" And all his army assented, saying, "What you wish we also wish." And when, elated with pride, he tried to achieve what he had conceived, the jealousy of the Lord, reaching out in fiery blackness, cast him down with all his retinue, so that they were made burning instead of shining and black instead of fair. Why did this happen?

### 3 God would have been unjust if He had not cast them down

If God had not cast down their presumption, He would have been unjust, since He would have cherished those who wished to divide the wholeness of divinity. But He cast them down and reduced their impiety to nothing, as He removes from the sight of His glory all who try to oppose themselves to Him, as My servant Job shows when he says:

### 4 Words of Job on this subject

"The lamp of the wicked shall be put out and a deluge shall come upon them; and He shall distribute the sorrows of His wrath. They shall be chaff before the face of the wind, and sparks scattered by the whirlwind" [Job 21:17-18]. This means the flagrant filth of wanton wickedness that emerges from false prosperity, like a distinguishing mark on the carnal will of those who do not fear God but spurn Him in perverse rage, disdaining to know that anyone can conquer them, while in the fire of their ferocity they want to consume whatever they oppose. In the hour of God's vengeance this filth will be trodden underfoot like dirt; and by the supreme judgment these impious ones will be cast down in wrath by all who are under heaven, because they are harmful both to God and to humans. Therefore, since God does not allow them to have what they want, they are scattered everywhere

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among people, tormented by pain in the rage of their madness, because they burn to possess what God does not allow them to devour. And since they withdraw in this way from God, they become entirely useless, able to do nothing good for either God or humanity, cut off from the seed of life by the foreseeing eye of God's contemplation. For which reason they are given over to misery, wasting themselves in the flat taste of evil fame, since they do not receive the downpouring rain of the Holy Spirit.

### 5 On Hell, which in its voracity keeps souls swallowed up

But *the pit of great breadth and depth* that appeared to you is Hell, having within it, as you see, the breadth of vices and the depth of losses. It has a mouth indeed like the mouth of a well, emitting a fiery smoke with great stench, because in its voracity to swallow up souls, it shows them sweetness and gentleness, and with perverse deception leads them to the torments of perdition, where rises a burning fire with black smoke pouring out and a boiling, deadly stench; these dire torments were prepared for the Devil and his followers, who turned away from the Supreme Good, not wishing to know or understand it. Therefore they are outcast from all good, not because they did not know it, but because in their great pride they despised it. What does this mean?

### 6 In the casting down of the Devil Hell was created

In the casting down of the Devil this exterior darkness, full of all kinds of pains, was created; for these evil spirits, in contrast to the glory that had been prepared for them, were subject to the misery of many punishments, and in contrast to the brightness they had had, endured the thickest darkness. How? When the proud angel raised himself on high like a snake, he received the prison of Hell, because it could not be that anyone should prevail over God. For how could two hearts possibly exist in one breast? Likewise, there could not be two gods in Heaven. But since the Devil and his followers chose proud presumption, therefore he found the pit of Hell prepared for him. So also the people who imitate them in their actions become sharers of their pains, according to their deserts.

### 7 Gehenna is for the impenitent, other torments for those who can be saved

Some souls, having reached the point of damnation, are rejected from the knowledge of God, and therefore they shall have the pains of Hell without the consolation of deliverance. But some, whom God has not con-



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signed to oblivion, experience a higher process and undergo purgation of the sins into which they have fallen, and at last feel the loosing of their bonds and are delivered into rest. How is this? Gehenna is ready for those who have impenitently forgotten God in their hearts, but other torments for those who, though they perform bad works, do not persevere in them to the end, but at last, groaning, look back to God. For this reason let the faithful flee from the Devil and love God, casting away evil works and adorning good works with the beauty of penitence; as My servant Ezekiel, inspired by Me, urges, saying:

### 8 Words of Ezekiel on this subject

“Be converted, and do penance for all your iniquities; and iniquity shall not be your ruin” [Ezekiel 18:30]. That is to say: O you people! who till now have wallowed in sin, remember your name of Christians, be converted to the way of salvation, and perform all your works in a gush of penitence, who previously had innumerable vices and committed many crimes. Thus as you rise from your evil habits, that iniquity by which you had been soiled will not sink you deep in the ruin of death, since you cast it off in the day of your salvation. Therefore the angels will rejoice over you, because you have abandoned the Devil and run to God, knowing Him better in your good actions than you did when you endured the mockery of the ancient seducer.

