BOLLINGEN SERIES LXXX

The Divine Comedy

Paradiso

2: Commentary
DANTE ALIGHIERI

The Divine Comedy

TRANSLATED, WITH A COMMENTARY, BY
CHARLES S. SINGLETON

Paradiso

2. Commentary

BOLLINGEN SERIES LXXX
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
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The sources for published material that has been quoted in the present commentary will be found in the List of Works Cited. The translations most frequently used include those of the Latin classics taken from the Loeb Classical Library, the translations of the works of Dante provided by the Temple Classics, the Confraternity-Douay translation of the Vulgate, and the translation of Aquinas' *Summa theologica* by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province in the edition of the Benziger Brothers, New York, 1947-48. Translations for which no published source was used have been provided by Charles S. Singleton.

References to the Bible are to the Vulgate; if the corresponding citation to the King James Bible differs, it is given in brackets following the Vulgate citation.

The Latin version of Aristotle that both Dante and Thomas Aquinas are assumed to have known has been quoted from the Parma edition of the *Opera omnia* of Thomas Aquinas; this "Antiqua Translatio" is the only Aristotle text quoted in the present work. Marietti editions of the Aquinas commentaries on Aristotle, which also contain the text of Aristotle in Latin, are suggested in the notes and included in the List of Works Cited for the general convenience of the reader. Bekker numbers are used in citations to the works of Aristotle to facilitate reference to any edition of Aristotle the reader may have, since Bekker numbers are not provided in the Aquinas *Opera omnia* itself; chapter numbers are those of the Loeb Classical Library.

Plate 1, a detail from *God and Scepter* (MS n. London Add. 15268) is reproduced here by permission of the British Museum. Maps 1, 2, and 4 and Figure 1 were prepared after maps and an illustration in the Temple Classics edition of *The Paradiso of Dante Alighieri*, edited by H. Oelsner and translated by P. H. Wicksteed (London, 1965). Map 3 and Figures 2 and 5 were prepared after a map and illustrations in Paget Toynbee, *A Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Mat-

Commentaries on the Divine Comedy, both early and modern, are cited by the commentator’s name alone, with no specific reference to page or verse number, because commentaries ordinarily follow the canto and verse number of the Comedy. The abbreviations Gr and TC are frequently used to indicate respectively the source of quotations taken from the commentaries of C. H. Grandgent and the Temple Classics. For modern authors other than commentators, the author’s name and date of publication serve as citation.
Paradiso

Commentary
CANTO I

Special Note: Since Dante's Letter to Can Grande (Epist. XIII) deals in specific detail with this first canto of the Paradiso, dedicating the third cantica of the poem to that high-placed patron, the notes to Par. I will often refer the reader to that epistle, which should be read in its entirety at this point. The accepted text of the original Latin is to be found in Le opere di Dante (2d edn., 1960); the translation cited is that of the Temple Classics. For a discussion of the letter, including the question of its authenticity, and pertinent bibliography, see the Enciclopedia dantesca, under the entry “Epistole.”

Because it is Beatrice who serves as guide through this third realm, the reader will do well to remember her several names as these have emerged in the broad patterns of meaning apparent in the last cantos of the Purgatorio—Revelation, Sanctifying Grace, and Wisdom. The whole event at the summit of the mountain has clearly made these three names appropriate for the “bearer of beatitude,” which the name Beatrice literally means.

For a general introduction to the Paradiso, see Grandgent’s Preliminary Note to the cantica (pp. 625-29 of his commentary) and the relative bibliography given by him. In general Grandgent’s arguments to the cantos will be found helpful throughout.
1. *La Gloria:* The following verses make this “glory” primarily God’s light. The reader should remember when he reaches the end of the poem that thematically the *Paradiso* describes a full circle by terminating with the light of glory, one of the three lights experienced by the pilgrim. (On the three lights, see C. S. Singleton, 1958, pp. 15-23.) However, “gloria” here should be understood primarily in the senses suggested by Dante himself in the *Letter to Can Grande* (*Epist.* XIII, 62-63):


And authority does the same as science; for the Holy Spirit says by Jeremiah [23:24], “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” and in the psalm [138(139):7-9], “Whither shall I go from thy spirit, and whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven thou art there; if I descend into hell thou art present. If I take my wings,” and the rest. And *Wisdom* [1:7] says that “the spirit of the Lord filled the whole world,” and *Ecclesiasticus*, in the forty-second [42:16], “His work is full of the glory of the Lord.” Whereo the scripture of the pagans bears co-witness, for Lucan in the ninth [Phars. IX, 580], “Juppiter est quodcunque vides quocumque moveris.” (“Whatsoever thou seest, wheresoever thou goest, is Jupiter.”)

colui che tutto move: God as the unmoved cause of movement is a conception of Aristotelian theology (cf. “lo motor primo,” *Purg.* XXV, 70). Thus the opening verse of the *Para-
CANTO I

diso (like its last verse) bears the unmistakable mark of the pagan philosopher.

2-3. per l’universo penetra . . . altrove: See Dante’s Letter to Can Grande (Epist. XIII, 64-65):

Bene ergo dictum est cum dicit quod divinus radius sive divina gloria, “per universum penetrat et resplendet”: penetrat, quantum ad essentiam; resplendet, quantum ad esse. Quod autem subicit de “magis et minus,” habet veritatem in manifesto; quoniam videmus in aliquo excellentiori gradu essentiam aliquam,quam vero in inferiori; ut patet de celo et elementis, quorum quidem illud incorruptibile, illa vero corruptibilia sunt.

It is therefore well said when it says that the divine ray, or divine glory pierces and reglows through the universe. It pierces as to essence; it reglows as to being. And what he adds as to more and less is manifest truth; since we see that one thing has its being in a more exalted grade, and another in a lower, as is evident with respect to the heaven and the elements, whereof that is incorruptible and these corruptible.

Much farther along in the poem, in verses that speak of the creation (specifically of the angels, but by implication of creation in general), God is said to create mirrors that reflect His light back to Him (Par. XXIX, 13-30).

See also Conv. III, xiv, 4, where Dante states: “Ancora è da sapere che lo primo agente, cioè Dio, pinge la sua virtù in cosa per modo di diritto raggio, e in cose per modo di splendore reverberato; onde ne le Intelligenze raggia la divina luce sanza mezzo, ne l’altri si ripercuote da queste Intelligenze prima illuminate.” (“We are further to know that the prime agent—to wit God—stamps his power upon some things after the manner of a direct ray, and upon others after the manner of a reflected splendour; for upon the intelligences the divine light rays without medium, upon other things it is reflected by those intelligences which are first enlightened.”) In his Letter to Can Grande (Epist. XIII, 56-61) Dante explains:
Et sic, mediate vel inmediate, omne quod habet esse habet esse ab eo; quia ex eo quod causa secunda recipit a prima, influit super causatum ad modum recipientis et reddentis radium, propter quod causa prima est magis causa. Et hoc dicitur in libro De Causis quod “omnis causa primaria plus influit super suum causatum quam causa universalis secunda.” Sed hoc quantum ad esse.

Quantum vero ad essentiam, probo sic: Omnis essentia, preter primam, est causata, aliter essent plura que essent per se necesse esse, quod est impossibile: quod causatum, vel a natura est vel ab intellectu, et quod a natura, per consequens causatum est ab intellectu, cum natura sit opus intelligentie; omne ergo quod est causatum, est causatum ab aliquo intellectu vel mediate vel inmediate. Cum ergo virtus sequatur essentiam cuius est virtus, si essentia intellectiva, est tota et unius que causat. Et sic quemadmodum prius devenire erat ad primam causam ipsius esse, sic nunc essentie et virtutis. Propter quod patet quod omnis essentia et virtus procedat a prima, et intelligentie inferiores recipiant quasi a radiante, et reddant radios superioris ad suum inferius ad modum specularum. Quod satis aperte tangere videetur Dionysius de Celesti Hierarchia loquens. Et propter hoc dicitur in libro De Causis quod “omnis intelligentia est plena formis.” Patet ergo quomodo ratio manifestat divinum lumen, id est divinam bonitatem, sapientiam et virtutem, resplendere ubique.

And thus mediatel or immediately everything which is has its being from him; for it is by what the second cause received from the first cause that it has influence upon that which it causes, after the fashion of a body that receives and reflects a ray. Wherefore the first cause is cause in a higher degree; and this is what the book De Causis says, to wit, that “every primary cause is more influential on that which it causes, than a universal secondary cause.” So much as to being.

But as to essence I prove it thus: Every essence, except the primary, is caused; otherwise there would be
more than one existence of self-necessity, which is impossible. What is caused is either of nature or of intelligence; and what is of nature is consequentially caused by intellect, since nature is the work of intelligence. Everything, therefore, which is caused, is caused by some intellect, mediatly or immediately. Since, then, virtue follows the essence whose virtue it is, if the essence be intellectual the whole virtue is of one [intelligence] which causes it; and thus, like as before we had to come to a first cause of being itself, so now of essence and of virtue. Wherefore it is clear that every essence and virtue proceeds from the primal one, and the lower intelligences receive it as from a radiating source, and throw the rays of their superior upon their inferior, after the fashion of mirrors. Which Dionysius, speaking of the celestial hierarchy, seems to handle clearly enough, and therefore it is said in the book De Causis that "every intelligence is full of forms." It is clear, then, how reason declares the divine light, that is, the divine excellence, wisdom, and virtue, to reglow everywhere.

The next canto, in discussing the reason for the dark spots in the moon, serves as a gloss to vs. 3 here. Also see Conv. III, vii, 2, where Dante touches on this: "Ove è da sapere che la divina bontade in tutte le cose discende, e altrimenti essere non potrebbero; ma avvegna che questa bontade si muova da simplicissimo principio, diversamente si riceve, secondo più e meno, da le cose riceventi." ("Where be it known that the divine excellence descends upon all things, and otherwise they could not exist; but although this goodness springs from the most simple principle, it is diversely received, in greater or smaller measure, by the things that receive it.")

4. Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende: The tenth heaven, the Empyrean. Dante's own comment on this verse, in his Letter to Can Grande (Epist. XIII, 66-68), is:

Et postquam premisit hanc veritatem, prosequitur ab ea circumloquens Paradisum; et dicit quod fuit in celo illo quod de gloria Dei, sive de luce, recipit affluentius.
Propter quod sciendum quod illud celum est celum supreme, continens corpora universa et a nullo conten-
tum, intra quod omnia corpora moventur, ipso in sem-
piterna quieta permanente *** et a nulla corporali
substantia virtutem recipiens. Et dicitur empyreum,
quod est idem quod celum igne sui ardoris flagrans;
non quod in eo sit ignis vel ardor materialis, sed spiri-
tualis, quod est amor sanctus sive caritas.

And having premised this truth, he goes on from it with
a circumlocution for Paradise, and says that he “was in
that heaven which receives most abundantly of the glory
or the light of God”; wherefore you are to know that
that heaven is the supreme heaven, containing all the
bodies of the universe and contained by love, within
which all bodies move (itself abiding in eternal rest),
receiving its virtue from no corporeal substance. And
it is called the Empyrean, which is the same as the
heaven flaming with fire or heat, not because there is
any material fire or heat in it, but spiritual, to wit holy
love or charity.

5–9. e vidi cose . . . ire: Here the echo of Paul’s report of his
own experience (II Cor. 12:3-4) is clearly heard. Dante him-
self, in the Letter to Can Grande (Epist. XIII, 77-79,
83-84), comments:

Et postquam dixit quod fuit in loco illo Paradisi per
suam circumlocutionem, prosequitur dicens se vidisse
aliaque que recitare non potest qui descendit. Et reddit
causam dicens “quod intellectus in tantum profundat
se” in ipsum “desiderium suum,” quod est Deus, “quod
memoria sequi non potest.” Ad que intelligenda scien-
dum est quod intellectus humanus in hac vita, propter
connaturalitaten et affinitatem quam habet ad substan-
tiam intellectualem separatam, quando elevatur, in tan-
tum elevatur, ut memoria post reditum deficiat propter
transcendisse humanum modum. Et hoc insinuaturo
nobis per Apostolum ad Corinthios loquentem, ubi
dicit: “Scio hominem, sive in corpore sive extra corpus
nescio, Deus scit, raptum usque ad tertium celum, et
vidit arcana Dei, que non licet homini loqui.” Ecce, postquam humanam rationem intellectus ascensione transierat, quid extra se ageretur non recordabatur....

Vidit ergo, ut dicit, aliquia “que referre nescit et nequit rediens.” Diligenter quippe notandum est quod dicit “nescit et nequit”: nescit quia oblitus, nequit quia, si recordatur et contentum tenet, sermo tamen deficit. Multa namque per intellectum videmus quibus signa vocalia desunt: quod satis Plato insinuat in suis libris per assumptionem metaphorismorum; multa enim per lumen intellectuale vidit que sermone proprio nequivit exprimere.

And when he has said that he was in that place of Paradise, described by circumlocution, he goes on to say “that he saw certain things which he thence descends cannot relate”; and he tells the reason, saying that “the intellect is so engulfed” in the very thing for which it longs, which is God, “that memory cannot follow.” To understand which things be it known that the human intellect, when it is exalted in this life, because of its being co-natural and having affinity with a sejunct intellectual substance, it is so far exalted that after its return memory fails it, because it has transcended the measure of humanity. And this we are given to understand by the apostle, speaking ad Corinthios [II Cor. 12:3-4], where he says, “I know such a man (whether in the body or out of the body I know not, God knoweth), who was rapt into Paradise and heard hidden words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Behold, when the intellect had transcended human measure in its ascent, it remembered not the things that took place beyond its own range....

He saw, then, as he says, certain things “which he who returns has not knowledge, nor power to relate”; and it must be noted carefully that he says, has “not knowledge, nor power.” He has not knowledge, because he has forgotten; and he has not power, because if he remembered and retained the matter, nevertheless language fails: for we see many things by the intellect for
which there are no vocal signs, of which Plato gives sufficient hint in his books by having recourse to metaphors; for he saw many things by intellectual light which he could not express in direct speech.

This theme becomes central in the final canto of the Paradiso.

7. suo disire: The object of desire, God and the vision of Him "face to face." For this use of the possessive, cf. Purg. XXXI, 22.

9. memoria: "Memoria" is the subject of the verb.


13-36. O buono Appollo . . . risponda: These verses contain the invocation which corresponds to those offered in Inf. II and in Purg. I. On this Dante himself comments in his Letter to Can Grande (Epist. XIII, 86-87):

Deinde cum dicit: "O bone Apollo," etc., facit invocationem suam. Et dividitur ista pars in partes duas: in prima invocando petit; in secunda suadet Apollini petitionem factam, remunerationem quandam prenuntians; et incipit secunda pars ibi: "O divina virtus." Prima pars dividitur in partes duas: in prima petit divinum auxilium, in secunda tangit necessitatem sue petitionis, quod est justificare ipsam, ibi: "Hucusque alterum iugum Parnassi" etc.

Then when he says, "O good Apollo," and the rest, he makes his invocation. And that part is divided into two parts: in the first he makes petition in his invocation; in the second he suavely urges upon Apollo the petition he has made, announcing a kind of remuneration. And the second part begins here, "O divine power." The first part is divided into two parts, in the first of which he seeks the divine aid, and in the second touches upon the necessity of his petition, which is its justification. And it begins here: "up to this point one peak of Parnassus," and the rest.
13. **Appollo**: The reader will recall that the sun appears at the beginning of the poem as "the planet that leads men aright by every path" (Inf. I, 17-18). Apollo, of course, was the god of the Sun. See Dante, Conv. III, xii, 6-7.

15. *l'amato alloro*: Daphne, loved and pursued by Apollo, was changed to a laurel. See Ovid, *Metam.* I, 452-567.

16. **Parnaso**: See n. to Purg. XXII, 65.


20. **Marsia**: Marsyas, a satyr of Phrygia, who, having found a flute which Minerva had thrown away in disgust because it distorted her features, discovered that it emitted of its own accord the most beautiful strains. Elated with his discovery he was rash enough to challenge Apollo to a musical contest, the conditions of which were that the victor should do what he pleased with his vanquished rival. The trial took place before the Muses as umpires, Apollo playing on the cithara, Marsyas on the flute. The decision being given in favor of the god, Apollo, to punish Marsyas for his presumption, bound him to a tree and flayed him alive. Dante here prays to Apollo to inspire him to sing as sweetly as the god played when he vanquished the satyr.

The story of Apollo and Marsyas is told by Ovid in the *Fasti* (VI, 697-708) and with more detail in the *Metamorphoses* (VI, 383-91), whence doubtless Dante took it:

>... satyri reminiscitur alter, quem Tritoniaca Latous harundine victum adfecit poena. "quid me mihi detrahis?" inquit; "a! piget, a! non est" clamabat "tibia tanti." clamanti cutis est summos direpta per artus, nec quicquam nisi vulner erat; cruor undique manat, detectique patent nervi, trepidaeque sine ulla pelle micant venae; salientia viscera possis et per lucents numerare in pectore fibras.

Another recalled the satyr whom the son of Latona had conquered in a contest on Pallas' reed, and punished. "Why do you tear me from myself?" he cried. "Oh, I re-
pent! Oh, a flute is not worth such price!” As he screams, his skin is stripped off the surface of his body, and he is all one wound: blood flows down on every side, the sinews lie bare, his veins throb and quiver with no skin to cover them: you could count the entrails as they palpitate, and the vitals showing clearly in his breast.

See also Statius, *Theb.* IV, 186; Lucan, *Phars.* III, 205-8.

21. *la vagina:* Marsyas was flayed, thus the “vagina” (“sheath”) of his limbs is his skin.

22. *divina virtù:* The invocation, with these words, now becomes more a prayer addressed to Apollo as the supreme Deity. See vs. 28, where he is called “father.”

23. *ombra:* The shadowy recollection that the poet now has of the experience (see vs. 9).

25. *vedra’mi = mi vedrai.* *diletto legno:* The laurel beloved by Apollo.

26. *le foglie:* The crown of poets was traditionally made of laurel leaves.

27. *che = di cui.* *la materia e tu mi farai degno:* Both “materia” and “tu” are the subjects of the singular verb “farai.”

29. *cesare:* Caesar, the title of the rulers of the Roman Empire, was applied by Dante to the rulers of the Holy Roman Empire and to other emperors as well. Note Dante’s use of the term in reference to Frederick II (*Inf.* XIII, 65), Albert I (*Purg.* VI, 92), and Henry VII (*Epist.* V, 5). Here the reference is to emperors in general.

30. *colpa e vergogna de’umane voglie:* “Colpa” and “vergogna” are here used in the ablative construction: “because of the sin and shame of human desires.”

31-32. *che parturir letizia . . . fronda:* “Fronda” is the subject of “dovria parturir,” of which “letizia” is the object. “Dovria” = *dovrebbe.*
32. *delfica deità*: Delphi was a small town on the southern slope of Mount Parnassus, famous as the site of the great temple of Apollo and the oracle who spoke in his name. The name Delphi may have derived from *adelfos* (Greek “brother”), alluding to the twin peaks of the mountain. As the name of the chief center of the worship of Apollo, the name Delphi was used to designate the god—see Ovid, *Metam.* II, 543-44: “Placuit tibi, Delphice, certe, / dum vel casta fuit vel inobservata.” (“She surely found favour in thy eyes, O Delphic god, so long as she was chaste—or undetected.”) The invocation to Apollo here turns, curiously, from direct to indirect address, since the “*delfica deità*” is Apollo himself.

33. *Peneia*: Peneus, son of Oceanus and Tethys and river god of the Peneus, the chief river in Thessaly and one of the most important in Greece, was the father of Daphne, who was pursued by Apollo for her beauty. *alcun*: The object of “*asseta*.”

36. *Cirra*: Cirra was a town on the Gulf of Corinth southwest of Delphi, the seat of the oracle of Apollo. It was intimately connected with Delphi and so was sometimes used as a synonym of either Apollo or Delphi. See Statius, *Theb.* III, 474-76:

\[\ldots\] non Cirrha deum promiserit antro
certius, aut frondes lucis quas fama Molossis
Chaonias sonuisse tibi \ldots\]

Not Cirrha can more surely vouchsafe the inspiration of her grotto, nor those Chaonian leaves that are famed to rustle at thy bidding in Molossian groves.

Cirra was also the name sometimes given to the peak of Parnassus sacred to Apollo. See Statius, *Theb.* III, 611-15:

\[\ldots\] non si ipse cavo sub vertice Cirrae,
quisquis is est, timidis famaeque ita visus, Apollo
mugiat insano penitus seclusus in antro,
exaspectare queam, dum pallida virgo tremendas
nuntiet ambages. \ldots\]
Not if beneath Cirrha’s caverned height he, whoe’er he is—Apollo cowards and rumour account him—were to bellow from the deep seclusion of his crazy grotto, could I wait for the pale virgin to announce the solemn riddlings!

37-44. Surge ai mortali ... quasi: “In these lines Dante describes the season. On every day of the year the sun rises from a particular point in the horizon, and this point differs from day to day. The points are called *foci*, ‘outlets.’ The best ‘outlet’ is the one from which the sun emerges on March 21, the vernal equinox. This is the *foce* that ‘brings together four circles with three crosses’: it is the point where three great heavenly circles intersect the horizon, each of them forming a cross with it. The circles are the equator, the ecliptic, and the colure of the equinoxes; this last is a great circle that traverses the two heavenly poles and crosses the ecliptic at Aries and Libra. When the sun rises from this point, it is ‘coupled with its best orbit, and with its best constellation,’ namely Aries. In that sign, the sun has the most benign influence on the earth. Now on the day when Dante rose to heaven, the sun had passed ‘almost’ through that *foce*: it was considerably later than March 21 (it was, in fact, Wednesday, April 13, 1300); but the sun was still in Aries; ‘almost this outlet,’ then, ‘had made morning yonder (in Eden) and evening here (in the Hemisphere of Land)’” (Gr). See Fig. 1.

It should be noted that, in place of the reading “tal foce quasi; e tutto era là bianco” accepted by Grandgent, Petrocchi and some other modern editors have adopted in vs. 44 the reading “tal foce, e quasi tutto era là bianco,” arguing that “quasi” is meant to indicate that the hemisphere of water with the mountain of Purgatory at its center is only partially enlightened by the sun when it is in Aries. But this seems a less likely meaning, since Dante is speaking from a post of observation where the rising sun at least *seems* to illuminate all, whereas the fine point of having “quasi” (“almost”) modify “foce,” in the meaning set forth by Grandgent above, would be typical of the poet. But see Petrocchi and Chimenz for the argument in favor of the other reading.
39. *giugne* = *congiunge*.

44-45. *tutto era . . . nera*: This tells us the time of day, although the signal of noon as the time of day has already been given (*Purg. XXXIII*, 104). Now it is noon in Eden, midnight in Jerusalem, the hemisphere of water is all light, the hemisphere of land all dark. It should be recalled that the entrance into Inferno took place in the evening and that the journey through Purgatory began at dawn. Now the upward journey of Paradise will begin at high noon. The symbolic value of this arrangement is rich in meaning and is, of course, deliberately calculated. On noon, or the “sixth hour,” as the most noble hour of the whole day, see Dante, *Conv.* IV, xxiii, 15. The sun is in full glory then, and the *Paradiso* has begun with an invocation addressed to Apollo, god of the Sun.

46. *in sul sinistro fianco*: Beatrice was facing east as her procession here at the top of the mountain finally turned and moved in that direction (*Purg. XXXII*, 17-18), and we may assume that she proceeded toward the east yet farther, to
reach Eunoe. In this hemisphere, the sun is to the north, or to the left for one facing east. See *Purg.* IV, 61-84.

48. *aguglia sì non li s'affisse unquanco*: It was a common belief that the eagle could gaze, as no other bird could, directly on the sun. See *Par.* XX, 31-33; *Lucan, Phars.* IX, 902-3. *li = gli*, i.e., “on it,” the sun. Cf. vs. 54. *unquanco*: “Never.” Cf. *Purg.* IV, 76.

49-54. *E si come ... uso*: The journey with Beatrice begins with a simile stressing light as reflected light and action by reflection, as it were. To see with the light which Beatrice represents in the allegory is to see by reflection, hence the stress on mirrors and mirror images throughout that part of the journey for which she is guide. In this area of the “second light” one sees primarily “per speculum,” whereas beyond this second light lies the light of glory at the end, where the pilgrim will see “facie ad faciem.” Cf. I Cor. 13:12: “Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem.” ("We see now through a mirror in an obscure manner, but then face to face.") For the three lights and such distinctions, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 15-38. In the literal image of the ray of light returning upwards, it is clear that the reflector must be conceived as being horizontal, the “second” or reflected ray thus rising back up.

51. *pur come pelegrin che tornar vuole*: The burden of connotation is clear: Dante will now return “home” in returning to God, by whom his soul was created.

52-53. *cosi de l'atto suo ... fece*: Dante now imitates Beatrice’s own gazing at the sun.

52. *per li occhi infuso*: “Infuso” here clearly bears the suggestion of infusion, and we know that in the allegory Beatrice is (in one of her names) Sanctifying Grace, which is always infused from above, even as are the theological virtues which are seen to attend her at the end of the *Purgatorio*.

53. *ne l'imagine mia*: One may understand *imagine* to mean “imagination,” but only in the sense of an “image-re-
ceiving” faculty of the mind. Cf. Purg. XVII, 13, where this same faculty is termed the “imaginativa” (and see n. to Purg. XVII, 13-18).

56-57. loco fatto ... spece: Eden, made for man as his proper abode. Cf. Gen. 2:8, 15; Purg. XXVIII, 91-102.

57. spece = specie.

61-63. e di subito ... addorno: Without knowing it, Dante has left the earth and is speeding heavenwards, rapidly rising ever closer to the sun, which explains the great increase of light. Some commentators interpret the meaning to be that he is passing through the sphere of fire which lies just below the sphere of the moon, but this seems unlikely, since the focus remains on the sun. Cf. vs. 82, “l grande lume.”

62. quei che puote: God.

63. addorno = adornato.

64-66. Beatrice ... rimote: Dante now turns away from the sun, which literally can be termed a mirror (cf. Purg. IV, 62), to Beatrice as to a mirror. See n. to vss. 49-54.

66. le luci: My eyes. rimote: “Withdrawn” (from my upward gazing on the sun).

67. Nel suo aspetto: “As I thus gazed on her” is the meaning. fei = feci.

67-69. Nel suo aspetto ... dèi: Glaucus was a fisherman of Boeotia who, according to Ovid (Metam. XIII, 904-59), sat down one day on a grassy spot where no one had ever been before, to count his catch. The fish began to move about on the grass and made their way back into the sea. Thinking it must be due to some magic property in the grass, Glaucus chewed some and immediately began to yearn for the ocean. Bidding farewell to the earth, to which he would never return, he plunged into the sea and was changed into a sea god by Oceanus and Tethys. Dante compares the change wrought in himself as he gazes upon Beatrice to the transformation of Glaucus after he tasted the divine herb. On the symbolic
and allegorical implications of Dante’s allusion to the transformation of Glaucus, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 28-29. Clearly it points to the verb “trasumanar” in the next verse as this applies to the pilgrim.

70. Trasumanar: “Transhumanizing,” rising above the human state, as Glaucus did. Dante will now literally rise with Beatrice through the spheres and high above the mortal condition. But in terms of the kind of vision he will have while Beatrice guides him, he now passes into that mode of vision which is possible through the special grace which she represents, which is a grace desursum descendens, infused from on high. See the Special Note at the beginning of this canto. Actually, in its context here, the verb “trasumanar” takes on the sense of a verb of motion, “to pass beyond the human.”

per verba: Latin for “in words.”

71. porla = potrebbe. però = perciò. esempio = esempio, i.e., the example of Glaucus, in becoming a god, or godlike.

72. a cui esperienza grazia serba: To those who, through such a grace as is represented by Beatrice, may also rise above the human state. The verse clearly points to the allegorical journey to God in this life. Such grace may be given to everyman in the itinerary of the mind to God, here and now. “Grazia” is the subject of the verb “serba.”

73. S’ = se, “whether.” sol di me quel che creasti: “Only that part of me which you created,” i.e., the soul. Cf. Purg. XXV, 70-72.

74. novellamente: “‘Most recently,’ ‘latest.’—Dante is not sure whether he took his body with him to Heaven, or left it behind. St. Paul expresses the same doubt with regard to his own experience, 2 Cor. xii, 3-4: ‘... And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.’ St. Augustine (De Genesi ad Litteram, XII, iii-vi) and St. Thomas discuss the question, but leave it undecided. The
poet considers his rapture as similar in kind to St. Paul’s, and therefore repeats St. Paul’s words. In the following narrative Dante seems to think of himself as still in the flesh, although he ultimately sees God. Whether St. Paul actually beheld God or not is a matter on which theologians have disagreed, St. Augustine and St. Thomas holding the affirmative opinion. Cf. Exod. xxxiii, 20: ‘Thou canst not see my face: for no man shall see me, and live’” (Gr). ‘l ciel: “The heavens,” the usual singular for the plural.

75. col tuo lume mi levasti: Since Beatrice, in the allegory, is precisely the light that uplifts the pilgrim Dante, this phrase, in direct address to the Deity, makes her a God-given light—which, of course, she is, “infused” from above.

76. rota: The revolution of the spheres.

77. desiderato: “‘By being desired.’ The swift motion of the Primum Mobile, the outermost sphere of the material universe, is due to the eagerness of every one of its parts to come into contact with every part of God’s own Heaven, the Empyrean; and the Primum Mobile imparts its revolution to all the heavens within it” (Gr). Cf. Dante, Conv. II, iii, 9:

E questo è cagione al Primo Mobile per avere velocissimo movimento; chè per lo ferventissimo appetito ch’è ’n ciascuna parte di quello nono cielo, che è immediato a quello, d’essere congiunta con ciascuna parte di quello divinissimo cielo quieto, in quello si rivolve con tanto desiderio, che la sua velocitade è quasi incomprensibile.

And this is the cause of the primum mobile having the swiftest motion, because by reason of the most fervid appetite wherewith every part of this ninth heaven, which is next below it, longeth to be conjoined with every part of this divinest, and tranquil heaven, it revolves therein with so great yearning that its swiftness is scarce to be comprehended.

That God, through being desired, moves the spheres is primarily an Aristotelian conception.
PARADISO

78. con l’armonia che temperi e discerni: The harmony of the spheres, which God is said to attune and distribute or arrange. Cf. Purg. XXX, 93. A text fundamental for this conception is found in Book VI of Cicero’s De re publica. Commonly known as the Somnium Scipionis, it was widely read in the Middle Ages. Because of its importance, and the fact that the equivalents for Dante’s two verbs temperare and discernere are found or reflected in this text, it seems appropriate to quote De re publica VI, xviii, 18-19 (italics added):

Quae cum intuerer stupens, ut me recepi, Quid? hic, inquam, quis est, qui conplet aures meas tantus et tam dulcis sonus?

Hic est, inquit, ille, qui intervallis disiunctus inparibus, sed tamen pro rata parte ratione distinctis impulsu et motu ipsorum orbium efficitur et acuta cum gravibus temperans varios aequabiliter concentus efficit; nec enim silentio tanti motus incitari possunt, et natura fert, ut extrema ex altera parte graviter, ex altera autem acute sonent. quam ob causam summus ille caeli stellifer cursus, cuius conversio est concitator, acuto ex excitato movetur sono, gravissimo autem hic lunar is atque infimus; nam terra nona inmobilis manens una sede semper haeret complexa medium mundi locum. illi autem octo cursus, in quibus eadem vis est duorum, septem efficiunt distinctos intervallis sonos, qui numerus rerum omnium fere nodus est; quod docti homines nervis imitati atque cantibus aperuerunt sibi reditum in hunc locum, sicut alii, qui praestantibus ingeniis in vita humana divina studia coluerunt. hoc sonitu oppletaet aures hominum obsurduerunt; nec est ullus hebetior sensus in vobis, sicut, ubi Nilus ad illa, quae Catadupa nominantur, praecipitat ex altissimis montibus, ea gens, quae illum locum adcolit, propter magnitudinem sonitus sensu audiendi caret. hic vero tantus est totius mundi incitatissima conversione sonitus, ut eum aures hominum capere non possint, sicut intueri solem adversum nequitis, eiusque radiis acies vestra sensusque vincitur.
After recovering from the astonishment with which I viewed these wonders, I said: "What is this loud and agreeable sound that fills my ears?"

"That is produced," he replied, "by the onward rush and motion of the spheres themselves; the intervals between them, though unequal, being exactly arranged in a fixed proportion, by an agreeable blending of high and low tones various harmonies are produced; for such mighty motions cannot be carried on so swiftly in silence; and Nature has provided that one extreme shall produce low tones while the other gives forth high. Therefore this uppermost sphere of heaven, which bears the stars, as it revolves more rapidly, produces a high, shrill tone, whereas the lowest revolving sphere, that of the Moon, gives forth the lowest tone; for the earthly sphere, the ninth, remains ever motionless and stationary in its position in the centre of the universe. But the other eight spheres, two of which move with the same velocity, produce seven different sounds,—a number which is the key of almost everything. Learned men, by imitating this harmony on stringed instruments and in song, have gained for themselves a return to this region, as others have obtained the same reward by devoting their brilliant intellects to divine pursuits during their earthly lives. Men's ears, ever filled with this sound, have become deaf to it; for you have no duller sense than that of hearing. We find a similar phenomenon where the Nile rushes down from those lofty mountains at the place called Catadupa; the people who live near by have lost their sense of hearing on account of the loudness of the sound. But this mighty music, produced by the revolution of the whole universe at the highest speed, cannot be perceived by human ears, any more than you can look straight at the Sun, your sense of sight being overpowered by its radiance."

79-81. parvemi tanto...disteso: As Beatrice will now declare to Dante (vss. 91-93), he is already rising heavenwards
faster than lightning. Some commentators take this great increase of light to mean that Dante is already traversing the sphere of fire, which was thought to be just below the sphere of the moon. However, the increase of light may simply be due to so rapid a rise toward the sun, as the phrase “fiamma del sol” seems to suggest. Cf. vss. 61-62.

85. che vedea me sì com’ lo: Beatrice knows Dante’s thoughts, of course, and “reads his mind,” even as Virgil was privileged to do.

87. aprì = apri.

89. falso imaginario: Beatrice knows that Dante believes he is still on earth.

92–93. ma folgore . . . riedi: “When lightning descends, it leaves its proper abode, the sphere of fire. Dante’s real home is the Empyrean, toward which he is returning more swiftly than lightning ever fell from the sky” (Gr). For the phenomenon of lightning in this sense, see Par. XXIII, 40-42. And, for the soul’s return, see Conv. IV, xxviii, 2, where Dante says that the noble soul “ritorna a Dio, sì come a quello porto onde ella si partio quando venne ad intrare nel mare di questa vita” (“returns to God, as to that port whence she departed when she came to enter upon the sea of this life”).

97. requiesci: A Latinism, the preterite of requiescere, meaning “I was resting.”

98. grande ammirazione: His wonder at the increase of light and at the harmony of the spheres.

98–99. ma ora ammiero . . . levi: Many commentators take “questi corpi levi” to refer to the spheres of air and fire, which lie below the sphere of the moon. But the verb “trascenda” (subjunctive of trascendere), and Dante’s wonder, point by anticipation to the other “light bodies,” the nine spheres beginning with the moon, which he knows he must pass through in his upward journey to the Empyrean. Is Dante rising in his body or not? See Par. II, 34-42. This is
a question that is never answered within the poem. Nor did Paul answer it regarding his own rapture (II Cor. 12:2).

Though the case here is wholly different, since the pilgrim Dante is a living man, it is interesting to note that the question was commonly discussed by theologians as to how it would be possible for the elect who are to receive their glorified bodies at the Last Judgment to pass with their bodies through the spheres as they rise to the Empyrean. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* IV, 87, the conclusion of which is as follows:

Neque etiam huic promissioni divinae impossibilitatem affert quod corpora caelestia frangi non possunt, ut super ea gloriosa corpora subleventur, quia a virtute divina hoc fiet ut gloriosa corpora simul cum aliis corporibus esse possint; cuius rei indicium in corpore Christi praecessit, dum ad discipulos ianuis clausis intravit.

Neither does this divine promise meet an impossibility in the assertion that celestial bodies are unbreakable so the glorious bodies may not be elevated above them. For the divine power will bring it about that the glorious bodies can be simultaneously where the other bodies are; an indication of this was given in the body of Christ when He came to the disciples, “the doors being shut” (John 20:26).

103–41. *Le cose . . . vivo*: Beatrice’s answer occupies the rest of the canto and is the first striking example of the new perspective of the *Paradiso*, in which, time and again, a total view of the cosmos and its providential order is set forth. Her beginning is typical in this passage: “All things whatsoever . . .”

104–5. *hanno ordine tra loro . . . simigliante*: There is a total order and harmony in this universe created by God, and this is the form (the essential informing and governing principle) which makes God’s handiwork, the universe, resemble its Maker. At the end, when the wayfaring Dante will see God “face to face,” he will, in fact, see in the depth of that vision
the whole universe, as it were, “bound with love into a single volume” (Par. XXXIII, 85-87). See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 47, a. 3, resp.: “Ipse ordo in rebus sic a Deo creatis existens unitatem mundi manifestat. Mundus enim iste unus dicitur unitate ordinis, secundum quod quaedam ad alia ordinantur. Quaecumque autem sunt a Deo, ordinem habent ad invicem, et ad ipsum Deum.” (“The very order of things created by God shows the unity of the world. For this world is called one by the unity of order, whereby some things are ordered to others. But whatever things come from God, have relation of order to each other, and to God Himself.”)

106-8. Qui veggion . . . norma: The created universe in all its harmony and total order is there to be contemplated by those among God’s creatures which have intellect, namely, angels and men, here called “high” creatures precisely because they have that “high” faculty. God made the universe for Himself and left His imprint (“orma”) upon it. Things in His universe point beyond themselves, point up to Him, to the eternal worth which He is, and they are so designed by Him to do this for those creatures who have the power to contemplate the creation in this way. See Ps. 18:2[19:1]: “Caeli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum eius annuntiat firmamentum.” (“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.”) The reader should consider here, in this context, that the poet has imitated God’s work in his poem by the very element of the triple rhyme in which it is written: a triune Craftsman left everywhere that “orma” of a number three in His work; so does the poet in imitation thereof. See further C. S. Singleton (1949), pp. 38-41. Thus the created universe declares the glory of God, and this is ultimately its reason (“norma”) for being, the “final cause” (“fine”) of its total order. The following verse continues to dwell on that “ordine.” See Dante, De mon. I, viii, 2:

De intentione Dei est ut omne causatum in tantum divinam similitudinem representet, in quantum propria natura recipere potest. Propter quod dictum est “Faci-
mus hominem ad ymaginem et similitudinem nostram”; quod licet “ad ymaginem” de rebus inferioribus ab homine dici non possit, “ad similitudinem” tamen de qualibet dici potest, cum totum universum nichil aliud sit quam vestigium quoddam divine bonitatis.

It is of the intention of God that every created thing should present the divine likeness in so far as its proper nature is capable of receiving it. Wherefore it is said, “Let us make man after our image and likeness.” And although “after our image” may not be said of things lower than man, yet “after our likeness” may be said of all things soever, since the whole universe is nought else than a certain footprint of the divine excellence.

109–23. Ne l’ordine . . . fretta: Beatrice’s cosmic view of this total order among all things now touches on the motive force within that order, which is love, natural love, an instinct innate in all things. It will be recalled that the poet has built into the exact center of his poem (his “imitation” of that order) a discourse on love, distinguishing this natural love, “which cannot err,” from elective love. Beatrice’s exposition now is a further explanation of how this instinct, or natural love, is indeed the primary motive force within the total order of God’s creation, as He in His providence willed it. See Purg. XVII, 91-94, and n. to Purg. XVII, 91-92. There is, of course, much Aristotelian philosophy in Beatrice’s disquisition, for in Dante’s time Christian theology had already taken a great deal from Aristotle.

109. *accline*: Natural love as a motive force is an instinct which “bends,” is an inclination toward something desired. See Purg. XVIII, 22-27, where the term *piegare* (“to bend”) is used, and such bending is said to be love itself.

110. *tutte nature*: All created things, animate and inanimate. Stones and flames, as well as animals, men, and angels, are included in this conception. *per diverse sorti*: Each class of creatures has a different destiny, as Beatrice goes on to state.
111–14. *più al principio ... porti:* The ultimate principle of all things is God or the good, and in the great “chain of being” which is His creation some creatures are by their nature nearer to Him than others. There is hierarchy and degree in the total order. Angels are higher than men in that order, though both are “high,” for if they are angels, they dwell forever with God, and if men, they may return to Him, returning by the motive force of natural love. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 59, a. 1, resp.:

Quodcum omnia procedant ex voluntate divina, omnia suo modo per appetitum inclinantur in bonum, sed diversimode. Quaedam enim inclinantur in bonum per solam naturalem habitudinem absque cognitione, sicut plantae et corpora inanimata; et talis inclinatio ad bonum vocatur appetitus naturalis. Quaedam vero ad bonum inclinantur cum aliqua cognitione; non quidem quod cognoscant ipsam rationem boni, sed cognoscunt aliquod bonum particulare, sicut sensus qui cognoscit dulce et album, et aliquid huiusmodi. Inclinatio autem hanc cognitionem sequens dicitur appetitus sensitivus. Quaedam vero inclinantur ad bonum cum cognitione, qua cognoscent ipsum boni rationem, quod est proprium intellectus; et haec perfectissime inclinantur in bonum; non quidem quasi ab alio solummodo directa in bonum, sicut ea quae cognitione carent; neque in bonum particulariter tantum sicut ea quibus est sola sensitiva cognitio; sed quasi inclinata in ipsum universal bonum; et haec inclinatio dicitur voluntas.

Since all things flow from the Divine will, all things in their own way are inclined by appetite towards good, but in different ways. Some are inclined to good by their natural inclination, without knowledge, as plants and inanimate bodies. Such inclination towards good is called *a natural appetite.* Others, again, are inclined towards good, but with some knowledge; not that they know the aspect of goodness, but that they apprehend some particular good; as the sense, which knows the sweet, the white, and so on. The inclination which fol-
lows this apprehension is called *a sensitive appetite*. Other things, again, have an inclination towards good, but with a knowledge whereby they perceive the aspect of goodness; this belongs to the intellect. This is most perfectly inclined towards what is good; not, indeed, as if it were merely guided by another towards good, like things devoid of knowledge, nor towards some particular good only, as things which have only sensitive knowledge, but as inclined towards good in general. Such inclination is termed *will*.

See also Dante, *Conv*. III, vii, 2-5:

Ove è da sapere che la divina bontade in tutte le cose discende, e altrimenti essere non potrebbero; ma avvegna che questa bontade si muova da simplicissimo principio, diversamente si riceve, secondo più e meno, de le cose riceventi. Onde scritto è nel libro de le Cagioni: “La prima bontade manda le sue bontadi sopra le cose con uno discorrimento.” Veramente ciascuna cosa riceve da quello discorrimento secondo lo modo de la sua vertù e de lo suo essere; e di ciò sensibile esempio avere potemo dal sole. Vedemo la luce del sole, la quale è una, da uno fonte derivata, diversamente da le corpora essere ricevuta; sì come dice Alberto, in quello libro che fa de lo Intelletto, che certi corpi, “per molta chiaritade di diafano avere in sè mista, tosto che ’l sole li vede diventano tanto luminosi, che per multipli­camento di luce in quello e ne lo loro aspetto, rendono a li altri di sè grande splendore,” sì come è l’oro e alcuna pietra. “Certi sono che, per esser del tutto diafani, non solamente ricevono la luce, ma quella non impediscono, anzi rendono lei del loro colore colorata ne l’altre cose. E certi sono tanto vincenti ne la purità del diafano, che divegno si raggianti, che vincono l’armonia de l’occhio, e non si lasciano vedere sanza fatica del viso,” sì come sono li specchi. Certi altri sono tanto sanza dia­fano, che quasi poco de la luce ricevono, sì come la terra. Così la bontà di Dio è ricevuta altrimenti da le sustanze separate, cioè da li Angeli, che sono sanza
grossezza di materia, quasi diafani per la purità de la loro forma, e altrimenti da l’anima umana.

Where be it known that the divine excellence descends upon all things, and otherwise they could not exist; but although this goodness springs from the most simple principle, it is diversely received, in greater or smaller measure, by the things that receive it. Wherefore it is written in the book Of Causes: “The primal excellence makes its excellences flow upon things with one flowing”; but each thing receives of this flowing according to the fashion of its power and of its being, and of this we may have an example patent to the senses from the sun. We see the light of the sun, which is one, derived from a single source, diversely received by the several bodies; as Albertus says in that book he has made On the intellect, that certain substances, because they have large measure of the clearness of the transparent mingled in their composition, so soon as the sun sees them become so luminous that their aspect consists in the multiplication of the light in them, and they cast a great splendour from themselves upon other substances; as are gold and certain stones. Certain there are which, because they are altogether diaphanous, not only receive the light, but without impeding it render it again, coloured with their colour, to other things. And certain there are so supreme in the purity of their transparency as to become so radiant that they vanquish the temper of the eye, and cannot be looked on without trouble of the sight; as are mirrors. Certain others are so completely without transparency that they receive but little of the light; as is earth. In like manner the excellence of God is received after one fashion by the sejunct substances, to wit the angels, which are without grossness of material, as though diaphanous, in virtue of the purity of their form; and after another fashion by the human soul.

112–14. onde si muovono ... porti: Metaphorically the whole of creation is now viewed as a great sea, the sea of existence, and the creatures, impelled by natural love
CANTO I

114. *con istinto a lei dato che la porti*: This natural love is implanted by God in everything, as its motive force. *che la porti*: The verb in the subjunctive expresses deliberate purpose on the part of the Giver of that instinct.

115. *Questi*: This instinct, which is the subject of the verb in this and each of the following two verses, is seen as the motive force in three classes of creatures or natures (vs. 110): fire, animate creatures, and earth. *ne porta*: “Ne” is the adverb “off.” *il foco inver’ la luna*: The sphere of fire lies immediately below the sphere of the moon and is the highest of the elemental spheres: fire, air, water, and earth, which exist in that descending order. Thus a flame is seen to reach upwards, as it were. Why? Because it seeks to return to its proper sphere or locus of existence, just below the moon. In the present context a certain passage of the *Convivio* (III, iii, 2-4) can serve as a further gloss to the meaning here:

Onde è da sapere che ciascuna cosa, come detto è di sopra, per la ragione di sopra mostrata ha ’l suo speziale amore. Come le corpora simplici hanno amore naturato in sè a lo luogo proprio, e però la terra sempre discende al centro; lo fuoco ha [amore a] la circunferenza di sopra, lungo lo cielo de la luna, e però sempre sale a quello. Le corpora composte prima, sì come sono le minere, hanno amore a lo luogo dove la loro generazione è ordinata, e in quello crescono e acquistano vigore e potenza; onde vedemo la calamita sempre da la parte de la sua generazione ricevere vertù. Le piante, che sono prima animate, hanno amore a certo luogo più manifestamente, secondo che la complessione richiede; e però vedemo certe piante lungo l'acque quasi c[ontent]-arsi, e certe sopra li gioghi de le montagne, e certe ne le piagge e dappiè monti: le quali se si transmutano, o muoiono del tutto o vivono quasi triste, sì come cose disgiunte dal loro amico.
Wherefore be it known that everything, as said above, and for the reason above set forth, hath its specific love, as, for example, the simple bodies have a love which has an innate affinity to their proper place; and that is why earth ever drops to the centre; but the love of fire is for the upper circumference, under the heaven of the moon, and therefore it ever riseth thereto.

Primary compound bodies, like the minerals, have a love for the place where their generation is ordained; and therein they grow, and thence draw vigour and power. Whence we see the magnet ever receive power from the direction of its generation.

Plants, which are the primary living things, have a more manifest love for certain places, according as their composition requires; and therefore we see certain plants almost always gather along watercourses, and certain on the ridges of mountains, and certain on slopes and at the foot of hills, the which, if we transplant them, either die altogether or live as if in gloom, like things parted from the place dear to them.

116. questi ne' cor mortali è permotore: Mortal hearts of animals. The heart is named, of course, because this instinct is essentially an affective force, a desire. A famous passage from Augustine's *Confessions* may be appropriately remembered as another gloss on vss. 115-17, as well as on vss. 118-20. See *Conf.* XIII, 9:

In dono tuo requiescimus: ibi te fruimur. requies nostra locus noster. amor illuc attollit nos et spiritus tuus bonus exaltat humilitatem nostram de portis mortis. in bona voluntate tua pax nobis est. corpus pondere suo nititur ad locum suum. pondus non ad ima tantum est, sed ad locum suum. ignis sursum tendit, deorsum lapis. ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua petunt. oleam infra aquam fusum super aquam attollitur, aqua supra oleum fusa infra oleum demergitur: ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua petunt. minus ordinata inquieta sunt: ordinantur et quiescunt. pondus meum amor meus; eo feror, quocumque feror. dono tuo accendimur et sursum
ferimur; inardescimus et imus. ascendimus ascensiones in corde et cantamus canticum graduum. igne tuo, igne tuo bono inardescimus et imus, quoniam sursum imus ad pacem Hierusalem, quoniam iucundatus sum in his, qui dixerunt mihi: in domum domini ibimus. ibi nos conlocabit voluntas bona, ut nihil velimus aliud quam permanere illic in aeternum.

In thy gift we rest; then we enjoy thee. Our rest is thy gift, our life's place. Love lifts us up thither, and thy good spirit advances our lowliness from the gates of death. In thy good pleasure lies our peace. Our body with its lumpishness strives towards its own place. Weight makes not downward only, but to his own place also. The fire mounts upward, a stone sinks downward. All things pressed by their own weight go towards their proper places. Oil poured in the bottom of the water, is raised above it: water poured upon oil, sinks to the bottom of the oil. They are driven by their own weights, to seek their own places. Things a little out of their places become unquiet: put them in their order again, and they are quieted. My weight is my love: by that am I carried, whithersoever I be carried. We are inflamed by thy gift, and are carried upwards: we wax hot within, and we go on. We ascend thy ways that be in our heart, and we sing a song of degrees; we glow inwardly with thy fire, with thy good fire, and we go, because we go upward to the peace of Jerusalem: for glad I was whenas they said unto me, We will go up into the house of the Lord. There will thy good pleasure settle us, that we may desire no other thing, but to dwell there for ever.

117. *la terra in sé stringe e aduna:* Augustine’s words cited in the preceding note give the proper view here, for this instinct or love is a gravitational force, which causes the heavy element earth to gather itself into its proper resting-place.

118–20. *né pur ... amore:* The tercet singles out angels and men as creatures who have intellect and love, that is, intel-
lect and will, the two faculties of man’s immortal soul. See n. on vss. 106-8.

119. *quest’ arco saetta*: Beatrice’s discourse is concerned with what is properly termed teleology. The term *telos*, in Greek (often in Aristotle), means the end or purpose of an action and commonly suggests the metaphor which is now implicit in Beatrice’s words, namely, archery, the aiming of an arrow at some target. This figure in the present context makes God, who governs the heavens and all things, an archer who aims (through the motive force of natural love) the creature at its own proper target or resting-place. The Archer is not named as such, but His bow, His instrument in the total movement of the universe, is this love, natural love.

121. *La provedenza, che cotanto assetta*: It is God’s providence that establishes and maintains this whole teleological order in the universe, which is now viewed in the order of its spheres.

122. *del suo lume fa ‘l ciel sempre quieto*: The reference is to the tenth heaven, the Empyrean, which does not revolve, but is always quiet, always at rest in itself, God’s light causing it to have this peace.

123. *nel qual si volge quel c’ha maggior fretta*: The heaven that turns next below the tenth heaven is the Primum Mobile, swiftest of all the spheres in its revolution. That revolution is itself caused by love or desire. See Dante, *Conv.* II, iii, 8-9.

124. *lì*: The Empyrean heaven, the final resting-place of the elect and of their natural love, in the vision of God. *decreto* = *decretato*. From the Latin *decretus*.

125–26. *cen porta . . . lieto*: The archery metaphor returns now with the full expression of its teleological implications. God, through natural love, aims us at Himself. It is His will that we should return to Him who creates our immortal souls directly (see *Purg.* XXV, 70-75). Natural love now becomes
that force, which comes from the bowcord of the Archer, who aims us at Himself, happy target that He is.

127–35. Vero è che . . . piacere: But a problem arises here. How is it that some arrows fail to hit the mark? Can it be that the Almighty Archer has sometimes a faulty aim? Many souls do not return to Him, to His target which is Himself. Beatrice’s discourse now contemplates this question, passing in these verses from the archery metaphor to that of art in the sense of giving shape to some object, as in the art of pottery, for example. Why is the potter’s intention not always perfectly realized in the object he makes, the product of his art? The answer is that the clay does not respond perfectly to the potter’s intention, it is “deaf” to it, it is not properly disposed. The failure therefore must be assigned to the matter, the clay, and not to the potter. Or, to return to the figure of the archer and the arrow that fails to hit the target, the failure must certainly be imputed to the arrow, not to the archer. But how can this be? Does the arrow in itself have the power to swerve and miss the target? The following verses return, by implication, to the archery figure and give the answer in those terms.

130. da questo corso: The upward course of the pilgrim now. Clearly the statement applies to the living, to their love and its direction, upwards, which is the direction of natural love.

130–32. si diparte . . . parte: The human creature (and Beatrice’s words apply now exclusively to living human beings) is impelled by God-given natural love, which, according to Purg. XVII, 94, cannot err and always holds to the upward course in this life, always desiring God. But this same human creature is also endowed with elective love or love of choice, which can swerve from the course of natural love. That is, human beings have free will, which can choose to depart from the God-implanted direction of natural love—and this, of course, is sin. Again it should be recalled that the whole discourse on love and free will at the center of the poem
(Purg. XVI, XVII, XVIII) can serve as an excellent gloss to these verses. See also Purg. XXI, 64-66 (and the note to those verses), where it is made clear that elective love must be straightened or brought back to the direction of natural love. Thus the power to bend (piegare) or swerve is the power of free will and elective love. God launches the human soul into existence ("così pinta") or, to return to the archery figure, "shoots the arrow" at Himself, but this arrow has a quite special power given to it which no actual arrow has. This arrow may choose not to move toward the target of natural love, God, and thus fall "somewhere else."

133-35. e sì come ... piacere: Like natural love, fire should always rise upward toward its "sito decreto" (vs. 124), which is above. Sometimes, however, it has a downward movement, as when lightning darts down to earth, reversing the proper or natural direction of fire. Thus the poet draws an illustration from nature to bring the reader, by such a comparison, into the focus of natural love in the human creature. This love is the "impeto primo," the innate instinct that we now understand. Lightning, of course, has no power of choice but is, in this downward motion, simply an unnatural movement of the element fire.

The swerving from natural love on the part of the human creature is also unnatural in being a turning-away from the upward course which that love should always follow. But unlike fire, the human creature, having elective love, turned toward earthly things through the attraction of false (i.e., sinful) pleasure—he can depart from the course. See Purg. XVII, 91-102, noting in particular vs. 97, which applies to elective love: elective love should always be in harmony with natural love, be directed on the primal good, this primal good being God. Thus the lesson in love at the center of the poem remains the best gloss available to us on Beatrice's meaning here.

135. l'atterra: There has been much discussion of the reading to be followed in this verse, whether it should be "s'atterra" (the reflexive verb atterrarsi), meaning "grounds it-
self,” or “l’atterra” (the transitive verb with lo as the object), meaning “grounds it.” (See the relative note in Petrocchi, whose reading is followed here.) Part of the debate has resulted from some confusion concerning the meaning in this context. With “sì l’impeto primo” Beatrice returns to natural love in the human soul. But since this primal impulse is God-given, how can such an instinct go wrong, when we have been clearly told in Purg. XVII that it cannot? The archery figure in the preceding verses would seem to give the proper focus. The arrow (or natural love) is the motive force in human hearts (vs. 116). The arrow would not move at all if it did not have that original endowment of love as its motive force. And it cannot, by its very nature, go wrong, cannot “ground itself.” But love in the human creature, unlike love in fire, can swerve to one side through the power of elective love, which is also God-given and depends on free will. Perhaps the best gloss on this particular point is to be found in Purg. XVIII, 59-75 (and note, in Purg. XVIII, 46-48, 73-75, the promise made by Virgil that later Beatrice will explain this matter).

It should be noted, however, that the reading “s’atterra” might also make good sense in the context and with only a slight change of focus.

136–41. Non dei ... vivo: Again Beatrice turns for an example to natural movement, now to that of gravitation, the downward flow of water, and her focus in the argument here is indeed close to that of Augustine in the words cited above (n. to vs. 116). The final verse of the Purgatorio gives us the pilgrim as being “puro e disposto a salire a le stelle,” that is, without any remaining impediment in the proper upward direction of his love. His love of choice is now in perfect harmony with his natural love, which has its natural gravitation toward God.

The poem's basic allegory is very much to the fore here. The upward journey of the pilgrim there reflects a possible journey of “whichever” living man is uplifted in desire and contemplation toward God: the natural gravitation of God-given love. But love is better symbolized by fire than by
water; so Beatrice again returns to fire, to conclude her discourse. If one were to see a flame that does not reach up (toward its proper place above), this quietness would be a marvel as great as the upward flow of a river. But the flame has within it a natural love which seeks to rise. Even so the human heart.

Nor should it be forgotten that Beatrice in her triumph is dressed in the color of fire (Purg. XXX, 33), which is the color of love and which was the color of her dress when Dante first saw her (Vita nuova II, 3).

142. *Quinci rivolse inver' lo cielo il viso*: This heavenward glance of Beatrice, pointing the upward way, is a perfect conclusion to her whole argument.
1–18. *O voi che . . . bifolco*: This is the most remarkable address to the reader in the whole of the *Commedia*. Such addresses are encountered elsewhere, but none so long and none addressed to such a group of readers, who are here urged to turn back in their little boats. The poet as poet addresses these readers, and his navigational figure concerns the “voyage” of his art as it now enters upon a new sea and “crosses over” (“cantando varca”) from time to eternity. It is essential to bear in mind that it is the poet who is speaking: if the voyage of Dante the pilgrim were meant here, the claim that no one ever sailed these waters before would be untrue, for St. Paul, uplifted to Heaven, must have passed through these spheres and completed this same journey. The claim is true only from the point of view of the poet, not from that of the wayfarer. Paul did not take us back over his experience, but Dante the poet intends to do this now, to go back over his journey, in poetry.

1–6. *O voi che . . . smarriti*: In the *Convivio* Dante recognizes that many men for various reasons are excluded from the banquet of wisdom and science. Noting that all men desire to know and that knowing is a kind of perfection, he concludes (*Conv*. I, i, 6-7):
Manifestamente adunque può vedere chi bene considera, che pochi rimangono quelli che a l'abito da tutti desiderato possano pervenire, e innumerabili quasi sono l'impediti che di questo cibo sempre vivono affamati. Oh beati quelli pochi che seggiono a quella mensa dove lo pane de li angeli si manuca! e miseri quelli che con le pecore hanno comune cibo!

Manifestly then may he perceive who rightly considers, that few be left who may reach to that habit which is desired by all; and well-nigh beyond number are they which be hindered and which live all their lives famished for this universal food. Oh blessed those few who sit at the table where the bread of angels is consumed, and wretched they who share the food of sheep!

Yet those who have followed the poet's ship so far are many, and in their little vessels they have been able, presumably, to navigate the waters of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*. But the *Paradiso* is as the open ocean (*pelago*), and their vessels (that is, their minds) should not venture forth on this ocean. One may think of this admonition in terms of the guides thus far in the journey. The journey with Virgil is ended, and (in spite of the fact that much philosophy was encountered there) many readers have been able to follow through the area or sea where Virgil is the guide. Such readers have even navigated the last cantos of the *Purgatorio*, which include the advent of Beatrice, the second guide, one of whose names in the allegory is Sapientia, Wisdom which descends from on high. But now the reader is launched with such a Lady Wisdom as Beatrice represents, now Dante rises with her, rises "beyond the human" and enters upon an ocean which is too deep even for many of those who were able to follow Virgil's guidance. See C. S. Singleton (1958).

2. *desiderosi d'ascoltare*: "Tutti li uomini naturalmente desiderano di sapere" ("All men by nature desire to know") is the opening statement of the *Con vivio* and derives from Aristotle. *seguiti*: To be connected with "siete" of vs. 1, "siete seguiti." Cf. the Latin *secati estis*.
3. *dietro al mio legno che cantando varca*: The reader will recall that the opening of the *Purgatorio* deals in a similar metaphor. Indeed, to look now to those verses and the navigational figure they introduce, one may say that each of the three *cantiche* can be viewed as a sea—*Inferno* a cruel one, *Purgatorio* a better one, *Paradiso* an ocean—across which the poet’s genius as poet takes us. On such navigational metaphors, E. R. Curtius (1953, pp. 128-29) writes:

The Roman poets are wont to compare the composition of a work to a nautical voyage. “To compose” is “to set the sails, to sail” (“vela dare”: Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 41). At the end of the work the sails are furled (“vela trahere”: *ibid.*, IV, 117). The epic poet voyages over the open sea in a great ship, the lyric poet on a river in a small boat. Horace makes Phoebus warn him (*Carm.*, IV, 15, 1):

*Phoebus volentem proelia me loqui *
_Victas et urbes increpuit lyra, _
_Ne parva Tyrrhenum per aequor _
_Vela darem . . . _

(Phoebus, when I of battles thought to tell
And conquered cities, struck his lyre, warning
Lest on the open sea I set
My little sails . . . )

In poems that consist of several books each book can begin with “setting” the sails and end with “furling” them. The end of the whole work is entering port, with or without casting anchor (Statius, *Silvae*, IV, 89; *Thebais*, XII, 809; *Ilias latina*, 1063). The poet becomes the sailor, his mind or his work the boat. Sailing the sea is dangerous, especially when undertaken by an “unpracticed sailor” (“rudis nauta”: Fòrtunatus, ed. Leo, 114, 26) or in a “leaky boat” (“rimosa fragilis ingenii barca”: Aldhelm [ed. Ehwald], 320, 20). Often the boat must be steered between cliffs (“sermonum cymbam inter loquelae scopulos frenare”: Ennodius [ed. Hartel], I, 3). Alcuin fears sea-monsters (*Poetae*,

39
I, 198, 1321 ff.); Smaragdus the raging tides (Poetae, I, 609, 55 ff.). Unfavorable winds and storms often threaten.

Nautical metaphors originally belong to poetry. Pliny writes to a poet (Ep., VIII, 4, 5): “Loose the hawsers, spread the sails, and let your genius voyage freely. For why should I not discourse poetically with a poet?” But Cicero had already adopted these expressions in prose. Shall he use the “oar of dialectics” or set “the sails of eloquence” at once (Tusc., IV, 5, 9). Quintilian feels like a solitary sailor on the high seas (prooemium to Book XII). Jerome sets “the sails of interpretation” (PL, XXV, 903 D). His sailing breeze is the Holy Ghost (ibid., 369 D). Prudentius refers to Paul’s shipwreck and Peter’s wanderings over the sea (ed. Bergmann, 215 f. and 245). This class of metaphor is extraordinarily widespread throughout the Middle Ages and long survives into later times.

Dante begins the second book of the Convivio with nautical metaphors: “... proemialmente ragionando ... lo tempo chiama e domanda la mia nave uscir di porto; perché, drizzato l’artimone de la ragione a l’òra del mio desiderio, entro in pelago.”

Also note the additional examples and footnote references given by Curtius in his review of nautical metaphors, as well as his discussion of Dante in this context.

5. in pelago: On the deep open ocean.

6. perdendo me: I.e., “losing sight of me and my vessel,” which now goes beyond the human (“trasumanar,” Par. I, 70), with Beatrice guiding.

8. Minerva: Minerva, goddess of wisdom. Wisdom is also the name (in allegory) of Beatrice. See C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 122-38. spira: In the nautical figure the meaning is “she fills my sails”; out of metaphor it is “she breathes within me.” Compare this use of spirare in Purg. XXIV, 53. conducemi Appollo: Apollo, to whom the
opening invocation is addressed, was the god of poetry. (See
n. to Par. I, 13.)

9. *e nova Muse*: Dante invokes the Muses at the beginning
of several important passages. See, for example, *Purg. I*,
7-12, and the n. to *Purg. I*, 9-12.  *l'Orse*: The “she-
bears” is a term used by Dante to refer to the Big and Little
Dippers (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, the Big Bear and Lit-
tle Bear) as constellations by which sailors are guided. The
Little Bear contains the North Star. To indicate the pole of
the northern hemisphere he speaks of the two together as
“l'Orse.”

10–11. *Voialtri pochi . . . angeli*: See the quotation from the
*Convidio* in n. to vss. 1-6. The bread of angels is wisdom, on
which the celestial Intelligences (angels) feed, as some few
men may also do. The poet is singling out the privileged few,
those who have devoted years to the study of philosophy and
theology. The expression “bread of angels” is from the Bible.
See Ps. 77[78]:25, “panem angelorum manducavit homo”
(“the bread of angels was eaten by men”), and Sapien.
16:20, “pro quibus angelorum esca nutrivisti populum tuum”
(“as against this, you nourished your people with food of
angels”).

12. *vivesi qui ma non sen vien satollo*: In *Conv.* IV, xxii, 13
Dante notes that the speculative intellect “in questa vita per-
fettamente lo suo uso avere non puote—lo quale averà in Dio
ch'è sommo intelligibile—, se non in quanto considera lui e
mira lui per li suoi effetti” (“cannot in this life have its per-
fekt exercise, which is to see God [who is the supreme object
of the intellect], save in so far as the intellect considers him
and contemplates him through his effects”). See also *Purg.*
XXXI, 128-29, and the corresponding note.

13. *sale*: “Salt sea.” This is a Latinism (see Horace, *Epodes
XVII*, 55).

14. *navigio*: The term suggests a larger ship and thus con-
trasts with the “little bark” of vs. 1.  *solco*: Literally,
“furrow”; here the wake of a ship.
15. *dinanzi a l’acqua che ritorna equale*: “Before the surface of the water becomes smooth again,” without any trace (“solco”) of the wake of my ship remaining visible.

16–18. *Que’ gloriosi . . . bifolco*: The Argonauts, who crossed to Colchis in quest of the golden fleece, were astonished to see Jason, their leader, plowing with fire-breathing oxen and sowing dragon’s teeth which grew into men. Ovid describes the scene in *Metam.* VII, 100-58.

16. *Colco*: The name of the inhabitants of Colchis (singular for plural), used to designate the country itself. Colchis was an ancient country of Asia, bounded on the west by the Euxine, on the north by the Caucasus, and on the east by Asian Iberia.

18. *Iasón*: The hero has already been encountered in *Inferno.* See *Inf.* XVIII, 86-96, where this famous voyage is referred to, among his other adventures, and n. to *Inf.* XVIII, 86.

19. *La concreata e perpetua sete*: This is innate natural love in man, a matter fully set forth in *Purg.* XVIII, that instinct now being called a thirst.

20. *del deiforme regno*: The Empyrean, where God is. *cen = ce ne.*

21. *veloci quasi come ’l ciel vedete*: “Our ‘inborn and eternal thirst’ for Heaven, ‘was sweeping us on almost as swift as you see the sky’—a curious comparison, since we are ordinarily not conscious of the sky’s motion. If, however, we follow the position of a heavenly body from hour to hour, we discover that in a very brief period it traverses an immense distance. The sky, without seeming to move at all, is really traveling with inconceivable velocity; and so we were doing. See also *Met.*, II, 70” (Gr).

23–34. *e forse . . . dischiava*: “‘And perhaps in as much time as that in which a bolt (from a crossbow) stops and flies and quits the notch’: the three incidents in the flight of the arrow are arranged in inverse order, to indicate that, to the
eye, they are simultaneous. The same device is used in XXII, 109" (Gr). Other commentators, observing the curious reversal, also take the meaning to suggest simultaneity. Such a reversal, however, is by no means unique with Dante, but was known to ancient rhetoric by the Greek name of *hysteron proteron*, meaning "the last [put] first." Benvenuto refers to it as "praeposteratio." Such a figure, especially in the present context, suggests something *caused from the end*, since the eye is invited to consider the end first and then the action as seen from the end. See C. S. Singleton (1966), pp. 63-64.

26. *però = perciò*.

27. *cura*: "Interest," "concern."

30. *n'ha congiunti = ci ha congiunti*. *la prima stella*: The moon.

31. *Parev' a me che nube ne coprisse*: As will now be made clear, Beatrice and Dante enter into the planet itself, and the poet is concerned to report the effects of so exceptional an experience. He is indeed causing us greater wonder than Jason's companions felt! The "matter" of the moon apparently gives the impression of a cloud to one who has actually entered into it. The reader realizes at once that the discussion of the moon which is now to follow concerns a planet conceived as being of a radically different matter than it has been thought to have since the time of Galileo. Indeed, a medieval poet and his readers (the learned few) would know from Aristotle's *De caelo*, or from medieval disquisitions on that famous text, that the moon—and everything above it—is radically different from the sublunar world.

32. *lucida*: Dante explains in *De mon*. III, iv, 17-18 that the moon not only receives light from the sun, but also has a light of its own.

33. *adamante = diamante*, "diamond."

34. *eterna*: The heavenly spheres and all that lies above the moon are incorruptible and therefore eternal. *margarita*: "Pearl." The comparison suggests a greater density of mat-
ter than was implied by "nube" in vs. 31, and this implication points to the problem raised by vss. 37-39.

35. ne = ci. recepe = riceve. "Recepe" is from the Latin recipio (infinitive, recipere). The body of the moon, with the attributes suggested above, receives Dante and Beatrice as water does a ray of light, i.e., without any displacement of the water. And this raises all the more the problem now to be presented: if Dante is rising in his body, how can his body pass into and through another body as a ray of light which does not displace the substance of water?

37. S'io era corpo: Cf. Par. I, 73-75. qui: Here on earth, where all is so different. Grandgent understands "qui" to mean "in this case"; but this, though possible, is less probable than the meaning "on earth."

38. com' una dimensione altra patio: "How one bulk brooked another," how one solid body could, without displacement, be penetrated by another. According to Thomas Aquinas (Summa theol. III, Suppl., q. 83, a. 3), it is possible for this to be brought about by a miracle. See also Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles IV, 87. patio = patì.

39. eh': "Which," referring to the preceding clause. repe: "Creeps."

40. ne: "Us." disio: The subject of dvuría (= dovrebbe) accendere.

41-45. di veder . . . crede: "In the 'essence' of Christ the human and the divine natures are miraculously united. The thought of [a human] body and the matter of the moon occupying simultaneously the same space should make us eager to rise to Heaven and behold, in the person of Christ, the greatest miracle of the kind—a miracle which we accept on faith, without being able to understand it. In Heaven it will be as clear and natural as a 'primal truth,' or axiom" (Gr).

43. Lì: In Heaven, in the vision of God "face to face." si vedrà ciò che tenem per fede: Precisely this desire will be the final desire of Dante the pilgrim, and he will have it satis-
fied there, at the end. See Par. XXXIII, 137-45. \textit{tenem} = \textit{teniamo}.

46-48. \textit{Madonna, sì devoto . . . remoto}: Dante is responding to Beatrice's exhortation (vss. 29-30).

47. \textit{lui}: God.

48. \textit{mortal mondo}: All that lies below the sphere of the moon; above it (and including it) all is immortal. See n. to vs. 34. \textit{remoto} = \textit{rimosso}.

49-51. \textit{Maditemi . . . altrui}: The big question is now asked, and Beatrice's answer will occupy the rest of this canto. For the old belief that the spots on the moon were Cain and his thorns, also referred to in Inf. XX, 126, see n. to Inf. XX, 126.

52-148. \textit{Ella sorrise alquanto . . . chiaro}: Before the reader ventures into Beatrice's long answer, he might do well to read Grandgent's paraphrase and exposition of the whole argument, since the scholastic manner of her disquisition and her philosophical terminology may be unfamiliar to him:

As he pictures himself rising with Beatrice to the sphere of the moon, the poet takes advantage of the occasion to explain—through the lips of his guide—the function of Nature, the power to which all the activities of the material universe are due. By Nature Dante means the operation of the heavenly bodies, directed by celestial Intelligences, or angels, which are the ministers of God. The world of matter, therefore, exactly corresponds to the world of spirit, and is its visible image. From the Maker, in his Empyrean abode, descends a vital principle, which is received by the 9th sphere, or Primum Mobile, the outermost of the revolving heavens. This sphere, which contains no stars, is alike in all its parts; and for that reason it does not analyze the force bestowed upon it, but imparts it, translated into material energy, to the heavens within its circuit. The 8th sphere—that of the fixed stars—by means of these bodies differentiates, in accordance with the needs of the world,
the single but potentially multiform power that comes from the Primum Mobile: cf. *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra* [LXX-LXXI]. This diversified power then sifts downward to the earth, passing through the other spheres, each of which combines with those energies which are akin to its own essence, and transmits them still further modified. The brightness of the heavenly bodies is due ultimately to this same power, derived from God, whose gladness is the source of all light. The various stars, according to their nature, combine to a greater or less degree with this energizing and light-giving principle; and that is why one star differs from another in glory. So it is with the moon. Some parts of this orb are less sensitive than others to the illuminining energy, and hence, when seen from below, appear as spots on the lunar surface. Looked at from above, the moon has no such marks: *Par. XXII*, 139-141 (*Bull.*, VII, 235)....

Averroës and Albertus Magnus believed the moon spots to be the results of the presence, in some regions of the moon, of rarer matter, which was unfit to reflect the sun's light; and they attributed this opinion to Aristotle (*Toynbee*, 78-79). The same view is expressed by Dante in *Conv.*, II, xiii, 9. By the time he wrote the *Paradiso*, however, he had evidently become dissatisfied with such a material explanation and had worked out a more spiritual one, which applies to the stars as well as to the moon. The refutation of his former theory is conducted, in scholastic style, by Beatrice, some of whose arguments may be found in Albertus Magnus, *De Caelo et Mundo*, Lib. II, Tr. ii and iii (*Toynbee*, 82).

In the first place, we must assume that the obscurity of some parts of the moon is due to the same cause as the comparative dimness of some of the stars. The question then is, whether this difference in brightness is caused by a difference in density, or quantity of matter, or by a difference in quality. Now we know that each of the several heavenly bodies and groups of stars has a special influence on the earth. If the stars differed only
in the density of their matter, the quality being the same, the effect of all would be the same in kind, and would differ only in degree. Different influences must be the result of different fundamental principles; and these principles, if Dante's earlier view were correct, would be reduced to one. Therefore the celestial bodies—and, by inference, the various parts of the moon—must differ in kind.

As far as the moon is concerned, there is another argument, a purely physical one. Supposing the moon contained streaks of rarer matter, these layers would either extend through the moon, from side to side, or not. If they did, we should see the sun shining through them at the time of a solar eclipse, when the moon is between the sun and the earth. If they did not, there must be dense matter behind the rare; and in that case this dense matter would reflect the light, just as if it were on the surface. But—it may be objected—the light reflected from farther back would be fainter than that reflected from the outside, and the fainter reflections would appear as spots. To be convinced that this is not true, says Beatrice, try an experiment. Aristotle has declared that experiment is the source of science (Metaphysics, I, i). Place three mirrors upright at a distance from you, one a little farther back than the other two. Somewhere behind you put a light in such a position that it will shine into the glasses and be reflected by them. You will see that the reflection in the three mirrors is equally bright, although its image in the more remote one is of somewhat smaller dimensions. If, as seems likely, Dante had actually performed this experiment, he must have done so under such conditions that, to the eye, his conclusion was shown to be correct.

On the philosophical and historical sources of this whole question and Beatrice's argument, the reader may profitably consult P. Toynbee (1902), pp. 78-86, cited by Grandgent above; B. Nardi (1930), pp. 3-39; E. Proto (1912); and E. G. Parodi (1922), pp. 13-41.
52-57. *Ella sorrisse alquanto... l’ali:* Paraphrasing the meaning, Sapegno comments:

Non dovresti ormai meravigliarti se le opinioni umane son soggette ad errare in quegli argomenti dei quali la conoscenza esatta non può esserci aperta e fornita dai sensi, poiché vedi che anche quando procede con la guida dei sensi (anche nel campo degli argomenti naturali) la nostra ragione non è in grado di spingersi molto lontano... Ora qui Dante non intende rifiutare e neppure svalutare l’importanza delle cognizioni unicamente, da cui “comincia la nostra conoscenza” (*Conv.*, II, iv, 17); si soltanto stabilire i limiti di una conoscenza razionale, che si affidi soltanto ai dati bene spesso insufficienti ed erronei dell’esperienza, anziché prender lume da un concetto generale e, in ultima istanza, teologico.

By now you should no longer marvel if human opinions are subject to error in those arguments in which exact knowledge cannot be clear and provided by the senses, since you see that even when it is guided by the senses (even in natural matters) our reason is not able to advance very far... Now Dante at this point does not intend to refute or even invalidate the importance of cognition from which “our knowledge begins” entirely (*Conv.* II, iv, 17), but he means only to establish the limits of any rational knowledge that depends solely on the data of experience (which are quite often insufficient and erroneous) instead of gaining light from a general concept which is, finally, theological.

52. *elli = egli.* This pronoun merely anticipates the subject, “l’opinion.”

55. *dovrien = dourebbero.*

56. *poi dietro ai sensi:* “‘Since even under the guidance of the senses.’ It is no wonder that men go astray in the interpretation of spiritual things, when they cannot even explain physical phenomena” (*Gr*).
58. *Ma dimmi quel che tu da te ne pensi:* With this verse Dante the poet enables Dante the pilgrim to hold the opinion expressed in *the Convivio* (II, xiii, 9):

Che se la Luna si guarda bene, due cose si veggiono in essa proprie, che non si veggiono ne l’altre stelle. L’una si è l’ombra che è in essa, la quale non è altro che rarità del suo corpo, a la quale non possono terminare li raggi del sole e ripercuotersi così come ne l’altre parti; l’altra si è la variazione de la sua luminositade, che ora luce da uno lato, e ora luce da un altro, secondo che lo sole la vede.

For if the moon be rightly examined two special things are perceived in her which are not perceived in the other stars; the one is the shadow upon her which is nought else than the rarity of her substance, whereon the rays of the sun may not be stayed and thrown back, as from her other parts; the other is the variation of her luminosity, which now shines from the one side and now from the other, according as the sun looks upon her.

Beatrice will now refute this opinion. For the history of this particular view, see B. Nardi (1930), pp. 3-39.

63. *li = gli,* “to it,” the opinion expressed by Dante.

64. *La spera ottava:* The heaven of the fixed stars, the eighth heaven counting out or upwards from that of the moon. Beatrice immediately refers the question to the lofty eighth heaven, to begin her refutation.

64–65. *molti lumi:* The stars, for in this Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmos *all* the stars are conceived to be “fixed” in this sphere.

65–66. *e nel quale e nel quanto . . . volti:* We see that the stars differ both in kind and in size, that is, in the quality and the quantity of their light. It is assumed that everyone—or at least the learned few—will have noticed this phenomenon.

66. *volti:* “Aspects.”
67. Se raro e denso ciò facesser tanto: “If rarity and density alone produced this”: i.e., this difference in apparent kind and size. There are other Tuscan examples of tanto = ‘only’” (Gr).

