

Ordo Virtutum

Hildegard von Bingen

The Thirteenth Vision of the Third Part

Thereupon the sky got very bright, and I heard all the previous virtues sing in a wondrous manner to the various types of music. They persisted strongly in the way of truth as they sang the praises of the city of celestial joy. They persisted strongly as they called those with complaints back to praising with joy. And they persisted in exhorting and encouraging themselves so that they might fight back the snares of the devil and help people gain salvation. But these virtues do overcome the snares of the devil, so that the faithful may pass over at last from sin to celestial reward through repentance.

And the sound was that of the voice of a multitude singing a musical performance with harmony in praise of the celestial orders. They sang the following:

Vision Thirteen: 1

They sang this song about holy Mary:

O most brilliant gem and serene glory of the sun,
you who the leaping fountain has been poured into from the heart of God,
the fountain is God's only Word
through which God created the first material of the world
which Eve threw into confusion;
God formed the Word--a person--from you,
and because of this you are that bright material
through which this very Word breathed out all the virtues,
just as God brought forth all the creatures from the first material.

O how, the sweetest virgin sprouting from the root of Jesse,
O how great is the virtue
which the divinity beheld in this most beautiful daughter,
as a water drop put into the divine eye--the sun,
when God directed the divine attention to the
brightness of the Virgin
where God wishes the Word to be made flesh in her.

For by the mystical mystery of God, the bright
flower went forth from this very Virgin, with
the mind of the Virgin made wondrously light.

Vision Thirteen: 2

They sang this song about the Nine Orders of the Heavenly Spirits:

O most glorious light--a living angel, you who below the divinity--
behold with burning desires
the divine eyes with the mystical obscurity of every creature,
whence you will never be satisfied with power:
o how the glorious joy--your garment--has a form
which is untouched in you by every depraved work,
the depraved work which first sprang up in your companion the destroyed angel,
who wanted to fly upward inside the concealed pinnacle of God,
whereby this angel, a tortuous one, was plunged down into ruin,
but by means of this fall
the devil was able to take counsel of the thing which the finger of God was about to do.

For o you angel
who protects the people,
whose form shines in your face,
and o you archangel
who receives the souls of the just ones,
and you virtues, powers, principalities, dominations, and thrones,
who are counted in the fifth hidden number,
and o you cherubin and seraphim of the hidden images of God,
praise be to you
who behold the little places of the ancient heart in the fountain.
for you see the inner strength of God
which breathes out from the heart of God as if it were a face.