### 9 The Devil’s fraud, which deceived Adam through the serpent

That *a loathsome cloud spread out from the pit and touched a deceitful, vein-shaped form* means that from the bottom of perdition the Devil’s fraud came forth and invaded the serpent, who already bore within itself the crime of fraudulent intention, in order to deceive humanity. In what way? Because, when the Devil saw Man in paradise, he cried out with great aversion, saying, “Oh! who touches me in the mansion of true beatitude?” And so he knew that he had not yet perfected in any creature the malice he had within himself, but seeing Adam and Eve walk with childlike innocence in the garden of delight, with great wonder he rose up to deceive them through the serpent. Why? Because he understood that the serpent more than any other animal resembled him and was eager to accomplish by its deceitfulness what he could not do openly in his own form. So when he saw Adam and Eve turn away in soul and body from the forbidden tree, he understood that they were obeying a divine precept, and that in the first work they began he could very easily throw them down.

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10 Only from Eve's reply did the Devil know the tree was forbidden

For he would not have known that this tree was forbidden them unless he had proved it by guileful questioning and by their answers. Wherefore *in that bright region he blew upon a white cloud, which had come forth from a beautiful human form and contained within itself many and many stars* because, in that place of delight, Eve—whose soul was innocent, for she had been raised out of innocent Adam, bearing in her body the whole multitude of the human race, shining with God's preordination—was invaded by the Devil through the seduction of the serpent for her own downfall. Why was this? Because he knew that the susceptibility of the woman would be more easily conquered than the strength of the man; and he saw that Adam burned so vehemently in his holy love for Eve that if he, the Devil, conquered Eve, Adam would do whatever she said to him. Hence the Devil *cast out both the cloud and the human form from that region* because that ancient seducer cast out Eve and Adam by his deception from the seat of blessedness and thrust them into the darkness of destruction. How? By first misleading Eve, so that she might flatter and caress Adam and thus win his assent, since she more than any other creature could lead Adam to disobedience, having been made from his rib. Thus woman very quickly overthrows man, if he does not hate her and easily accepts her words.

11 What things are to be observed and avoided in marriage

Because a mature woman was given not to a little boy but to a mature man, namely Adam, so now a mature woman must be married to a man when he has reached the full age of fertility, just as due cultivation is given to a tree when it begins to put forth flowers. For Eve was formed from a rib by Adam's ingrafted heat and vigor, and therefore now it is by the strength and heat of a man that a woman receives the semen to bring a child into the world. For the man is the sower, but the woman is the recipient of the seed. Wherefore a wife is under the power of her husband because the strength of the man is to the susceptibility of the woman as the hardness of stone is to the softness of earth.

But the first woman's being formed from man means the joining of wife to husband. And thus it is to be understood: This union must not be vain or done in forgetfulness of God, because He Who brought forth the woman from the man instituted this union honorably and virtuously, forming flesh from flesh. Wherefore, as Adam and Eve were one flesh, so now also a man and woman become one flesh in a union of holy love for the multiplication of



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the human race. And therefore there should be perfect love in these two as there was in those first two. For Adam could have blamed his wife because by her advice she brought him death, but nonetheless he did not dismiss her as long as he lived in this world, because he knew she had been given to him by divine power. Therefore, because of perfect love, let a man not leave his wife except for the reason the faithful Church allows. And let them never separate, unless both with one mind want to contemplate My Son, and say with burning love for Him: "We want to renounce the world and follow Him Who suffered for our sake!" But if these two disagree as to whether they should renounce the world for one devotion, then let them by no means separate from each other, since, just as the blood cannot be separated from the flesh as long as the spirit remains in the flesh, so the husband and wife cannot be divided from each other but must walk together in one will.

But if either husband or wife breaks the law by fornication, and it is made public either by themselves or by their priests, they shall undergo the just censure of the spiritual magisterium. For the husband shall complain of the wife, or the wife of the husband, about the sin against their union before the Church and its prelates, according to the justice of God; but not so that the husband or wife can seek another marriage; either they shall stay together in righteous union, or they shall both abstain from such unions, as the discipline of church practice shows. And they shall not tear each other to pieces by viperous rending, but they shall love with pure love, since both man and woman could not exist without having been conceived in such a bond, as My friend Paul witnesses when he says:

### 12 Words of the apostle on this subject

"As the woman is of the man, so is the man for the woman; but all are from God" [1 Corinthians 11:12]. Which is to say: Woman was created for the sake of man, and man for the sake of woman. As she is from the man, the man is also from her, lest they dissent from each other in the unity of making their children; for they should work as one in one work, as the air and the wind intermingle in their labor. In what way? The air is moved by the wind, and the wind is mingled with the air, so that in their movement all verdant things are subject to their influence. What does this mean? The wife must cooperate with the husband and the husband with the wife in making children. Therefore the greatest crime and wickedest act is to make by fornication a division in the days of creating children, since the husband and wife cut off their own blood from its rightful place, sending it to an alien place. They will certainly incur the deceit of the Devil and the wrath of God, because they have transgressed that bond God ordained for them. Woe to them, therefore, if their sins are not forgiven! But although, as has been shown, the husband

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and wife work together in their children, nevertheless the husband and the wife and all other creatures come from the divine disposition and ordination, since God made them according to His will.