67–72. Se raro e denso . . . distrutti: For the turn which Beatrice’s refutation now takes, Sapegno’s comment is most helpful:

Ecco lo schema del suo ragionamento, che risulta difficile in quanto presuppone tutta una serie di proposizioni che dovevano apparire evidenti alla coscienza filosofica dei lettori contemporanei: l’ottavo cielo mostra ai vostri occhi molti astri che appaiono differenti nel loro aspetto per quantità e qualità di luce; queste differenze di luminosità debbono spiegarsi allo stesso modo di quelle che appaiono nel corpo lunare; ora, se esse dipendessero soltanto dalla maggiore o minore densità dei corpi, ne sarebbe una sola virtù, cioè esse avrebbero tutte un’identica natura specifica, distinta non qualitativamente, ma solo quantitativamente (distribuita in misura maggiore, minore, od uguale, più e men . . . e altrettanto, in ciascuna stella). Ma questo è assurdo; le stelle fisse hanno ciascuna una diversa virtù (come è richiesto dall’ordine complesso e molteplice del mondo sublunare, sul quale quelle virtù son chiamate ad operare); e virtù diverse non possono che essere effetto di differenti principi formali; mentre, per chi accettasse la tesi di Averroè, tutti questi principi formali verrebbero ridotti ad uno solo. La teoria del raro e del denso è dunque insufficiente a spiegare, filosoficamente, una diversità che non è soltanto di ordine quantitativo, sì anche qualitativo. In altre parole: alla differenziazione delle specie nel mondo infralunare deve corrispondere nel cielo una differenza di forme; la diversa luminosità dei corpi celesti è indice di virtù attive diversamente operanti a plasmare e specificare la materia terrestre; queste virtù diverse debbono dipendere infine da principi formali distinti.
Here is the outline of her [Beatrice's] reasoning, which is difficult [for us to follow] in that it presupposes a whole series of propositions which must have seemed obvious to the philosophical mentality of contemporary readers: the eighth heaven shows you many stars that appear different in the quantity and quality of their light; and these differences in luminosity must be explained in the same way as those which appear in the body of the moon; now, if these differences resulted solely from the greater or lesser density of these bodies, it would follow that in all the stars there would be one single virtue, that is, the stars would all have an identical specific nature, not distinguished qualitatively but only quantitatively (distributed in greater, lesser, or equal degree, "più e men . . . e altrettanto," in each star). But this is absurd: the fixed stars have each a different virtue (as is required by the complex and varied order of the sublunar world, on which those virtues are ordained to shed their influence); and different virtues can only be the result of different formal principles; whereas, for anyone who should accept the thesis of Averroës, all these formal principles would be reduced to one only. The theory of rarity and density is therefore insufficient to explain, philosophically, a diversity that is not only quantitative in kind, but also qualitative. In other words: to the differentiation of species in the sublunar world there must be in the heaven a corresponding difference of forms; the differing luminosity of the heavenly bodies indicates active virtues which operate differently in shaping and rendering specific earthly things [that which lies within the sublunar region of the universe]; these different virtues must result, finally, from distinct formal principles.

The formal principle is the active principle, that is, the intrinsic cause which determines the specific form of a given thing. See B. Nardi (1930), pp. 9-10; E. Proto (1912), pp. 201-4.

67-69. Se raro e denso . . . altrettanto: B. Nardi (1930, pp. 12-13) observes:
E si noti anche un’altra cosa. Rigettando la dottrina averroistica, Beatrice non intende affatto negare che alcune parti del cielo siano più dense ed altre più rare. Ma vuole che il raro e il denso . . . non sia sufficiente a spiegare la diversità sostanziale “nel quale e nel quanto” (v. 65); cossicchè, pur ammettendo il raro e il denso come condizione o disposizione materiale della diversità, questa richiede, inoltre, una diversità di principii formali intrinseci. Tale appunto è il significato di quel “tanto” del verso 67.

And let this also be noted: in rejecting the doctrine of Averroës, Beatrice does not in the least intend to deny that some parts of the heavens do indeed vary in density and rarity. But she means that this rarity and density . . . is not sufficient to explain the substantial difference “in quality and quantity” (vs. 65); so that, even admitting rarity and density as a condition or material disposition of this diversity, this latter requires, besides, a diversity of formal intrinsic principles. Such is the meaning of that “tanto” in vs. 67.

70-72. Virtù diverse . . . distrutti: On this point Dante’s own statement in his *Questio de aqua et terra* LXX-LXXII may be cited:

Licet celum stellatum habeat unitatem in substantia; habet tamen multiplicitatem in virtute; propter quod oportuit habere diversitatem illam in partibus quam videmus, ut per organa diversa virtutes diversas influeret; et qui hec non advertit, extra limitem phylosophie se esse cognoscat. Videmus in eo differentiam in magnitudine stellarum et in luce, in figuris et ymaginibus constellationum; que quidem differentie frustra esse non possunt, ut manifestissimum esse debet omnibus in phylosophia nutritis. Unde alia est virtus huius stelle et illius, et alia huius constellationis et illius, et alia virtus stellarum que sunt citra equinocialem, et alia earum que sunt ultra. Unde cum vultus inferiores sint similes vultibus superioribus ut Ptolomeus dicit, consequens est quod, cum iste effectus non possit reduci nisi in celum
stellatum ut visum est, quod similitudo virtualis agentis consistat in illa regione celi que operit hanc terram detectam.

Although the starry heaven has unity in substance, yet it has multiplicity in virtue; and that is why it needed the diversity in its parts which we observe, in order, by diverse organs, to pour down its diverse virtues; and let him who perceives not these things know that he is outside the threshold of philosophy. We observe in this heaven difference in the magnitude and luminosity of the stars and in the figures and forms of the constellations, which differences cannot be for nought, as must be perfectly clear to all who have been nurtured in philosophy. Wherefore the virtues of this star and that differ, and likewise of this constellation and of that. And the virtue of the stars this side of the equinoctial differs from that of those beyond it. Wherefore, since the aspects of things below are like to the aspects of things above, as Ptolemy asserts, it follows that (since that effect can only be referred to the starry heaven, as we have seen) the similitude of the virtual agent abides in that region of heaven which covers this exposed land.

"These principles, 'according to thine argument, would be obliterated.' There would be one and the same nature in all the stars, and they would all have the same influence" (Gr).

72. sequiterieno = sequiterebbero.

73. Ancor: E. G. Parodi (1922, p. 20) observes that this is the adhuc by which the Scholastics passed to a new argument. For Beatrice's argument now, see again the final paragraph in the passage cited from Grandgent in n. to vss. 52-148.

74. o d'oltre in parte: "All through," from side to side. Some editors have adopted the reading "ed oltre in parte," but Petrocchi has elected "d'oltre in parte" (also adopted by others), arguing for "d'oltre" as deriving from the Provençal d' otra, d'outra. See his note, where he cites the expression d'oltre in oltre in the meaning da parte a parte.
75. _fora = sarebbe. di sua materia sì digiuno: Would thus be deficient in its matter.

76–78. _o, sì come . . . carte: “Or else, even as in the body of an animal the fat and the lean are divided in layers which do not extend all the way through, so would there be such layers in the body of the moon, like pages in a book.” Here there is a play on “volume,” which means “mass,” but also “volume,” i.e., “book,” so that the layers of the one become in metaphor the pages of the other.

79. _l primo: The first case (vss. 74–75). For the argument, see the quotation from Grandgent that appears in the note to vss. 52-148.

81. _ingesto: “Introduced,” i.e., as light does when introduced into any rare matter. “Ingesto” is a Latinism.

82. _però = perciò.

85–105. _S'elli è che . . . risplenda: For the remainder of Beatrice’s refutation, see Grandgent’s exposition of the argument as quoted in n. to vss. 52-148.

87. _lo suo contrario più passar non lassi: “Its contrary [the dense] allows no further passage [of the rare].” _lassi = lasci.

88. _indi: “From there,” i.e., from the “termine” where the rare ends and the dense begins. _l'altrui raggio: The light of the sun reflected on the face of the moon. _si rifonde: “Is reflected.”

89–90. _così come color . . . nasconde: “Just as color comes back through glass” that is backed with lead, i.e., is reflected from a mirror, the glass corresponding to the rare matter, the leaden back to the dense” (Gr).


91. _el = egli. The pronoun is redundant and anticipates the subject, “raggio.” Cf. “elli,” vs. 52.

95. *esperienza*: The subject of “può.” The term still keeps the meaning of “experiment” in Italian.

96. *ch’esser suol fonte ai rivi di vostr’ arti*: The concept that experiment is the basis of human art (or of applied physical science, as we might say today) derives from Aristotle (see his *Anal. post.* II, 19, 100a), becoming, with the Scholastics, the argument *per experimentum*.

98. *d’un modo*: “To the same distance.”

98–99. *più rimosso . . . ritrovi*: Let this mirror meet your eyes between the first two mirrors, but farther away.


102. *ripercosso*: “Reflected.”


104. *vista*: “Image,” as reflected in the mirror farthest away.

106–8. *Or, come ai colpi . . . primai*: “As, when exposed to the hot beams of the sun, the material of the snow [i.e., water] is left stripped of its previous color and cold.”

107. *suggetto*: The scholastic *subiectum*, that which “lies under” a thing and is its basis, its basic matter, in this case, water.

109–11. *così rimaso te . . . aspetto*: “You, reduced to like state mentally, will I infuse with light so keen that it will quiver as it appears to you.”

112. *Dentro dal ciel de la divina pace*: With this verse Beatrice makes a fresh beginning and, typically, takes the argument back to the highest heaven, *above* the eighth heaven (see vss. 64-66). This is a point of great significance, as if she were saying: only by beginning at the true beginning, with the tenth and highest heaven, the Empyrean, can the question concerning the moon spots be answered (see *Par. I*, 4).

113–14. *si gira un corpo . . . giace*: The ninth (counting out
from the earth) or crystalline heaven, the Primum Mobile, which in descending order lies just within the Empyrean and is the outermost material heaven. See Conv. II, xiv, 15-16, where Dante says:

And so doth the said heaven regulate with its movement the daily revolution of all the others, whereby every day they all receive from above [and send down] the virtue of all their parts. For if the revolution of this heaven did not thus regulate the same, little of their virtue would come down here, and little sight of them.

Thus we are told that the outermost of the material heavens, the Primum Mobile, derives a "virtue" (power) from the spiritual heaven which contains it, and it in turn transmits this power to the material universe which lies within it; and in this way we begin to follow out the passing down through the spheres of a power which, in its origin, is spiritual, is from God. The poet is presenting the view of this whole matter that was accepted in his time.

114. *contento = contenuto.*

115. *Lo cielo seguente:* The eighth heaven, the heaven of the fixed stars, with which Beatrice began her refutation (see vss. 64-66 and n. to vs. 64). With this heaven begins the process of differentiation of the power which first passed undifferentiated from the Empyrean to the Primum Mobile. *vedute:* Stars. See Par. XXIII, 30; XXX, 9.

116. *quell’ esser parte per diverse essenze:* "Distributes that existence [the power transmitted by the Primum Mobile] in various types." Thus it comes to its first differentiation by passing into the stars, which are many. See Dante, Conv. II, xiv, 1-7.
Canto II

117. *da lui distrette e da lui contenute*: “Different from it [the *esse*re] but contained in it.”

118. *Li altri giron*: The remaining spheres are those of the planets, which are seven. These, it is now said, continue the process of differentiation of the power (and existence), which passes to them from the stars of the eighth heaven. Cf. *Purg.* XXX, 109-11, where mention is made of this process of transmission by the “great wheels.” On the derivation of this conception from Aristotelian and Neoplatonic ideas, see B. Nardi (1930), pp. 14-19. “Giron” here is the subject of “dispongono” (vs. 120), of which “distinzion” is the object.

119. *le distinzion*: The essences or virtues, deriving originally from the one virtue but now further distinguished, that is, differentiated, by these planetary spheres.

120. *a lor fini*: To the accomplishments of their effects on the sublunar world, which are according to a purpose, as we are soon to be reminded, for this transmission is not merely physical, but involves the Intelligences who move the spheres. *lor semenze*: Their seedings, again with the suggestion of a purposive act on the part of the Intelligences that preside over this operation, which, through the spheres, “seeds,” as it were, the sublunar world. Norton comments: “Each of the seven inferior heavens distributes its specific virtues in such wise as to secure their due ends, and to make them seed for the production of further effects.” See Dante, *Conv.* II, vi, 9:

Dico anche che questo spirito viene per li raggi de la stella: per che sapere si vuole che li raggi di ciascuno cielo sono la via per la quale discende la loro vertude in queste cose di qua giù. E però che li raggi non sono altro che uno lume che viene dal principio de la luce per l'aere infino a la cosa illuminata, e luce non sia se non ne la parte de la stella, però che l'altro cielo è diafano, cioè transparente, non dico che vegna questo spirito, cioè questo pensiero, dal loro cielo in tutto, ma da la loro stella.
I say then that this spirit comes upon the “rays of the star,” because you are to know that the rays of each heaven are the path whereby their virtue descends upon things that are here below. And inasmuch as rays are no other than the shining which cometh from the source of the light through the air even to the thing enlightened, and the light is only in that part where the star is, because the rest of the heaven is diaphanous (that is transparent), I say not that this “spirit,” to wit this thought, cometh from their heaven in its totality but from their star.

121–23. *Questi organi . . . fanno:* There is hierarchy and degree in a universe so conceived, and the transmission of the power is through degree (each higher heaven being nobler than the next lower heaven contained by it). This principle of hierarchy will be all the clearer when the transmission (downwards only) is referred to the Intelligences, or nine orders of angels, called now “beati motor” (vs. 129), that direct the nine spheres of the material cosmos.

124–26. *Riguarda bene . . . guado:* “Loco” and “guado” suggest, metaphorically, that Beatrice’s disquisition is a kind of journey or fording to the final truth at which she means to arrive, and Dante must learn to follow the path of it and later be able to “ford” to it by himself.

127–29. *Lo moto . . . spiri:* The motion and the virtue (transmitted) must derive from the Intelligences, which preside over the spheres, causing them to revolve and distribute the virtue which, in the process we have followed, derives from God. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theol.* I, q. 65, a. 4, resp.) writes:

Sequitur ulterius quod etiam formae corporales a substantiis spiritualibus deriventur, non tanquam influentibus formas, sed tamquam moventibus ad formas. Ulterius autem reducuntur in Deum, sicut in primam causam, etiam species angelici intellectus, quae sunt quaedam seminales rationes corporalium formarum.
It follows further that even corporeal forms are derived from spiritual substances, not as emanating from them, but as the term of their movement. And, further still, the species of the angelic intellect, which are, as it were, the seminal types of corporeal forms, must be referred to God as the first cause.

The simile Dante uses here presents the action of the Intelligences as purposive, as is a smith's, which suggests that the material heaven or sphere (called an organ, vs. 121) is the instrument of the order of Intelligences which turn it and transmit the virtue in its downward movement. See Conv. IV, iv, 12, where Dante says: "La forza dunque non fu cagione movente . . . ma fu cagione instrumentale, sì come sono li colpi del martello cagione del coltello, e l'anima del fabbro è cagione efficiente e movente." ("Force then was not the moving cause . . . but was the instrumental cause, even as the blows of the hammer are the cause of the knife, whereas the mind of the smith is the efficient and moving cause.") The simile derives from Aristotle (De anima II, 4, 416a-b) and is a commonplace in scholastic thought. The verb spirare suggests spiritual rather than material causality on the part of the Intelligences, which is the case.

"A difficulty seems to be caused by Dante's habit of sometimes explicitly recognising, and sometimes practically ignoring, the distinction between the heavens or heavenly bodies and their guiding and influencing Angels. There is no confusion in his own mind; but the connection between the Angels and the heavens is so close that it is often unnecessary to dwell upon the distinction, which distinction, however, is always there. It has been ignored up to this point in the present Canto. Now we find the 'differentiatings' of the Divine Power recognised as divers angelic virtues which are respectively connected with the divers heavenly bodies, so that the moving heaven is an 'alloy,' or union of the heavenly substance and the angelic influence. Again, the 'mingled virtue' itself that shines through the heavenly body is the personality of the Angel mingled with the creating and inspiring power of God. Cf. xxi. 82-87" (TC).
130–32. *e 'l ciel . . . suggello*: Beatrice’s argument now returns to the eighth sphere, that of the fixed stars which first differentiate the virtue, as we have learned from her, but we now have the Intelligences assigned to each of the heavens brought into the picture as well. Each heaven, by way of the Intelligences which operate it, “takes from above and transmits below” (vs. 123). Often the singular *Intelligenza* is used collectively, but the plural (an entire order of angels) is understood. This is also the case with the singular “la mente profonda,” meaning the minds of the presiding order of angels, which in this case is the order of the Cherubim.

131. *lui*: This eighth heaven, the heaven of the stars.

132. *prende l’image*: Receives from the mind of the presiding Intelligences their intention and transmits this downwards, by way of the differentiating stars, imprinting it as effect on the world beneath it, even as a seal stamps wax.  
*fassene = se ne fa*, i.e., makes of it (the image) a seal, stamping the many stars of this particular heaven with the intention of the Intelligences. See Boethius, *Consol. philos.* III, ix, vss. 1-28.

133–38. *E come l’alma . . . unitate*: Sapegno comments:

In queste due terzine, e più ancora in quella che segue, Dante sembra accostarsi alla dottrina dei neoplatonici e dei filosofi arabi, che concepivano le intelligenze come anime o forme dei cieli; ma si tratta di un accostamento piuttosto apparente che sostanziale: anche per lui, come in genere per gli scolastici, il rapporto fra l’intelligenza e il corpo celeste da essa mosso è soltanto simile, e non identico, a quello fra l’anima e il corpo nell’organismo umano (cfr. *Conv.*, II, v, 18).

In these two tercets, and even more in that which follows, Dante seems close to the doctrine of the Neoplatonists and Arab philosophers, who conceived of the Intelligences as souls or forms of the heavens; but it is a closeness that is more apparent than substantial: for him, even as for the Scholastics in general, the relation between the Intelligence and the heavenly body moved
by it is only similar to, not identical with, the relation between soul and body in the human organism (cf. Conv. II, v, 18).

See B. Nardi (1930), pp. 31-33.

133. alma = anima. vostra polve: The human body ("polve" = polvere). The expression is from the Bible—see Gen. 3:19: "Quia pulvis es, et in pulverem revert eris." ("For dust you are and unto dust you shall return.")

135. a diverse potenze si risolve: "Is distributed in different faculties," i.e., is distributed in the different members of the human body that befit (are conformed to) such different faculties and are able to receive these and function accordingly.

136. l'intelligenza: The singular for the plural. sua bontate: Its goodness, i.e., the virtue it has received from above.

137. multiplicata per le stelle spiega: This being the process of differentiation and distribution explained above.

138. girando sé sovra sua unitate: The verse turns from the outward operation of the Intelligences (in distributing and differentiating the virtue received) to the inner operation of the Intelligence, which is intellection, of which the circle is the accepted figure. See Purg. XXV, 75, and n. to that verse; also see Par. XIII, 55-60.

139–40. Virtù diversa ... avviva: Each differentiated power from on high (the differentiation taking place in the eighth sphere, in the many stars it contains) "makes a different alloy" with the precious or incorruptible heavenly "body which it quickens," i.e., it does this in each of the stars first, then in the planets below, all the way down to and including the moon. This virtue is the very "life" of the star or planet, even as the spirit or soul in the human creature.

142–44. Per la natura lieta ... viva: The virtue or power now passes into the figure of light (thus recalling the opening verses of the Paradiso where the "gloria" is in such terms).
We are thus returned to the passing-down of a light, which is also a virtue that becomes mingled with the stellar or planetary body and shines in each star variously (hence the greater or lesser light of each star) or variously in the parts of a single planet, as in the moon. Each Intelligence, like the Creator Himself (cf. Purg. XXV, 70), is happy in its nature, and from this happiness, now mixed (alloyed) with the star or planet, the light of a given heavenly body shines forth, as happiness in the pupil of a human eye.

To comprehend the full import of this statement, as it applies to the moon, the reader needs to be reminded that the moon spots were conceived to be visible only on the lower, earthward-turned, side of that planet. (See B. Nardi, 1930, p. 34, n. 1.) Through the simile, that downward-looking planet becomes an eye turned earthwards, in which, as in the human eye, there are darker and lighter parts. A power, which is also a light, mingled with the precious body of the planet diversely (making a different alloy here and there in the body of the planet), shines forth upon the sublunar world, working its effects there.

145-48. *Da essa vien . . . chiaro:* Beatrice concludes her argument. The light and dark parts of the moon are not due to rarity or density of its matter, but to the varying alloy of the virtue which has been transmitted downwards, originating with God.

145. *da luce a luce:* From star to star (thus the argument returns to its positive beginning in vss. 64-66).

147. *formal principio:* See n. to vss. 67-72.

148. *conforme a sua bontà:* Cf. the “bontate” of vs. 136. *turbo = torbo* (from the Latin *turbidus*), “the dark.” Thus the dark spots on the moon result from the lesser alloy of some of its parts, the lesser “goodness” with which here and there it is alloyed.

From a principle of material causality (rarity and density of matter) formerly held by Dante and others, Beatrice has led Dante to the principle of a spiritual causality that
descends from God and variously informs His creation. "It may seem surprising to the reader on first becoming acquainted with the preceding canto, which has so little poetical charm, that Dante's first enquiry of Beatrice, after his overwhelming experience in entering the superterrestrial world, and his marvellous reception into the sphere of the Moon, should be concerning a mere physical phenomenon, and especially a matter so apparently trivial as the cause of the light and dark spots on the face of the Moon, and seemingly suggested to him only by finding himself in the body of the planet. But the surprise will vanish, and the intention of the poet will become manifest, on consideration of the full significance of the reply made by Beatrice. She begins with the lesson that in the supersensual world the evidence of the senses is not to be trusted, since even in the world of sense conclusions drawn from their evidence are often erroneous (vv. 52-105). She then proceeds to set forth the mode of operation of the Heavens, begun in the Crystalline Heaven,—the Primum Mobile,—and thence transmitted to the inferior spheres (vv. 112-123). But 'their motion and their virtue,' from which the differences in themselves and the differences in the natures and aspects of mortal things proceed, are not inherent in themselves, but are inspired by angelic Intelligences, ministers of the Divine Will to carry out the Divine plan in the order of the Universe, and to impress upon it the image of the Divine idea (vv. 127-148).

"Thus the apparently trivial question asked by Dante has led to an exposition of the Divine scheme of the Universe, requisite for the understanding of the nature of the realm into which the poet has been uplifted" (Norton).
1. **Quel sol:** Beatrice. *che pria d’amor mi scaldò ’l petto:* Dante’s love for Beatrice began when he was nine years old. See *Vita nuova* II, 2, where Dante speaks of this.

2–3. **di bella verità . . . aspetto:** In normal prose form and order this would read “mi aveva scoperto il dolce aspetto di bella verità,” i.e., the whole truth regarding the spots of the moon.

3. **riprovando:** “Refuting.” The reader will recall how Beatrice began her argument by refutation (*Par.* II, 61–105).

4. **corretto e certo:** Corrected by the refutation and made certain by the truth, as expounded by Beatrice.

6. **proferer = proferire,** “to speak.”  
   **erto = eretto.**

7. **visione:** “Vision” only in the sense of “that which becomes visible.” Dante uses the word in this sense elsewhere in the poem.

8. **per vedersi** = “through sight of it.”

9. **non mi sovvenne:** The impersonal use in the third person of the verb *sovvenire.* Cf. Purg. XXVI, 147.

10. **vetri:** “Panes” of glass.
12. *persi*: This could be either the past participle of *perdere*, meaning “lost,” or the adjective *perso*, meaning “dark” (cf. *Inf.* V, 89). Either meaning might serve here, but since the poet goes on to speak of reflections, the sense of the past participle seems preferable. The bottom can be seen, and the water reflects better for that reason.

13. *tornan*: “Are reflected.” To Dante the faces seem to be reflected. *postille*: Literally, “notes” such as might be found on a manuscript page surrounding the main text; here, metaphorically, “outlines,” “lineaments,” “contours” of the face.

14–15. *debili sì . . . pupille*: These faces are as faint to Dante’s sight as is a pearl on a white forehead. The reference is to a feminine fashion of Dante’s day and later, which may be seen depicted in various portraits. Hence the image arises from something familiar to the reader of the time.

17–18. *per ch’io . . . fonte*: Narcissus took his reflection in the fountain to be a real person, whereas Dante takes these real beings to be reflections, as the first part of the simile suggests and as is stated in vs. 20. See n. to *Inf.* XXX, 128.

21. *per veder di cui fosser, li occhi torsi*: Dante turns around to see the real faces which he assumes must be behind him.  
   *di cui = di chi.*

22. *ritorsili = li ritorsi.*


27. *poi = poiché.*  
   *’l vero*: These supernatural realities.  
   *ancor lo piè non fida*: The thought does not yet trust its foot thereon.

28. *ma te rivolve, come suole, a vòto*: The subject is “coto,” which is said to turn him in error. Beatrice’s chiding, begun at the summit of the mountain of Purgatory, continues in the phrase “come suole” (“as it is wont”) and bears a reference
to Dante's mistaken thought concerning the moon's spots. Concerning the rhyming of "vòto" here with "voto" (pronounced vòto) in vs. 30, see a similar case in Inf. XXII, 75.

vòto = vuoto, "emptiness," "vanity."

29. vere sustanze: "Real souls," not reflected images. A "substance" is any being or thing possessing independent existence. See Dante, Vita nuova XXV, 1-2. The human soul is a substance, of course, by this definition.

30. qui rilegate: The term "relegated" is ambiguous, for it can suggest that these souls have their constant abode here in this sphere. This question is discussed in the next canto (Par. IV, 28-63), where we learn that the souls abide in the Empyrean and simply appear (mysteriously) in the different spheres as Dante rises from one to another. "Dante leaves us in doubt whether, in the literal sense of his narrative, the souls actually leave their seats in the Empyrean and come to meet him, or merely project their images into the several spheres. In the 8th heaven all the elect are seen by him, even those who have previously appeared below. The idea that the blessed can change their places, without losing sight of God and thus interrupting their beatitude, is in no wise contrary to Christian doctrine. St. Thomas tells us as much in his Summa Theologiae, Tertia, Suppl., Qu. lxix, Art. 3, and Qu. lxxxiv, Art. 1 and 2; also in De Veritate Catholicae Fidei contra Gentiles, IV, lxxxvi, where he discusses the active life of the spirits in Heaven. For their existence does not wholly consist of passive receptivity; they have the power of locomotion, they take interest in one another and (without diminution of their everlasting joy) in the world beneath" (Gr).

per manco di voto: The inconstant moon is the appropriate sphere in which those who were inconstant in life manifest themselves to Dante. Though we actually hear only of and from inconstant nuns, we may suppose, as Grandgent observes, "that all weak and inconstant persons who win salvation at all are to be connected with this sphere, the nuns being chosen as extreme examples."

31. Però = perciò.
32. *la verace luce*: God's light, which is the truth.

33. *da sé*: From Itself, the truth. *torcer li piedi*: Again "feet" are used to express movements of the soul. Cf. vs. 27.

35. *drizza' mi = mi dirizzai*.


40. *grazioso = gradito*.

41. *del nome tuo e de la vostra sorte*: The reader will do well to note the shift here to the plural "vostra." The plural "your" includes all the spirits who have presented themselves in the sphere of the moon.

43. *non serra porte*: Literally, "does not close its doors," i.e., does not deny satisfaction (to any rightful desire).

44. *se non come quella*: "Any more than that" (God's love).

45. *tutta sua corte*: All the blessed in Heaven.

46. *vergine sorella*: A nun.

47. *e se la mente tua ben sé riguarda*: "If your memory examines itself well."

48. *non mi ti celerà l'esser più bella*: "L'esser più bella" is the subject of the verb.

49. *Piccarda*: Piccarda was the daughter of Simone Donati and the sister of Corso and Forese and was related by marriage to Dante through his wife, Gemma, daughter of Manetto Donati. According to the early commentators, she entered a convent but was forced thence by her brother Corso so that he might marry her to a Florentine named Rossellino della Tosa. (See n. to *Purg.* XXIV, 10.) She is spoken of in *Purg.* XXIV, 10-15, in connection with Dante's encounter with Forese, where it is said that she already enjoys her crown "on high Olympus."
50. *posta*: "Placed." The ambiguity, which was first evident in "rilegate" in vs. 30, continues here.

51. *la spera più tarda*: "The sphere of the moon, being nearest to the center, turns slowest in the diurnal revolution of the heavens. This comparative sluggishness of motion symbolizes a relatively low degree of love and of beatitude" (Gr). This means that the spirits here "placed" are lowest in the heavenly hierarchy, which explains what is said in vs. 55.

53. *piacer*: "Will." The Holy Ghost is eternal Love.

54. *letizian del suo ordine formati*: They "rejoice in whatever grade of bliss is assigned to them in that order of the universe which is the form that makes it like unto God" (Norton).

55. *par giù cotanto*: "Appears so lowly."

56. *però = per ciò. n'è = ci è.*

57. *vòti = vuoti.*

59. *risplende non so che divino*: In the faces of these souls there now shines a wondrous supernatural light.

60. *che vi trasmuta da' primi concetti*: Which changes your appearance as it was on earth and as it is remembered ("primi concetti") by those who saw and knew you there. "Compare Dante's words to Ciacco, *Hell*, Canto vi. 43-45. In Hell anguish, in Paradise joy transfigures the spirits and makes recognition of them difficult" (Norton).

61. *festino*: From the Latin *festinus*, "quick."

63. *latino*: "Easy." This is a use of the noun as adjective or adverb which is common in early Italian. Cf. "latinamente" as used in *Conv.* II, iii, 1.

64. *voi*: The reader should note that Dante continues to speak in the plural, i.e., of all the souls "relegated" to this sphere.

66. *per più vedere e per più farvi amici*: "In order to see
more and make yourselves more intimate’ with God. The souls that are spiritually nearest to God are endowed with the keenest intellectual vision; they therefore see God clearest and love him most” (Gr).

67. *Con quelle altr’ ombre pria sorrisa un poco*: Piccarda and the other souls smile at Dante’s naive question.

68. *da indi*: “Then.” From the Latin *deinde*.

69. *ch’arder parea d’amor nel primo foco*: Piccarda seems to glow with the love of the Holy Ghost, “first” love in this sense (see *Inf.* III, 6).

70. *Frate*: On the use of this form of address, which in the poem often introduces a statement correcting some misconceived opinion of the person spoken to, cf. *Purg.* XXVI, 115, and *passim*.

70–71. *la nostra volontà . . . carità*: “Volontà,” in this construction, is the object of the verb “quieta.” Cf. *Conv.* III, xv, 10, where Dante states: “E questa è la ragione per che li Santi non hanno tra loro invidia, però che ciascuno aggiugne lo fine del suo desiderio, lo quale desiderio è con la bontà de la natura misurato.” (“And this is why the saints envy not one another, because each one attains the goal of his longing, which longing is commensurate with the nature of his excellence.”)


74. *foran = sarebbero*.

75. *qui ne cerne*: “Assigns us to this place” (this lowest order of beatitude).

76. *non capere*: “Have no place,” “would not be fitting.” *capere*: Pronounced *capère*. *in questi giri*: Piccarda now extends her statement to include all the spheres of heaven.

77. *essere in carità*: Desiring and loving in conformity with
God's will and the "first" love, the love of the Holy Ghost. *necesse:* A "necessity." The Latin expression *necesse est* belongs to scholastic language and is often used to express *logical* necessity.

78. *se la sua natura ben rimiri:* "If you consider well the very nature" of love, which implies conformity of the will on the part of the lover to that of the beloved.

79. *formale:* "Essential," "inherent." *ad esto beato esse* = *a questo essere beato,* i.e., to this our condition of beatitude.

80–81. *tenersi dentro . . . stesse:* Piccarda continues to speak of all the elect and their love of God. "Tenersi dentro a la divina voglia" is another way of expressing the perfect conformity of their wills to God's, so that in Heaven the many wills are but one, in this sense.

81. *fansi = si fanno.*

82. *sem = siamo.* *soglia:* The word here means "station" or "rank." Cf. *Purg.* XXI, 69 and *passim.*

83. *a tutto il regno piace:* The subject of "piace" is the preceding clause.

84. *lo re che 'n suo voler ne 'nvoglia:* And this order pleases God who conforms our will to His. *ne = ci.*

85. *E 'n la sua volontade è nostra pace:* Cf. Eph. 2:14: "Ipse enim est pax nostra." ("For he himself is our peace.")

86–87. *ell' è quel mare . . . pace:* Just as all water comes from the sea (by evaporation) and returns to the sea by the many rivers that flow into it (cf. *Purg.* XIV, 34-36; *Par.* I, 116), so all creatures formed directly by God (angels and human souls) return to Him, and those formed by Nature seek their proper resting-place. The metaphor is explicit in Francesca's words in *Inf.* V, 98-99, where she speaks of the Po as seeking peace, while she desires peace with God, which she, being damned to Hell, shall never have.
88. *ogne dove*: Here, as *passim*, the adverb "dove" becomes a noun: every *where*, i.e., every place, station, or rank that is allotted to each soul who enjoys the beatitude of Heaven.

89. *etsi*: A Latinism, meaning "although."

90. *d’un modo*: "In the same measure," equally.

91. *elli avvien*: "It happens."

93. *chere = chiede*. *Chere*, from the Latin *quaerere*, is common in old Italian. *e di quel*: That is, for the food already had.

95–96. *per apprender . . . spuola*: Dante would now hear more from Piccarda concerning her statement about herself in vss. 46 and 56-57. This is the cloth ("tela") which she has begun but has not finished weaving, as the metaphor of these two verses has it. Or, in Dante’s desire to hear it, in the other metaphor of the two foods (one had, the other desired), this becomes the second food. Some commentators take the "tela" to refer specifically to Piccarda’s broken vow itself, but this seems less acceptable as the precise meaning of the metaphor even though, out of metaphor, it amounts to the same thing.

96. *onde non trasse infino a co la spuola*: “In which she did not draw the shuttle to the end.” *co = capo*. Cf. *Inf*. XX, 76, and *passim*.

97–99. *Perfetta vita . . . vela*: The reference is to St. Clare, who, with St. Francis, founded a Franciscan conventual institution for women, the Clarisse. She was born of a noble family of Assisi in 1194, founded in 1212 under the direction of St. Francis the order of nuns which bears her name (Order of Poor Clare), and died in 1253. She was canonized, by Alexander IV, in 1255. The rule of her order was characterized by extreme austerity.


98. *più sù*: We are never told just how high in Heaven St. Clare is, but one must think that her saintly life gives her a
very high station indeed. \textit{a la cui norma}: “According to whose rule.”

100. \textit{perché}: “In order that.” \textit{si vegghi} = \textit{si vegli} (subjunctive of \textit{vegliare}).

101. \textit{con quello sposo}: With Christ, in mystical union (marriage) with Him.

102. \textit{che caritate a suo piacer conforma}: “Which love conforms to His will.”

103–4. \textit{Dal mondo . . . fuggi’mi}: To follow St. Clare, “fleeing from the world,” even as St. Francis had done, in taking the vow of poverty.

104. \textit{fuggi’mi} = \textit{mi fuggii}. The reflexive pronoun is the familiar so-called pleonastic reflexive, here in its distancing function. Piccarda entered the convent of the Clarisse of Monticelli, near Florence.

105. \textit{la via de la sua setta}: Cf. vs. 98: “norma.”

106–8. \textit{Uomini poi . . . fusi}: The men were her brother Corso Donati and his followers, who compelled her to marry. This took place around 1288. The date of her death is not known, but vs. 108 suggests that, contrary to legend, her married life outside the convent lasted for a considerable time after she was taken from it.

108. \textit{Iddio si sa}: Here the value of the reflexive may be translated as “only” or “alone”: “God only knows.” \textit{fusi} = \textit{si fu}. This is again the pleonastic reflexive which commonly follows the verb “to know” and in this case has its identifying value: “what my life was then,” i.e., how terrible it was.

109–11. \textit{E quest’ altro splendor . . . nostra}: For the first time we are told that the spirits are resplendent in their joy and love, a feature of Paradise which will become very familiar. The reference is to the soul of the “great Constance” (as is then declared), who would seem to outshine all other spirits
in this heaven of the moon, or at least to be resplendent to
the maximum degree.

112. *ciò ch'io dico di me, di sé intende*: "Applies to herself
what I say of me," i.e., she too was a nun who was taken
from the cloister by violence and forced to marry.

114. *l'ombra de le sacre bende*: The nun's veil, called
"shade" because it may be said, literally, to shade the face.
As Chimenz observes, however, the "shade" is also spiritual,
"shading" from the world.

115. *pur*: "Again," this being then re-echoed in the *ri-* of
"rivolta."

117. *non fu dal vel del cor già mai disciolta*: "She was never
stripped of the veil of the heart," i.e., she remained a nun
at heart.

118-20. *Quest' è la luce ... possanza*: This most resplend-
ent of the souls is thus finally named "the great Constance."
Constance (1154-98) was the daughter of Roger II, king of
Naples and Sicily, and wife of the Emperor Henry VI, by
whom she became the mother of the Emperor Frederick II.
She was the last heir of the Norman dynasty. See *Purg.* III,
113.

Villani (V, 16), following the belief current among
Guelphs, states that the marriage between Constance and
Henry was desired by Pope Clement III and the archbishop
of Palermo for the purpose of getting the kingdom out of the
hands of Constance's nephew, Tancred, who showed no re-
spect for the interests of the Church. But William the Good
was still alive at the time of the marriage, and, as a matter of
fact, on his death in 1189, Tancred's election was ratified by
Clement, as a bar to the pretensions of Henry, though
Henry's wife was the rightful heiress.

William the Good, son of William the Bad, having no issue
by his wife Joan (daughter of Henry II of England), his aunt
Constance became presumptive heiress to the throne, which
the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa desired to acquire for his
own house. To effect his object he projected an alliance be-
tween Constance and his son Henry, duke of Swabia, afterwards emperor as Henry VI. The marriage took place in 1186, when Constance was over thirty and Henry twenty-one, but their son, Frederick of Palermo, the heir to the throne, was not born until eight years later (December 1194), only four years before the death of his mother (November 1198).

It is now generally thought by historians that Constance was never a nun, as the poet would have it. Dante has simply followed a current legend. It is interesting to note (see E. Levi, 1921, p. 69) that Piccarda took the name Costanza when she entered the order.

119. secondo vento di Soave: “The Swabian Emperors are called ‘blasts’ because of the violence and the brief duration of their activity. Frederick I (Barbarossa) was the first; the ‘second wind’ was Constance’s husband, Henry VI; the third and last was her son, Frederick II.—Soave (German Schwaben) = Suevia. Formerly Soave was the usual form” (Gr).

122. vanio = vanì (svanì).

124. seguito = seguì.

126. volsesi = si volse. al segno di maggior disio: Beatrice, who is a greater “target” or object of desire for Dante than is Piccarda.
1–3. *Intra due cibi* . . . *denti*: “The familiar paradox later known as the Ass of Buridan, or the donkey and the two bales of hay, is here applied to Dante, who is eager to ask two questions and cannot decide which to put first” (Gr). See Aristotle, *De caelo* II, 13, 295b, and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I-II, q. 13, a. 6; cf. Ovid, *Metam.* V, 164-66.

1. *moventi*: “Attractive.”


2–3. *prima si morria* . . . *denti*: The subject of “si morria” (= *si morirebbe*) is “liber’ omo.”

3. *liber’ omo*: A man in full possession of his free will.

4–5. *sì si starebbe* . . . *lupi*: That is, immobile, like the free man, but in this case paralyzed by equal fear of the two wolves. “*Intra due brame di fieri lupi*” means “*tra due lupi feroci e bramosi*.”

6. *sì si starebbe un cane intra due dame*: The third example returns to the case of equal desire, rather than fear, now on the part of a hunting dog at equal distance between two does.

*dame*: The word is obsolete in the sense in which Dante
uses it here. Cf. the Latin damma and the modern Italian daina.

7–9. *per che . . . commendendo*: Dante, equally urged by two doubts which he would have Beatrice solve, remains silent and cannot blame himself for it, since this must be the effect of such a situation, matching in its way the other three instances just cited.

10–12. *Io mi tacea . . . distinto*: Dante’s desire to hear from Beatrice the answers to his questions, along with the formulation of those questions (“’l dimandar”), is evident in his face and more fervently expressed there than it would have been had he set it forth in words (“che per parlar distinto”).

13–15. *Fé sì Beatrice . . . fello*: “Daniel divined the dream Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed as well as the interpretation of it (*Daniel* ii.). So Beatrice knew what problems were exercising Dante’s mind as well as what were the solutions” (*TC*).

15. *ingiustamente fello*: Nebuchadnezzar, Chaldean king of Babylon, was about to put to death the wise men of Babylon who could not interpret a dream they had not been told.

16–18. *Io veggio . . . spira*: Dante’s equally divided eagerness to have the one and the other question solved prevents his expressing either.

19–21. *Se ’l buon voler . . . misura?* The question focuses on the cases of Piccarda and Constance, whose desire to return to the convent continued in them even after they had been taken forth therefrom by violence. By what reason, then, can they be thought to deserve less, how can their “measure” of reward be less?

21. *mi scema*: The “mi” obviously generalizes the two cases, allowing them to apply to anyone.

22. *Ancor*: “Secondly.” *di dubitar ti dà cagione*: *Cagion di dubitar* is the object of “dà.” The subject of the verb is the clause in the next line.
24. *secondo la sentenza di Platone*: “In the *Timaeus*, which was accessible to Dante in the Latin paraphrase of Chalcidius. Dante’s direct knowledge of Plato was doubtless confined to this one dialogue. The doctrine ascribed to Plato, implicitly here and explicitly in *Conv.* [IV, xxi, 2], goes somewhat beyond the warrant of the text either in the Greek or Latin” (TC). “Plato, in his *Timaeus* (41, 42), says that the creator of the universe assigned each soul to a star, whence they were to be sown in the vessels of time. ‘He who lived well during his appointed time was to return to the star which was his habitation, and there he would have a blessed and suitable existence.’ Jowett’s translation.—Dante’s doubt has arisen from the words of Piccarda (Canto iii. 50, 51), which implied that her station was in the sphere of the Moon” (Norton). This doctrine is contrary to Christian faith. See *Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol.* III, Suppl., q. 97, a. 5. “Plato’s theory appealed strongly to some of the early Christian theologians, but had to be abandoned after 540, when the Council of Constantinople decided that every soul is created by God at the birth of its body” (Gr).

25–26. *nel tuo velle pontano*: “Push upon thy will.” *Velle*, as a noun, is late Latin and is common to scholastic terminology.

27. *quella che più ha di felle*: “Plato’s doctrine (as understood by Dante) is poisonous because it ascribes to the admitted influences of the heavenly bodies such a prepotency as would be fatal to freewill, and therefore to morality” (TC). See *Purg.* XVI, 58-81, and XVIII, 61-75; see also *Dante, Epist.* XI, 4. “This question has the most poison, because the belief that the souls returned to the stars would be contrary to the faith that the true end of the soul is the attainment of bliss in the vision of God in the Empyrean, and would tend to divert the soul from its effort to make itself worthy of this bliss” (Norton). *felle*: The “gall” or “poison” of heresy.

28. *D’i Serafin colui che più s’india*: That Seraph of the
Seraphim, the highest order of angels, who is closest to God (enjoying His light most).

29. Moisè, Samuel: The statement now passes from angels to human creatures.

29-30. e quel Giovanni che prender vuoli: “Whichever of the Johns [the Baptist or the Evangelist] you choose.”

30. non Maria: The statement having passed to the human order, to name Mary is to name her as the highest in that order (the “non” here having the value of “not even”).

31-34. non hanno . . . giro: The “primo giro” is the Empyrean heaven, where God is and where the blessed and the angels see Him in direct vision, which is their beatitude. Thus Beatrice is settling one of Dante’s doubts by assuring him that even the highest among angels and human creatures have the same abode as these of this lowest order. All have their seats there in the Empyrean (as the reader will see at the end of the poem), and all have eternal life there, contrary to Plato’s opinion, which allowed a longer or briefer sojourn in the heavens according to the souls’ respective merits.

32. mo = ora. appariro = apparirono.

33. l’esser lor: The duration of their existence.

35-36. e differentemente . . . spiro: Cf. Par. III, 88-90. Grandgent (p. 649) comments: “‘In my Father’s house are many mansions’ (John xiv, 2). By ‘mansions’ are meant degrees of happiness: so says St. Thomas in the Summa Theologiae, Tertia, Suppl., Qu. xciii, Art. 2, 3; see also his Commentary on John xiv, and St. Augustine’s Treatise on John, lxvii. Every soul in Heaven receives all the gladness of which it is capable, but the capacity differs. God, on creating each soul, endows it—according to his mysterious grace—with a certain degree of keenness of spiritual sight, upon which (if the soul attains Heaven) depends its vision of God, and upon the clearness of this vision depend the soul’s love and joy. This is the doctrine of St. Thomas, which Dante upholds.”
However, “spiro” (spirare) stresses love rather than vision at this point.

37. *Qui si mostraro:* The spirits have “shown themselves” to Dante, and, as the reader will see, this will be the case in each of the spheres. *mostraro = mostraronono.* *sortita:* “Allotted.”

38. *spera = sfera.* *lor:* “To them.” *per far segno:* “To give a sign” to Dante.

39. *de la celestial c’ha men salita:* Of their rank in the celestial sphere, the Empyrean, where they occupy the lowest seats, farthest from God. And what these spirits say of themselves applies in turn to each of the spheres that lie ahead and above. The poet’s invention of this whole scheme is noteworthy, and the reader has only to consider how unsatisfactory (if not impossible) it would have been had the pilgrim risen immediately and directly to the Empyrean, in the first canto of the *Paradiso,* and remained there for thirty-two cantos! By such a device, instead, his journey can pass eventfully upwards by degrees or stages, each stage higher than the last, like so many rungs of a ladder, reaching upward all the way to God.

40–42. *Così parlar . . . degno:* The poet has Beatrice affirm that it is necessary to “speak” to human kind by way of the senses and that even the Holy Scriptures and Holy Church observe this method. The tenet thus expressed has the full support, moreover, of Aristotle’s philosophy, namely, that we learn first through sense experience only.

40. *vostro:* The reader who is following the translation should note that Beatrice’s affirmation shifts, with “vostro,” to the plural, i.e., to a generalization regarding human kind.

41. *solo da sensato apprende:* See n. to vs. 40. On the importance of this principle to the poet as poet, see C. S. Singleton (1969), pp. 25-29. This is the essentially Aristotelian doctrine often stated as the tenet *nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu* (“nothing is in the intellect unless it is
first in sense experience"), a doctrine of great importance to a poet who is committed to rendering his experience in concrete imagery. The reader should connect this same tenet with the question, left open, as to whether the pilgrim makes this upward journey through the spheres in his body or not. (See Par. I, 73-75, and n. to Par. I, 74.) He would appear to be having “sensible” experience here, even as he had during his journey through Inferno and Purgatory, where he did move with his body. Thus, by indirection (but never explicitly), the poet suggests that he did indeed traverse the heavens in his body, even though this is a great mystery (cf. Par. II, 37-42). And Heaven, as it were, condescends to speak to him through sensible experience in each of the spheres of the upward way.

42. fa poscia d'intelletto degno: “According to the psychology of Aristotle and the Schoolmen, the Intellect works upon images, etc., which are retained in the mind after the sense- impressions that produced them have vanished. Thus the imaginative faculties receive from the faculties of sense the impressions which they then present to the intellect for it to work upon” (TC).

43-45. Per questo . . . intende: Thomas Aquinas, at the very beginning of his Summa theologica, feels the necessity of entering into such a question. See Summa theol. I, q. 1, a. 9, resp.:

Respondeo dicendum quod conveniens est sacrae Scripturae divina et spiritualia sub similitudine corporalium tradere. Deus enim omnibus providet, secundum quod competit eorum naturae. Est autem naturale homini ut per sensibilia ad intelligibilia veniat; quia omnis nostra cognitio a sensu initium habet. Unde convenienter in sacra Scriptura traduntur nobis spiritualia sub metaphoris corporalium; et hoc est quod dicit Dionysius, 1 cap. Coelestis Hierarch. (circa med.): Impossibile est nobis aliter lucere divinum radium, nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum. Convenit etiam sacrae Scripturae, quae communiter omnibus proponitur, se-
I answer that, It is befitting Holy Writ to put forward divine and spiritual truths by means of comparisons with material things. For God provides for everything according to the capacity of its nature. Now it is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge originates from sense. Hence in Holy Writ spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the likeness of material things. This is what Dionysius says (Coel. Hier. i): *We cannot be enlightened by the divine rays except they be hidden within the covering of many sacred veils.* It is also befitting Holy Writ, which is proposed to all without distinction of persons—*To the wise and to the unwise I am a debtor* (Rom. i. 14)—that spiritual truths be expounded by means of figures taken from corporeal things, in order that thereby even the simple who are unable by themselves to grasp intellectual things may be able to understand it.

Thus the poet’s way of writing does not differ from God’s, the Author of Holy Scripture, but can continue to seem an imitation thereof—which in so many respects it is.

44-45. *e piedi e mano attribuisce a Dio:* See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 3, a. 1, ad 3:

Partes corporeae attribuuntur Deo in Scripturis ratione suorum actuum secundum quamdam similitudinem; sicut actus oculi est videre; unde oculus de Deo dictus significat virtutem eius ad videndum modo intelligibili, non sensibili; et simile est de aliis partibus.

Corporeal parts are attributed to God in Scripture on account of His actions, and this is owing to a certain parallel. For instance the act of the eye is to see; hence the eye attributed to God signifies His power of seeing
intellectually, not sensibly; and so on with the other parts.

46–48. *e Santa Chiesa . . . sano:* Holy Church, in its many offices, follows God’s way of speaking in Holy Scripture. But “vi rappresenta” in this statement seems also to apply to the paintings, icons, statues, and frescoes which are found in churches and “speak” to the people through a certain anthropomorphic imagery.

48. *e l’altro che Tobia rifece sano:* Raphael, who restored sight to old Tobit (see Tob. 11:1-15). All three angels here named are archangels.

49. *Quel che Timeo de l’anime argomenta:* Beatrice now turns to the second question, referred to in vss. 22-24. Timaeus is the chief interlocutor in the Platonic dialogue which bears that name, and it is he who expounds the opinion referred to by Beatrice. See n. to vs. 24.

51. *però che, come dice, par che senta:* “Because he seems to mean it as he expresses it,” i.e., literally, not figuratively.

“The controversy still rages as to how far Plato is to be taken literally and how far Aristotle’s matter-of-fact interpretation (and refutation) of his utterances is justified. Thomas Aquinas says: ‘Now certain say that those poets and philosophers, and especially Plato, did not mean what the superficial sound of their words implies, but chose to hide their wisdom under certain fables and enigmatical phrases, and that Aristotle was often wont to raise objections, not to their meaning, which was sound, but to their words; lest any should be led into error by this way of speaking; and so saith Simplicius in his comment. But Alexander would have it that Plato and the other ancient philosophers meant what their words seem externally to imply; and that Aristotle strove to argue not only against their words, but against their meaning. But we need not greatly concern ourselves as to which of these is true; for the study of philosophy is not directed to ascertaining what men have believed, but how the truth of things standeth.’ Simplicius (6th century) and
Alexander of Aphrodisias (2nd and 3rd centuries) are the two greatest of the Greek commentators on Aristotle. It is interesting to note that even Beatrice hesitates between the two schools of interpretation” (TC).


54. per forma: The soul is the “form” of the body and, according to the Timaeus (XLII), is implanted into the body.

55-57. e forse ... derisa: Cf. n. to vs. 51.

55. sentenza: “Meaning.”

56. la voce: His words.

57. da non esser derisa: “Not to be derided,” i.e., worthy of respect. See Dante, Conv. IV, xxi, 2-3:

Veramente per diversi filosofi de la differenza de le nostre anime fue diversamente ragionato: ché Avicenna e Algazel volsero che esse da loro e per loro principio fossero nobili e vili; e Plato e altri volsero che esse procedessero da le stelle, e fossero nobili e più e meno secondo la nobilitade de la stella. Pittagora volse che tutte fossero d’una nobilitade, non solamente le umane, ma con le umane quelle de li animali bruti e de le piante, e le forme de le minere; e disse che tutta la differenza è de le corpora e de le forme. Se ciascuno fosse a difendere la sua opinione, potrebbe essere che la veritate si vedrebbe essere in tutte.

It is true that divers reasonings have been held by philosophers concerning the difference of our souls; for Avicenna and Algazel would have it that they in themselves, and in their principle, were noble or base. Plato and others would have it that they proceeded from the stars and were noble, more or less, according to the nobleness of the star. Pythagoras would have it that all were of like nobleness, and not only the human souls, but together with the human those of the brute animals.
and of the plants, and the forms of the minerals; and he said that all the difference was in the bodily forms. If each were to defend his own opinion, it might be that truth would be seen to exist in all of them.

58-60. S'elli intende . . . percuote: “If he means that the credit or the blame for influence (on human souls) reverts to these (heavenly) revolutions, perhaps the bow (of his speech) hits some truth.” Dante is evidently reluctant to impute fundamental error to such a philosopher as Plato” (Gr).

59. l'onor de la influenza e 'l biasmo: The influence of the stars was granted in the argument of Marco Lombardo (Purg. XVI, 73) and was generally taken for granted in medieval thought. The most striking instance, in Dante's poem, will come when Dante the pilgrim reaches the constellation of Gemini under which he was born, where (Par. XXII, 112-23) he acknowledges that he owes all his genius to those “glorious” stars. Indeed, the notion is fundamental to the whole structure of the Paradiso, for the souls seen in each of the planets were variously influenced by these heavenly bodies.

61. Questo principio, male inteso: This principle or doctrine of stellar influence wrongly understood. torse: “Led astray,” “led into error.”

62. già: In ancient times. tutto il mondo quasi: “Almost the whole world,” the Hebrew people being the great exception.

62-63. sì che Giove . . . trascorse: “This passage is important as throwing light on Dante's constant assumption that the heathen deities, though in one sense ‘false and lying’ (Inf. i. 72), yet stand for some truly divine reality. We see here that idolatry springs from a misconception of the divine influences of which the heavenly bodies are the instruments. Its essential content therefore is real and divine, its form is false and impious” (TC). Cf. Par. VIII, 1-9; Conv. II, iv, 2, 6-7.
63. *trascorse*: “‘It (the world) went astray’ in attributing the stellar power to heathen gods and in naming the planets after them. Cf. VIII, 1-3, 10-11.—For a rationalistic, astronomical explanation of myths, see Lucian, *On Astrology*” (Gr).


65. *velen*: Cf. “felle,” vs. 27. \(\text{però che} = \text{perciò che}\).


67-69. *Parere ingiusta . . . nequizia*: “Parere . . . mortali is the subject of è.—Argomento, ‘proof.’—Nequizia, ‘iniquity.’—If man had not faith in the perfection of divine justice, he would not be troubled by apparent deviation from it” (Gr).

67. *nostra giustizia*: Beatrice speaks as one who comes from the Empyrean, hence “nostra giustizia” is to be understood as God’s justice.

70. *vostro*: Beatrice continues to address all human kind.

73-74. *Se violenza . . . sforza*: Beatrice begins with a definition of the involuntary or compulsory which scholastic thought derived essentially from the third book of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. The philosopher, in treating of the virtues, gives the following definition of the compulsory in *Eth. Nicom.* III, i, 1109b-1110a (see Aquinas, *Opera omnia*, vol. XXI, p. 70, or R. M. Spiazzi, 1964, p. 111): “Videntur autem involuntaria esse, quae violenta vel propter ignorantiam facta. Violentum autem est cuius principium extra tale existens in quo nihil conferit operans vel patiens. Puta si spiritus tulerit aliquo, vel homines domini existentes.” (“Involuntary actions seem to be those that arise either from violence or from ignorance. The ‘compulsory action’ [violentum] is one whose principle is from outside and to which the person involved or the recipient contributes nothing, for example, if he is driven somewhere by the wind, or if he is in
the power of other men.”) Much that is relevant to Beatrice’s argument, as it proceeds, can be found in this book of the Nicomachean Ethics and in the many scholastic commentaries written on it, such as that of Aquinas, which is quoted in these notes as typical.

76–78. ché volontà . . . torza: Here Beatrice speaks of what emerges in the argument concerning the absolute will, as opposed to the relative or qualified will, the will secundum quid. See Thomas Aquinas (Summa theol. I-II, q. 6, a. 4, resp.), who uses an example from nature to make his point, though the example is of a falling stone rather than a rising flame:

Quod autem est coactus vel violentum, est ab exteriori principio. Unde contra rationem ipsius actus voluntatis est quod sit coactus vel violentus; sicut etiam est contra rationem naturalis inclinationis vel motus lapidis, quod feratur sursum; potest enim lapis per violentiam ferri sursum; sed quod iste motus violentus sit ex eius naturali inclinatione, esse non potest. Similiter etiam potest homo per violentiam trahi; sed quod hoc sit ex eius voluntate, repugnat rationi violentiae.

Now what is compelled or violent is from an exterior principle. Consequently it is contrary to the nature of the will’s own act, that it should be subject to compulsion and violence: just as it is also contrary to the nature of a natural inclination or movement [of a stone that is thrown upward]. For a stone may have an upward movement from violence, but that this violent movement be from its natural inclination is impossible. In like manner a man may be dragged by force: but it is contrary to the very notion of violence, that he be thus dragged of his own will.

76. se non vuol: Except by its own volition. non s’am-morza: Cf. Inf. XIV, 63. This verb, commonly used of fire or a flame, already anticipates the example to be given. It is the nature of a flame to stand erect and reach upwards, and even if the wind blows it and bends it to one side a thousand
times, when the wind ceases, the flame will return to its natural upward position and movement. In the second book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle also uses such examples of that which is natural. See *Eth. Nicom.* II, 1, 1103a (in Aquinas, *Opera omnia*, vol. XXI, p. 45, or R. M. Spiazzi, 1964, p. 69): “Puta lapis natura deorsum latus, non utique assuescit sursum ferri: neque si decies millies assuescatur quis eum sursum iaciens. Neque ignis deorsum, neque aliquod eorum, quae aliter innata sunt, aliter utique assuescet.” (“Thus a stone that naturally gravitates downward will never become accustomed to moving upward, not even if someone should continue to throw it into the air ten thousand times. Neither will fire become accustomed to tend downward, nor will anything else that naturally tends one way acquire the contrary custom.”)

77. face = fa.

78. torza = torca (subjunctive of torcere).

79–80. Per che, s'ella . . . forza: Clearly Beatrice means that if the flame remains bent over when the wind has ceased, then it “follows” the violence or compulsion from without.

79. ella: The will.

80. e così queste: And thus did Piccarda and Constance, who, when free of compulsion from without, when no longer detained outside the convent by compulsion, could have returned to the cloister. Thus their will was not “interno” (vs. 82), as implied by the following verse; or, to keep the metaphor of the flame, they remained “bent” by the violence, a point that must now be dealt with (vss. 91-114).


83. Lorenzo: St. Lawrence, a deacon of the Church of Rome, said to have been a native of Huesca in Spain, suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Valerian in 258. The tradition is that, being commanded by the prefect of Rome to deliver up the treasures of the Church, which had been
entrusted to his charge by Pope Sixtus II, he replied that in three days he would produce them. On the expiration of the appointed time he presented to the prefect all the sick and poor to whom he had given alms, with the words “Behold the treasures of Christ’s Church.” The prefect thereupon directed St. Lawrence to be tortured, in order to make him reveal where the treasures were hidden. But, torture proving ineffectual, he was stretched on an iron frame with bars, like a gridiron, beneath which a fire was kindled so that his body was gradually consumed. In the midst of his agony he is said to have remained steadfast, and to have mocked his executioners, bidding them to turn his body that it might be equally roasted on both sides.

84. Muzio: Gaius Mucius Scaevola, a Roman citizen who, when Lars Porsena of Clusium was besieging Rome, made his way into the enemy’s camp with the intention of killing Porsena; by mistake, however, he stabbed the king’s secretary instead of the king himself. Being seized, Mucius was ordered by the king to be burned alive, whereupon he thrust his right hand into a fire, which was already lighted for a sacrifice, and held it in the flames without flinching. Porsena, struck with admiration at his fortitude, ordered him to be set free; in return Mucius informed him that there were three hundred noble youths in Rome who had sworn to take the king’s life, that the lot had fallen upon him to make the first attempt, and that his example would be followed by the others, each as his turn came. Porsena, impressed with this account of the determination of the Romans, made proposals of peace and withdrew from the siege. From the circumstance of the loss of his right hand, Mucius was thenceforward known as Scaevola (“left-handed”). Dante mentions Mucius in connection with this incident in Conv. IV, v, 13 and, with a reference to Livy (II, xii, 1-16) as his authority, in De mon. II, v, 14.

85–86. così l’avria ripinte . . . sciolte: That is, as soon as they were free to return to the convent, they would have done so.
85. avria = avrebbe.

86. ond' eran tratte: "By which they had been dragged."
   come fuoro sciolte: When the violent men who had taken
   them from the convent no longer held them captive or physi-
   cally restrained them.

87. ma così salda voglia è troppo rada: I.e., the "volere in-
   tero" which Piccarda and Constance did not have and which
   is now called a "salda voglia."

88. per queste parole: By Beatrice's exposition of this whole
   question.

88–89. se ricolte l'hai: "If you have taken them in" and re-
   tained them.

89. dei = devi. casso: "Quashed." Cf. Par. II, 83. The
   "argomento" which is thus quashed has reference to the ap-
   parent injustice of God's will in reducing the merit of Pic-
   carda and Constance by placing them in the lowliest sphere.
   This mistaken reasoning would have continued to trouble
   Dante many times, had Beatrice not set him straight about
   it.

91–99. Ma or . . . contradire: But the question is not settled
   yet, since there is an apparent contradiction between what
   Piccarda said about Constance (that she had remained a nun
   at heart) and Beatrice's whole discourse so far. Beatrice,
   knowing Dante's thoughts, knows that it is necessary to settle
   a further point in the matter of this argument, namely the
   distinction between the absolute will and the relative or
   qualified will (secundum quid). Beatrice continues, of
   course, quite in line with the Aristotelian philosophy and
   with scholastic reasoning according to Aristotle.

91–93. Ma or . . . lasso: Beatrice, able to read Dante's
   thoughts, knows that another pass lies athwart his progress
   toward the whole truth, another problem through which he
   must make his way, and this he would never do without her
   further help (with the argument which follows).
93. *pria* = *prima*. *saresti lasso*: These words obviously imply a struggle on Dante’s part to make his way alone through this difficulty: he would be completely exhausted therein and never extricate himself if Beatrice did not help him through it.

94–96. *lo t’ho . . . appresso*: Beatrice is referring to her words in *Par. III*, 32-33.

95. *poria* = *potrebbe*.

96. *però ch’* = *perciò che*. *al primo vero appresso*: Next to, i.e., in possession of, the divine truth.

97. *da Piccarda*: The reference is to Piccarda’s words in *Par. III*, 117.

100–102. *Molte fiate già . . . si convenne*: Beatrice now settles this new point in terms of a “conditioned” will or in scholastic terms a *voluntas secundum quid*, as distinguished from what has been termed a “volere intero” (vs. 82) or a “salda voglia” such as St. Lawrence had (vs. 87). For the established scholastic doctrine on this point, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol. I-II*, q. 6, aa. 4-6. (See n. to vss. 76-78.) Thomas’ sixth article, “Whether fear causes involuntariness simply,” is fundamental to this particular point, since Beatrice puts the matter in just such terms with her phrase “per fuggir periglio” (vs. 101). Thomas recalls Book III of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, of course, where precisely such considerations come up, where the philosopher is concerned to define the difference between the voluntary and the involuntary. See *Eth. Nicom. III*, 1, 1110a (in Aquinas, *Opera omnia*, vol. XXI, p. 70, or R. M. Spiazzi, 1964, p. 111):

> Quaecumque autem propter timorem maiorum malorum operand a sunt, vel propter bonum aliquod, puta si tyrannus praecipi at turpe aliquod operari, dominus existens parentum et filiorum, et operante quidem salventur, non operante autem moriantur, dubitationem habet utrum involuntaria sint vel voluntaria.

Some things are done because of the fear of greater evils or because of the hope of some good. Thus a tyrant,
having in his power the parents or children of a certain man, commands him to do a disgraceful deed on condition that they will be spared if he does it but killed if he does not do it. Here a doubt arises whether his actions are voluntary or involuntary.

The instance cited here corresponds to Beatrice’s “per fuggir periglio” and the case of Alcmaeon (vs. 103), which involves piety of family. Aristotle goes on in this context to observe: “Mixtae quidem igitur sunt tales operationes.” (“Operations of this kind are mixed.”) See vs. 107, where the verb “si mischia” expresses this notion. Thomas Aquinas recalls this (Summa theol. I-II, q. 6, a. 6, resp.):

Sicut Philosophus dicit in 3 Eth. (ibid.), et idem dicit Gregorius Nyssenus in lib. suo de Homine (ibid.): huissmodi quae per metum aguntur, mixta sunt ex voluntario et involuntario. Id enim quod per metum agitur, in se consideratum non est voluntarium, sed fit voluntarium in casu, scilicet ad vitandum malum quod timetur.

As the Philosopher says (Ethic. iii) and likewise Gregory of Nyssa in his book on Man (Nemesius, loc. cit.), such things as are done through fear are of a mixed character, being partly voluntary and partly involuntary. For that which is done through fear, considered in itself, is not voluntary; but it becomes voluntary in this particular case, in order, namely, to avoid the evil feared.

The “Antiqua Translatio” (the Latin version of Aristotle known to Dante) of Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics has “mixtae” here, and Thomas Aquinas keeps the term in his commentary on the Ethics and introduces the term “violen­
tum secundum quid.” See Exp. Eth. Nicom. III, lect. 1, n. 387: “Primo ostendit quid sit simpliciter violentum. Secundo quid sit violentum secundum quid, ibi, ‘Quaecumque autem propter timorem.’ ” (“First he shows what violence is in itself. Secondly, what violence is when relative [secundum quid], where he says ‘certain acts however done through fear.’ ”)
100. frate: See n. to Par. III, 70. Here the term of address introduces an admonishment, as elsewhere in the poem. Cf. Purg. XI, 82.

101. contra grato: Against one's pleasure or will.

103-5. come Almeone . . . spietato: Alcmaeon's story is told in the note to Purg. XII, 50-51. The line “per non perdere pietà si fé spietato” is reminiscent of Ovid (Metam. IX, 407-8): “Ultusque parente parentem / natus erit facto pius et sceleratus eodem.” (“And his son shall avenge parent on parent, filial and accursed in the selfsame act.”)

It is interesting to note that Alcmaeon is mentioned in the same book of the Nicomachean Ethics in which Aristotle is discussing the “mixed” type of action. See Eth. Nicom. III, i, 1110a-b (in Aquinas, Opera omnia, vol. XXI, p. 72, or R. M. Spiazzi, 1964, p. 114):

In aliquibus autem laus non sit quidem, venia autem quando propter haec operatur aliquis, quae non oportet, quae humanam naturam excedunt et nullus utique sustineret.

Quaedam autem fortassis non est cogi, sed magis moriendum patientem durissima. Etenim Euripidis Alcmaeone desiroria videntur cogentia matrem occidere.

Est autem difficile quandoque iudicare, quale pro quali eligendum, et quid pro quo sustinendum.

Adhuc autem difficilior immorari cognitis. Ut enim in multum, quae quidem expectantur tristia, quae autem coguntur turpia. Unde laudes et vituperia sunt circa coactos vel non.

Some actions do not deserve praise but only pardon, for example, if a person does things that are wrong because he fears evils beyond human endurance which no one would undergo in any case.

Yet it is probable that there are some actions that a man cannot be forced to do and he ought to undergo death of the cruelest kind rather than do them. (The reasons that constrained Euripides' Alcmaeon to kill his mother seem to be ricidulous.)
Sometimes it is difficult to judge what is to be chosen for the price and what is to be endured for the gain.

It is still more difficult to abide by our decisions. As often happens, the expected results are painful but the compulsory acts are disgraceful. Hence we receive praise and blame according as we yield or stand firm against the constraint.

On the case of Alcmaeon, Thomas Aquinas comments (Exp. Eth. Nicom. III, lect. 2, n. 395): “Et ideo dicit quod Alcmaeona, idest carmina de Alcmaeone facta ab Euripide poeta, videntur esse derisoria, in quibus narratur quod Alcmaeon coactus fuit matrem occidere ex praecepto patris sui, qui hoc sibi praeceperat in bello thebano moriens, ad quod ierat ex uxoris consilio.” (“He says, therefore, that Alcmaeona or the poems about Alcmaeon written by Euripides seem to be satirical. These poems narrate the story of Alcmaeon who was forced to kill his mother by the command of his father. The father had ordered this when dying in the Theban war to which he had gone by the advice of his wife.”) The fact that Dante brings in the case of Alcmaeon in just this context shows clearly how closely he is following Book III of the Nicomachean Ethics as rendered in the translations thereof available to him and the commentaries thereon. But Ovid’s verses are also of primary importance. See Metam. IX, 408, quoted above.

105. pietà: Filial devotion to his father, a common meaning of the Latin pietas. spietato: “Impious,” the adjectival antonym, in the Latin sense, of filial devotion, in this case, towards his mother.

106. voglio che tu pense: “Pense” (= pensi) is subjunctive: “I would have you believe.”

107. la forza al voler si mischia: For the verb, out of Aristotle’s notion of “mixed” cases, see n. to vss. 100-102.

108. l’offense: “Offenses” against God, of course, and therefore sins.

109. Voglia assoluta: Beatrice now introduces the technical
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and specific term, the “absolute will,” which is what she had termed “volere intero” in vs. 82 and “salda voglia” in vs. 87. 
danno: “Harm,” “evil.”

110. consentevi = vi consenti, i.e., to the “danno.” in quanto teme: Cf. n. to vss. 100-102.

112. Però = perciò. quello spreme = quello esprime, i.e., what Piccarda says in Par. III, 117, which is then remembered in vs. 98 of the present canto.

114. ver = il vero (la verità). Thus is the apparent contradiction resolved!

115-16. Cotal fu l’ondeggiar . . . deriva: Through the metaphor one may glimpse, in allegory, the name of Sapientia for Beatrice here.

117. uno e altro disio: The two questions with which the canto began, in the figure of the ass of Buridan.


119. m’inonda: The verb continues the metaphor of the “santo rio,” vs. 115.

120. scalda: Latent in the metaphor is the notion of a plant that is revived, by life-giving water and by the warmth of the sun; and in the sun, or the notion of the sun, the name of Sapientia for Beatrice is even more evident.


123. ma quei che vede e puote: God.

124-26. Io veggio ben . . . spazia: “The mind is satisfied only with that truth which contains within itself every other truth” (Gr).

126. si spazia: “Extends.”
127. *Posasi = si posa, si riposa. in esso:* In the truth. *come fera in lustra:* "As a wild beast in its lair." *Lustra,* plural of the Latin *lustrum,* is used in older Italian as a singular.

128. *puollo = lo pud.*

129. *se non, ciascun disio sarebbe frustra:* The Latin *frustra,* with the verb in the conditional, reflects a commonplace scholastic expression, *esset frustra,* "would be in vain." And it is a basic tenet in Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy that "God and nature do nothing in vain." Thus, the meaning here is: "If we have this natural desire implanted in us to know the truth, it is unthinkable that it is given to us in vain, i.e., it must be an innate desire that *can* be satisfied." This explains the statement in the following tercet.

130–32. *Nisce per quello . . . collo:* The image is of a plant that puts out shoot after shoot from its base. The image is wholly natural and, by being so, is pointing to what is sometimes known in theology as man's natural desire to know God and to love Him. Here the matter is more in terms of God's truth, to which Beatrice (as Sapientia or Wisdom) can lead the wayfarer, as she has just done.

130. *per quello:* "Therefore." *rampollo:* "Shoot," "sprout."

131. *ed è natura:* The whole subject of the verb "è" is the preceding clause, "nasce . . . dubbio."

132. *ch'al sommo pinge noi di collo in collo:* As every reader knows by now, Dante is much given to such abrupt shifts in metaphor. So here, immediately following on the plant image, we are shifted to that of a journey, an upward mountain climb wherein we climb from foothill to higher hill, from peak to peak, until finally we reach the highest summit. The reader will come to see that this latter is an image which fits the whole upward journey through the heavenly spheres excellently well. Each new heaven or sphere, with the doubts on Dante's part which arise there, is here
matched with the phrase "di collo in collo," and the "sommo" will be where God is finally seen "face to face." It is already evident, moreover, that the journey through Paradise is much more of an intellectual journey than was the journey through either Purgatory or Inferno.

133–35. *Questo m'invita . . . oscura:* Thus, following on the natural image just expressed, there springs up at once in Dante, on his upward journey, another doubt, another question that puzzles him.

136–37. *Io vo' saper . . . beni:* The question of "making amends for unfulfilled vows with other goods" is discussed by Thomas Aquinas in *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 88, aa. 10-12.

136. *sodisfarvi:* The -vi means "to you," that is, to the court of Heaven.

138. *la vostra statera:* "Your scales" (the possessive bearing the same reference as the -vi of "sodisfarvi," vs. 136). *parvi:* "Deficient." The whole import of the question is made clear in the following canto.

140. *divini:* I.e., *occhi.*


142. *quasi mi perdei:* Literally, "I almost lost myself," a notion conveyed elsewhere in the poem by the verb *smarrirsi.* Cf. *Inf.* V, 72; *Par.* II, 6.
1–3. *S’ io ti fiammeggi* . . . *valore*: As Dante rises from “peak to peak” (*Par.* IV, 132), that is, as he passes through question after question and their resolution by Beatrice, Beatrice’s beauty increases, as the reader of the *Paradiso* comes to know full well. These opening verses present that beauty as a flaming-forth of love, not for Dante in any ordinary sense, but for truth, which Beatrice—who as Lady Wisdom has access to, being the vehicle of the divine truth (“di là dal modo che ’n terra si vede”)—has been able to convey to him (see the preceding canto). In the same sense, other spirits will glow with love and with their pleasure in being able to satisfy Dante in this intellectual quest.

4–6. *ché ciò procede . . . piede*: Beatrice’s words here touch on a point often repeated in the *Paradiso*. *She* has “perfect vision,” but her words apply even to a mortal, who has a far more limited vision. This point concerns the priority of intellect over will: The intellect sees or apprehends first, then the will moves (in the case of a desirable good) toward the possession of what is apprehended (“nel bene appreso”).

6. *move il piede*: The soul was said to have two “feet,” one the intellect and the other the will. See *Inf.* I, 30, and the note to that verse.
7–9. *Io veggio...* accende: Clearly the verses continue the expressed doctrine as it first applies to Beatrice, but they now turn it to Dante, a mortal, first to his intellect, and then to his love, which is of the will. Already, in this lowest of the heavens, his love is kindled by the “eternal light” perceived by him, as revealed through Beatrice.

10–12. *e s’altra cosa...* traluce: Beatrice’s discourse shifts its point of emphasis from Dante in particular to a generalization concerning all mortals on earth.

11. *vestigio*: “Unworthy things mislead the love of you mortals (*vostro amor*), not because they are evil, but because they have in them some ‘trace’ of the ‘eternal light’” (Gr). See Dante, *De mon.* I, viii, 2: “cum totum universum nichil aliud sit quam vestigium quoddam divine bonitatis” (“since the whole universe is nought else than a certain footprint of the divine excellence”). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica.* I, q. 93, aa. 1-4.

12. *traluce*: God’s light shines in and through created things, but our mortal apprehension can fail to see this and we can be seduced (by misapprehension) into an act of the will, into mistaken love, *malo amor.* See Purg. XVI, 85-93; XXX, 131-32.

13–15. *Tu vuoi saper...* letigio: Beatrice, reading Dante’s thoughts, knows without being told by him that another question has already sprung up in his mind. It is a question that is to occupy most of this canto.

15. *che*: “Che” is the subject of “sicuri,” of which “anima” is the object. *letigio*: “Contradiction” of its right to enter Heaven.

16. *Sì cominciò Beatrice questo canto*: The reader is expected to consider such a conceit on the part of the poet to mean that Beatrice continues, with an aspect of the argument concerning vows, her “processo santo” (vs. 18).

19–24. *Lo maggior don...* dotate: The argument concerns only the high creatures (see Par. I, 106, 120), i.e., angels and
men; these and these alone receive the precious gift of free will from God. Cf. Dante, *De mon.* I, xii, 6: "Manifestum esse potest quod hec libertas sive principium hoc totius libertatis nostre, est maximum donum humane nature a Deo collatum: quia per ipsum hic felicitamur ut homines, per ipsum alibi felicitamur ut dii." ("We may further understand that this freedom [or this principle of all our freedom] is the greatest gift conferred by God on human nature; for through it we have our felicity here as men, through it we have our felicity elsewhere as deities.") See also *Purg.* XVI, 67-81, and *Purg.* XVIII, 73-75, where Virgil suggests that Beatrice will indeed deal with this matter of free will when Dante reaches her. "Fesse" (vs. 20) looks upon God's *original* endowment of the precious faculty in His first creation, of angels and then of Adam and Eve, and this past tense continues into vs. 24, "fuoro" (*furono*). But the present tense of the closing words of vs. 24 extends it to mean His continuing creation of immortal souls in human creatures. Cf. *Purg.* XXV, 70-75. For the creation of angels with free will, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 59, a. 3, and for free will in man, see *Summa theol.* I, q. 83.

20. *fesse* = *facesse*.

24. *e tutte e sole*: "All of them, and they alone."

25–27. *Or ti parrà . . . consenti*: God accepts only vows of a high moral and spiritual nature, not evil, foolish, or trivial vows. To the former He *may* consent (note the verb "consenta" in the subjunctive) even as the one who makes the vow consents, and in this lies the "high value of the vow."

29. *vittima*: The term suggests strongly something that is solemnly served up as precious and befitting. *fassi* = *si fa*.

29–30. *vittima fassi . . . atto*: "'This treasure'—free will—'precious as I describe it, becomes the offering, and it does so by its own act,' i.e., by an act of the will itself" (Gr).

31. *Dunque che render puossi per ristoro?* The implied answer to the question is, of course, nothing: for nothing can
equal in preciousness the sacrifice of the free will, God's greatest gift to man.  \( puossi = si\ può\).

32-33. \textit{Se credi . . . lavoro}: “If thou thinkest to make amends by putting to a good use that which thou hast promised and then withdrawn, thou art like a thief who is trying to do good deeds with ill-gotten gain (\textit{maltolletto})” (Gr). Cf. “tollette” in \textit{Inf.} XI, 36. Cf. vss. 13-15.

35-39. \textit{ma perché Santa Chiesa . . . dispensa}: But Holy Church, as everyone knows, does give dispensation or release from the fulfillment of vows. Thus here lies a further problem, for Beatrice seems to contradict herself (vs. 36).

37. \textit{convieni} = \textit{ti conviene}. \textit{un poco a mensa}: The use of the metaphor of eating and digesting for the acquisition of knowledge is a common one, basic to the title and opening chapters of Dante's own \textit{Convivio}. Cf. \textit{Par.} X, 22-27.

39. \textit{dispensa}: “Digestion.”

41. \textit{fermalvi} = \textit{fermalo ivi} (i.e., hold it in your mind, your memory).

43-45. \textit{Due cose . . . convenenza}: “‘The thing of which the sacrifice is made’ is the thing promised; ‘the other’ element in a vow ‘is the act of agreement’” (Gr).

46-48. \textit{Quest' ultima . . . favella}: The act of agreement itself (with God) must be carried out.

48. \textit{si favella}: “I spoke.”

49. \textit{però = perciò}. \textit{necessitato}: Petrocchi has preferred the past participle of \textit{necessitare} here to the noun \textit{necessità}, commonly given by other editors.

49-51. \textit{però necessitato . . . dei}: The Jews, that is, were “put in the necessity of” continuing to make offerings and sacrifices to God by the Mosaic law, as explicitly prescribed in the twenty-seventh chapter of Leviticus, which is given as spoken by God directly to Moses.
50. *pur:* "Still." *offerere = offrire,* i.e., the act itself of offering. The form *offerere* is common in early Italian. *offerta:* "The thing offered." This may be exchanged. See Lev. 27.

51. *come saver dei:* I.e., you must know this, since it is so plainly stated in Leviticus and other books of the Old Testament.

52. *L'altra:* The other element, the specific subject matter of the vow (*vs. 44*). *t'è aperta:* Has been described to you.

53. *puote = pud.* *non si falla:* "One does no wrong" (from *fallare,* which in a certain context, as here, can imply sin, a wrong done to God).