### 13 Why before the Incarnation some men had several wives

Before the Incarnation of My Son, however, certain men among the ancient people had several wives at once, as they wished; they had not yet heard the open prohibition of My Son, Who when He came into the world showed that the right fruit of this union of husband and wife as long as they live is the fruit manifest in the union of Adam and Eve, a union to be exercised not by the will of Man but by the fear of God. For it is better to have this right union, by the arrangement of the prudence of the Church, than to crave fornication; but you humans ignore this, and pursue your lusts not only like humans but like beasts.

But let there be right faith and pure love of the knowledge of God between husband and wife lest their seed be polluted by the Devil's art and divine vengeance strike them because they are biting and tearing each other to pieces and sowing their seed inhumanly with the wantonness of beasts. In such a case jealousy will torture them like a viper, and without the fear of God and without human discipline a defiled excess of seed will be stored up in them, and often, by the just judgment of God, this perversity of theirs will be chastised by having those born of them deprived of limbs and of health in their lives; unless I receive their penitence and show Myself propitious to them. For if any shall call upon Me in penitence for their sins, I will accept their penitence for the love of My Son; for if anyone lifts a finger to Me in penitence, that is, reaches out to Me in penitence and groaning in his heart, saying, "I have sinned, Lord, before You!" My Son, Who is the Priest of priests, will show Me that penitence; for penitence which is offered to priests for the love of My Son obtains the purgation of the sinners. Therefore, people who worthily do penance escape from the jaws of the Devil, who, trying to swallow the hook of divine power, has grievously wounded his jaw; and now, therefore, faithful souls pass out of perdition and arrive at salvation. How?

Because the priests at the altar, invoking My name, will receive the confession of the peoples and show them the remedy of salvation. So, in order to find God propitious, let them not contaminate their seed by various vices, since those who emit their semen in fornication or adultery render their children, born of them thus, unsound. How? Can he who mixes mud or ordure with pure clay make a lasting vessel? Likewise, will he who contaminates his semen in fornication or adultery ever beget strong sons? But many work in different ways in their inmost being, and many of these become



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prudent toward the world and toward God. And with these the heavenly Jerusalem is filled; deserting vice and loving virtue, they imitate My Son in chastity and in great works, carrying in their bodies, as much as they are able, His martyrdom.

But when I do not wish a person to have children, I take away the virile power of the semen, that it may not coagulate in the mother's womb; so also I deny the earth the power to bear fruit when by My just judgment I will to do so. But do you wonder, O human, why I let children be born in adultery and similar crimes? My judgment is just. For, since the fall of Adam, I have not found in human seed the justice that should have been in it, for the Devil drove out this justice by the taste of the fruit. Therefore I sent My Son into the world born of a virgin, so that by His blood, in which there was no carnal pollution, He might take away from the Devil those spoils that he had carried off from humanity.

### 14 No human or angel but only the Son of God could deliver Man

For neither a human being, conceived in sin, nor an angel, who has no covering of flesh, could save Man, wallowing in sins and laboring under the heaviness of the flesh, from the power of the Devil; but only He Who, coming without sin, with a pure and sinless body, delivered him by His Passion. Therefore, though human beings are born in sin, I nevertheless gather them into My heavenly kingdom when they faithfully seek it. For no wickedness can take My elect from me, as Wisdom testifies, saying:

### 15 Words of Wisdom on this subject

“The souls of the just are in the hand of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them” [Wisdom 3:1]. Which is to say: The souls of those who embrace the path of rectitude with devout affection are aided by the celestial Helper; so that, because of the good works by which in the height of justice they strive for Heaven, the torment of perdition does not break them, for the true Light strengthens them in the fear and love of God. But after Adam and Eve were driven out of the place of delight, they knew in themselves the work of conceiving and bearing children. And falling thus from disobedience into death, when they knew they could sin, they discovered sin's sweetness. And in this way, turning My rightful institution into sinful lust, although they should have known that the commotion in their veins was not for the sweetness of sin but for the love of children, by the Devil's suggestion they changed it to lechery; and, losing the innocence of the act of begetting, they yielded it to sin. This was not accomplished without the Devil's persuasion; for that purpose he sent forth his darts, and it did not come to pass without

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his suggestion; as he said, "My strength is in human conception, and therefore humanity is mine!" And, seeing that if Man consented to him he would become a sharer in his punishment, he said again within himself: "All iniquities are against Most Powerful God, since He is certainly not unjust." And that deceiver put this as a great seal on his heart, that Man, who had consented to him of his own accord, could not be taken away from him.