55. *trasmuti:* The subject of "trasmuti" is "alcun," *vs. 56.*

56. *carco:* The "burden" is the substance of the vow, the "materia" of *vs. 52.*


59–60. *se la cosa . . . raccolta:* "'If the thing put aside is not contained, as easily as four in six, in the thing assumed.' Probably no exact proportion is intended, merely a manifest superiority of the new obligation to the old" (Gr). On the whole point, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 88, especially the following, in article 10 of the question, which concerns dispensation in particular (*Summa theol.* II-II, q. 88, a. 10 resp.):

Dispensatio voti intelligenda est ad modum dispensationis quae fit in observantia alicuius legis; quia . . . lex ponitur respiciendo ad id quod est ut in pluribus bonum. Sed quia contingit huiusmodi in aliquo casu non esse bonum, oportuit per aliquem determinari, in illo particulari casu legem non esse servandam. Et hoc proprie est dispensare in lege: nam dispensatio videtur importare quamdam commensuratam distributionem, vel ap-
plicationem communis alicuius ad ea quae sub ipso continetur; per quem modum dicitur aliquid dispensare cibum familiae.

Similiter autem ille qui vovet, quodammodo sibi statuit legem, obligans se ad aliquid quod est secundum se, et, ut in pluribus, bonum. Potest tamen contingere quod in aliquo casu sit vel simpliciter malum, vel inutile, vel maioris boni impeditivum; quod est contra rationem eius quod cadit sub voto, ut ex praedictis patet, art. 2 huius qu. Et ideo necessum est quod determinetur in tali casu votum non esse servandum.

Et si quidem absolute determinetur aliquod votum non esse servandum, dicitur esse dispensatio voti; si autem pro hoc quod servandum erat, aliquid aliud imponatur, dicitur commutatio voti. Unde minus est votum commutare quam in voto dispensare; utrumque tamen in potestate Ecclesiae consistit.

The dispensation from a vow is to be taken in the same sense as a dispensation given in the observance of a law because . . . a law is made with an eye to that which is good in the majority of instances. But since in certain cases this is not good, there is need for someone to decide that in that particular case the law is not to be observed. This is properly speaking to dispense in the law: for a dispensation would seem to denote a commensurate distribution or application of some common thing to those that are contained under it, in the same way as a person is said to dispense food to a household.

In like manner a person who takes a vow makes a law for himself as it were, and binds himself to do something which in itself and in the majority of cases is a good. But it may happen that in some particular case this is simply evil, or useless, or a hindrance to a greater good: and this is essentially contrary to that which is the matter of a vow, as is clear from what has been said above (a. 2). Therefore it is necessary, in such a case, to decide that the vow is not to be observed. And if it be decided absolutely that a particular vow is not to be observed, this
is called a *dispensation* from that vow; but if some other obligation be imposed in lieu of that which was to have been observed, the vow is said to be *commuted*. Hence it is less to commute a vow than to dispense from a vow: both, however, are in the power of the Church.

61–63. *Però qualunque . . . spesa:* These verses are aimed specifically at the cases of Piccarda and Constance and religious vows, in which free will itself is served up as the offering. Free will, as Beatrice has said, is the most precious gift given us by God, and it would of course outweigh any substitute (“altra spesa”). Then, were Piccarda and Constance ever exempted by ecclesiastical authority from the fulfillment of their vows? They are here among the elect, and therefore they must have died repentant and must have been forgiven through God’s mercy. Cf. *Purg. III*, 133-35, where Manfred, Constance’s grandson, speaks of such mercy as possible “as long as hope prevails.”

A passage in Thomas Aquinas is especially relevant here, since the case of Jephthah will now be cited in this argument (see vs. 66), being remembered in a context that, *mutatis mutandis*, applies here. See *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 88, a. 2, ad 2:

Quod quaedam sunt quae in omnem eventum sunt bona, sicut opera virtutis; et talia bona possunt absolute cadere sub voto. Quaedam vero in omnem eventum sunt mala, sicut ea quae secundum se sunt peccata; et haec nullo modo possunt sub voto cadere. Quaedam vero sunt quidem in se considerata bona, et secundum hoc possunt cadere sub voto, possunt tamen habere malum eventum, in quo non sunt observanda. Et sic accidit in voto Iephte, qui, ut dicitur Iud. 11.[30-31]: *votum vovit Domino, dicens: Si tradideris filios Ammon in manus meas, quicumque primus egressus fuerit de foribus domus meae, mihique occurrerit revertenti in pace, eum offeram holocaustum Domino.* Hoc autem poterat malum eventum habere, si occurreret ei aliquod animal non immolandum, sicut asinus vel homo; quod etiam
accidit. Unde et Hieronymus dicit . . . : In vovendo fuit stultus, quia discretionem non habuit, et in reddendo impius. Praemittitur tamen ibidem, quod factus est super eum Spiritus Domini; quia fides et devotio ipsius, ex qua motus est ad vovendum, fuit a Spiritu sancto, propter quod ponitur in catalogo sanctorum, et propter victori­am quam obtinuit, et quia probabile est cum poenituisse de facto iniquo, quod tamen aliquod bonum figurabat.

Certain things are good, whatever be their result; such are acts of virtue, and these can be, absolutely speaking, the matter of a vow: some are evil, whatever their re­sult may be; as those things which are sins in them­selves, and these can nowise be the matter of a vow: while some, considered in themselves, are good, and as such may be the matter of a vow, yet they may have an evil result, in which case the vow must not be kept. It was thus with the vow of Jephte, who, as related in Judges xi. 30, 31, made a vow to the Lord, saying: If Thou wilt deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, whosoever shall first come forth out of the doors of my house, and shall meet me when I return in peace, . . . the same will I offer a holocaust to the Lord. For this could have an evil result if, as indeed happened, he were to be met by some animal which it would be un­lawful to sacrifice, such as an ass or a human being. Hence Jerome says: In vowing he was foolish, through lack of discretion, and in keeping his vow he was wicked. Yet it is premised (verse 29) that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, because his faith and devo­tion, which moved him to make that vow, were from the Holy Ghost; and for this reason he is reckoned among the saints, as also by reason of the victory which he ob­tained, and because it is probable that he repented of his sinful deed, which nevertheless foreshadowed some­thing good.

64. a ciancia: “Lightly.”

65. bieci = biechi, “squint-eyed,” i.e., unreasonable. Cf.

66–68. *come leptè* ... *peggio*: Jephthah (or Jephte), the Gileadite, was a judge of Israel (*ca.* 1143-1137 B.C.). He sacrificed to Jehovah his only daughter in fulfillment of a vow that if he returned victorious over the Ammonites he would sacrifice whatever first came to meet him. The account is given in *Judic.* 11:30-31, 34:

> Votum vovit Domino, dicens: Si tradideris filios Am-mon in manus meas, quicumque primus fuerit egressus de foribus domus meae, mihi occurrerit revertenti cum pace a filiis Ammon, eum holocaustum offeram Domino. . . .

Revertente autem Jephte in Maspha domum suam, occurrit ei unigenita filia sua cum tympanis et choris; non enim habebat alios liberos.

Jephte made a vow to the Lord. “If you deliver the Ammonites into my power,” he said, “whoever first comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites I shall offer up as a holocaust to the Lord.”

. . . When Jephte returned to his house in Maspha, it was his daughter who came forth, playing the tambourines and dancing. She was an only child: he had neither son nor daughter besides her.

Cf. n. to vss. 61-63.

68. *servando*: “By keeping his vow.”

70. *Efigènia*: According to one version of the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, as a consequence of Agamemnon’s having killed a stag in the sacred grove of Diana, the goddess in anger sent a pestilence on the Greek army and caused a calm which prevented the Greek fleet in Aulis from sailing against Troy. On the advice of Calchas the seer, Agamemnon proceeded to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, in order to appease the wrath of the goddess (see Virgil, *Aen.* II, 116-19). However, Iphigenia disappeared just as the fatal blow was
to fall, and in her place a beautiful deer appeared. See Ovid, *Metam.* XII, 24-34:

> Permanet Aoniis Nereus violentus in undis bellaque non transfert, et sunt, qui parcere Troiae Neptunum credant, quia moenia fecerat urbi; at non Thesstorides: nec enim nescitve tacetve sanguine virgineo placandam virginis iram esse deae. postquam pietatem publica causa rexque patrem vicit, castumque datura cruorem flentibus ante aram stetit Iphigenia ministris, victa dea est nubemque oculis obiect et inter officium turbamque sacri vocesque precantum supposita fertur mutasse Mycenida cerva.

But Nereus continued to be boisterous on the Aonian waters, and refused to transport the war. And there were some who held that Neptune was sparing Troy because he had built its walls. But not so the son of Thes­tor. For he was neither ignorant of the truth nor did he withhold it, that the wrath of the virgin goddess must be appeased with a virgin’s blood. After consideration for the public weal had overcome affection, and the fa­ther had been vanquished by the king, and just as midst the weeping attendants Iphigenia was standing before the altar ready to shed her innocent blood, the goddess was moved to pity and spread a cloud before their eyes; and there, while the sacred rites went on, midst the con­fusion of the sacrifice and the cries of suppliants, she is said to have substituted a hind for the maiden of Mycenae.

Dante adopts the version according to which Agamemnon vowed to the goddess the fairest thing born in his realm during the year, which turned out to be his own daughter, Iphigenia. Benvenuto refers to a passage in the *De officiis* (III, xxv, 95) of Cicero, which Dante evidently had in mind when he wrote vss. 68-72:

> Quid, quod Agamemnon cum devovisset Dianae, quod in suo regno pulcherrimum natum esset illo anno, immolavit Iphigeniam, qua nihil erat eo quidem anno na-
tum pulchrius? Promissum potius non faciendum quam
tam taetrum facinus admittendum fuit.

Ergo et promissa non facienda non numquam.
And once more; when Agamemnon had vowed to Diana
the most beautiful creature born that year within his
realm, he was brought to sacrifice Iphigenia; for in that
year nothing was born more beautiful than she. He
ought to have broken his vow rather than commit so
horrible a crime.

Promises are, therefore, sometimes not to be kept.
Iphigenia’s “bewailing her fair face (which made her an ac­
tceptable offering) is a trait transferred probably by Dante
from the story of Jephthah’s daughter, who, before her death,
‘bewailed her virginity upon the mountains’: Judges xi, 38”
(Gr). Note that the name here must be pronounced Efigènia.

71. i folli e i savi: An established expression meaning every­
one who heard of it, without distinction.

72. cólto = culto, “act of worship.”

73. a muovervi: I.e., in the matter of making vows.

75. e non crediate ch’ogne acqua vi lavi: The verse has been
variously interpreted. Sapegno appears to choose the more
probable meaning when he paraphrases as follows: “Do not
believe that any kind of water can wash you clean, as does
that of baptism for original sin and holy water for venial sins;
do not delude yourselves that vows are sufficient to purify
you from sins committed and to assure you of salvation.”

76. Avete il novo e ’l vecchio Testamento: See Eccles.
5:3-4[4-5]; I Tim. 6:12.

77. e ’l pastor de la Chiesa che vi guida: “The Pope alone
has power to absolve from the greater vows” (Gr).

80. uomini siate: Cf. Eph. 4:14: “Ut iam non simus parvuli
fluctuantes, et circumferamur omni vento doctrinae.” (“And
this he has done that we may be now no longer children,
tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of
document.”)
81. *sì che 'l Giudeo di voi tra voi non rida*: See Dante, *Epist.* XI, 4: “Impietatis fautores, Iudei, Saraceni et gentes, sabbata nostra rident, et, ut fertur, conclamant: ‘Ubi est Deus eorum?’” (“The champions of impiety, Jews, Saracens, and Gentiles, scoff at our sabbaths; and, as it is written, cry out ‘where is their God?’”)

84. *a suo piacer combatte*: Buti interprets this to mean “saltando e corneggiando” (“jumping about and tossing its horns”).

87. *a quella parte ove 'l mondo è più vivo*: Beatrice looks toward the highest heaven, where God is, the Empyrean, as toward their ultimate goal. Cf. *Par.* XXIII, 113-14.

88. *e 'l trasmutar sembiante*: As they rise from sphere to sphere, Beatrice, as has been noted, becomes more and more beautiful.

91-93. *e si come saetta ... regno*: Again, as he does in describing movement from the top of the mountain of Purgatory to the sphere of the moon, the poet uses, as the first part of a simile, a figure which guides the eye of the reader first to the target, then back to the bowcord, which is still quivering. See *Par.* II, 23-26, and n. to *Par.* II, 23-24. Dante is certainly expressing great velocity, but his use of the figure of *hysteron proteron* here is also to be noted. There will be yet other examples in the *Paradiso*.

93. *secondo regno*: The heaven of Mercury, which symbolizes the degree of beatitude enjoyed by the souls of the ambitious.

95. *come*: “When.” *nel lume di quel ciel*: Into the planet of Mercury, as the following verse makes clear.

96. *che più lucente se ne fé 'l pianeta*: The hyperbole is remarkable here: the whole planet becomes more radiant for having Beatrice in it! *fé = fece*. *'l pianeta*: Mercury.

III, viii, 11: "E che è ridere se non una corruscazione de la
dilettazione de l'anima, cioè uno lume apparente di fuori se­
condo sta dentro?" ("And what is laughter save a corusca­
tion of the delight of the soul, that is to say, a light appearing
outwardly according as it exists within?")

But the heavens are supposed to be immutable! Men are
mutable, of course, and Dante admits to being so in the ex­
treme, so one can imagine how he must have changed and
smiled, if the planet did!

98. *da mia natura = per la mia natura.*

101. *traggansi = si traggon.*

102. *per modo che lo stimin lor pastura: "In such a way that*
*they judge it to be their food."

103. *splendori: These, of course, are souls, already called*
*"splendors" in the first heaven (cf. Par. III, 109).*

105. *Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori: It was explained to*
*Dante while he was still in Purgatory that the more souls*
*there are to be loved in Paradise, the more love there is (see*
*Purg. XV, 49-78).*

107. *vedeasi l'ombra piena di letizia: The souls rejoice that*
*they now enjoy the possibility of illuminating the living man*
in his doubts and questions, so that suddenly the simile is
transformed from food for fish to food as increase of love.

*vedeasi = si vedeva.*

*l'ombra: In this second heaven*
a mere semblance of the body is still present, though very
faint; in fact, joy on the part of the soul can cause it to be so
resplendent that the light hides this semblance—as will soon
be seen to happen (vss. 133-39). Thereafter, all souls be­
come simply *splendori,* and any semblance of a human body
that they might have is concealed by the light emanating
from them.

109. *quel che qui s'inizia: "That which begins here" is the*
description of this heaven.

111. *carizia = carenza, “want,” “lack,” “craving.”*
114. *si come*: “As soon as.” *fur* = *furono*.


117. *la milizia*: The warfare of life. Cf. *Iob* 7:1: “Militia est vita hominis super terram.” (“The life of man is a warfare on earth.”) The reader will encounter the two terms *trionfo* and *milizia* frequently, in one form or another, in the cantos ahead. Here “milizia” serves to distinguish the living man from the souls of the elect, he being one who is still serving in the “warfare of life.”

118. *del lume che per tutto il ciel si spazia*: This is God’s light (cf. the opening verses of the *Paradiso*), which is both light and love. *si spazia*: “Extends.” Cf. *Purg.* XXVI, 63; *Par.* I, 1-2.

119. *però* = *perciò*.

120. *di noi chiarirti*: Be enlightened about ourselves and our condition.

123. *credi come a dii*: Grandgent calls attention to Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 13, a. 9 and quotes the following passage from Boethius, *Consol. philos.* III, x, ll. 83-86, 88-89: “Nam quoniam beatitudinis adepti one fìunt homines beati, beatitudo vero est ipsa divinitas, divinitatis adeptione beatos fieri manifestum est . . . Omnis igitur beatus deus.” (“For since men are made blessed by the obtaining of blessedness, and blessedness is nothing else but divinity, it is manifest that men are made blessed by the obtaining of divinity. . . . Wherefore everyone that is blessed is a god.”)

124. *t’anni di*: From *annidarsi*, “to nestle down in,” a sense that will be made clearer in the final verses of the canto. Cf. vs. 138, “chiusa chiusa.”

125. *de li occhi il traggi*: The light which hides the soul (in any semblance of a human body) comes from the eyes. This serves to gloss vs. 108. *il traggi* = *lo trai*. 
127.aggi = abbia.

128–29. *il grado de la spera . . . raggi*: Dante wishes to understand who the soul is and why it is assigned to the heaven of Mercury, the sphere (planet) which, more than any other, is “veiled” by the rays of the sun, for being so close to it. Speaking of Mercury in *Conv.* II, xiii, 11, Dante refers to it as “la più picciola stella del cielo” (“the smallest star of heaven”) and notes that “l’altra proprietade si è che più va velata de li raggi del Sole che null’altra stella.” (“The other special property is that its orbit is more veiled by the rays of the sun than that of any other star.”) Thus “altrui” refers to the sun.

129. mortai = mortali.

131. fessi = si fece.

133. stessi = stesso. Cf. *Inf.* IX, 58.

134. *come*: “When.”  
   *róse*: “Consumed,” from *rodere*.

136–37. *per piùletizia . . . santa*: The happiness of this soul is increased at being able to satisfy this living man who is visiting Heaven. Happiness manifests itself as light, and this henceforth, in the upper heavens, will render the spirits invisible, even as it does here.

138. *chiusa chiusa*: The adjective thus repeated stresses the “nestling down” of the soul in its own increased splendor, resulting from increase of happiness. Not even the eyes of this soul are visible now.
1-3. *Poscia che Costantine . . . tolse*: "Constantine, transferring the seat of Empire from Rome to Byzantium, carried the Eagle from West to East, counter to the course which it took with Aeneas from Troy to Italy, where he was to become the father of the Roman people, and the founder of the Empire of whose power the bird of God was the symbol" (Norton). Byzantium was renamed Constantinople and inaugurated as the new capital in 330. (See n. to *Inf.* XIX, 116; also see *Par.* XX, 55-60.)

1. *aquila*: The object of "volse" ("turned").

3. *l'antico che Lavina tolse*: "The man of old who wedded Lavinia" was Aeneas, who brought the imperial eagle from Troy. Dante mentions Lavinia, who was the mother of Silvius and thus the co-founder of the Roman race, in *Inf.* IV, 126; *Purg.* XVII, 37; and *De mon.* II, iii, 16.

4-5. *cento e cent'anni . . . ritenne*: Constantine reigned from 306 to 337, Justinian—who is speaking—from 527 to 565. See P. Toynbee (1902), pp. 298-99:

Justinian says that when he became Emperor the Roman eagle had been at Constantinople for more than two hundred years ("cento e cent'anni e più"). Ac-
according to the chronology accepted at the present day this statement presents no difficulty, the period from the foundation of Constantinople in 324 (as distinguished from the dedication in 330) to the accession of Justinian in 527 being just over two hundred years. This, however, was not the chronology of Dante's day. Brunetto Latino, for instance, in his Trésor (p. 82, ed. Chabaille) assigns the transference of the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople to the year 333, and the accession of Justinian to the year 539. This gives an interval of 206 years between the two dates, and I have little doubt that the Trésor, with which, of course, Dante was well acquainted, was his authority for the reckoning of "cento e cent' anni e più."

4. l'uccel di Dio: The eagle, symbol of imperial power.

6. vicino a' monti de' quai prima usciò: While at Constantinople, the imperial eagle was relatively near the site of ancient Troy.

7–9. e sotto l'ombra . . . pervenne: In Constantinople the Eagle, descending from emperor to emperor, governed the world, which was under the shadow of its wings. Cf. Ps. 16[17]:8: "Sub umbra alarum tuarum protege me." ("Hide me in the shadow of your wings.")

9. mia: I.e., mano.

10. Cesare fui e son Iustiniano: The same contrast between the fui and the son is used in Purg. V, 88. Iustiniano: Justinian I, surnamed the Great, was emperor of Constantinople from 527 to 565. He was born in Illyricum in 483, married Theodora in 523, and died in 565. During his reign Justinian's great general Belisarius overthrew the Vandal kingdom in Africa and the Gothic kingdom in Italy. Justinian is best known, however, not by his conquests but by his legislation. In The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon (1908, p. 441) says:

The vain titles of the victories of Justinian are crumbled into dust; but the name of the legislator is inscribed on
a fair and everlasting monument. Under his reign, and by his care, the civil jurisprudence was digested in the immortal works of the Code, the *Pandects*, and the *Institutes*; the public reason of the Romans has been silently or studiously transfused into the domestic institutions of Europe; and the laws of Justinian still command the respect or obedience of independent nations.

See n. to _Purg._ VI, 88-89.

11. *per voler del primo amor ch’i’ sento:* This is love of God, but with stress on the Holy Ghost. Cf. _Inf._ III, 6.

12. *d’entro le leggi trassi il troppo e ’l vano:* See n. to vs. 10 and, for Justinian’s codification of the law, see n. to _Purg._ VI, 88-89.

13. *ovra = opera,* i.e., the reformation and codification of law.

14–15. *una natura . . . contento:* It was believed that Justinian was attached to the Eutychian or Monophysite heresy, which held that Christ was divine but not also human. As Butler observes, however, it appears to have been not Justinian himself, but his wife Theodora who held heterodox opinions.

16–18. *’l benedetto Agapito . . . sue:* Dante’s reference here is to Agapetus I, who was pope from 535 to 536, a time when the Ostrogothic power in Italy was being destroyed by Belisarius. The story is that he was sent by Theodat, king of the Ostrogoths, to make terms with Justinian at Constantinople, and while on his mission he convinced Justinian to accept the orthodox doctrine of the two natures of Christ.

Dante’s authority for his statement about the conversion of the emperor by Agapetus may have been Brunetto Latini (*Tresor* I, lxxxvii, 5), who says concerning Justinian: *‘Ja soit ce k’il fust au comencement en l’erreur des erites, a la fin reconut il son erreur de par le conseil Agapite, ki lors estoit apostoiles.’* (“Although he was in the beginning in the error of the heretics, in the end he recognized his error through the counsel of Agapetus, who was then pope.”) According to the
Liber pontificalis (LIX, 2), Agapetus convinced Justinian as to the two natures of Christ: “Cui beatissimus Agapitus episcopus constantissime fidei apostolicae responsum reddidit de domino Iesu Christo Deum et hominem, hoc est duas naturas in uno Christo.” (“To whom [to the Emperor Justinian] the very blessed Bishop Agapetus sent back a reply according to the very firm apostolic faith concerning our Lord Jesus Christ man and God, that is, two natures in one Christ.”)

19. li = gli.

19-21. e ciò che . . . vera: “What he (and afterward I) accepted on faith, without being able to comprehend it, I can now see as a fact, as clearly as thou seest an axiomatic truth—for instance, that if a proposition is false, its opposite must be true (cf. Mon., II, xi, 4).—Of the two natures of Christ, Dante beheld a symbolic presentment in the Griffin: Purg. XXXI, 121-126” (Gr). Cf. also Par. II, 40-45.

“It is a cardinal point of Dante’s belief that in the perfect state all effort both of will and intellect shall cease, while their activity reaches its highest point. Even truths that now seem paradoxical shall be seen as axioms, and the facts that now seem perplexing or distressing shall be felt as axiomatically right and beautiful. But unfathomed depths of the Divine Nature and Will shall ever remain, adored but uncomprehended. Compare Parad. xix. 40-57, xxi. 82-102, etc.

“Both in this passage and in ii. 40-45 the union of the divine and human natures in Christ is the point which Dante declares will be as clear to souls in bliss as ‘the initial truth which man believeth,’ or is as clear to Justinian as that ‘every contradiction is both false and true.’ Now ‘the initial truth which man believeth’ is not a generic term for axiomatic truth, but a specific reference to the ‘law of contradictories’ on which the whole system of Aristotelian logic is built up. It asserts that the propositions this is so and this is not so cannot both be true in the same sense and at the same time. . . . And it follows immediately from this fundamental axiom, that of the two propositions ‘all A’s are B’s’ and ‘some A’s are not B’s,’ or of the two propositions ‘no A’s are B’s’ and
‘some A’s are B’s,’ one must be true and the other false. They cannot both be true or both false in the same sense at the same time. For example, if the proposition ‘some A’s are not B’s’ be true, the proposition ‘all A’s are B’s’ is false; for if not, take one of the A’s that is not a B; now since all A’s are B’s, that particular A is a B; therefore that particular A both is and is not a B, which is impossible, therefore, etc. Propositions so related are called contradictories, and therefore every ‘contradiction’ or ‘pair of contradictories’ is ‘both false and true’ axiomatically” (TC).

25. Belisar: Belisarius, the famous general of the Emperor Justinian, was born on the borderland between Thrace and Illyricum ca. 505 and died in 565. His great achievements were the overthrow of the Vandal kingdom in Africa, the reconquest of Italy from the Goths, and the foundation of the exarchate of Ravenna upon the ruins of the Gothic dominions. When he was nearly sixty, he was accused of being privy to a conspiracy against Justinian, in consequence of which, according to the popular tradition, his property was confiscated, his eyes were put out, and he was compelled to beg in the streets of Constantinople, crying to the passers-by, “Date obolum Belisario.” In truth, however, his disgrace lasted only eight months, during which he was confined to his own palace. The emperor, having satisfied himself that the charge was false, restored Belisarius to favor, and he lived in possession of his wealth and honors until his death two years later (in 565), Justinian himself dying a few months afterwards.

It is probable that Dante, who does not hint at the ingratitude of Justinian towards his great general, did not know more of the history of the latter than is contained in the medieval chronicles. Villani (II, 6) concludes his account as follows: “Belisario ... bene avventurosamente e con vittoria in tutte parti vinse e soggiogò i ribelli dello ’imperio, e tenne in buono stato mentre vivette, infino agli anni di Cristo 565, che Giustiniano imperatore e Belisario moriro bene avventurosamente.” (“Belisarius ... with great strategy and winning victory everywhere, overcame and subjugated the rebels to the Empire and held it in good order all his lifetime until
the year A.D. 565, when Justinian the emperor and Belisarius died in their daring ventures.

26. *cui*: This is the dative.


29–30. *sua condizione . . . giunta*: Justinian's reply has made it necessary for him to mention the Roman Eagle.

30. *seguitare* = *far seguire*.

31. *veggi* = *vegga* or *veda*. *quanta*: "How little."

33. *e chi 'l s'appropria e chi a lui s'oppose*: "Chi" and "chi" (Ghibelline and Guelph) are subjects of "move."

35–36. *e cominciò . . . regno*: "It—the valor (virtù) of heroes—'began from that hour when Pallas'—son of the Latin king Evander—'died to give it (the segno) a kingdom.' Pallas, leading Latin troops to help Aeneas, was killed by Turnus (*Aen.*, X, 479-489); to avenge his death, Aeneas slew Turnus (*Aen.*, XII, 945-952), and gained possession of Latium" (Gr). Virgil represents the Trojan Aeneas, when he landed on the shores of Italy, as becoming involved in war with Turnus, king of the Latins, and as seeking and gaining the alliance of Evander, who had established a kingdom on the seven hills, afterwards to be the site of Rome.

37–39. *Tu sai . . . ancora*: The kingdom of Aeneas "was founded, however, not on the seven hills, but at Lavinium, whence it was transferred by his son Ascanius to Alba Longa where it remained for more than 300 years, till, in the reign of Tullus Hostilius (670-638 B.C.), Alba fell under Rome, on the defeat of the three Alban champions, the Curiatii, by the survivor of the three Roman champions, the Horatii" (TC).

40–41. *dal mal de le Sabine . . . Lucrezia*: "Meanwhile the Alban outcast, Romulus, had founded a camp of refuge on the Palatine (one of the seven hills), and had provided the desperadoes, who gathered there, with wives, by seizing the
Sabine women who had come to attend the public games. Under him and his six successors Rome gradually extended her power, till the outrage offered to Lucretia by Sextus, the son of the last king, so roused the indignation of the people that the monarchy was swept away (510 B.C.)” (TC).

43-53. Sai quel ch’el . . . Scipione: “The long period of the Republic, up to the beginning of Caesar’s campaigns in Gaul (58 B.C.), is passed over rapidly by Dante, without notice of constitutional and social struggles; but the main aspects of the outward history are dealt with by rapid and effective strokes. During this period Rome established her supremacy over the other Latin tribes, repelled invasions of Italy, both by civilised and barbarous peoples, and extended her dominion by counter invasions. Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus (from cincinnus = a curl), called from the plough to the dictatorship, conquered the Aequians (458 B.C.); against Brennus (390, etc., B.C.) and his Gauls, one of the Fabii, and Titus Manlius Torquatus (as well as others, notably Camillus), distinguished themselves. The Decii,—father, son and grandson,—died self-devoted deaths in serving against the Latins (340 B.C.), the Samnites (295 B.C.) and the Greek invader Pyrrhus (280 B.C.); while the greatest of all the Fabii, Quintus Fabius Maximus (Cunctator), saved Rome from Hannibal who crossed the Alps and victoriously invaded Italy in 218 B.C., in which same year Scipio Africanus (the Elder), a boy of seventeen, won military fame by saving his father’s life at the defeat of Ticinus. It was he who subsequently organised the counter invasion of Africa which compelled Hannibal to withdraw from Italy. Cf. xxvii. 61 seq.” (TC).

48. mirro: “Embalm,” “preserve.”

49. Aràbi: “Arabs” is a term applied by an anachronism to the Carthaginians, whose territory in Dante’s day was occupied by the Arabs, the reference being to their passage of the Alps under Hannibal and their subsequent defeat by Scipio Africanus.

51. l’alpestre rocce: Although Dante several times uses the
word “alpine” to refer to any mountainous place, here it refers to the Alps themselves. *labi*: “You descend.” From the Latin *labi*.

52–96. *Sott’ esso . . . soccorse*: “By a great leap Dante now brings us to the achievement of Pompey, the great conqueror of the eastern kings and queller of the faction of Marius. He celebrated a triumph when not yet twenty-five (81 B.C.). After a passing reference to the mythical exploits of the great Romans in reducing Fiesole which overhangs Florence, and which was the refuge of Catiline (Villani, i. 31-37), we find ourselves following the career of Caesar preparatory to the founding of the Roman Empire. Lines 58-60 refer to the campaigns in Gaul (58-50 B.C.); lines 61-63 to Caesar’s crossing the Rubicon (49 B.C.) between Ravenna and Rimini, thereby leaving his province, without orders from the Senate, and so formally beginning the civil war. In the same year he overcame formidable opposition in Spain, and next year unsuccessfully besieged Pompey in Dyrrachium, and then utterly defeated him at Pharsalia in Thessaly. Pompey escaped to Egypt, where he was treacherously slain by Ptolemy (lines 64-66). Caesar crossed the Hellespont and, says Lucan, visited the Troad (cf. l. 6). He took Egypt from Ptolemy and gave it to Cleopatra, subdued Juba king of Numidia who had protected his opponents after Pharsalia, and then returned to Spain (45 B.C.) where Pompey’s sons had raised an army (lines 67-72). After the murder of Caesar his nephew Augustus defeated Mark Antony at Modina (43 B.C.); then, with Antony as his ally, defeated his uncle’s assassins, Brutus and Cassius (cf. Inf. xxxiv.), at Philippi (42 B.C.), and afterwards Antony’s brother Lucius at Perugia (41 B.C.). In 31 B.C. at Actium he finally defeated his rival Mark Antony, who soon afterwards committed suicide, and his example was followed by his paramour Cleopatra, who died by the tooth of a viper (lines 76-78). This made Augustus master of the whole Roman Empire to the remotest ends of Egypt, and the temple of Janus, the gates of which were always open in war-time, was, for the third time only in the history of Rome, closed in sign of universal peace. Heaven
'had brought the world to its own serene mood' (line 56), and all was ready for the birth of Christ (lines 79-81), who was crucified under Tiberius, the successor of Augustus, whereby the sin of human nature at the fall was avenged (lines 82-90). Jerusalem fell, under Titus, whereby the sin of slaying Christ was avenged on the Jews (lines 91-93).

"The epilogue of the defence of the Church by Charlemagne against the Lombard king Desiderius, whom he de­ throned in A.D. 774, produces a disjointed effect upon the modern reader, but would seem natural enough to Dante and his contemporaries" (TC).

55–56. che tutto 'l ciel . . . sereno: See Dante, Conv. IV, v, 6-8:

E però è scritto in Isaia: "Nascerà virga de la radice di Jesse, e fiore de la sua radice salirà"; e Jesse fu padre del sopra detto David. E tutto questo fu in uno tem­ porale, che David nacque e nacque Roma, cioè che Enea venne di Troia in Italia, che fu origine de la cittade romana, sì come testimoniano le scritture. Per che assai è manifesto la divina elezione del romano imperio, per lo nascimento de la santa cittade che fu contemporaneo a la radice de la progenie di Maria. E incidentemente è da toccare che, poi che esso cielo cominciò a girare, in migliore disposizione non fu che allora quando di là su discese Colui che l'ha fatto e che 'l governa; sì come ancora per virtù di loro arti li matematici possono ritro­ vare. Nè 'l mondo mai non fu nè sarà sì perfettamente disposto come allora che a la voce d'un solo, principe del roman popolo e comandatore, sì come testimonia Luca evangelista. E però [che] pace universale era per tutto, che mai, più, non fu nè fia, la nave de l'umana compagnia dirittamente per dolce cammino a debito porto correa.

Wherefore it is written in Isaiah [11:1] "a rod shall spring out of the root of Jesse and a flower shall spring up from his root." And Jesse was the father of the above-said David. And it was all at the same point of time wherein David was born and Rome was born, that
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is to say Æneas came into Italy from Troy, which was the origin of the . . . city of Rome, as testify the scriptures. Whereby the divine election of the Roman empire is manifest enough; to wit by the birth of the holy city being at the same time as the root of the family of Mary. And incidentally we may note that since the heaven itself began to roll it ne'er was in better disposition than at the time when he who made it and who rules it came down below; as even now by virtue of their arts the mathematicians may retrace. Nor was the world ever so perfectly disposed, nor shall be again, as then when it was guided by the voice of one sole prince and commander of the Roman people, as Luke the evangelist beareth witness. And therefore there was universal peace which never was before nor shall be, and the ship of the human fellowship was speeding straight to the due port in tranquil voyage.

See also C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 96-98.

57. Cesare per voler di Roma il tolle: "'Caesar takes (tolle = toglie) it (the segno) at the bidding of Rome': in accordance with a popular mandate (Phars., V, 389-394)" (Gr). Caesar was regarded by Dante as the first of the Roman emperors—a popular misconception in the Middle Ages.

58. Varo: The Var is a river of southern France.

59–60. Isara vide . . . pieno: "'The rivers Isère, Loire, and Seine beheld,' and all the tributaries of the Rhone. For Era, see Giorn. dant., XIV, 47, and Rendiconti del R. Istituto Lombardo di scienze e lettere, Serie II, Vol. XLI, p. 757. See also H. Hauvette, Études sur la Divine Comédie, 226: the Italian name for the Loire was Era, from Old French Leire or Lere, understood as L'Ere" (Gr).


65. Durazzo: Dyrrachium, the ancient Epidamnus, a seaport in Illyria; it is the modern Durrës. Farsalia: Pharsalia is the district in eastern Thessaly in which Pharsalus is situated. This was the scene of the decisive battle between Pom-
Pey and Julius Caesar, which made the latter master of the
Roman world in 48 B.C.

66. *sì ch'al Nil caldo sì sentì del duolo*: The consequences
of Caesar's victory over Pompey at Pharsalia were felt in
Egypt, where Pompey was murdered.

67–68. *Antandro e Simeonta . . . rivide*: It was from the
town of Antandros, near the river Simois, that the Eagle first
set forth with Aeneas (Virgil, *Aen.* III, 5-6). When Caesar
was pursuing Pompey, he stopped to visit the Troad (Lucan,
*Phars.* IX, 961-99).

68. *là dov' Ettore sì cuba*: Hector was buried at Troy. *sì
cuba*: "Lies."

69. *e mal per Tolomeo poscia sì scosse*: "'And then shook
itself, ill for Ptolemy,' who was deprived by Caesar of the
kingdom of Egypt, and soon perished" (Gr). *Tolomeo*:
Ptolemy XII was king of Egypt from 51 to 47 B.C. He was
the eldest son of Ptolemy Auletes, and by his father's will the
sovereignty was left jointly to him and his sister Cleopatra,
but the latter was expelled after sharing the throne for three
years. Having collected an army, however, Cleopatra invaded
Egypt and with the help of Julius Caesar, who espoused her
cause, defeated her brother, who was drowned while attempt-
ing to escape. Ptolemy had been accessory to the murder of
Pompey, who fled to Egypt after the battle of Pharsalia (48
B.C.). Ptolemy had his head cut off and sent to Caesar, but
the latter to show his abhorrence of the deed caused the mur-
derers to be put to death.

70. *Iuba*: Juba, king of the Numidians, was an ally of
Pompey.

71. *occidente*: Spain, where the followers of Pompey were
defeated in the battle of Munda.

73. *col baiulo seguente*: Augustus. *baiulo*: A Latinism,
pronounced *bàiulo* and meaning "keeper."

74. *Bruto con Cassio ne l'inferno latra*: Brutus and Cassius,
defeated by the imperial eagle, “bark” of its victory in Hell (Inf. XXXIV, 64-67). For the use of latra, cf. Dante, Rime CIII, 59 and Conv. IV, iii, 8.

75. e Modena e Perugia fu dolente: Mark Antony was beaten near Modena, his brother Lucius at Perugia. Dante’s coupling of Modena and Perugia is a direct echo of Lucan, Phars. I, 41-42: “his, Caesar, Perusina fames Mutinaeque labores / accedant fatis” (“though to these be added the famine of Perusia and the horrors of Mutina”).

76. Piangene = ne piange. trista: The adjective may well be used here in the pejorative sense, with reference to Cleopatra’s wantonness (Inf. V, 63).

77-78. che, fuggendoli innanzi . . . atra: After the final defeat of Mark Antony at Actium, Cleopatra, fleeing before the imperial eagle, is said to have killed herself with an asp (colubro).

77. li = gli.


80-81. con costui . . . delubro: “The temple of Janus—of which the doors were closed only in time of peace, for in time of war the god was supposed to be absent with the armies—had been locked up but twice during the whole life of the Roman Republic. But under Augustus they were closed three times; and in one of those periods when ‘Heaven willed to bring the world to its own serene mood’ (v. 56) it has been supposed that Christ was born; and then, ‘no war, or battle’s sound was heard the world around’” (Norton). See n. to vss. 55-56.

83. era fatturo: “Was about to do,” a Latinism.

91. l’ammina: I.e., meravigliati. replico: “Unfold.”

92-93. poscia con Tito . . . antico: The Emperor Titus is referred to in Purg. XXI, 82-84 (see n. to those verses) by
Statius, with a reference to the point here mentioned, a point which is discussed at length in *Par. VII*, 19-51. The theory that Titus, as the destroyer of Jerusalem (in A.D. 70), was the avenger of the death of Christ was borrowed by Dante from Orosius, who, in recording the triumph of Titus after his victory, says (*Hist. VII*, iii, 8, ix, 9):

Capta eversaque urbe Hierosolymorum, sicut prophetae praenuntiaverunt, extinctisque Judaeps Titus, qui ad vindicandum Domini Iesu Christi sanguinem iudicio Dei fuerat ordinatus, victor triumphans cum Vespasiano patre Ianum clausit. . . . iure enim idem honos ultiioni passionis Domini inpsensus est, qui etiam nativitati fuerat aattributus.

After the capture and overthrow of Jerusalem, as the prophets had foretold, and after the total destruction of the Jewish nation, Titus, who had been appointed by the decree of God to avenge the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, celebrated with his father Vespasian his victory by a triumph and closed the Temple of Janus. . . . It was indeed right that the same honor should be paid to the avenging of the Lord's Passion as had been bestowed upon His Nativity.

94-96. *E quando il dente . . . soccorse*: "In 773 Pope Adrian I invoked the aid of Charlemagne against Desiderius, king of the Longobards or Lombards. Charlemagne—who now, in Dante's mind, represented the Empire, although he was not crowned until 800—came to the aid of the Church under the pinions of the Eagle" (Gr).

94. *dente*: The metaphor is from the Bible: cf. Pss. 3:8[7], 56:5[57:4], 123[124]:6, and Prov. 30:14.


101. *quello*: The "segno." *a parte*: "To a party," i.e., the Ghibelline. They appropriate the Eagle as their own sign and for their own purposes.
102. forte: “Hard.” si falli: The “si” here is the so-called pleonastic si used to specify identity (“which one”). For fallare in this sense, see *Par. V*, 53.

106. *esto Carlo novello*: “This younger Charles” is Charles II of Naples, son of Charles of Anjou. See *Purg. XX*, 79. He was not crowned until 1289 and died in 1309.

107. *Guelfi*: The Guelphs were supporters of the Church, as opposed to the Ghibellines, who were supporters of the Empire. They are mentioned by name only once in the poem. The standard of the Guelph party, in Florence, bore the arms of Clement IV, over which they later placed a small scarlet lily, as is recorded by Villani (*VII*, 2):

Volle il detto papa che per suo amore la parte guelfa di Firenze portasse sempre la sua arme propria in bandiera e in suggello, la quale era, ed è, il campo bianco con una aguglia vermiglia in su uno serpente verde, la quale portarono e tennero poi, e fanno insino a’ nostri presenti tempi; bene v’hanno poi aggiunto i guelfi uno giglietto vermiglio sopra il capo dell’aquila.

The aforesaid pope decreed that in allegiance to him the Guelph party of Florence should always bear his own coat of arms on their flag and on their seal, which was and is, against a white background, a red eagle upon a green serpent, which coat of arms they did bear and did keep as they still do in our own present day; to be sure, the Guelphs later added a red lily over the head of the eagle.

li artigli: “The claws” of the imperial eagle.

109–10. *Molte fiate già . . . padre*: Charles is warned that the consequences of his folly may fall on his children.

111. *armi*: The eagle.

112. *Questa picciola stella*: Justinian now proceeds to answer Dante’s second question (*Par. V*, 127-29).

114. perché onore e fama li succeda: “In order that honor and fame should follow them” on earth.
115–17. *e quando li disiri . . . vivi*: When desires are set on earthly honor and fame (thus deviating from true love), then it must follow that the rays of true affection mount heavenwards less intensely.

118–20. *Ma nel commensurar . . . maggi*: Part of the heavenly joy of these spirits consists in their seeing that there is an exact correspondence between their desert and their reward. One is reminded of Piccarda’s words in *Par.* III, 50-57, 70-75. *Gaggi* (cf. the French *gages*) is the equivalent of the English *wages*.

120. *maggi = maggiori*. Cf. *Inf.* VI, 48; XXXI, 84.

121. *giustizia*: The subject of “addolcisce.”

123. *nequizia*: “Iniquity,” i.e., envy, in this case.

124–26. *Diverse voci . . . rote*: The simile (made such by “così,” vs. 125) compares the harmony of many voices singing together to the harmony of the many “benches” (“scanni”) or orders of blessedness witnessed by the pilgrim in these heavens. Latent here is a metaphor of cosmic harmony and order that will be variously restated in the cantos that lie ahead. There is a cosmic symphony, the cosmos is a work of art making use of darkness as well as light. In vs. 126 one hears the echo of the established notion of the harmony of the spheres. Cf. *Par.* I, 78, and see Beatrice’s whole discourse in *Par.* I, 103-41, concerned as it is with cosmic order.

128–42. *Romeo . . . loderebbe*: “Raymond Berengar IV. of Provence (reigned 1209-1245), to be distinguished from his contemporary and opponent Raymond VII. of Toulouse (reigned 1222-1249), was notorious for his liberality and his patronage of poets and other men of genius. His daughter, Margaret, married Louis IX. of France (St. Louis). Eleanor married Henry III. of England. Sancho married Henry’s brother, Richard of Cornwall; and Beatrice, his youngest daughter, whom he made his heiress, married Charles of Anjou after her father’s death. Raymond’s able and upright chamberlain, Romeo of Villeneuve (1170-1250), is also an
historical character; but his name, Romeo, is the current term for one who has made a pilgrimage to Rome, or a pilgrim generally (see *Vita Nuova*, [XL, 6-7]). Hence arose the romantic legend recorded by Villani [VI, 91], and here followed by Dante. 'There came to his [Raymond Berengar's] court a certain Romeo, who was returning from S. James', and hearing the goodness of Count Raymond abode in his court, and was so wise and valorous, and came so much into favour with the Count, that he made him master and steward of all that he had. . . . Four daughters had the Count and no male child. By prudence and care the good Romeo first married the eldest for him to the good King Louis of France by giving money with her, saying to the Count, "Leave it to me, and do not grudge the cost, for if thou marriest the first well thou wilt marry all the others the better for the sake of her kinship and at less cost." And so it came to pass; for straightway the King of England, to be of kin to the King of France, took the second with little money; afterwards his carnal brother, being the king elect of the Romans, after the same manner took the third; the fourth being still to marry the good Romeo said, "For this one I desire that thou shouldst have a brave man for thy son, who may be thine heir,"—and so he did. Finding Charles, Count of Anjou, brother of King Louis of France, he said, "Give her to him for he is like to be the best man in the world," prophesying of him: and this was done. And it came to pass afterwards through envy, which destroys all good, that the barons of Provence accused the good Romeo that he had managed the Count's treasure ill, and they called upon him to give an account. The worthy Romeo said, "Count, I have served thee long while, and raised thy estate from small to great, and for this, through the false counsel of thy people, thou art little grateful. I came to thy court a poor pilgrim, and I have lived virtuously here; give me back my mule, my staff, and my scrip, as I came here, and I renounce thy service." The Count would not that he should depart; but, for nought that he could do would he remain; and, as he came so he departed, and no one knew whence he came or whither he went. But many held that he was a sainted soul" (TC).
130. *fecer contra lui*: “Who worked against him” with their calumnies.

131. *non hanno riso*: I.e., they were punished for their evil deed by passing under the harsh rule of the Angevins, by way of Beatrice’s marriage in 1246 to Charles of Anjou. Since Beatrice was her father’s heiress and at the time of her marriage was countess of Provence, her union with Charles of Anjou brought Provence into the possession of the royal house of France. See *Purg.* XX, 61. *e però mal cammina*: “And that shows that he travels an evil road.” *però* = *perciò*.

132. *qual si fa danno*: “Whoever does himself harm.”

133. *del ben fare altrui*: “By reason of another’s good works.”

134. *li = gli*.


137. *ragione*: “An accounting,” i.e., of his administration.

138. *che li assegnò sette e cinque per diece*: “Who had rendered him twelve for ten.” *li = gli*. *assegnò*: The term *assegnare ragione* belongs to the mercantile language of the day (see M. Barbi, 1934, p. 251).
1–3. *Osanna, sanctus Deus . . . malacôth*: "‘Hail, holy God of hosts, doubly illumining with thy brightness the happy fires of these kingdoms.’ The blessed souls—‘happy fires’ of the heavens—are illumined first by their own intelligence and secondly by God’s grace.—Of the three Hebrew words mixed with the Latin, *osanna* and *sabaôth* are used in the Bible, and *malacôth* (a mistake for *mamlacoth*) occurs in St. Jerome’s preface to the Vulgate called *Prologus Galeatus*, where it is said to be equivalent to *regnorum*, ‘of kingdoms’ “(Gr).

5. *fu viso a me* = *fu visto da me*. Cf. the Latin *visum est mihi*. *essa sustanza*: Justinian.

6. *doppio lume*: Dante is probably referring here to the double light of natural intelligence and illuminating grace. There are, however, several other interpretations of the meaning, such as “the light of his beatitude doubled by that of his joy in enlightening Dante” (Norton). See *Par. V*, 131-37. *s’addua*: “Is twinned.” For this unusual type of verb, invented by Dante, cf. “s’incinqua” (*Par. IX*, 40) and “s’intrea” (*Par. XIII*, 57).

7. *ed essa e l’altre mossero a sua danza*: The lights now join in one dance. *sua* = *loro.*
9. *mi si velar di sùbita distanza*: The souls return to the Empyrean, their abode.  
*velar = velaronono.*

10–12. *Io dubitava . . . stille*: Another question has now arisen in Dante’s mind, and he addresses himself in his own thoughts. “Dille” (“tell her”) is used repeatedly to convey the urgency Dante feels within himself to have his thirst quenched by his lady (Beatrice), who does this, time and again, with the “sweet drops” of the truth.

14. *per Be e per ice*: “Be is the name of the letter $b$, ice is the rest of the name Bice, the shortened form of Beatrice. Dante is filled with reverence at the thought of the mere earthly Beatrice, and the name by which she was called: how much more reverent must he be in the presence of the heavenly Beatrice, whose full name occurs two lines below! The usual Tuscan name of $b$ is $b i$; $b e$, however, is Aretine” (Gr).


18. *faria = farebbe.*

19–21. *Secondo mio infallibile . . . miso*: No reader will forget that Beatrice can always read Dante’s thoughts, which she now proceeds to do, stating that in this she is infallible. For the problem that has arisen with Dante, cf. Par. VI, 88-93.


*presente*: “Gift.”

25. *Per non soffrire*: “Because he would not endure.”  
*la virtù che vole*: The will.

*a suo prode*: “For his own profit.”  

27. *dannando sè, dannò tutta sua prole*: Thus was the burden of original sin transmitted to all mankind. This is well-
established doctrine, of course, as is that expressed in the following tercet.

28-33. *onde l'umana specie . . . amore*: The statement of this standard doctrine continues. Adam’s sin left all his progeny “wounded” (“inferma”) in intellect and in will. Fallen man is wounded in these two faculties of his immortal soul. See n. to *Inf.* I, 30.

29. *giù per secoli molti*: “*Giù*” bears the suggestion that man was abandoned, left “below,” by God, *sibi relictus* as the theologians commonly phrase it. We learn later (*Par.* XXVI, 118-23), from Adam himself, that 5,232 years passed between the creation of Adam and the Crucifixion, which means that man lay below in error for more than fifty centuries before the Incarnation.


31. *u’* = *ove*, “where,” i.e., to mankind. *natura*: The object of “*unì*” (vs. 32).

32. *s’era allungata*: This stresses the force of “*giù*” (see n. to vs. 29). *unì a sé in persona*: The divine Christ assumed human nature, uniting it to Himself in the mystery of the Incarnation. And this was an act of pure love. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* III, q. 32, a. 1, resp., where one is reminded that “conceptionem corporis Christi tota Trinitas est operata. Attribuitur tamen hoc Spiritui sancto.” (“The whole Trinity effected the conception of Christ’s body: nevertheless, this is attributed to the Holy Ghost.”) And the Holy Ghost is eternal Love. See also *Summa theol.* III, q. 32, a. 4, ad 1:

Illà conceptio tria privilegia habuit: scilicet quod esset sine peccato originali; quod esset non puri hominis, sed Dei et hominis; item quod esset conceptio virginis: et haec tria habuit a Spiritu sancto. Et ideo dicit Damascenus quantum ad primum, quod Spiritus sanctus supervenit Virginī purgans ipsam, idest, praeservans, ne cum peccato originali conciperet.
This conception had three privileges—namely, that it was without original sin; that it was not that of a man only, but of God and man; and that it was a virginal conception. And all three were effected by the Holy Ghost. Therefore Damascene says, as to the first, that the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, purifying her—that is, preserving her from conceiving with original sin.

35-36. *questa natura . . . buona*: Human nature as it was in Adam before the Fall, "united to its Creator," was pure and good.

37-38. *ma per sé . . . paradiso*: Adam sinned by an act of his own free will, and the consequence thereof was his (and Eve's) banishment from Eden ("paradiso" here is used in the sense of the earthly Paradise).

38. *però che* = *perciò che*.


40-42. *La pena . . . morse*: Christ assumed human nature in order to purge it, or heal it, by that assumption. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* III, q. 31, a. 1, resp.:

Christus humanam naturam assumpsit, ut eam a corruptione purgaret. Non autem purgatione indigebat natura humana nisi secundum quod infecta erat per originem vitiatam, qua ex Adam descendebat. Et ideo conveniens fuit ut carnem sumeret ex materia ab Adam derivata, ut ipsa natura per assumptionem curaretur.

Christ assumed human nature in order to cleanse it of corruption. But human nature did not need to be cleansed save in as far as it was soiled in its tainted origin whereby it was descended from Adam. Therefore it was becoming that He should assume flesh of matter derived from Adam, that the nature itself might be healed by the assumption.

Christ's death on the Cross therefore *justly* atoned for original sin in Adam. Nothing was ever so just.
43–45. *e così nulla ... natura:* Christ on earth was God, second person of the Trinity, who had assumed corrupt human nature. But He remained God, hence the Jews nailed God to the Cross. And they are responsible. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* III, q. 46, a. 12, ad 3, where Aquinas is quoting a sermon of the Council of Ephesus:

> Sicut subditur ibidem, *non purum hominem crucifixerunt Iudaei, sed Deo intulerunt praescriptiones.* Pone enim principem loqui per verbum, et hoc formari per litteras in charta aliqua, et dirigere civitatis, et aliquis inobediens chartam disrupsat; ad mortis sententiam deducetur, non tamquam chartam disruppes, sed tamquam verbum imperiale disruppes. Non ergo securus sit Iudaeus, tamquam purum hominem crucifigens; quod enim videbat, quasi charta erat; quod autem in ea celabatur, imperiale Verbum erat, natum ex natura, non prolatum per linguam.

As the passage quoted goes on to say: *The Jews did not crucify one who was simply a man; they inflicted their presumptions upon God. For suppose a prince to speak by word of mouth, and that his words are committed to writing on a parchment and sent out to the cities, and that some rebel tears up the document, he will be led forth to endure the death sentence, not for merely tearing up a document, but as destroying the imperial message. Let not the Jew, then, stand in security, as crucifying a mere man; since what he saw was as the parchment, but what was hidden under it was the imperial Word, the Son by nature, not the mere utterance of a tongue.*

Thus, says Dante, “considering the [divine] person who suffered crucifixion at their hands, never was there a greater outrage.”

46–47. *Però ... morte:* The second verse explains the first. It pleased God that Christ should die on the Cross (a point which Beatrice will now explain), and it also pleased the Jews that he should die thus. But even though the Crucif-
fixion of Christ was part of God’s plan, the Jews are none-theless accountable for their terrible deed. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* III, q. 47, a. 5, resp.:

Apud Iudaeos quidam erant maiores, et quidem minores. *Maiores quidem qui eorum principes dicebantur,* ut dicitur in lib. QQ. veteris et novi Testam. (quaest. 66, a med., inter op. Aug.), *sicut et daemones cognoverunt eum esse Christum promissum in lege: omnia enim signa videbant in eo quae dixerunt futura Prophe-tae; mysterium autem divinitatis eius ignorabant.* Et ideo Apostolus dicit quod *si cognovissent, nunquam Dominum gloriae crucifixissent.* Sciem dum tamen quod eorum ignorantia non eos excusabat a crimen, quia erat quodammodo ignorantia affectata: videbant enim evidentia signa divinitatis ipsius, sed ex odio, et invidia Christi ea pervertebant; et verbis eius, quibus se Dei Filium fatebatur, credere noluerunt. Unde ipse de eis dicit Ioan. 15, 22: *Si non venisset, et locutus eis non fuisse, peccatum non haberent; nunc autem excusationem non habent de peccato suo.* Et postea subdit: *Si opera non fecissem in eis, quae nemo alius fecit, peccatum non haberent.* Et sic ex persona eorum accipi potest quod dicitur Iob 21, 14: *Dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis, scientiam viarum tuarum nolimus.* *Minores vero, idest populares qui mysteria scripturae non noverant, non plene cognoverunt ipsum esse nec Christum, nec Filium Dei. Licet enim aliqui eorum in eum crediderint, multitudo tamen non credidit; et si aliquando dubitaverunt an ipse esset Christus, propter signorum multitudinem et efficaciam doctrinae, ut habetur Ioan. 7, tamen postea decepti fuerunt a suis principibus, ut eum non crederent neque Filium Dei, neque Christum. Unde et Petrus eis dixit: *Scio quia per ignorantiam fecistis, sicut et principes vestri,* quia scilicet principes seducti erant.

Among the Jews some were elders, and others of lesser degree. Now according to the author of *De Qq. Nov. et Vet. Test., qu. lxvi,* the elders, who were called *rulers,* knew, as did also the devils, *that He was the Christ*
promised in the Law: for they saw all the signs in Him which the prophets said would come to pass: but they did not know the mystery of His Godhead. Consequently the Apostle says: If they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory. It must, however, be understood that their ignorance did not excuse them from crime, because it was, as it were, affected ignorance. For they saw manifest signs of His Godhead; yet they perverted them out of hatred and envy of Christ; neither would they believe His words, whereby He avowed that He was the Son of God. Hence He Himself says of them (Jo. xv. 22): If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. And afterwards He adds (24): If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin. And so the expression employed by Job (xxi. 14) can be accepted on their behalf: (Who) said to God: depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.

But those of lesser degree—namely, the common folk—who had not grasped the mysteries of the Scriptures, did not fully comprehend that He was the Christ or the Son of God. For although some of them believed in Him, yet the multitude did not; and if they doubted sometimes whether He was the Christ, on account of the manifold signs and force of His teaching, as is stated Jo. vii. 31, 41, nevertheless they were deceived afterwards by their rulers, so that they did not believe Him to be the Son of God or the Christ. Hence Peter said to them: I know that you did it through ignorance, as did also your rulers—namely, because they were seduced by the rulers.

48. tremò la terra: Cf. Inf. XII, 41. The reference is to the earthquake that shook the earth when Christ died on the Cross (Matt. 27:51). e 'l ciel s'aperse: See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol., III, q. 49, a. 5, resp.: Clausio ianuae est obstaculum quoddam prohibens homines ab ingressu. Prohibebantur autem homines ab
ingressu regni caelestis propter peccatum, quia, sicut dicitur Isa. 35, 8, *Via illa sancta vocabitur, et non transibit per eam pollutus.* Est autem duplex peccatum impediens ab ingressu regni caelestis. Unum quidem commune totius humanae naturae, quod est peccatum primi parentis; et per hoc peccatum praecluebatur homini aditus regni caelestis. Unde legitur Gen. 3, 24, quod post peccatum primi parentis *collocavit Deus Cherubim et flammaeum gladium atque versatilum, ad custodiam viam ligni vitae.* Aliud autem est peccatum speciale uniuscuiusque personae, quod per proprium actum committitur uniuscuiusque hominis. Per passionem autem Christi liberati sumus, non solum a peccato commune totius humanae naturae, et quantum ad culpam, et quantum ad reatum poenae, ipso solvere pretium pro nobis, sed etiam a peccatis propriis singulorum, qui communicant eius passioni per fidelem, et charitatem, et fidei sacramenta. Et ideo per passionem Christi aperta est nobis ianua regni caelestis.

The shutting of the gate is the obstacle which hinders men from entering in. But it is on account of sin that men were prevented from entering into the heavenly kingdom, since, according to Isa. xxxv. 8: *It shall be called the holy way, and the unclean shall not pass over it.* Now there is a twofold sin which prevents men from entering into the kingdom of heaven. The first is common to the whole race, for it is our first parents’ sin, and by that sin heaven’s entrance is closed to man. Hence we read in Gen. iii. 24 that after our first parents’ sin God *placed . . . cherubim and a flaming sword, turning every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.* The other is the personal sin of each one of us, committed by our personal act.

Now by Christ’s Passion we have been delivered not only from the common sin of the whole human race, both as to its guilt and as to the debt of punishment, for which He paid the penalty on our behalf; but, furthermore, from the personal sins of individuals, who share
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in His Passion by faith and charity and the sacraments of faith. Consequently, then, the gate of heaven's kingdom is thrown open to us through Christ's Passion.

49. forte: “Hard” to understand.

50-51. quando si dice . . . corte: See vss. 20-21 and Par. VI, 92-93.

51. da giusta corte: By Titus, i.e., by the legitimate Roman tribunal, bearing the sign of the imperial eagle.

52-57. Ma io veggi’ . . . modo: Beatrice, reading Dante’s thoughts, knows that another question, and a knotty one, has arisen in his mind: Why did God choose this way, as set forth above, for the redemption of mankind? For the theologian’s typical answer, one may continue to turn to Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. III, perhaps choosing q. 46, a. 3, where Aquinas considers whether there was a more suitable way of delivering the human race than by Christ’s Passion. In his answer, Aquinas says:

Tanto aliquis modus convenientior est ad assequendum finem, quanto per ipsum plura concurrent quae sunt expedientia fini. Per hoc autem quod homo per Christi passionem est liberatus, multa concurrent ad salutem hominis pertinentia praeter liberationem a peccato. Primo enim per hoc homo cognoscit quantum Deus hominem diligat, et per hoc provocatur ad eum diligentum, in quo perfectio humanae salutis consistit: unde Apostolus dicit Rom. 5, 8: Commendat suam charitatem Deus in nobis: quoniam cum inimici essemus, Christus pro nobis mortuus est. Secundo, quia per hoc dedit nobis exemplum obedientiae, humilitatis, constance, iustitiae et caeterarum virtutum in passione Christi ostensarum, quae sunt necessariae ad humanam salutem: unde dicitur † Pet. 2, 21: Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia eius. Tertio, quia Christus per passionem suam non solum hominem a peccato liberavit, sed etiam gratiam iustificantem et gloriam beatitudinis ei promeruit, ut
infra dictetur, quaest. 48. Quarto, quia per hoc est homini inducta major necessitas se immunem a peccato conservandi . . . secundum illud 1 Corinth. 6, 20: Empti enim estis pretio magno: glorificate et portate Deum in corpore vestro. Quinto, quia hoc ad majorem dignitatem hominis cessit, ut sicut homo victus fuerat et deceptus a diabolo, ita etiam homo esset qui diabolum vinceret; et sicut homo mortem meruit, ita homo moriendo mortem superaret. Unde dicitur 1 ad Corinth. 15, 57: Deo gratias, qui dedit nobis victoriam per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum. Et ideo convenientius fuit quod per passionem Christi liberaremus quam per solam Dei voluntatem.

Among means to an end that one is the more suitable whereby the various concurring means employed are themselves helpful to such end. But in this that man was delivered by Christ's Passion, many other things besides deliverance from sin concurred for man's salvation. In the first place, man knows thereby how much God loves him, and is thereby stirred to love Him in return, and herein lies the perfection of human salvation; hence the Apostle says (Rom. V. 8[-9]): God commendeth His charity towards us; for when as yet we were sinners . . . Christ died for us. Secondly, because thereby He set us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and the other virtues displayed in the Passion, which are requisite for man's salvation. Hence it is written (1 Pet. ii. 21): Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. Thirdly, because Christ by His Passion not only delivered man from sin, but also merited justifying grace for him and the glory of bliss, as shall be shown later (q. 48, a. 1; q. 49, aa. 1, 5). Fourthly, because by this man is all the more bound to refrain from sin, according to 1 Cor. vi. 20: You are bought with a great price: glorify and bear God in your body. Fifthly, because it redounded to man's greater dignity, that as man was overcome and deceived by the devil, so also it should be a man that should overthrow the devil; and as man deserved death,
so a man by dying should vanquish death. Hence it is written (1 Cor. xv. 57): *Thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* It was accordingly more fitting that we should be delivered by Christ's Passion than simply by God's good-will.

58. *frate:* The reader will note the admonitory tone of this word. Cf. *Purg.* IV, 127; XI, 82; *Par.* III, 70.

60. *adulto:* “Full-grown’ in the flame of love. Only an infinitely loving mind can comprehend the boundless love which impelled God to sacrifice himself for man” (Gr).

61. *Veramente:* “However.” *segno:* “Target,” i.e., this problem.

63. *perché tal modo fu più degno:* Thus the argument is now couched in terms of *suitability,* even as Thomas Aquinas frames it in *Summa theol.* III, q. 46, a. 3.

64–66. *La divina bontà . . . eterne:* “Divine Goodness, in its exuberant love, brings forth men and angels, just as a blazing fire sends out sparks. Thus it ‘reveals its eternal beauties,’ by giving them a visible, objective form in the created world.”—Cf. *Cons.*, III, Metr. ix, ll. 4-6 (Boethius is addressing the Creator):

Quem non externae pepulerunt fingere causae
Materiae fluitantis opus, verum insita summi
Forma boni, livore carens.

(No external causes impelled You to make this work from chaotic matter. Rather it was the form of the highest good, existing within You without envy.)” (Gr).

On the matter of the resemblance of God’s creatures to Himself, E. G. Gardner (1913, pp. 106-7) notes that Dionysius and Aquinas echo Plato’s *Timaeus* (XXIX).

67. *sanza mezzo:* “Immediately,” “without intermediary or secondary causes.” *distilla:* “Derives.”

70–72. *Ciò che da essa . . . nove:* The meaning of “libero è tutto” is explained by the clause that follows. That which is created directly by God is not subject to the power or in-
fluence of more recent things, of the heavens and their “sec-
ondary” causality—it is not subject to nature, in short. The
heavens are “recent” compared to their Creator.

70. piove: “Piove” repeats the idea of “distilla” (vs. 67),
both verbs suggesting a descent of power from above, from
God.

73. Più l’è conforme, e però più le piace: The created thing
is more like God and hence more pleasing to Him.

74–75. ché l’ardor santo . . . vivace: God’s love shines in all
things (cf. Par. I, 1-3), but it is most resplendent in those
creatures (angels and men) which are more like Himself.

76. dote: Plural of dota, meaning “gifts,” “endowments,”
in this case immortality and liberty, which make the human
creature more like God. s’avvantaggia: “Has the advan-
tage” over lesser things. And this advantage is man’s “nobil-
ity,” as it is termed in vs. 78.

77–78. s’una manca . . . caggia: The human creature needs
must fall from its nobility (freedom), if it loses any one of
its “advantages” or special endowments.

78. caggia = cada.

79. Solo il peccato è quel che la disfranca: Sin alone “dis-
franchises,” i.e., takes away the God-given privilege.

80. falla = la fa. dissimile al sommo bene: When the
special “gift” (liberty) is lost, the human creature is less like
God. This special gift includes reason, of course, which
beasts do not have. See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. II-II,
q. 64, a. 2, ad 3: “Homo peccando ab ordine rationis recedit;
et ideo decedit a dignitate humana, prout scilicet homo est
naturaliter liber, et propter seipsum existens; et incidit quod-
ammodo in servitutem bestiarum.” (“By sinning man departs
from the order of reason, and consequently falls away from
the dignity of his manhood, in so far as he is naturally free,
and exists for himself, and he falls into the slavish state of the
beasts.”)
81. per che: “Wherefore.” del lume suo poco s’imbianca: This obviously returns to the metaphor of light with which Beatrice’s discourse on this problem began (vss. 64-66).

82–84: e in sua dignità . . . pene: The argument continues in terms of a “dignity” that is lost through sin, which “disfranchises.” As is already clear—and will become clearer—Beatrice is speaking of the sin of Adam and Eve and its consequences for human nature. Thus, in vs. 87 “paradiso” is used to mean the earthly Paradise. The burden of expiation for sin is man’s. Justice would require that he make amends, by “refilling where he had emptied,” by suffering penalties equal to the sin (“mal dilettar”).

85–86. Vostra natura . . . suo: It is important to note that the matter is kept in terms of human nature sinning when Adam, our seed, sinned. We were all in Adam (as in our seed) when Adam sinned, we all sinned when Adam sinned, that is, human nature sinned when Adam sinned. It is in this context that theology speaks of natural justice as the perfect condition lost when Adam sinned. See C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 222-53, especially pp. 230-31.

85. tota = tutta. “Tota” is a Latinism.

86–87. da queste dignità . . . remota: The condition of original justice was lost, human nature was removed from that condition, even as it was in our first parents when they were driven from the earthly Paradise.

88–90. né ricovrar potiensi . . . guadi: The dignities lost by Adam’s sin could not be regained except by (one or the other of) two ways (literally, “fords”). Beatrice’s logic is very strict here.

91–92. o che Dio solo . . . avesse: One way or “ford” was this: God, through His mercy (“cortesia”), might simply have forgiven the sin of Adam.

92. dimesso: “Forgiven.” “Dimesso” is from the Latin di-
mittere, used here in the sense it has in the Bible. \textit{per sé isso}: From the Latin \textit{per se ipsum}, “by himself.”

92–93. \textit{o che l’uom . . . follia}: The other way would have been for man to make satisfaction for his sin.

94. \textit{mo = ora}.


96. \textit{distrettamente = ben strettamente}.

97–98. \textit{Non potea l’uomo . . . sodisfar}: The argument proceeds by looking first at the possibility of man’s making amends himself for his sin, a possibility that was nil, for the reason now to be stated.

98–100. \textit{per non potere . . . suso}: Beatrice now goes on to explain that man himself could not atone for his sin because he was unable to descend in humility to the extent that he had once aspired to rise. Adam’s sin is thus put essentially in terms of his and Eve’s aspiration to be as gods, according to the serpent’s promise, if they should eat of the forbidden fruit. See Gen. 3:4-5: “Dixit autem serpens ad mulierem: Nequaquam morte morietis; scit enim Deus quod in quocumque die comederitis ex eo, aperientur oculi vestri, et eritis sicut dii scientes bonum et malum.” (“But the serpent said to the woman, ‘No, you shall not die; for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”) Adam’s sin was one of disobedience and pride, an aspiration to rise up and be like God. Beatrice, with “ir suso” and with “disobediendo,” puts the matter in these terms.

99. \textit{con umiltate}: The needful compensatory descent is a descent to humility, which is the opposite of the prideful aspiration of our first parents.

100. \textit{quanto disobediendo intese ir suso}: Adam and Eve
could not actually have risen up to be like God, as the serpent had promised. But their sin is measured by the degree ("quanto") of their intention or aspiration in this regard (hence, "intese"). Note that the statement is made in terms of man in general (rather than of Adam the individual), which keeps it in terms of human nature. Man could not, by his own powers, make satisfaction for original sin.

102. *dischiuso* = escluso.

103–4. *Dunque a Dio . . . vita*: "Man cannot, therefore God must" is the turn the argument now takes.

103. *con le vie sue*: God's two ways are mercy and justice. Cf. Ps. 24[25]:10: "Universae viae Domini misericordia et veritas requirentibus testamentum eius et testimonia eius." ("All the paths of the Lord are [mercy and justice] toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.")

104. *riparar l'omo a sua intera vita*: Restore man to the rectitude he had in Eden and lost through sin.

105. *dico con l'una, o ver con amendue*: Either God could have excused man for original sin or He could have found some other way. *con l'una*: That is, *via*, i.e., either with mercy or with justice. *o ver con amendue*: Or with both mercy and justice.

106. *ovra* = *opera*.

106–7. *è più gradita da l'operante*: "Is the more pleasing to the one who performs it."


111. *a rilevarvi*: Continuing in the figure of "up and down," Beatrice means mankind by the pronoun -vi. This will come to mean, as she continues, that in this way God made it possible for man to "raise himself" (vs. 116).

corresponding note). Here Beatrice’s words survey the whole of the divine economy from the end, as it were.

113. *processo* = *procedimento*.

114. *o per l’una o per l’altra*: I.e., *via.* *fie* = *sarà.*

115. *più largo fu Dio*: The goodness of God in choosing this way (vs. 108) continues to be the central point. Cf. vs. 91: “cortesia.” *a dar sé stesso*: The Father giving the Son, second person of the Trinity, who in His sacrifice obeyed the Father.

116. *per far l’uom sufficiente a rilevarsì*: The possibility for an individual man to “raise himself” to salvation was thus established through Christ’s sacrifice. This stress on the possibility of man’s cooperation should be noted.

117. *che s’elli avesse sol da sé dimesso*: This was the other way or “ford” (vss. 90-93), the one which God did not choose. *elli* = *egli.*

118–19. *e tutti . . . giustizia*: Justice remains the keynote, though mercy (God’s other way) is not obscured by this.

120. *non fosse umiliato ad incarnarsi*: Christ’s very Incarnation is viewed as a humiliation, God becoming man being the great descent that opened the way to heaven, by making it possible for man to descend low enough. But the greatest humiliation was death on the Cross. Cf. Phil. 2:8, where it is said that Christ, appearing as a man, “humiliavit semetipsum factus obedientis usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis” (“humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross”).

At this point, the reader should pause to consider that descent before ascent, a master pattern of Christian thought, is the basic conceptual necessity of the whole journey through Hell, up to the girding-on of the rush of humility when the wayfaring Dante reaches the shore of Mount Purgatory. On this pattern, generally overlooked in Dante studies, see C. S. Singleton (1966), pp. 75-79.

122. *in alcun loco*: This “certain place” is the distinction be-
tween direct creation by God and formation through intermediary or secondary causes (vss. 67-72).

123. veggi = vegga, veda.

124-25. Tu dici . . . terra: Beatrice thus names the four elements that make up the sublunar world.

125. e tutte loro mixture: All that which is formed by the various combinations of these elements.

126. venire a corruzione, e durar poco: This seems to contradict what Beatrice has said previously (vss. 67-72), but she will now explain.

127. e queste cose pur furon creature: The tense of the verb, in the past absolute, is significant, suggesting that God might have created the elements and their mixtures in His original creation. In that case they should be incorruptible (vs. 129).

129. dovrien = dovrebbero.

130-32. Li angeli . . . intero: A typical use of frate may be noted here (see n. to Par. III, 70). Dante is now being admonished to correct his thinking, for he ought to know that God in His original creation made the angels and the heavens or heavenly spheres, the "country" in which Dante now finds himself (cf. Par. XXIX, 32-33, 35-36). And these were created entire, i.e., in their complete being, without further change or modification ("in loro essere intero").

133-41. ma li alimenti . . . sante: As stated in vss. 136-38 brute matter ("la materia ch'elli hanno") and the informing virtue which the heavenly spheres shed on the sublunar world were also created in God's first creation (cf. Par. XXIX, 22-24). But the four elements named and their "mixtures" (vss. 124-25) are formed indirectly by operation of the informing virtues of the spheres, the planets, and the stars, over which the angelic Intelligences preside (see Par. II, 112-38). These things, therefore, are not created directly by God, and this is the main point (see vss. 67-72). "The prima materia is informed (i.e. so combined with a 'form' or ideal and essential principle as to pass from the possibility of being any-
thing to the actuality of being something) not direct by God, but by created powers, i.e. angels or heavenly influences. The transforming and vivifying power of the sun (and in lesser degree the moon) was supposed to have its analogies in equally real but less obvious influences of the other heavenly bodies, especially the planets. It is these heavenly influences collectively that draw the ‘soul’ or life of plant (nutritive and reproductive) or animal (sensitive and locomotive) from the stage of potentiality in the germinal material into that of actuality in the living things itself” (TC).

139. L’anima d’ogne bruto e de le piante: For the conception of the souls which animals and plants have (the sensitive and the vegetative respectively), see Purg. XXV, 52-60, and the corresponding notes.

140. complession potenziata: The terminology continues to be primarily Aristotelian as in so many other passages in the Paradiso.

142–44. ma vostra vita . . . disira: Compare Purg. XXV, especially vss. 70-75, where it is explained that God breathes the immortal soul into the fully formed fetus. Thus each human soul is created directly by God. Moreover, this loving God inspires each soul with a love and desire for Himself (natural love).

145–48. E quinci . . . fensi: “I.e. ‘from the distinctions now drawn’; for the bodies both of Adam and Eve were made immediately by God, and when the work of redemption is finally consummated (after the last judgment) man’s body will be restored to the dignity which it lost only by sin. The argument is Anselm’s. He meets the obvious objection that it does not cover the case of the ‘resurrection unto wrath,’ by urging that if the saved rejoice both in body and soul, it is but fitting that the lost should suffer in both” (TC).

145. quinci: “Hence.”

147. fessi = si fece.

148. fensi = si fecero.
1–3. *Solea creder... raggiasse*: “The belief that ‘mad love’ was sent down from a star by a goddess was a dangerous one” (Gr).

1. *mondo*: “Mondo” is the subject of the verb. *in suo periclo*: “To its peril.” *Periclo* is a Latinism.

2. *Ciprigna*: Venus, so called from her birth in Cyprus. *il folle amore*: Carnal love.

3. *raggiasse*: See *Conv.* II, vi, 9, where Dante states that “li raggi di ciascuno cielo sono la via per la quale discende la loro vertude in queste cose di qua giù.” (“The rays of each heaven are the path whereby their virtue descends upon things that are here below.”) Cf. *Par.* VII, 141. *volta nel terzo epiciclo*: This identifies the goddess with the planet, as if she had her abode there and turned with it. “The spheres that bear the various stars are transparent hollow globes of light matter, turning all together from east to west, and, in addition, possessing each an independent revolution in another direction and at a different speed. Moreover, the heaven of Venus—like those of the Moon, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—has, attached to itself, a little revolving sphere carrying the planet. The circuit of this smaller ball is called an *epicycle.* Mathematically, an epicycle is defined as
a circle whose center is on the circumference of a greater one. By means of this device (and others) the Ptolemaic astronomers explained the varying distances of each planet from the earth. Every heavenly body, except the sun and the fixed stars, has three different revolutions: the general diurnal course, the periodic orbit of the individual sphere, and the accompanying turn of the epicycle. The sun and the fixed stars have the first two. In the heaven of Venus Dante and his guide find the third of the epicycles” (Gr).


7. Dione: Daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, Dione was the mother of Venus, whence Venus is sometimes called Dionaea. Cupido: Pronounced Cupido. Cupid was the well-known son of Venus.

9. e dicean ch'el sedette in grembo a Dido: The allusion is to the account given by Virgil of how Cupid in the form of Ascanius sat in Dido’s lap and inspired her fatal passion for Aeneas. See Aen. I, 657-60, 715-19:

   At Cytherea novas artes, nova pectore versat consilia, ut faciem mutatus et ora Cupido pro dulci Ascanio veniat, donisque furentem incendat reginam atque ossibus implicet ignem.

   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

   ille ubi complexu Aeneae colloque peependit et magnum falsi implevit genitoris amorem, reginam petit. haec oculis, haec pectore toto haeret et interdum gremio fovet, inscia Dido, insidat quantus miser ae deus . . .

   But the Cytherean revolves in her breast new wiles, new schemes; how Cupid, changed in face and form, may come in the stead of sweet Ascanius, and by his gifts kindle the queen to madness and send the flame into her very marrow. . . . He, when he has hung in embrace on Aeneas’ neck and satisfied the deluded father’s deep love, goes to the queen. She with her eyes, with all her heart clings to him and anon fondles him in her bosom,
knowing not, poor Dido, how great a god settles there to her sorrow.

10. costei: Venus.  principio: “Beginning” of this canto.

11. vocabol = vocabolo, “name.”

12. che: The object of “vagheggia” (“woos”).  or da coppa or da ciglio: “Da coppa, ‘at nape,’ i.e., behind; da ciglio, ‘at brow,’ i.e., before: according as Venus is morning or evening star. For the odd expression da coppa, cf. Aen., I, 402: (Venus) ‘avertens rosea cervice refulsit.’ (As she turned away, her roseate neck flashed bright.)” (Gr).

13. in ella = in essa, in the planet Venus itself.

15. far = farsi.

19. essa luce: The light of the planet.  altre lucerne: These lights are the souls of the blessed that have descended to greet the wayfarer on his upward flight. From now on the souls will be seen thus, as covering and hiding with their own radiance any human semblance they might have, which radiance expresses their joy.

20–21. muoversi in giro . . . interne: The souls turn about as in a dance, moving more or less fast, according, as Dante believes, to their “internal vision,” that is, the vision of God, which they do not cease to have even though they have left the Empyrean to show themselves here.


26. giro: Round dance.

27. in: “Among.”  in li alti Serafini: In the Empyrean, in company with the Seraphim, the highest of the angels.

28. appariro = apparirono.


32. sem presti = siamo pronti.
33. **gioi**: Present subjunctive of *gioiare*, “have joy.”

34. **principi = principati**, Principalities, the angels who preside over the sphere of Venus. “Principi” is pronounced *prìnàp1*.

35. **d’un giro e d’un girare e d’una sete**: These souls revolve in perfect harmony with the angels who turn this planet and who are addressed in the opening verse of the *canzone* now to be cited by this spirit. “Giro” has reference to the dimension of their circle, “girare” to the velocity of their circling.

**un . . . un . . . una**: “Selfsame.”

**d’una sete**: These spirits have the same desire (thirst) to contemplate God as do the Principalities.

36. **tu del mondo = tu dal mondo**, that is, “you, when in the world.”

37. **Voi che ’ntendendo il terzo ciel movete**: This is the first verse of the first *canzone* of the *Convivio*, amply commented on by the poet in that work. See *Conv.* II, ii, 7, where Dante says:

> Adunque dico che la canzone proposta è contenuta da tre parti principali. La prima è lo primo verso di quell a: ne la quale s’inducono a udire ciò che dire intendo certe Intelligenze, o vero per più usato modo volemo dire Angeli, le quali sono a la revoluzi one del cielo di Venere, sì come movitori di quello.

I say then that the ode before us is composed of three chief parts. The first is the first verse of it, wherein are introduced, that they may hearken to that which I intend to say, certain Intelligences, or, to name them after the more customary use, certain Angels, which are set over the revolution of the heaven of Venus, as its movers.

**’ntendendo = intendendo**. The angels move the sphere by intellection, and solely by intellection, as Dante states in *Conv.* II, vi, 1 in his commentary on this verse: “con lo intelletto solo” (“with the intellect alone”). In the *Convivio*
Dante holds that the angels who turn the third heaven are the Thrones, not the Principalities (Conv. II, v, 13).

38. *sem* = *siamo*.

39. *fia* = *sarà*. *un poco di quiete*: Even though this is the heaven of love, how far we may now feel we are from the circle of the lovers in Inferno, where "a little quiet" was allowed to Francesca and Paolo that they might speak with Dante (Inf. V, 96)!

40. *si fuoro offerti* = *si furono rivolti*.

41. *reverenti*: I.e., in asking her permission to speak with these souls.

42. *di sé contenti e certi*: Beatrice gives her full consent, so that Dante's eyes are made content and certain in their request.

43. *rivolsersi* = *si rivolsero*.

44. *s'avea* = *si era* (the use of the auxiliary *avere* with reflexive verbs is common in older Italian, as every reader of the poem knows by now). *Deh, chi siete?* This is a much-debated reading. Some would have the question in the singular, since the answer is in the first person, and accordingly propose readings such as "Di' chi se' tu" and variants thereof. But Petrocchi's note on the manuscript evidence and on the sense of the question in the plural is persuasive. The pilgrim wants to know more about the whole group of souls. The present speaker has already served as the spokesman for the group as a whole (cf. a similar situation in Par. III, 40-41), and others will speak out (in the next canto), identifying themselves.

46-48. *E quanta e quale . . . sue*: The light, which is the radiance that hides the soul, increases in size ("quanta") and in intensity ("quale") in anticipation of the happiness this soul will feel in answering Dante's question.

46. *più* = *più* (the familiar epenthesis).
Così fatta: In the increase of joy.

Il mondo m'ebbe già poco tempo: Charles Martel, the speaker, who will now identify himself with ample references, died at the age of twenty-four.

moltò sarà di mal, che non sarebbe: “Much evil which shall be would not have befallen.” For the curious construction, cf. Par. VI, 142.

quasi animal di sua seta fasciato: A silkworm.

Assai m'amasti . . . fronde: “In the spring of 1294 Charles Martel visited Florence with a brilliant retinue, and was received with unprecedented magnificence, as G. Villani relates in his Croniche, VIII, xiii. We may infer from the present canto that our poet then made his personal acquaintance. Indeed, we are justified in conjecturing that Charles, on this occasion, heard and applauded Dante's canzone (the first in the Convivio), Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete, which was presumably the great literary novelty in Florence at the time of his visit; for he greets Dante in heaven with a reference to this poem. This episode affords, then, a clue to the date of composition of the canzone in question. When they met in Santa Maria Novella, Dante won the admiration of Charles by his perfect calligraphy, and was offered the post of dictator pulcherrimus” (Gr).

io ti mostrava . . . fronde: I should have shown you the fruit of my love.

Quella sinistra riva . . . arca: The spirit amply identifies himself as Charles Martel. The eldest son of Charles II of Naples and Mary of Hungary, he was born in 1271 and died in 1295 at the age of twenty-four. In September 1289 his father created him vicar of the realm, and in 1292 he was invested by his mother with the kingdom of Hungary. In 1287 he married Clemence of Habsburg, daughter of the Emperor Rudolf I. The date of his death, August 1295, is proved by a letter written, under the date August 30, 1295, by Boniface VIII to Mary of Hungary, appointing her regent.
of the kingdom of Naples and condoling with her on the death of her son. For the text of the letter, see P. Toynbee (1968), p. 145.

58-60. **Quella sinistra riva . . . m'aspettava**: "Provence, which lies on the left of the Rhone below its confluence with the Sorgue, was the dowry of Beatrice, wife of Charles of Anjou, Charles Martel's grandfather: cf. VI, 133-134; *Purg. XX*, 61-62" (Gr).

61. **quel corno**: The verb "m'aspettava" is understood as repeated. **Ausonia**: A name for Italy used by the Latin poets.

61-62. **s'imborga di Bari . . . Catona**: "S' imborda, 'is skirted': *borghi* means 'outskirts,' 'suburbs'" (Gr). Dante uses the towns of Bari, Gaeta, and Catona to indicate the eastern, western, and southern confines of the kingdom of Naples, won by Charles of Anjou.

63. **da ove**: "From the point where." **Tronto e Verde in mare sgorga**: The rivers Tronto, on the east side, and Verde (now called the Liri or Garigliano), on the west, separate the kingdom of Naples from the Papal States at the north.

64. **Fulgeami = mi fulgeva**.


67. **Trinacria**: Sicily, conquered by Charles of Anjou. **caliga**: "'Is darkened' by clouds of smoke from Etna" (Gr).

68-69. **tra Pachino e Peloro . . . briga**: Cape Passero (Pachynus) is at the southeast point of the island of Sicily, and Cape Faro (Pelorus) is at the northeast extremity of the island. Eurus was the name given by the ancients to the east or southeast wind.

70. **non per Tifeo ma per nascente solfo**: "The darkness from Etna is not due, as Ovid sang (*Met.*, V, 346-356), to the struggles of the giant Typhoeus, buried under the whole island of Sicily, but is caused by the effect of the sun's heat
on 'sulphur in formation'" (Gr). See Ristoro d'Arezzo, *Della comp.* VII, iv, 7 (pp. 217-19).

71–75. *attesi avrebbe . . . mora:* “Sicily would now be awaiting a line of kings descended from Charles of Anjou and Rudolph of Hapsburg (respectively the grandfather and the father-in-law of Charles Martel), if the revolution of 1282, called the Sicilian Vespers, breaking out in Palermo with the cry 'Death to the French!' had not driven Charles’s people from the island and given the crown to Peter III of Aragon” (Gr).

72. *per me:* Through Charles Martel.

73. *mala segnoria:* The tyrannical government of Charles I. *accora:* “Afflicts.”

76–78. *E se mio frate . . . offendesse:* “Charles Martel’s brother Robert succeeded his father, Charles II, in 1309; he had been chosen for the succession before 1300. Robert, who had spent some years as a hostage for his father in Spain, is represented as having adopted the traditional miserliness of Catalonia” (Gr). Or, as other commentators contend, the “avar a povertà di Catalogna” may refer to the miserliness of Catalan officials appointed by Charles to high positions.

78. *fuggeria = fuggerebbe.*  

80. *per lui, o per altrui = da lui o da altrui.*

80–81. *si c'h'a sua barca . . . pogna:* That even more burdens (administrative difficulties) not be added to the ship of state that he, Robert, will inherit and pilot and that is already “laden” with troubles.

81. *pogna = ponga.*

82–84. *La sua natura . . . arca:* Robert’s “stingy” nature descended from a “lavish” one. The reference may be to Charles II, or perhaps to Robert’s grandfather, Charles of Anjou, since Charles II is judged to be avaricious in *Purg.* XX, 79-84 and is repeatedly condemned by Dante.
83. *milizia*: From the Latin *milites*, which, under the emperors, had the meaning of "court-officials."

84. *mettere in arca*: "To put [money] into the chest," "to fill the coffer"—either his or their own—by oppression of the people.

85. *Però = perciò*.

85–90. *Però ch'i' credo . . . Dio*: Sapecno paraphrases the meaning of these verses thus: "Since I believe that the great joy which your words give me is seen by you in God, the beginning and end of all good, with the same clarity as I see it in myself (and without my seeking to express it in a way that would be inadequate in any case), that joy is the dearer to me; moreover, this increase of joy is also dear to me since you discern it by gazing, as one of the blessed, on God."

88. *per te si veggia = da te si veda*.

91. *mi fa chiaro = fammi chiaro* (imperative), *chiariscimi*.

93. *com' esser pudò, di dolce seme, amaro*: "How bitter [fruit] can come from sweet seed," as in the case of Robert (see vss. 82-84).

95. *un vero = una verità*.

95–96. *a quel che tu dimandi . . . dosso*: You will have before your eyes the explanation of the point that puzzles you now and that you are turning your back on. Cf. vs. 136.

97–99. *Lo ben . . . grandi*: The whole concept expressed in these verses is a variation on a familiar theme. Cf. *Par.* II, 112-48, especially. But now the accent is on providence rather than on the process of transmission of the power by God.

97. *Lo ben*: God. *il regno che tu scandi*: "The realm that you ascend," i.e., the heavenly spheres. "Scandi" is a Latinism, from *scandere*, "to climb," "to ascend."

98–99. *fa esser virtute . . . grandi*: "Makes Its providence to be a power ['virtute'] in these great bodies" (the planets
and the stars). Cf. Deut. 4:19: "ne forte elevatis oculis ad caelum, vides sollem et lunam et omnia astra caeli, et errore deceptus adores ea et colas quae creavit Dominus Deus tuus in ministerium cunctis gentibus quae sub caelo sunt" ("and when you look up to the heavens and behold the sun and the moon and all the stars in the heavens and deceived by error you adore them and worship that which the Lord your God created for the lot of all nations under the heavens").

100-102. E non pur . . . salute: Sapegno paraphrases the meaning thus: "In the divine mind, which is perfect in itself, the various natures are provedute, that is, prevedute, determined, not only in respect to their being, but also in respect to the disposition to fulfill their place in the universal order, this disposition being their welfare (salute)."

103-5. per che quantunque . . . diretta: Again the archery figure to express the divine teleology, everywhere visible in His created universe. See Par. I, 125-26 and the corresponding note.


107. producerebbe = produrrebbe. li suoi effetti: "Its effects" (on the world below).

108. che non sarebbero arti, ma ruine: If God's providence were not directing the whole order and operation, the result would be not His art, but chaos, a "ruination."

109-11. se li 'ntelletti . . . perfetti: The whole statement in the "if" clause is unthinkable. Defect in the subordinate Intelligences would imply defect in God, which is impossible.

109. li 'ntelletti: The angels (Intelligences) who turn these spheres by intellection. See vs. 37.

110. manchi: "Deficient."

111. il primo: I.e., intelletto, God.

112. ti s'imbianchi: "Be made clear to you."
113. Non già: I.e., no certo, “certainly not.”

114. la natura: In this present context, “natura” includes God (natura naturans) and nature in the sense of natura naturata or the total order of creation. See Questio de aqua et terra XLIV, where Dante writes:

Propter quod sciemundum est quod Natura universalis non frustratur suo fine; unde, licet natura particularis aliquid propter inobedientiam materie ab intento fine frustretur, Natura tamen universalis nullo modo potest a sua intentione deficere, cum Nature universalis equaliter actus et potentia rerum, que possunt esse et non esse, subiaceant.

And therefore be it known that universal nature is not baulked of her goal. And so, though particular nature may be baulked of her intended goal by the recalcitrance of matter, yet universal nature can in no sort fail of her intention, since both the actuality and the potentiality of things which may be or not be, are equally subject to universal nature.

The argument is a familiar one in scholastic thought deriving from Aristotle. See also Conv. IV, xxiv, 10 and De mon. I, x, r: “cum Deus et natura in necessariis non deficiat” (“since God and nature fails not in things necessary”).

115–16. sarebbe il peggio . . . cive: The argument now turns to the social order among men on earth and derives, of course, from Aristotle. See Polit. I, 1, 1253a: “Homo natura civile animale est.” (“Man is by nature a social animal.”)

116. cive: Citizen, a social being, one who is part of a social order. From the Latin civis.

117. cheggio = chiedo.

118–19. E puot’ elli . . . offici? Can he, man, be a citizen, i.e., live a civil life, if the social order is not made up of many different natures and functions?

120. ’l maestro vostro: Aristotle. Dante’s statement in the
PARADISO

*Convivio* (IV, iv, 1-2) of Aristotle’s thought in this regard may serve as gloss here:

Lo fondamento radicale de la imperiale maiestade, secondo lo vero, è la necessità de la umana civilitade, che a uno fine è ordinata, cioè a vita felice; a la quale nullo per sè è sufficiente a venire sanza l’aiutorio d’al­
cuno, con ciò sia cosa che l’uomo abbisogna di molte
cose, a le quali uno solo satisfare non può. E però dice
lo Filosofo che l’uomo naturalmente è compagnevole
animale. E sì come un uomo a sua sufficienza richiede
compagnia dimestica di famiglia, così una casa a sua
sufficienza richiede una vicinanza: altrimenti molti di­
fetti sosterrebbe che sarebbero impedimento di felicit­
tade. E però che una vicinanza [a] sè non può in tutto
satisfare, conviene a satisfacimento di quella essere la
cittade. Ancora la cittade richiede a le sue arti e a le
sue difensioni vicenda avere e fratellanza con le cir­
cavicine cittadi; e però fu fatto lo regno.

The root foundation of the imperial majesty is in truth
the necessity of human civility; which is ordained for a
certain end, to wit the life of felicity; to the which no
man is sufficient to attain by himself without the aid of
any, inasmuch as man hath need of many things which
no one is able to provide alone.

Wherefore the Philosopher saith that man is by na­
ture a social animal. And as an individual man requires
the companionship of home and household for his com­
pleteness, so likewise a household requires a district for
its completeness, since otherwise it would suffer many
defects which would be a hindrance to felicity. And
since a district cannot satisfy itself in everything, needs
must there be a city for its satisfaction. And further the
city requires for its arts and for its defence to have mu­
tual relations and brotherhood with the neighbouring
cities; wherefore the kingdom was instituted.

121. *quici* = *qui*.

123. *effetti*: “Works.”  *radici*: The “roots” are the dis­
positions of men.
124–26. *per ch’un nasce* . . . *perse*: “One is born a legislator, or Solon; another a general, or Xerxes; another a priest, or Melchisedech (Gen. xiv, 18); another a mechanic, or Daedalus (who lost his son Icarus while they were flying through the air: cf. *Inf.* XVII, 109-111)” (Gr).

127–29. *La circular natura* . . . *ostello*: Nature is here regarded as the operation of the heavens that turn about the earth, hence “circular” or “revolving” nature. This nature now becomes, through metaphor, a “stamp” on “the mortal wax,” i.e., men, and this is part of Nature’s “art,” which is well performed. But even though Nature stamps well, she makes no distinctions between individuals with respect to lineage. “Ostello”—literally, “inn”—is the individual who receives the stellar influence.

130–32. *Quinci addivien* . . . *Marte*: “Esau and Jacob, though brothers, were radically different from the start: Gen. xxv, 21-27. Quirinus, or Romulus, was the son of such a poor father that his paternity was ascribed to the god Mars” (Gr).

133. *Natura generata*: The character of the offspring.

134. *a’ generanti*: The parents.

135. *se non vincesse il proveder divino*: But God’s providence intervenes, through the virtù that descends from Him through the heavens, and prevents the constant and uniform descent of the nature and character from parent to offspring.

136. *Or quel che t’era dietro t’è davanti*: Cf. vs. 96.

137. *di te mi giova*: “I delight in you.”

138. *un corollario voglio che t’ammanti*: “‘I will have thee cloak thyself in a corollary.’ The corollary is added to the demonstration, as a cloak to a suit of clothes. Cf. *Purg.* XXVIII, 136” (Gr). See Boethius, *Consol. philos.* III, x, ll. 81-83: “Veluti geometrae solent demonstratis propositis aliquid inferre . . . ita ego quoque tibi veluti corollarium dabo.” (“As the geometricians are wont, out of their propositions which they have demonstrated, to infer . . . so will I give thee as it were a corollarium.”)
139-41. *Sempre natura . . . prova*: "Natura" is now used in the sense of "natura generata" (vs. 133), the natural disposition of the individual when born.

140. *com' ogne altra semente*: The natural order of this principle is stressed by an image clearly from nature, that of the seed that falls on a soil or into a place or climate not suited to it.

142-44. *E se 'l mondo . . . gente*: If mortals would only heed the foundation that nature lays (the given character and disposition of the individual child), then in consequence people would be good, i.e., the seed (to recall the metaphor) would grow as it should.

145-46. *Ma voi torcete . . . spada*: But you mortals twist to religion, i.e., force to become a monk or a priest, one who is born to gird on the sword, to be a warrior.

146. *fia = sarà* (connoting possibility, as in modern Italian).

147. *tal ch'è da sermone*: This seems a clear reference to Robert, Charles' brother (vs. 76), who was much given to writing sermons and whom Villani (XII, 10) terms "grandissimo maestro in teologia" ("a very great master in theology").

148. *onde la traccia vostra è fuori di strada*: Hence your mortal way strays from the right path. "The condensed argument of the reply of Charles Martel to Dante's question is made the more difficult to follow, because of the various meanings in which the word *nature* is employed. First, in v. 100 *natures* signify the products of Nature in its generic sense; in v. 114 *Nature* stands for the personified order of the created world; in v. 127 'the circular nature' is equivalent to the system of the spheres; in vv. 133 and 139 *nature* is used for the individual creature, though in the latter instance it is held by many commentators to signify Nature with the same meaning which it has in v. 142, where the word is employed in its generic and personified sense" (Norton).
1. *Clemenza*: The Clemence whom the poet apostrophizes here may be either the wife or the daughter of Charles Martel of Hungary, and there is considerable doubt among commentators as to which Clemence the poet is addressing. Charles' wife, Clemence of Habsburg, daughter of the Emperor Rudolf I, died in 1295, in the same epidemic that claimed her royal husband's life when he was only twenty-four years of age. Therefore, in the fictional time of the poem, Charles and Clemence had both died five years before. Would the poet address in this fashion a Clemence, spouse of Charles, who was already dead? Some commentators have held this to be unlikely, and have therefore argued that Charles' daughter is intended, Clemence of Anjou, who was born of Charles and Clemence of Habsburg at Naples in 1293, and who was married to King Louis X of France in 1315, and lived until 1328. Thus, in addressing the daughter, the poet would be addressing a living Clemence.

The arguments for and against the one identification and the other are many. Any reader interested in exploring them will find them expounded in the *Enciclopedia dantesca* under the entries "Clemenza d'Asburgo" and "Clemenza d'Angiò." All things considered, and despite some serious objections to be reckoned with, Clemence of Habsburg, spouse of Charles,
would seem the more likely candidate. A strong argument in favor of this choice is the address “tuò,” which is more properly said to a *wife* than to a *daughter*, and “*vostrì*” (vs. 6) likewise seems to point to husband and wife, rather than to father and daughter. However, no conclusive proof is available.

3. *la sua semenza:* His son, Charles Robert (Carobert), who was king of Hungary from 1308 to 1342. Born in 1288, he was the son of Charles Martel and Clemence of Habsburg. On the death of Otto of Bavaria (in 1308) he succeeded to the throne of Hungary, of which his father had been titular king (1292-95), and on the death (in 1309) of his grandfather, Charles II, he claimed the throne of Naples also; his claim, however, was disputed by his uncle Robert (eldest surviving son of Charles II), who appealed in person to Pope Clement V and, obtaining a decision in his favor, was crowned king of Naples at Avignon, June 1309 (Villani, VIII, 112), his nephew being at the same time recognized by Clement as king of Hungary. Dante is referring, in vss. 2-3, to the fact that Charles Robert was deprived of his right of succession to the throne of Naples.


6. *ai vostri danni:* Readers of the translation should note the plural “*vostri*” here.


8. *al Sol:* To God.

9. *tanto:* “Sufficient.”


11. *si fatto ben:* God, as referred to in the verses immediately preceding.
1. Hungary and surrounding area
12. *le vostre tempie*: "Your faces," "your eyes" (literally, "brows").

14. 'l suo voler piacermi: The object of "significava" in the following verse.

18. *fermi = mi fecero*.

19-21. *Deh, metti al mio voler . . . penso*: Dante begs the unknown soul to answer without waiting to be questioned.


24. *seguette = segui. a cui = colui al quale*.

25-26. *la terra prava italica*: All Italy is judged by these words.

26-27. *che siede tra Rialto . . . Piava*: The March of Treviso, in the northeast corner of Italy, lies between Venice (indicated here by the Rialto, the largest of the islands on which the city is built) and the Alps, where the rivers Brenta and Piave have their source.

27. *Brenta*: See n. to Inf. XV, 7. *Piava*: The Piave, a river of northern Italy, which rises in the Carnic Alps and flowing south and southeast through Venetia falls into the Gulf of Venice some twenty miles from Venice.

28. *colle*: The hill of Romano whereon the castle of the Ezzelino family stood.

29-30. *una facella . . . assalto*: The "torch" or scourge of mankind is Ezzelino (or Azzolino) III da Romano, the most infamous and bloodthirsty of the petty tyrants of medieval Italy (cf. Inf. XII, 110). He was born in 1194, in the little hill town of Romano, and died in 1259. Ezzelino extended his cruel rule beyond the March of Treviso and over much of the Venetian territory, as far as Mantua and Trent.

31. *D'una radice*: Of the same parents. *ella*: The "facella" (Ezzelino).
32. Cunizza: A sister of the Ghibelline Ezzelino III da Romano and youngest daughter of Ezzelino II and Adelaide di Mangona, Cunizza was born ca. 1198 and in 1222 was married, for political reasons, to the Guelph captain Count Riccardo di San Bonifazio of Verona. Shortly after her marriage she became enamored of the troubadour Sordello, by whom (ca. 1226), with the connivance of her brother, she was abducted from Verona and conveyed back to Ezzelino's court. Her intrigue with Sordello did not last long (although it appears to have been renewed later at Treviso), and she then went to the court of her brother Alberico at Treviso, where she abandoned herself to a knight named Bonio, with whom, according to the old chronicler Rolandino (Cronica I, 3, p. 18) she wandered about the world, leading a life of pleasure.

After the death of Bonio, who was slain while defending Treviso on behalf of Alberico against his brother Ezzelino, Cunizza was married by the latter to Aimerio, count of Breganze; after his death, he having fallen a victim to a quarrel with Ezzelino, she married a gentleman of Verona; and subsequently she married a fourth husband in the person of Salione Buzzacarini of Padua, Ezzelino's astrologer. In or about 1260, both Ezzelino and Alberico being dead, and the fortunes of her house being at a low ebb, Cunizza went to reside in Florence, where in 1265, in the house of Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, the father of Dante's friend Guido, she executed a deed granting their freedom to her father's and brothers' slaves, with the exception of those who had been concerned in the betrayal of Alberico. In 1279, being then about eighty, she made her will, whereby she bequeathed her possessions to the sons of Count Alessandro degli Alberti of Mangona, her mother's family. She probably died not long after this date, no further mention of her having been preserved.

33. esta stella: Venus.

34–36. ma lietamente . . . vulgo: I condone the fact that I was so much under the influence of the planet Venus, indeed it pains me not at all ("e non mi noia"), which fact would be hard ("forte") for men on earth to understand.
37–39. *Di Questa luculentâ... rimase*: The reference will soon be clear, for the light to whom she refers will be the next to speak.

40. *questo centesimo anno ancora s'incinqua*: “This centennial year shall yet be fived,” shall return five times, i.e., five centuries shall pass. The year is 1300.


43–44. *la turba presente... richiude*: The March of Treviso is designated by the two rivers which bound it on east and west respectively, the Tagliamento and the Adige.

46–48. *ma tosto fia... crude*: Padua is a city of Venezia Euganea in northeast Italy, on the Bacchiglione (which joins the Brenta a few miles south of Padua), west of Venice and southeast of Vicenza. It claims to be the oldest city in Italy and to have been founded shortly after the fall of Troy by the Trojan Antenor. On February 12, 1237 Ezzelino IV da Romano, with the help of Frederick II and the Ghibellines, obtained possession of the city, but, on the proclamation of the crusade against him by Pope Alexander IV in 1256, he was expelled by the Paduan Guelphs and the Venetians. After the death of Ezzelino in 1259, the Guelphs of Padua asserted their independence and conquered Vicenza (1265), whence, however, they were driven out, in 1314, by Can Grande della Scala, who was at that time imperial vicar in Vicenza.

47. *Vincenza*: Vicenza is a town in northern Italy, in Venetia, on the Bacchiglione, northeast of Verona and northwest of Padua. The water that bathes it is the Bacchiglione, which actually forms swamps around the city.

48. *per essere al dover le genti crude*: “Because the people are stubborn against duty” which is owed to the imperial authority.

49. *dove Sile e Cagnan s'accompagna*: The Sile and the
Cagnano (which is now known as the Botteniga) are two small rivers in upper Italy in Venetia. They unite at Treviso.

50-51. tal signoreggia . . . ragna: The reference is to Rizzardo da Camino, son of Gherardo da Camino (see Purg. XVI, 124), whom he succeeded in the lordship of Treviso in 1306, having shared the office with his father from 1300 on; he married Giovanna, daughter of Nino Visconti of Pisa, and was (according to the most trustworthy accounts) murdered in 1312 by a half-witted servitor, while playing at chess in his own palace with Alteniero degli Azzoni, who had planned the assassination in order to avenge the honor of his wife, whom Rizzardo had seduced.

52-54. Piangerà Feltro . . . Malta: The main facts of the incident referred to appear to be as follows. In 1314, while Alessandro Novello of Treviso was bishop of Feltre (1298-1320), certain Ferrarese Ghibellines of the house of Fontana, having failed in a conspiracy against Pino della Tosa, King Robert's vicar in Ferrara, took refuge in Feltre and placed themselves under the protection of the bishop. The latter, however, on the requisition of Pino, delivered them up (in July of that year), and they were taken back to Ferrara and publicly executed with their confederates (thirty in all). By this act of treachery the bishop incurred such great odium that he was forced to quit Feltre and retire into a monastery, where he died in 1320.

54. Malta: Malta is the name of several different prisons. On an island in Lake Bolsena was a dungeon of that name, for guilty prelates. See the Enciclopedia dantesca under the entry “Malta.” See also M. Antonelli (1921).

55. bigoncia: “Vat.”

59. parte: “Party” (Guelph).

61. Troni: The Thrones are the angels that direct the seventh sphere, the heaven of Saturn.

62. onde refulge a noi Dio giudicante: These angels are executors of God's judgments. Thomas Aquinas (Summa
theol. I, q. 108, a. 6, resp.) notes: "Throni dicuntur secundum Gregorium . . . per quos Deus sua iudicia exercet." ("The Thrones, according to Gregory . . . are so called because through them God accomplishes His judgments.") See Gregory, Homil. XXXIV, 10.

63. sì che questi parlar ne paion buoni: "We see mirrored in the Thrones the punishment that God has in store for the sinners, and therefore we can speak with satisfaction of their misdeeds" (Gr).

65. rota: The round dance of bright souls.

67. letizia: The happy spirit mentioned in vs. 37.

69. balasso: A kind of ruby that took its name from the region in Asia from which it was imported, Arabic balâksh, the modern Persian province of Badakhshân. percuota: The subjunctive form expresses the hypothetical.

70. Per letiziar là sù fulgor s'acquista: Cf. Par. V, 126.

71. qui: On earth. giù: In Hell. Some commentators, however, take "giù" to refer also to those on earth.

73. s'inluia: A word made up by Dante, from the pronoun lui, meaning "hims itself," i.e., identifies itself with him. Cf. vs. 81 for other similar forms.

74–75. nulla voglia . . . fuia: "No wish can be a thief of itself [can steal or secrete itself] from you," i.e., you can see my wish in God. For another example of fuia in this sense, cf. Inf. XII, 90.

77. fuochi: The Seraphim, ministers of divine love.

78. sei ali: For the six wings of the Seraphim, see Isa. 6:2, and for the six wings of the fallen seraph, Satan, see Inf. XXXIV, 46. coculla: The gown and hood of a monk, the whole outer garment.

81. s'io m'intuassi, come tu t'inmii: "If I could thou me, as thou meest thee." The verbs are constructed, in the same fashion as that in vs. 73, from tu and mi.
82. *La maggior valle:* The Mediterranean, which was thought to extend from west to east $90^\circ$ or a quarter of the earth’s circumference.

84. *quel mar che la terra inghirlanda:* The great ocean which was thought to surround all the land.

85. *discordanti:* “Inharmonious,” varied. *contra ‘l sole:* “As the opening of the sea is at the west end, it is thought of as stretching from west to east” (Gr).

86–87. *che fa meridiano . . . suole:* “The meridian of any place is a great circle passing through its zenith and nadir and the two celestial poles. The horizon of a place is a great heavenly circle midway between its zenith and its nadir, the plane of the circle being at right angles to that of the meridian. The two circles are, then, $90^\circ$ apart. When the water enters the Mediterranean, at the Strait, its zenith is that of Gibraltar and its horizon traverses the zenith of Jerusalem: but when it reaches the eastern end of the sea, its meridian is that of Jerusalem and its horizon passes through the zenith of Gibraltar” (Gr).

88. *li torano:* “Shore-dweller.”

89–90. *tra Ebro e Macra . . . Toscano:* Between the Spanish river Ebro and the Italian Magra or Macra. Cf. *Inf.* XXIV, 145; *Purg.* VIII, 116. The Magra, which under the Roman Empire, from the time of Augustus, formed the boundary between Liguria and Etruria, in Dante’s day divided the Genoese territory from Tuscany for a relatively short distance (“per cammin corto”).

92. *Buggea:* Bougie, a town in North Africa, in Algeria, on the gulf of the same name. In the Middle Ages it was a very important commercial port, its chief article of export being wax and wax candles, whence the latter came to be known as “bougies.” Bougie is situated about 115 miles east of Algiers and is on almost the same meridian as Marseilles. *la terra:* The city, Marseilles.

93. *che fé del sangue suo già caldo il porto:* In 49 B.C. there
was a fierce naval battle in the harbor of Marseilles between Caesar's fleet and the local supporters of Pompey. See *Purg.* XVIII, 101-2. Also see *Phars.* III, 572-73, where Lucan writes: "Cruor altus in unda / Spumat, et obducti concreto sanguine fluctus." ("Their blood foamed deep upon the wave, and a crust of gore covered the sea.")

94. *Folco:* Folquet de Marseille, famous Provençal troubadour who flourished as a poet from 1180 to 1195, was born *ca.* 1160 and died in 1231. According to the old Provençal biography, he was the son of a rich merchant of Genoa, who bequeathed him a large fortune. Devoting himself to a life of pleasure, Folquet became a frequenter of courts, his special patrons being Richard Cœur de Lion, Alfonso VIII of Castile, Raymond V, count of Toulouse, and Barral de Baux, viscount of Marseilles and lord of the city (1188-92). He attached himself and paid court to the wife of the last, composing songs in her honor, but she appears to have rejected his addresses. After her death and the deaths of the princes whose favor he had enjoyed, Folquet retired from the world and became (*ca.* 1195) a Cistercian monk; he persuaded his wife to enter a convent with their two sons. In 1201 he became an abbot in the diocese of Toulon and in 1205 was appointed bishop of Toulouse. In the latter capacity he was deeply implicated in the sanguinary persecution of the Albigensian heretics (1208-29).

96. *imprenta:* Cf. *Par.* VII, 69. *com' io fe' di lui:* "As I did [i.e., was stamped] with it."


98. *noiando e a Sicheo e a Creusa:* Dido, by her passion for Aeneas, wronged her dead husband, Sichaeus, and Aeneas' dead wife, Creusa.

99. *di me, infin che si convenne al pelo:* "Than I did, as long as it befitted my hair," i.e., until I turned gray.

100-101. *né quella Rodopea ... Demofoonte:* The Thracian princess Phyllis, thinking herself forsaken by her lover

100. *Rodopea*: Pronounced *Rodopéa*. Rhodope is the name of a mountain range on the edge of Thrace near which Phyllis lived.

101–2. *né Alcide . . . rinchiusa*: Alcides was Hercules, grandson of Alcaeus and son of Jupiter and Alcmene. He lost his life as a result of his infatuation for the Thessalian princess Iole. See Ovid, *Heroïdes* IX. Cf. *Inf.* XII, 67-68.

103–5. *Non però . . . provide*: “The memory of sin is removed by Lethe, although the souls, seeing all things in God, have an objective knowledge of their past wickedness, and recognize the eternal fitness of the dispositions originally given them by the stars” (Gr). See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* III, Suppl., q. 87; Augustine, *De civ. Dei* XXII, xxx, 4. See also E. G. Gardner (1913), p. 73.

103. *però* = *perciò*.

105. *valor*: Divine power.

107. *cotanto affetto*: The subject of “addorna” of which “l’arte” is the object. *discernesi = si discerne*. 

*l bene*: The divine goodness.

108. *per che ’l mondo di sù quel di giù torna*: “By reason of which the world below [mankind] again becomes the world above.” A difficult and much discussed line. It should be noted, in favor of this interpretation, that the verb (“torna”) in rhyme must not have the same meaning in the two verses in which it appears (a rule not to be violated). The reference is to the “harvest out of time” which comes about through the turning of the spheres and their influence on human creatures, and this is a result of God’s love (“affetto”); for He, loving Creator that He is, wishes every soul that He creates to return to Him. His providence works through the operation of the spheres on the world below, whence the elect return to Him.

112. *lumera*: "Light."

114. *mera = pure.*

115–16. *Or sappi che . . . Raab*: "The story of Rahab is related in Joshua ii. When Joshua was trying to take Jericho, he sent to the city two spies, who lodged in the house of ‘an harlot named Rahab.’ Their presence becoming known to the enemy, their hostess saved them by sending the pursuers on a false clue, hiding her guests on the roof of the house, and, when the coast was clear, letting them ‘down by a cord through the window, for her house was upon the town wall.’ In return, they promised safety for her and her relatives when Jericho should fall; as a token, she was to ‘bind’ a ‘line of scarlet thread in the window.’ Her service resulted in the victory of the Children of Israel; and when the city was cursed, Joshua proclaimed (vi, 17): ‘Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.’ Thus, too, she won salvation, and, according to Dante, was the first soul ‘assumed’ by the heaven of Venus, when the Hebrew spirits were liberated from Limbus. ‘Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works,’ says James ii, 25, ‘when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way?’ And in Hebrews xi, 31, we read: ‘By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not.’ In the allegorical exposition of the Scriptures, Joshua often figures as a symbol of Christ, while Rahab is sometimes interpreted as the Church, which he saved by the ‘scarlet thread’ of his blood” (Gr).

116–17. *e a nostr’ ordine . . . si sigilla*: “And, she being united to our order, it (the order) is sealed with her in the highest degree.” Rahab is the supreme representative of our order of beatitude” (Gr).

118–19. *Da questo cielo . . . face*: “The earth’s conical shadow reaches the sphere of Venus and touches the planet when Venus is at its least, but not when it is at its greatest, distance from our globe: cf. *Conv.*, II, vi, 10. The shadow,
according to Ptolemy and Alfraganus, is 871,000 miles long” (Gr). See P. Toynbee (1902), pp. 76-77; E. Moore (1903), p. 30. The shadow reaches no farther than Venus, hence it falls only over the first three heavens, wherein are seen spirits who were too much influenced by mundane inclinations.

119–20. *pria ch’altr’ alma . . . assunta:* The triumph of Christ here referred to is His harrowing of Hell (cf. *Inf.* IV, 46-63), when (as we now learn) Rahab was among those who were taken to Heaven by Christ, indeed, was the first to be chosen for such a triumph.

121–22. *Ben si convenne . . . cielo:* “It was indeed fitting to leave her, in some heaven.” This is to be understood symbolically, of course, for Rahab dwells in the Empyrean with all the blessed, but was “left in” (i.e., “assigned to”) the heaven of Venus (cf. *Par.* IV, 28-48) and accordingly has descended with the other souls influenced by this planet to meet the pilgrim on his upward way.

122–23. *l’alta vittoria . . . palma:* Christ’s great victory over Hell by the Crucifixion, when His hands (*palme*) were nailed to the Cross.

124. *favorò = favorì.*

124–25. *la prima gloria . . . Terra Santa:* Joshua was the successor of Moses and conqueror of the land of Canaan.

126. *che poco tocca al papa la memoria:* Which (the Holy Land) is well-nigh forgotten by the pope. This judgment is then repeated in vs. 137.

127–29. *La tua città . . . pianta:* Florence is a “plant” of the devil.

128–29. *che pria . . . pianta:* Satan was the first creature to turn away from God, and in his fallen and evil condition he envied Adam and Eve, causing them to sin—with such lamentable consequences for humankind.

(“But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world.”) Cf. Inf. I, 111.

130. *il maladetto fiore*: The florin, coined by Florence, which was imprinted on one side with the lily.


132. *però che* = *perciò che*. *fatto ha lupo del pastore*: Avidity for riches has turned the pope and ecclesiastics generally into greedy wolves, and they thus set an example for their flock. Cf. Inf. VII, 46-48; Purg. XVI, 100-102.

133. *Per questo*: Because of this greed for riches.

133-35. *Per questo . . . studia*: The decretals are the papal decrees or epistles, usually written in reply to some question of general ecclesiastical law. They form the groundwork of a large part of the law of the Church. A compilation of them, with additions of his own, was issued by Pope Gregory IX in 1234 and, with further additions, by Pope Boniface VIII in 1298 and again, in 1314, by Pope Clement V. Previously, sometime before 1150, Gratian of Bologna had published his *Decretum*, a general collection of canons, papal epistles, and sentences of fathers, in imitation of the *Pandectae*. This work appears to have been the chief authority on the canon law in the Middle Ages. The code of the papal decretals was promulgated as the great statute law of Christendom, superior in its authority to all secular laws. The book of Gregory’s decretals was issued as the authorized text to be used in all courts and schools of law.

The dative “ai Decretali” is used with “si studia,” as with the Latin *studere*, i.e., “men busy themselves about.” The decretals are studied for financial profit. Cf. Dante, *Epist. XI*, 16; *De mon.* III, iii, 9-11.

135. *sì che pare a’ lor vivagi*: As is evident from their margins, full of notes and much worn.

136. *intende*: The verb in the singular serves a double subject.
137–38. Nazarette . . . l’ali: Nazareth, in the Holy Land, scene of the Annunciation, where Gabriel “opened his wings” before Mary, in an attitude of homage which many painters have represented.

139. Vaticano: The Vatican hill at Rome, on the right bank of the Tiber, where St. Peter’s basilica (San Pietro in Vaticano) and the Vatican palace are located. The latter has been the usual residence of the popes ever since the return from Avignon in the latter part of the fourteenth century, the papal residence in Dante’s time having been the Lateran palace. The Vatican hill, as having been the reputed scene of the martyrdom of Peter and of numbers of the early Christians, is held to be the most sacred quarter of all Rome. l’altra parti elette: The holy places of Rome, where the followers of Peter were tortured, slain, and buried.

1-3. *Guardando nel suo Figlio* . . . *Valore*: As almost always in the poem (see the inscription of the gate of Hell, *Inf.* III, 5-6 and the corresponding note), the act of creation is assigned to the triune God, the Trinity, with the familiar names: the Son is Christ, the Love is the Holy Ghost, whereas God the Father is here designated as "the first and ineffable Power." The act of creation is itself an act of love, a "spiration," also termed, in theology, a "procession." See Singleton (1954), pp. 39-41. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 45, a. 6, resp.:

Creare est proprie causare sive producere esse rerum. Cum autem omne agens agat sibi simile, principiun actionis considerari potest ex actionis effectu; ignis enim est qui generat ignem. Et ideo creare convenit Deo secundum suum esse, quod est eius essentia, quae est communis tribus personis. Unde creare non est proprium alicui personae, sed commune toti Trinitati.

Sed tamen divinae personae secundum rationem suae processionis habent causalitatem respectu creationis rerum. Ut enim supra ostensum est, qu. 14, art. 8, et qu. 19, art. 4, cum de Dei scientia et voluntate ageretur, Deus est causa rerum per suum intellectum et voluntatem, sicut artifex rerum artificiarum. Artifex autem
per verbum in intellectu conceptum, et per amorem suae
voluntatis ad aliquid relatum, operatur. Unde et Deus
Pater operatus est creaturam per suum verbum, quod
est Filius, et per suum amorem, qui est Spiritus sanctus.
Et secundum hoc processiones personarum sunt ra­
tiones productionis creaturarum, in quantum includunt
essentialia attributa, quae sunt scientia et voluntas.

To create is, properly speaking, to cause or produce the
being of things. And as every agent produces its like, the
principle of action can be considered from the effect of
the action; for it must be fire that generates fire. And
therefore to create belongs to God according to His be­
ing, that is, His essence, which is common to the three
Persons. Hence to create is not proper to any one Per­
son, but is common to the whole Trinity.

Nevertheless the divine Persons, according to the na­
ture of their procession, have a causality respecting the
creation of things. For as was said above (q. 14, a. 8;
q. 19, a. 4), when treating of the knowledge and will of
God, God is the cause of things by His intellect and will,
just as the craftsman is cause of the things made by his
craft. Now the craftsman works through the word con­
ceived in his mind, and through the love of his will re­
garding some object. Hence also God the Father made
the creature through His Word, which is His Son; and
through His Love, which is the Holy Ghost. And so the
processions of the Persons are the type of the produc­
tions of creatures inasmuch as they include the essential
attributes, knowledge, and will.

2. che l'uno e l'altro etternalmente spira: “L'uno e l'altro”
is the subject and “che” is the object of “spira.” According
to orthodox Roman Catholic faith, the Holy Ghost (or divine
love) emanates from both Father and Son and consists in
their eternal love for each other. Cf. Thomas Aquinas,
Summa theol. I, qq. 36 and 37. “Note the special frequency
of references to the Trinity in this and the next following
cantos. Also the emphasis laid, in line 2, on the procession
of the Holy Ghost from the Son as well as from the Father.

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The *filioque* controversy was one of the chief sources of the alienation between the East and West, which, after widening for centuries, resulted at last in the great schism of 1054 by which the Greek and Latin Churches were severed” (TC).

4. *quanto per mente e per loco si gira*: This phrase is the object of “fé” in vs. 5 and is a statement intended to designate the *totality* of creation, whether conceived by the mind or objectively existing in space.

5. *con tant’ ordine fé*: The celebration of the total order of the universe is indeed a central theme of the *Paradiso* from its first canto to its last.


7. *Leva dunque, lettore*: This invitation to the reader, which extends through vs. 27, is to a “feast of contemplation” of this total order. The first twenty-seven verses of this canto which bears the perfect number ten have quite correctly been viewed by commentators as marking, thematically, a fresh beginning, so that the first nine cantos, which deal with the first three of the heavenly spheres, are an initial subdivision of the *Paradiso*. This is the more fitting, moreover, in that the post of observation to which the reader is invited and from which he is to scan mentally the whole order in its operation is the heaven of the sun, indeed the very sun itself, which symbolically represents intellectual light, or wisdom.

9. *dove l’un moto e l’altro si percuote*: “The ‘two motions’ are the diurnal and the annual revolutions of the sun, represented by the celestial equator and the celestial ecliptic. They ‘strike,’ or cross, each other at Aries, in which constellation the sun is at the time of Dante’s journey” (Gr).


11–12. *quel maestro . . . parte*: God the creator who lovingly sustains His creation and its admirable operation, seeing it perpetually, and first of all, within Himself.
Like the "lei" in the next verse, this stands for the "arte" of vs. 10.

Vedi come . . . porta: At Aries the ecliptic slants across the equator.

si dirama: "Branches."

oblico = obliquo. pianeti: The seven planets move through the signs of the zodiac, and thus their influence is properly distributed and modified.

Chiama: "Invokes," i.e., needs.

Che se la strada . . . morta: If the ecliptic, or zodiac, were not thus slanting, the solar and stellar influence could not operate as it does. Cf. Dante, Conv. III, v, 13-14, 21. There would be no seasons, and hence no generation.

torta: I.e., obliqua.

e se dal dritto . . . mondano: "If the obliquity of the ecliptic were greater or less, the succession of the seasons would not be so effective on the part of the globe where there is land" (Gr). Cf. Ristoro d'Arezzo, Della comp. II, 3.

manco = manchevole.


riman: Imperative.

si preliba: "Is foretasted." Cf. Par. XXIV, 4, where the same familiar metaphor is again used in the context of an intellectual "banquet." Also see Dante, De vulg. eloqu. I, iv, 5.

Messo t'ho innanzi: Mettere sustains the metaphor of eating at table, since it was frequently used in this sense in early Italian. Cf. Boccaccio, Decam. I, 5 (vol. I, p. 52, l. 18).

ti ciba: Imperative.

quella materia ond' io son fatto scriba: The "matter" is the very journey with Beatrice which is always given as a real event of which the poet is not the inventor, but (as under-
scored here) the “scribe.” scriba = scrivano. “Scriba” is a Latinism.

28. **Lo ministro maggior de la natura:** The proem of twenty-seven verses (see n. to vs. 7) being completed, the new beginning is in the name of the sun, now termed “the greatest minister,” the planet in which the wayfarer finds himself with Beatrice. Cf. Gen. 1:16: “Fecitque Deus duo luminaria magna: luminare maius ut praesset diei, et luminare minus ut praesset nocti, et stellas.” (“God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the smaller one to rule the night, and he made the stars.”)

29. **che del valor del ciel lo mondo imprenta:** The downward transmission of this “valor” through the planets is set forth in Par. II, 112-48.

30. **ne = ci.**

31. **quella parte:** Aries. sù: Vss. 8-9. si rammenta: “Is mentioned.”

32–33. **si girava . . . s'appresenta:** “The sun’s apparent course around the earth, from day to day, is spiral. In the spring season it rises every day farther north and earlier than the day before” (Gr).

32. **spire = spirali.**

35–36. **se non com' . . . venire:** “Any more than one perceives the coming of a thought before it begins.” “Del suo venire” depends on “s’accorge.”

36. **suo:** “Its,” the thought’s.

37. **scorge:** “Guides.” See Purg. XVII, 18, and cf. the noun scorta (“guide”) passim.

38. **di bene in meglio:** The first three heavens were a “bene,” but the heaven of the sun is certainly a “meglio,” in every respect. The journey now passes beyond the earth’s shadow and directly into the greatest luminary of all, the sun itself.

39. **per tempo non si sporge:** “Has no extension in time.”
41–42. *era dentro al sol . . . parvente*: The souls of the wise (*sapienti*) are brighter than the sun. See Dan. 12:3: “Qui autem docti fuerint fulgebunt quasi splendor firmamenti.” ("But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.") See also Matt. 13:43: “Tunc iusti fulgebunt sicut sol in regno Patris eorum.” ("Then the just will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.")

*Docti* is, in fact, the proper name, along with that of *sapienti*, for the souls who now appear in the sun to greet Dante. They are “quel ch’era dentro al sol.” “Era . . . parvente” means “was manifest.”

41. *entra’mi = mi entra*, the pronoun being the distancing reflexive frequently noticed before.


45. *puossi = si può. di veder si brami*: “‘Let men long to see it!’ Let them make themselves fit for Heaven” (Gr).

46. *le fantasie nostre*: “Our powers of imagination” which, in this life, receive images through the senses; but our sense of sight knows no brighter light than that of the sun, as stated in vs. 48.

49–51. *Tal era . . . figlia*: To the “fourth family,” the *sapienti* who now present themselves in the sun, it is given to contemplate the mode of God’s spiration and how the Son is generated by the Father, i.e., the greatest mystery of the Christian faith, the Trinity, in its operation, as set forth in the verses that open this canto. The central presence of trinitarian imagery will be noted in the poet’s account of his experience in the heaven of the sun.

53. *il Sol de li angeli*: God. See Conv. III, xii, 7, where Dante writes:

*Nullo sensibile in tutto lo mondo è più degno di farsi esempio di Dio che’l sole. Lo quale di sensibile luce sé prima e poi tutte le corpora celestiali e le elementali allumina: così Dio prima sé con luce intellettuale allumina, e poi le [creature] celestiali e l’altre intelligibili.*
No object of sense in all the universe is more worthy to be made the symbol of God than the sun, which enlightens, with the light of sense, itself first, and then all the celestial and elemental bodies; and in like manner God illuminates first himself with intellectual light and then the celestial and other creatures accessible to the intellect.

53–54. ch’ a questo sensibil: That is, sole sensibile, i.e., this sun which we perceive with our senses.

55. digesto: “Disposed.”

57. gradir: “Grateful assent.”

59. lui: God.

60. eclissò: An eclipse now within the sun!

61. se ne rise: “Rejoiced at this.”

63. mia mente unita in più cose divise: “‘Divided among many things my mind, which was concentrated on one.’ The blessed souls are revealed again” (Gr).

64. vincenti: I.e., surpassing the light of the sun.

65. far di noi centro e di sé far corona: Beatrice, who in allegory is Sapientia, is now surrounded and “crowned,” as it were, by this circle of the sapienti, and such will the configuration remain with two other crowns later joining this first one, thus celebrating, by their number, the Trinity.

67–68. così cinger . . . talvolta: Latona’s daughter is Diana, the Moon. Sometimes, in moist weather, we see the moon “girdled” with a shining halo. Cf. Purg. XXIX, 78.

69. il fil che fa la zona: The “thread” which makes the belt (zona) is the light from the moon.

70. Ne la corte del cielo: Cf. Inf. II, 125.

71. gioie: “Jewels.” “Torraca cites from Marco Polo a couple of passages describing eastern countries whose rulers will
not allow the rubies and pearls, which abound there, to be ‘taken out of the kingdom’” (Gr).

74-75. *chi non s’impenna . . . novelle*: Cf. Purg. X, 125; XII, 95. “Wings” and “acquiring wings” for the upward flight apply in metaphor to such a flight now in contemplation, i.e., to an experience similar to the one the wayfarer Dante is having. There is no point in anyone’s awaiting word from one who has had such an experience and returns to the world of the living since he must be “mute” about certain ineffable things seen and heard there.

76. *Poi* = *poi che*, “when.”

77. *fuor* = *furono*. *tre volte*: Again the number of the Trinity.

78. *come stelle vicine a’ fermi poli*: Beatrice and Dante at the center of this round dance are the “fixed poles,” but the dance is primarily in honor of Beatrice, for she is Sapientia, and these are sapienti.

79-81. *donne mi parver . . . ricolte*: In the *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana* N.S. IV (1897), p. 180 there is the following quotation from V. Borghini, who describes the customary dance done by women singing a *ballata* (dance song):

Dimostra l’uso delle ballate, nelle quali quella che guida il canto dice la prima stanza stando ferma; la qual finita, il ballo tutto, volgendosi, la replica cantando, e finita, si ferma; e la madonna della canzone pur ferma dice la stanza nuova, la quale finisce nella rima della prima, e subito finita, il ballo si muove in cerchio, cantando pur la stanza che si chiama il ritornello.

He represents the customary manner of dancing to a *ballata*, in which the lady who leads the song recites the first stanza [the *ripresta* or *ritornello*], standing still; when she has done this, the entire group of dancers moves in a round dance, repeating the stanza, and when finished, stops; then the lady of the song [i.e., who first began the song], again standing still, sings the next
stanza, which ends rhyming with the first whereupon the group again does a round dance, singing again the stanza called ritornello.

The ladies hold one another by the hand. The phrase “non da ballo sciolte” catches the dance at the moment when the group, still in dance formation, awaits the end of the leader’s singing of the stanza (“le nove note”) in order to resume their round dance. A simile bringing to mind such a scene, familiar to any contemporary reader of the poem, serves to humanize the imagery of the Paradiso in a notable manner: for clearly souls that are only bright lights do not exactly resemble dancing ladies.

82. Quando: “Since.”

84. verace amore: Love of God.

86. quella scala: The ladder of contemplation, a figure which appears elsewhere in the Paradiso. Cf. Par. XXII, 68-74.

87. u' = ove. u' senza risalir nessun discende: “Here is a distinct promise of Dante’s ultimate salvation. Cf. Purg. II, 91-92” (Gr).

88. qual ti negasse il vin de la sua fiala: “Whichever one of us should refuse to pour of his wine to quench your thirst,” i.e., to know who these souls are.

89. fora = sarebbe.

90. se non com': “‘Any more than.’ It would be as unnatural for one of these souls to refuse to satisfy Dante, as it would be for water not to run downhill” (Gr).

91-93. Tu vuo' saper . . . t'avvalora: Dante’s “thirst” is now clearly stated, and what was a “crown” of lights now becomes a “garland” for Beatrice. “Vagheggia” belongs to amatory parlance. These, we learn, were and are sapienti and appropriately garland Beatrice, whose name in allegory is Sapientia. (See C. S. Singleton, 1958, pp. 122-38.) But her other name is Sanctifying Grace, and as such she also “uplifts” to Heaven, having descended from there.
94. agni = agnelli. santa greggia: The Dominican order.

95. Domenico: St. Dominic, whose life is recounted in Par. XII, 46-105. See n. to Par. XII, 55-56.

96. u' ben s'impingua se non si vaneggia: “The speaker, St. Thomas Aquinas, who belonged to the Dominican order, declares that St. Dominic led his flock over a road where the sheep ‘fatten well, if they do not stray,’ i.e., they have abundance of spiritual food, as long as they adhere to his rule. This expression calls for an explanation in the next canto” (Gr). Cf. Prov. 11:25: “Anima quae benedicit impinguabitur.” (“He who confers benefits will be made fat.”)

97-98. Questi che m'è . . . fummi: Thomas' “brother and master” is to his right in the circle.

98. fummi = mi fu.

98-99. ed esso Alberto è di Cologna: Albert of Cologne, now St. Albert (canonized 1932), better known as Albertus Magnus. Named Doctor Universalis on account of his vast learning, he was born of noble parents at Lauingen on the Danube in Swabia between 1193 and 1206. After studying at Padua, he joined the Dominican order in 1223 and under its rules studied theology at Bologna and elsewhere. Subsequently he was appointed to lecture at Cologne, where the order had a house, and he taught for several years there and at Regensburg, Freiburg, Strasbourg, Hildesheim, and Paris. Among his pupils was Thomas Aquinas; in 1248 Albertus returned to Cologne with Thomas Aquinas. In 1254 he was elected provincial of the Dominican order at Worms, and in 1260 he was appointed bishop of Regensburg. Sometime after 1262 he retired to Cologne, where he died, November 15, 1280.

Albertus was a most voluminous writer, his collected works (printed at Lyons in 1651) filling twenty-one folio volumes. Six are devoted to commentaries on Aristotle, five on the Scriptures, two on Dionysius the Areopagite, three on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, the remaining five containing his Summa theologica, Summa de creaturis, a treatise on
the Virgin, and various opuscula, one of which is on alchemy. Albertus was the earliest among the Latins, as Avicenna had been among the Arabs, to make known the complete doctrine of Aristotle; he wrote not merely commentaries, but paraphrases and illustrative treatises on each of Aristotle's works.

99. *Thomas d'Aquino*: Thomas Aquinas, the famous scholastic theologian and philosopher, who was of noble descent and closely allied to several of the royal houses of Europe, was born in 1225 or 1226 at Roccasecca, the castle of his father, the count of Aquino, in northwest Campania. He received his early education at the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, which was close to his home, and he afterwards studied for six years at the University of Naples, which he left at the age of sixteen. In 1243-44, in spite of the opposition of his family (which was only overcome by the intervention of Pope Innocent IV), he became a Dominican and shortly after was sent to study under Albertus Magnus at Cologne. In 1245 he accompanied Albertus to Paris and remained with him there for three years, during which he took a prominent part in the controversy between the university and the Begging Friars as to the liberty of teaching, being chosen to defend his order against the famous Guillaume de Saint-Amour, the champion of the university, whom he successfully confuted. In 1248 he returned with Albertus to Cologne, where he began his career as a teacher. In 1257 he became doctor of theology at the Sorbonne (at the same time as his friend Bonaventura) and began to lecture on that subject in Paris, where he speedily acquired a great reputation. In 1263 he attended a chapter of the Dominican order in London; five years later he was lecturing in Rome and Bologna; and in 1271 he was again in Paris, lecturing and at the same time busied with the affairs of the Church and acting as adviser to his kinsman, Louis VIII. In 1272 he returned to his native country, at the instance of Charles of Anjou, to assume the office of professor at the University of Naples, having previously refused the archbishopric of Naples and the abbacy of Monte Cassino. In January 1274 he was sum-
moned by Gregory X to attend the Council of Lyons, which had been called in the hope of bringing about a union of the Greek and Latin Churches. Though ill at the time, he set out on the journey, but died, after lingering for some weeks at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanova, near Terracina on the borders of Campania and Latium, March 7, 1274, a groundless suspicion being entertained that he had been poisoned at the instance of King Charles (Dante mentions Aquinas in this connection in *Purg.* XX, 69). Within fifty years of his death, Thomas Aquinas, who during his lifetime had been known as the Angelic Doctor, was canonized by Pope John XXII (in 1323, two years after Dante’s death).

In allowing Aquinas to be spokesman for the first garland of lights Dante has given him the most prominent place there, even though Aquinas himself politely defers to Albertus.

101. *ten vien* = *vientene* (imperative).

102. *serto*: “Wreath.”

104. *Grazian*: Gratian (Franciscus Gratianus), founder of the science of canon law, was born about the end of the eleventh century at Chiusi in Tuscany (or, according to some, at Carraria near Orvieto). In early life he appears to have become a Benedictine monk and to have entered the Camaldolese monastery of Classe near Ravenna, whence he afterwards removed to that of San Felice at Bologna. Here he spent many years in the preparation of his great work, the celebrated *Concordia discordantium canonum*, better known as the *Decretum Gratiani*, which was completed before 1150. In this work, which forms the first part of the *Corpus iuris canonici* and which he compiled from the Holy Scriptures, the canons of the apostles and of the councils, the decretals of the popes, and the writings of the fathers, Gratian brought into agreement the laws of the ecclesiastical and secular courts.

107. *Pietro*: Peter Lombard, otherwise known as Magister Sententiarum (from the title of his work *Sententiarum libri*
quatuor), was born near Novara, in what is now Piedmont but formerly was part of Lombardy, ca. 1100. He studied first at Bologna and then at Paris, where he was sent with letters from Bernard of Clairvaux. After holding a theological chair at Paris for many years, he was in 1159 appointed bishop of Paris, but died shortly after, either in 1160 or 1164. He is said to have been a pupil of Abelard at one time. He was also, together with Richard of St. Victor, a pupil of the celebrated Hugh of St. Victor. Peter Lombard's best known work, the Libri sententiarum quatuor, is, as its name implies, primarily a collection of the "sentences," i.e., the opinions of the Fathers. These are distributed into four books, of which the first treats of the Godhead, the second of creation and the creature, the third of the Incarnation and redemption, the fourth of the seven sacraments and eschatology. It attained immense popularity and became the favorite textbook in the theological schools and the subject of innumerable commentaries. che con la poverella: Here the allusion is to the opening sentence in the preface of his book, which he presents, like the widow's mite (Luc. 21:2), as a humble offering to God: "Cupientes aliquid de penuria ac tenuitate nostra cum paupercula in gazophylacium Domini mittere." ("Desiring to contribute somewhat of our poverty and our little store [of knowledge] to the treasury of the Lord, as did the poor widow [her two mites].")

109-10. La quinta luce . . . amor: The "fifth light," that of Solomon, is the "most beautiful" of all the circle, since it comes from the love which phrased the Song of Solomon (Canticle of Canticles), the epithalamium of Christ and Church. He revealed truth in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

111. gola: "Is greedy." novella: "News," concerning its fate. Some theologians maintained, as did Jerome, that Solomon was saved, while others maintained, as did Augustine, that he was damned. See III Reg. 11:4-12.

112-14. entro v'è . . . secondo: See III Reg. 3:12: "Dediti cor sapiens et intelligens, in tantum ut nullus ante te similis tui fuerit nec post te surrecturus sit." ("[I] have given thee
a wise and understanding heart; insomuch that there hath been no one like thee before thee, nor shall arise after thee.”)

“It is apparent that the phrase ‘no second ever rose,’ in l. 114, has raised in Dante’s mind a question which is answered in Canto XIII” (Gr).

115–17. il lume di quel cero . . . ministero: “The ‘candle’ is Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Paul’s convert in Athens (Acts xvii, 34), to whom was ascribed a Neoplatonic work of the 5th or 6th century, called De Caelesti Hierarchia, the great authority on the orders of the angels, their nature, their functions, and their relation to the heavens. Cf. XXVIII, 130-139; also Letter to Can Grande [Epist. XIII, 60]” (Gr).

118–20. Ne l’altra piccioletta luce . . . provide: Since this light is not actually named, the commentators have varied in their identification of it, but most would still seem to hold that it must be the spirit of Paulus Orosius, the historian. Orosius was a Spanish priest, born towards the end of the fourth century. He visited Augustine at Hippo in 413 or 414, and, after staying for a time in Africa as his disciple, he was sent by Augustine, in 415, to Jerome in Palestine. After attending a synod at Jerusalem, at which he arraigned Pelagius for heresy, he returned to North Africa, where he is believed to have died—the date of his death is unknown. His best-known work is the Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, written at the suggestion of Augustine (to whom it was dedicated and to whose De civitate Dei it was intended to be subsidiary) to prove by the evidence of history that the condition of the world had not grown worse since the introduction of Christianity, as the pagans asserted. This work, which attained a wide popularity, was translated into Anglo-Saxon (in a free and abridged version) by Alfred the Great and into Italian (towards the beginning of the fourteenth century) by Bono Giamboni.

121. tranì: From tranare, trainare, “to draw.”


125. l’anima santa: The soul of Boethius (Anicius Manlius
Severinus Boethius), Roman statesman and philosopher, who was born at Rome ca. 480 and died at Pavia (Ticinum) in 524. Gibbon (1908, pp. 197-98) describes him as “the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman.” His father, Flavius Manlius Boethius, was consul in 487 and died soon after. As a wealthy orphan Boethius inherited the patrimony and honors of the Anician family and was educated under the care of the chief men at Rome. He also studied at Athens and translated or commented on the geometry of Euclid, the music of Pythagoras, the arithmetic of Nicomachus, the mechanics of Archimedes, the astronomy of Ptolemy, the theology of Plato, and the logic of Aristotle, with the commentary of Porphyry. To his works was due to a great extent the knowledge of Aristotle up to the thirteenth century. He was no less distinguished for his virtue than for his learning, and he was always ready to relieve the poor and oppressed. He married Rusticiana, daughter of the senator Symmachus, by whom he had two sons. From Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, who was then master of Italy, he received the title of patrician while still a youth, and in 510 he was made consul, an honor which twelve years later (522) was conferred upon his two sons. But his good fortune did not last; his powerful position and bold maintenance of justice aroused jealousy and hatred, and he was accused by his enemies of plotting against Theodoric. The king, believing him guilty, threw him into prison at Pavia, while the senate without a trial passed a sentence against him of confiscation and death. After he had spent some time in prison he was put to death by torture, a cord being fastened round his head and tightened until his eyes were forced from their sockets; he was then beaten with clubs until he expired. He was buried in the church of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro, where in 722 a tomb was erected to his memory by Liutprand, king of the Lombards; this was replaced in 990 by a more magnificent one erected by the Emperor Otto III, for which Pope Sylvester II wrote an inscription. The church was reconstructed in the twelfth century, and restored in 1899; behind the altar in the crypt is a small marble sarcophagus of the sixth century in Ravennate style,
in which the bones of Boethius have been preserved since 1923; below it is an inscription in Latin elegiacs. It was during his imprisonment at Pavia that Boethius wrote his most celebrated work, the *De consolatione philosophiae*. In the Middle Ages Boethius was regarded as a martyr who died in defense of the Christian faith. He is known in the Church as St. Severinus. Boethius is frequently mentioned by Dante in his prose works (for the references see P. Toynbee, 1968, p. 102). See the *Enciclopedia dantesca* under the entry “Boezio.”

128. *Ciel dauro*: The basilica of San Pietro in Ciel d’Oro (“with the golden ceiling”) in Pavia (see n. to vs. 125).

131. *Isidoro*: Isidorus Hispalensis, St. Isidore of Seville, a learned Spaniard, was one of the most influential writers of the early Middle Ages and a father of the Western Church. He was the son of a wealthy and distinguished native of Cartagena, where he was born *ca.* 570. His elder brother Leander was archbishop of Seville, in which dignity Isidore succeeded him in 600; he died at Seville in 636. He devoted himself to the conversion of the Visigoths from Arianism and wrote many works, the most important of which were the *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, a widely used encyclopedia of the scientific knowledge of the age, the *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, and the *Libri sententiarum*. Brunetto Latini made extensive use of the *Etymologies* in certain portions of his *Tresor*. Isidore completed the Mozarabic missal and breviary, which had been begun by his brother Leander. He followed Boethius in his treatment of logic, as he himself was followed by Bede.

*Beda*: The Venerable Bede, Anglo-Saxon monk, the father of English history, and most eminent writer of his age, was born *ca.* 673, at Monkwearmouth, near Wearmouth (modern Sunderland) in the northeast of county Durham. At the age of seven he was received into the monastery at Wearmouth, where he was educated. In his nineteenth year he was ordained deacon, and in his thirtieth he became priest. After three years at Wearmouth he removed to the newly founded monastery at Jarrow, where he spent the rest of his life in
study and writing and where he died in 735. He was the author of a large number of works, chiefly ecclesiastical, the most important being his ecclesiastical history of England (Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum) in five books, which he brought down to 731, within four years of his death. He was made doctor of the Church by Pope Leo XIII in 1899.

131–32. Riccardo . . . viro: Richard of St. Victor, said to be a native of Scotland, was a celebrated scholastic philosopher and theologian and chief of the mystics of the twelfth century. He studied at the University of Paris, where he became one of the canons-regular of the Augustinian monastery of St. Victor, of which he was appointed sub-prior in 1159 and prior in 1162. He was, with Peter Lombard, a pupil of the famous Hugh of St. Victor and a friend of Bernard of Clairvaux, to whom several of his works are dedicated. He died at St. Victor in 1173. His writings, which are freely quoted by Thomas Aquinas, consist of commentaries on parts of the Old Testament, Paul's Epistles, and the Apocalypse, as well as of works on moral and dogmatic subjects and on mystical contemplation, the last of which earned him the title of Magnus Contemplator, which Dante's phrase "più che viro" ("more than man") seems to echo.

132. più che viro: Cf. "trasumanar" in Par. I, 70 and the context in which it is used, and see the notes to vss. 67-69 and 70 of that canto. Richard is said to go beyond the human measure in the same sense of contemplation and is so referred to in Dante's Letter to Can Grande (Epist. XIII, 80), where his work on contemplation is cited. viro: A Latinism.

133. Questi onde a me ritorna il tuo riguardo: The twelfth light to be named completes the circle. riguardo = sguardo.

134–35. 'n pensieri gravi: "Immersed in deep problems."

135. a morir li parve venir tardo: "Thought that he was moving too slowly toward death."—He was eager to reach Heaven, where his questions might be answered" (Gr).

li = gli.
136. Sigieri: Siger de Brabant was professor of the University of Paris in the thirteenth century, but little is known about him (see the bibliographies on him in P. Toynbee, 1968, p. 576, and the Enciclopedia dantesca under the entry "Sigieri"). It is clear that Siger took a prominent part in the violent disputes which arose between the lay members of the University of Paris and the friars of the mendicant orders concerning the teaching of Aristotle's philosophy. In 1266 he and Guillaume de Saint-Amour were publicly refuted by Thomas Aquinas, the champion of the Dominicans. He was no doubt one of those at whom, in 1270, a general condemnation of Averroism was aimed, and in 1277 the famous list of condemned propositions issued by Bishop Étienne Tempier was certainly directed at him and his colleague Boethius of Dacia. Finding himself excommunicated thereby, Siger appears to have fled to Rome to appeal to the jurisdiction of the pope, for by October 23, 1277, when he was cited to appear before the tribunal by the inquisitor Simon du Val, he had already escaped. The exact date of Siger's death is uncertain, but he is believed to have been stabbed to death by a demented servant, at Orvieto, between 1281 and 1284.

137. leggendo nel Vico de li Strami: Siger lectured in the Latin Quarter, in the Rue du Fouarre (Straw Street). It is now called Rue Dante.


139. ne = ci. chiami: "Calls," "awakens." This is a hypothetical subjunctive.

140. ne l'ora: At dawn, the hour of Matins. la sposa di Dio: The Church, the traditional epithet in connection with the sposo, who is Christ.

141. a mattinar lo sposo perché l'ami: Literally, given the context, "mattinar" means "to sing matins." But the phrase "perché l'ami" brings out a meaning which that verb had in amorous secular usage, namely "to court" by singing mattinate beneath the window of the beloved.
142. che = in cui.

144. turge: “Swells” (with the love of God).

146. tempra: “Modulation.”

147. pò = pud.

148. s’insempra: A word coined by Dante from sempre.
1. *cura*: “Concerns.”

2. *difettivi silogismi*: “False reasonings.”

3. *in basso batter l’ali*: Again the familiar metaphor, implying the upward flight of contemplation and concern for heavenly things, which men forget to engage in, even though they have the “wings” to do so, here and now in this life. Cf. *Purg.* XII, 95-96.

4. *iura*: “Law,” the study of law, both civil and canonical. “*Iura*” is a Latinism. *amforismi = aforismi*, i.e., the study of medicine, so referred to because the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates served as a textbook of medicine. The *Aphorisms* attributed to Hippocrates comprised one of the chief medical authorities in the Middle Ages. Galen wrote a commentary upon them which, with the *Aphorisms* themselves, was translated into Latin from an Arabic version in the eleventh century. Benvenuto defines an aphorism as a “maxima in medicina” (“maxim in medicine”).

5. *sacerdozio*: “Priesthood,” or the studies which lead to it.

6–7. *e chi regnar . . . rubare*: “Regnar” and “rubare” are objects of “seguendo” in vs. 5, as are the other activities named.
6. *per sofismi*: "By trickery," "by deception." Both "*per forza*" and "*per sofismi*" can bring to mind what Guido da Montefeltro said of himself in Hell ("l'opere mie / non furon leonine, ma di volpe," *Inf.* XXVII, 74-75), which reflects the same two notions of violence and fraud.

10-12. *quando, da tutte queste cose . . . accolto*: The contemplative life guided by wisdom and the lofty heights to which it can attain (even to the heaven of the sun, which symbolizes wisdom itself) has uplifted the wayfarer and placed him "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," and now in memory he exults over this.

11. *mi'era*: The use of the so-called pleonastic reflexive here is an excellent example of its distancing function. Cf. *Inf.* VII, 94 and *passim*.


15. *fermossi = si fermò. come a candellier candelo*: The image suggests a circular chandelier seen when it is motionless, with each of the candles set into its place. *candelo = candelas*.

16. *quella lumera*: The light is the soul of Thomas Aquinas.


21. *li tuoi pensieri onde cagioni apprendo*: "I apprehend whence you derive your thoughts," i.e., what occasions them in you. Thus Thomas, seeing Dante's thoughts by gazing into God's light, can formulate them.

22. *Tu dubbi = tu dubiti. si ricerna*: Subjunctive of *ricernere*, "to re-explain," by distinguishing (cf. vs. 27). Through its derivation from the Latin *cernere*, the verb can suggest "sifting," in this case "resifting." The subject is "lo dicer mio" in vs. 24.

24. *si sterna*: A Latinism, here in the subjunctive, from
‘sternere, in the sense of “to spread something out flat,” “to level.” In the reflexive form here it means “to be leveled,” i.e., “made plainer.”


26. Non nacque il secondo: The verb has been changed here from the “surse” of Par. X, 114, to “nacque.”

28–30. La provedenza . . . fondo: Thomas begins his clarification of the first “problem” with verses which restate the central theme of the Paradiso.

29. quel consiglio: God’s counsel.

29–30. ogne aspetto creato: The sight of every angel and every man, his intellect or capacity to understand. Cf. Par. VII, 94–95; XXI, 94–96. Also see Purg. III, 34-37.

31. però che = perciò che, “in order that.” andasse: The subject is “sposa” in vs. 32. lo suo diletto: Christ, the Bridegroom.


33. disposò lei col sangue benedetto: Christ wedded the Church with his blood, on the Cross.

34. in sé sicura e anche a lui più fida: Both phrases depend on “andasse,” vs. 31.

35. principi: Pronounced principi. The two “princes,” as we are to learn, are St. Francis and St. Dominic. ordinò: “Instituted.” Cf. Inf. VII, 78. in suo favore: “In her behalf.”

37. L’un fu tutto serafico in ardore: St. Francis, called “seraphic” because the Seraphim, the highest order of angels,
2. The location of Assisi
CANTO XI

represent love (they are conceived to be of the color of fire which is the color of love). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 63, a. 7, ad 1: “Seraphim autem interpretatur ardentes, sive incendentes.” (“While Seraphim means those who are on fire, or who set on fire.”)


40. *un:* St. Francis.

40–41. *però che . . . prende:* We describe both by praising one, whichever one we choose.

42. *ad un fine:* “To one end.” *sue:* “Their.”

43–51. *Intra Tupino . . . Gange:* These verses locate Assisi, where Francis was born. Assisi is situated between the river Topino and the Chiascio, which runs into it below. The Topino empties into the Tiber. (See Map 2, facing p. 196.)

44. *del colle eletto dal beato Ubaldo:* On the hill, in the vicinity of Gubbio, from which the Chiascio river flows, St. Ubald had his hermitage, before he became bishop of Gubbio. He died in 1160.

45. *fertile costa d’alto monte pende:* The west slope of Monte Subasio, facing Perugia, is less steep than the other side.

46–48. *onde Perugia . . . Gualdo:* “The gate called Porta Sole is on the side of Perugia nearest to Subasio. The town feels the effect of the summer sun and the winter snow on the mountain. East of the range to which Subasio belongs are the little towns of Nocera and Gualdo, which ‘weep because of the heavy mountain chain’ of the Apennines on their east. The Monte di Nocera may be seen, from Porta Sole, covered with snow in mid-April” (Gr).
50. *rattezza*: "Steepness" (cf. the description in *Purg.* XII, 103). Assisi lies on a spur of the mountain. *sole*: "Even before Dante, St. Francis had been called a Sun, a traditional appellation with the Franciscans" (Gr).

51. *come fa questo talvolta di Gange*: The "questo" is the real sun, where Dante now is. The sun rises from the Ganges, due east from Jerusalem, at the vernal equinox.

52-54. *Però chi . . . vuole*: The spot from which this new sun rose should be called Orient, or Dayspring. See Luc. 1:78: "Visitavit nos orien ex alto." ("The Dayspring from on high has visited us.") Cf. Zach. 3:8, "adducam servum meum Orientem" ("I will bring my servant the Orient") and Zach. 6:12, "ecce vir Oriens nomen eius" ("behold a man, the Orient is his name"). "The usual form of the name Assisi, in the Tuscan of Dante's day, was *Ascesi*, which may be interpreted as meaning 'I have risen.' While this is suggestive of dayspring, it is inadequate (corto): 'Orient' is the only fit word" (Gr). See Bonaventura (*Legenda sancti Francisci, Prologus 1*), who applies to Francis the words of Apoc. 7:2: "Vidi alterum angelum ascendente ab ortu solis." ("I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun.")

55. *orto*: The term keeps the simile of a rising sun (see preceding note), but here signifies "birth."

56-57. *ch'el cominciò . . . conforto*: The terms "virtute" and "conforto" keep to the metaphor of the sun.

58-59. *ché per tal donna . . . corse*: Francis was about twenty-four when he began to woo Poverty ("tal donna"). For this "war with his father" and other details of Francis' life, see n. to vs. 74.

59-60. *a cui . . . diserra*: To which lady (Poverty, as is made clear in vs. 74) no one willingly opens—i.e., unlocks—the door, any more than anyone welcomes death. The phrase "porta del piacer" as referring to the will is made somewhat clearer through the use of this same metaphor by Virgil in his words to Dante in the discussion of love and free will at the
center of the poem (Purg. XVIII, 61-63), where the will is said to hold the "threshold of assent."

61. *corte*: The episcopal court of Assisi.

62. *coram patre*: For the phrase "coram patre," which is from the Bible, see Matt. 10:33: "coram Patre meo" ("before my Father"). *le si fece unito*: E. G. Gardner (1913, p. 233) notes that the conception of the mystical marriage with Poverty is indicated only slightly by Tommaso da Celano and Bonaventura.


65-66. *millecent' anni e più... invito*: From Christ to Francis no one had cared for Poverty.

66. *si stette*: This is again the reflexive in its distancing—here "isolating"—function.

67-69. *né valse udir... paura*: "‘And it availed not that men heard how he who terrified the whole world (Caesar) found her, with Amyclas (a poor fisherman), fearless at the sound of his voice.' See Phars., V, 515-531. Amyclas, who had nothing to lose, was not afraid when Caesar knocked at his door; he was 'securus belli'—fearless of war. But even this example of the advantages of indigence—upon which Lucan moralizes (cf. Conv., IV, xiii, 12)—did not make Poverty seem desirable" (Gr).

70. *feroce*: "Fearless."

71-72. *dove Maria... croce*: "When even Mary had to remain at the foot of the cross, Poverty accompanied her Spouse: Christ's raiment was taken from him" (Gr). See Mar. 15:24: "Et crucifigentes eum divisert vestimenta eius, mittentes sortem super eis, quis quid tolleret." ("Then they crucified him, and divided his garments, casting lots for them to see what each should take.")

72. *pianse*: Some texts have "salse" for "pianse." On this variant, see Petrocchi.
PARADISO

74. Francesco: St. Francis of Assisi (Giovanni Francesco Bernardone), son of Pietro di Bernardone, a wool-merchant of Assisi, was born in 1181 or 1182 and died in 1226. In his youth he was given up to a life of pleasure and prodigality, but was always open-handed to the poor. On one occasion at least he bore arms, for he was taken prisoner in a skirmish between Assisi and Perugia. When he was about twenty he was seized with a severe illness, which gave his thoughts a serious turn; and after a second illness at Spoleto (ca. 1206), while he was on his way to join a military expedition, he determined to devote himself to a religious life.

Vowing himself to poverty, which he spoke of as his bride, Francis renounced every sort of worldly goods, including even his clothes, which he stripped off in the presence of the bishop, to whom his enraged father had appealed for the protection of his property. Two or three years after this, he heard one day in church the injunction of Christ to His apostles (Matt. 10:9-10): "Nolite possidere aurum, neque argentum, neque pecuniam in zonis vestris, non peram in via, neque duas tunicas, neque calceamenta, neque virgam." ("Do not keep gold, or silver, or money in your girdles, nor wallet for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staff.") He cast aside shoes, staff, and girdle and girt himself with a cord, which subsequently became the distinguishing mark of his order, sometimes known as the Cordeliers. He soon began to gather followers around him, whom he sent forth to preach, and in 1209 he drew up the rules of his order, the members of which were called Friars Minor in token of humility. The order first received the verbal sanction of Innocent III.

In 1212 Francis was presented by the Benedictines of Monte Subasio with the little church of the Porziuncola (Santa Maria degli Angeli) in the vicinity of Assisi, which became the home of his order, and in the same year the first order of nuns was founded by St. Clare under his direction. In 1219 he went to Egypt with the object of converting the sultan and preached to him in his camp before Damietta, but without success. On his return he founded (in 1221) his tertiary order of penitents of both sexes; and in 1223 his order
was solemnly confirmed by a bull of Honorius III. In 1224, in the solitude of Monte della Verna in the Apennines, he received in a vision the stigmata, or marks of the Crucifixion, in his hands, feet, and side. After two years of great bodily suffering he died near Assisi, October 4, 1226. His body was laid first in the cathedral of Assisi, but was claimed four years later by the brethren of his order and removed to their church outside the walls. He was canonized in 1228 by Gregory IX, who appointed October 4, the date of his death, to be observed as his festival.

Lives of St. Francis were written within a few years of his death; one of the best known is that by Bonaventura, who as an infant had been miraculously healed by him. This and the one by Tommaso da Celano were the chief sources of Dante's information as to the details of the life of the saint.