Therefore I took secret counsel within Myself, to send My Son for the redemption of humanity, that Man might be restored to the heavenly Jerusalem. And no iniquity could withstand this counsel, for My Son, coming into the world, gathered unto himself all who, forsaking sin, chose to hear and imitate Him. I am just and righteous, not willing the iniquity that you, O human, embrace when you know you can do evil. For Lucifer and Man each tried at the beginning of their creation to rebel against Me and could not stand firm, but fell away from good and chose evil. But Lucifer laid hold of total evil and rejected all good, and did not taste the good at all, but fell into death. Adam, however, tasted the good when he accepted obedience, but he longed for evil, and in his desire accomplished it by his disobedience to God. Why this happened is not for you, O human, to investigate; mortal cannot know what there was before the creation of the world or what may happen after the last day, but God alone knows this, except insofar as He permits His elect to know it.

But that fornication, which is commonly done by people, is abominable in My sight, for I created male and female from the beginning in integrity and not in wickedness. Therefore those hypocrites who say it is lawful for them to commit fornication, with animal appetites, with whomever they wish, are unworthy of My eyes, because, despising the honor and loftiness of their rationality, they look to the beasts and make themselves like them. Woe to those who live so and persevere in this wickedness!

### 16 Blood relatives may not be united in marriage

I also do not wish the blood of relatives to be mingled in marriage, where the ardor of family love is not yet weakened, lest there arise shameless love in the relation of consanguinity; but let the blood of different families flow together, which feels no blood relationship burning within it, so that human custom may work there.

### 17 Example of milk

Milk that is cooked once or twice has not yet lost its flavor, but by the time it is coagulated and cooked the seventh or eighth time, it loses its qualities and does not have a pleasant taste except in case of necessity. And as



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one must not have sexual relations with a relative who is one's own spouse, so also one must abhor a sexual relationship with a relative related not to one but to one's spouse; let no human being join in such a coupling, which the Church by its Doctors, who established it in great responsibility and honor, has forbidden.

### 18 Blood relatives could marry in the Old, but not in the New Testament

Under the Old Testament people married their blood relatives by the precept of the Law, but that was allowed because of their hardheartedness, so that they might be at peace among themselves and charity be strengthened in them; so that these tribes would not break My Covenant by dividing and mixing with the pagans in marriage, until the time came when My Son brought the fullness of charity, changing the joining of relatives in carnal bonds into marriages with different people in bashful modesty. Thus, since the Bride of My Son [the Church] now possesses in holy baptism a bond of My fear and righteous justice, let such joinings of relatives be far from her; for the embraces of a man and woman related by blood would be wickedly enkindled into shameless fornication and ceaseless lust much more than those of unrelated people. I am explaining this by this person [Hildegard], to whom this human operation is unknown; she is receiving this explanation not from human knowledge, but from God. What next? *vsp?*

### 19 A man should be adult to marry and take only a wife of marriageable age

When a male is at the age of strength, so that his veins are full of blood, then he is fertile in his semen; then let him take in lawfully instituted marriage a woman who is also at the age of heat, that she may modestly receive his seed and bear him children in the path of rectitude.

### 20 On the avoidance of illicit and lustful pollution

But let not a man emit his semen in excessive lust before the years of his strength; for if he tries to sow his seed in the eagerness of lust before that seed has enough heat to coagulate properly, it is proof that he is sinning at the Devil's suggestion. And when a man is already strong in his desire, let him not exercise his strength in that work as much as he can; because if he thus pays attention to the Devil, he is doing a devilish work, making his body contemptible, which is entirely unlawful. But let the man do as human nature

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teaches him, and seek the right way with his wife in the strength of his heat and the vigor of his seed; and let him do this with human knowledge, out of desire for children.

But I do not want this work done during the wife's menses, when she is already suffering the flow of her blood, the opening of the hidden parts of her womb, lest the flow of her blood carry with it the mature seed after its reception, and the seed, thus carried forth, perish; at this time the woman is in pain and in prison, suffering a small portion of the pain of childbirth. I do not remit this time of pain for women, because I gave it to Eve when she conceived sin in the taste of the fruit; but therefore the woman should be cherished in this time with a great and healing tenderness. Let her contain herself in hidden knowledge; she should not, however, restrain herself from going into My temple, but faith allows her to enter in the service of humility for her salvation. But because the Bride of My Son is always whole, a man who has open wounds because the wholeness of his members has been divided by the impact of a blow shall not enter My Temple, except under the fear of great necessity, lest it be violated, as the intact members of Abel, who was a temple of God, were cruelly broken by his brother Cain.

21 A woman shall not enter the temple after birth or defloration  
by a man

So a woman, too, when she bears offspring, may not enter My Temple except in accordance with the law I give her, because her hidden members have been broken, that the holy sacraments of My Temple may be unviolated by any masculine or feminine pain or pollution; because the most pure Virgin bore My Son, and she was whole without any wound of sin. For the place that is consecrated in honor of my Only-Begotten should be untouched by any corruption of bruise or wound, because My Only-Begotten knew in himself the integrity of the Virgin Birth. Therefore, let a woman who breaks the wholeness of her virginity with a man also refrain from entering My Temple while injured by the bruise of her corruption, until the injury of that wound is healed, in accordance with the sure instruction of church teaching. For when His Bride was wedded to My Son on the wood of the cross, she kept herself hidden until My Son commanded His disciples to teach the truth of the Gospel throughout the whole world; but afterward she arose openly and publicly preached the glory of her Bridegroom in the regeneration of the Spirit and water. So let a virgin who is joined to a husband do the same, namely remain hidden with modest shame until the time which church opinion appoints for her; and when she has given herself over to the love of her husband in her concealment, let her come forth openly.



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### 22 Those who have intercourse with the pregnant are murderers

I do not want that work of man and woman to take place from the time when the root of a little child has already been placed in the woman, lest the development of that little child be polluted by excessive and wasted semen, until her purification after childbirth. After that it may be done again, in rectitude and not in wantonness, for the love of children. Thus the human race may procreate by honest human custom, and not as foolish people babble when they claim it is lawful to satisfy their lust at will, saying, "How can we contain ourselves so cruelly?" O humans, if you pay attention to the Devil, he will incite you to evil and destroy you with his deadly poison; but if you raise your eyes to God, He will help you and make you chaste. Do you not desire chastity in your works rather than lust? The woman is subject to the man in that he sows his seed in her, as he works the earth to make it bear fruit. Does a man work the earth that it may bring forth thorns and thistles? Never, but that it may give worthy fruit. So also this endeavor should be for the love of children and not for the wantonness of lust.

Therefore, O humans, weep and howl to your God, Whom you so often despise in your sinning, when you sow your seed in the worst fornication and thereby become not only fornicators but murderers; for you cast aside the mirror of God and sate your lust at will. Therefore the Devil always incites you to this work, knowing that you desire your lustfulness more than the joy of children. Hear, then, you who are among the towers of the Church! In your fornication do not accuse Me, but consider yourselves; for when you despise Me and run to the Devil you do unlawful things, and therefore you do not wish to be chaste; as My servant Hosea says, speaking of the corrupted people:

### 23 Hosea on this subject

"They will not set their thoughts to return to their God; for the spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known God" [Hosea 5:4]. Which is to say: Evil people who do not know God hide the countenance of their heart, and do not do the various things that would bring it back to true brightness; that is, they do not see with clear eyes the things that are of God, but nurture evil in themselves; for, by the Devil's persuasion, the breath of wanton impurity weakens the virile strength they should have, and they cannot put good faith in God because the Devil turns them away from the life of felicity.



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### 24 Commendation of chastity

But now I will turn to My most loving sheep who are securely placed in My heart, the seed of chastity. Virginity was made by Me, for My Son was born of a virgin. And therefore virginity is the most beautiful fruit of all the fruits of the valleys, and the greatest of all the persons in the palace of the unfailing King; for it was not subject to the precept of the law, since it brought My Only-Begotten into the world. Therefore, listen, all those who wish to follow My Son, in the innocence of free chastity or in the solitude of mourning widowhood: Virginity unspotted from the beginning is nobler than widowhood oppressed under the yoke of a husband, even though widowhood, after the grief of the loss of a husband, would imitate virginity.

For My Son bore many pains in His body and underwent the death of the cross; therefore you also, in His love, will suffer much anguish when you conquer in yourselves what was sown in the lust of sin by the taste of the fruit. But though you will endure in your seed flowing rivulets from the conflagration of lust, since you cannot be so chaste as to prevent human weakness from appearing in you secretly, you should in that labor imitate the Passion of My Son and resist yourselves; that is, extinguish within yourselves the burning flame of lust and other things of this world, casting out anger, pride, wantonness and other vices of that sort and attaining this victory by a great struggle. These battles are to Me full of great beauty and much fruit, brighter than the sun and sweeter than the love of spices; for when you trample under foot the burning lust within you, you imitate My Only-Begotten in His pains. And when you persevere in this, you will attain much glory for it in the celestial kingdom.