74-75. Francesco e Povertà . . . prendi: "Francesco e Povertà" is the object of the imperative "prendi."

75. nel mio parlar diffuso: "In my long figurative discourse" —for ten tercets (vss. 43-72), in fact.

76-78. La lor concordia . . . santi: "'Love, wonder, and sweet gaze made their concord and their glad looks to be a source of holy thoughts' in the beholders" (Gr).

78. facieno = facevano.

79. Bernardo: Francis' first disciple was Bernardo da Quintavalle, a wealthy merchant of Assisi, where he was a person of much importance. At first, though attracted by St. Francis, he distrusted him, but having convinced himself of his sincerity, he submitted himself to his direction, sold all his possessions for the benefit of the poor, and embraced the rule of poverty. Dante's account follows that of Tommaso da Celano (see P. Toynbee, 1968, p. 93).

80. si scalzò: Francis and his followers went barefoot, imitating the apostles. See Luc. 22:35.

81. li = gli.

82. ferace: "Fruitful."
83. Egidio: Aegidius of Assisi (Blessed Giles), one of Francis’ three earliest followers, was the author of a book called *Verba aurea*. He died at Perugia in 1262. Silvestro: One of Francis’ earliest followers, Sylvester is said to have been a priest and to have supplied Francis with stone for church-building, about the price of which he disputed on one occasion, whereupon Francis added a handful of gold to his previous payment. Sylvester soon after, struck with remorse at his own greed in contrast with the contempt for gold displayed by Francis, abandoned his former life and became one of Francis’ disciples. He died *ca.* 1240.

85. *Indi*: “Then.”

85–87. *Indi sen va . . . capestro*: Francis, with Poverty and with his followers, went off to Rome.


88. *Né li gravò viltà di cuor le ciglia*: “Viltà di cuor” is the subject of “gravò.” For the expression, see *Purg.* XVII, 52.

89. *per esser fi’ di Pietro Bernardone*: Francis’ father was a wool-merchant, therefore of the middle class and not noble. Bonaventura, in his *Legenda sancti Francisci* (VI, 1), written in 1261-63, relates that when Francis heard himself lauded as a holy man, he would bid one of his friars to vilify him, and on being thus reproached with his low birth and his father’s occupation, he would reply that it was fitting for the son of Pietro di Bernardone to hear such things (see P. Toynbee, 1968, p. 95). *fi’*: The apocopated form of *figlio* was common Tuscan usage of the day.

90. *dispetto a maraviglia*: “Wondrously despicable.” When Francis first visited the papal court, his appearance excited derision.

92. *Innocenzio*: Innocent III (Giovanni Lotario de’ Conti) was elected pope (in succession to Celestine III) in 1198, at the age of thirty-seven, and died at Perugia, July 16, 1216.
93. sigillo: "Seal," approval. religione: "Order." "In 1210, Innocent III verbally, and with some reluctance, sanctioned St. Francis's Rule, which seemed to him harsh and dangerous" (Gr).

94. la gente poverella: Francis' followers, dedicated to poverty, were at first known as the "poveri d'Assisi" (the poor ones of Assisi) and only later as the Friars Minor.

96. meglio in gloria del ciel si canterebbe: "Were better sung in Heaven's glory" than thus related by me.

97–99. di seconda corona . . . archimandrita: "The holy purpose of this Arch-shepherd was rounded with a second crown by the Eternal Breath (the Holy Ghost) through Honorius."—In 1223 St. Francis obtained a definite, official sanction of his Rule from Honorius III" (Gr).

99. archimandrita: "'Head of the fold,' a term of the Greek Church, is one of the words that Dante got from the Magnae Derivationes of Uguccione da Pisa. It is used of the Pope in Ep. XI, 13; of St. Peter in Mon., III, ix, 17" (Gr).

100–102. E poi che . . . seguiro: In 1219 Francis and some of his disciples accompanied the crusaders to Egypt, where he preached before the sultan of Egypt, called also in Dante's time the sultan of Babylon. Francis joined the crusaders' army before Damietta and at the risk of his life made his way into the camp of the sultan, al-Malik al-Kamil, and summoned him to embrace Christianity. The sultan received him courteously and listened to him, but remained unconvinced, even when Francis offered to prove his faith by entering the fire. Finally, after pressing gifts upon him which Francis refused, the sultan dismissed him in safety to the crusaders' camp, from which he returned to Italy.

102. li altri: The apostles.

103. per trovare: "Finding." acerba: "Unripe."

105. redissi = si redi, "he returned." The infinitive is redire, from the Latin redire. al frutto de l'italica erba: To
Italy, where better fruit (results) could be had, i.e., where conversion was easier.

106. nel crudo sasso intra Tevero e Arno: Francis retired to a shelter built by his followers on the wild and rugged Monte della Verna, between the upper Arno and the source of the Tiber.

107. da Cristo prese l’ultimo sigillo: There, in 1224, Christ or, as some painters have represented it, a seraph appeared to him and imprinted on his hands, feet, and side the stigmata, or marks of Christ’s five wounds. This miracle, attested by contemporary evidence, was confirmed by three papal bulls. See n. to vs. 74.

108. che le sue membra due anni portarno: These marks he bore until his death in 1226. He died in Porziuncola, where the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli is now located, in the plain below Assisi.

109. colui: God. sortillo = lo sortì, “chose him.”

111. pusillo: A Latinism, meaning “little,” lowly.

113. donna: Poverty.

115–17. e del suo grembo ... bara: Francis, desiring to rise to Heaven “from the lap” of Poverty, commanded his followers to strip his body, after his death, and let it lie for some time on the bare ground.

118. colui: St. Dominic. (See vss. 40-42.) Aquinas has thus concluded his encomium of St. Francis and now turns to his own order, the Dominicans.


120. in alto mar: Where navigation is difficult and fraught with danger. per dritto segno: Directed toward the right goal, i.e., set on the right course.

121. il nostro patriarca: St. Dominic, whose life is recounted in Par. XII.
123. *merce = merci.* Continuing the navigation metaphor, this refers, figuratively, to spiritual goods, virtues and deserts. *carca = carica.*

124–25. *Ma 'l suo pecuglio . . . ghiotto:* The sharp criticism by this Dominican of his own order (following the eulogy of Francis' order) begins here.


126. *diversi:* “Distant,” “remote” (from the Latin *deverto*). *salti:* “Wild pastures” (from the Latin *saltus*).

128. *da esso:* “From him” (Dominic).

129. *di latte vòte:* I.e., without the spiritual good they should have fed on.

130. *Ben son:* The “ben” is concessive: “There are indeed.” *di:* The partitive.

131. *stringonsi = si stringono.*

131–32. *ma son sì poche . . . panno:* I.e., it takes but little cloth to furnish them all with cowls, since they are so few. “Poco panno” is the subject.

134. *audienza:* “Listening.”

135. *revoche = rivochi,* “recall.”

136. *in parte:* Only the first of the two points of Dante’s confusion (vss. 25-26) has been clarified.

137. *la pianta:* The Dominican order. *onde si scheggia:* Which is torn, “chipped away,” by the degenerate mass of Dominicans.

138. *corrègger:* The infinitive is used as a noun, “correction,” referring to the qualifying phrase “se non si vaneggia.” *che argomenta:* In more normal prose order this might be “ciò che il correggere argomenta” (“what the qualification means”), the qualification being the restrictive clause “se non si vaneggia.”
2. *per dir tolse = prese a dire*, but in the sense of “finished uttering,” having just said “se non si vaneggia” (*Par. XI*, 139).

3. *mola*: “‘Millstone’: the ring of spirits. In a mill, the two grindstones operate concurrently, and both are necessary” (*Gr*). It should be noted that a millstone turns horizontally, as does this ring of lights.


7–8. *nostre muse, nostre serene*: Figuratively, poetry and song as we know them here on earth. Cf. *Purg. XIX*, 19, for the form *serena* instead of *sirena* and for the word used in the sense of one who sings (although it is used there in a pejorative sense, which is absent here).


9. *quanto primo splendor quel ch’e’ refuse*: As a direct ray surpasses its reflection, the one it has reflected. *e’ = egli.*

   *Refuse*: *Refuse* is the preterite (here used with a present-tense meaning) of *rifondere*, “to throw back.” See, for an equivalent use of this verb, *Par. II*, 88.
12. **ancella**: Iris, the rainbow. Daughter of Thaumas and Electra, Iris was the personification of the rainbow, which was regarded as the messenger of the gods and (among later writers) of Juno in particular (Virgil, *Aen.* IV, 694; V, 606; IX, 2, 5; Ovid, *Metam.* I, 271). *iube*: “Commands.” The Latin is *iubet*.

13. **nascendo di quel d'entro quel di fori**: The outer arc of a double rainbow is called the reflection, or echo, of the inner one. It was formerly thought to be an actual reflection.

14–15. **quella vaga ch'amor consunse**: The “wanderer” is the nymph Echo, who used to keep Juno engaged by incessantly talking to her, while Jupiter sported with the nymphs. Juno, on finding this out, punished Echo by changing her into an echo. In this state the nymph fell in love with Narcissus, but, her love not being returned, she pined away in grief, so that nothing remained of her but her voice. Dante got the story from Ovid (*Metam.* III, 356-401).

15. **come sol vapori**: “Sol” is here the subject of *consuma* (present tense), understood but not used.

16. **presaga**: “Confident,” or “weather-wise,” in this case.

17. *per*: “Because of.” *lo patto che Dio con Noè puose*: The reference is to the covenant which God made with Noah that never again should there be a flood to destroy the earth (Gen. 9:8-17).

18. **s'allaga**: “Shall be flooded.”

20. **volgiensi = si volgevano**. Pronounced *volgiensi*.

22. **tripudio**: “Dance.” The word is a Latinism.

23. **sì . . . sì**: “Both . . . and.”

25. **a punto e a voler**: “At one instant and of one accord.”

26. **piacer**: “Will.” *i = li*.

27. **conviene insieme chiudere e levarsi**: “‘Must be closed and lifted together.’ The two circles operate simultaneously,
like a pair of eyes. Dante seems here to confuse the *turning* of the eyes, which must affect both at once, with shutting and opening, which may affect one without the other" (Gr).


30. *in volgermi al suo dove*: The image is exact, for Dante, being—as it were—inside the circle of so many points of a compass, acts as does the needle.  *dove*: “Place.” Here, as often in the poem, the adverb is used as a noun.


33. *per cui del mio sì ben ci si favella*: “‘For whose sake there is such fair speech here concerning mine.’” St. Thomas, for love of his own leader, St. Dominic, has been praising St. Francis” (Gr).

34. *s’induca*: “Be mentioned.”

35. *ad una*: Together and for the same cause.  *militar* = *militarono*.


38. *’nsegna*: The Cross.


43. *come è detto*: See Par. XI, 43-117.

46–47. *In quella parte ... Zefiro*: Spain is the country nearest the source of Zephyr, the west wind. Cf. Ovid, *Metam.* I, 63-64: “Vesper et occiduo quae litora sole tepescunt, / proxima sunt Zephyro.” (“The western shores which glow with the setting sun are the place of Zephyrus.”) E. G. Gardner (1913, p. 245) notes that Petrus Ferrandi compares Dominic to Hesperus, rising from the west.
48. *rivestire = rivestirsi.*

49-52. *non molto lungi . . . Calaroga:* Compared with Italy, Caleruega, in Old Castile, is "not very far" from the Atlantic. "Spain lying due west of the Italian peninsula, the sun sets behind its Atlantic shore at the time of the vernal equinox (in the summer the direction is northwest)" (Gr). See M. Porena (1924), p. 157. Cf. *Par.* XI, 51. Note also *Aen.* XI, 913-14, where Virgil writes:

\[ \text{ni roseus fessos iam gurgite Phoebus Hibero} \\
\text{tinguat equos noctemque die labente reductat.} \]

But ruddy Phoebus now laves his weary team in the Iberian flood, and, as day ebbs, brings back the night.

49. *al = dal.*

50. *foga:* "‘Flight,’ its long spring course" (Gr).

51. *talvolta:* "Note that the *talvolta* occurs in l. 51 in both XI and XII: the *onde* of this canto are evidently contrasted with the *Gange* of XI" (Gr). *ad ogne uom si nasconde:* "When the sun sinks over the Atlantic, it ‘hides itself from every man,’ because there is no land beyond" (Gr).

52. *Calaroga:* Caleruega, a village of Old Castile, in the province of Burgos (not to be confused with Calahorra, ancient Calagurris).

53-54. *sotto la protezion . . . soggioga:* The shield of Castile has two lions and two castles quartered, one lion above a castle and one below.

55-56. *l’amoroso drudo de la fede cristiana:* Since the life of St. Dominic begins here, the reader may understand better the details which follow if he has in mind a general brief account of the saint’s life. Dominic was born between 1170 and 1175 in the village of Caleruega in Old Castile. He is supposed to have belonged to the noble family of Guzmán but there seems to be no certain evidence of this. His mother is said to have dreamed before he was born that she gave birth to a dog with a torch in its mouth, which set the world on
fire. At the age of fourteen he went to the University of Palencia, where he studied theology for ten or twelve years. He was early noted for his self-denial and charity, it being told of him that during a famine he sold his clothes to feed the poor and that, in order to ransom the brother of a poor woman who appealed to him for help, he offered to sell himself as a slave to the Moors. In 1195 he became canon of the cathedral of Osma. In 1203 he accompanied the bishop on a diplomatic mission to Denmark (or more probably, to the French or Italian Marches) and thence to Rome. On his way back, two years later, he remained for some time in Languedoc, where he took an active part in the Albigensian crusade, preaching—and, according to some accounts, even fighting—against the heretics. In 1215 he accompanied Folquet de Marseille, bishop of Toulouse, to the Lateran Council. In the same year, on his return to Toulouse, he founded his order of Preaching Friars, which was formally recognized by Honorius III in 1216. By the latter he was appointed master of the sacred palace at Rome, where he henceforth resided. In 1219 the center of his order was established at Bologna, Dominican convents having by this time been founded in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Poland, and England. He died in August 1221 at Bologna, where he was buried, his remains being preserved in the marble tomb by Nicola Pisano in the church of San Domenico. He was canonized soon after his death (in 1234) by Gregory IX, who declared that he no more doubted the sanctity of Dominican than that of Peter or Paul.

58–60. e come fu creata . . . profeta: “Before his birth, his mother dreamed that she brought forth a black and white dog with a burning torch in its mouth. Black and white are the Dominican colors; the torch signifies zeal; the word Dominicanis suggests Domini canes, ‘dogs of the Lord’” (Gr).

58. repleta: “Full.” The word is a Latinism.

60. lei: “Her” (the mother).

61–63. Poi che le sponsalizie . . . salute: “His baptism is conceived as a wedding. He espoused Faith, as Francis (in
ll. 61-63 of XI) espoused Poverty. Dominic and Faith 'dowered each other with mutual health.' Dante evidently plotted out cantos XI and XII, to make them parallel, line by line. Francis and Dominic are the symmetrical 'two wheels' of the Chariot of the Church” (Gr).

63. *u' = ubi (ove).*  *dotar = dotarono.*

64. *la donna che per lui l'assenso diede:* His godmother, who presented him for baptism. In the traditional ceremony, the priest asked: "Do you wish to be baptized?" His godmother, giving the assent for the child, replied: “I do.”

65-66. *vide nel sonno . . . rede:* His godmother dreamed that he bore a star on his forehead which illumined the world. This, by stressing light, points to the *intellectual* gifts and pursuits of Dominic (cf. vs. 85) and his followers (“lerede”), in contrast with the *affective* direction of Francis and his order (cf. Par. XI, 112).

67. *e perché fosse qual era in costrutto:* “And that he might be in name [verbal construct] what he was in reality.” Basic to the notion here expressed is the familiar dictum *nomina sunt consequentia rerum* (names are the consequence of things). Cf. Dante, *Vita nuova* XIII, 4; XXIV, 4; *Purg.* XIII, 109-10.

68. *quinci:* From Heaven.


71-72. *l'agricola che Cristo . . . aiutarlo:* “Among the interpretations of the name *Dominicus* in the *Legenda Aurea* is ‘keeper of the vineyard of the Lord’” (Gr). See Jacobus de Varagine, *Legenda aurea* CXIII. Cf. Par. XXVI, 64-65.

71. *agricola = agricoltore,* “husbandman.”

71-75. *Cristo . . . Cristo:* “Note that in ll. 71, 73, 75 *Cristo* is in rhyme with itself. The same thing occurs in XIV, 104;
XIX, 104; XXXII, 83. In the Commedia Dante will not allow Cristo to rhyme with any other word” (Gr).

73. messo: Past participle used as a noun, meaning “messenger.” famigliar: A follower, one of the household (cf. Purg. XXIX, 136).

75. al primo consiglio che diè Cristo: This probably refers to the first of the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3; see also Luc. 6:20), “beati pauperes spiritu” (“blessed are the poor in spirit”), taken to refer to humility (cf. Purg. XII, 110-11), which seems to agree best with what is said of the child in vss. 76-78. But some commentators interpret otherwise. Grandgent observes: “The ‘counsels’ of Christ are poverty, continence, and obedience, and the first of these is poverty: ‘Sell what thou hast, and give to the poor’ (Mat. xix, 21). Dante insists that St. Dominic, as well as St. Francis, was a lover of Poverty. Their love is declared in ll. 73-75 of XI and XII.”

78. Io son venuto a questo: The words seem to echo Christ’s (Mar. 1:38): “Ad hoc enim veni.” (“For this is why I have come.”)

79-81. Oh padre suo . . . dice: Again the notion supported by the dictum cited above (vss. 67-69). His father’s name, “Felice,” means “happy.” His mother’s name, “Giovanna,” signifies in Hebrew “the grace of the Lord,” an interpretation cited by several of Dante’s authorities. See E. G. Parodi (1898).

81. se: This “if” does not express doubt, but affirms true doctrine. Cf. Par. VIII, 120.

82. Non per lo mondo: The phrase depends on the affirmation of vs. 85, i.e., Dominic did not become a great doctor to seek worldly gain. mo = ora.

82-83. s’affanna di retro . . . Taddeo: “Labors in pursuit of the Ostian and Taddeo,” i.e., what they represent.

83. Ostiense: Belonging to Ostia, a village in Latium, just east of the ancient Ostia, about twenty miles southwest of
CANTO XII

Rome and now about four from the mouth of the Tiber. Originally it was at the mouth, as the name Ostia implies. It is an episcopal see. The reference is to Enrico da Susa (Enrico Bartolomei), the author of a famous commentary on the decretals (Summa titulorum decretalium, or Summa Hostiensis) and cardinal bishop of Ostia (1261-71).

Taddeo: Probably Taddeo d'Alderotto of Bologna (or, according to some, of Pescia), celebrated physician of the latter half of the thirteenth century (ca. 1235-95) and reputed founder of the scientific school of medicine at the University of Bologna. He wrote commentaries on the works of Hippocrates and Galen, with philosophical illustrations. But some commentators take the reference to be to one Taddeo dei Pepoli, who was a contemporary of Dante and specialized in canon law and jurisprudence.

84. la verace manna: True knowledge, “the bread of angels” (cf. Par. II, 11).

85. gran dottor: Cf. Par. XI, 38-39. Dominic became a profound theologian, the shining light of the prophecy in vss. 64-66. He studied at the University of Palencia. feo = fece.

86. circuir: “To go about.” From the Latin circumire.

86–87. la vigna ... reo: The vineyard grows “white” (not green, as it should be) if neglected by the vineyardist. Dominic cared for the vineyard of the Lord (the Church), dressing it and guarding it.

88–89. E a la sedia ... giusti: The papal chair “which once was kinder” than it is now.

88. a la sedia: “Of the chair.” “A la sedia” depends on “addimandò” in vs. 94.

89–90. non per lei ... traligna: “The difference in its disposition is ‘not because of itself’ (the Papal office has not changed), but because of the degeneracy of its latterday occupants” (Gr). “A marked case of severing the ideal Papacy from the actual Popes. The Papacy in itself is as benign to the
poor as ever; but the degenerate Pope (Boniface VIII) makes it manifest itself in other fashion" (TC).

91-93. *non dispensare* . . . *Dei*: "His application was not for leave to plunder on condition of paying a third or a half of the plunder to pious purposes, nor a petition for the first fat appointment that should fall vacant, or for leave to apply the tithes to his own purposes" (TC). "These phrases are the object of *addimandò* in l. 94: permission to dole out in charity only a third or a half of the money on hand, 'the income of the first vacancy,' 'the tithes which belong to God's poor'—he asked for none of these things" (Gr).

94. *mondo errante*: "The erring world = the heretics, notably the Albigenses, against whom Dominic's efforts were mainly directed" (TC).

95. *seme*: The faith, the seed from which sprang the bright souls which "enfold" Dante. Cf. Luc. 8:11.

98. *officio*: "Authorization." Dominic went to Rome with Folquet de Marseille (Par. IX, 94) and asked permission to found a new order; official sanction was given in 1216. See n. to vss. 55-56.

99. *ch'alta vena preme*: "Pushed forth by a high spring," or perhaps a deep spring. The adjective can bear either meaning in the context.

100-102. *e ne li sterpi eretici . . . grosse*: The verses continue the metaphor of the torrent. "Sterpi" suggests barren, fruitless growths (cf. Inf. XIII, 7 and 37), the reference being chiefly to the heretics in Provence ("quivi dove . . .") and to Dominic's role in the Albigensian crusade.

103. *Di lui si fecer poi diversi rivi*: From this "torrent" many lesser streams branched off. The reference may be simply to all the followers of Dominic or to the religious orders that were established in his name.

105. *arbuscelli*: The term is in contrast with "sterpi" (vs. 100) and with the modification "più vivi" suggests plants green and fruitful.

108. *e vinse in campo la sua civil briga*: The reference seems to apply more precisely to Dominic and his war against heresy, which in the context is termed a civil war in that heresy divides the Christian community or the heavenly city on earth.


112. *Ma l'orbita che fé la parte somma*: Here, matching what Aquinas the Dominican has done (in the preceding canto), begins this Franciscan’s criticism of his own order, through a curious series of mixed metaphors.

“The panegyric on Francis is pronounced by a Dominican, and that on Dominic by a Franciscan (whereas the denunciation of the unworthy Dominicans and Franciscans is in each case pronounced by one of themselves). Thus Dante fore-shadowed what afterwards became a general usage, viz., for a Dominican to read mass in a Franciscan convent on their founder’s day (Oct. 4), and a Franciscan to do the like for a Dominican convent on their founder’s day (Aug. 4)” (TC).

112–13. *Ma l'orbita . . . derelitta*: The metaphor obviously continues the image of the wheel: “But the rut which the outside of its circumference made is forsaken.” The wheel is St. Francis. His track is deserted by the Franciscans.


114. *sì ch'è la muffa dov' era la gromma*: The change of metaphor is most abrupt, passing now to wine-making. Good wine leaves a crust in the barrel, bad wine leaves a mold. Thus the degeneracy of the Franciscans is scored.

115–17. *La sua famiglia . . . gitta*: In place of the track left by the wheel the metaphor changes to the footprints of Fran-
cis ("le sue orme") which his first followers held to. Vs. 117 is obscure in its meaning, which is much debated. The phraseology seems, in the context, to imply a backward movement where there should be a forward one, following in the saint's footsteps. (For "backward steps," see Purg. X, 123.) It focuses on a single walker who "throws" his forward foot ("quel dinanzi") toward his hind foot ("quel di retro") as he walks, which can only mean that he walks backwards. See M. Barbi (1934), p. 287.

118–20. e tosto . . . tolta: "The tare 'shall complain that the bin is taken from it.' Cf. Mat. xiii, 30: 'Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.'—There may be here a reference to the condemnation of a group of the Spirituals by the Pope in 1318" (Gr). See U. Cosmo (1900), pp. 177-82. It is also possible that the bin may be the kingdom of Heaven itself, from which degenerate Franciscans will find themselves excluded.

120. li = gli.

121–22. Ben dico . . . carta: Again the change in metaphor is abrupt: the volume is the Franciscan order, the leaves are the individual friars of that order.

122. troveria = troverebbe.

123. u' = ubi (ove). I' mi son: The "mi" is the so-called pleonastic reflexive, here in its function of distinguishing and identifying. Cf. Purg. XXIV, 52. In metaphor the page (the individual friar) affirms that it is unchanged. Vss. 121-22 suggest that such a page is not easy to find.

124. fia = sare. Casal: A town of northern Italy in Piedmont, on the right bank of the Po, about thirty miles east of Turin. The allusion is to Ubertino da Casale, leader of the so-called Spirituals in the Franciscan order, who opposed the relaxations of discipline introduced by Matteo d'Acquasparta as general of the order. Ubertino, who was born in 1259, entered the Franciscan order in 1273; after spending nine
years as lecturer in the University of Paris he returned to Italy, where he became head of the Spirituals. During the pontificate of Clement V his party prevailed, but on the election of John XXII he withdrew from the Franciscan order and entered (in 1317) that of Benedict. His most important work is the *Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesu*, which was begun in March 1305 at La Verna, where he had been ordered to retire, and finished the following September, shortly after the election of Clement V. This work was undoubtedly known to Dante.

**Acquasparta**: Village in Umbria, about ten miles southwest of Spoleto, at the head of a torrent of the same name. The allusion is to Matteo d'Acquasparta, who was appointed general of the Franciscan order in 1287 and created cardinal by Nicholas IV in the next year. In 1300, and again in 1301, he was sent by Boniface VIII to Florence to act as mediator between the Bianchi and the Neri, but he was unsuccessful in his mission on both occasions (Villani, VIII, 40, 43, 49). He died in 1302. His portrait is preserved in a fresco by Bennozzo Gozzoli in the church of San Francesco at Montefalco in Umbria. As general he introduced relaxations in the discipline of the Franciscan order, which allowed abuses to creep in and which were vehemently opposed by the ascetic Ubertino da Casale.

125. *scrittura*: The rule of St. Francis.

126. *ch' uno la fugge*: Matteo d'Acquasparta flees from the rule, which seems to him too strict. *e altro la coarta*: Ubertino makes it more strict or narrow (“coarta,” from the Latin *coarctare*, “to compress”).

127–28. *Bona ventura da Bagnoregio*: St. Bonaventura (Giovanni di Fidanza) was born at Bagnoregio, near Orvieto, in 1221, the year of St. Dominic’s death. As a child he was attacked by a dangerous disease, which was miraculously cured by St. Francis of Assisi. When the latter heard that the child had recovered, he is said to have exclaimed “buona ventura,” whereupon the boy’s mother changed his name to Bonaventura. In 1238 or 1243 he entered the Franciscan
order. After studying at Paris under Alexander of Hales, he became successively professor of philosophy and theology and in 1257 was made doctor. Having risen to be general of the Franciscan order (in 1257), he was offered the archbishopric of York by Clement IV, which he declined. He was afterwards (1274) created cardinal bishop of Albano by Gregory X, whom he accompanied to the second Council of Lyons, where he died, July 15, 1274. St. Bonaventura was canonized in 1482 by Sixtus IV and placed among the doctors of the Church, with the title of Doctor Seraphicus, by Sixtus V. The authoritative edition of his voluminous works is *S. Bonaventurae opera omnia* (Quaracchi, 1882-1902).

129. *la sinistra cura*: Temporal interests, in which Bonaventura was much involved, as general of the Franciscan order (see preceding note) and cardinal bishop. For the expression and its significance, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I-II, q. 102, a. 4, ad 6:

> Sapientia autem pertinet ad dextram, sicut et caetera spiritualia bona; temporale autem nutrimentum ad sinistram, secundum illud Prov. 3, 16: *In sinistra illius divitiae et gloria.* Potestas autem sacerdotalis media est inter temporalia et spiritualia sapientiam; quia per eam et spiritualis sapientia, et temporalia dispensatur.

And wisdom, like other spiritual goods, belongs to the right hand, while temporal nourishment belongs to the left, according to Prov. iii. 16: *In her left hand [are] riches and glory.* And the priestly power is midway between temporal goods and spiritual wisdom; because thereby both spiritual wisdom and temporal goods are dispensed.

Since *sapientia* is precisely uppermost in the meaning of this sphere and the souls who appear here are *sapienti*, these words are particularly significant. Bonaventura was thus between temporal and spiritual wisdom, and his statement means that he always gave priority to the spiritual side, which signifies contemplation. Bonaventura wrote a well-known treatise entitled *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (*Itinerary of the*
Mind to God), which might even stand as an appropriate title of the Paradiso and of Dante's journey to Paradise.

130. **Illuminato**: Illuminato da Rieti, one of the earliest followers of St. Francis of Assisi. He accompanied St. Francis into Egypt. **Augustin**: Augustine, another of the earliest followers of St. Francis of Assisi, whom he joined in 1210, was eventually (in 1216) head of the Franciscan order in Terra di Lavoro.

131. *fuor* = *furono*. **scalzi poverelli**: The Franciscans.

132. *nel capestro*: Girt with the rope cord of the order. Cf. Par. XI, 87. *fero* = *fecero*.

133. **Ugo da San Vittore**: Hugh of St. Victor, celebrated mystic and theologian of the beginning of the twelfth century. He was born near Ypres in Flanders ca. 1097 or, as some believe, in Saxony, and he was educated during his early years in the monastery of Hamersleben near Halberstadt in Saxony. In 1115 he removed to the abbey of St. Victor near Paris, which had recently been founded by William of Champeaux, the preceptor of Abelard, and which during the twelfth century was a center of mysticism. He became one of the canons-regular of the abbey and was in 1130 appointed to the chair of theology, which he held until his death in 1141. His reputation was so great that he was known as "alter Augustinus" and "lingua Augustini." He was the intimate friend of Bernard of Clairvaux, and among his pupils were Richard of St. Victor and Peter Lombard.

The writings of Hugh of St. Victor, which are very numerous and are characterized by great learning, are frequently quoted by Thomas Aquinas. The most celebrated are the Didascalicon, a sort of encyclopedia of the sciences as then understood, viewed in their relation to theology; the treatises *De arca Noe morali, De arca Noe mystica*, and *De vanitate mundi*; and the *De sacramentis Christianae fidei*, on the mysteries of the faith, comprising a systematic exposition of Catholic theology. He also wrote commentaries on various books of the Old and New Testament (with the latter of
which he appears to rank as of equal importance the canons, the decretals, and the writings of the fathers), and upon the De caelesti hierarchia of Dionysius.

134. Pietro Mangiadore: Petrus Comestor (i.e., Peter the Eater, so called because he was an insatiable devourer of books), priest, and afterwards dean, of the cathedral of Troyes in France, where he was born in the first half of the twelfth century. He became canon of St. Victor in 1164 and chancellor of the University of Paris, and died at St. Victor in 1179, leaving all his possessions to the poor. His chief work was the Historia scholastica, which professed to be a history of the Church from the beginning of the world down to the times of the apostles; it consists mainly of a compilation of the historical portions of the Bible, accompanied by a commentary and parallels from profane history. It was the great authority on the subject in the Middle Ages and was translated into several languages.

Pietro Spano: Petrus Hispanus (Petrus Juliani) was born at Lisbon ca. 1225, where he at first followed his father's profession of medicine. He studied at Paris, probably under Albertus Magnus; subsequently he was ordained and became (1273) archbishop of Braga. In 1274 he was created cardinal bishop of Tusculum (Frascati) by Gregory X. On September 13, 1276, he was elected pope, under the title of John XXI, at Viterbo, in succession to Adrian V. He died May 20, 1277, after a reign of a little more than eight months, his death being caused by the fall of the ceiling of one of the rooms in his palace at Viterbo.

Besides several medical works of a more or less popular character (one of which, consisting of a collection of prescriptions, is entitled Thesaurus pauperum), Petrus Hispanus wrote a manual of logic, which, under the title of Summulae logicales, attained a wide popularity in the Middle Ages. In it the logic of the schools was expanded by the incorporation of fresh matter of a semi-grammatical character. In this treatise, which is divided into twelve parts, occurs for the first time the well-known mnemonic formula beginning "Barbara Celarent" for the valid forms of the syllogism.
136. Natàn: Nathan, the prophet, who was sent by God to reprove David (II Reg. 12:1-12) for his sin in causing the death of Uriah the Hittite in order that he might marry Bathsheba.

136–37. *l metropolitan Crisostomo: Metropolitan* is the title of a bishop exercising powers over a province consisting of several dioceses. The title first appears in the fourth canon of the Council of Nicaea (325). The reference is to St. John Chrysostom (χρυσόστομος, golden-mouthed), celebrated Greek father of the Church, who was born at Antioch ca. 345 and died at Comana in Pontus in 407. He belonged to a noble family and was first a lawyer; he afterward became a monk, in which capacity he so distinguished himself by his preaching that the Emperor Arcadius appointed him (in 398) patriarch of Constantinople. His severity toward the clergy in his desire for reform made him an object of hatred to them and led to his deposition (403) at the instance of Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, and the Empress Eudoxia, whose excesses he had publicly rebuked. Sentence of exile was pronounced against him, but the people, to whom he had endeared himself by his preaching, rose in revolt, and he was reinstated in his office. Shortly afterward, he was again banished (404), and he finally died in exile on the shores of the Black Sea. He left nearly one thousand sermons or homilies as evidence of his eloquence.

137. Anselmo: Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109, was born at Aosta in Piedmont in 1033, and in 1060, at the age of twenty-seven, he became a monk in the abbey of Bec in Normandy, to which he had been attracted by the fame of Lanfranc, at that time prior. In 1063, on the promotion of Lanfranc to the abbacy of Caen, he succeeded him as prior; fifteen years later, in 1078, on the death of Hervin, the founder of the monastery, he was made abbot, an office he held till 1093. In that year he was appointed archbishop of Canterbury by William Rufus, in succession to Lanfranc, after the see had been vacant for four years; in 1097, in consequence of disputes with William on matters of
ecclesiastical jurisdiction, he left England for Rome to consult the pope and remained on the Continent until William's death in 1100, when he was recalled by Henry I. He died at Canterbury, April 21, 1109 and was canonized, in 1494, by Alexander VI.

Anselm was the author of several theological works, the most important of which are the Monologion (to which Anselm gave the sub-title Exemplum meditandi de ratione fidei), the Proslogion (Fides quaerens intellectum), and the Cur Deus homo (a treatise on the atonement intended to prove the necessity of the incarnation).

137-38. Donato . . . mano: Aelius Donatus, Roman scholar and rhetorician of the fourth century, who is said to have been the tutor of Jerome. He was the author of a commentary on Virgil (now lost, but often alluded to by Servius) and of another on Terence, but his most famous work was an elementary Latin grammar, Ars grammatica, in three books, part of which served as a model for subsequent similar treatises. Because of the popularity of this work in the Middle Ages—it was one of the earliest books, being printed even before the invention of movable types—the name of its author became a synonym for grammar, just as Euclid did for geometry. Thus the title of a Provençal grammar of the thirteenth century begins: "Incipit Donatus Provincialis." Rutebeuf says in L'État du monde (vs. 158): "Chascuns a son Donet perdu." ("Each one has lost his Donatus.") See also Piers Plowman (B text, Passus V, vs. 209): "Thanne drowe I me amonges draperes my donet to lerne."

138. la prim' arte: Grammar is the first of the seven liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium. See Dante, Conv. II, xiii, 8-10.

139. Rabano: Rabanus (more correctly Hrabanus) Maurus Magnentius, born at Mainz of noble parents ca. 776. While still a youth he entered the monastery at Fulda, where he received deacon's orders in 801. Shortly thereafter he proceeded to Tours to study under Alcuin, who in recognition of his piety and diligence gave him the surname of Maurus,
after St. Maurus (who died in 565), the favorite disciple of St. Benedict. He was ordained priest in 814 and after a pilgrimage to the Holy Land returned to Fulda in 817, where he became abbot in 822. He held this office for twenty years until 842, when he retired in order to devote himself more completely to religion and literature. Five years later, however, he was appointed to the archbishopric of Mainz, which he held until his death in 856. Rabanus, who was considered one of the most learned men of his time, wrote a voluminous commentary on the greater portion of the Bible and was the author of numerous theological works, the most important being the De institutione clericorum. His treatise De laudibus sanctae crucis contains figures in which rows of letters are cut by outlines of stars, crosses, and the like, so as to mark out words and sentences.

140. Giovacchino: Joachim of Floris, the Calabrian abbot. He appears to have enjoyed in his own day, and long afterwards, a reputation for prophetic power; hence Bonaventura speaks of him as “di spirito profetico dotato” (vs. 141), words which are taken from the anthem still chanted on the festival of St. Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary, in the churches of Calabria.

Joachim was born ca. 1145 at Celico, about four miles northeast of Cosenza in Calabria. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and on his return to Italy became a monk, entering (ca. 1158) the Cistercian monastery of Sambucina. In 1177 he was made abbot of Corazzo in Calabria. In 1185, Pope Urban III appointed a deputy abbot in order that Joachim might have leisure to devote himself to his writings. In 1189 Joachim founded a monastery, San Giovanni in Fio­re in the forest of the Sila among the mountains of Calabria, whence he was named “de Floris.” From this institution, the rule of which was sanctioned by Celestine III in 1196, ultimately sprang the so-called Ordo Florentis (absorbed by the Cistercians, 1505). Joachim died ca. 1202.

The authenticated works of Joachim comprise a commentary upon the Apocalypse (Expositio in Apocalypsim), a harmony of the Old and New Testaments (Concordia novi
et veteris Testamenti), the Psalterium decem chordarum, and perhaps the Adversus Iudeos. Many works have been attributed to him—among them, the Liber figurarum, the authorship of which is much debated. He was credited with the authorship of a book on the popes, in which the persons and names of all the future popes were described.

Joachim "was the reputed author of many prophecies. He was also the first preacher of the doctrine that the dispensation of the Father (Old Testament) and of the Son (New Testament, and the Church as an institution) would be followed by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the period of perfection and freedom, without the necessity of disciplinary institutions. This was the 'Everlasting Gospel'—a dispensation, not a book. Joachim was a Cistercian, not a Franciscan; but the Franciscan 'Spirituals' were much influenced by him, and one of them, Gerardus by name, wrote a book entitled Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel. 'Joachism' henceforth became a feature of the extreme Spiritual movement among the Franciscans, and as such was opposed by Bonaventura" (TC).

It should be noted that Joachim occupies, in this second circle of sapienti, a position corresponding to that of Siger (Par. X, 136) in the first: each is the last named, each is to the immediate left of the spokesman. Both were not only controversial figures, but Thomas Aquinas, the spokesman of the first circle, engaged in an attack on Siger's ideas, and Bonaventura attacked the Spirituals of the Joachimite order. The poet's parallelism expresses a spirit of lofty conciliation and heavenly charity.

142. inveggiar: The meaning of the verb in this context is much debated. (See Petrocchi's note concerning it.) The most plausible interpretation would seem to be that "inveggiar," deriving from invidiare, "to envy," would mean (as does its Provençal equivalent envejar) "to envy in a good sense," hence "to praise." Cf. the adjective "invidiosi" as applied to Siger (Par. X, 138 and note).

cotanto paladino: St. Dominic. The term "paladino" ("warrior") is quite in keeping with "santo atleta" (vs. 56) and the presentation in general of Dominic.
143. *l'inflammata cortesia*: “The ardent [loving] courtesy” of Aquinas refers primarily to the fact that he, as a Dominican, eulogized Francis.

144. *discreto latino*: “Discerning discourse”; but, given the context, the adjective may also bear the suggestion of “reverent.” For “latino” in this sense, cf. *Par. X*, 120.

145. *meco = con me. compagnia*: The eleven companions of Bonaventura just named.
1. cupe: “Wishes.” From the Latin *cupit*.

2. l’image = l’immagine.

4–15. *quindici stelle . . . gelo:* On this whole elaborate and complex figure, see Grandgent, who observes: “The better to visualize the scene, the reader is asked to pick out twenty-four of the brightest fixed stars and imagine them arranged in the shape of a double Ariadne’s Crown. Fifteen miscellaneous ones are selected first, there being, according to Ptolemaic astronomy, fifteen stars of the first magnitude in the whole sky. Next are added the seven conspicuous members of the Wain (the Great Bear or Dipper), a constellation which in our climate never sinks below the horizon: cf. Dante, *Rime* C, 28-29. The remaining two of the twenty-four are from the hornlike Little Bear (or Little Dipper) whose peak is the North Star; the two chosen—those which, at the other extremity, form the mouth of the horn—are, according to Alfraganus, of the second magnitude.”

4. plage = plaghe. From the Latin *plagae*.

5. sereno: “Brightness.”

6. compage = compagine, “composition,” “condition.” From the Latin *compages*. 
7. *quel carro*: The Wain (Ursa Major, or the Big Dipper). See n. to vss. 4-15.

7–8. *il seno . . . giorno*: The vault of heaven over the northern hemisphere. Ursa Major cannot literally be seen day and night, but one is asked to imagine it so.

9. *temo* = *timone*, “pole.” *non vien meno*: “Never disappears,” i.e., the pole of the Wain, as it turns about, changing position, never sinks below the horizon, is always visible.

10. *la bocca di quel corno*: The last two stars of the hornlike Little Dipper (Ursa Minor), the mouth (“bocca”) of which is formed by the two stars farthest from the polestar.


12. *prima rota*: The daily rotation of the heavens.


14. *la figliuola di Minoi*: The daughter of King Minos (see Inf. V, 4) was Ariadne. In Metam. VIII, 174-82 Ovid relates how Ariadne’s crown was turned into a constellation. _Minoi_: “The form _Minoi_ was taken from the oblique cases of _Minos_ ( _Minois_ , etc.)” (Gr).

16. *ne l’altro*: “Within the other.”

18. *che l’uno andasse al primo e l’altro al poi*: “That one should start at the word ‘First!’ and the other at the word ‘Next!’” (Gr).


23. _Chiana_: River in east Tuscany and southwest Umbria. It was noted in Dante’s time for the sluggishness of its stream. The silting up of its bed turned the whole Val di Chiana into a malarious swamp, which thus became a byword for its unhealthiness.
24. *il ciel:* The Primum Mobile, swiftest of the heavens.

25-27. *Lì si cantò . . . l'umana:* “As celebrants of old sang hymns to heathen deities, so the Heavenly chorus sings of the threefold God and the twofold Christ, perhaps in the words of the Athanasian Creed” (Gr).

25. *Peana:* “*Paean* (accusative *Paeana*) is a name given to Apollo, and also a hymn in his honor” (Gr).

27. *essa:* I.e., “divina natura.”

28. *Compìé 'l cantare e 'l volger:* “Cantare” and “volger” are subjects of “compìé.” *sua:* “Their.”

29. *attesersi = si attesero.*

30. *felicitando sé di cura in cura:* The spirits rejoice in turning from their dance and song, their first “care,” to their next, the satisfying of Dante’s other question.


32. *luce:* The “light” of Thomas Aquinas.

32-33. *in che . . . fumi:* Within which the wondrous life of Francis of Assisi was related.

33. *fumi = fummi (mi fu).* For the unusual rhyme, see Inf. VIII, 17.

34. *Quando:* “Since.” *una paglia:* The question suggested by “u’ ben s’impingua” (see Par. X, 96; XI, 25). *trita:* “Threshed” (Gr).

35. *riposta:* “Stored away.”

36. *l'altra:* I.e., *paglia,* the question raised by “non surse il secondo” (see Par. X, 114; XI, 26).

37-39. *petto onde la costa . . . costa:* The “breast” of Adam, whence was taken the “rib” to form Eve.

39. *il cui palato:* Eve’s taste for the forbidden fruit.

40. *quel:* That is, *petto,* the breast of Christ.

43. *quantunque = quanto*.

45. *quel valor*: God, who created Adam and Christ (in his human aspect).

46. *miri*: "You marvel." *suso = sopra*.


47. *non ebbe*: Thomas once more changes the verb of the affirmation, which first was "surse" (*Par.* X, 114) and then "nacque" (*Par.* XI, 26).


51. *nel vero farsi come centro in tondo*: "A circle has but one point as its center. The truth is as a mathematical point, in which the two opinions coincide" (Gr).

52. *Ciò che non more*: Incorruptible things created directly by God: the angels, the heavens, primal matter, and human souls. *ciò che può morire*: Corruptible things, created by secondary causes (see *Par.* VII, 133-41).

53-54. *non è se non . . . Sire*: Cf. *Par.* X, 1-6. Thus all creation, corruptible and incorruptible, is said to be merely a reflection ("splendor") of God's idea. The idea is the Word, second person of the Trinity, which God the Father ("il nostro Sire") contemplates and through which, in His love, He produces, in His eternity, all things. The Word is the archetype of all things created directly or indirectly. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 44, a. 3, resp.: Deus est prima causa exemplaris omnium rerum. Ad cunuis evidentiam considerandum est quod ad productionem alicuius rei ideo necessarium est exemplar, ut effectus determinatam formam consequatur. Artifex enim producit determinatam formam in materia propter exemplar ad quod inspicit, sive illud sit exemplar ad
quod extra intuetur, sive sit exemplar interius mente conceptum. Manifestum est autem quod ea quae naturaliter fit, determinatas formas consequuntur. Haec autem formarum determinatio oportet quod reducatur, sicut in primum principium, in divinam sapientiam, quae ordinem universi excogitavit, qui in rerum distinctione consistit. Et ideo oportet dicere quod in divina sapientia sint rationes omnium rerum, quas supra diximus (q. 15, a. 1) ideas, id est, formas exemplares in mente divina existentes. Quae quidem, licet multiplicentur secundum respectum ad res, tamen non sunt realiter aliud a divina essentia, prout eius similitudo a diversis participari potest diversimode. Sic igitur ipse Deus est primum exemplar omnium. Possunt etiam in rebus creatis quaedam aliorum exemplaria dici secundum quod quaedam sunt ad similitudinem aliorum vel secundum eandem speciem, vel secundum analogiam alicuius imitationis.

God is the first exemplar cause of all things. In proof whereof we must consider that if for the production of anything an exemplar is necessary, it is in order that the effect may receive a determinate form. For an artificer produces a determinate form in matter by reason of the exemplar before him, whether it is the exemplar beheld externally, or the exemplar interiorly conceived in the mind. Now it is manifest that things made by nature receive determinate forms. This determination of forms must be reduced to the divine wisdom as its first principle, for divine wisdom devised the order of the universe, which order consists in the variety of things. And therefore we must say that in the divine wisdom are the types of all things, which types we have called ideas—i.e., exemplar forms existing in the divine mind (q. 15, a. 1). And these ideas, though multiplied by their relations to things, in reality are not apart from the divine essence, according as the likeness to that essence can be shared diversely by different things. In this manner therefore God Himself is the first exemplar of all things. Moreover, in things created one may be called the ex-
emplar of another by the reason of its likeness thereto, either in species, or by the analogy of some kind of imitation.

Note that with “amando” the verses bring in the Holy Ghost and thus the Trinity; and this continues by restatement in the next tercet.

55–57. ché quella . . . s’intrea: Now the subject of the action becomes the “viva luce,” the Word which emanates as light from the Father without ever separating Himself from the Father or from the Love (Holy Ghost), which makes them three (is their third part).

55. mea: Literally, “pours.”

57. s’intrea: The verb is Dante’s invention.

58. per sua bontate il suo raggiare aduna: “In its goodness, gathers its radiance together.”

59. quasi specchiato, in nove sussistenze: The “nine subsistences” are the nine orders of angels, reflecting God’s wisdom, which contains the plan of the universe. The reader will recognize the pattern of the descent of a power from on high through the spheres down to the sublunar world, by way of the nine orders of angels who turn the spheres, which was followed out in Par. II. The angels, receiving light from the Word, reflect it in turn and are thus properly termed “mirrors.” See Conv. III, xiv, 4, where Dante writes:

Lo primo agente, cioè Dio, pinge la sua virtù in cosa per modo di diretto raggio, e in cose per modo di splendore reverberato; onde ne le Intelligenze raggia la divina luce senza mezzo, ne l’altra si ripercuote da queste Intelligenze prima illuminate.

The prime agent—to wit God—stamps his power upon some things after the manner of a direct ray, and upon others after the manner of a reflected splendour; for upon the intelligences the divine light rays without medium, upon other things it is reflected by those intelligences which are first enlightened.
But, though reflected in so many mirrors, the divine light remains eternally one at its source. Cf. Par. XXIX, 142-45.

61–62. *Quindi discende . . . atto*: From the nine orders of angels this creating light descends then to the elements of the sublunar world ("ultime potenze"). Again the verses of Par. II (112-41) may be reconsidered as an exposition of this process, but here we are concerned more with what happens to the *virtù* from above when it extends to the sublunar world. Each heaven is a *potenza* insofar as it receives from above and is an *atto* insofar as it transmits to the world beneath it.


Contingentia dupliciter possunt considerari: uno modo, secundum quod contingentia sunt; alio modo, secundum quod in eis aliquid necessitatis invenitur; nihil enim est adeo contingens, quin in se aliquid necessarium habeat . . .

Est autem unumquodque contingens ex parte materiae; quia contingens est quod potest esse et non esse. Potentia autem pertinet ad materiam.

Contingent things can be considered in two ways; either as contingent, or as containing some element of necessity, since every contingent thing has in it something necessary. Now contingency arises from matter, for contingency is a potentiality to be or not to be, and potentiality belongs to matter.

Thus "brevi contingenze" signify things of the sublunar world, which are made from the elements, which may be shaped by the descending power but are of brief duration and, viewed from the *material* side, are mere potentialities and have no necessary or enduring existence.

66. *con seme e sanza seme*: Animals and vegetables "with seed," minerals "without seed." *il ciel movendo*: The heavens (singular for plural, as frequently in the poem) in their revolution, which constitutes nature.
67-69. *La cera* . . . *traluce*: The "wax" of generated things (in the sublunar world) and the heavens (which imprint their form on elemental matter) are not always the same (being variously disposed at different times, the heavens or "stamp" on the one hand, and matter or "wax" on the other). See Virgil, *Aen.* VI, 848: "Vivos ducent de marmore voltus." ("[They] shall from marble draw forth the features of life.") The subject of "traluce" is the wax of the elemental world, and the "segno ideale" is the imprint of the idea which has been transmitted downwards so variously through the heavens (the process followed out in the preceding verses). Generated things shine more or less with the imprint from above, which comes ultimately from the idea or Word, hence "ideale." Cf. *Par.* I, 1-3.

67. *duce*: "Shapes" or stamps (to keep the figure).

68. *però* = *perciò*.

70. *Ond'*: "Wherefore." *elli avvien*: "It happens." "Elli" is a pleonastic subject.

70-71. *un medesimo legno, secondo specie*: One tree equal to another as to species.

72. *voi nascete con diverso ingegno*: You human creatures (though all of one species) are born with different dispositions. See *Par.* VIII, 122-48, where this fact is viewed as providential.

73. *Se fosse a punto la cera dedutta*: "If the wax were perfectly disposed." "Dedutta," from the Latin *deducta*, bears the suggestion of "made ready," i.e., to receive.

74. *il cielo*: Again the singular for the plural, "the heavens."

75. *la luce del suggel parrebbe tutta*: The light of the "segno ideale," the stamp, would shine forth, be visible, entirely, perfectly.

76. *la natura*: The whole causal operation of the heavens, which is termed "la circular natura" in *Par.* VIII, 127. In the context here, however, there is something of a personification
of Nature implied, a personification which can lead into the striking figure of the artist which follows.

77–78. *similmente operando* . . . *tremä*: Deficiencies or imperfections in the sublunar world must be explained. They cannot really be assigned to any source above nature, for that would be to derogate from God’s idea; they must therefore result from Nature (the revolving heavens) in its downward transmission of the “seal,” as if Nature were an artist who has the clear idea (right reason) of that which is to be made, but a hand that trembles. Even so, the image is a daring one, for Nature is, after all, God’s agent in this process!

79–81. *Però se ’l caldo amor* . . . *s’acquista*: The act of creation now is viewed as a disposition whereby the ardent Love (the Holy Ghost) disposes and stamps the clear Vision (the Son, Wisdom, second person of the Trinity) of the first Power (God the Father). When the entire Trinity “stamps” directly, then all perfection is the result; no trembling hand of any intermediary, Nature, and no secondary causes, are involved.

82–84. *Così fu fatta* . . . *pregna*: Thus without intermediary—but directly—was man created from the dust (“terra”) with all possible perfection (see Gen. 2:7); thus, in the womb of Mary, was Christ conceived. Adam and Christ (in his human aspect) were created perfect.

85–87. *sì ch’io commendo* . . . *persone*: Thus the opinion held by Dante that Adam and Christ in his human aspect represent the summit of perfection in human nature is commended as correct, and that perfection never was nor will be surpassed.

88–90. *Or s’i’ non procedesse* . . . *tue*: Thomas Aquinas now anticipates an objection on Dante’s part. If he did not proceed in his discourse, Dante might well put the question as phrased in vs. 89, having understood Aquinas to have affirmed absolutely that Solomon was “without peer” in human nature.
91–93. Ma perché... dimandare: But in order that the concept be made clear (as it is not yet), Dante is urged to think who Solomon was (a king) and what he (as king) asked of God. Cf. III Reg. 3:5-12:

Apparuit autem Dominus Salomoni per somnium nocte, dicens: Postula quod vis ut dem tibi. Et ait Salomon: Tu fecisti cum servo tuo David patre meo misericordiam magnam, sicut ambulavit in conspectu tuo in veritate et iustitia et recto corde tecum; custodiisti ei misericordiam tuam grandem, et dedisti ei filium sedentem super thronum eius sicut est hodie. Et nunc, Domine Deus, tu regnare fecisti servum tuum pro David patre meo. Ego autem sum puer parvulus, et ignorans egressum et introitum meum; et servus tuus in medio est populi quem elegisti, populi infiniti qui numerari et supputari non potest prae multitudine. Dabis ergo servo tuo cor docile, ut populum tuum iudicare possit et discernere inter bonum et malum; quis enim poterit iudicare populum istum, populum tuum hunc multum?

Placuit ergo sermo coram Domino, quod Salomon postulasset huiuscemodi rem, et dixit Dominus Salomoni: Quia postulasti verbum hoc, et non petisti tibi dies multos, nec divitiias aut animas inimicorum tuorum, sed postulasti tibi sapientiam ad discernendum iudicium, ecce feci tibi secundum sermones tuos, et dedi tibi cor sapiens et intelligens, in tantum ut nullus ante te similis tui fuerit nec post te surrecturus sit.

And the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, saying: Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee.

And Solomon said: Thou hast shewn great mercy to thy servant David my father, even as he walked before thee in truth, and justice, and an upright heart with thee; and thou hast kept thy great mercy for him, and hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

And now, O Lord God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father. And I am but a child, and know not how to go out and come in.
And thy servant is in the midst of the people which thou hast chosen, an immense people, which cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

Give therefore to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, and discern between good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people, thy people which is so numerous?

And the word was pleasing to the Lord that Solomon had asked such a thing.

And the Lord said to Solomon: Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life or riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, but hast asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment.

Behold I have done for thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart; insomuch that there hath been no one like thee before thee, nor shall arise after thee.

Cf. Dante, Conv. IV, xxvii, 6.

94. *posse = possa*.

97-102. *non per sapere . . . avesse*: The things other than wisdom to govern which Solomon might have asked for are now phrased as specific questions in theology, dialectic, physics, and geometry.

97-98. *il numero in che . . . su*: The question of the number of the heavenly motors, or angels, was treated by Plato and Aristotle and is discussed by Dante in the *Convivio* (see Conv. II, iv and v). The angels are almost countless.

97. *enno = sono*.

98-99. *o se necesse . . . fenno*: “Or whether an absolute premise with a conditional premise has ever produced an absolute conclusion.” This is a scholastic problem in logic, also touched upon by Plato and Aristotle. The answer is “no.”

100. *non si est dare primum motum esse*: “Not, whether a prime motion is to be admitted,” i.e., a motion independent
of any cause. See Aristotle, *Physica* VIII, 1-2, 250b-253a. All motion is dependent on God (see Dante, *De mon.* I, ix, 2).

101-2. *o se del mezzo . . . avesse*: See Euclid, *Elements* III, 31. "Note that here again the answer is 'no'" (Gr).

102. *retto*: "Right angle."

103-5. *Onde, se ciò . . . percuote*: "Wherefore—if thou notest what I said, and this—that peerless vision which the arrow of my intention hits is kingly prudence" (Gr).

106. *al "surse":* To my phrase "non surse il secondo" (Par. X, 114).

109. *questa distinzion*: I.e., that Solomon was the wisest of all kings, not of all men.

110-11. *e così puote star . . . Diletto*: My affirmation and distinction are in accord with your belief respecting Adam and Christ.

110. *puote = pud*.

114. *e al si e al no che tu non vedi*: I.e., in affirming or denying in a matter where you cannot see clearly.

115. *bene a basso*: Far down in the scale of foolishness.

117. *ne l'un così come ne l'altro passo*: "In the one case as well as in the other," that is, whether he affirms or denies.

118. *elli 'ncontra*: "It happens." The "elli" is the familiar pleonastic subject.


120. *affetto*: "Fondness" for one's own opinion. "Affetto" is the subject of "lega," and "intelletto" the object.
121. *Vie più:* "Far worse.” *’ndarno = indarno,* “in vain.” *da riva si parte:* The metaphor is made clear in vs. 123. The subject of "si parte" is "chi" (vs. 123). *si parte:* “Sails forth.”

122. *non torna tal qual e’ si move:* “Chi” in vs. 123 is still the subject. Such a person is (out of metaphor) only confirmed in error and false opinions and so is worse off than before.

125. *Parmenide:* Parmenides, an early Greek philosopher, was born at Elea in Italy *ca.* 513 B.C. He is the chief representative of the Eleatic philosophy, in which he was followed by his disciple Zeno; he and Zeno, according to Plato, met Socrates in Athens in *ca.* 448 B.C. Parmenides wrote in verse his philosophical views *On Nature,* of which only fragments are extant. *Melisso:* Melissus, a philosopher of Samos who flourished *ca.* 441 B.C., was a follower of Parmenides. Only fragments of his writings are extant. *Brisso:* Bryson was a Greek philosopher mentioned by Aristotle as having attempted to square the circle, a problem which apparently he tried to solve dishonestly by non-geometrical methods (*Soph. elench.* I, 11, 171b; *Anal. post.* I, 9, 75b).

127. *Sabellio:* Sabellius, heresiarch of the third century, was born at Pentapolis in North Africa, became presbyter of Ptolemais, and died *ca.* 265. He refused to accept the received doctrine of the Trinity and held that the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were merely different names for the One God. He was excommunicated by Pope Callistus I. *Arrio:* Arius, who died in 336, was the originator of the Arian heresy that the Father and the Son are not “one substance,” a doctrine which the Athanasian creed was designed to controvert. Arius was presbyter of Alexandria and while holding that position (*ca.* 318) promulgated his heresy, which consisted in the doctrine that Christ was a created being inferior to God the Father in nature and dignity, though the first of all created beings, and that the Holy Ghost is not God, but was created by the power of the Son. This doctrine, which was condemned by the Council of Nicaea in 325,
gained many adherents after the death of Arius, including several emperors, and gave rise to the famous Heterousian and Homoousian controversy, which distracted the Church for three hundred years.

128-29. *come spade ... volti:* “Instead of reflecting the Scriptures accurately, like a glass, they gave a distorted image of them, similar to faces mirrored in sword blades” (Gr).

130-32. *Non sien le genti ... mature:* See I Cor. 4:5: “Itaque nolite ante tempus iudicare.” (“Therefore, pass no judgment before the time.”) See Boethius, *Consol. philos.* IV, vi, ll. 1-210, which deals with God's providence.

130. *ancor:* “Moreover.” This serves to turn the admonition from famous men who presumed in their false knowledge, to people generally in their judgments concerning the future, which leads, in the closing verses, to the presumption of knowing the inscrutable ways of God's providence. And in the background of this latter admonition is the case of Solomon, whether he was saved or not (see n. to Par. X, 111).


136. *legno:* “Ship.”

139. *donna Berta e ser Martino:* “Berta and Martino were equivalent to our ‘Tom, Dick, and Harry’ ” (Gr). Cf. Dante, *Conv.* I, viii, 13; *De vulg. eloqu.* II, vi, 5.


142. *quel:* The thief. *surgere:* “Rise up” (i.e., be saved, by true repentance, before his death). *e quel:* The devout person. *cadere:* “Fall” (into sin and damnation).
1–3. *Dal centro . . . dentro*: The reader will note that the image of the circle remains uppermost in this heaven of the *sapienti*, the wise, and will remember that the circle is the symbol of intellection. We are to imagine that the water, in this case, is struck in the exact middle of its surface.

1. *cerchio*: “Rim.”

2. *movesi = si move*.

4. *fé sùbito caso*: “Suddenly fell into” my mind; “suddenly occurred to me.” “Caso” here is from the Latin *casus*, “a fall.” There are other examples of this usage in early Italian. The subject of “fé” (*fece*) is “questo ch’io dico” in vs. 5.


7–9. *per la similitudine . . . piacque*: “The sound waves proceeding from St. Thomas, in the ring of bright spirits, and from Beatrice, in the center, remind Dante of the circular ripples in a round vessel, when the water is stirred at the edge or in the middle” (Gr). R. Murari (1905, p. 228) notes a similar comparison that is to be found in Boethius, *De institutione musica* I, 14.

10-11. e nol vi dice . . . ancora: Dante has not expressed his question yet, either vocally or—by clear formulation—in his own mind (the spirits in the two circles would of course know his thoughts, which would thus be expressed to them without utterance). Beatrice, however, even before such a formulation in Dante's mind, clearly knows what his question is (cf. Par. XV, 61-63) and proceeds to state it. He wishes to “go to the root” of yet another truth (vs. 12).


13-14. onde s'infiora vostra sustanza: “Whereof your souls flower,” i.e., are radiant.

15. ell' = ella, i.e., essa.

16-17. poi che sarete visibili rifatti: “Visibili” is here used in the sense of “seeing with one's bodily eyes.” After the Last Judgment these souls will be reunited with their glorified bodies, and each will be again the “form” of its body forever.

18. esser porà ch'al veder non vi nòi: Since the answer to the first question is affirmative, of course, then the further question is: “How can it be that all this bright radiance in Heaven will not hurt your sight, will not dazzle your bodily eyes?” On this question and the answer that follows, Grandgent observes: “The effulgence that clothes the soul will remain after the restoration of the flesh, but it will not dazzle the bodily eyes; for the glorified body can suffer nothing except through the spirit. This ‘claritas’ is discussed by St. Thomas in the Summa Theologiae, Tertia, Suppl., Qu. lxxxv, Art. 1-3.” See Summa theol. III, Suppl., q. 85, a. 2, ad 2, where Aquinas says:

Sicut corpus gloriosum non potest pati aliquid passione naturae, sed solum passione animae, ita ex proprietate gloriae non agit nisi actione animae. Claritas autem intensa non offendit visum, inquantum agit actione animae, sed secundum hoc magis delectat; offendit autem, inquantum agit actione naturae, caelefaciendo et dissolvendo organum visus, et disgregando spiritus. Et ideo claritas corporis gloriosi, quamvis excedat claritatem
solis, tamen de sua natura non offendit visum, sed
demulcet.

Just as a glorified body is not passible to a passion of
nature but only to a passion of the soul, so in virtue of
its property of glory it acts only by the action of the
soul. Now intense clarity does not disturb the sight, in
so far as it acts by the action of the soul, for thus it
rather gives delight, but it disturbs it in so far as it acts
by the action of nature by heating and destroying the
organ of sight, and by scattering the spirits asunder.
Hence, though the clarity of a glorified body surpasses
the clarity of the sun, it does not by its nature disturb
the sight but soothes it.

porà = potrà. nòi: “Hurt.” “Nòi” is from noiare. Cf.
Purg. IX, 87.

19. pindi = spindi, sospindi. tratti: “Drawn.” For the
same notion in metaphor, see Par. X, 142.

20. a la fiata: “From time to time.” See E. G. Parodi
(1957), p. 274, n. 121; M. Barbi (1903), p. 6. vanno
a rota: “Dance a round dance.”


23. mostrar = mostraron.

Purg. XXXII, 33; Par. VI, 124.


26. colà sù: In Heaven. quive = quivi, referring to “colà
sù.”

27. lo refrigerio de l’eterna ploia: Souls in Heaven are con-
stantly “refreshed” by the down-pouring (rain) of God’s
grace. “Ploia” is from the Provençal ploia. For a similar use,
see Par. XXIV, 91.

28–30. Quell’ uno e due e tre . . . circunscrive: “Once more
the souls celebrate the mystery of the Trinity. Cf. XIII, 26”
(Gr). For parallels to vs. 30 in Gregory, Isidore of Seville, Hugh of St. Victor, and Peter Lombard, among others, see J. S. P. Tatlock (1919), p. 275. Cf. *Purg.*, XI, 2. The Em­pyrean heaven, which does indeed “enclose all,” was sometimes identified with the mind of God.

31. *tre volte*: The Trinity is not only celebrated by such a number, but the poet has seen to it that a single tercet expresses what is sung (vss. 28-30).

33. *merto = merito*. *muno*: “Reward.” “Muno” is from the Latin *munus*.

34. *luce*: The “light” is that of Solomon (see *Par.*, X, 109). The Song of Solomon (Canticle of Canticles) celebrates the union of the divine with the human, the resurrection of the body. See *Bullettino della Società Dantea Italiana* N.S. XX (1913): 236-37. *dia = diva*, “resplendent.”


37–39. *Quanto fia lunga . . . vesta*: The joy of Paradise will be eternal, and the radiance of the souls eternal, whether in the glorified body or not.

40–42. *La sua chiarezza . . . valore*: “The brightness of the ‘garment’ of light shall be proportionate to the fervency of love in each soul, the love shall be proportionate to the distinctness of its vision of God, and that vision is a gift of Grace, or predestination, not dependent on merit” (Gr). The point of doctrine here reflected in the sequential order of three (brightness, fervency of love, vision) represents a reversal of the actual order, as vss. 46-51 make clear by a re­statement of that order. See Bonaventura, *Soliloquium* IV, v, 27: “Tantum gaudebunt, quantum amabunt; tantum amabunt, quantum cognoscent.” (“They shall rejoice in proportion as they shall love; they shall love in proportion as they shall know.”)

41. *quella*: Here used for *questa*, i.e., “visione,” which is the subject of “séguita,” understood as repeated from vs. 40.
42. *soutra suo valore*: "Beyond its desert" (Gr).

43. *Come*: "When."

43–45. *la carne . . . quanta*: The soul is the form of the body, and the human creature is more perfect when it has its body. This point is actually touched on in Inf. VI, 103-8 (see n. to Inf. VI, 106-7) and derives from Aristotle, even though in his philosophy he never dreamt of a glorified body. The glorified body adds an even greater perfection. Grandgent comments: "Now, inasmuch as man was made to consist of both spirit and matter, it follows that the blessed will be more perfect after the resurrection than before and therefore more like to God, who is absolute perfection. As St. Thomas says (*Summa Theologiae*, Tertia, Suppl., Qu. xciii, Art. 1, ad 1): 'Anima coniuncta corpori glorioso est magis Deo similis quam ab eo separata, inquantum coniuncta habet esse perfectius: quanto enim est aliquid perfectius, tanto est Deo similius.' (The soul united to a glorified body is more like to God than when separated therefrom, insofar as when united it has more perfect being. For the more perfect a thing is the more it is like to God.) The bodiless soul in Heaven has full spiritual happiness; but when clad again in the flesh it will possess bodily happiness as well: its joy will be increased 'extensively.' Therefore the blessed, while feeling no sorrow, look forward with pleasure to the Judgment Day, when, as they know, they will be complete, more akin to their Maker, and endowed with an additional capacity for blessedness. 'Omne autem imperfectum,' says St. Thomas (*loc. cit.* [resp.]), 'appetit suam perfectionem. Et ideo anima separata naturaliter appetit corporis coniunctionem.' (Now every imperfect thing desires its perfection. Hence the separated soul naturally desires reunion with the body.)" See Bernard of Clairvaux, *De diligendo Deo* XI, 30-32; E. G. Gardner (1913), pp. 119-21.

46–48. *per che s'’accrescerà . . . condiziona*: The light given to the blessed by God, the supreme good, is the light of glory, by means of which (and only by means of which) each can see God. Cf. *Par. XXX*, 100-102.
46. *ne = ci* (indirect object).


49–51. *onde la vision . . . vene:* Now the sequence is stated in its actual order, vision coming first, then love, then radiance. Cf. n. to vss. 40-42.

53. *vivo candor:* This suggests a white-hot glow. *quella soverchia:* “Outshines it” (the flame). The coal glows through the flame that envelops it” (Gr).

54. *sì che la sua parvenza si difende:* “So that its visibility is maintained.”

55. *ne = ci.*

56. *apparenza:* “Distinctness.”

57. *tutto dì:* “As yet,” “still.”

58–60. *né potrà . . . diletтарne:* Cf. n. to vs. 18.

60. *diletтарne = diletтарci.* Cf. “affaticarne” (*affaticarci*) in rhyme (vs. 58).


63. *mostrar = mostrarono.*

64. *non pur per lor:* “Not for themselves alone.”

65. *fuor = furono.*

66. *fosser = fossero,* the subject of which is “l’uno e l’altro coro,” vs. 62.

67. *di chiarezza pari:* Of uniform brightness, i.e., in all its parts.

68. *un lustro:* A splendor (cf. *Purg.* XXIX, 16). *sopra:* “In addition to,” i.e., to the splendor of the two circles of lights already there.

69. *orizzonte che rischiari:* The horizon becomes bright, of course, where the sun rises.

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70-72. *E sì come . . . vera:* The simile changes abruptly from the moment of sunrise to that of twilight.

71. *nove parvenze:* “New appearances,” i.e., of stars, faint in the twilight.

72. *la vista:* The sight of these faint stars.

73. *novelle sussistenze:* “New souls.”

74-76. *un giro . . . Spiro:* This third circle of lights (the context and simile clearly suggest that they are a multitude and not merely twelve lights) completes the triad and is obviously yet another way of celebrating the Trinity here. The Holy Ghost, which is Love, illumines all the souls in each of the three circles, but to end the exclamation in the name of the third person of the Trinity points up this very fact, since in the usual order of naming the three persons the Holy Ghost comes last. Moreover, no spirits of this third circle are named, hence their appearance here for the purpose of completing the number three is the more evident.

“Line 76 makes it clear that this third circle specially represents the Holy Spirit, and so completes the symbol of the Trinity . . . .

“In its dimness at first and brightness afterwards, there may be a reference to the difficulty that has always been experienced in finding an adequate *philosophical* basis for the doctrine of the Third Person of the Trinity corresponding to the clearness of the distinction between the conceptions of God in his essence (Father) and God as manifested (Son); whereas to the more strictly *theological* speculation, or rather to the religious experience, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (God regarded not as the Creator or the Redeemer, but as the Inspirer) has always had a special vividness” (TC).

77. *sùbito e candente:* “Suddenly incandescent.” Cf. “candor” in vs. 53.

78. *nol soffriro = soffrirono,* “did not endure it.”

81. *si vuol lasciar:* “Must be left.” This new sight of Beatrice is such that it surpasses the memory’s powers of retention.
Cf. Par. I, 7-9. But, as usual, Dante’s gazing on Beatrice “empowers” him to rise to the next heaven (cf. Par. X, 93), and, looking up now, he is immediately lifted to the fifth sphere.

83. *translato*: “Borne.” The word is from the Latin *translatus*.

84. *in più alta salute*: “To a higher degree of blessedness,” that of the fifth heaven, the sphere of Mars. The very principle of hierarchy in the order of the heavens requires that this be so. It should be remembered that the sphere of Mars is the midmost of the nine material heavens and so represents a center, even as does the sun in the strictly planetary spheres.

86-87. *l’affocato riso . . . l’usato*: Mars is normally said to be a ruddy planet. Cf. Dante’s description of Mars in *Conv.* II, xiii, 21: “Esso Marte dissecca e arde le cose, perché lo suo calore è simile a quello del fuoco; e questo è quello per che esso pare affocato di colore, quando più e quando meno, secondo la speszezza e raritade de li vapori che ’l seguono.” (“This same Mars drieth and burneth things, because his heat is like to the heat of fire; and this is why he appeareth enkindled in colour, sometimes more and sometimes less, according to the thickness and rarity of the vapours which follow him.”) Cf. *Purg.* II, 13-15. And now Mars becomes even ruddier in its happiness at receiving Dante and Beatrice within itself (cf. Par. V, 94-96).

88-89. *quella favella . . . tutti*: The unspoken language of the heart, in silent thanksgiving.


90. *conveniesi = si conveniva*.


95. *splendor*: The plural is *splendori*.  

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96. Eliòs: Helios, here used as the name of God, the spiritual sun. The word represents a fusion of the Greek word *helios* (ἥλιος), meaning “sun,” and the Hebrew *Ely*, meaning “God.” Thus Uguccione da Pisa says in his *Magnae derivationes* (as found in P. Toynbee, 1902, p. 112): “Ab ely, quod est deus, dictus est sol elyos, quod pro deo olim reputabatur.” (“From Ely, that is God, the sun is called elyos, having been considered a god in former times.”) Dante frequently refers to God as *Sole* (see *Par.* IX, 8; X, 53; Conv. III, xii, 6).

99. Galassia: Pronounced *Galàssia*; the Galaxy or Milky Way. Dante says the Galaxy forms part of the heaven of the fixed stars and discusses (*Conv.* II, xiv, 5-8) the various theories as to its origin. *che fa dubbiar ben saggi*: Aristotle deals with the nature and origin of the Galaxy in his treatise on meteors (*Meteor.* I, 8, 345a-346b). The opinion attributed to him in what Dante calls the Old Translation is probably due to the Arabic translator or editor and was introduced as a correction of his actual opinion (which is recorded in the New Translation). Ptolemy’s opinion is given in the *Almagest* (VIII, 2). Dante, however, got his account of the various opinions as to the origin of the Milky Way not from Aristotle, but from Albertus Magnus (*De meteoris* I, ii, 2-5).

100. *costellati*: “Costellati” is in apposition to “quei raggi” of the following verse, the subject of “facean.”

100–101. *nel profondo Marte*: “In the depth of Mars.” This is a Latin construction.

101. *il venerabil segno*: The cross, meaning in this case the Greek cross, as vs. 102 makes evident.

102. *che fan giunture di quadranti in tondo*: “Which joinings of quadrants make in a circle.” Two diameters of a circle, intersecting at right angles, form a cross and divide the circle into four quadrants.

103. *vince la memoria*: “Memoria” is the subject of “vince.”
croce lampeggiava: “Croce” is the subject of “lampeggiava” (“flashed forth”). Cristo: Once more Cristo occurs in the rhyme. Cf. Par. XII, 71, 73, 75.

esempro = esempio.


lasso = lascio.

vedendo: The present participle refers to the first person (Dante the wayfarer): “when I beheld.”

corno: “Horn,” arm of the cross. Given the military context, it is important to realize that “corno” also can be used to designate the “flank” of an army.

cosi si veggion . . . acquista: “The moving lights in the cross are compared to bits of dust dancing in a ray of sunshine in a dark room” (Gr). Cf. Lucretius, De rerum natura II, 114-20.

qui: On earth. torte: “Aslant.”

rinovando vista: “Changing aspect.”

minuzie: “Particles.”

onde si lista: “With which is streaked.”

per sua difesa: “For self-protection” from the sun.

la gente con ingegno e arte acquista: “People obtain, by building houses. In warm countries the house is regarded primarily as a shelter from the heat” (Gr).


tintonno: Cf. Par. X, 143.

apparinno = apparirono.


elli = egli, i.e., the hymn. lode: Plural of loda. Cf. Par. X, 122.
125. però = per ciò. "Resurgi" e "Vinci": "The song which Dante cannot entirely catch is evidently a triumphal hymn to Christ, sung by the knights of the Cross" (Gr).

127. Io: The word here has two syllables. quinci: "With it."

129. vinci = vincoli, "ties."


131. posponendo il piacer de li occhi belli: "Subordinating, giving a secondary place to the eyes of Beatrice. Dante seems to be rating the song above those 'beauteous eyes'; but, as he presently explains, he is not really doing so, since he has not yet looked upon them in this sphere" (Gr). See vs. 135.

133–34. i vivi suggelli d'ogni bellezza: "The living stamps of all beauty' are Beatrice's eyes, which become more potent from sphere to sphere, as she approaches God" (Gr).

135. quelli: The eyes.

136. escusar = scusare. puommi = mi pud.

136–37. escusar puommi . . . vero: "May excuse me for that (i.e., l. 131) of which I accuse myself in order to excuse myself—i.e., for the accusation which I bring against myself merely in order to have an opportunity to deny it—'and may see that I am telling the truth'" (Gr).

138. ché 'l piacer santo non è qui dischiuso: For that holy delight, the eyes, is not excluded (set aside) as of less account than the song here. dischiuso: Cf. Par. VII, 102.

139. più sincero: "Purer."
1. *liqua*: “Liqua” (from the Latin *liquet* shifted to the first conjugation in Italian and made reflexive) means “manifests itself.”


3. *fa*: Replaces the verb “spira” of vs. 2. *iniqua*: I.e., *volontade.*

4-6. *silenzio puose . . . tira*: The subject is “benigna volontade,” benign will on the part of these spirits who, in their configuration of a Greek cross, are metaphorically termed a lyre (“lira”). Similar metaphors, “viol” and “harp,” have already been applied to this same figure of the cross (*Par. XIV, 118*), as if the bands of souls might somehow be the strings (“corde”) of one such instrument, strings which are now said to be “tuned” (“allenta e tira”) by the right hand of Heaven, i.e., by God.

7-12. *Come saranno . . . spoglia*: The two tercets constitute a kind of indirect address to the living, to those who pray righteously, and to those who misdirect their loves on earth.

9. *concorde = concordi.*

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11–12. per amor di cosa . . . spoglia: The things that do not last are temporal things, and love of them reflects the notion of “cupidità” in vs. 3, even as “quello amor” refers to “l’amor che drittamente spira,” right love in this life and perfect love of God in the next, in Heaven, as “eternalmente” plainly suggests.


14. discorre = trascorre. subito foco: The light of a shooting star. “Meteors were explained as dry vapors which had risen so high as to take fire and then had plunged back in the direction of the earth” (Gr).

15. movendo li occhi che stavan sicuri: Causing the spectator’s eyes to move in following the brief sight, eyes that until then had been calmly contemplating the vault of the sky at night.

17. e’ = el. The shooting star.

18. nulla sen perde: No star is missing. esso: The “subito foco” (vs. 14), referred to by “el” in the preceding verse.

19–21. tale dal corno . . . resplende: Again the military overtone (see Par. XIV, 109) of the word “corno” may be felt, as this light holds to the figure of the cross in coming toward Dante, who somehow stands at or near the bottom of the great configuration of souls. This soul does not break formation but executes a kind of “soldierly” left-front movement, a fact made further emphatic by vss. 22-23.

22. né si partì la gemma dal suo nastro: “The gem did not leave its ribbon.” Silk ribbons studded with pearls as ornaments were common in Dante’s time.

23. lista radial: The band followed by the spirit in its motion is termed radial as if the “tondo” (Par. XIV, 102) or circle brought into the picture through simile were actually there.
Here the band followed by this spirit is that which extends from right to center, then from center to the bottom of this circle where Dante stands ("radial," from the Latin radius). Some commentators, however, take the adjective to mean "radiant."

24. che parve foco dietro ad alabastro: Within the great diffused radiance of the cross made up of many souls in these ribbons, this particular soul now shines the brightest and can be followed in its movement, as it gleams through the general luminosity. "Alabastro" can suggest any translucent screen.

25-27. Sì pia l’ombra ... s’accorse: The reference is to the encounter of Aeneas with his father, Anchises, in the Elysian fields, as related by Virgil in Aen. VI, 684-88:

isque ubi tendentem adversum per gramina vidit
Aenean, alacris palmas utrasque tetendit,
effusaeque genus lacrimae et vox excidit ore:
“venisti tandem, tuaque exspectata parenti
vicit iter durum pietas? . . .”

And he, as he saw Aeneas coming towards him over the sward, eagerly stretched forth both hands, while tears streamed from his eyes and a cry fell from his lips: "Art thou come at last, and hath the love thy father looked for vanquished the toilsome way?"

26. se fede merta nostra maggior musa: “Our greatest muse” (poet) is Virgil, who inspires other poets, as do the Muses. Cf. Dante’s wording in Conv. IV, xxvi, 8: “Virgilio, lo maggiore nostro poeta” (“Virgil, our greatest poet”) and see Purg. VII, 16-17. Regarding the implications of the “if” clause as such, cf. Inf. II, 13 and the corresponding note.

28-30. O sanguis meus . . . reclusa: "O blood of mine, O lavish grace of God! To whom was Heaven’s gate ever twice opened, as to thee?" Heaven receives Dante now, and will receive him again after his death; such a thing has never happened since the days of St. Paul.—The use of Latin—the language of Church and school—adds dignity to this celestial greeting. It is made more appropriate by the reminiscence of
Anchises, to whom, indeed, the phrase ‘sanguis meus’ (meaning ‘my child’) belongs: ‘Proice tela manu, sanguis meus’ (cast from thy hand the sword, thou blood of mine!) in *Aen.*, VI, 835, where Anchises is addressing Julius Caesar” (Gr).

In any case, this is clearly another instance of Dante’s prediction of his own ultimate salvation (cf. *Inf.* III, 93; *Par.* X, 87), and behind the exclamation of this soul may perhaps be heard the unexpressed marvel that Dante is visiting Heaven in his body (for the soul is surely not recognizing a disembodied soul—though this is not actually stated). To be sure, Paul did not know whether he had made the heavenly journey in his body or not, but through the words of this soul there is a strong suggestion that Dante actually did. Cf. *Inf.* II, 28-30; *Par.* I, 73-75.

32–36. *poscia rivolsi . . . paradiso*: Until now, Dante has not looked into the eyes of Beatrice in this sphere.

36. *mio paradiso*: “My beatitude.”

37. *Indi, a udire e a veder giocondo*: “Then, joyous to hear and see.”

38. *giunse = aggiunse*.

40. *né per elezion*: “Not through any choice of his.”

42. *al segno d’i mortal si soprapuose*: “Shot above the target of mortals,” i.e., above their level of comprehension, as in vs. 45. The poet is using the archery figure continued in the next verse with “arco.”

43. *affetto*: Love of God, and gratitude to Him, as expressed in vss. 47-48.

46. *per me s’intese*: For the construction, cf. *Inf.* I, 126.

49. *Grato e lontano digiuno*: The “welcome and long-felt hunger” is the object of “you have relieved” in vs. 52.

51. *du' = dove*, “wherein.” *non si muta mai bianco né bruno*: White and black are never altered, i.e., in God’s book of the future the text is never changed. This soul, who proves to be Cacciaguida, Dante’s great-great-grandfather, knows this, and reading therein of this journey of his great-great-grandson to Heaven, he has felt for all these years the “welcome hunger” of an event destined to come about in the spring of 1300.

52. *solvuto = risolto*, “satisfied” (referring back to “di­giuno” of vs. 49). The echo of Virgil’s verses continues in Cacciaguida’s words (cf. vss. 25-27). *questo lume*: The light from within which Cacciaguida speaks, the radiance that conceals him from view.

53–54. *colei ch’... piume*: Beatrice gives Dante wings for his upward flight, the power to rise. Cf. *Par. X*, 74; X, 93; and *passim*.


56–57. *da quel ch’è primo ... sei*: “Unity is the beginning of number, as God is the beginning of thought; from the conception of unity is derived the conception of all numbers, and in the divine mind all thought is contained” (Gr). “The thought of man rays out, reflected from the mind of God, the prime Unity, as all numbers proceed from the unit; and the thought thus becomes known to the blessed gazing upon God. See Canto ix. 73-75. This is what Donne (Sermon xxiii.) calls ‘Gregory’s wild speculation,’ *Qui videt videntem omnia, omnia videt* [‘he who sees Him who sees all, sees all’], because we shall see him that sees all things, we shall see all things in him, for then we should see the thoughts of men” (Norton).

56. *raia*: “Radiates.”

58. *però = perciò. ch’io mi sia*: The “mi” is the reflexive (sometimes termed pleonastic) that specifies and stresses identity.

60. *che*: “Than,” connecting with “più gaudioso” in vs. 59.

63. *il pensier pandi:* See n. to vss. 56-57. *pandi:* "Reveal."


68. *suoni:* Subjunctive used as imperative, "la voce tua" being the subject: "Let your voice sound out." *suoni la volontà,* *suoni 'l disio:* "Volonta" here refers to Dante’s will or wish taken subjectively, whereas "disio" indicates the object of his wish.

69. *decreta:* A Latinism, meaning "decreed," i.e., "established" (since Cacciaguida, knowing what Dante is about to ask, knows what his own answer is to be).

71. *arrisemi = mi arise.* Some manuscripts have "arrrosemi," but Petrocchi has rightly preferred "arrisemi," according to the manuscript evidence. See his note.


73–75. *L'affetto e 'l senno . . . si fenno:* "‘As soon as the primal Equality (God, in whom all powers are perfect and therefore equal) revealed himself to you, desire and faculty in each one of you became equal in weight’: the blessed have no wish which they have not intelligence to fulfill" (Gr). E. G. Gardner (1913, p. 102) refers to Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus,* in this regard. This is a conception that will re-emerge at the very end of the poem (*Par.* XXXIII, 143-44).

75. *fenno = fecero.*

76. *però = percio.* *‘l sol:* God. *v'allumò:* Illumined with His light (the light of glory by which the creature sees God). This light regards the intellect. *e arse:* That is, caused to glow with His love, which regards the will. Thus the verses continue to keep intellect and will, the two powers of the immortal human soul, central to the conception here expressed. See *Par.* XXX, 100, and the note to *Par.* XXX, 100-102.
77. *col caldo e con la luce*: “Caldo” pertains to the will and to the notion expressed by “arse” in the preceding verse, whereas “luce” pertains to intellect, as is evident in the verb “v’allumò.” Now the two faculties are stated or implied in reverse order. *sì iguali*: “So perfectly balanced.” “Iguali” is singular, modifying “sol,” vs. 76. It derives from the Latin nominative *aequalis* and is found in early Florentine texts.

78. *simiglianze*: Comparisons.

79–81. *Ma voglia . . . ali*: Whereas the blessed have no wish which they have not the intelligence to fulfill, with mortals it is otherwise, as is to be made plain in this particular case. Dante has the wish (“voglia”) to express his gratitude adequately to Cacciaguida, but the expressive means or power to execute that wish is lacking in him, as it so often is in mortals. See “argomenti” in this sense in *Purg.* II, 31. Thus the two essential terms *will* and *intellect* are kept, but now are measured in our mortal condition in contrast with the immortal perfection of these powers in the blessed, “ali” reflecting metaphorically those two powers.

83. *disagguaglianza = disugguaglianza*. The term clearly echoes, by contrast, the statement of vss. 73–78 respecting the condition of the blessed in Heaven as soon as they behold God face to face. *però = perciò.*

84. *se non col core*: Only with the words of the heart (corresponding to the “voglia” in that this wish belongs to desire, which is in the affective faculty, the will). *la paterna festa*: The joyous welcome made by a great-great-grandfather to his grandson. The word *festa* in the sense of “welcome” is common, as in the expression *fare festa a qualcuno*, “to welcome someone.”

85. *supplico io a te*: The construction with the dative is modeled on the corresponding Latin. Cf. *Par.* XXVI, 94. *vivo topazio*: “Resplendent topaz,” which resumes the metaphor of vs. 22. The choice of this particular precious stone meets the requirements of the rhyme, of course; but it is perhaps significant that the most precious of the topazes,
the yellow (also known as the yellow sapphire), is sometimes made red by heating, and red is the color of love and would be most appropriate here, since we are everywhere told that the souls appear as flames.

86. gioia: The cross in its total configuration, made up of the many jewels which form it.

88–89. O fronda mia . . . radice: The notion of family tree clearly informs the metaphor, Dante being the latest descendant ("leaf") growing on this tree, of which the speaker is the "root." See n. to Purg. XX, 43-45.

88. compiacemmi = mi compiacqui, in which there may be heard God’s words when Jesus was baptized (Matt. 3:17): "Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui." ("This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.") Cf. Mar. 1:11; Luc. 3:22.

90. femmi = mi feci.

91. Poscia mi disse: In reply to Dante’s question concerning the name and identity of this soul, the soul will require many verses to make his answer, and he will not name himself until vs. 135 as Cacciaguida, who, from what he first tells, proves to be the great-great-grandfather of Dante. Of Cacciaguida’s life nothing is known beyond what the poet has him tell of himself.

R. Davidsohn (1896, p. 440, including n. 2) cites a document dated April 28, 1131, in which there is mention of one Cacciaguida, son of Adam, whom he identifies with Dante’s great-great-grandfather. What Cacciaguida begins to tell of himself in this canto extends into Par. XVI as well and may be summarized here. Cacciaguida was born in Florence in the Sesto di Porta San Piero about the year 1091. He belonged, possibly, to the Elisei, one of the old Florentine families which boasted Roman descent. He was baptized in the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence and had two brothers, Moronto and Eliseo. Cacciaguida’s wife came from the valley of the Po and from her, through his son, Dante got his surname of Alighieri. Cacciaguida followed the Emperor Con-
rad III on the second Crusade and was knighted by him; finally he fell fighting against the infidel about the year 1147. His existence is attested by the mention of his name in a document (still preserved in Florence), dated December 9, 1189, in which his two sons bind themselves to remove a fig tree which was growing against a wall of the church of San Martino. See R. Piattoli (1950), pp. 3-4.

There is considerable difference of opinion as to the precise date of Cacciaguida's birth, the indications given by Dante (Par. XVI, 34-39) being variously interpreted. Cacciaguida says that from the Incarnation of Christ down to the day of his own birth the planet Mars had returned to the sign Leo 580 times (or 553 times, according as "trenta" or "tre" be read in Par. XVI, 38), i.e., had made that number of revolutions in its orbit. Two questions are involved. The first involves the reading, "trenta" or "tre." The second concerns whether the period of the revolution of Mars is to be estimated at about two years, as given by Brunetto Latini (Tresor I, cx, 5) and implied by Dante in the Con vivio (II, xiv, 16), or at the correct period, as given by Alfraganus, of approximately 687 days (actually, according to Witte, 686 days, 22 hours, 29 minutes). If we read "trenta" (with the majority) and take the period of Mars at the estimate of Alfraganus, we get (due regard being given to leap years) the year 1091 as the date of Cacciaguida's birth. If, on the other hand, we read "tre," and put the period of Mars at two years, we get the year 1106. In the former case Cacciaguida would have been fifty-six, in the latter forty-one at the time when he joined Conrad III on the second Crusade (1147) and met his death (vss. 139-48). Several of the early commentators (Anonimo fiorentino, Buti, and Landino, among others), reading "trenta" and computing the period of Mars at two years, bring the date of Cacciaguida's birth to 1160 (i.e., thirteen years after his death!), while Benvenuto, who avoids this error, brings it to 1054, which on his own showing (since he gives 1154 as the date of the Crusade) would make Cacciaguida a crusader at the age of 100!

Cacciaguida indicates (Par. XVI, 40-42) the situation of the house in which he and his ancestors lived in Florence as
being “in the place where the last ward is reached by him who runs in your annual game,” i.e., on the boundary of the district known later as the Sesto di Porta San Piero. The house of the Elisei (Villani, IV, 11) stood not far from the junction of the Mercato Vecchio and the Corso, apparently just at the angle formed on the north side of the present Via de’ Speziali by its intersection with the Via de’ Calzaïoli. The Sesto di Porta San Piero appears to have been the last of the city divisions to be traversed in the annual gioco by the competitors who entered the city probably at the Porta San Pancrazio, close to where the Palazzo Strozzi now stands, crossed the Mercato Vecchio, and finished in the Corso which was thence so called.

92. cognazione: “‘Family name’: Alighieri. Alighiero (or Allagherius), son of Cacciaguida, was the first male member of the family to bear this name, which, as we learn presently, he derived from his mother. His name occurs in documents of 1189 (where it is joined with that of his brother Preitennito) and of 1201. The cent’ anni e piùe would seem, therefore, to indicate ignorance of the exact date of his death” (Gr).


95. la lunga fatica: The toil of carrying a huge stone on his back, and this now for more than a century!

96. li = gli. opere tue: “Your prayers.”

97. cerchia antica: The old city walls. The first medieval walls, probably built in the ninth century, which were virtually identical with the Roman walls. (See Map 3, facing p. 260.)

98. ond’ ella toglie ancora e terza e nona: Beside these walls stood the ancient abbey, the Badia, whose bell continued, in Dante’s day, to mark the hours for the Florentines. Tierce is the third of the canonical hours, or 9 A.M. None, or nones, is the ninth of the canonical hours, or 3 P.M.
3. Florence: the circuits of walls
CANTO XV

100. Non avea = non vi aveva (non c'era). Cf. the French il n'y avait. catenella: "Necklace," or "bracelet."

101. contigiae: "Adorned." Cf. the noun contigia, meaning "ornament."

102. la persona: The wearer.

103-5. Non faceva . . . misura: "The marriageable age had not yet become absurdly low, nor the dowry ruinously high" (Gr).

105. fuggien = fuggivano.

106. Non avea case di famiglia vòte: There were no palaces built on too large a scale for their occupants.

107-8. non v'era . . . puote: "Sardanapalus, king of Assyria, was notorious in antiquity for his luxury and effeminacy. He is mentioned by Paulus Orosius and Egidio Colonna" (Gr). Cf. Juvenal, Satires X, 362.

109-11. Non era vinto . . . calo: "Rome was not yet surpassed in splendor by Florence, which has been swifter in its rise and will be swifter in its fall. Montemalo (or Montemallo), now Montemario, is a hill that affords the approaching traveler a view of Rome; similarly the height called Uccellatoio offers the stranger, as he draws near on the north, an outlook on Florence. In Uccellatoio the -toio counts as one syllable: cf. Purg. XIII, 22; XIV, 66; XX, 52.—Che in l. 110 refers to Montemalo" (Gr).

111. calo: "Decline."

112. Bellincion Berti: Florentine of the ancient Ravignani family, father of "la buona Gualdrada" (see Inf. XVI, 37), through whose marriage with Guido Guerra IV the Conti Guidi traced their descent from the Ravignani. He lived in the second half of the twelfth century and in 1176 was deputed by the Florentines to take over from the Sienese the castle of Poggibonsi, which had been ceded by the latter. Villani (IV, 1) speaks of him as "il buono messere Bellincione Berti de' Ravignani onorevole cittadino di Firenze" ("the
good Messer Bellincione Berti de’ Ravignani, honorable citizen of Florence”).

113. *di cuoio e d’osso*: With a plain leather belt fastened with a clasp of bone.

114. *la donna sua*: “His wife.”

115. *Nerli*: Ancient noble family of Florence which received knighthood from the Marquis Hugh of Brandenburg, “il gran barone” (*Par. XVI*, 128). *del Vecchio*: Ancient noble family of Florence (otherwise known as the Vecchietti). Villani (IV, 12) couples the Vecchietti with the Pigli and Soldanieri as ancient families residing in the “quartiere della porta di san Brancazio.” He says they were Guelphs (V, 39) and as such were expelled from Florence in 1248 (VI, 33) and went into exile in 1260 after the Ghibelline victory at Montaperti (VI, 80). When the Guelph party was split up into Bianchi and Neri they sided, some with one faction, some with the other (VIII, 39).

116. *pelle scoperta*: “Bare leather,” i.e., plain dressed skin not covered or lined with cloth.


118–19. *certa de la sua sepultura*: I.e., each knew that she would be buried in her own church or churchyard, and would not die in exile.

119–20. *ancor nulla . . . diserta*: None was abandoned by a husband who journeyed to France as a merchant.

119. *nulla = nessuna.*

121. *vegghiava = vegliava. a studio*: In the sense of the Latin *studium*, “assiduous and affectionate care.”
122–23. *l'idioma che prima . . . trastulla*: Baby talk, such as parents use with their children as they play with them.

124. *rocca*: "Distaff." *chioma*: The wool or flax that is put upon the distaff and drawn off onto the spindle, in spinning. "Chioma" ("hair") is thus figuratively synonymous with "penneccio" in vs. 117.

125. *famiglia*: "Family" in the sense of "household," i.e., including female servants.

126. *d'i Troiani, di Fiesole e di Roma*: Legends of the founding of Rome by the Trojans, and of the founding of Fiesole and then of Florence by the ancient Romans. Such legends enjoyed a considerable popular diffusion in Dante's day and long before. Cf. Villani, I, 6 and 7. The telling of such "founding" tales attests essentially to the "piety" (in the Latin sense of *pietas*) of the good people of old Florence, as Dante would have it, and this fits into the whole picture as an effective touch.

128. *Cianghella*: Florentine lady of ill repute, contemporary of Dante. She is said to have been the daughter of Arrigo della Tosa and to have died ca. 1330. The early commentators say Cianghella was notorious for her arrogance, extravagance, and profligacy. Benvenuto states that she married a certain Lito degli Alidosi of Imola, a native of his own city, after whose death she returned to Florence and led a disreputable life. He says he had heard many stories of her from a neighbor of hers in Imola. One of these he records as a specimen, to the effect that on a certain occasion when she had gone to church to hear a sermon she was so infuriated because none of the ladies present rose to make room for her that she violently assaulted several of them; her blows being returned, a free fight ensued, greatly to the amusement of the male members of the congregation who could not restrain their laughter in which the preacher himself joined and thus the sermon was brought to an end. She appears also to have been in the habit of beating her servants with a stick.
Lapo Salterello: Florentine lawyer and judge, a relative and adherent of the Cerchi, the leaders of the Bianchi faction in Florence. He belonged to the same party as Dante and was included in the same decree of banishment (March 10, 1302), in which his name is second on the list. He was a prominent and active politician, and his name recurs continually in contemporary documents as having been concerned in most of the important public acts in Florence during the twenty years between the institution of the priorate (1282) and the banishment of the Bianchi (1302). In 1294 he went with other Florentines on an embassy to Boniface VIII; and in 1300 he served in the office of prior during the two months (April 15-June 15) preceding Dante's priorate. In this latter year he and two others denounced a conspiracy between certain Florentines and Boniface VIII to incorporate Tuscany with the States of the Church, whereby he incurred the deadly hatred of the pope. After the outbreak in Florence of the Bianchi and Neri feuds, and the triumph of the latter, he attempted to conceal himself in the house of the Pulci, but he was discovered, and proscribed with most of the other members of his party. He appears to have been very corrupt and was specifically accused of having taken bribes to pervert the course of justice. He is said to have died in exile in great poverty. Dante's negative opinion of Lapo Salterello is fully borne out by the early commentators and by Dino Compagni, who frequently mentions him in his chronicle.

129. Cincinnato: See n. to Par. VI, 43-53. Cornigilia: Cornelia, daughter of the elder Scipio Africanus, wife of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, and mother of the Gracchi, the tribunes Tiberius and Gaius. On being condoled on the death of her sons, who were both slain during her lifetime, she is said to have exclaimed that she who had borne them could never deem herself unhappy. Dante places her, along with Lucretia, Julia, and Marcia, among the noble spirits of antiquity in Limbo (Inf. IV, 128).


135. *insieme fui cristiano e Cacciaguida*: I was baptized and at the same time given the name of Cacciaguida.

136. *Moronto fu mio frate ed Eliseo*: Of these two brothers, named (as was Cacciaguida) by their first names only, nothing is known, though it is thought possible that the family of the Elisei, or one branch of it, may have descended from Eliseo. They were Ghibellines and noble, and they were exiled from Florence several times.

137. *mia donna*: "My wife." Cf. vs. 114. *di val di Pado*: The valley of the Po. It is thought that the lady may have come from Ferrara, where, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, there flourished a family with the name of Aldighieri; but the reference to "the Po valley" has allowed other cities of that valley to lay claim to being the birthplace of Dante's great-great-grandmother.

138. *e quindi il sopranome tuo si feo*: The family name (variously spelled), which the poet thus assigns to himself, might well have been *Alaghieri* in its Italian form (*Alagerius* or *Alagherius* in Latin), whereas *Alighieri* appears later with Boccaccio and is thereby confirmed in the tradition. *si feo = si fece.*

139. *lo 'mperador Currado*: Conrad III (1093-1152) was the son of Frederick, duke of Swabia. As duke of Franconia, he fought against Lothair II, duke of Saxony, and being elected king by the adversaries of Lothair, in 1127, and being recognized in Italy as well, he was crowned at Milan in the spring of 1128 and recognized as emperor thereafter. As such he undertook the disastrous second Crusade, in company
with Louis VII of France. He returned to Germany in 1149 and died at Bamberg in 1152.

140. \textit{el = egli. mi cinse de la sua milizia:} "He made me one of his knights." The ceremony involved the girding on of a sword, hence "cinse." As there is no record of any Florentines having been knighted by Conrad III, some think that Dante may have confused him with Conrad II (1024-39), who according to Villani (IV, 9) undertook an expedition against the Saracens in Calabria, and passed through Florence on his way, knighting several Florentines who accompanied him.

141. \textit{bene ovrar:} For faithful service to him. \textit{li = gli. venni in grado:} "I won his favor."

142-44. \textit{Dietro li andai . . . giustizia:} The whole reference is to the second Crusade.

142. \textit{li = gli.}

143. \textit{legge:} "Religion," the Mohammedan, the followers of which are usurping the Holy Land—which rightly belongs to you ("vostra giustizia")—because the popes care nothing about the reconquest of it. Cf. \textit{Inf. XXVII}, 85-90.

145. \textit{Quivi:} In the Holy Land. \textit{turpa = turpe,} "base."


147. \textit{deturpa:} "Corrupts."

148. \textit{venni dal martiro a questa pace:} Those who died on a crusade in the Holy Land were considered martyrs of the faith who would therefore go directly to Heaven after suffering their death as crusaders.
1–6. *O poca nostra nobiltà . . . gloriai:* "'Iam vero quam sit inane, quam futilis nobilitatis nomen, quis non videat?'

(Likewise, who sees not what a vain and idle thing it is to be called noble?) says Boethius, in *Consolatio Philosophiae*, III [vi, ll. 20-21]. Other authors known to our poet, in Latin, Provençal, and Italian, disparage the glory of birth, and exalt the true nobility of character. Dante himself devotes the 3rd Canzone of the *Convivio* to the development of this theme, and touches upon it in *Monarchia*, II, iii, 4. Yet in the presence of his belted ancestor he cannot check a feeling of family pride, which betrays itself by the use of the respectful 'voi'" (Gr).

3. *qua giù dove l'affetto nostro langue*: On earth the affection of mortals is fainter than in heaven and falls short of its proper goal.

5. *là*: In Heaven.

5–6. *dove appetito . . . gloriai*: Dante is, of course, not yet confirmed in heavenly love, but being a visitor from earth, he succumbs to this kind of pride of family. The whole passage is self-deprecat ing.

7. *raccorre*: "Shrinks."
8. *se non s’appon*: “Unless we add to you.”

9. *lo tempo va dintorno con le force*: Time cuts away at the mantle with its scissors. \( \textit{force} = \textit{forbici} \). “Force” is from the Latin \textit{forfices}. The meaning out of metaphor will be evident in the discourse on the decline of families that now follows.

10. *Dal “voi”: “With the you.” “Dal ‘voi’” depends on “ricominciaron,” vs. 12. Dal “voi” che prima a Roma s’offerie: According to tradition, the plural \textit{vos} was first used, in addressing one person, when Julius Caesar made himself emperor. In the entire \textit{Commedia} Dante uses the honorific plural to address only Farinata and Cavalcante (\textit{Inf. X}), Brunetto Latini (\textit{Inf. XV, 80}), Pope Adrian V, when he learns that it is he (\textit{Purg. XIX, 131}), and—always—Beatrice until the very end of the poem, where he very strikingly addresses her with the singular form \textit{tu} (see \textit{Par. XXXI, 80-90}). Thus, his shifting to “voi” here is significant. \( s’\textit{offerie}: \) The reading in some manuscripts is “sofferie” \( (= \textit{sofferì}) \), “allowed,” but see Petrocchi for his preference of “s’offerie” \( (= \textit{si offrì}) \), “offered.”

11. *in che la sua famiglia men persevera*: It seems that in the time of Dante the Romans were more inclined to use the familiar \textit{tu}, instead of \textit{voi}; and this remains true of Roman speech in outlying regions in the country around Rome. \textit{la sua famiglia}: Her people.

13-15. *onde Beatrice . . . Ginevra*: “Beatrice, ‘who stood a little apart,’ smiled indulgently at Dante’s weakness, just as, in the Old French romance of \textit{Lancelot du Lac} (cf. \textit{Inf. V, 127-138}), the Dame de Malehaut, watching the first clandestine interview of Guinever and Lancelot, coughed on hearing the impassioned speech of the Queen.—\textit{Fallo scritto}, ‘recorded fault.’—The Lady of Malehaut, in whose castle Lancelot had for some time secretly lived unrecognized, was hiddenly in love with him.—Guinever, after having drawn from Lancelot the avowal of his love, asks: ‘Whence comes this love of yours for me?’ Then it is that (in some manuscripts but not in all) the Lady of Malehaut coughs” (Gr).

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14. *tossio* = *tossì*.

16. *il padre mio*: Dante speaks affectionately and reverently in addressing Cacciaguida as his father, meaning the first head of his family.

20. *che di sé fa letizia*: “That it congratulates itself,” i.e., at being able to bear so much joy and exultation without “breaking,” as the next verse makes clear.

21. *può sostenere che non si spezza*: “On being able to endure without bursting.”


24. *si segnaro = segnarono*.

25. *ovil di San Giovanni*: John the Baptist is the patron saint of Florence. “Ovil” (“sheepfold”) plays into the notion of a small and simple Florence.

26. *quanto era*: How many were its inhabitants.

26–27. *e chi eran le genti . . . scanni*: The reader should remember this particular turn of the question as Cacciaguida replies at length, singling out the families of Florence that were “worthy of the highest offices.”


33. *ma non con questa moderna favella*: This “does not imply that Cacciaguida spoke throughout in Latin as he had begun (xv. 28-30), but that he spoke in the ancient Florentine dialect of his day. Dante was well aware of the rapidity with which spoken dialects, not yet fixed by a standard literature, vary. See *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, i. 9 [7-8]” (TC). Cf. also Dante, *Conv.* I, v, 8-9.
34. *Da quel di che fu detto “Ave”:* From the Annunciation (Luc. 1:28). The Florentine year began with the Conception, March 25.

35. *ch’è or santa:* Who is now among the blessed, in Paradise.

36. *grave = gravida.*

37–39. *al suo Leon . . . pianta:* “This fire (Mars) came 580 times to its Lion, to be rekindled under its paw.” Between the Conception—the beginning of the year 1—and the birth of Cacciaguida, Mars returned 580 times to the constellation of Leo, which, being of like disposition to Mars, reinforces the influence of that planet. As Mars completes its revolution in 687 days, we shall get the year of Cacciaguida’s birth by multiplying 687 by 580 and dividing by 365: 1091. He was therefore 50 when he followed the crusade, having lived from 1091 to 1147. Cf. Moore, III, 59-60” (Gr). See n. to Par. XV, 91. “Apparently the kinship between Leo and Mars is to be found in the attribute of courage, not in any specific astrological belief of the time” (TC).

41–42. *dove si truova . . . gioco:* “Where the last ward is first reached by the runner in your annual sports.” The races were run on June 24 (St. John’s day). The horse race (*palio*) began on the west boundary of the city and went along the Corso, thus entering the “last” ward, that of Porta San Piero, at what is still the beginning of Via de’ Speziali. In that place were the houses of the Elisei family, whereas those of the Alighieri were later in the so-called *popolo* of San Martino and thus were not near the course of the annual race. (See Map 4, facing p. 270.)

43–45. *Basti d’i miei maggiori . . . onesto:* With this sentence, presumably, Dante veils his lack of further information. Cf. Inf. IV, 104.

43. *maggiori:* Cf. Inf. X, 42.

44. *si fosser:* This is the familiar so-called pleonastic reflexive *si*, stressing identity.
4. The district around Florence
45. *onesto*: "Modest."

47. *da poter arme*: "Fit for arms," eligible for military service. Cf. the Latin *armipotens.* *tra Marte e 'l Batista*: Between the old statue of Mars, on the river (cf. vs. 145), and the Baptisterium (cf. Inf. XIX, 17). The ancient city was measured thus from south to north.

48. *erano il quinto di quei ch'or son vivi*: According to Casini-Barbi, who cites Villani (VIII, 39) as his evidence, in 1300 Florence had a total population of more than 30,000 citizens, perhaps around 40,000, and those subject to military service (all men from the age of eighteen to sixty) must have been approximately 10,000. Therefore, in the time of Cacciaguida, the population would have been between 6,000 and 8,000 citizens, and those subject to military service would have been approximately 2,000.

49-50. *or mista . . . Fegghine*: The citizens of Florence are now mixed with people from the surrounding countryside.

50. *di Campi, di Certaldo e di Fegghine*: These three villages, all in Tuscany, are named as typical of the many small towns situated in the vicinity of Florence. Campi is on the Bisenzio, about nine miles northwest of Florence. Certaldo is in the Val d'Elsa, about seven and a half miles northwest of Poggibonsi, on the road from Poggibonsi to Empoli. Figline (pronounced Figlíne) Valdarno is on the Arno, seventeen miles southeast of Florence.

51. *pura*: I.e., pure Florentine. *vediesi = si vedeva.* *ne l'ultimo artista*: "Even to the lowliest artisan."

52. *fora = sarebbe.* *vicine*: "Neighboring," hence outside the city of Florence, not inside its limits (cf. vs. 55).

53. *Galluzzo*: Ancient village of Tuscany, to the south of Florence, about two miles from the Porta Romana on the road to Siena, a little to the north of the confluence of the Ema with the Greve.

54. *Trespiano*: Village of Tuscany, to the north of Florence, about three miles from the Porta San Gallo.
56. Aguglione: A castle (now destroyed), formerly called Aquilone, in the Florentine territory in the Val di Pesa to the south of the city. The reference “villan d’Aguglione” is to one Baldo d’Aguglione, who is spoken of by Dino Compagni in his Cronica (I, 19) as “giudice sagacissimo” and who was one of those who drew up the ordinamenti di giustizia in Florence in 1293. His family were Ghibellines, and as such his father Guglielmo and his brother Puccio were exiled from Florence in 1268. Baldo himself, however, took the other side and remained in Florence, where, after playing an important part in the events of 1293, and in the expulsion of Giano della Bella in 1295, he became prior in 1298. In 1299, in consequence of the discovery of his share in the fraud of Niccola Acciaiuoli, he fled from Florence and was condemned in his absence to a fine of 2,000 lire and to a year’s banishment. In 1302, when through the intervention of Charles of Valois the Bianchi were expelled, he and Fazio de’ Morubaldini da Signa joined the Neri with certain other renegade Bianchi and Ghibellines. From this time forward he occupied a position of great influence in Florence. In 1311, while he was prior for the second time, and the city was anxious to present a united front to Emperor Henry VII, he drew up the decree (dated September 2, 1311) known as the riforma of Baldo d’Aguglione, whereby the sentences against a number of the Guelph exiles were revoked and canceled, and a number of others, who are all included under the head of Ghibellines, were expressly excepted, among the latter being Dante Alighieri.

When, in the next year, Emperor Henry VII’s army was advancing towards Florence, Baldo d’Aguglione fled from the city and was consequently himself declared an outlaw. He managed, however, to secure a pardon. He returned to Florence, where he died not long after, leaving several sons to succeed him. The family died out before the end of the fourteenth century.

Signa: Village of Tuscany, near the Arno, about ten miles west of Florence. The reference is probably to one Fazio (Bonifazio) from Signa. Fazio or Bonifazio de’ Morubaldini da Signa was a lawyer who was gonfaloniere di giustizia in
Florence in 1316 and was prior several times. He was sent as ambassador to Clement V in 1310 for the purpose of organizing the opposition to Emperor Henry VII when he came into Italy, and his name figures in consequence on the list of those condemned by the emperor in 1313.

58. **gente**: The clergy. **traligna**: “Degenerates.”

59. **a Cesare noverca**: “Like a stepmother”—that is, hostile—to Caesar, i.e., to the emperor and the Holy Roman Empire.

61. **merca** = **mercanteggia**.

62. **si sarebbe vòlto**: Would have continued to live, more literally, “to go about.”

62–63. **Simifonti . . . cerca**: Semifonte was a strong fortress in the Val d’Elsa, southwest of Florence and east of Certaldo, which belonged originally to the Conti Alberti. In 1202, after a four-year siege, it was captured and destroyed by the Florentines, with whom it had long been carrying on hostilities.

The point of Cacciaguida’s allusion, which appears to be to some special circumstance, is not now understood. Some think the reference is to an incident in the taking of Semifonte by the Florentines, to whom the fortress was betrayed by one of the defenders, as is recorded by Villani (V, 30). However, Casini-Barbi and Del Lungo think there may possibly be a reference to one of the Velluti family, who were well-known merchants and money-changers in Florence and originally came from Semifonte. The special allusion may be to Lippo Velluti, who is mentioned in Dino Compagni’s *Cronica* (I, 18) as belonging to the government which expelled Giano della Bella in 1295. Lippo’s father and grandfather were soldiers. If the reference in these lines is not to him, the phrase “andava . . . a la cerca” may have its more common sense of “went begging” or “went about the countryside as peddlers,” as Buti understands the phrase.

64. **sariesi** = **si sarebbe**. The reflexive specifies identity and bears also a touch of its distancing function. **Montemurlo**:
A castle on a hill between Prato and Pistoia which belonged to the Conti Guidi, who were finally (1254) obliged to sell it to the Florentines since they could not hold it against the Pistoians. Its acquisition, therefore, marks a step in the aggressive expansion of Florence.

65. Cerchi: Wealthy Florentine family of low origin, who originally came from Acone, a small village in the neighborhood of Florence. In 1215, when Florence was divided into Guelphs and Ghibellines, they espoused the cause of the former and were already at that date rising into prominence. Subsequently, when the Florentine Guelphs split up into Bianchi and Neri, by which time the Cerchi were wealthy merchants and very powerful in the commercial world, they became the leaders of the former, while the Donati, who were of noble origin, headed the Neri.

After their purchase of the palace of the Conti Guidi (Villani, IV, 11) the Cerchi became the near neighbors of the more ancient but less wealthy Donati, and in consequence great jealousy, ending in a deadly feud, arose between the two houses, which led to constant breaches of the peace in Florence. Cacciaguida laments that the feud between the Church and the emperor, among other consequences, brought the Cerchi from their original home at Acone to settle in Florence.

It appears that the people of Acone district were constantly at war with the Florentines on account of the castle of Montecroce, which belonged to the Conti Guidi and was situated in their neighborhood, close to the Florentine territory. After a number of unsuccessful attempts, the Florentines at length, in 1154, captured it by treachery and razed it, on which account the Conti Guidi ever after bore a grudge against Florence, as Villani (IV, 37) relates. It was about this time that the Cerchi came to Florence. *piovier = pievania*, a group of parishes under the head (*piovano*) of one of them.

66. Valdigreve: The valley of the Greve, a small river of Tuscany, which rises about twenty miles south of Florence
and flows north, joining the Ema close to Galluzzo, about three miles from the Porta Romana of Florence. Buon-delmonti: The leaders of the Guelph party in Florence, whose family left the country and took up their residence in Florence in 1135, on account of the destruction of their castle of Montebuono in the Valdigreve close to Florence, in the process of the expansion of the city.


69. s'appone: “Is added,” i.e., to food still undigested in the stomach, which, it was believed, causes sickness.


71–72. e molte volte . . . spade: “Many times one sword will cut better than five.” The article with the number (“le cinque”) is common in early Italian.

73. Luni: Ancient Luna, a maritime town in Etruria on the left bank of the Magra, not far from Sarzana, on the boundary between Liguria and Etruria. Modern Luni is west of Apuania, Tuscany, near the Carrara marble quarries. The first mention of ancient Luna was in 177 B.C. It fell into decay under the Roman emperors and was sacked by the Lombards in 630, by the Saracens in 849, and again in 1016. The date of its final destruction is uncertain. The site of the ancient town is still marked by the ruins of an amphitheater and circus. The harbor of Luna (the Gulf of La Spezia or the mouth of the Magra) was well known, but the Magra was silted up, and Portovenere took its place. Luni was an episcopal see, which was transferred to Sarzana by Innocent III in 1204. It was from Luni that the district of Lunigiana derived its name.

Orbisaglia: Urbisaglia, the ancient Urbs Salvia, was once an important town, but in Dante’s day the ancient city was a collection of ruins. In the region of the Marches, about thirty miles south of Ancona and about six miles southwest of Macerata, the extensive Roman remains consist of an amphitheater, baths, and walls.
75. *Chiusi*: The ancient Clusium, formerly one of the twelve great Etruscan cities. It is situated in the Val di Chiana, close to the lake of the same name, on the borders of Tuscany and Umbria, midway between Florence and Rome on the Via Cassia. The decay of Chiusi was doubtless in great part due to the unhealthiness of its situation in the malarious Val di Chiana, as Benvenuto points out. See Villani, I, 54.

*Sinigaglia*: Now Senigallia, the ancient Sena Gallica, called Senagallia by Pliny (*Nat. hist.* III, xiv, 113), so named to distinguish it from Sena Julia (Siena). It is situated on the Adriatic at the mouth of the Misa, about seventeen miles northwest of Ancona, in what was formerly the duchy of Urbino, but now forms part of the region of the Marches. The ancient city, which was founded by the Galli Senones, was made a Roman colony in 283 B.C. It was sacked by Pompey in 82 B.C. and ravaged by Alaric, king of the Visigoths, in the fifth century, by the Lombards in the eighth century, and by the Saracens in the ninth century. It was eventually ruined for a time in the thirteenth century by the wars of the Guelphs and Ghibellines and especially by the severities of Guido da Montefeltro. According to Benvenuto the town was practically deserted in his day.

78. *termine*: “An end.”

80. *celasi in = si cela in*, “it is not apparent in the case of.”


82–83. *E come 'l volger ... posa*: It was the common opinion that tides are due to the influence of the moon (a fact accepted by modern science in the sense that tides are caused by the interaction between the moon and the earth of gravitational forces). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 110, a. 3, ad 1.

84. *così fa di Fiorenza la Fortuna*: Cf. *Inf.* VII, 67-81. Fortune’s realm, the whole sublunar world, is characterized by constant change. “Fortuna” is the subject of “fa.”

88. Ughi: Ancient noble family of Florence. Villani (IV, 12) says that in his own day they were extinct. Catellini: Another ancient noble family of Florence mentioned by Villani (IV, 12). They were also extinct in Dante’s day.

89. Filippi: Of the Filippi, another ancient noble family of Florence, Villani (IV, 13) says: “[I] Filippi, che oggi sono niente, allora erano grandi e possenti, abitavano in Mercato nuovo.” (“The Filippi, who are nothing today, were great and powerful then and lived near the Mercato Nuovo.”)

Greci: The reference here is to yet another noble family of Florence, extinct in Dante’s day. The Borgo de’ Greci in Florence (which at the present time leads from the Piazza San Firenze to the Piazza Santa Croce) was named for them. See Villani, IV, 13.

89–93. Ormanni e Alberichi . . . Bostichi: All these old families have declined or disappeared. See Villani, IV, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

94–95. Sopra la porta . . . peso: In 1280 the Cerchi bought the palace of the Conti Guidi, near the Porta San Piero (see Dino Compagni, I, 20). The Cerchi became leaders in party strife. See n. to vs. 65.

96. jattura: “Jettison,” throwing overboard. Perhaps the reference is to the exile of the Bianchi, including many of the Cerchi, in 1302, the “barca” being the city of Florence itself.

97–99. i Ravignani . . . preso: The Ravignani were another of the older families extinct in Dante’s day. The head of the family, in Cacciaiguida’s time, was Bellincione Berti (cf. Par. XV, 112), the father of Gualdrada, who was the wife of Guido Guerra IV. The several lines of the Conti Guidi descended from them. The Conte Guido here referred to was doubtless their grandson, that same Guido Guerra of Inf. XVI, 38 (see n. to that vs.).
e qualunque... preso: The descendants of Ubertino Donati, son-in-law of Bellincione Berti, took the name of Bellincioni, as did some members of the Adimari family.

100. de la Pressa: Villani (IV, 10) includes this family among the old families who lived in the neighborhood of the Duomo. They were among the Ghibelline families who were expelled from Florence in 1258 (Villani, VI, 65) and were associated with the Abati in the treachery at Montaperti (VI, 79).

101. Galigaio: Galigaio de' Galigai was a member of an ancient noble family of Florence. Villani (IV, 11), who describes the family as "molto antichi," says the Galigai lived in the Porta San Piero. They were Ghibellines (Villani, V, 39) and as such were expelled from Florence in 1258 (VI, 65). In 1293, in consequence of a murderous assault committed in France by one of the family upon a Florentine citizen, their houses in Florence were demolished in obedience to the provisions of the ordinamenti di giustizia, under the superintendence of Dino Compagni, who records the fact in his Cronica (I, 12).

102. dorata in casa sua già l'elsa e 'l pome: A sign of nobility.

103. la colonna del Vaio: A representation of a strip of vair (ermine) traversed longitudinally the escutcheon of the Pigli family. Villani (IV, 12) mentions them among the old Florentine families. He says that they became Ghibellines (in 1215), though some of the family afterwards joined the Guelphs (V, 39), and eventually they identified themselves for the most part with the Bianchi (VIII, 39).

104. Sacchetti: Villani speaks of this ancient family as Guelph (V, 39) and as having been among those who fled from Florence to Lucca after the great Ghibelline victory of Montaperti (VI, 80). Giuochi: According to Villani (V, 39; VI, 33) this family was Ghibelline and, though originally noble, had suffered a decline by his time. Fiftanti: Villani mentions this family as being among the early inhabitants of
Florence. He records that they were Ghibelline (V, 39) and as such were expelled from the city in 1258 (VI, 65).

Barucci: The Barucci family was also Ghibelline and according to Villani (IV, 10) extinct in his time.

105. Galli: Villani states that the Galli were Ghibellines (V, 39) who lived in the Mercato Nuovo and in his time had become of no account (IV, 13). Their houses in Florence, like those of the Galigai, were demolished in 1293 in accordance with the provisions of the ordinamenti di giustizia (Villani, VIII, 1), on which account, probably, the Ottimo Commento speaks of them as being hopelessly ruined. quei che arrossan per lo stiao: The Chiaramontesi, here spoken of by reference to a fraud of a member of the house who was overseer of the salt customs. This same fraud is also alluded to, together with that of Niccola Acciaiuoli, in connection with the ascent to the church of San Miniato, the steps of which Dante says were made in the days “when the ledger and the stave were safe” in Florence. See nn. to Purg. XII, 105 and 104-5.

106. i Calfucci: A Guelph family. According to Villani (IV, 11) they were extinct in his time. They descended from the Donati family, their stock (“ceppo”).

108. curule: Supreme offices of magistrates, high civic offices. Sizii e Arrigucci: Ancient noble families of Florence. The two families are frequently mentioned together by Villani, who says they resided in the “quartiere della porta del Duomo” (IV, 10). They were Guelphs (Villani, V, 39; VI, 33) and were among those who fled from Florence to Lucca after the great Ghibelline victory at Montaperti (VI, 80). They afterwards threw in their lot with the Bianchi (VIII, 39).

109. quali: In what glory.

109–10. quei che son . . . superbia: The Uberti, who in the latter part of the twelfth century rebelled against the Florentine government and for a while gained control of the city. For Farinata degli Uberti, see Inf. X.
110–11. *le palle de l’oro ... fatti:* The Lamberti family, to which Mosca (*Inf.* XXVIII, 106) belonged, had golden balls on their shield. Both the Lamberti and the Uberti were of German origin.

112–14. *Così facieno ... consùtoro:* The Visdomini and the Tosinghi, patrons of the bishopric of Florence, administered the episcopal revenues whenever the see was vacant, until a successor was chosen, “and thus after the death of a bishop, by securing delay in the appointment of his successor, grew fat on the episcopal revenues” (*Norton*).

115. *L’oltracotata schiatta:* The reference is to the Adimari family. Villani says that they were Guelphs (V, 39) and as such were expelled from Florence in 1248 (VI, 33). They were among those who took refuge in Lucca after the Ghibelline victory at Montaperti in 1260 (VI, 80); and, when subsequently the Guelph party in Florence split up into Bianchi and Neri, they all joined the former, with the exception of the Cavicciuli branch (VIII, 39). It appears from Villani (VII, 56) that there was a bitter feud between the Adimari and the Donati (who were afterwards leaders of the Neri) long before the division of the Guelph party in Florence, and this feud is doubtless hinted at in Cacciaigua's allusion. *oltracotata =* oltracotante, “proud and insolent.” *s’indraca:* "Becomes fierce as a dragon.” Filippo Argenti (*Inf.* VIII, 61) belonged to this clan.

118. *venia = veniva.*

119–20. *sì che non piacque ... parente:* Ubertino Donati, who had married one daughter of Bellincione Berti, was displeased when another daughter was given in marriage to one of the humble stock of the Adimari. Cf. n. to vss. 97-99.

120. *il fé = lo fece.*

121. *‘l Caponsacco:* The singular is used for the plural (the entire family) here as elsewhere (cf. vs. 92). The Caponsacchi, ancient noble family of Florence, originally (in 1125) came from Fiesole. Villani says they were one of the original
Ghibelline families in Florence (V, 39) and records that they took part in the expulsion of the Florentine Guelphs in 1248 (VI, 33) and that they were among the Ghibellines who were themselves expelled in 1258 (VI, 65). After their return from exile in 1280 they appear to have joined the Bianchi and to have been again expelled along with them in 1302.

122. Fiesole: See n. to Inf. XV, 62.

123. Giuda: Again the singular is used for the plural, referring to the Giudi family of Florence. The Ottimo Commento says of them: “Questi son gente d’alto animo, Ghibellini, e molto abbassati d’onore e di ricchezze e di persone; e quelli che v’erano al tempo dell’Autore, seguirono coi detti Cerchi la fuga.” (“This is a family proud of its lineage, Ghibellines, but it has dwindled in honors, riches and in numbers, and those who were in Florence in the author’s time followed the Cerchi in fleeing the city.”) Infangato: Name, again in the singular, used to represent the Infangati family. Villani mentions them among the ancient families of note in Florence and says they were Ghibellines (V, 39) and as such were expelled from Florence in 1258 (VI, 65).

125. picciol cerchio: The old city walls. Cf. Par. XV, 97.

126. quei de la Pera: Ancient noble family of Florence. The gate in question is said to have been the Porta Peruzza, one of the minor city gates. The statement that the family gave their name to one of the city gates, which Cacciaguida qualifies as “incredible but true,” has been explained in various ways. Some think the incredible point was the smallness of the size of the city of Florence when this was one of the actual city gates. The view taken by the Ottimo Commento, however, seems the best: “Dice l’Autore: chi crederebbe, che quelli della Pera fossono antichi? Io direi ch’ella sono si antichi, che una porta del primo cerchio della città fu denominata da loro; li quali vennero sì meno, che di loro non fu memoria.” (“The author says: who would believe that the Pera family was ancient? I tell you, they are so ancient that one of the gates of the first walls of the city was named for
them, but they declined so that the memory of them perished.”)

127–29. Ciascun che . . . riconforta: The great baron is the Marquis Hugh of Brandenburg. He is said to have come to Florence from Germany with Emperor Otto III, and while there to have conferred knighthood on six Florentine families (the Giandonati, the Pulci, the Nerli, the Gangalandi, the Alepri, and the Della Bella). He died in Florence on the festival of St. Thomas the Apostle and was buried in the Badia of Florence (founded by his mother in 978), where the anniversary of his death was (and is still) solemnly commemorated every year on St. Thomas’ day (December 21). The coat of arms referred to as “la bella insegna” consisted of seven red and white staves, which each of the families named above adopted, with variations, in its escutcheon. See M. Barbi (1934), p. 303.

This marquis of Brandenburg appears to be identical with Ugo, marquis of Tuscany from 961 to 1001, who was the son of Uberto, marquis of Tuscany from 936 to 961 (natural son of Ugo, king of Italy and count of Arles from 926 to 945), and of the Countess Willa (foundress of the Badia of Florence in 978).

131–32. avvegna che . . . fregio: “One, however, of the knights whose nobility goes back to Hugh, is now ‘siding with the people.’ This is Giano della Bella, who introduced, in 1293, severe reform measures directed against the nobles, and was banished in 1295. His family has somewhat changed the escutcheon of the ‘great baron,’ ‘bordering’ it with a ‘fringe’” (Gr). They had a border of gold on their coat of arms.

133. Gualterotti e Importuni: These old families had also fallen from high estate by Dante’s time. Both were excluded from the magistracy in 1311, and both were Guelphs (Villani, V, 39).

134. Borgo: The quarter called Borgo Santi Apostoli, where the Gualterotti and Importuni lived.
135. *se di novi vicin fosser digiuni:* "‘If they had gone on fasting for new neighbors,’ i.e., if they had never had any: for this use of *digiuno*, cf. *Inf.* XVIII, 42, and XXVIII, 87. The undesirable new neighbors are the Buondelmonti (cf. l. 66), who, after the destruction of their castle of Montebuono in 1135, returned to take up their abode in Florence” (Gr).


137. *disdegno:* “Resentment.” The indignation of the Amidei against Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti, who, on his wedding day, in 1215, forsook his betrothed—one of the Amidei—for a daughter of the Donati. *che v'ha morti:* To avenge this insult, the Amidei murdered him, and this was the beginning of the feud. See *Inf.* XXVIII, 103-11. *v'ha morti:* Here the verb is transitive, “has slain you.”

139. *suoi consorti:* “Their associates.” “The Uccellini and Gherardini. In the democratic legislation against the Magnates (who systematically defied the civic law and recognised no authority save that of the Family Council), members of a family who had ceased to act with it were regarded as no longer belonging to it, and members of another family who had joined its Tower-club, that is to say, its association for the maintenance of a tower for military purposes, were regarded as its ‘consorts,’ or associates, forming one *consorteria* with it, and therefore legally identified with it” (TC).


143. *Ema:* Small stream in Tuscany, which rises in the hills south of Florence and falls into the Greve a few miles from the city. It is crossed near Galluzzo by the road from the Val di Greve to Florence, by which the Buondelmonti would have entered Florence in coming from their castle to the city. Though the reference here is, first of all, to the individual named Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti (vs. 140), also im-
plied of course is the evident involvement of the entire family in the tragic incident and their coming into the city from the country in the first place.

145-47. *Ma conveniesi* . . . *postrema*: “But it was fitting that Florence, in her last peace, should offer a victim to that mutilated stone which guards the bridge”—the old, broken statue supposed to be of Mars (the first patron of Florence) at the end of the Ponte Vecchio. Cf. *Inf.* XIII, 143-150. The victim was Buondelmonte, who was killed on Easter morning at the foot of the statue” (Gr). See also *Inf.* XXVIII, 107-8.

145. *conveniesi* = *si conveniva*.

146. *fesse* = *facesse*.

148. *altre con esse*: As Scartazzini-Vandelli observes, Villani (V, 39) mentions some seventy noble or notable families in 1215, hence Cacciaguida has not even mentioned half of them.

154. *né per division fatto vermiglio*: In 1251, after the expulsion of the Ghibellines, the Guelphs altered the Florentine standard from a white lily in a red field to a red lily in a white field. The Ghibellines kept the old colors. See Villani, VI, 43.
1–2. *Qual venne a Climenè . . . uditò*: Because Dante has received several dire forecasts of exile and hard years ahead from Farinata, Brunetto Latini, and Vanni Fucci, and has just now heard Cacciaguida mention internal strife in Florence such as often leads to exile, he is naturally anxious to learn something about his own future. Although he had been informed by Virgil (*Inf.* X, 130-32) that Beatrice would tell him about the course of his life, and he remembered this and referred to it later (*Inf.* XV, 89-90), Dante nevertheless now turns to Cacciaguida in his concern. The poet, having doubtless decided while writing the poem to stage an encounter with Cacciaguida, finds it more appropriate to have great-great-grandfather provide this information in Beatrice’s place.

Dante compares himself to Phaëthon, who, having been told by a comrade that the god of the Sun was not really his father, went to his mother, Clymene, to find out the truth. Clymene swore to Phaëthon that he was truly the son of the god and urged him to ask his father in person. The result was that Phaëthon induced his father to let him drive his chariot, an enterprise that proved fatal to him. Dante got the story from Ovid; see *Metam.* I, 750-61:
He had a companion of like mind and age named Phaëthon, child of the Sun. When this Phaëthon was once speaking proudly, and refused to give way to him, boasting that Phoebus was his father, the grandson of Inachus rebelled and said: "You are a fool to believe all your mother tells you, and are swelled up with false notions about your father." Phaëthon grew red with rage, but repressed his anger through very shame and carried Epaphus' insulting taunt straight to his mother, Clymene. "And that you may grieve the more, mother," he said, "I, the high-spirited, the bold of tongue, had no word to say. Ashamed am I that such an insult could have been uttered and yet could not be answered. But do you, if I am indeed sprung from heavenly seed, give me a proof of my high birth, and justify my claims to divine origin."

See Inf. XVII, 106-8.

1. Climènè: For the accentuation of Greek proper names, see the n. to Inf. V, 4.

3. quei ch'ancor fa li padri ai figli scarsi: The example of Phaëthon still makes fathers cautious in granting their sons' requests because of the tragedy that resulted when Phaëthon was allowed by his father to drive the chariot of the Sun. See Ovid, Metam. II, 31-328.

5-6. da la santa lampa . . . sito: The "holy lamp" (light) is
the soul of Cacciaguida. For the changing of place, see Par. XV, 19-24.

7–9. *Manda fuor . . . stampa:* Dante’s desire to know what he now will ask of Cacciaguida is a burning desire (termed a “thirst” in vs. 12) within him to which Beatrice urges him to give adequate expression.

10. *nostra conoscenza:* Beatrice here speaks of herself and all the blessed in Heaven.

11. *ma perché t’ausi:* “But in order that you may accustom yourself.”

12. *sì che l’uom ti mesca:* “So that one may pour you [drink].” “Uom” is here used as the equivalent of the French *on.*

13. *piota:* “Sole of the foot,” i.e., foundation. (Cf. *Inf.* XIX, 120.) Elsewhere the term “radice” is applied to Cacciaguida (*Par.* XV, 89), and “ceppo” is used in referring to another family (*Par.* XVI, 106).

14–16. *come veggion . . . contingenti:* “The blessed see even ‘contingent,’ or casual, things—whether they be past, present, or future—as clearly as ‘earthly minds’ can grasp an eternal, concrete, elementary fact—as for instance the geometrical proposition that ‘two obtuse angles cannot be contained in a triangle.’ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* IX, x” (Gr). Cf. “breve contingenze” in *Par.* XIII, 63.

16–18. *così vedi . . . presenti:* As has been made clear before, the blessed are able to know many things denied to ordinary mortals, since they see them in God. For God’s own knowledge of contingent things specifically, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 14, a. 13, resp.:

Deus autem cognoscit omnia contingentia, non solum prout sunt in suis causis, sed etiam prout unumquodque eorum est actu in se ipso. Et licet contingentia fiant in actu successive, non tamen Deus successive cognoscit contingentia, prout sunt in suo esse, sicut nos, sed simul;
quía eíus cognitio mensuratur aeternitate, sicut etiam suum esse; aeternitas autem tota simul existens ambit totum tempus, ut supra dictum est, quaest. 10, art. 2 et 4. Unde omnia quae sunt in tempore, sunt Deo ab aeterno praesentia, non solum ea ratione qua habet rationes rerum apud se praesentes, ut quidam dicunt, sed quia eíus intuitus fertur ab aeterno supra omnia, prout sunt in sua praesentialitate. Unde manifestum est quod contingentia infallibiliter a Deo cognoscuntur, in quantum subduntur divino conspectui secundum suam praesentialitatem, et tamen sunt futura contingentia, suis causis proximis comparata.

Now God knows all contingent things not only as they are in their causes, but also as each one of them is actually in itself. And although contingent things become actual successively, nevertheless God knows contingent things not successively, as they are in their own being, as we do; but simultaneously. The reason is because His knowledge is measured by eternity, as is also His being; and eternity being simultaneously whole comprises all time, as said above (q. 10, [aa. 2, 4]). Hence, all things that are in time are present to God from eternity, not only because He has the types of things present within Him, as some say; but because His glance is carried from eternity over all things as they are in their presentiality. Hence it is manifest that contingent things are infallibly known by God, inasmuch as they are subject to the divine sight in their presentiality; yet they are future contingent things in relation to their own causes.

19–23. mentre ch’io . . . gravi: See n. to vss. 1-3. Also see Purg. VIII, 133-39; XI, 139-42.


27. ché saetta previsa vien più lenta: “An arrow foreseen
comes slower,” i.e., strikes us with a less violent shock. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 123, a. 9, resp.: 

In operatione fortitudinis duo sunt consideranda: unum quidem quantum ad electionem ipsius; et sic fortitudo non est circa repentina; eligit enim fortis praemeditari pericula, quae possunt imminere, ut eis resistere possit, aut facilius ea ferre: quia, ut Gregorius dicit in quadam homil. ([35] in Evang., in princ.), *iacula quae praevidentur, minus feriunt; et nos mala mundi facilius ferimus, si contra ea clypeo praescientiae praemunimus.*

Aliud vero considerandum est in operatione fortitudinis quantum ad manifestationem virtuosi habitus; et sic fortitudo maxime est circa repentina; quia secundum Philosophum in 3 Ethic. (cap. 8, ad fin.), in repentinis periculis maxime manifestatur fortitudinis habitus: habitus enim agit in modum naturae. Unde quod aliquis absque praemeditatione faciat ea quae sunt virtutis, cum necessitas imminet propter repentina pericula, hoc maxime manifestat quod sit fortitudo habitualis in animo confirmata.

Potest autem aliquis, etiam qui habitu fortitudinis caret, ex diuturna praemeditatione animum suum contra pericula praeparare: qua etiam praeparatione fortis utitur, cum tempus adest.

Two things must be considered in the operation of fortitude. One is in regard to its choice: and thus fortitude is not about sudden occurrences: because the brave man chooses to think beforehand of the dangers that may arise, in order to be able to withstand them, or to bear them more easily: since according to Gregory (*Hom. [xxxv], in Ev.)*, *the blow that is foreseen strikes with less force, and we are able more easily to bear earthly wrongs, if we are forearmed with the shield of foreknowledge.* The other thing to be considered in the operation of fortitude regards the display of the virtuous habit: and in this way fortitude is chiefly about sudden occurrences, because according to the Philosopher (*Ethic. iii. 8*) the habit of fortitude is displayed chiefly
in sudden dangers: since a habit works by way of nature. Wherefore if a person without forethought does that which pertains to virtue, when necessity urges on account of some sudden danger, this is a very strong proof that habitual fortitude is firmly seated in his mind.

Yet is it possible for a person even without the habit of fortitude, to prepare his mind against danger by long forethought: in the same way as a brave man prepares himself when necessary.


31–33. *Ne per ambage ... tolle:* In no enigmatical or ambiguous terms, such as heathen prophets used in order to ensnare the “foolish folk.” In *Aen.* VI, 98-100 Virgil writes:

> Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumaeae Sibylla
> horrendas canit ambages antroque remugit,
> obscuris vera involvens...

In such words the Cumaean Sibyl chants from the shrine her dread enigmas and echoes from the cavern, wrapping truth in darkness.

On “ambage,” see P. Rajna (1920), p. 93. The “gente folle” are the pagans, of course, as the verses make clear. Cf. *Par.* VIII, 1-6.

32. *già s’inviscava:* “Once entangled themselves.” The verb is based on vischio, “birdlime.” Cf. *Inf.* XIII, 57: “m’ineschì.” See also *Inf.* XXII, 144.


35. *latin:* “Discourse.” Dante also uses the word in this sense in *Par.* XII, 144.

36. *chiuso e parvente del suo proprio riso:* “Enclosed by his own radiance and manifesting his own joy.”
37–39. *La contingenza... eterno*: See n. to vss. 16–18 for the quotation from Thomas Aquinas. Here the singular implies the plural, “contingent events.” These occur only in the sublunar world, which is also called the elemental world of matter in that the four elements—fire, air, water, and earth—make it up. This notion of the four elements is implied in the term “quaderno” (cf. the English *quaternion*), which in turn also fits the metaphor of book (volume) in the sense of a quire.

40–42. *necessità però... discende*: “‘But it [contingency] does not derive inevitability therefrom (from being foreseen by God), any more than a boat going downstream derives inevitability from the eye in which it is mirrored.’ Casual things are no more necessary from being anticipated by omniscience than they would be if there were no power to see them coming” (Gr). See n. to vss. 16–18. Here the question concerns the determination of future contingent events in regard to their being foreseen by God, and Aquinas’ argument at another point in the *Summa theologiae* (I, q. 22, a. 4, resp.) is more pertinent:

> Providentia divina quibusdam rebus necessitatem imponit, non autem omnibus, ut quidam crediderunt.
> Ad providentiam enim pertinet ordinare res in finem. Post bonitatem autem divinam, quae est finis a rebus separatus, principale bonum in ipsis rebus existens est perfectio universi; quae quidem non esset, si non omnes gradus essendi invenirentur in rebus. Unde ad divinam providentiam pertinet omnes gradus entium producere. Et ideo quibusdam effectibus praeparavit causas necessarias, ut necessario evenirent; quibusdam vero causas contingentes, ut evenirent contingenter, secundum conditionem proximarum causarum.

> Divine providence imposes necessity upon some things; not upon all, as some formerly believed. For to providence it belongs to order things towards an end. Now after the divine goodness, which is an extrinsic end to all things, the principal good in things themselves is the perfection of the universe; which would not be, were not
all grades of being found in things. Whence it pertains to divine providence to produce every grade of being. And thus it has prepared for some things necessary causes, so that they happen of necessity; for others contingent causes, that they may happen by contingency, according to the nature of their proximate causes.

To be sure, the image expressed in vss. 41-42 states the matter in terms of a human eye in which the boat going downstream is mirrored, and this would seem to make a considerable difference. For when the event is mirrored in God, He could and (in the sense expressed by Aquinas above) does have control over all things, whether contingent or not. Cf. vs. 17.

43. Da indi: From the “cospetto etterno,” vs. 39. “Da” may be considered redundant here.

43-44. si come . . . organo: Since the prophecies of what is to come are dire indeed for Dante, one may wonder at the comparison with sweet music. But Cacciaguida is one of the blessed and in God’s will is his peace (Par. III, 85), that is, all things willed by God or allowed by God, such as these “contingent things,” are “sweet.”

46-47. Qual si partio . . . noverca: Hippolytus was a son of Theseus by Hippolyte, a queen of the Amazons. Theseus later married Phaedra, who fell in love with her stepson Hippolytus; on his rejecting her shameful proposals, she accused him to his father of having attempted her dishonor. Theseus thereupon cursed his son, who was obliged to flee from Athens. He subsequently met his death in fulfillment of his father’s curse. When Theseus afterwards discovered that Phaedra’s accusation was false, Phaedra killed herself in despair. Dante got the story of Hippolytus and Phaedra from Ovid (Metam. XV, 497-505). See Virgil, Aen. VII, 761-82; Cicero, De officiis I, x, 32.

47. noverca = matrigna, “stepmother.” Cf. Par. XVI, 59.

49-51. Questo si vuole . . . merca: Apparently the exile of Dante and other opponents of the papal policy was planned
in Rome in April 1300, two months before Dante’s priorate. Specifically the reference seems to be to the fact that Boniface VIII and the Roman curia were already plotting to turn the city of Florence over to the faction of the Neri, an event which did indeed lead finally to Dante’s exile. At this time the city was in a state of ferment, owing to the feuds between the Neri and the Bianchi. The former were the partisans of Boniface and were clamoring for Charles of Valois as his representative, while the Bianchi, to which faction Dante belonged, were bitterly opposed both to Boniface and to Charles. In October 1301, in order to appeal for a change in the papal policy towards the city and to protest the machinations of the Neri, the Bianchi sent to Rome an embassy of which, according to Dino Compagni’s *Cronica* (II, 25), Dante was a member. During Dante’s absence, however, Charles of Valois entered Florence (November 1, 1301), and soon afterwards the podestà, Cante de’ Gabrielli of Gubbio, under the date of January 27, 1302, pronounced a sentence against Dante and other Bianchi, a sentence which in Dante’s case was followed by yet others. Dante never returned to Florence.

50. verrà fatto a chi: “Will be brought about by him who”—i.e., by Pope Boniface.

51. là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca: The place is Rome, where the pope and curia traffic in holy things. Cf. similar judgments in *Inf.* XIX, 52-57, 69-72.

52–53. *La colpa . . . suol:* Compare Boethius, *Consol. philos.* I, 4, ll. 158-59: “Quo fit ut existimatio bona prima omnium deserat infelices.” (“By which means it comes to pass that the first loss which miserable men suffer is their esteem and the good opinion which was had of them.”)

52. *colpa:* “Blame.” *offensa* = *offesa*, “wronged.”

53–54. *ma la vendetta . . . dispensa:* “Many regarded the disgrace and death of Boniface VIII as a divine punishment for his cruelty and ambition” (Gr). See Dino Compagni, *Cronica* II, 35; Villani, VIII, 64.
58–59. *come sa di sale lo pane altrui*: How bitter is the bread of another, i.e., bread that must be begged of someone else.


59. *altrui*: The possessive form, as used again in vs. 60.

60. *l'altrui scale*: Literally, the stairs of another, but clearly meaning the begged-for bed and hospitality.

62. *la compagnia malvagia e scempia*: The other Florentine exiles of the party of the Bianchi. Of Dante’s movements for some years after his exile, little is known for certain. In 1302 he was at San Godenzo in the Mugello at a meeting of the Bianchi and the next year at Forlì, where he served at one point as an aide to Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi. On July 20, 1304, the exiled Bianchi made an abortive attempt to effect an entry into the city, but from this attempt Dante seems to have held aloof, and about this time he separated himself from the Bianchi, having come to hold them in the bitter dis­esteem which the adjectives here reflect.

63. *in questa valle*: Vale of tears, of hardship and suffering, which your exile will be for you.

66. *ella*: The company of the exiled Bianchi. *n'avrà rossa la tempia*: “Shall have its brows red therefrom,” i.e., shall blush for shame for its foolishness, stupidity, and wicked deeds.

67–68. *Di sua bestialitate . . . prova*: Their very deeds and ways of proceeding (“processo”)—implying the progressive unfolding of their deeds and ways—will be the best proof of their stupidity.

68–69. *sì ch'a te . . . stesso*: It will be more fitting and commendable on your part to have left that wicked company (that party) and to stand aloof and alone, a party by yourself.
69. *averti fatta*: The use of *avere* as auxiliary in reflexive verbs is common in early Italian.

70–72. *Lo primo . . . uccello*: Apparently, after separating himself from the exiled Bianchi, Dante took refuge at Verona, with one of the Scaligers (probably Bartolomeo della Scala). Nearly all the early commentators, including Pietro di Dante, who ought to have known, take the reference to be to Bartolomeo. After the death of Ezzelino III, Mastino della Scala was elected captain of Verona (1262). He was succeeded (in 1277) by his brother Alberto della Scala, who had four sons, Bartolomeo, Alboino, Can Grande, and Giuseppe, the abbot of San Zeno (*Purg.* XVIII, 124-26). Alberto died in 1301 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Bartolomeo, who died in March 1304.

The coat of arms of the Scaliger family was a ladder surmounted by the imperial eagle. For “santo uccello” in this sense, see *Par*. VI, 4. Some commentators have objected to the identification of the “gran Lombardo” as Bartolomeo because in his time the Scaligers did not bear the imperial eagle on their arms. This, however, as Scartazzini-Vandelli points out, is a mistake of Dante himself, and the objection might be urged equally against any of the other members of the family. Dante makes Cacciaguida, speaking in 1300 (the imagined date of the journey), say that the Scaliger in question “bears” (“porta”) the imperial eagle on his arms, the fact being that the first of the family to be created imperial vicar was Alboino, who was appointed to the office by Henry VII in 1311. Butler suggests that Bartolomeo adopted the eagle as a sign of devotion to the imperial cause; but even so, since he did not succeed his father, Alberto, until 1301, the description in the text could hardly have applied to him in 1300. For the view that “il gran Lombardo” is Can Grande, see C. Hardie (1963). On this question, see the *Encyclopediadantesca*, under the entry “Della Scala.”

73. *ch’inte = verso di te*.

74. *del fare e del chieder*: “De” (*di*) is here used as in its limiting sense in Latin, “as for.”
75. *fia primo quel che tra li altri è più tardo*: The great Lombard will give before you have to ask, which is not usual with benefactors, who wait to be asked before giving.

76–78. *Con lui vedrai . . . sue*: Can Francesco della Scala, called Can Grande, third son of Alberto della Scala (lord of Verona, 1277-1301), was born on March 9, 1291. In 1308 he married Giovanna, daughter of Conrad of Antioch, and died at Treviso on July 22, 1329. In 1308 he was associated with his brother Alboino in the lordship of Verona and was made joint imperial vicar with him by Emperor Henry VII; on the death of Alboino (November 29, 1311) he became sole lord of Verona, a position which he maintained until his death.

To Can Grande Dante dedicated the *Paradiso*, in a lengthy letter addressed (Epist. XIII, 1) “magnifico atque victorioso domino domino Cani Grandi de la Scala sacratissimi Cesarei Principatus in urbe Verona et civitate Vicentie Vicario generali” (“to the magnificent and victorious lord, Lord Can Grande della Scala, vicar-general of the most sacred imperial principedom in the city of Verona and in the state of Vicenza”), in which the title and subject of the *Divine Comedy* are discussed. The letter opens with a eulogy of Can Grande’s magnificence and bounty, of which Dante says he himself partook, and which he acknowledges to have surpassed even the extravagant reports he had heard of it (Epist. XIII, 2-3):

Inclita vestre Magnificentie laus, quam fama vigil volitando disseminat, sic distrahit in diversa diversos, ut hos in spem sue prosperitatis attollat, hos exterminii deiciat in terrorem. Huius quidem preconium, facta modernorum exsuperans, tanquam veri existentia latius arbitrabar aliquando superfluum. Verum ne diuturna me nimis incertitudo suspenderet, velut Austri regina Ierusalem petiit, velut Pallas petiit Elicona, Veronam petii fides oculis discursurus audita, ibique magnalia vestra vidi, vidi beneficia simul et tetigi; et quemadmodum prius dictorum ex parte suspicabar excessum, sic posterius ipsa facta excessiva cognovi.
The illustrious praise of your munificence, which wakeful fame scatters abroad as she flies, draws divers in such divers directions as to exalt these in the hope of prosperous success and hurl down those into terror of destruction. Now this report, exceeding all deeds of moderns, I was once wont to think extravagant, as stretching beyond the warrant of truth; but, lest continued doubt should keep me too much in suspense, even as the queen of the south sought Jerusalem or as Pallas sought Helicon, so did I seek Verona, to scrutinise by the faithful testimony of my own eyes the things which I had heard. And there I beheld your splendour, I beheld and at the same time handled your bounty; and even as I had formerly suspected excess on the side of the reports, so did I afterwards recognise that it was the facts themselves that exceeded.

The authenticity of the letter is much disputed. See E. Moore (1903), pp. 284-369; also see F. Mazzoni (1955), who argues for the authenticity of the letter, and B. Nardi (1960) and C. Hardie (1960), who argue against it. The present commentary considers it to be authentic.

77. forte: The adjective, used for the adverb, goes with the preceding “sì.”

78. notabili fier l’opere sue: Can Grande’s great deeds were martial, evidence of the fact that he was chiefly influenced, at birth, by the planet Mars. The following is a summary of the most important events in his career:

1311. Imperial vicar in Verona (Villani, IX, 20); November, sole lord of Verona; December, rescued Brescia from the Guelphs (Villani, IX, 32); helped to take Vicenza from the Paduans.
1312. Imperial vicar in Vicenza.
1314. September, repelled Paduan attack on Vicenza (Villani, IX, 63); October, made peace with Padua and was confirmed in lordship of Vicenza.

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1315. Attacked Cremona, Parma, and Reggio, in alliance with Passerino Bonaccolsi, lord of Mantua and Modena.

1316. Dante perhaps at Verona.

1317. May, with help of Uguccione della Faggiuola repelled fresh attack of Paduans on Vicenza; December, appointed imperial vicar in Verona and Vicenza by Frederick of Austria; besieged Padua (Villani, IX, 89).

1318. April, took Cremona (Villani, IX, 91); December 16, elected captain general of Ghibelline league in Lombardy at Soncino.

1319. August, besieged Padua (Villani, IX, 100).

1320. August 25, repulsed by Paduans, Uguccione della Faggiuola being killed (Villani, IX, 121).

1322. September, took part with Passerino Bonaccolsi in siege of Reggio (Villani, IX, 167).

1324. June, attacked in Padua by German forces of Otto of Austria, whom he repelled (Villani, IX, 255).

1327. Besieged Padua (Villani, X, 42).

1328. Captured Mantua; September 8, at invitation of Paduan Ghibellines became lord of Padua (Villani, X, 101).

1329. July 18, took Treviso, where he died (July 22); buried at Verona (Villani, X, 137).

80. *la novella età*: Can Grande was born in March 1291.


82. *ma pria che 'l Guasco l'alto Arrigo inganni*: Before 1312, when the Gascon pope, Clement V, after promising to support the emperor, Henry VII, in his expedition to Italy, promoted opposition to it. See Inf. XIX, 83; Par. XXX, 133-48.

83. *parran = appariranno*.

84. *in non curar d'argento né d'affanni*: Indifference to
wealth and toil is a characteristic of magnanimity. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 129, a. 8.

88. *A lui t'aspetta:* “Look to him,” “expect from him,” and from his benefactions. The verb is in the imperative. Cf. *Purg.* XVIII, 47.

89. *per lui = da lui.*

89-90. *fia trasmutata . . . mendici:* Cf. Luc. 1:51-53: “Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui, deposuit potentess de sede, et exaltavit humiles, esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes.” (“He has shown might with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”)

91. *portera’ne = ne porterai.*

93. *che fier presente:* “Who shall be witnesses.” *presente = presenti.*

94. *giunse = aggiunse.*

94-95. *le chiose . . . fu detto:* Clarifications (glosses) of what had already been predicted.

95. *le ’nsidie:* Cf. vss. 49-51.

96. *pochi girì:* “But a few turns” of the sun, i.e., in the course of but a few years.

97-99. *Non vo’ però . . . perfidie:* “Dante’s life extended long beyond the miserable end of Boniface and of Corso Donati (*Purg.* XXIV, 82-87). The latter was a ‘neighbor’ in the strictest sense of the word. It may be, however, that l. 98 refers to Dante’s enduring fame, rather than to his bodily existence” (Gr).

97. *invidie = invidii,* “bear hatred toward.”

106-7. *sì come sprona . . . darmi:* The metaphor suggests
that time "spurs toward" Dante, like some charging warrior on horseback, with lance lowered to deal him a terrible blow.

108. *ch'è più grave a chi più s'abbandona*: Such a blow is even more terrible to one who is not expecting it, or, out of metaphor, to one who does not know clearly what blows await him, and these Cacciaguida can see and know, since he sees them in the mind of God.

109. *provedenza = previdenza*.

110. *se loco m'è tolto più caro*: Florence. Such is the reading accepted by Petrocchi. Other editors have "se'l loco," which would be normal.

111. *li altri*: Other places, places of refuge in exile.

112. *lo mondo sanza fine amaro*: Inferno.

113–14. *lo monte . . . levaro*: Purgatory, from the summit of which (beautiful because of the Garden of Eden there) the pilgrim is said to have been lifted by the eyes of Beatrice. Such turns of phrase should not be overlooked, for they are always clear pointers to the allegorical role of Beatrice, as the second of three lights. See C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 23-31.

114. *levaro = levarono*.

115. *di lume in lume*: From one planet to another.

116–17. *quel che . . . agrume*: Dante has seen things—particularly in Hell, where he has seen the damned and where they are punished there—which, if reported, are going to prove very sour to some of his readers, who might otherwise offer him hospitality in his exile. Shall he make a true report, or shall he withhold certain things?

117. *agrume*: "Sourness."

118–20. *e s'io . . . antico*: To withhold true report of the things seen on this journey, to be a "timid friend of truth," could mean that my fame as poet will endure less with pos-
terity, with those who one day will look upon the year 1300 as ancient.

121–23. *La luce in che rideva . . . d’oro:* Cf. Par. XV, 22 and 85. The light which is Cacciaguida, ever resplendent (“rideva”), now becomes more so, at the prospect of counseling his great-great-grandson concerning the question asked.

124. *fusca = offuscata,* “darkened.”

126. *pur sentirà la tua parola brusca:* “Will indeed deem your speech harsh,” whether on their own account, or for the shameful deeds of their relatives (“altrui vergogna”).

128. *vision:* Here, as elsewhere in the poem, the word is used to mean “that which has been seen,” and it nowhere implies “vision” in the sense of a dream-experience.

129. *rogna:* “‘Itch.’—Dante chose to write his poem in the ‘comic’ rather than the ‘tragic’ style, that he might, when occasion required, sacrifice elegance to vigor” (Gr).

130–32. *Ché se la voce . . . digesta:* See Boethius, *Consol. philos.* III, i, ll. 13-14: “Tali a sunt quippe quae restant, ut degustata quidem mordeant, interius autem recepta dulciscant.” (“For the remedies which remain are of that sort that they are bitter to the taste, but being inwardly received wax sweet.”)

132. *digesta = digerita.*

133. *Questo tuo grido:* “Grido” is used here in something of the meaning of a “public proclamation,” i.e., of all that you have seen.

134. *più alte cime:* The word *cima* can suggest “peak” (as of a mountain) or “treetop,” or, out of metaphor, it can mean the mighty of this world.

135. *argomento:* “‘Proof’: because it requires exceptional courage to ‘strike the highest peaks’” (Gr).

136. *Però = perciò,* which depends on “che” in vs. 139.
138. *pur l’anima che son di fama note*: Cacciaguida’s assertion here cannot be taken as literally true, for every reader will recall the many humble, unknown characters encountered in Hell and elsewhere. One has only to think of the riffraff, generally, of the eighth circle of Inferno.

139–42. *che l’animo ... paia*: “The listener is never satisfied nor convinced by an unknown example or an obscure argument” (Gr).

140. *aia = abbia*. 
1. *verbo*: “Word,” i.e., thought. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 34, a. 1, resp.: “Ex hoc ergo dicitur verbum vox exterior, quia significat interiorem mentis conceptum. Sic igitur primo et principaliter interior mentis conceptus verbum dicitur.” (“Wherefore the exterior vocal sound is called a word from the fact that it signifies the interior concept of the mind. Therefore it follows that, first and chiefly, the interior concept of the mind is called a word.”)

2. *specchio*: Cacciaguida is called a “mirror” because he reflects God’s mind.

3. *lo mio*: My inner thoughts. *temprando col dolce l’acerbo*: The “sweet” are the consoling parts of the prophecy, the “bitter” are the harsh: exile and the hardships thereof.


8. *mio conforto*: Beatrice. Virgil is so termed in *Inf.* IV, 18; *Purg.* III, 22; and elsewhere.
8–9. *qual io allor...l'abbandono*: “At this point I renounce any attempt to express it,” i.e., the love I saw in the holy eyes of Beatrice. “Qual” modifies “amor” in this construction, “amor” being the direct object of “vidi.”

10. *non perch' io pur del mio parlar diffidi*: “Not only ['pur'] because I have no confidence in my [powers of] expression.”


16–18. *fin che...aspetto*: The “secondo aspetto” is the reflected light of beauty. Such expressions continue to underscore the allegory of Beatrice, by and through whose guidance the pilgrim sees by reflected light. Cf. *Par.* I, 49, 64-66.

20. *Volgiti e ascolta*: I.e., turn back to Cacciaguida and listen to him.