O sweetest flowers! My angels marvel at your struggle, for you escape from death, so as not to be polluted by the poisonous mud of the world; you have a carnal body, but you tread it under foot, and so you will be glorious in their company since you will appear unpolluted in their likeness. Therefore rejoice that you thus persevere, for I am with you when you receive Me faithfully and with joy in your hearts receive My voice; as I show in a secret vision of My beloved John, saying:

### 25 John on this subject

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any shall hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me” [Apocalypse 3:20]. That is to say: O you who faithfully love Me, your Savior, look and see how, wishing to aid you, I wait at the tabernacle of your heart,

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seeing what you have in the self-knowledge of your conscience, and with the breath of your memory I knock at your spirit, that its goodwill may open and grant admission. And if then the faithful heart, which fears Me, hears My knock, I join Myself to him, embracing him and taking with him the unfailing food, since he offers Me that sweet taste, himself, in his good works; therefore he too shall have that food of life in Me, because he loves what brings life to those who desire justice.

### 26 After Adam was expelled, God closed Paradise in

But, as you see, after Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise, *a luminous splendor surrounded that region*, since when they went forth from the place of delight because of their transgression, the Power of the Divine Majesty took away every stain of contagion from the place and fortified it with His Glory, so that from then on it would be touched by no encroachment; which also showed that the transgression which had taken place there would one day be abolished by His clemency and mercy.

### 27 Creation opposed Man because he rebelled against God

And so *all the elements of the world, which before had existed in great calm, were turned to the greatest agitation and displayed horrible terrors*, because when Man chose disobedience, rebelling against God and forsaking tranquillity for disquiet, that Creation, which had been created for the service of humanity, turned against humans in great and various ways so that Man, having lowered himself, might be held in check by it. What does this mean? That Man showed himself a rebel against God in the place of delights, and therefore that Creation, which had been subjected to him in service, now opposed itself to him.

### 28 On the delightfulness of Paradise

But Paradise is the place of delight, which blooms with the freshness of flowers and grass and the charms of spices, full of fine odors and dowered with the joy of blessed souls, giving invigorating moisture to the dry ground; it supplies strong force to the earth, as the soul gives strength to the body, for Paradise is not darkened by shadow or the perdition of sinners.

### 29 Why God made Man such that he could sin

Therefore listen and understand me, you who say in your hearts, "What are these things and why?" Oh, why are you so foolish in your hearts, you who have been made in the image and likeness of God? How can such great



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glory and honor, which is given to you, exist without testing, as if it were an empty case of nothing? Gold must be tested in the fire, and precious stones, to smooth them, must be polished, and all things of this kind must be diligently scrutinized. Hence, O foolish humans, how can that which was made in the image and likeness of God exist without testing? For Man must be examined more than any other creature, and therefore he must be tested through every other creature. How?

Spirit is to be tested by spirit, flesh by flesh, earth by water, fire by cold, fight by resistance, good by evil, beauty by deformity, poverty by riches, sweetness by bitterness, health by sickness, long by short, hard by soft, height by depth, light by darkness, life by death, Paradise by punishments, the Heavenly Kingdom by Gehenna, earthly things by earthly things and heavenly things by heavenly things. Hence Man is tested by every creature, in Paradise, on earth and in Hell; and then he is placed in Heaven. You see clearly only a few things among many that are hidden from your eyes. So why do you deride what is right, plain and just, and good among all good things in the sight of God? Why do you think these things unjust? God is just, but the human race is unjust in transgressing God's precepts when it claims to be wiser than God.

30 Man should not examine the highest things since he cannot the lowest ones

Now tell me, O human: What do you think you were when you were not yet in soul and body? Truly you do not know how you were created. But now, O human, you wish to investigate Heaven and earth, and to judge of their justice in God's disposition, and to know the highest things though you are not able to examine the lowest; for you do not know how you live in the body, or how you may be divested of the body. He Who created you in the first human foresaw all these things; but that same most gentle Father sent His Only-Begotten to die for the people, to deliver humanity from the power of the Devil.