21. *non pur ne' miei occhi è paradiso*: “Beatitudine consists not only in acceptance of the demonstration of divine truth, but also in the companionship of the blessed and the comprehension of their state as a manifestation of divine grace. This idea is conveyed by Beatrice in a figure as appropriate as it is sweet and modest” (Gr).

22. *qui*: On earth.


24. *tolta*: “Rapt.”


28–29. *quinta soglia...cima*: “The ‘tree’ of the heavens,
which derives all its sustenance from above, is conceived as a fir, whose branches grow in rings or 'tiers' around the trunk. The fifth ring is the heaven of Mars" (Gr).


30. e frutta sempre e mai non perde foglia: This "tree" produces beatitude, which never "falls away."

32. fuor = fuorono. voce: "Fame."


34. Però = perciò. corni: The term doubtless applies now to all the four arms of the cross, lateral and vertical.

35–36. lì farà l'atto . . . veloce: We are to conceive that each spirit (light), as it is named, darts through the cross like lightning in a cloud. The ruddy background of the planet itself provides the element that corresponds, in the simile, to the cloud. It should be remembered, throughout this review, that all those named were warriors for the faith.

38. dal nomar: "By the mention of." Iosuè: Joshua, successor of Moses and conqueror of the promised land. Cf. Purg. XX, 111; Par. IX, 124-25. com' el si feo: "When it [the mention] was made." feo = fece.

39. né mi fu noto il dir prima che 'l fatto: The response by the light named is instantaneous.

40. Macabeo: Judas Maccabaeus, the great Jewish warrior. First under the leadership of his father, Mattathias, and, after his death (ca. 166 B.C.), as leader himself, he carried on the war against Antiochus IV Epiphanes, king of Syria, and his successor Demetrius and successfully resisted their attempts to destroy the Jewish religion. After having gained a series of victories over the generals of both kings, and having restored and purified the Temple at Jerusalem (165 or 164 B.C.), Judas was defeated and slain by the Syrians under Bacchides at Elasa (160 B.C.). His valor is glorified in the book of Maccabees (I Mach. 3:3-4).
42. *e letizia era ferza del paleo*: "'And joy was the whip of the top,' i.e., it was joy that made it (the light) spin. Several times in the *Paradiso* Dante makes a swift rotary motion the symbol of keen delight" (Gr).

43. *per*: "At the naming of." *Carlo Magno*: Charlemagne (Charles the Great), restorer of the Empire of the West, was born at Salzburg in 742, the eldest son of Pépin le Bref, king of the Franks. On his father's death (in 768) Charlemagne became joint king with his brother Carloman, and on the death of the latter (in 771) he became sole king of the Frankish empire. After his defeat of Desiderius (773-74), he assumed the title of king of Lombardy, and on Christmas Day 800, he was crowned Emperor of the West at Rome by Pope Leo III. He died on January 28, 814 and was buried at Aix-la-Chapelle. He was canonized in 1165.

*Orlando*: Roland, the French epic hero who was represented as the nephew of Charlemagne and one of the twelve peers. According to the poetical account, he was slain at Roncesvalles by the Saracens in league with the traitor Ganelon. See n. to Inf. XXXI, 18.

44. *due ne*: I.e., *due lumi*. "Due" is the object of "seguì."

46. *Guiglielmo e Rinoardo*: "William, count of Orange, is the hero of a group of Old French epics, of which the best known is the *Aliscans*. He combatted the Saracens in southern France, as Charlemagne and Roland fought against them in Spain. Associated with him is the gigantic Renoart, of Saracen birth but baptized" (Gr). "Guiglielmo" and "Rinoardo" are subjects of "trasse."

47. *'l duca Gottifredi*: Godfrey of Bouillon, leader of the first Crusade (1096), battled with the Saracens in the Holy Land and became first Christian king of Jerusalem. *vista*: The object of "trasse."

48. *Ruberto Guiscardo*: Robert Guiscard, a Norman conqueror of the second half of the eleventh century, took a large part of southern Italy and Sicily from the Saracens. If the reader glances back over the list of the warriors thus named,
he will note that a certain chronological order is observed and
that some examples are from B.C. and some from A.D. times.

49. *mota e mista*: “Going and mingling.”  *mota* = *mossa*.

50–51. *mostrommi l’alma . . . artista*: Cacciaguida, having
returned to his place in this great heavenly “choir,” shows his
great-great-grandson what an artist (singer) he is there.

55. *luci*: “Eyes.”  *mere*: “Pure.”

56–57. *la sua sembianza . . . solere*: Beatrice is now seen to
be more beautiful than Dante has ever seen her before.

57. *li altri e l’ultimo solere*: The verb “solere” is used as a
noun, meaning her wonted appearance (“sembianza”).
*Soleri*, in the plural, is understood (“*li altri soleri e l’ultimo
solere*”), thus referring to the many times Dante has looked
upon Beatrice, including the very last (vss. 8-18).

3, 1104b.

58. *per sentir*: “Through feeling.”

59. *bene operando*: “Through virtuous conduct.”

61–63. *sì m’accors’ io . . . addorno*: “Thus from an increase
of Beatrice’s loveliness I inferred that I had risen to a greater
and swifter sphere. Since all the heavens revolve together
from east to west, the outer must move faster than the inner,
just as the tire of a wheel moves quicker than the hub; and
as Dante proceeds from the center to one heaven after an­
other, each successive sphere he reaches must, in a given
time, cover a greater arc than its predecessor. As long as
Dante remains in a sphere, he of course revolves with it”
(Gr).

63. *miracol*: Beatrice. See Dante, *Vita nuova* XXI, 4;
XXIX, 3.

64–66. *E qual è . . . carco*: The change from the red light
of Mars to the whiteness of Jupiter is compared to the change
in a pale lady’s face when a blush suddenly passes from it. For the simile, cf. Ovid, Metam. VI, 46-49.

66. **vergogna**: The meaning should be understood as “modest shame.”

68–69. **temprata stella sesta**: The “temperate sixth star,” Jupiter, is between hot Mars and cold Saturn. See Conv. II, xiii, 25, where Dante writes: “Onde Tolomeo dice . . . che Giove è stella di temperata complessione, in mezzo de la freddura di Saturno e de lo calore di Marte. L’altra si è che intra tutte le stelle bianca si mostra, quasi argentata.” (“Wherefore Ptolemy saith . . . that Jove is a star of temperate composition betwixt the cold of Saturn and the heat of Mars. The other is that he shows white among the stars, as though of silver.”) Cf. Par. XXII, 145.

69. **ricolto** = raccolto, “received.”

70. **giovial facella**: “Torch of Jove,” the planet Jupiter, but in “giovial” there is doubtless a play on the adjective in its more common sense of “jovial,” since the planet Jove (Jupiter) was thought to make those born under it to be of joyful and merry disposition.

72. **nostra favella**: “Our human language,” here actually letters of the alphabet.

73. **surti**: Past participle of surgere. **surti di rivera**: “Which have flown up from a riverbank.”

74. **congratulando**: “Rejoicing together.” **pasture**: “Food.”

76–77. **sì dentro . . . cantavano**: Each soul within its own light sings as it flies about.

77. **faciensi** = **si facevano**. The word is pronounced faciensi.

79. **a sua nota**: “To their own tune.” **sua** = loro. **moviensi** = **si movevano**. The pronunciation is moviensi.

81. **taciensi** = **si tacevano**. “Taciensi” is pronounced taciensi.

82. **Pegasea**: I.e., Muse. The Muses are associated with the
winged horse, Pegasus. It is not clear whether Dante had in mind any special Muse; nor is it clear, if he was thinking of a particular Muse, whether the one invoked is Calliope (Purg. I, 9), Urania (Purg. XXIX, 41), or Euterpe (who presided over the sphere of Jupiter). This brief invocation here serves to indicate that some most remarkable thing is about to be recounted. Cf. Purg. XXIX, 37-39.


84. *ed essi teco:* Rendo longevi is understood: “renders them long-lived.” “Essi” stands for “li ’ngegni.” *teco = con te,* “with your aid.”


86. *concette = concepite* (from the Latin *conceptae*), “beheld.”

87. *paia = apparisca.* possa = possanza.


90. *le parti:* The single letters. *come mi parver dette:* In the order in which they were traced out to me, as if spoken.


92. *fur = furono.*

94. *emme*: The Italian name of the letter is *emme*, and the reader is to conceive the “sky-written” letter here to be the type illustrated in Fig. 2a.

![Figures illustrating the successive changes of the shape assumed by the spirits of the just](image)

2. Figures illustrating the successive changes of the shape assumed by the spirits of the just

96. *d'oro distinto*: “Patterned with gold.” The planet looked like a silver background with a golden *M* embroidered on it. For the silvery hue of Jupiter, see n. to vss. 68-69.

97–98. *E vidi scendere ... quetarsi*: For this second formation, see Fig. 2b. The shape is now not unlike that of a lily. This second moment in the transformation will be referred to later (vss. 112-13).

99. *cantando, credo, il ben ch’a sé le move*: Dante cannot hear clearly the words of their song, hence “credo.” *il ben*: God, who moves them “to Himself” in love of Him.


102. *onde li stolti sogliono agurarsi*: The reference is to the superstitious practice of drawing omens from the many sparks that would rise from the log thus struck. Benvenuto observes: “Est enim de more in partibus Italiae, quod pueri stantes in hyeme de sero iuxta ignem percutientes stipitem augurantur sibi, dicentes: tot civitates, tot castella, tot agnelli, tot porcelli; et ita transeunt tempus.” (“For it is the custom in some parts of Italy, that on a winter’s evening when they are sitting by the fire, children will strike the burning log and draw omens therefrom, saying [according to the quantity of
the sparks]: 'So many cities, so many towns, so many lambs, so many little pigs.' And thus they pass the time.')
agurarsi = augurarsi.

103. quindi: From the body or lower parts of the letter M.

105. 'l sol: God. sortile = le sortì, "distributed them," allotting to each its place. Cf. Par. IV, 37, and passim.

107. la testa e 'l collo d'un'aguglia: See Fig. 2c for the third and last stage in the changes of shape assumed by the spirits. The reader must bear in mind that it is an heraldic eagle that is "figured" here by the many lights, and accordingly it is seen only in profile. Thus later only one eye of the bird will be noted, for in profile only one is seen. By this remarkable transformation, the capital M, already standing for monarchy, has become the symbol of the Roman Empire, the eagle which every reader of Par. VI recalls.

108. a: "By." distinto: "Patterned." Cf. vs. 96.

109. Quei che dipinge lì: God.

109-11. non ha chi . . . nidi: "'He (God) who paints there has no one to direct him, but he himself directs; and from him we recognize that power which is the essence of nest-building.' The instinct of the little bird, which is able to build its nest without having any need of a pattern, comes from God, and, in its own small way, serves as an image of the creative activity of God, who constructs solely from his inner conception" (Gr). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 19, a. 4, resp.

112-13. L'altra beatitudo . . . emme: The rest of the blessed souls that had seemed content to form a lily in the M (see Fig. 2b). Some commentators have thought that these souls might symbolize Guelphs, who, as Grandgent observes, "though seemingly reluctant at first to give up their own standard [the lily], readily conform to the Imperial design [the imprenta of the eagle]." Yet others would hold to quite another view, that the group which temporarily, in the sec-
ond shape, makes the heraldic $M$ into a lily thus alludes to the French monarchy, whose heraldic device is the lily. Though momentarily attempting to stand alone, as seemed to happen in 1300, the French monarchy was to yield and merge with the Empire, or in all justice should have done so, for the $M$ and the eagle are one, and, in Dante's well-known view, as expressed in the De monarchia, there is no place for another shape or sign, such as a lily, another separate power.

112. beatitudo = beatitudine.

114. seguitò la 'mprenza: The group fits itself perfectly into the figure of the eagle which began as an $M$, this $M$ being the last letter of the scriptural exhortation to love justice. Thus the symbolic configuration is complete in all its details and transformations, and the poet can end his canto with a prayer for order and justice and with a bitter denunciation of the corrupt papacy.


116. nostra giustizia: Human justice on earth.

117. effetto sia del ciel che tu ingemme: See n. to vss. 91-93.

118. la mente: God.

120. ond' esce il fummo che 'l tuo raggio vizia: The smoke that obstructs the downpouring influence of Jupiter for justice is chiefly avarice, as the following verses make clear.

121-23. sì ch'un'altra fiata . . . martiri: Cf. Matt. 21:12: "Et intravit Iesus in templum Dei; et eiiciebat omnes vendentes et ementes in templo, et mensas numulariorum et cathedras vendentium columbas evertit." ("And Jesus entered the temple of God, and cast out all those who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold the doves.")

123. che si murò di segni e di martiri: Cf. Actus 20:28: "ecclesiam Dei, quam acquisivit sanguine suo" ("the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood").

125. *adora*: "Pray."

126. *tutti sviati dietro al malo esempio*: See Rom. 3:12: "Omnès declinaverunt." ("All have gone astray together.") For the notion of misguidance by a corrupt papacy and the "bad example" set by it, cf. *Purg. XVI, 100-111; Par. IX, 127-32.


130. *Ma tu che sol per cancellare scrivi*: "John XXII, who was Pope when Dante was writing, issued and revoked many excommunications. He amassed a large fortune. In 1317 he excommunicated Can Grande della Scala, who remained under the ban until his death" (Gr).

131. *moriro = morirono.*

132. *per la vigna che guasti*: See Isa. 3:14: "Vos enim depasti estis vineam." ("For you have devoured the vineyard.") The "vineyard" is, traditionally, the Church. Cf. *Par. XII, 86-87.*

133-36. *Ben puoi . . . Polo*: "My heart is so set on John the Baptist (i.e., on the gold florin bearing his image) that I have forgotten Peter and Paul" (Gr). Villani (IX, 171) relates how John XXII had a gold coin minted in Avignon that was very similar to the florin of Florence.


1. *Parea = appariva.*

2. *che:* The object of "facevan" in vs. 3. *frui:* A Latin infinitive used as a noun, meaning " fruition," "enjoyment." For *frui* and its noun *fruitio,* which are used frequently by Augustine, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I-II, q. 11, a. 3, ad 3:

Finis dicitur dupliciter: uno modo ipsa res, alio modo adeptio rei. Quae quidem non sunt duo fines, sed unus finis in se consideratus, et alteri applicatus. Deus igitur est ultimus finis sicut res quae ultimo quaeritur; fruitio autem, sicut adeptio huius ultimi finis. Sicut igitur non est alius finis Deus, et fruitio Dei, ita eadem ratio fruitiovis est qua fruimur Deo, et qua fruimur divina fruitione. Et eadem ratio est de beatitudine creatae, quae in fruitione consistit.

We speak of an end in a twofold sense: first, as being the thing itself; secondly, as the attainment thereof. These are not, of course, two ends, but one end, considered in itself, and in its relation to something else. Accordingly God is the last end, as that which is ultimately sought for: while the enjoyment is as the attainment of this last end. And so, just as God is not one end, and the
enjoyment of God, another: so it is the same enjoyment whereby we enjoy God, and whereby we enjoy our enjoyment of God. And the same applies to created happiness which consists in enjoyment.

2-3. che nel dolce frui . . . conserte: A more normal prose order would be: “la quale [immagine] le anime conserte formavano, liete nel dolce frui.”


8. incostro = inchiostro.

9. né fu per fantasia già mai compreso: “Fantasia,” here as elsewhere in the Comedy, refers specifically to that human faculty of the mind which receives images; hence “compreso” means “grasped,” “taken in.” Cf. Purg. XVII, 25, and see the corresponding note.

11-12. e sonar . . . “nostro”: The single voice of the eagle speaks collectively for the just souls comprising it, “an image of the concordant will of the Just, and of the unity of Justice under the Empire” (Norton).

13. Per esser: “For being.” giusto e pio: The two terms reflect God’s two ways (see n. to Par. VII, 103), which should also be the ways of the Empire and a good emperor, whose authority derives from God.

15. che non si lascia vincere a disio: “Which cannot be surpassed by desire.” A higher glory (in Heaven) than that of the eagle (i.e., of the souls that make it up) cannot be desired by us, for it is supreme.

16. la mia memoria: “Memory of myself,” the record (“la storia,” vs. 18) of my deeds (such as are recounted by Justinian in Par. VI).

18. lei: “La mia memoria,” vs. 16. la storia: The record
or history of the Empire, which is in itself exemplary and should be followed.

19–21. *Così un sol calor . . . image*: Once more the unity of Empire, its oneness, is stressed by the imagery, as it is again in vss. 23-24.

24. *tutti vostri odori*: A single perfume comes from the many “flowers” that make up “the one.”

25. *spirando*: “By speaking.”

27. *trovandoli = trovandogli*, the *gli* meaning “for it,” the long hunger.


30. *l vostro*: That is, *cielo*, this heaven of Jupiter. *non l’apprende con velame*: Whereas souls in other spheres look up to the Thrones for the reflection of God’s judgment and justice, it appears that the souls in the heaven of Jupiter (this heaven of justice) see God’s justice directly.

31–33. *Sapete come attento . . . vecchio*: The souls that make up the eagle know Dante’s past and present thoughts in regard to the question that has troubled him for so long, and they will soon proceed to read those thoughts and formulate his “doubt” (vss. 70-78).

34. *cappello*: “Hood.” The falcon was hooded while it was taken to the place of the hunt, but was then unhooded and released when the hunt began.


37. *segno*: From the Latin *signum*, “segno” means the “ensign” of the Roman Empire, its banner. Cf. *Par. VI*, 32. *laude = lodi*. The term is used here to mean those souls who
1. God and compass
declare God’s grace and glory by their very actions. See Inf. II, 103 (where this is said of Beatrice) and the note.

39. quai = quali. si sa chi là sù gaude: The “si” here serves to set off, to mark special distinctness, and has something of the meaning “he alone knows.” Cf. Par. III, 108. gaude = gode.

40–42. Poi cominciò . . . manifesto: The eagle’s answer to Dante’s “long doubt” begins significantly with words that declare the glory and the might of God the Creator of Heaven and earth, and the specific answer itself (vss. 86-90, 103-5) holds to this tone. See Prov. 8:27-29: “Quando præparabat caelos, aderam, quando certa lege et gyro vallabat abyssos, quando aethera firmabat sursum, et librabat fontes aquarum, quando circumdabat mari terminum suum, et legem ponebat aquis ne transirent fines suos, quando appendebat fundamenta terrae.” (The following translation is found in the King James version of the Bible: “When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth.”) Cf. Iob 38:5-6.

41. a lo stremo del mondo: “Mondo” here, as often in Italian, has the meaning of “universe,” “lo stremo” being the outer confines and limit, marked off as with a compass.

43–45. non poté suo valor . . . eccesso: This should not be understood as derogating from God’s power (as if He could not do this or that), but rather as being to His greater glory, since His worth necessarily exceeds all created things (even though these are created by Him), as does His wisdom (“verbo”). “Cf. XIII, 52-78. God’s ideal conception is infinite, while the created universe is finite” (Gr).

44. verbo: Cf. Par. XVIII, 1.

46. E ciò fa certo che ’l primo superbo: “And a proof of this
(the inferiority of every created thing to the creative mind) is that the first proud one (Lucifer) . . .” (Gr).

47. che fu la somma d'ogne creatura: Lucifer was the most beautiful of all the angels, who are at the very summit of creation. Cf. Inf. XXXIV, 34-36.

48. per non aspettar lume: Without waiting for God's special grace, the “light of glory,” Lucifer sought to attain to it by his own natural means. See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 63, a. 3, resp.: “Sed in hoc appetit indebite esse similis Deo, quia appetit ut finem ultimum beatitudinis id ad quod virtute suae naturae poterat pervenire, avertens suum appetitum a beatitudine supernaturali, quae est ex gratia Dei.” (“But he desired resemblance with God in this respect,—by desiring, as his last end of beatitude, something which he could attain by the virtue of his own nature, turning his appetite away from supernatural beatitude, which is attained by God's grace.”) On the light of glory, which Lucifer did not wait to receive, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 20-23. On the notion that pride (Lucifer's sin par excellence) causes the creature to remain incomplete or “unripe,” see n. to Inf. XIV, 48; XXV, 18.

50. è corto recettacolo: See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 12, a. 4. corto: “Insufficient.”

52. vostra veduta: Your human sight, the sight of all mortals.

52-53. conviene essere alcun de' raggi: This statement is best glossed by vss. 64-65.

55. da: “By.”

56. che suo principio non discerna: “As not to discern its origin” (the mind of God).

57. molto di là da quel che l'è parvente: Far beyond all that human vision can see. Our intelligence, a product of the intelligence of God, has just power enough to understand how far beyond the range of its comprehension its divine Source lies. l' = le, the “vostra veduta” of vs. 52.
58–60. **Però ne la giustizia ... s'interna:** The eagle's discourse finally touches on justice and thus approaches Dante's specific question. "Earthly intelligence, then, can no more penetrate eternal justice than a human eye can penetrate the ocean" (Gr). Cf. Ps. 35:7[36:6]: "Iudicia tua abyssus multa." ("Your judgments [are] like the mighty deep.")

61–63. **che, ben che ... profondo:** The image effectively conveys, with "pelago," what is often referred to as the abyss of God's counsel (*Par.* VII, 94-95).

61. **proda:** "Shore."

62. **pelago:** The deep (cf. *Inf.* I, 23).

63. **èli = vi è** (unaccented *li = vi*). *lui:* "Il fondo," vs. 61. "It [the bottom] is there, but its depth conceals it."

64. **Lume non è:** "There is no light," i.e., no light for the human intellect.

64–65. **dal sereno ... mai:** From the eternally serene light of God.

65–66. **anzi è tenèbra ... veleno:** Without grace (God's light), all that we take to be light is darkness, either the shadow or the poison of the flesh, either ignorance or vice.


69. **facei = facevi. crebra:** A Latinism, meaning "frequent."

70. **dicevi:** The past descriptive tense conveys the notion that the question is repeatedly put to oneself.

70–71. **a la riva de l'Indo:** The river Indus, in northern India, is used to indicate India itself, as the eastern limit of the habitable world and as a place far removed from the Holy Land and the lands of Christendom generally, where all have heard of Christ.
71–72. *e qui vi ... scriva*: The three verbs here ("ragioni," "legga," "scriva") are all in the hypothetical subjunctive. The hypothetical example of this man so far removed *in space* from knowledge of Christ and belief in Him may be compared to that of those who were far removed from His coming *in time* and so had no knowledge of Him (the most striking examples of which are the virtuous pagans in Limbo).


73–75. *e tutti suoi voleri ... sermoni*: "Voleri" looks to the will of the inner man and "atti" to his outward deeds, the key phrase being "quanto ragione umana vede," which clearly implies that our human view and understanding of the case may indeed be a limited one.

75. *in vita o in sermoni*: Cf. Luc. 24:19: "vir propheta potens in opere et sermone" ("a prophet, mighty in work and word").

76. *Muore non battezzato e senza fede*: Again one thinks of the virtuous pagans in Limbo, who in life were far removed in time from knowledge of Christ and who, according to Virgil (Inf. IV, 33-42), did not sin, but who died without being baptized and without having faith in Christ.

77. *ov' è questa giustizia*: As much as to say: "What kind of justice is this?"

79–81. *Or tu chi se' ... spanna?* The reply of the eagle to the troubling question, in these its opening words, is actually no reply at all, but an outburst against man's very pride and presumption in asking any such question in the first place. There are echoes of passages in the Scriptures here. Note, for example, Sapien. 9:13: "Quis enim hominin poterit scire consilium Dei? aut quis poterit cogitare quid velit Deus?" ("For what man knows God's counsel, or who can conceive what the Lord intends?") See Iob 38 and 39 and Rom. 9:20: "O homo, tu quis es, qui respondeas Deo?" ("O man, who art thou to reply to God?")
79. *sedere a scranna*: “Sit in the judgment seat.”
*scranna* = *scranno*.

82. *Certo a colui che meco s’assottiglia*: “‘Surely, for him who sophisticates with me...’ Dante is putting subtle questions about justice to the Eagle, who is its embodiment” (Gr).

83–84. *se la Scrittura . . . maraviglia*: “If you mortals had not the Bible and its clear utterances to guide you, there would be no end to your sophistries, since even with the Bible you enter into such discussions” (Gr).

84. *da dubitar sarebbe a maraviglia*: “There would be a marvelous chance for questioning.”


88. *Cotanto è giusto quanto a lei consuona*: Cf. *De mon.* II, ii, 5, where Dante says: “Et iterum ex hoc sequitur quod ius in rebus nichil est aliud quam similitudo divine voluntatis; unde fit quod quicquid divine voluntati non consonat, ipsum ius esse non possit, et quicquid divine voluntati est consonum, ius ipsum sit.” (“And hence it follows again that right as manifested in things is nought else than the similitude of the divine will. Whence it comes to pass that whatever is not consonant with the divine will cannot be right, and whatever is consonant with the divine will is right.”) Also see Rom. 9:14-24:

  Quid ergo dicemus? Numquid iniquitas apud Deum?

What then shall we say? Is there injustice with God? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will show pity to whom I will show pity.” So then there is question not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God showing mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised thee up that I may show in thee my power, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore he has mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardens.

Thou sayest to me: Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will? O man, who art thou to reply to God? Does the object moulded say to him who moulded it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or is not the potter master of his clay, to make from the same mass one vessel for honorable, another for ignoble use? But what if God, wishing to show his wrath and to make known his power, endured with much patience vessels of wrath, ready for destruction, that he might show the riches of his glory upon vessels of mercy, which he has prepared unto glory—even us whom he has called not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles?

89. *nullo creato bene a sé la tira*: “No created goodness draws it [the will of God] to itself.”
90. *ma essa, radiando, lui cagiona:* "It [God's will], raying forth, causes it [the 'creato bene']."

91. *sovresso:* "Over." *si rigira:* The subject of "si rigira" is "la cicogna," to be supplied from vs. 92.

93. *è pasto = è pasciuto,* on the model of the Latin *pastus est.*

94. *cotal:* "Cotal" is the correlative of "quale" in vs. 91. *sì:* "Sì" is the correlative of "come" in vs. 93.

94-95. *cotal si fece . . . imagine:* The image is awesome. The great eagle, made up of so many lights, actually circles about over Dante, even as the stork over its little ones in the nest.

96. *sospinte da tanti consigli:* Again the underscoring of the striking fact, stressed throughout, of the single concerted movement of so many souls together.

98. *le mie note:* "My song."

100. *Poi = poi che.*

101. *nel segno:* See n. to vs. 37.

102. *fé = fece.*

104. *Cristo:* For the third time we have *Cristo* in rhyme with itself: cf. *Par.* XII, 71, 73, 75. See also *Par.* XIV, where the rhyming lines are the same as in this canto: vss. 104, 106, 108.

106. *Ma vedi: molti gridan "Cristo, Cristo!":* See Matt. 7:22-23: "Multi dicent mihi in illa die: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo daemonia eiecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus? Et tunc confitebor illis: Quia numquam novi vos; discedite a me, qui operamini iniquitatem." ("Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and work many miracles in thy name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity!'")
107. *prope*: A Latinism, meaning "near."


Viri Ninivitae surgent in iudicio cum generatione ista, et condemnabunt eam; quia paenitentiam egerunt in praedicatione Ionae, et ecce plus quam Ionas hic. Regina austri surget in iudicio cum generatione ista, et condemnabit eam; quia venit a finibus terrae audire sapientiam Salomonis, et ecce plus quam Salomon hic.

The men of Nineve will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

*Etiòpe*: Ethiopian, in the sense of "the heathen" generally.


*si partiranno* = *si divideranno*. *collegi*: "Assemblies."

111. *inòpe*: "Poor," from the Latin *inops*, that is, deprived of Heaven, these being the damned.

112. *poran* = *potranno*. *li Perse* = *i Persiani*. The word is used here, as "Etiòpe" is in vs. 109, for the heathen in general.

113. *quel volume*: Cf. Apoc. 20:12: "Et vidi mortuos magnos et pusillos stantes in conspectu throni; et libri aperti sunt, et alius liber apertus est, qui est vitae: et iudicati sunt mortui ex his quae scripta erant in libris secundum opera ipsorum." ("And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the scrolls, according to their works.")

114. *suoi dispregi*: "Their disgraces."

115. *Lì si vedrà, tra l'opere d'Alberto*: The adverb "lì," used
thrice in this device of anaphora, refers to "the volume" (vs. 113). With this verse begins a series of judgments and condemnations of Christian rulers of Dante’s time, their strife held up to scorn by the poet in contrast to the ideal unity and harmony of justice represented by the image of the eagle.

Alberto: Albert of Austria, whom Dante here rebukes for his invasion of Bohemia. See n. to Purg. VI, 97.

116. quella: That is, opera. The devastation of Bohemia in 1304. penna: The pen of the recording angel.

117. Praga: Prague, on the Moldau (now Vltava), the capital of Bohemia. The allusion is to the invasion of the dominions of Wenceslaus II, king of Bohemia, in 1304 by his brother-in-law, Albert I (Wenceslaus having married, as his first wife, Albert’s sister). Albert was jealous of the growing power of Bohemia and wanted to force Wenceslaus to renounce the claim of his son Wenceslaus to the throne of Hungary in favor of Charles Robert, eldest son of Charles Martel. (See Map 1, facing p. 162.)


119. falseggiando la moneta: Philip the Fair, to supply himself with money after the battle of Courtrai in 1302, debased the coinage of the realm, causing great misery.

120. quel che morrà di colpo di cotenna: “Philip died in 1314 from a fall occasioned by a wild boar which ran between the horse’s legs” (Gr). See Villani, IX, 66. colpo di cotenna: “Boarskin blow” is an odd phrase: the king’s death was due, not to the tusks of the boar, but to its bristly hide brushing against the horse” (Gr).

121–22. Lì si vedrà . . . folle: The first part of the fourteenth century saw the wars of Edward I and Edward II against the Scots under Wallace and Bruce.

121. asseta: “Quickens thirst.”

123. soffrir: “Endure,” keep.
124. *Vedrassì = si vedrà* (i.e., recorded in God’s book). The anaphora passes now to this verb.


127. *Ciotto di Ierusalemme*: Charles II of Naples, titular king of Jerusalem, was called “the Cripple” on account of his lameness. See Villani, VII, i. Charles derived the title of Jerusalem from his father, Charles of Anjou, king of Naples and Sicily, who claimed to have acquired the right to it by purchase in 1272. He further claimed it in his own right, as one of the forfeited Hohenstaufen dignities, with which he had been invested by the pope. The title had come to the Hohenstaufen through the marriage of Frederick II to Yolande (his second wife), daughter of John of Brienne and Marie of Montferrat, who was the eldest daughter of Isabella (daughter of King Amalric I of Jerusalem) and Conrad of Montferrat. Frederick II became titular king of Jerusalem in 1227 and assumed the crown in 1229.

128–29. *segnata con un i . . . un emme*: “His goodness will be marked 1, his wickedness 1000.” He seems to have had no virtue except liberality. For Charles’ character, see *Purg*. XX, 79-81.


133–35. *e a dare . . . loco*: “To indicate at the same time his insignificance and his wickedness, his many misdeeds shall be recorded in shorthand” (Gr). The anaphora shifts now
to tercets beginning with “e.” Thus it is first l, then u (interchangeable with u), then e. The term *lue* is thus spelled out, which as a noun (*la lue*) means “pestilence.” For a similar device, see *Purg.* XII, 25-63 and the note to *Purg.* XII, 61-63.

137. *barba*: “Beard,” but here meaning “uncle,” a usage that is still common in Italian dialects. The reference is to James, second son of James I of Aragon and brother of Pedro III. On the death of his father in 1276 he entered into possession of the kingdom of the Balearic Islands, which had been wrested from the Moors by James I in 1232 and of which he had been assigned the sovereignty in 1262. He also claimed Valencia under his father’s will, and in order to enforce his claim he joined Philip III of France in his luckless expedition against Pedro III of Aragon in 1284. He supplied the enemy of his house with ships and men, and occupied Perpignan on behalf of the French king. The campaign proved a disastrous failure, and James was deprived of his kingdom. Ten years later, however, in 1295, he was reinstated in accordance with the terms of an agreement between his nephew, James II of Aragon, and Philip IV, the Fair, of France and Charles II of Naples. He died in 1311.


139. *quel di Portogallo*: Diniz (also known as Dionysius), king of Portugal from 1279 to 1325, was the son of Alfonso III, whom he succeeded, and Beatrice, daughter of Alfonso X of Castile and León. He married Isabel (Saint), daughter of Pedro III of Aragon.

It is not clear on what grounds Dante condemned Diniz, for he has the reputation of being one of the best and ablest rulers of his time, having by his wise government laid the foundations of the future Portugal. Among the benefits he conferred on his country was the foundation (in 1290) of the University of Coimbra, which was at first in Lisbon. As
hinted by the *Ottimo Commento*, Dante’s censure of him may be explained by the fact that he devoted himself to extending the commerce of Portugal, instead of taking the field against the Moorish infidels, as his predecessors had done. Or possibly Dante misunderstood his action with regard to the Templars in Portugal, who in common with those of Castile and León had in 1310 been declared by the Council of Salamanca innocent of all the charges against them. Nevertheless, when the order was finally suppressed by the Council of Vienne two years later, Diniz, instead of handing their property over to the Knights of St. John, took possession of it and refused to give it up. Dante may have regarded this simply as an act of spoliation, not being aware (at any rate at the time he wrote) that when, in 1319, Diniz founded the Order of Christ he endowed it with the confiscated property of the disbanded Templars, of whom the new order was chiefly composed.

The infidelity of Diniz to his wife, St. Isabel, and the civil wars between him and his heir, Alfonso IV, occasioned by the latter’s jealousy of his bastard brother, may also have influenced Dante’s judgment against him.

*Norvegia*: Norway, an independent kingdom until the Union of Kalmar in 1397, when the three kingdoms of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark were united. Since only living sovereigns are in question here, the reference is probably to Haakon V Magnusson, king from 1299 to 1319, who passed his reign in wars with Denmark. But it is quite likely that Dante’s knowledge of the Norwegian kings was vague and that the reference is to Haakon’s elder brother, Eric II (who ruled from 1280 to 1299), or even to their father, Magnus VI (who ruled from 1263 to 1280).

140. *Rascia*: Name by which the former kingdom of Serbia was known in the Middle Ages, from the name of its capital, Raska or Rashka, the modern Novi Pazar. It comprised parts of the modern Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, and Dalmatia. (See Map 1, facing p. 162.)

The king in question is Stephen Urosh II (1275-1321), son of Stephen Urosh I (1240-72), and grandson of Stephen, the
first king (1222-28). The reign of Stephen Urosh II, otherwise known as Milutin, was chiefly occupied with struggles against the Greeks, in which he was for the most part successful. His domestic life was unhappy—he divorced three wives and caused his only son, Stephen (who was a bastard), to be blinded on suspicion of treachery. In 1314 he fought on the side of the Emperor Andronicus against the Turks, and in the same year forced the republic of Ragusa to pay him tribute. In 1319 he was deprived of Bosnia by the Hungarians, and two years later he died (October 29, 1321, a few weeks after Dante).

141. che male ha visto il conio di Vinegia: Dante's allusion to Stephen's counterfeiting of the Venetian coinage refers to the fact that he issued coins of debased metal in imitation of the Venetian matapan or grosso. A decree which was issued March 3, 1282, and repeated May 3, 1306 (both during the reign of Stephen Urosh II), is preserved in the Venetian Libro d’oro, whereby it is enacted that all official receivers of government monies are to make diligent search for the counterfeit Venetian grossi issued by the king of Rascia, and that all money-changers on the Rialto and their boys from the age of twelve upwards be bound upon oath to do the same, the said counterfeits wherever found to be defaced and destroyed.

It appears from the same source that the Venetians sent an embassy in 1287 to the king of Rascia about this same matter of the counterfeit grossi. From Venice this debased coinage found its way to other parts of Italy, among other places to Bologna, where in 1305 a number of bankers and money-changers were convicted of purchasing a large quantity of the counterfeit grossi for the purpose of exchanging them (at a profit of 40 per cent) against good Venetian grossi.

142–43. O beata Ungheria . . . malmenare: The throne of Hungary, which belonged to Charles Martel (Par. VIII, 64-66), was usurped by Andrew III.

143–44. e beata Navarra . . . fascia: “Navarre would be
happy if she could protect herself with the mountain chains that enfold her—that is, if she could make the Pyrenees a bulwark against France, which is destined to annex her on the death of her queen, Joanna, married to Philip the Fair” (Gr).

145-48. *E creder . . . si scosta*: “We may regard as a ‘foretaste’ and a warning of these great disasters the misfortunes of a couple of towns in Cyprus, which are already bewailing and scolding about their ‘beast,’ the dissolute King of Cyprus, Henry II of Lusignan” (Gr). Dante here alludes to the sufferings of Cyprus under the unsettled rule of the house of Lusignan. Hugh III of Antioch, king of Cyprus and Jerusalem, who derived the Lusignan title from his mother, died in 1284, leaving several dissolute sons. The eldest of these, John, succeeded, but died within a year, his death being attributed to poison administered by his brother Henry. The latter, second son of Hugh, a prince of feeble character and constitution, assumed the government in 1285, under the title of Henry II. Six years later (1291), Acre, the last possession of the Christians in the Holy Land, having been captured by the Saracens (*Inf.* XXVII, 89), Henry collected a force with the object of attempting its reconquest and gave the command of it to his younger brother Amalric or Amaury, prince of Tyre. The failure of this expedition, and the unpunished depredations of some Genoese galleys on the coast of Cyprus, gave Amalric a pretext for declaring his brother incapable of governing. Having got himself appointed governor of the island by the supreme council (1307), Amalric kept Henry virtually a prisoner and assumed all the power into his own hands. Before, however, he could finally make himself master of the kingdom, he was assassinated by one of his own adherents (1310). On his death, his younger brother attempted to seize the throne; but Henry’s following demanded the restoration of the rightful king, who resumed the government and retained it until his death in 1324.

148. *che dal fianco de l’alte non si scosta*: “This little beast trots along beside the big ones on the path of crime” (Gr).
CANTO XX


4–6. *lo ciel . . . risplende*: In Dante’s time it was generally held that all the stars derived their light from the sun. Hence the many lights that appear in the heavens after sunset are still shining with the light of the sun. Cf. *Conv.* III, xii, 7, as well as II, xiii, 15.

7–11. *e questo atto . . . canti*: The comparison is not intended to be exact, for although the sun disappears in setting, the figure of the eagle does not. However, that figure, which has been speaking as one, now presents the aspect of its many parts, as does the sun after sunset, for the many lights, or souls, that constitute it begin to sing as so many participants in a chorus. Each becomes brighter, which further supports the simile.


10. *però che = perciò che.*

12. *da mia memoria labili e caduci*: These songs are such
that the memory of the living man cannot retain them. See Par. X, 70-73. \textit{caduci} = \textit{caduchi}.


14. \textit{flailli}: "Pipes." Cf. the OFr \textit{flavel}, "flute."

15. \textit{avieno} = \textit{avevano}.


17. \textit{il sesto lume}: The planet Jupiter.

18. \textit{squilli}: "Songs," as is clear from the context.


22-24. \textit{E come . . . penètra}: In the cittern, or lute, "the sound is shaped at the neck," where the fingering is done; in the bagpipe, it is at the holes.

24. \textit{sampogna} = \textit{zampogna}.

25. \textit{rimosso d'aspettare indugio} = \textit{rimosso ogni indugio d'aspettare}, "removed every delay in waiting," or simply "without delay." The expression in the Italian is somewhat redundant.

26. \textit{salissi} = \textit{si salì}. The \textit{si} here, as again in "uscissi" (vs. 28), is the so-called pleonastic reflexive which serves to focus attention more emphatically on the subject, in this case on the sound as it is gradually formed and as it then issues as a voice. The poet delights in following such gradual formation, particularly in the matter of a voice. Cf. Inf. XIII, 40-44; XXVII, 13-18.

27. \textit{bugia}: "Hollow."

28. \textit{quivi}: In the neck ("collo"). \textit{uscissi} = \textit{si usci}. Cf. n. to vs. 26.

30. \textit{quali aspettava il core ov' io le scrissi}: Dante's heart-felt desire is to know the names of the spirits exalted to this heav-
en, and as he now hears some of them, he inscribes them in his heart (memory).

31-32. *La parte in me . . . mortali*: The eagle's eye. The reader should bear in mind that the eagle is seen in profile, hence only one of its eyes is visible. (See Fig. 2, p. 310.)


32. *incominciommi = mi incominciò*.

33. *riguardar si vole*: "Must be looked at."

36. *e' = ei* (*elli*). The redundant pronoun refers back to "quelli" in vs. 35. *di tutti lor gradi son li sommi*: The meaning here is not entirely clear, but it probably is that "of the spirits that form my body, these are the highest."

37-39. *Colui che luce . . . villa*: David, as the light which he is here, is the very pupil of the eye, therefore the highest of all that are to be named as forming eye and eyebrow. The psalms written by him were inspired by the Holy Ghost, as were all the canonical books of the Bible. As king of Israel, he had the ark of the covenant moved to Jerusalem (II Reg. 6:2-17).

39. *villa*: "Town."

40-42. *ora conosce . . . altrettanto*: Now (in Paradise) David knows that which he merited by his psalms, written by him insofar as their art, as song, was of his own devising. The whole statement allows for merit deserved by the human side of the artistic achievement, distinguishing this from what must be assigned to the dictation of the Holy Ghost. "Consiglio," that is, points to the act of free will and talent on the part of the artist.

It will be noted, in the review of the spirits that make up the eye and brow, that the poet enters into the device of anaphora, with the second tercet of each pair of tercets allotted to each figure beginning with the words "ora conosce." This may be compared with *Purg.* XII, 25-63. The repeated phrase "ora conosce" clearly stresses the distance between

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the limited human vision of God’s justice as had on earth and
the revelation thereof which awaits the elect in Paradise.

42. *per lo remunerar ch’è altrettanto*: God’s justice rewards

43. *Dei cinque che mi fan cerchio per ciglio*: See Fig.
2, p. 310.

44-45. *colui che più . . . figlio*: For the story of Trajan’s
justice to the poor widow for the death of her son, see *Purg.*
X, 73-93.

46-48. *ora conosce . . . l’opposta*: The just emperor Trajan
lived in Christian times but died a pagan; however, in re-
sponse to the prayers of Gregory the Great, he was allowed
to return from the lower world (probably from Limbo),
where conversion is impossible, and to resume his body long
enough for him to embrace the true faith and thus win to a
place in Heaven. (See n. to vs. 106.) For this legend, see
Jacobus de Varagine, *Legenda aurea* XLVI, 10 and n. to
*Purg.* X, 75.


49-54. *E quel che segue . . . l’odierno*: King Hezekiah, who,
when Isaiah told him of his impending death, prayed and had
his life prolonged for fifteen years. See IV Reg. 20:1-6. Also
see Isa. 38:1-22, where in the words of the prophet, expres-
sing the king’s gratitude, there is echoed the latter’s sense of
his guilt as well as his penitence.

50. *per l’arco superno*: I.e., proceeding now along the rising
arch of the Eagle’s brow.

53. *preco = preghiera*.

54. *fa crastino là giù de l’odierno*: “Turns today’s into to-
morrow’s down on earth.” In such cases the “prayer” and its
result are a part of the divine plan.

55-60. *L’altro che segue . . . distrutto*: The Emperor Con-
stantine occupies thus the central and highest part of the
arch. The reference is to his ceding Rome to the pope and transferring the capital to Byzantium, thus making himself, the imperial eagle, and the laws Greek. Cf. *Inf.* XIX, 115-17; XXVII, 94-97; *Purg.* XXXII, 124-29; *Par.* VI, 1-3.


Eventus sequens aut est praecogitatus aut non. Si est praecogitatus, manifestum est quod addit ad bonitatem vel malitiam actus: cum enim aliquis cogitat quod ex opere suo multa mala possunt sequi, nec propter hoc dimittit, ex hoc apparat voluntas eius esse magis inordinata.

Si autem eventus sequens non sit praecogitatus, tunc distinguendum est: quia si per se sequitur ex tali actu, et ut in pluribus, secundum hoc eventus sequens addit ad bonitatem vel malitiam actus. Manifestum est enim meliorem actum esse ex suo genere, ex quo possunt plura bona sequi, et peiorem ex quo nata sunt plura mala sequi.

Si vero per accidentes, et ut in paucioribus, tunc eventus sequens non addit ad bonitatem vel ad malitiam actus. Non enim datur iudicium de re aliqua secundum illud quod est per accidentes, sed solum secundum illa quod est per se.

The consequences of an action are either foreseen or not. If they are foreseen, it is evident that they increase the goodness or malice. For when a man foresees that many evils may follow from his action, and yet does not therefore desist therefrom, this shows his will to be all the more inordinate.

But if the consequences are not foreseen, we must make a distinction. Because if they follow from the nature of the action and in the majority of cases, in this respect, the consequences increase the goodness or malice of that action: for it is evident that an action is specifically better, if better results can follow from it; and specifically worse, if it is of a nature to produce worse results.—On the other hand, if the consequences follow
by accident and seldom, then they do not increase the
goodness or malice of the action: because we do not
judge of a thing according to that which belongs to it by
accident, but only according to that which belongs to
it of itself.

58. *dedutto*: “Resulting.”

59. *li = gli*.

61–66. *E quel . . . ancora*: William II, the Good, king of
Naples and Sicily in the Norman line from 1166 to 1189. He
was the son (born 1154) of William I, the Bad (who ruled
from 1154 to 1166 and was so called on account of his
cruelty towards his rebellious barons), and in 1177 married
Joan, youngest daughter of Henry II of England, by whom
he had no issue. On his death, at the age of thirty-five, the
crown passed to his cousin Tancred, whose son and successor
was dispossessed by Emperor Henry VI, who had married
Constance, the aunt of William II and heiress presumptive
to the throne. The kingdom thus passed to the Hohenstaufen
line, in the person of Frederick I (afterwards emperor as
Frederick II), the son of Henry VI and Constance.

William II’s reign was as beneficial to his subjects as that
of his father had been the reverse. He was a zealous cham­
pion of the Church and spent the large treasures left by Wil­
liam I in founding and endowing pious institu­
tions. His
death was sincerely lamented by the Sicilians.

62. *cui*: The direct object of “plora.”

63. *Carlo e Federigo*: The kings of Naples and of Sicily who
are rebuked in Par. XIX, 127-35.

67–72. *Chi crederebbe . . . fendo*: Ripheus was a Trojan
hero who was slain during the sack of Troy. “Nowhere, be­
fore Dante, do we find any suggestion that this Trojan prince
attained Heaven, nor that he was of particular importance.
Virgil mentions his name, with those of other Trojans, in
_Aen._, II, 339 and 394. In _Aen._, II, 426-427, he adds a brief
description” (Gr). In this third passage, Virgil writes: “Cadin
et Ripheus, iustissimus unus / qui fuit in Teucris et servantis-
simus aequi.” ("Ripheus, too, falls, foremost in justice
among the Trojans, and most zealous for the right.") "Noth-
ing more. But these words evidently made a profound im-
pression on Dante and led him to conjecture that such devo-
tion to justice must have been a result of grace—of that
divine plan which no created mind can penetrate. The
upright heathen, who has made the most of his natural en-
dowments, is met by grace, which moves him to love good
above everything else and finally reveals to him the essential
truth of salvation through Christ. The choice of such a minor
personage as Ripheus emphasizes the mystery of God’s pre-
destination. On the other hand, Ripheus was a Trojan, a rep-
resentative of that noble stock from which the Romans
sprang. And among the Trojans he was ‘the most righteous of
all, and the strictest observer of justice’” (Gr).

Thus, we here “find illustrated the possibility of salvation
for a virtuous man living in pagan times. ‘Invincible’ (that
is, insuperable, inevitable) ignorance is not an absolute bar:
cf. Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae, Qu. lxxvi, Art. 2.
Often, says St. Thomas, has grace been extended to the
worthy but otherwise unenlightened” (Gr). In Summa theol.
II-II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 3 Aquinas notes that “multis gentilium
facta fuit revelatio de Christo, ut patet per ea quae prae-
dixerunt. . . . Sibylla etiam praenuntiavit quaedam de
Christo.” ("Many of the gentiles received revelations of
Christ, as is clear from their predictions. . . . The Sibyl too
foretold certain things about Christ.") He continues:

Si qui tamen salvati fuerunt quibus revelatio non fuit
facta, non fuerunt salvati absque fide Mediatoris; quia
etsi non habuerunt fidem explicitam, habuerunt tamen
fidem implicitam in divina providentia, credentes Deum
esse liberatorem hominum secundum modos sibi placi-
tos, et secundum quod aliquibus veritatem cognoscenti-
bus Spiritus revelasset.

If, however, some were saved without receiving any re-
velation, they were not saved without faith in a Mediator,
for, though they did not believe in Him explicitly, they
did, nevertheless, have implicit faith through believing in Divine providence, since they believed that God would deliver mankind in whatever way was pleasing to Him, and according to the revelation of the Spirit to those who knew the truth.

“The *Commedia*, however, affords only two individual examples: that of Cato in *Purgatorio* I, and, in the present canto, that of Ripheus” (Gr).

72. *ben che sua vista non discerna il fondo*: Cf. *Par.* XIX, 52-63. With this verse the device of anaphora ends, having served to frame the cases of six just kings, seen in this sixth heaven; it will be recalled that the sixth canto of the *Paradiso* is the canto of the Roman Empire and the imperial eagle, as recounted by Justinian.

73-75. *Quale allodetta . . . sazia*: This figure of the skylark was used before Dante, by the Provençal poets (*la lauzeta* in Provençal) and earlier Italian poets. Cf. Bernard de Ventadour’s *canzone* beginning “Can vei la lauzeta mover” (in S. G. Nichols, Jr. and J. A. Galm, 1962, pp. 166-68) and Bondie Dietauți’s *canzone* beginning “Madonna, me ë avenuto similgliante” (in E. Monaci, 1955, pp. 263-64).

73. *allodetta = allodoletta. si spazia*: “Soars.”

76-77. *tal mi sembiò . . . piacere*: “Thus the image appeared to me, [satisfied] with the stamp of God’s will,” i.e., in the mystery of this salvation of two who were thought to be pagans.

77-78. *al cui disio . . . diventa*: Cf. *Par.* XVIII, 109-11, where this same principle applies to birds’ nests.

79-80. *E avvegna . . . veste*: Although my doubt showed through me, as a coat of paint shows through glass. In *Conv.* III, ix, 10 Dante writes: “E però coloro che vogliono far parere le cose ne lo specchio d’alcuno colore, interpongono di quello colore tra ’l vetro e ’l piombo, si che ’l vetro ne rimane compreso.” (“And therefore they who desire to give some particular colour to the things in a mirror, interpose of
that colour between the glass and the lead, so that the glass is embraced by it.”

81. *tempo aspettar tacendo non patio*: “It [the doubt] endured not to bide its time in silence.” Cf. Conv. IV, *canzone* III, 9 and Conv. IV, ii, 5-10.  *

83. *mi pinse = mi spinse*. The subject is “il dubbiar mio” (vs. 79).

84. *per ch’io di coruscar vidi gran feste*: As usual, in the anticipation of being able to satisfy Dante’s doubt, the souls rejoice with an increase of brilliance, and with a brighter eye, as the next verse makes clear.


94. *Regnum celorum violenza pate*: See Matt. 11:12: “Regnum caelorum vim patitur.” (“The kingdom of heaven has been enduring violent assault.”) Cf. Luc. 16:16. The eagle’s discourse is the more solemn in its beginning for being in Latin, and for being a verse of the Scriptures.

95-96. *da caldo amore . . . volontate*: “Caldo amore” and “viva speranza” constitute a double subject of the verb “vince,” in the singular.

97. *a guisa che*: “As.”  *

98. *vince lei*: “It [love and hope] conquers it [divine will].”


100. *La prima vita del ciglio e la quinta*: The first and fifth are Trajan and Ripheus.  *

102. *la region de li angeli*: The heavens which Dante is traversing.  *

103-4. *D’i corpi suoi non uscir . . . Gentili = dai corpi loro non uscirono Gentili*, i.e., they did not die as pagans.
105. *quel d’i passuri e quel d’i passi piedi*: “The one (Ripheus) had faith in the feet (of Christ) that were to suffer (being nailed to the cross), the other (Trajan) had faith in the feet that had suffered. *Passuri* and *passi* are Latin future and perfect participles. Both Ripheus and Trajan had faith in Christ, one before and one after the crucifixion” (Gr). See Dante, *De mon.* III, iii, 10.

106–11. *Ché l’una ... mossa*: The first of the two cases to be considered is that of Trajan. Cf. n. to vss. 46-48.

106. *inferno*: This was doubtless Limbo, where there is “good will” among the virtuous pagans. “Good will,” however, does not suffice. God’s special sanctifying grace is required for salvation, a grace infused from above and given only to the living (with this great exception due to Gregory’s prayers, his great hope, “viva spene”). The effectiveness of Gregory’s prayers in short is an instance of the doctrine stated in vss. 94-99. It may be noted here that Thomas Aquinas considers the case of Trajan and of Gregory’s prayers for him; a passage in his *Summa theologiae* may serve here as a gloss on the case (*Summa theol.* III, Suppl., q. 71, a. 5, ad 5):

> De facto Traiani hoc modo potest probabiliter aestimari, quod precibus B. Gregorii ad vitam fuerit revocatus, et ita gratiam consecutus sit, per quam remissionem peccatorum habuit, et per consequens immunitatem a poena: sicut etiam apparat in omnibus illis qui fuerunt miraculose a mortuis suscitati, quorum plures constat idololatras et damnatos fuisse. De omnibus talibus enim similiter dici oportet quod non erant in inferno finaliter deputati, sed secundum praesentem propriorum meritorum iustitiam: secundum autem superiores causas, quibus praevidebantur ad vitam revocandi, erat aliter de eis disponendum.

> Vel dicendum, secundum quosdam, quod anima Traiani non fuit simpliciter a reatu poenae aeternae absolu; sed eius poena fuit suspensa ad tempus, scilicet usque ad diem iudicii. Nec tamen oportet quod hoc fiat
communiter per suffragia; quia alia sunt quae lege com-
muni accidunt, et alia quae singulariter ex privilegio
aliquibus conceduntur.
Concerning the incident of Trajan it may be supposed
with probability that he was recalled to life at the pray-
ers of blessed Gregory, and thus obtained the grace
whereby he received the pardon of his sins and in conse-
quence was freed from punishment. The same applies
to all those who were miraculously raised from the dead,
many of whom were evidently idolaters and damned.
For we must needs say likewise of all such persons that
they were consigned to hell, not finally, but as was ac-
tually due to their own merits according to justice: and
that according to higher causes, in view of which it was
foreseen that they would be recalled to life, they were
to be disposed of otherwise.
Or we may say with some that Trajan’s soul was not
simply freed from the debt of eternal punishment, but
that his punishment was suspended for a time, that is,
until the judgment day. Nor does it follow that this is
the general result of suffrages, because things happen
differently in accordance with the general law from that
which is permitted in particular cases and by privilege.

110. per suscitarla: “To resuscitate” Trajan’s soul.

111. sua voglia: Trajan’s will, now moved by God toward
Himself, the supreme good.

112–17. L’anima gloriosa . . . gioco: Two more tercets are
thus given to the case of Trajan.

114. credette in lui: He believed in Christ and thereby was
saved. See vss. 104-5.

115–16. s’accese in tanto foco . . . amor: The will, the good
will of Trajan, is thus stressed, since love pertains to the will.

116. a la morte seconda: Trajan’s second death.

117. questo gioco: The joy of Paradise.
118. *L'altra*: The soul of Ripheus.

118–21. *per grazia . . . drittura*: The inclination of the will to good is a result of grace, and accepted doctrine speaks of two kinds of grace (a point worth considering in the case of Ripheus), namely, of operating grace and of cooperating grace. In *Summa theol.* I-II, q. 111, a. 2, resp., Thomas Aquinas defines the two:

   Utroque autem modo gratia dicta convenienter dividitur per operantem et cooperantem. Operatio enim alicuius effectus non attribuitur mobili, sed moventi. In illo ergo effectu in quo mens nostra est mota, et non movens, solus autem Deus movens, operatio Deo attribuitur: et secundum hoc dicitur *gratia operans*. In illo autem effectu in quo mens nostra et movet et movetur, operatio non solum attribuitur Deo, sed etiam animae; et secundum hoc dicitur *gratia cooperans*. Est autem in nobis duplex actus: primus quidem interior voluntatis; et quantum ad istum actum voluntas se habet ut mota, Deus autem ut movens; et praesertim cum voluntas incipit bonum velle, quae prius malum volebat; et ideo, secundum quod Deus movet humanam mentem ad hunc actum, dicitur *gratia operans*. Alius autem actus est exterior, qui cum a voluntate imperetur, ut supra habitum est, quaest. 17, art. 9, consequens est quod ad hunc actum operatio attribuatur voluntati. Et quia etiam ad hunc actum Deus nos adiuvat, et interius confirmando voluntatem, ut ad actum perveniat, et exterius facultatem operandi praebendo; respectu huiusmodi actus dicitur *gratia cooperans*. Unde post praemissa verba subdit Augustinus (ibid., 4): *Ut autem velimus, operatur; cum autem volumus, ut perficiamus, nobis cooperatur*. Sic igitur si gratia accipiatur pro gratuitate Dei motione, qua movet nos ad bonum meritorium, convenienter dividitur gratia per *operantem et cooperantem*.

Now in both these ways grace is fittingly divided into operating and co-operating. For the operation of an effect is not attributed to the thing moved but to the mover. Hence in that effect in which our mind is moved.
and does not move, but in which God is the sole mover, the operation is attributed to God, and it is with reference to this that we speak of *operating grace*. But in that effect in which our mind both moves and is moved, the operation is not only attributed to God, but also to the soul; and it is with reference to this that we speak of *co-operating grace*. Now there is a double act in us. First, there is the interior act of the will, and with regard to this act the will is a thing moved, and God is the mover; and especially when the will, which hitherto willed evil, begins to will good. And hence, inasmuch as God moves the human mind to this act, we speak of operating grace. But there is another, exterior act; and since it is commanded by the will, as was shown above (q. 17, a. 9), the operation of this act is attributed to the will. And because God assists us in this act, both by strengthening our will interiorly so as to attain to the act, and by granting outwardly the capability of operating, it is with respect to this that we speak of co-operating grace. Hence after the aforesaid words Augustine subjoins: *He operates that we may will; and when we will, He co-operates that we may perfect.* And thus if grace is taken for God’s gratuitous motion whereby He moves us to meritorious good, it is fittingly divided into operating and co-operating grace.

For Aquinas’ reference to Augustine, see Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* XVII.

120. *la prima onda*: The “first wave” of a fountain is the water that is gushing into it from the bottom.

121. *tutto suo amor là giù pose a drittura*: The verse focuses on Ripheus’ cooperation with the special grace bestowed on him, and he directs all his love to righteousness or inner justice (“*drittura*”). It will be noted that the stress here is on love, which pertains to the will, as noted in the case of Trajan.

122–23. *per che, di grazia in grazia . . . futura*: Thus, as with Trajan, the absolute requirement for salvation is met.
Ripheus believes, with an implicit faith comparable to that which God gave to those who were harrowed from Hell and through a special revelation made to him by God ("Dio li aperse l’occhio").

124–29. _ond’ ei credette . . . millesmo_: Two more tercets are given to the case of Ripheus, making four in all in this passage: precisely the number of tercets allotted to the case of Trajan (vss. 106-17).

125. _da indi . . . più_: “From that moment on.”

126. _riprendiene = ne riprendeva_, “reproofed therefor.”

127–28. _Quelle tre donne . . . rota_: See _Purg._ XXIX, 121-29. The three theological virtues (whom Dante saw beside the right wheel of the chariot of the Church) were Ripheus’ baptism. In this particular reference, which takes the reader back to the advent of Beatrice in the great procession at the summit of Mount Purgatory, it is possible to see that the pilgrim Dante fulfills the same pattern as Ripheus. First he is brought (by Virgil and special grace from Heaven) to “drittura,” justice (see _Purg._ XXVII, 139-42), and then he attains to special grace (beyond Virgil’s ken) on the other side of the river, the three theological virtues finally presenting him to Beatrice (_Purg._ XXXI, 133-35). On this whole pattern in the journey, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 72-121.

127. _li fur = gli furono_. _per battesmo_: Ripheus thus fulfills an essential requirement for salvation, which is baptism. Cf. _Inf._ IV, 34-36.

129. _dinanzi al battezzar_: It was the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist which instituted the sacrament.

130–32. _O predestinazion . . . tota_: The two exceptional cases of Trajan and Ripheus support the exclamation over God’s predestination, hidden from the sight of all creatures.

131. _aspetti_: A Latinism, from _aspicior_ (“I see”), here meaning “sight” and used in the plural to include all creatures, even angels and the blessed in Heaven.
132. *tota* (Latin) = *tutta*.

133–35. *E voi, mortali ... eletti*: The tercet now distinguishes between the vision of God’s predestination that mortals have on earth and that which the blessed have in Heaven, which is also limited, even though they see God.


137–38. *perché il ben nostro ... volemo*: “‘For our good is perfected by this good, namely, that we will what God wills.’ Our happiness is made perfect by the complete surrender of our will to God” (Gr). Cf. *Par. III*, 85-87.

142–48. *E come a buon cantor ... fiammette*: “While the Eagle speaks, the lights of Trajan and Ripheus flash together (like the twinkling of a pair of eyes) at the two ends of the semicircle,—just as a lute-player accompanies a singer by touching the strings” (Gr).

143. *seguitar*: “Accompany.”

145. *mentre ch’é’ = mentre che egli.*
3. *intento*: Object of attention. *s'era tolto = s'era distolto*.

4–6. *non ridea . . . fessi*: Beatrice speaks of her smile, so often bestowed upon Dante in this journey through the heavens, which always implies a radiance. Hence here her radiance in smiling would be such that it would reduce Dante to ashes.

6. *Semelè quando di cener fessi*: Semele, daughter of Cadmus and mother of Bacchus, having insisted on beholding her lover, Jupiter, in all his heavenly majesty, was burned to ashes by his splendor. See Ovid, *Metam.* III, 253-315; cf. *Inf.* XXX, 2. *fessi = si fece*.

7–8. *le scale de l'eterno palazzo*: The metaphor converts the heavens through which Dante (and contemplation) passes with Beatrice into so many steps which lead finally to the innermost throne-room of God’s “palace” (cf. *Par.* XXV, 42). The reader should begin to note a gradual transformation in this journey through the heavens to God; for in the world-picture in which the journey begins, the earth is at the center and the Empyrean heaven is the circumference—sometimes termed the mind of God. But now, through such similes as
this of an “eternal palace,” the reader is being led to God as to a point and not as to a circumference. The poet will continue this gradual transformation until finally (Par. XXVIII, 16) God will be seen symbolically as a point of light, and the pilgrim will be puzzled at the way things have turned inside out, so to speak, as he passes from the material world to the purely spiritual.

12. fronda che trono scoscende: “Trono” is the subject, “fronda” the object of the verb. trono: “Bolt of lightning.” See vs. 108; see also Dante’s Rime CXVI, 57: scoscende: Cf. Purg. XIV, 135, for the verb used, as here, in the sense of “rend.”


14–15. che sotto . . . valore: Saturn, “the seventh brightness,” being in line with the constellation Leo, its cold influence “now radiates downward” mitigated by the heat of the Lion. Dante speaks of the coldness of Saturn in Conv. II, xiii, 25: “Giove è stella di temperata complessione, in mezzo de la freddura di Saturno e de lo calore di Marte.” (“Jove is a star of temperate composition betwixt the cold of Saturn and the heat of Mars.”) See n. to Purg. XIX, 3; Par. XXII, 145-46. In Georg. I, 336, Virgil refers to “frigida Saturni . . . stella” (“Saturn’s cold star”).

14. Leone ardente: The reference is to Leo the Lion, constellation and fifth sign of the zodiac. Cf. Par. XVI, 34-39. In the spring of 1300 the planet Saturn was in the constellation of Leo, which, as Lana observes, is of a hot and dry nature, like fire.

18. questo specchio: The planet Saturn. ti sarà par- vente: It will be remembered that Beatrice and Dante always enter into the planet contained in each heaven. Cf. vs. 25: “dentro al cristallo.”

19–20. Qual savessse . . . beato: “Anyone who knew how my eyes loved to feed on her blessed countenance” (Gr).
19. savesse = sapesse.

21. quand' io mi trasmutai ad altra cura: "When I turned my attention to a different object."

24. contrapesando l'un con l'altro lato: "By balancing the one side with the other": i.e., by weighing in the scales my desire to see Beatrice against my desire to obey her" (Gr).

25. Dentro al cristallo: Saturn has been termed a "specchio" (vs. 18). vocabol: "Name," in this case, Saturn.

26. cerchiando il mondo: "Revolving around the earth," as do all the planets and their spheres.

26-27. del suo caro duce . . . morta: The god Saturn, dear to the earth for having ruled there during the Golden Age, when, as vs. 27 reminds the reader, all was perfect. Cf. Purg. XXII, 148-50; XXVIII, 139-40. Appropriately, as indicated in the following verses, the ladder seen in this planet is the color of gold.

28. traluce: "Shines brightly." For a similar use of this verb, see Par. XIII, 69.

29. uno scaleo = una scala.

29-30. uno scaleo eretto . . . luce: On this ladder, the appropriate symbol of contemplation, Grandgent remarks: "Corresponding to the Cross in Mars and the Eagle in Jupiter, we find in Saturn a Ladder of golden light, the emblem of Contemplation, stretching upward farther than the eye can follow—such a ladder as Jacob once saw. . . . A similar ladder adorns the gown of Lady Philosophy in the Consolatio Philosophiae of Boethius (I, Pr. i)." See Gen. 28:12: "Viditque in somnis scalam stantem super terram, et cacumen illius tangens caelum, angelos quoque Dei ascendentes et descendentes per eam." ("He dreamed that a ladder was set up on the ground with its top reaching to heaven; angels of God were ascending and descending on it.")

30. mia luce: "My sight."

32. *tanti splendor*: "So many lights" (spirits).

32–33. *ogni lume che par nel ciel*: Each and every heavenly body that is visible in the sky.

33. *quindi*: "Thereover."

34. *costume*: "Habit."


35–36. *al cominciare . . . piume*: To bring in the coldest time of day and to have these birds flying about to warm their cold feathers, the poet is clearly adding another touch of coldness to that which is already associated with Saturn (cf. n. to vss. 14-15).

37–39. *poi altre . . . soggiorno*: The varied flight of these birds may well be here used to suggest, through metaphor, what properly belongs to contemplation. Grandgent remarks that "in the fragmentary Old Provençal *Boecia—probably through an error in reading the Latin text—the figures climbing the rungs are called birds; and by an odd coincidence Dante likens to birds the bright spirits that come swarming down the steps to meet him." Richard of St. Victor (*De gratia contemplationis* I, 5) compares the operations of the contemplative mind to the movements of birds.

40–42. *tal modo . . . si percossi*: "When the sparkling host of souls, in its descent, reaches a 'certain round' of the ladder (probably the one nearest Dante), it breaks up into groups that hover and flit like birds" (Gr).

40. *me*: The old language often used the pronouns in *e*, without a preposition, as unstressed dative (as here) or accusative.

42. *si percossi*: The "si" here is the so-called pleonastic reflexive, which actually focuses specifically on the subject, in this case that part of the total "sfavillar" which strikes upon a certain rung of the ladder.
43. quel: I.e., “splendor” (vs. 32).

44. fé = fece.

45. accenne = accenni. Some editors make this the last word of Dante’s inner thought and end the quotation here. But Petrocchi has chosen, for quite persuasive reasons, to extend the quotation to the end of vs. 48.

46–48. Ma quella . . . dimando: Thus Dante’s thought continues.

46–47. quella ond’ . . . si sta:Beatrice, from whom I take my every cue as to how and when to speak.

47. si sta: Freely, “is not doing or saying anything.”


49. Per ch’ella, che vedea il tacer mio: Beatrice reads Dante’s unexpressed thought.

50. colui che tutto vede: God. Cf. Par. IX, 73.


55–56. vita beata . . . letizia: As so often, the spirit is swathed in the effulgence of its own joy.

56–60. fammi nota . . . divota: Dante’s two requests, as expressed in these verses, are not answered in the order in which they are asked, but in reverse order. The first (vss. 56–57) seems deliberately introduced by the poet in order to bring in once more the theme of predestination, thus making it the far more important question. The second can be answered in a few words.

59. sinfonia: The hymns sung by spirits in the preceding spheres.

60. l’altre: The other wheels or heavens.

63. per quel che: “For the same reason that.” For the phrase, cf. Purg. XV, 133; XXXIII, 77-78.
64–66. *Giù per li gradi . . . ammanta*: The reply to Dante’s first question begins.

65. *discesi tanto*: I.e., descended so far down, even to you. 
   *sol* = *solo*, *soltanto*, modifying “per farti festa.” 
   *farti festa*: *Fare festa* commonly has the meaning of “welcome.”

67. *più amor*: I.e., greater than that of my companions.

68. *quinci sì ferve*: “Glows from here up,” on the ladder.

69. *sì come il fiammegegar ti manifesta*: The measure of love is the brightness of the spirit. Hence above the speaker, at a higher rung of the ladder, there must be spirits brighter and equally bright.

70. *l’alta carità*: God’s love.

71. *pronte al consiglio che ’l mondo governa*: Quick to obey the counsel or providence. (God’s) which governs the universe.

72. *sorteggia*: “Allots.” 
   *osservi* = *osservi*.

76–78. *ma questo . . . consorte*: “Why does God choose one soul for a particular office, rather than another? Once more Dante is confronted with the inscrutable mystery of predestination, which perturbs and baffles him. And once more his curiosity is curbed. Cf. XIX, 52-66, 79-90; XX, 130-138” (Gr).

76. *cerner*: “Make out.” 
   *forte*: “Hard.”

78. *consorte = consorti*.

79–81. *Né venni . . . mola*: The spirit, in the joy it feels in being able to respond to Dante’s question, spins upon itself. See *Par.* XVIII, 41-42.


83. *s’appunta*: “Focuses.”

84. *questa*: I.e., “luce.” 
   *in ch’io m’inventro*: “In which
I am embellied,” i.e., contained. The verb was coined by Dante.


89. *quant’*: “According as.”

90. *la chiarietà de la fiamma pareggio*: “‘I match the clearness of my flame.’ Again the doctrine that happiness depends on clearness of spiritual vision, which is a gift of grace” (Gr).

91. *alma = anima. più si schiara*: “Is most illumined.”

92. *quel serafin che ’n Dio più l’occhio ha fisso*: With this touch the statement comes very close to that of *Par.* IV, 28. The Seraphim are the angels who are closest to God and who represent His love.


94. *però che = perciò che.*

95. *eterno statuto*: That which has been “eternally decreed” by God. *quel che chiedi*: The subject of “s’innoltra.”


98. *presumma = presume*. The double *m* in such forms (like *summa* and *assumma*) is archaic.

99. *segno*: “Goal,” i.e., the inscrutable ways of God’s providence.

100. *qui*: In Heaven.

101-2. *onde riguarda . . . l’assumma*: Consider, then, how it can do on earth (where it “is smoky”) that which it cannot do in Heaven (where it “shines”).
102. perché 'l ciel l'assumma: “Though heaven receives it into itself.”

103. Si mi prescrisser: Prescrivere has here the meaning of “set a limit to.” Cf. Par. XXIV, 6; XXV, 57.

104. mi ritrassi: “I limited myself.”

105. umilmente: In this context the adverb registers resignation respecting the unanswerable and far deeper question of God’s providence.


107. e non molto distanti a la tua patria: The reference proves to be to the mountains of the Apennine chain near Gubbio (cf. vs. 109, “Catria”), which is relatively close to Florence.

108. tanto: Modifies “surgon” (vs. 106). che ’ troni assai suonan più bassi: The mountains rise so high as to be above the clouds wherein lightning and thunder are formed (cf. “trono,” vs. 12). The verb suonare points to the meaning “thunder.”

109. gibbo: “Hump.” Catria: Monte Catria, one of the peaks of the Apennines, on the borders of Umbria and the Marches, about ten miles northeast of Gubbio, near the Via Flaminia.


111. suole: “Suole” is evidently equivalent to the imperfect, soleva. See, for other persons of the verb, Inf. XXVII, 48; Par. XII, 123 (cf. Inf. XVI, 22). latria: “Worship.” Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. II-II, q. 81, a. 1, ad 3: “Manifestum est autem quod dominium convenit Deo secundum propriam et singularem quamdam rationem, quia scilicet ipse omnia fecit, et quia summum in omnibus rebus obtinet principatum; et ideo specialis ratio servitutis ei debetur; et talis servitus nomine latriae designatur apud Graecos;
et ideo ad religionem proprie pertinet.” (“Now it is evident that lordship belongs to God in a special and singular way, because He made all things, and has supreme dominion over all. Consequently a special kind of service is due to Him, which is known as latria in Greek; and therefore it belongs to religion.”)

112. *ricominciommi* = *mi riconinciò.* *sermo:* “Speech.”

114. *mi fe’* = *mi feci.*

115. *pur con cibi di liquor d’ulivi:* Lenten fare, food seasoned only with olive oil, not animal fat. *pur:* “Only.” *cibi di = cibi da.*


119. *vano:* “Void.” There seems to be here a reference to some condition or event of which we have no knowledge, but which is so deplorable that it will disclose itself eventually.

121–23. *In quel loco . . . adriano:* There has been much discussion as to the interpretation of vss. 121-23. If “fu’” (i.e., *fui*), “I was,” be the reading in vs. 122, “Pietro Damiano” and “Pietro Peccator” must be one and the same person, and the meaning would be: “I was known as Peter Damian in the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, but I was Peter the Sinner in the monastery of Our Lady on the shores of the Adriatic.” Or, reading “fu” (“he was”), the meaning would be: “At the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana I was Peter Damian, and Peter the Sinner was in the monastery of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore.” In the latter case, the remark would be parenthetical, to correct, as it were, a prevailing confusion of the two Peters.

Some early commentators take the latter view, but many modern commentators agree with Benvenuto in the former interpretation and would read “fu’” in vs. 122. In this case, Dante has Peter Damian affirm what was a common confu-
tion of the two Peters in the poet's day. This seems the more plausible interpretation.

121. Pietro Damiano: San Pietro Damiani (St. Peter Damian), proclaimed doctor of the Church by Leo XII in 1828, was born of an obscure family at Ravenna ca. 1007. In his childhood he was much neglected and after the death of his parents was set by his eldest brother to tend swine. Later on, another brother, named Damiano, who was arch­deacon of Ravenna, took compassion on him and had him educated. Peter in gratitude assumed his brother's name and was thenceforth known as Peter Damian (Petrus Damiani).

After studying at Ravenna, Faenza, and Parma, Peter Damian himself became a teacher and soon acquired celebrity. At the age of about twenty-eight, however, he entered the Benedictine monastery of Fonte Avellana on the slopes of Monte Catria, of which in 1043 he became abbot. In this capacity he rendered important services to Popes Gregory VI, Clement II, Leo IX, Victor II, and Stephen IX, by the last of whom he was in 1057, much against his will, created cardinal bishop of Ostia. He appears to have been a zealous supporter of these popes, and of Hildebrand (afterwards Gregory VII), in their efforts to reform Church discipline, and he made journeys into France and Germany with that object. After fulfilling several important missions under Nicholas II and Alexander II, he died at an advanced age at Faenza, February 22, 1072.

122–23. la casa di Nostra Donna: The monastery of Santa Maria in Porto, near Ravenna.

123. lito adriano: The Adriatic shore.

125. cappello: The cardinal's hat. (See n. to vs. 121.) The fact is that the "cardinal's hat" (as still in use today) did not exist at the time of Peter Damian, but was instituted by Innocent IV in 1252.

126. di male in peggio si travasa: "Which is shifted only from bad to worse." Each successive cardinal is worse than the one before. si travasa: Literally, "poured."
127. Cefas: St. Peter. See Ioan. i:42: “Intuitus autem eum Iesus, dixit: Tu es Simon, filius Iona; tu vocaberis Cephas (quod interpretatur Petrus).” (“But Jesus, looking upon him, said, ‘Thou art Simon, the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas, which interpreted is Peter.’”) Petrus is a translation of the Aramaic cephās. Dante also mentions Peter in Par. XVIII, 131. vasello: St. Paul, the “chosen ves-


129. ostello: “House.” See Luc. 10:5, 7; I Cor. 10:27.

130. quinci e quindi: “On either side.” chi rincalzi: “Someone to prop them up.” Some editors prefer the reading “chi i rincalzi,” wherein “i” = li, “them,” redundant for “li moderni pastori” in the following verse. These servants who attended on either side were called braccieri.

131. chi li meni: This can mean either in sedan chairs, in which case the two who carried the chair were known as portantini, or on horseback, flanked by lackeys known as staffieri.

132. e chi di retro li alzi: These who held up the prelate’s train behind were known as caudatari.

133. due bestie: The prelate and his palfrey. pelle: The prelate’s fur-lined mantle.

134. voce: “Words.”

135. fermarsi = si fermarono.

136. fero = fecero.

137. qui: I.e., on earth. assomigliarsi: “Be paralleled.”


2. parvol = parvolo, “child.”

3. colà dove più si confida: To its mother.

4-6. e quella . . . disporre: The simile of child and mother is sustained now in these verses. Beatrice is often seen as “mother” to Dante, in one way or another.

5. palido = pallido. anelo: “Panting.”

9. buon zelo: Probably, given the context, the expression is here used to denote “righteous indignation,” as in Purg. XXIX, 23.


12. mosso = commosso.

13. se ’nteso avessi i prieghi suoi: “If you had understood the prayers it contained.” Dante, of course, has not understood them.
14–15. *la vendetta* . . . *muoi*: The prediction is deliberately obscure, and no specific event can be singled out as its fulfillment. It will, in any case, be a “vengeance” wreaked on corrupt prelates and a corrupt Church.

15. *muoi = moia*.

16–18. *La spada* . . . *l’aspetta*: God’s sword (“la spada di qua sù”) never cuts either too soon or too late, except as it seems to one who desires it or one who fears it.


21. *redui = riduci (rivolgì)*. The infinitive is *redurre*, from the Latin *reducere*.

22. *ritornai*: “I turned again.” The verb is transitive here and has “li occhi” as its direct object.

23–24. *e vidi . . . rai*: *Sperule* is the diminutive of *spere* and thus could mean “little globes” (of light), but the diminutive here may well be that of enhancement, adding the touch of “precious” to these globes (see vs. 29, where they are termed “pearls”). The same applies to the use of “rubinetto” to designate spirits in Par. XIX, 4. “Cento” is here used to mean a multitude.

24. *mutui rai*: The spirits shine to one another in their love. Cf. vs. 32.

25. *repreme = reprime*.


27. *del troppo si teme*: “Fears he will go beyond proper bounds.” The “si” here is the usual pleonastic reflexive which directs attention back on the subject with the suggestion of “fears, for his own part.”

28–29. *la maggiore . . . margherite*: When the reader learns
that this is none other than the great St. Benedict, he will understand these superlatives, and just why this flame is so.

29. *innanzi fessi*: *Farsi innanzi* and *farsi avanti* are established expressions in both early and modern Italian. *fessi = si fece*.


31. *dentro a lei = dentro ad essa* (the flame or, in metaphor, the “pearl”). The spirit is swathed in its own radiance.

33. *sarebbero espressi = sarebbero già espressi*, i.e., you would not have held back so.

34. *tarde = tardi*, present subjunctive of *tardare*.

35. *a l’alto fine*: The end of the journey and the sight of God face to face.

36. *pur al pensier, da che sì ti riguarde*: “Even to that thought of which you are so chary.” *riguarde = riguardi*.

37–39. *Quel monte . . . disposta*: The mountain referred to is that of Monte Cassino, which is situated on a commanding spur of Monte Cairo, overlooking the valley of the Liri, 1,400 feet below, a few miles from Aquino in the north of Campania, almost halfway between Rome and Naples. The town of Cassino is at the base of Monte Cassino. When St. Benedict first came to the spot, it was still a center of pagan worship, the summit of the hill being crowned by a temple of Apollo and a grove sacred to Venus, both of which he destroyed.