31 Man now shines brighter in Heaven than before

And thus Man, having been delivered, shines in God, and God in Man; Man, having community in God, has in Heaven more radiant brightness than he had before. This would not have been so if the Son of God had not put on flesh, for if Man had remained in Paradise, the Son of God would not have suffered on the cross. But when Man was deceived by the wily serpent, God was touched by true mercy and ordained that His Only-Begotten would become incarnate in the most pure Virgin. And thus after Man's ruin many

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shining virtues were lifted up in Heaven, like humility, the queen of virtues, which flowered in the virgin birth, and other virtues, which lead God's elect to the heavenly places. For when a field with great labor is cultivated, it brings forth much fruit, and the same is shown in the human race, for after humanity's ruin many virtues arose to raise it up again. But you, O humans, oppressed by the heaviness of the flesh, do not see that great glory God's full justice has prepared for you, without stain or unworthiness, so that no one can throw it down. For before the structure of the world was made, God in true justice had foreseen all these things. Therefore, O human, consider this comparison:

### 32 Man's condition symbolized by a garden, a sheep and a pearl

The master who seeks to set out a garden without being wearied first chooses a suitable site, and then, deciding on a place for each planting, reflects on the fruit of good trees and the utility, taste, fragrance and high esteem of various spices. And so this master, if he is a great philosopher and expert contriver, lays out each of the plantings where he sees that it will be most useful; and then he thinks of enclosing it with great walls, so that none of his enemies can destroy his planting. Then he appoints his experts, who know how to water the garden and who collect its fruit and make from it many fragrant things. Therefore consider well, O human: If that master foresaw that his garden, bringing forth no fruit or any kind of use, was to be destroyed, why would so great a philosopher and contriver have made, planted, watered and fortified it so eagerly and with so much labor?

Hear, therefore, and understand! God, Who is the Sun of Justice, made His splendor rise over the filth that is Man's wickedness; and that splendor shone with great brightness, as that filth stank exceedingly. The sun gleamed forth in its brightness, and the filth putrefied in its foulness; and therefore the sun was embraced by those beholding it with much greater love than if the filth had not been there opposite it. But as foul as the filth is compared to the sun, so evil is Man's wickedness compared to God's justice. Hence justice, being beautiful, must be loved, and iniquity, being foul, must be rejected.

Into this foulness fell a sheep belonging to the master who had planted this garden. But this sheep was separated from its master by its own consent, not by his negligence; afterward the master sought it again with great zeal and justice. Therefore the choir of angels shone with great honor, for the angels saw a human in Heaven. What does this mean?

When the innocent Lamb was suspended on the cross, the elements trembled, because the most noble Son of the Virgin was slain in the body by the hands of murderers; by His death the lost sheep was brought back to the



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pastures of life. For the ancient persecutor saw that because of the blood of the innocent Lamb, which the Lamb had poured out in remission of the sins of humanity, he must lose that sheep, and only then first recognized who that Lamb was; previously he had not been able to understand how the Celestial Bread, without a man's semen and without any desire for sin, had become incarnate of the Virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

For that persecutor, when first he was created, raised himself up in the haughtiness of pride, throwing himself into death and expelling Man from the glory of Paradise; but God did not will to resist him by His power, but conquered him by humility through His Son. And because Lucifer derided God's justice, by God's just judgment he was unable to know the incarnation of God's Only-Begotten. For by this hidden decision the lost sheep was brought back to life. Therefore, O rebellious humans, why are you so hard-hearted? God did not will to forsake humanity, but sent His Son for its salvation; thus God crushed the head of pride in the ancient serpent. For when Man was snatched from death, Hell opened its gates, and Satan cried, "Alas, alas, who will help me?" And the Devil's whole band was torn with great agitation, marvelling that there was a power so great they and their prince could not resist it, since they saw the souls of the faithful being taken away from them. Thus Man was lifted up above the heavens because through the Son of God God appeared in Man and Man in God. Likewise, that master who lost the sheep but brought it so gloriously back to life had, like that sheep, a precious pearl that slipped from him and fell into the mud. But he, not allowing it to lie in the dirt, mercifully drew it forth and purified it of the filth in which it had lain, as gold is purified in the furnace, and restored it to its former honor with even greater glory. For God created Man, but the latter at the Devil's instigation fell into death, from which the Son of God saved him by His blood and brought him gloriously to the glory of Heaven. And how? By humility and charity.

### 33 Commendation of humility and charity above all other virtues

For humility caused the Son of God to be born of the Virgin, in whom was found humility, not eager embraces or beauty of flesh or earthly riches or gold ornaments or earthly honors. But the Son of God lay in a manger, because His Mother was a poor maiden. Humility always groans, weeps and destroys all offenses, for this is its work. So let anyone who wishes to conquer the Devil arm himself with humility, since Lucifer fervently flees it and hides in its presence like a snake in a hole; for wherever it finds him, it quickly snaps him like a fragile thread.

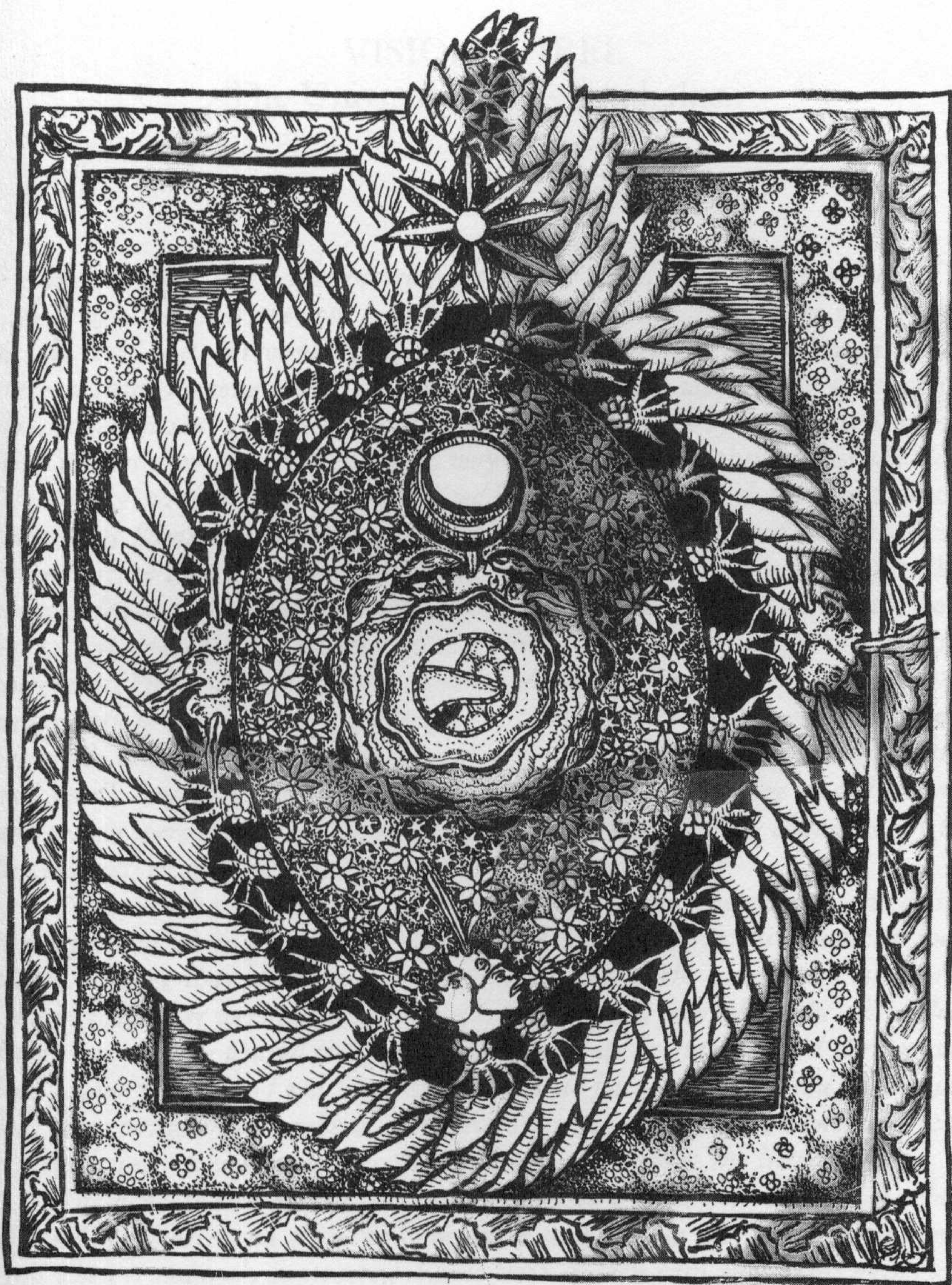
And charity took the Only-Begotten of God, who was in the bosom of the Father in Heaven, and placed Him in the womb of a mother on earth, for

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it does not spurn sinners or publicans but seeks to save all. Therefore it often brings forth a fountain of tears from the eyes of the faithful, thus softening hardness of heart. In this, humility and charity are brighter than the other virtues, since humility and charity are like a soul and body that possess stronger powers than the other powers of soul and bodily members. How? Humility is like the soul and charity like the body, and they cannot be separated from each other but work together, just as soul and body cannot be disjoined but work together as long as a person lives in the body. And as the various members of the body are subject, according to their powers, to the soul and to the body, so also the other virtues cooperate, according to their justice, with humility and charity. And therefore, O humans, for the glory of God and for your salvation, pursue humility and charity; armed with them, you shall not fear the Devil's snares but shall have everlasting life.

Therefore whoever has knowledge in the Holy Spirit and wings of faith, let this one not ignore My admonition, but taste it, embrace it and receive it in his soul.





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