39. *la gente ingannata e mal disposta*: Pagans who worshiped the “false and lying gods” (*Inf. I, 72*), who were “the ancient peoples in their ancient error” (*Par. VIII, 6*). “Ingannata” refers primarily to the intellect, to erroneous beliefs, whereas “disposta” refers to the will, which in them was perverse.

40–42. *e quel son io . . . soblima*: St. Benedict now declares himself. Founder of the Benedictine order, the first religious
order of the West, St. Benedict was born of a noble family at Nursia (now Norcia) in the east of Umbria ca. 480. In early youth he was sent to school in Rome, but shocked by the wild life of his associates he ran away at about the age of fourteen and hid himself among the mountains near Subiaco on the borders of the Abruzzi. There he lived in solitude for three years in a cave, acquiring a great reputation for sanctity, which led the monks of the neighboring monastery of Vicovaro to choose him as their abbot. Impatient, however, of his severe rule, of which he had warned them before accepting their invitation, they attempted to rid themselves of him by poison. Their attempt being discovered, St. Benedict left them and returned once more to Subiaco, whence he went to Monte Cassino, where ca. 529 he founded his famous monastery on the site of an ancient temple of Apollo. He died at Monte Cassino ca. 543.

St. Benedict's *Regula monachorum*, which was designed to repress the irregular lives of the wandering monks, was first introduced in this monastery and eventually became the rule of all the western monks. One of the features of his system was that, in addition to their religious exercises, his monks occupied themselves with manual labor and in the instruction of the young.

41. *lo nome di colui*: Christ.

42. *sublima* = *sublima*, "exalts," "uplifts" (to salvation).

43. *e tanta grazia sopra me relusse*: St. Benedict attributes to God and His grace all he achieved. *relusse* = *rilucette*. "Relusse" is from the Latin *reluxit*.

44. *le ville circunstanti*: The neighboring towns.

45. *cólto*: "Cult," i.e., pagan worship.

46–47. *Questi altri . . . fuoro*: This is the explicit declaration that Saturn is the heaven of contemplation, this already having been symbolized by the configuration of a ladder and by what has been said about it.

46. *fuochi*: "Spirits."
47. accessi di quel caldo: “Kindled with that fire” of holy love.

48. che fa nascere i fiori e’ frutti santi: The “flowers” may be taken to be thoughts and sentiments, which then produce the fruits, i.e., holy works.

49. Maccario: St. Macarius. It is uncertain which of the several saints of the name of Macarius is the one intended by Dante. The two best known, between whom perhaps Dante did not very clearly distinguish, are St. Macarius the Elder, called the Egyptian, and St. Macarius the Younger of Alexandria—both disciples of St. Anthony. St. Macarius the Elder (born in 301) retired at the age of thirty into the Libyan desert, where he remained for sixty years, passing his time between prayer and manual labor, until his death, at the age of ninety, in 391. St. Macarius the Younger had nearly 5,000 monks under his charge; he is credited with having established the monastic rule of the East, as St. Benedict did that of the West. He died ca. 404.

Romoaldo: St. Romuald, founder of the order of Camaldoli or reformed Benedictines, belonged to the Onesti family of Ravenna, where he was born ca. 950. He entered the Benedictine order ca. 970 and lived a hermit’s life. In 998 he was named abbot of Sant’Apollinare in Classe, but soon renounced the office. He then began to establish the hermitages of his order, one of which was the famous monastery of Camaldoli in the Casentino about thirty miles from Florence. He died ca. 1027. A purely contemplative life was enjoined on the members of his order, which received the papal sanction from Alexander II in 1072.

51. fermar = fermarono.

52-54. E io a lui . . . vostri: The reader should note that Dante, who has been speaking only to St. Benedict, now refers to all the spirits in this heaven.


60. *con imagine scoverta:* I.e., in your true human semblance, and not concealed by the radiation that hides you. The reader will recall, with this request by Dante, how long it has been since any semblance whatsoever of a human countenance or figure has been seen. By such a question, and considering how great the saint is to whom he is speaking, the poet causes the wayfaring Dante to express a wish that may well be that of the reader by now. The answer, moreover, points to the end, and such signals are beginning to come (see vs. 124). By the answer we are also given the first hint of the special grace that awaits the pilgrim at the end (*Par. XXX*, 43-45), to which end the ladder of contemplation rises (vs. 68).

61. *Frate:* Again this form of address introducing a corrective or admonitory tone. Cf. *Purg. IV*, 127; XI, 82; XVI, 65; *Par. III*, 70, and passim. *alto disio:* “Alto” anticipates the reply, for it is a desire (for vision, let it be remembered) that will be satisfied only at the summit of the ladder of contemplation.

62. *l'ultima spera:* The Empyrean.

64. *ivi:* In the Empyrean. *perfetta, matura e intera:* These adjectives, implying perfection, maturation, and fulfillment, will be better understood when the journey to God reaches the experience that awaits the pilgrim at the final summit. *Peretto* would seem to take its meaning from the Latin *perficio,* “to complete.”

65–66. *in quella sola . . . sempr' era:* In the Empyrean, a spiritual heaven, all is as it ever was, and all is at rest, whereas the other nine heavens revolve, their parts changing place.

67. *loco:* “Space.” *non s'impola:* “It has no pole,” it does not revolve, like the material heavens.

68. *e nostra scala infino ad essa varca:* The ladder of contemplation reaches all the way to the Empyrean. “Varca”
brings in the notion of fording, from one shore to another, i.e., from time to eternity.


70–72. *Infin là sù . . . carca:* Cf. Gen. 28:12: "Viditque in somnis scalam stantem super terram, et cacumen illius tangens caelum, angelos quoque Dei ascendentes et descendentes per eam." ("He dreamed that a ladder was set up on the ground with its top reaching to heaven; angels of God were ascending and descending on it.")

73. *Ma:* With this "ma" begins St. Benedict's denunciation of corruption in monastic orders and in the Church, which extends through vs. 96 and is strong indeed. Since he speaks in terms, first, of the ladder of contemplation which reaches all the way to the Empyrean, his words are important for the basic allegory of the *Paradiso,* which is that of a journey of contemplation. And Contemplation, let it be remembered, is one of Beatrice's names, so that the very journey with her is seen through St. Benedict's words, even though they apply more to monastic orders and their neglect of the ladder.

73–75. *per salirla . . . carte:* To climb this ladder no one leaves the earth, all are so attached to worldly things.

75. *per danno de le carte:* "As so much waste paper," i.e., not worth the paper on which the "regola" is written, since no one follows it any longer.

76–77. *Le mura . . . spelonche:* What were abbeys have become caves—here with the overtone, perhaps, of such passages from the Bible as Ier. 7:11: "Numquid ergo spelunca latronum facta est domus ista, in qua invocatum est nomen meum, in oculis vestris?" ("Is this house then, in which my name hath been called upon, in your eyes become a den of robbers?") See also Matt. 21:13: "Scriptum est: Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur; vos autem fecistis illam speluncam latronum." ("It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of thieves.")

77. *cocolle:* "Cowls." Cf. Par. IX, 78, "coculla."
78. *sacca*: Feminine plural of *sacco*, "sack."

79–81. *Ma grave usura . . . folle*: But exorbitant usury (interest paid by the borrower) when exacted ("si tolle") is not so much against God’s will as the taking of that fruit (Church moneys) which makes the hearts of monks so wild, i.e., avid for more (see "folle" in this sense in Par. XIX, 122).

82–84. *ché quantunque . . . brutto*: For all the material goods which the Church has in its keeping belong to the people who ask in God’s name (that is, the worthy poor) and is not for family or worse (i.e., concubines and bastards). Cf. Dante, *De mon.* III, x, 17.

85–87. *La carne . . . la ghianda*: Human nature is so weak ("blanda," "soft") that down in the world a good beginning does not last ("basta") as long as it takes the oak to sprout and form its fruit, the acorn. Early commentators assure us that this is a period of some twenty years, but less time is implied by the figure, indeed a very short time. For a similar judgment, see Par. XXVII, 136-38.


90. *Francesco*: St. Francis of Assisi. See Par. XI, 43-117.

93. *tu vederai del bianco fatto bruno*: "You will see the white turned dark," as in a withered flower. Again the imagery is close to that of Par. XXVII, 136-38.


96. *mirabile a veder che qui l soccorso*: "The turning back of the Jordan and the parting of the Red Sea were examples of divine intervention ‘more wonderful to behold than succor here.’ Therefore we must not despair" (Gr).

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97. *indi*: From where he was, near me.

97–98. *si raccolse . . . collegio*: "He withdrew to his company."

98. *e 'l collegio si strinse*: "And the company drew together into a single group."


100. *La dolce donna*: Beatrice.

100–102. *dietro a lor mi pinse . . . vinse*: Here one may hear, in allegory, an echo of the words by which Virgil first recognized Beatrice (see *Inf.* II, 76-78).

103. *qua giù*: Down here on earth.

105. *la mia ala*: "My flight."

106. *S'io torni mai*: "As I hope ever to return." *letitore*: Scartazzini-Vandelli notes that this is the last of Dante's sixteen apostrophes to the reader.

109–11. *tu non avresti . . . esso*: This main clause swears by the asseveration of the author's true hope to return to the immortal world above. Again one notes the figure of *hysteron proteron* or the "last first" ("tratto e messo / nel foco il dito"). See n. to *Par.* II, 23-24. Rapidity of motion is certainly expressed here by the reversal, but there is more to it than just that.

112–23. *O gloriose stelle . . . tira*: God's providence has seen to it that the pilgrim Dante "lands" precisely in the constellation under which he was born, Gemini, or the Twins, and his apostrophe to these stars constitutes the most eloquent witness to the belief in the influence of the heavenly bodies on human character that is found anywhere in the poem. That these bodies do have such influence is granted in *Purg.* XVI, 73-81; but that the poet would grant, in his prayer here, that these glorious stars gave him "tutto, qual che si sia" (*all, whatever it may be*) of his genius was perhaps hardly expected by the reader.
This tribute is then turned into a devout invocation, that *virtù*, power, may come to him, as poet, from these stars, that he, the poet, may be equal to the hard pass that "draws his soul to it." Thus, as a little invocation, the verses signal the end, the final challenge to the poet, and beseech the power, from his own stars, to achieve it. Whereupon Beatrice's first words (vs. 124) join in this signal of the final course to be run: "Tu se' sì presso a l'ultima salute."

115-17. *con voi nasceva . . . tosco*: The sun, "padre d'ogni mortal vita," was rising and setting with Gemini when Dante first breathed "the Tuscan air." He was born, then, between May 21 and June 21.

115. *vosco*: "With you."

127-54. *e però . . . belli*: On these verses, which close this canto, and on the theme they present, Grandgent observes: "Between Saturn and the fixed stars is a distance greater than any hitherto traversed by Dante. The long, swift ascent symbolizes the uplifting of the soul by contemplation. In the 8th sphere, which contains countless heavenly bodies, the poet enters the constellation of Gemini, under whose influence he was born. Thus, in a spiritual sense, he returns, like Plato's departed, to his native star: cf. *Par.* IV, 52-57. At this point of his journey, he is told to look back (*Purg.* IV, 54): 'che suole a riguardar giovare altri.' Beneath him are the sun, the moon, and all the planets, and, lowest, our little earth, so tiny that its pettiness makes him smile. Once St. Benedict, standing at a window, had a similar vision, suddenly beholding the whole world collected, as it were, under one sunbeam (Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, II, xxxv).

Grandgent notes that "a closer parallel to Dante's experience, however, is to be found in Cicero's *De Re Publica*, VI, where Scipio [Africanus the Younger], in a dream, is lifted to the skies." See *De re publica* VI, xvi, 16:

Erant autem eae stellae, quas numquam ex hoc loco vidimus, et eae magnitudines omnium, quas esse numquam suspicati sumus, ex quibus erat ea minima, quae ultima a caelo, citima terris luce lucebat aliena. stella-
rum autem globi terrae magnitudinem facile vincebant. iam ipsa terra ita mihi parva visa est, ut me imperii nostri, quo quasi punctum eius attingimus, paeniteret. There were stars which we never see from the earth, and they were all larger than we have ever imagined. The smallest of them was that farthest from heaven and nearest the earth which shone with a borrowed light. The starry spheres were much larger than the earth; indeed the earth itself seemed to me so small that I was scornful of our empire, which covers only a single point, as it were, upon its surface.

Grandgent, noting that Scipio “sees the starry sphere, the seven planets (including sun and moon), and the earth,” cites De re publica VI, xx, 21-22:

Omnis enim terra, quae colitur a vobis, angustata verticibus, lateribus latior, parva quaedam insulæ est circumfusa illo mari, quod Atlanticum, quod magnum, quem Oceanum appellatis in terris, qui tamen tanto nomine quam sit parvus, vides. ex his ipsis cultis notisque terris num aut tuum aut ciusquam nostrum nomen vel Caucasum hunc, quem cernis, transcendere potuit vel illum Gangen tranatare?

For that whole territory which you hold, being narrow from North to South, and broader from East to West, is really only a small island surrounded by that sea which you on the earth call the Atlantic, the Great Sea, or the Ocean. Now you see how small it is in spite of its proud name! Do you suppose that your fame or that of any of us could ever go beyond those settled and explored regions by climbing the Caucasus, which you see there, or by swimming the Ganges?

Comments Grandgent: “So Dante sees the whole inhabited continent—short from north to south, but broad from east to west—exposed ‘from hills to river mouths,’ from Caucasus to Ganges and Ebro. This, then, is ‘the little threshing floor that makes us so ferocious’! Like a threshing floor our earth appeared to Alexander the Great, when, according to an ancient legend, he had himself carried up to the sky by eagles
or griffins. Equally insignificant it seemed to Boethius.” See *Consol. philos.* II, vii, vss. 1-6:

> Quicumque solam mente praecepit petit  
> Summumque credit gloriarn,  
> Late patentes aetheris cernat plagas  
> Artumque terrarum situm.  
> Brevem replere non valentis ambitum  
> Pudebit aucti nominis.

He that to honour only seeks to mount  
And that his chiefest end doth count,  
Let him behold the largeness of the skies  
And on the strait earth cast his eyes;  
He will despise the glory of his name,  
Which cannot fill so small a frame.

Grandgent continues: “In Canto XXVII, ll. 76-87, Dante describes a second downward look from the same constellation, with which he has been revolving. It would appear from this passage that during his first observation he reached the meridian of Jerusalem, the center of the inhabited earth. The phrase ‘while I was circling with the eternal Twins’ [vs. 152] indicates that this first gaze lasts a considerable length of time. When it began, he was presumably in line with central Asia, and saw the whole of that region, as far east as the mouth of the Ganges; when it ended, he was on the meridian of the Holy City, and could see the entire westerly stretch of land to the Atlantic. If the sun, too, had been in Gemini, he could have taken in the whole continent (which is 180° broad) at one sweep, from a position on the line of Jerusalem; but inasmuch as the sun was in Aries, some 40° west of the observer, the part of the earth illumined by its light did not coincide with Dante’s field of vision.”

127. *t'inlei:* A verb coined by Dante on the same model as others (e.g., “s’inluia,” *Par.* IX, 73).

129. *ti fei* = *ti feci*.

131-32. *s'appresenti a la turba . . . tondo:* Thus the announcement is made of what is now to be expected in the action.
132. *etera tondo*: "This round heaven." *Etera* is from the Latin accusative *aethera*, which is generally used to refer to the matter of which the heavens are made.

133–34. *Col viso ritornai . . . spere*: The seven planetary heavens that have now been traversed. This backward glance sums them up, and their number, which is seven, is not insignificant.

134–35. *vidi questo globo . . . sembiante*: Then, after and below the glorious seven, he sees the earth with its "vil sembiante," so much so that anyone who sets his thoughts elsewhere is truly to be praised.

139–41. *Vidi la figlia di Latona . . . densa*: The moon shows her spots only on the side toward the earth (see n. to *Par.* II, 52-148).

142–50. *L'aspetto del tuo nato . . . riparo*: The planets are then variously distinguished, by names and in ways the reader will at once recognize.


144. *lui*: The sun. *Maia e Dione*: "Maia" and "Dione" are probably to be taken as vocatives like "Iperione" in vs. 142. These persons are invoked because, like Hyperion, they are parents of gods whose names are borne by heavenly bodies. Maia is the mother of Mercury; Dione, the mother of Venus. Cf. Statius, *Theb.* II, 1, "Maia satus" ("son of Maia") and Virgil, *Aen.* I, 297, "Maia genitum" ("son of Maia"). See *Par.* VIII, 7.


150. *riparo*: "Abode."

151–53. *L'aiuola che . . . foci*: See n. to vss. 127-54. The "threshing-floor" (the inhabited part of the earth) makes us ferocious not only in our striving to possess as much of it as we may, but because of the grain that is on it at harvest
time, which can only diminish by division or partnership, as this poem's central thesis makes clear (Purg. XV, 49-75). For the Latin area (the word from which aiuola derives) in the sense of "threshing-floor," see Virgil, Georg. I, 178-81.

154. poscia rivolsi li occhi a li occhi belli: Dante's turning away from the whole visible universe to Beatrice's eyes implies an upward gaze now that rejects and negates all the rest. The beautiful eyes reflect a spiritual universe that is immeasurably more important.
1-9. *Come l’augello ... nasca:* These three opening tercets, presenting the first term of a simile, are laden with sentiment, as every reader will feel: “augello,” “amate fronde,” “dolci nati,” “aspetti disiati,” “ardente affetto.”

2-3. *posato al nido ... la notte:* “Having sat on the nest throughout the night.” It is important that the reader should get his bearings with the first term of the simile: the present action of the mother bird, after having sat on the nest through the night, is given in vss. 7-9.

2. *dolci nati:* Her beloved nestlings.

4-9. *che, per veder ... nasca:* The mother bird has longed all night for the sight of the faces of her nestlings and for the light of day, so that she may find food for them, and such labor is sweet to her.

6. *labor = lavori.* “Labor” is a Latinism. *li = gli.* There is no feminine form for *uccello,* hence the construction is in the masculine, though the bird in question is certainly the mother bird. *aggrati:* Adjective probably formed on the adverbial phrase *a grato* and meaning “pleasant,” “to one’s liking.”
7. *previene il tempo*: Anticipates daybreak, as vs. 9 makes clear. *in su aperta frasca*: The mother bird thus leaves the nest for the open bough that she may see her “dolci nati” and the coming of the dawn.

9. *pur che l'alba nasca*: “Pur” stresses the mother bird’s persistent waiting for the dawn. Through all the sentiment-laden first term of the simile, the awaiting of sunrise is the guiding central motif, and it should be remembered that the rising sun is the image of the coming of Christ (cf. *Purg.* XXX, 22-27, and see C. S. Singleton, 1958, p. 73). That His Advent is to be realized now symbolically in the action of the poem the reader does not yet know, but will soon realize as the canto develops.

10-12. *così la donna mia . . . fretta*: Thus, in the second term of the simile, Beatrice replaces the mother bird, and Dante must somehow replace her nestlings (but in the singular). Spiritual is the food that now comes for him, food that comes by way of Beatrice, in the allegory. But the most curious feature of the simile is that *this* “dawn,” this advent, is expected, not on the horizon, but at the zenith: “la plaga sotto la quale il sol mostra men fretta.” Christ and the hosts of the blessed appear there, descending from on high. (Actually, Beatrice and Dante are above the sun, hence the indication is metaphorical and not literal at this point.)

11-12. *la plaga . . . fretta*: In the middle of the sky the sun seems to move more slowly than it does near the horizon. *plaga*: “Quarter.” Cf. *Par.* XIII, 4.


15. *vorria = vorrebbe. sperando s'appaga*: “Contents himself with hope.”

16. *quando*: Here used as a noun, “moment.”

18. *lo ciel venir più e più rischiarando*: This keeps this advent as a dawn, even though it is at the meridian.
19–21. *Beatrice . . . spere*: Finally we are told what comes, though the whole scene is entirely symbolical, as the reader must realize. Christ will now appear as a sun illuminating many stars, and the action of the canto will develop from and through such symbolism. Here is the host of the blessed who were, so to speak, “harvested” out of time, the fruit gathered in from the turning of the spheres, a turning which is the very image of time, for it determines time for mortals on earth. This notion of “harvest out of time” also appears at the end of the canto, vss. 130–32. “Triunfo,” as distinguished from *militia* (Christ’s army still on earth and in time), bears in itself this latent metaphor. Such, then, is the wayfarer’s experience in the heaven of the fixed stars, where, unlike the planetary heavens, there is no single body, no planet, but a multitude of bodies, *all* the stars.

22. *Pariemi* = *mi pareva*.

24. *che passarmen convien sanza costrutto*: “That it behooves me to leave it without phrasing.” For *costrutto* in this sense, cf. *Par.* XII, 67. *passarmen* = *passarmene*.

26. *Triviu*: “The goddess at the three ways,” a term applied by Virgil (e.g., *Aen.* VI, 13, 35; VII, 516, 774) and other Latin poets to Diana (whose temple was frequently placed where three roads met), and hence by Dante to the moon, Diana being goddess of the Moon. *ride*: “Shines.” *ninfe*: “Stars.” Thus even as nymphs made up the following of the goddess, so here the stars make up the following of the moon. Cf. Horace, *Epodes* XV, 1-2: “Nox erat et caelo fulgebant Luna sereno / inter minora sidera.” (“‘Twas night, and in a cloudless sky the moon was shining amidst the lesser lights.”) The poet has been obliged to shift, through simile, to a night scene as we now see, in order to have the major body (which at first was the sun but now is the moon) shining amidst many lesser lights. And yet, in the second term of the simile, that body is still the sun, and since the stars derive their light from the sun, it is proper that this symbolic sun should illumine all the lights, “lucerne” (vs. 28) here.

28. sopra migliaia di lucerne: Some commentators attempt to determine just which particular group of the blessed is here intended by these “thousands of lights,” but surely the symbolism is calculated to convey the meaning that there is represented here the entire host of the blessed, all of Christ’s “triumph” in that sense—represented, not all necessarily present in the many lights.

29–30. che tutte quante . . . superne: “Christ illumines all the blessed, just as our material sun illumines all the stars—‘the phenomena on high’ (cf. II, 115). See Conv., II, xiii, 15: ‘del suo lume tutte le altre stelle s’informano’ [‘all the other stars are informed by his light’]. Cf. Par. XX, 6.—A. Santi, Giorn. dant., XXII, 229, attempts to show that in Dante’s belief the light of the stars does not come entirely from the sun. We find that both opinions were current in the Middle Ages” (Gr).

30. viste: Cf. “vedute” in Par. II, 115; also see Par. XXX, 9.

31–32. e per la viva luce . . . chiara: Through the effulgence of this sun, the person of Christ, the source of this light, which is itself a shining substance, can be seen. “Sustanza” is used in the scholastic sense (substantia), denoting that which has separate existence, as contrasted with “accident,” which is a quality existing in a substance. See Dante’s use of these terms in Vita nuova XXV, 1-2. With this term the stress is rather on the human Christ. The whole vision is symbolic, however—a point not to be forgotten.

35. sobranza: “Overcomes.” Cf. Par. XX, 97.


37. Quivi è la sapienza e la possanza: See I Cor. 1:24: “Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam.” (“Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.”) Usually Christ is identified with wisdom.
38. *ch'apri le strade tra 'l cielo e la terra*: From Adam's sin to the Advent of Christ, the way to Heaven was closed. Even the virtuous who believed in Him went to Limbo to await His "opening of the way." And there in Limbo the long desire for His coming was felt, as it was on earth among those who believed in Him as the Redeemer. Adam, as he tells us later (*Par.* XXVI, 118-20), waited in Limbo 4,302 years for Christ's harrowing, which took him forth.


42. *e fuor di sua natura in giù s'atterra*: It is the nature of fire to rise. Cf. *Par.* I, 115; *Conv.* III, iii, 2. *fuor di*: "Contrary to."

43. *dape*: Meaning "viands," from the Latin *dapes,* but with a plural ending in *e* instead of *i.*

44. *di sé stessa uscìo*: This is the *excessus mentis* of the mystics, wrought by the power of Christ, here present symbolically. *uscìo = uscì.*

45. *che si fesse*: "What it became." The pleonastic reflexive (here "si") is very commonly used, in older Italian, after *non sapere.* *fesse = facesse.* *sape = sa.*

46-48. *Apri li occhi ... mio*: Dante has not seen Beatrice's smile since entering the heaven of Saturn, because he could not have endured it (*Par.* XXI, 4-12), but now that he has seen the "triunfo di Cristo" (vs. 20) and Christ in His effulgence, his eyes can endure the sight of her radiant smile.

49. *come quei che si risente*: "As one who comes to himself."

50. *di visione oblita*: "From a vision that has faded away." "Oblita" is a Latinism, "obliterated."

51. *ridurlasi = ridursela.*


55. quelle lingue: The tongues of poets.

56. Polimnia: Here pronounced Polimnìa. Polyhymnia, the Muse of the Sublime Hymn. con le sore: "With her sisters," the other Muses. The Muses nourish (or "fatten") the tongues of poets. fero = fecero.

59. verria = verrebbe.

60. e quanto il santo aspetto facea mero: It (the smile) "lighted up" the face of Beatrice.

61. figurando: "Depicting."

62. poema: The subject of "saltar."

63. riciso: "Cut off," "barred."

67. pareggio: There has been much discussion concerning the correct reading here, whether "pileggio" or "pereggio" or "poleggio." There is also a Low Latin parigium to be reckoned with. Petrocchi's acceptance of "pareggio" seems justifiable. See his vol. I, Introduzione, pp. 240-41, where he admits that other forms are possible, but that in any case the poet means by the term "a long and difficult stretch of sea." In fact, the metaphor here returns the reader to the opening of Par. II, particularly with the touch "che fendendo va l'ardita prora" (vs. 68).

69. a sé medesmo parca: "Who would [seek to] spare himself"; from the Latin sibi parcat.


71. bel giardino: Now all the lights of the blessed, irradiated by the sun, who is Christ, become a beautiful garden. The flower metaphor continues in the following verses.
73. la rosa: Mary, the "Mystic Rose" of the liturgy. Cf. rosario, rosary, a series of prayers to the Virgin. *verbo divino*: Christ. See Ioan. 1:14: "Et Verbum caro factum est." ("And the Word was made flesh.")

74. gigli: The apostles. "In his unfinished commentary on Isaiah, St. Thomas discusses the resemblance of saints to lilies" (Gr). See G. Busnelli (1911a), pp. 128-29, n. 3.

75. a: "By." *al cui odor si prese il buon cammino*: See II Cor. 2:14: "Deo autem gratias, qui semper triumphat nos in Christo Iesu, et odorem notitiae suae manifestat per nos in omni loco." ("But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ Jesus, manifesting through us the odor of his knowledge in every place.")

78. cigli: "Brows," for "eyes."

79-87. *Come a raggio . . . possenti*: In three tercets the poet suggests, by such a transition from the preceding image, the Ascension of Christ: the sun withdrawn—having risen, as it were, above the clouds—but still shining through upon the company of the elect. Grandgent comments: "'As ere now my eyes, covered by a shadow, have seen a flowery meadow under a sunbeam that streams clear through a rifted cloud': an exceedingly beautiful simile used to describe the vast throngs of flowerlike souls illumined from above by the dazzling light of Christ, who has risen once again to the Empyrean, in order that Dante's own eyes may not be entirely blinded by his brightness."

79. mei: "Pours down." Cf. Par. XIII, 55. "Mei" is subjunctive to suggest the hypothetical though common scene.


83. folgorate: "Illuminated."

84. *principio di folgori*: In this instance, Christ, the sun, withdrawn, "arisen," as the following tercet makes clear.

85. li'mprenti: "Do stamp them."
87. *non t'eran possenti*: “Were not able to endure Thee” (your light).

88. *nome*: The mention of Mary by Beatrice in vs. 73. Among the bright lights, hers is now the greatest (vs. 90).

89. *mane = mattina.*

89–90. *tutto mi ristrinse l'animo*: Made me concentrate all my attention on.

90. *avvisar*: “Make out,” “distinguish.”

91. *come*: “When.” *luci*: “Eyes.” *dipinse*: The subject of “dipinse” is the phrase in vs. 92.


93. *che là sù vince come qua giù vinse*: Mary outshines all the other stars up there, even as on earth she outshone all other creatures.

94–96. *una facella . . . ella*: The “torch” seems certainly to be the Archangel Gabriel, the messenger of the Annunciation. He now forms a circling halo around the head of the Virgin, re-enacting, as it were, the great moment. But this is only a ritualistic celebration of the Annunciation and does not take its place chronologically in the events symbolized, for Christ has already “ascended.”

96. *cinsela = la cinse.* *girossi = si girò.* *ella = lei.*

99. *parrebbe nube che squarciata ton*: See Ovid, *Metam.* XII, 51–52: “qualemve sonum, cum Iuppiter atras / increpuit nubes, extrema tonitrua reddunt” (“or like the last rumblings of thunder when Jove has made the dark clouds crash together”).

100. *quella lira*: The singing Gabriel who circles and thus “crowns” Mary, the most beautiful sapphire in Heaven. Cf. a similar crowning of Dante, described in *Par.* XXIV, 152-54.
102. *il ciel più chiaro*: The Empyrean.

103. *giro*: “Encircle.”

104. *ventre*: “Womb.”


106. *girerommi = mi girerò*.

106-8. *mentre che . . . entre*: I.e., until Mary shall rise to the highest heaven, following Christ, which she does (vs. 120).


108. *perché li entre*: “By entering it.” *li*: The unaccented “li” here is the unemphatic adverb, corresponding to *vi. *entre = entri*.

110. *si sigillava*: “Sealed itself,” i.e., ended.

112-13. *Lo real manto . . . mondo*: “The royal cloak of all the revolutions of the world” is the ninth sphere, the Primum Mobile, which encircles the eight revolving heavens, the seven planetary spheres plus the sphere of the fixed stars where the wayfarer now is.


113-14. *che più ferve . . . costumi*: The Primum Mobile, or ninth sphere, is said to “burn” most (with desire) and be most “living” through the spirit (“alito”) of God and His operations or ways (“costumi”). Cf. Dante, *Conv.* II, iii, 8-9:

Veramente, fuori di tutti questi, li cattolici pongono lo cielo Empireo, che è a dire cielo di fiamma o vero luminoso; e pongono esso essere immobile per avere in sè, secondo ciascuna parte, ciò che la sua materia vuole. E questo è cagione al Primo Mobile per avere velocissimo movimento; chè per lo ferventissimo appetito ch’è’n ciascuna parte di quello nono cielo, che è im-
mediato a quello, d'essere congiunta con ciascuna parte
di quello divinissimo ciel quieto, in quello si rivolve con
tanto desiderio, che la sua velocitade è quasi incom-
prensibile.

But beyond all these the Catholics assert the empyrean
heaven, which is as much as to say the heaven of flame,
or the luminous heaven; and they assert it to be immov-
able, because it hath in itself with respect to every part
that which its matter demandeth. And this is the cause
of the primum mobile having the swiftest motion, be-
cause by reason of the most fervid appetite wherewith
every part of this ninth heaven, which is next below it,
longeth to be conjoined with every part of this divinest,
and tranquil heaven, it revolves therein with so great
yearning that its swiftness is scarce to be compre-
hended.

It should be remembered that the desire which the spheres
have for the unmoved Mover is basically Aristotelian in con-
ception. The very last verse of the whole poem will echo this
doctrine. Moreover, in imagery that is to come (Par. XXX,
106-8) the reader will see how this ninth heaven receives
God's light and power.

115-17. avea sopra . . . appariva: The concave inner surface
(“bank”) of the ninth heaven is said to be so far beyond the
reach of Dante's eyes that, as he looks up, he cannot see it.
The reader should recall that, in this cosmology, each of the
nine spheres is conceived as having material existence.

117. ancor non appariva: “Ancor” has reference to the up-
ward journey, of course, and clearly implies that the “bank”
will be visible later.

118. però = per ciò.

119. la coronata fiamma: Mary.

120. sua semenza: Christ, the “seed” or child of Mary.

121-26. E come fantolìn . . . palese: The simile clearly casts
the Virgin Mary in the role of mother (mater gratiae, mater
misericordiae) and is an excellent example of the vivid earthly and everyday imagery which the poet introduces, in the first terms of his similes, throughout this rarified realm of Paradise. All readers will remember having seen the flush on a baby's face after it has suckled and the way it may reach out its little arms towards its mother. Literally, flames are conceived of as "reaching upward," through their desire to reach home (the sphere of fire), and this conception forms the background of the second term of the simile, these "flames" being souls.

123. per l'animo che 'nfin di fuor s'infiamma: "Because of the spirit (of grateful love) which breaks even into external flame"—which, in default of words, finds expression in a gesture" (Gr).

124. ciascun di quei candori in sù si stese: All the bright souls extend their flames upward after Mary. candori: "Glowing lights" (cf. Par. XIV, 77). si stese = si protese.

126. avieno = avevano.

128. Regina celi: "Regina coeli," antiphon in praise of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, which is sung in the Office at Easter. See P. Guéranger (1888), p. 39:

Regina coeli, laetare, alleluia,
Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia.
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.
Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.
Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.
Rejoice, O Queen of heaven, alleluia,
For he whom thou deservedst to bear, alleluia,
Hath risen, as he said, alleluia.
Pray to God for us, alleluia.
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
For the Lord hath truly risen, alleluia.

131. *arche*: “Bins” or “coffers,” the blessed souls.

132. *bobolce*: Feminine plural of *bobolco*, from the Latin *bubulcus*, “a ploughman.” The plural reflects *anime*. The meaning is “husbandmen,” “tillers and sowers.” The souls are now filled with the good which they sowed on earth. Cf. Gal. 6:8[7]: “Quae enim seminaverit homo, haec et metet.” (“For what a man sows, that he will also reap.”) Other commentators take “bobolce” to mean “fields,” but this seems less fitting in the context.

134-35. *lo essilio di Babillòn*: The “exile of Babylon” is the earthly life. Cf. Ps. 136[137]:1: “Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et flevimus, cum recordaremur Sion.” (“By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Sion.”)


137. *di sua vittoria*: “By his victory.” The canto ends on the note of “triumph” and “victory” with which it began.

138. *e con l'antico e col novo concilio*: “In company with the souls of the Old and the New Covenant. Prophets and Apostles preached the same faith” (Gr).

139. *colui*: “Colui,” St. Peter, is the subject of “triunfa” in vs. 136. *tien le chiavi di tal gloria*: Cf. Matt. 16:19: “Et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum.” (“And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”) The final verse thus presents Peter—who, as the reader will soon see, is the most prominent of these figures—with keys and an examination suggesting that the journey has now reached an “entrance-way” into Heaven.
1–3. *O sodalizio* . . . *piena*: There are clear scriptural echoes in Beatrice’s opening words, which are addressed to the whole company of the blessed that is before her and Dante, like so many flames.

1. *sodalizio*: The word means “company,” but Pietro di Dante and other early commentators sense that the term already tends to single out the apostles in particular. Commenting on this point, Pietro speaks of the apostles as those “qui fuerunt sodales, quasi simul sedentes ad mensam cum Christo” (“who were intimate companions, as those who sat together at table with Christ”). *eletto*: Cf. Matt. 22:14: “Multi enim sunt vocati, pauci vero electi.” (“For many are called, but few are chosen.”)

1–2. *cena del benedetto Agnello*: Cf. Apoc. 19:9: “Beati qui ad cenam nuptiarum Agni vocati sunt.” (“Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”) For “Agnello,” see Ioan. 1:29: “Ecce agnus Dei; ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi.” (“Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”)

2–3. *vi ciba sì . . . piena*: Cf. Ioan. 6:35: “Dixit autem eis Iesus: Ego sum panis vitae; qui venit ad me non esuriet.”
("But Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger.'") The desire of the blessed in Paradise is always satisfied, but there is desire and not cessation of desire, a fact which will be reflected in the experience of Dante the pilgrim at the end of his journey (Par. XXXIII, 143-44).

4. *questi preliba*: "This man [Dante] foretastes."

5. *di quel che cade de la vostra mensa*: Cf. Matt. 15:27: "Nam et catelli edunt de micis quae cadunt de mensa domnorum suorum." ("For even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.") Dante develops this image and idea in Conv. I, i, 10, and it is reflected in the very title of that work.

6. *prima che morte tempo li prescriba*: "Before death cuts off his time" (i.e., his lifetime on earth). *li* = *gli.*

7. *affezione immensa*: "Great desire," i.e., Dante's desire to know the truth, or (to continue the opening metaphor) to participate in the "feast" of the blessed, who are feasting on the truth.

8. *roratelo*: "Bedew him," give him a few drops from the fount of truth, on which his desire is set. "Rorate, coeli" belongs to liturgical language, and dew is the well-established symbol of grace given from Heaven. This shifts the metaphor, of course, to the notion of drinking, rather than eating bread, to thirst instead of hunger, as is at once evident.

8-9. *voi bevete . . . pensa*: You, the elect, drink eternally at the fountain of God's wisdom, i.e., you gaze upon God and thus see the very origin of this man's thoughts. Cf. Purg. XXI, 1-3.

11. *si fero spere sopra fissi poli*: It is evident from vs. 30 and from Par. XXV, 14, that "spere" means "circles," rings of spirits dancing in a round, or carol. It is also clear, from vss. 16-17, that the flames (souls) form different groups, or
carols, this being implied also by the clock image which now comes.

12. fiammando, volte: Some editors have adopted “forte” here, in place of “volte,” but Petrocchi’s choice seems the better. a guisa di comete: The image implies that each of these flames, thus spinning, leaves a certain trail of light behind it.

13. cerchi: The cerchi or wheels of a clock’s works. tempra: The total mechanism of the clock, including the escapement as well as the wheels.

14–15. ’l primo . . . pare: The first wheel that one observes is the largest and in the clock’s mechanism the slowest to turn, so slow that it seems to stand still.

15. e l’ultimo che voli: The smallest wheel of the mechanism turns so fast that it seems to “fly” around.

16–18. così quelle carole . . . lente: The second term of the simile confirms what is already evident: that the flames form different rounds, or carols, and now are seen to spin at different velocities, like the wheels of a single mechanism. This latter metaphor of the whole clock stresses one total harmony in these different round dances.

16–17. differentemente: “An adverb like differentemente was originally a phrase made up of an adjective and the ablative mente; its composite nature long continued to be felt” (Gr).

17. de la sua ricchezza: The pace of the circling rings of dancers is a measure of their “wealth” of gladness. sua: I.e., loro.

18. facieono = facevano.

19. quella: That is, carola. carezza: “Wealth,” connecting with “ricchezza,” vs. 17. Some editors have preferred the reading “bellezza” here; but see Petrocchi, whose choice of “carezza” is persuasive. Thus the flame that comes forth from
the dance now belongs to the “richest” of the rounds, that of greatest worth.

20–21. sì felice ... chiarezza: Joy is the cause of brightness. The flame that comes now is not only from the richest “round,” but is the brightest flame in that dance.

22–24. e tre fiate ... ridice: This same flame will circle Dante’s head an equal number of times (see vs. 152) and thus seems to have a predilection for the number three.

23. divo = divino.

24. la mia fantasia: Here, as usual, the term “fantasia” is used in the sense of that faculty which receives images (cf. Purg. XVII, 25; Par. X, 46; and passim); but that faculty in Dante, in this case, does not hold the image so that memory can deliver it up (ridire). nol mi = non me lo.

25. Però = per ciò. salta la penna: “La penna” is the subject of “salta,” literally, “jumps,” “passes over.”

26–27. ché l’imagine ... vivo: “For our imagination—not to say our speech—is too bright a color for such folds.’ Human speech and even human memory are not profound enough to describe or retain an impression of such depth of holiness. The metaphor is taken from the technique of painting (in V.N., [XXXIV], Dante appears as an artist): pictures, in our poet’s day, consisted mainly of faces and garments, the latter falling in folds, and these folds presented the deepest shades; skill was required to find a color dark enough to portray them, while preserving the purity of tone the Tuscans loved” (Gr).

28. suora = sorella, one who is herself of the company of the elect. ne priege = ci prieghi.

29. per: “By” or “through.” affetto: Charity, love.

30. da quella bella spera: From the carol that was in fact the most beautiful (see vs. 19). mi dislegh = mi disleghi, “you unloose me.”
31. *Poscia*: First (vss. 22-23) the shining spirit circles about Beatrice and sings, “then” ("poscia") it stops and speaks the words just cited. For this use of *poscia*, cf. *Inf.* XXIV, 118.


33. *favellò*: “Spoke.”

34–36. *O luce eterna . . . miro*: When we learn that this is none other than St. Peter, the overtones of “gran” become clear.

34. *viro*: “Man,” from the Latin *vir*. The Latinism confers solemnity.


36. *di questo gudio miro*: “Of this wondrous delight” in Heaven. The phrase depends on “le chiavi.”


38. *intorno de la fede*: Faith is thus the first point on which Dante is to be examined. The other two will be hope and charity. Thus, the total examination will prove to be one on the three theological virtues and will constitute, as it were, an entrance examination to Heaven (which is above, and towards which the pilgrim moves). See Bonaventura, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* IV, 2; Dante, *Conv.* III, xiv, 15. Grandgent comments: “Dante’s examiners are St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, the disciples most closely associated with Jesus, and the traditional representatives of the virtues he preached. The fitness of Peter and John to stand for Faith and Love is obvious; less clear is the special appropriateness of the assignment of Hope to James.” Grandgent notes that “after his colloquy, in this sphere, with the Apostles and Adam, Dante converses only with those who serve as his guides, Beatrice and St. Bernard.”

es, iube me ad te venire super aquas. At ipse ait: Veni. Et descendens Petrus de navicula ambulabat super aquam, ut veniret ad Iesum.” (“But Peter answered him and said, ‘Lord, if it is thou, bid me come to thee over the water.’ And he said, ‘Come.’ Then Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water to come to Jesus.”)

40. *S'elli ama bene e bene spera e crede*: The verse reverses the usual order of statement (faith, hope, and charity), but also signals what the total examination will involve.

41. *viso*: “Sight.”

41–42. *quivi dov' ogne . . . vede*: “Quivi” is “in God”; the fact that the elect can read all things in Him has been frequently stated in a variety of images.

43–45. *ma perché questo regno . . . arrivi*: This realm of Paradise has formed its citizenry through the true faith, and therefore, in order to glorify faith, “it is well that he [Dante] be called upon to speak of it.”

43. *civi*: “Citizens.”

45. *arrivi*: Equivalent to *tocchi*, “befall.”

46–48. *Si come . . . terminarla*: To understand the simile the modern reader needs to know that in the medieval examination, or *disputatio*, leading to the degree of doctor of theology, a time was appointed for the discussion of a given question. On this occasion the master or doctor examining the candidate would state the question, whereupon the “bachelor” was expected to adduce proofs (*approvare*), that is, bring arguments to bear on it (both *pro* and *con*), but he did not presume to settle or decide the question (*terminare*), since this privilege belonged only to the examining doctor and was called the *determinatio*. See M. Barbi (1927). The bachelor had a brief time (as Dante has here with St. Peter) in which to collect himself and muster his arguments (“s’arma”).
46. baccialier: Petrocchi prefers the form baccialier to the more common baccellier.

49-51. così m'armava . . . professione: Dante “arms himself” even before hearing the question, especially since, this being St. Peter, that question is bound to concern faith.

51. tal querente: “Such a questioner.” professione: This anticipates “profession of faith,” which Dante already surmises his examination will be on.

52-53. Di, buon Cristiano . . . è? St. Peter’s manner is most direct and his words are simple. Moreover he knows already that the “candidate” is a good Christian. The first question, then, is simply: what is faith?

54. in: “Toward.” spirava: Cf. “spiro,” vs. 32. questo: These words.

56. sembianze femmi: “Signed to me” (“with her eyes and look” being implied). femmi = mi fece.

56-57. perch’ io . . . fonte: Cf. Ioan. 7:37-38: “Si quis sitit, veniat ad me et bibat. Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre eius fluent aquae vivae.” (“If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture says, ‘From within him there shall flow rivers of living water.’ ”)

59. da l’alto primipilo: “By the high commander,” Peter, the first commander of the Church. Note that primopilus is the title of a Roman military officer, strictly the centurio primipili, centurion of the front rank of the triarii (the veteran Roman soldiers who formed the third rank from the front when the legion was drawn up in order of battle), hence the chief centurion of the legion. Dante probably got the term from the Epitoma rei militaris (II, 8) of Vegetius, whom he mentions in De mon. II, ix, 3.

61. ’l verace stilo: “The veracious pen.”

sapientiam scripsit vobis” (“just as our most dear brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given him, has written to you”).

63. *che mise teco Roma nel buon filo*: “Who, with you, brought Rome into the right line,” i.e., the path of Christianity.

64–65. *fede è sustanza . . . parventi*: The definition of faith is, as stated, St. Paul’s. See Heb. 11:1: “Est autem fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium.” (“Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen.”) “This formula, says St. Thomas, although some say that it is not a definition, contains all the elements of one” (Gr). See Aquinas, *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 4, a. 1, resp.: “Licet quidam dicant praedicta Apostoli verba non esse fidei definitionem . . . tamen si quis recte consideret, omnia ex quibus fides potest definiri, in praedicta descriptione tanguntur.” (“Though some say that the above words of the Apostle are not a definition of faith, yet if we consider the matter aright, this definition overlooks none of the points in reference to which faith can be defined.”) Aquinas adds: “Si quis ergo in formam definitionis huiusmodi verba reducere velit, potest dicere quod fides est habitus mentis, quo inchoatur vita aeterna in nobis, faciens intellectum assentire non apparentibus.” (“Accordingly if anyone would reduce the foregoing words to the form of a definition, he may say that faith is a habit of the mind, whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is non-apparent.”)


67. *sentì*: “Think,” “conceive.”

68. *la ripuose*: “He [Paul] placed it [faith].”

69. *tra le sustanze, e poi tra li argomenti*: On this and Dante’s comments, which follow, Grandgent observes: “But why, demands St. Peter, did St. Paul call Faith first a ‘substance’ (*sustanza*) and then an ‘evidence’ (*argomento*)? The
eternal Heavenly life, replies Dante, is beyond the perception of mortals and, for them, exists only in their belief; hence Faith, from the human point of view, is the material, or substance, of which the hoped-for joys consist. Moreover, while in ordinary matters we argue from proved facts, in religion we use as our basis for further reasoning a belief; and so Faith, in theological questions, takes the place which in worldly syllogisms is taken by evidence."

71. che mi largiscon qui la lor parvenz a: "Which here [in Heaven] allow themselves to be seen by me." Largire implies "bounty," "grace."

72. a li occhi di là giù: To the eyes of mortals on earth. ascose = nascoste.

73. che l'esser loro v'è in sola credenza: That their existence is there founded only on belief.

74. spene = speme, speranza. This is the hope of eternal beatitude.

75. però = perciò. sustanza: "Substance" or "material," with the verb "si fonda," in the preceding verse, suggesting the meaning "foundation." Cf. vs. 69. prende intenza: "It assumes the concept': it falls into the category. Intenza is the scholastic Latin intentio, 'notion' or 'concept'; English intention has often been used in this sense" (Gr).


78. però = perciò. tene = tiene.

81. non li auria loco ingegno di sofista: "The sophist's wit would have no place there." li: Here the unaccented "li" = vi.

83. trascorsa: "Inspected," "examined."

84. lega: "Composition," "alloy." peso: "Weight," these being the two essential "tests" of a coin.

86. Sì ho: The repetition of the verb adds emphasis to the
affirmation, and in such cases the omission of the object pronoun (lo, la, etc.) was common in early Italian. See M. Barbi (1934), p. 291. *si lucida e si tonda*: The verbs reflect the tests of a coin (see vs. 84), the *lucidezza* attesting a good composition (with high gold content) and the *tondezza* referring to its weight, for coins could be shaved down around the outer edge (a not uncommon practice), thus reducing the weight.

87. *coni o*: “Stamp.” *s’inforsa*: “Is questionable.” The verb is coined by Dante.

89. *Questa cara gioia*: Faith.

90. *sopra la quale ogne virtù si fonda*: See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 4, a. 7, resp.:

Aliquid potest esse prius altero dupliciter; uno modo per se; alio modo per accidentis. Per se quidem inter omnes virtutes prima est fides. Cum enim in agibilibus finis sit principium, ut supra dictum est, I-II, quaest. 13, art. 3, et quaest. 34, art. 4, ad 1, necesse est virtutes theologicas, quorum obiectum est ultimus finis, esse priores caeteris virtutibus. Ipse autem ultimus finis oportet quod prius sit in intellectu quam in voluntate; quia voluntas non fertur in aliiquid, nisi prout est in intellectu appre­hensum. Unde cum ultimus finis sit quidem in voluntate per spem et charitatem, in intellectu autem per fidem; necesse est quod fides sit prima inter omnes virtutes; quia naturalis cognition non potest attingere ad Deum, secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis, prout tendit in ipsum spes et charitas.

One thing can precede another in two ways: first, by its very nature; secondly, by accident. Faith, by its very nature, precedes all other virtues. For since the end is the principle in matters of action, as stated above (I-II, q. 13, a. 3: q. 34, a. 4, *ad 1*), the theological virtues, the object of which is the last end, must needs precede all the others. Again, the last end must of necessity be present to the intellect before it is present to the will, since the will has no inclination for anything except in so far
as it is apprehended by the intellect. Hence, as the last end is present in the will by hope and charity, and in the intellect, by faith, the first of all the virtues must, of necessity, be faith, because natural knowledge cannot reach God as the object of heavenly bliss, which is the aspect under which hope and charity tend towards Him.

91. *ploia* = *pioggia* (cf. Par. XIV, 27), “rain,” inspiration.


94. *silogismo* = *sillogismo*, “argument.” *la m'ha conchiusa* = *me l'ha conchiusa*. “Conchiusa” (“demonstrated”) extends the metaphor of “silogismo.”

95. *che 'nverso d'ella* = *che inverso di essa*, “compared to it.”

96. *ottusa*: “Unconvincing,” opposed to “acutamente,” vs. 95.

98. *propositzion*: “Premise.” The Old Testament and the New Testament are the premises from which the conclusion is deduced.


102. *non scalda ferro mai né batte incude*: Many editors have accepted the reading of some MSS that have these verbs in the preterite (*scalda*, *battè*), but Petrocci argues well for the present tense here. The figure obviously involves the metaphor of the smith, which Nature, as artist, was often said to be. The “works that followed,” therefore, are divinely wrought miracles, not natural occurrences. *incude* = *incudine*, “anvil.”

104. *che quell' opere fosser*: “That those works [miracles] took place, existed.”

104-5. *Quel medesmo . . . giura*: “‘The very thing that is to be proved (the revealed Truth), and naught else, is thy voucher for it.’ St. Peter, wishing, as examiner, to draw out Dante more fully, tells him that he is arguing in a circle” (Gr).
106–8. *Se 'l mondo... centesmo*: "If the world was converted to Christianity without the miracles related in the Bible, this conversion was itself a far greater miracle, and quite sufficient proof of divine intervention. The argument is taken from St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII, v: 'hoc nobis unum grande miraculum sufficit, quod... terrarum orbis sine ullis miraculis credit.' ('This one grand miracle suffices for us, that the whole world has believed without any miracles.') St. Thomas also, *De Veritate Catholicae Fidei*, I, vi, discourses on the miracle of the conversion of the world to Christianity" (Gr).

108. *non sono il centesmo*: All the other miracles are not worth the hundredth part of this one.

109–10. *ché tu... campo*: "For you [and the other apostles] entered the field poor and fasting." "Field" introduces the familiar metaphor of cultivation, good or bad, and—with "vite" (vs. 111)—of the "vineyard of the Lord."

111. *fu già vite*: The verb has its full force of the past absolute here. *pruno*: The vine is said to have become wild like a thorn bush (cf. Inf. XIII, 32).


115. *baron*: "Lord," i.e., Peter. Cf. Par. XXV, 17, where the term is applied to James as well.

115–17. *sì di ramo... appressavamo*: The examination becomes, in metaphor, a tree, and the end thereof the "last boughs."

118. *donnea*: "Holds amorous discourse"; from the Provençal *domnejar*.

119–20. *la bocca... si dovea*: With these words Peter assigns all the merit of the answers to grace, and not to Dante.

121. *emerse*: "Has issued."
122. quel che credi: The specific truths you hold in your belief.

123. e onde a la credenza tua s'offerse: “And whence these truths came to you for your belief.”

124-26. O santo padre . . . piedi: “St. Peter now sees in God that which on earth he accepted through faith. This faith was so strong that it impelled him to enter the Sepulchre before John, although the younger disciple reached it first: John xx, 3-8. Cf. Mon., III, ix, 16” (Gr).


129. la cagion di lui: “Its cause.”

130-32. E io rispondo . . . disio: Dante’s Credo follows the accepted one in its essentials, but contains Aristotelian touches as well.

131-32. che tutto ’l ciel move . . . disio: Here il ciel has its usual plural meaning (i cieli, all the heavens or spheres) and, like the unmoved mover who moves those heavens with desire on their part, is from Aristotle. (Cf. Par. I, 76-77.) Only the love—if this means, as it seems to, love on the part of God for His creation, so that He moves the heavens with His love—is specifically Christian.

133. pur: “Only.”

133-34. prove fisice e metafisice: “St. Thomas, Summa Theologiae, Prima, Qu. ii, Art. 3, gives five physical and metaphysical proofs of the existence of God: the impossibility of explaining the world without the assumption of a first motor, of a first efficient cause, of a first necessity, of a first goodness, of a first governing intelligence. In Prima, Qu. 1, Art. 5, he tells us that theology makes use of philosophy” (Gr).

134. dalmi = me lo dà. The subject is “verità” in vs. 135.

135. piove: See n. to Par. XIV, 27.
136. *per Moisè, per profeti e per salmi:* See Luc. 24:44: "Haec sunt verba quae locutus sum ad vos, cum adhuc esset vobiscum, quoniam necesse est impleri omnia quae scripta sunt in lege Moysi et prophetis et psalmis de me." ("These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me.")


137-38. *e per voi . . . almi:* The Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypse—thus, the whole of the Bible is implied in vss. 136-38.

138. *poi che l’ardente Spirito vi fé almi:* The reference is to Actus 2:1-4, which describes the time of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost, as tongues of fire, descended upon the apostles. *almi:* "Reverend" (cf. Inf. II, 20).

141. *soffera:* The word is pronounced *sòffera* and means "it admits." When speaking of the Trinity, it is possible to use either a singular or a plural verb. *este:* *Este* (from the Latin *est*) for *è* is not uncommon in early Italian.

143. *mente:* The object of "sigilla" ("stamps").

144. *l’evangelica dottrina:* Various passages in the Bible are cited in support of the doctrine of the Trinity. See Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:13[14]; I Pet. 1:2; and I Ioan. Apos. 5:7: "Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in caelo: Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus; et hi tres unum sunt." ("For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.") This truth, therefore, is entirely based on revelation.

145-47. *Quest’ è . . . scintilla:* The existence of God, One and Three, a principle given by revelation through the Holy Scriptures, is the source, therefore, of all articles of faith, is the "spark" which becomes a great flame (and flame or fire can always suggest love).

147. *come stella in cielo:* My "guiding star," as it were, my "north star."
148. \( i = \text{gli.} \) Cf. *Inf.* XXII, 73.

149. *da indi*: From the Latin *de inde*, “then.” *gratulando*: “Rejoicing with him.”

150. *novella*: “News.” *el* = *egli*.


154. *sì nel dir li piacqui*: Thus Dante has “passed” the first part of what proves to be an “entrance” examination, with the highest mark possible, considering the examiner: nothing less than a *summa cum laude!* *li* = *gli.*
1–12. *Se mai continga ... fronte*: “Until the very end of his life Dante cherished, at the bottom of his heart, a hope that he might be called back to his city, to that Florence which he so loved and so reviled. Pathetic indeed is the yearning expressed in the opening lines of this canto. Some day, he thinks, his great poem may win such fame as to ‘overcome the cruelty that locks him out’—‘la crudeltà che fuor mi serra.’ In earlier years, addressing one of his lyrics as he sent it forth, he had said (*Rime*, CXVI; 77-79):

Forse vedrai Fiorenza, la mia terra,
Che fuor di sè mi serra,
Vota d’amore e nuda di pietate.

[ ... mayhap to see my city Florence, who bars me out from her, void of love and stripped of pity.]

The longing to return is voiced in the *Con vivio*, I, iii, 4; and the same sentiment is treated half playfully, half sadly, in the first Eclogue, 39-50” (Gr).

1. *continga*: Subjunctive form of *contingere*; cf. the Latin *contingat*. In the present context the meaning is: “should it happen.” *poema sacro*: Cf. *Par.* XXIII, 62: “sacrato poema.”
2. *ha posto mano e cielo e terra*: The verb in the singular serves a plural subject, as so often in the poem, and is effective here in binding together, as it were, the whole universe, declaring that nothing less than the whole is the subject of this poem.

3. *molti anni*: The received opinion is that Dante composed his poem between 1310 and 1320, a period of only ten years—and what years for the exile! Now he is within nine cantos of the end, as he opens with one of the most poignant and personal passages in the entire work. Can the number nine be accidental in this case? *macro*: Cf. *Purg. IX*, 138.

4. *la crudeltà che fuor mi serra*: The Neri, or Blacks, exiled Dante from Florence in 1302, and the poet was never allowed to return to the city.


6. *nimico*: Following upon the figure of Dante as the lamb, "nimico" is the object of the "wolves" who devised against him as he grew up in the city and took finally an active role in its political life. For *nemico* as object in such a construction, see n. to *Inf. II*, 61.

7. *vello*: "Fleece," obviously continuing the metaphor of the lamb and the sheepfold.

8. *fonte*: In the Baptistery, where he was baptized. Cf. *Inf. XIX*, 17.


10. *però = perciò. conte = cognite*, "known." Cf. Gregory, *In Ezech.* I, iii, 1: "Per fidem namque ab omnipotenti Deo cognoscimur." ("Now we are known to almighty God through faith.")


17–18. ecco il barone . . . Galizia: This is James the Apostle, also known as St. James the Great and St. James of Compostela. Son of the fisherman Zebedee and of Salome, and brother of John the Apostle and Evangelist, he was put to death by Herod Agrippa I shortly before the day of the Passover in 44 (Actus 12:2). According to tradition, James preached the Gospel in Spain. He later returned to Jerusalem, and after his death his body was miraculously transferred to Santiago de Compostela, then the capital of Galicia. The relics of the saint were said to have been discovered in 835 by Theodomir, bishop of Iria, who was guided to the spot by a star, whence the name (Campus Stellae).

Pilgrimages to the tomb of St. James at Santiago de Compostela were so frequent in the Middle Ages as to be second only to those to Rome itself, and in fact, as Dante explains in the Vita nuova (XL, 6-7), those who made the pilgrimage to St. James’ tomb are properly and specifically known as peregrini, as distinguished from palmieri and romei:

Peregrini si possono intendere in due modi, in uno largo e in uno stretto: in largo, in quanto è peregrino chiunque è fuori de la sua patria; in modo stretto non s’intende peregrino se non chi va verso la casa di sa’ Iacopo o riede. E però è da sapere che in tre modi si chiamano propriamente le genti che vanno al servigio de l’Altissimo: chiamansi palmieri in quanto vanno oltremare, là onde molte volte recano la palma; chiamansi peregrini in quanto vanno a la casa di Galizia, però che la sepultura di sa’ Iacopo fue più lontana de la sua patria che d’alcuno altro apostolo; chiamansi romei in quanto vanno a Roma, là ove questi cu’ io chiamo peregrini andavano.

Pilgrims may be understood in two ways, one wide and another narrow. In the wide sense, in so far as whoever
is outside his fatherland is a pilgrim; in the narrow sense, none is called a pilgrim save him who is journeying towards the sanctuary of St. James, or is returning: and therefore it should be known that there are three ways of properly naming folk who journey for the worship of the Most High. They are called *palmers*, in so far as they journey over the sea, there, whence many times they bring back palm branches; they are called *pilgrims* in so far as they journey to the sanctuary of Galicia, because the tomb of St. James was farther from his own country than that of any other apostle; they are called *romers*, in so far as they journey to Rome, where these which I call *pilgrims*, were going.

17. *barone*: Cf. Par. XXIV, 115, where Peter is so termed.

18. *victa* = *visita*. There are other examples of the form *vicitare* in early Italian. On Petrocchi’s preference for this form, see his vol. I, *Introduzione*, p. 443. *Galizia*: Galicia (ancient Gallaecia), region and ancient kingdom in northwest Spain; in Dante’s day it was a province of León and Castile.

19. *il colombo*: Both the masculine and the feminine form could be used generically. Thus in the famous simile which introduces Francesca and Paolo the poet uses the feminine form (*Inf. V*, 82), since a woman dominates in that scene, whereas here, for the two apostles, he chooses the masculine form, even though the act of pouting and circling commonly seen among pigeons or doves normally involves male and female as an act of love.


23. *principe*: Now the apostles are termed “princes,” as St. James was called a “baron” before (vs. 17).

PARADISO

25. 'l gratular: The reciprocal manifestation of joy and affection. assolto: From the Latin absolutum, "ended."

26. coram me: Latin, meaning "before me." Cf. Par. XI, 62. It should be noted that here, as so often in the Paradiso, the use of Latin and of Latinisms in Italian lends solemnity and elevation to the style. One remembers Cacciaguida, who spoke in Latin first (Par. XV, 28-30) and then "descended" to Italian (Par. XV, 44-45).

27. ignito: Another Latinism, from ignitus, "fiery," "glowing." volto: "Face" for "eyes."

29. Inclita: Pronounced inclita, this is yet another Latinism, from inclitus, meaning "illustrious." vita: "Soul." larghezza: "Bounty."

29–30. la larghezza . . . scrisse: "In the Epistle of James there are some references to divine liberality" (Gr). See Iac. 1:5: "Deo qui dat omnibus affluenter et non improperat" ("God, who gives abundantly to all men, and does not reproach"), and 1:17: "Omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum desursum est, descendens a Patre lumini num." ("Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights.") Also see Iac. 2:5: "Nonne Deus elegit pauperes in hoc mundo divites in fide et heredes regni, quod repromisit Deus diligentibus se?" ("Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to those who love him?")

30. basilica: The "court" of Heaven.

31–33. fa risonar . . . carezza: "Three of the disciples (Peter, James, John) were chosen by Jesus to be present, and to receive the clearest revelation of his character, on three different occasions: at the Transfiguration (Mat. xvii, 1-8), in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mat. xxvi, 36-38), and at the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Luke viii, 50-56). On these three occasions Peter, James, and John stand respectively for Faith, Hope, and Love" (Gr). See G. Busnelli (1911a), pp. 151-58.
32–33. tu sai... carezza: "You know that you personified it [hope] as many times as Jesus bestowed more honor on the three."

33. fé = fece. fé più carezza: Some editors follow the reading "chiarezza" of certain MSS, but the expression fare carezza in the meaning "to honor" is well documented in early Italian and fits better here.

38. ond’ io levai li occhi a’ monti: See Ps. 120[121]:1: "Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium mihi." ("I lift up my eyes toward the mountains, from whence comes my help.")

40. vuol: The subject of "vuol" is "Imperadore" in vs. 41. t'affronti: "T'affronti" is to be connected with "co' suoi conti" in vs. 42.

42. conti: The counts in the imperial court of Heaven are the saints. The feudal terminology, following "barone" in vs. 17 and "Imperadore" in vs. 41, continues now with "conti." With such a figure as is suggested by "aula piú secreta," the reader should realize that such metaphors, in their cumulative effect, will finally make it credible to come to God and the vision of Him, not as to a circumference (the Empyrean heaven, synonymous with the mind of God) but as to a center, to God as the center.

44. spene: "Spene" is the object of "conforte" in vs. 45. là giù bene innamora: Begets righteous love on earth.

45. di ciò conforte: "‘Thou mayest strengthen therewith’—with the recital of what thou hast seen" (Gr). conforte = conforti.

46–47. di quel... venne: "Three questions are asked: what is Hope, to what degree dost thou possess it (‘how does thy mind blossom with it’), and from what source dost thou derive it? Beatrice (I. 51) forestalls Dante's response to the second question, since his affirmative answer would imply that he thought himself worthy of salvation, and hence might smack of vainglory; to the other two he replies" (Gr). It will
be noted that St. James’ three questions correspond very closely in nature to those of St. Peter in Par. XXIV (53, 85, 91) respecting faith.

49-50. *E quella pia . . . volo:* Over and over again Dante employs figures such as this, which stress Beatrice’s allegorical role in the journey. Cf. the first of these, which appears as early in the poem as *Inf.* II, 76-78 (and see the corresponding note).

52-54. *La Chiesa militante . . . stuolo:* “Our band” (“nostro stuolo”) is the symbolical representation of the Church Triumphant. This pair of terms (Church Militant and Church Triumphant), firmly established in its Christian concept, will come into play very often as the journey of this living man, still engaged in the warfare of life, approaches the end and the “harvest out of time” which is the Church Triumphant. Cf. Par. XXIII, 19-21. Thus “Egypt” and “Jerusalem” in the verses immediately following are established terms for the two conditions, the living on the one hand and the blessed on the other.

55. *Egitto:* By “Egypt” is meant life on earth. See Ps. 113[114]:1; cf. Dante’s *Letter to Can Grande* (Epist. XIII, 21).

56. *Ierusalemme:* Jerusalem was commonly used to indicate the city of God on high. Cf. Heb. 12:22: “Sed accessistis ad Sion montem et civitatem Dei viventis, Ierusalem caelestem et multorum millium angelorum frequentiam.” (“But you have come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels.”)


59. *perch’ei rapporti:* “That he may relate” on earth.

60. *quanto questa virtù t’è in piacere:* “Souls in Heaven have no further use for Hope, but St. James loves it still” (Gr).
CANTO XXV


62. *né di iattanza:* Nor cause for vainglory.

63. *ciò *li *comporti:* "Help him therein."

64-65. *Come discente . . . esperto:* The simile may be compared with that of the *bacchiali*ere in Par. XXIV, 46-48, and continues to stress the fact of formal examination.

64. *discente:* "Pupil." *seconda:* "Replies."

65. *libente:* "Willing." *ch' = che,* i.e., *in cui.*

66. *si disasconda:* "May be disclosed."

67-69. *Spene . . . merto:* The definition of hope given by Dante here is that of Peter Lombard in *Sent.* III, xxvi, 1: "Est enim spes certa expectatio futurae beatitudinis, veniens ex Dei gratia et meritis praeecedentibus." ("Now hope is a certain expectation of future beatitude proceeding from God's grace and antecedent merits.") He adds: "Sine meritis aliquid sperare non spes sed praesumptio dici potest." ("Without merits, to hope for something is not hope but presumption.") "When we say that Hope comes from Grace and from antecedent merits, we must remember that these two sources are not of the same kind: the impulse to hope springs from Grace alone, while our merits are, as we know, a necessary condition of the fulfillment of our assurance of salvation. This is explained by St. Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae,* Secunda Secundae, Qu. xvii, Art. 1" (Gr).

67. *uno attendere certo:* "A sure expectation."

68. *il qual:* The object of "produce," of which "grazia" and "merto" (vs. 69) are subjects.

70. *Da molte stelle mi vien questa luce:* Cf. Dan. 12:3: "Qui autem docti fuerint fulgebunt quasi splendor firmamenti, et qui ad iustitiam erudient multos quasi stellae in perpetuas aeternitates." ("But they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity.")

73–74. *Sperino in te . . . tuo*: See Ps. 9:11[10]: “Et sperent in te qui noverunt nomen tuum.” (“They trust in you who cherish your name.”)


76. *Tu mi stillasti, con lo stillar suo*: “You did instill it into me with his instilling.”

78. *vostra pioggia repluo*: Grace and revelation are commonly symbolized by rain or dew, as that “refreshment” which descends from on high. The reader will note the shift to the plural “vostra,” the second person plural which includes both David and St. James. *repluo*: The Latin *repluo*, “rain down again.” The poet has shifted the accent from the first syllable to the penultimate for the sake of the rhyme.

80–81. *un lampo . . . baleno*: James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were surnamed by Jesus (Mar. 3:17) “Boanerges, quod est filii tonitrui” (“Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder”).

83. *virtù*: Hope.  *seguette = segui*.

84. *palma*: The victory of martyrdom. He was put to death by Herod Agrippa. See Actus 12:2.  *campo*: “The ‘battlefield’ of life. James was a strenuous and rigid ascetic” (Gr).

85. *respiri*: “Breathe [i.e., speak] once more.”  *ti dilette*: “Are gladdened.”

86. *emmi = mi è.  diche = dica*.

88–90. *E io . . . amiche*: “‘The token’ set up by the Old and the New Testament is indicated in ll. 91-96.—*Ed esso* etc., ‘and it (the token) points it out to me,’ i.e., points out what blessedness in Heaven means—perfect joy of the body and the spirit” (Gr).

91–92. *Dice Isaia . . . vesta*: See Isa. 61:7: “Propter hoc in
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71-112
terra sua duplicia possidebunt, laetitia sempiterna erit eis.”
(“Therefore shall they receive double in their land. Everlasting joy shall be unto them.”) Also see Isa. 61:10: “Quia induit me vestimentis salutis.” (“He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation.”) The “double garment” is the effulgence of the soul and the glorified body.

94. fratello: John. assai vie più digesta: “Far more explicitly.”

95. là dove tratta de le bianche stole: “St. John ‘treats of the white robes’ of the elect in Rev. iii, 5, and vii, 9-17. The ‘white robes’ symbolize the brightness or glory of ‘the souls that God has made his friends.’ The body, after the Resurrection, will become bright and pure like the spirit, and will share in its happiness. According to St. Bonaventure, Breviloquium, VII, vii, the body is called the ‘second robe’” (Gr).

98. Sperent in te: Cf. vs. 73.

99. tutte le carole: All the “dances” or circles of the blessed. Cf. Par. XXIV, 16.

100. lume: The “light” of St. John. si schiarì: “Brightened.”

101-2. se ‘l Cancro . . . di: “In mid-winter the constellation of Cancer, for a month, shines all night long. If it contained a star as bright as this newly appeared ‘crystal,’ night, during that month, would be as light as day. In other words, the effulgence of St. John is as bright as the sun” (Gr).

103-11. E come surge . . . immota: The three representatives of the Christian virtues dance before Beatrice, as the virtues themselves did (in allegorical form) in Purg. XXIX, 121-29.

105. novizia: “Bride.” fallo: “Failing,” i.e., vanity or love of display.

108. conveniesi = si conveniva.

recumbens unus ex discipulis eius in sinu Iesu, quem diligebat Iesus." ("Now one of his disciples, he whom Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus' bosom.")

113. pellicano: See Ps. 101:7[102:6]: "Similis factus sum pellicano solitudinis." ("I am like a pelican of the wilderness.") "It was generally believed that the pelican brings its young back to life with its own blood; hence this bird was taken as the symbol of Christ" (Gr).

113-14. questi fue . . . eletto: John was entrusted with the care of Mary. See Ioan. 19:27: "Deinde dicit discipulo: Ecce mater tua. Et ex illa hora accepit eam discipulus in sua." ("Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, thy mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.")

115-17. né però . . . sue: The construction is somewhat involved. "La vista sua" ("her eyes") is the object of "mosser," of which the subject is "le parole sue" ("her words"). That is, her speaking did not cause her to turn her eyes away from the three apostles, neither as she made ready to speak ("prima"), nor after she had spoken ("poscia").

115. però = per ciò.


119. di vedere eclissar lo sole un poco: "Dante had an opportunity to see seven eclipses of the sun, two of them total in Italy" (Gr).

123. per veder cosa che qui non ha loco: "Dante is trying to see, through the effulgence, the body of St. John, believing, according to an old legend, that John was taken up to Heaven in the flesh" (Gr). See Ioan. 21:22-23: "Dicit ei Iesus: Sic eum volo manere donec veniam, quid ad te? Tu me sequere. Exiit ergo sermo iste inter fratres quia discipulus ille non moritur; et non dixit ei Iesus: Non moritur; sed: Sic eum volo manere donec veniam, quid ad te?" ("Jesus said to him [Peter], 'If I wish him [John] to remain until I come, what is it to thee? Do thou follow me.' This saying therefore
went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple was not to die. But Jesus had not said to him, 'He is not to die'; but rather, 'If I wish him to remain until I come, what is it to thee?'"

"In a fresco, attributed to Giotto, in Santa Croce, John is rising in body, obliquely, from the grave to God" (Gr).

124. saragli = vi sarà.

125. tanto . . . che: "Until."

126. con l'eterno proposito s'agguagli: "Shall be equal to the eternal purpose." See Eph. 1:4: "sicut elegit nos in ipso ante mundi constitutionem" ("even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world"). In Conv. II, v, 12, Dante tells us that the elect are to fill the places of the fallen angels, who were "forse in numero de la decima parte" ("[perhaps in] the number of a tenth part") of all the angelic orders.

127. le due stole: The "two robes" are the effulgence of the spirit and the glorified body.

128. son le due luCl sole che saliro: On Christ's rising from death in His body, see Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. III, q. 53, a. 3.

130-32. A questa voce . . . spiro: I.e., at the beginning of the words spoken by St. John, not at the end, both the dance ("giro") of the three apostles and their song (see vss. 106-8) cease.

131. con esso: "Together with." mischio: The apostles' song is now called a "mischio" because the voices are three and a "triune breathing" ("trino spiro").

133. cessar: "Avoid."

134-35. li remi . . . fischi o: The vigorous simile is taken from Statius, Theb. VI, 799-801.

134. ripercossi: "Driven."

138. per non poter: "At being unable."

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1–79. Mentr’io...poi: The reader will note that during the entire examination on caritas, or love, the third theological virtue, Dante is blinded, a fact which can hardly fail to bring to mind Cupid blindfolded and many another such traditional association of blindness with love. In this striking context it should also be noted that no definition of love is given in the examination, as it is with faith and hope. This serves to stress the fact that love is primarily a matter of the will, not of the intellect. Dante is simply asked what he loves, and why. The examination concludes what amounts to a kind of “entrance examination,” the “entrance” being into the region of eternal blessedness above. Cf. Conv. III, xiv, 14, where Dante writes: “onde la nostra buona fede ha sua origine; da la quale viene la speranza, [che è] lo preveduto desiderare; e per quella nasce l’operazione de la caritade. Per le quali tre virtudi si sale a filosofare a quelle Atene celestiali” (“whence our excellent faith hath its origin, from which cometh the hope of that for which we long and which we foresee, and from this is born the activity of charity; by which three virtues we rise to philosophise in that celestial Athens”).

The fact that this examination on the three virtues is indeed an entrance examination is precisely what is under-
scored, for the attentive reader, by the closing words of Par. XXIII, that is, just before the examination is to begin, with Par. XXIV and with St. Peter as first examiner. Now it will be remembered that the two keys that were left to Peter by Christ are (as the poet has chosen to conceive the matter) in the hands of the guardian angel at the gate of Purgatory proper, the entrance to Purgatory (Purg. IX, 117-29). But Peter’s presence here in Paradise, framing the examination cantos XXIV-XXVI (for Peter appears centrally on the scene in Par. XXVII), and the reference in Par. XXIII, 139, to him as “the one who holds the keys to such glory” (the glory above this heaven, in the Empyrean) clearly signal the fact that the wayfarer here passes through a kind of “gateway” (symbolically conveyed), if not a material gate such as that of Purgatory, where the keys actually are.

1. dubbiava: The verb conveys the sense of hesitation and of fear. Cf. Inf. IV, 18; Purg. III, 72; XX, 135.


3. spiro: “Voice” (a breathing forth); cf. Par. XXIV, 32.

4-5. risense de la vista: “Regain your sight.”

5. in me consunta: “Lost by looking upon me.”

6. la compense: “You make up for it,” i.e., by speaking with me and using the light of the mind in place of actual sight.

7-8. ove s’appunta l’anima tua: That is, whither, at what principal “target” (vs. 24), does your soul aim? “Aiming,” it should be noted, is a matter of the will primarily (see n. to vss. 1-79), and love is primarily of the will. And, as noted, no definition of love is required here.

8. e fa ragion che: “And know that,” “and realize that.” Cf. Inf. XXX, 145.

9. non defunta: “Not lost forever,” but only temporarily “confounded.”
10. *dia*: I.e., *divina*. Cf. Par. XIV, 34; XXIII, 107. This is the “region de li angeli” (*Par*. XX, 102).

11. *lo sguardo*: It should be recalled that Beatrice has kept her eyes on the three apostles and has not yet turned from them to look at Dante. Cf. *Par*. XXV, 110-11; 115-17.

12. *Anania*: Ananias, the disciple at Damascus, cured St. Paul of his blindness by “laying his hands upon him.” See Actus 9:17-18:

Et abiit Ananias, et introivit in domum; et imponens ei manus dixit: Saule frater, Dominus misit me Iesus, qui apparuit tibi in via qua veniebas, ut videas et implearis Spiritu Sancto. Et confestim ceciderunt ab oculis eius tamquam squamae, et visum recepit; et surgens baptizatus est.

So Ananias departed and entered the house, and laying his hands upon him, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me—Jesus, who appeared to thee on thy journey—that thou mayest recover thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And straightway there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he recovered his sight, and arose, and was baptized.

13. *Al suo piacere*: “At her pleasure,” “whenever it may please her.”


16. *Lo ben che fa contenta questa corte*: This is divine love and the gift of eternal beatitude to human souls.

16-18. *Lo ben . . . forte*: Thus Dante answers St. John’s query (vss. 7-8) concerning the object of his love. The subject of the sentence is “Amore,” the object is “lo ben,” at the beginning, and the verb “legge” clearly bears the meaning of “read” in the sense of “teach.”

17. *Alfa e O*: Alpha and omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. In the Apocalypse (1:8)—which, it should be remembered, was in Dante’s time attributed to
the same apostle John who wrote the fourth Gospel—we find: “Ego sum Α et Ω, principium et finis, dicit Dominus Deus.” (“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end,’ says the Lord God.”) “The Vulgate in the 13th century read ‘alpha et Ω’ or ‘α et Ω’” (Gr). scrittura: Out of metaphor this means “all possible objects of love.”

18. *o lievemente o forte*: “With lesser or greater emphasis.”


20. *abbarbaglio = barbaglio*.

22. *Certo*: “However,” “but.” *a più angusto vaglio*: “With the finer sieve” (one that separates the bran from the flour), that is, “you must make your declaration more precise, you must ‘refine’ it.”

23. *schiarar = chiarire*.

25. *Per filosofici argomenti*: The nature of these is made explicit in vss. 38-39. This amounts to a statement of what human reason can see, what an Aristotle could teach in this regard, as distinguished from divine revelation.


27. *convien che in me si ’imprenti*: “Must needs stamp on me,” so that I will be “imprinted by it.” For the figure of the stamp on wax, so common in the poem, but more specifically in a context of love, see *Purg.* XVIII, 38-39. Cf. “imprenta” in *Par.* X, 29.

28–30. *ché ’l bene . . . sé comprende*: “For good, as such, kindles love in proportion as it is understood, and kindles the greater love, the more goodness it contains within it” (Gr). This is the philosophical argument, common to Aristotle and other pagan thinkers; it thus corresponds to the “filosofici argomenti” and represents them, continuing through vs. 36. Although love is primarily of the will, Dante’s position is repeatedly and consistently on the side of those philosophers.
and theologians who hold that perception and understanding (acts of the intellect) precede love (an act of the will). Cf. Purg. XVIII, 22-27; Par. XXVIII, 109-11; and passim.


31-36. Dunque a l'essenza . . . prova: “Since love is attracted by goodness, and all goodness is in God, he must be the primal object of love” (Gr).

31. a l'essenza: “A l'essenza” is to be connected with “si mova” in vs. 34.

33. altro non è ch'un lume di suo raggio: Cf. Par. XXXI, 22-24.

34. più che in altra convien che si mova: “Must turn more than to any other [essence].” The subject of “si mova” is “la mente . . . di ciascun che cerne / il vero in che si fonda questa prova” of the next two verses.


36. in che: “Upon which.” prova: “Argument.”

37-39. Tal vero . . . sempiterne: “This is clearly Aristotle, who teaches that God is the supreme object towards whom the heavens yearn . . . . The extension of this idea from the heavens to the Angels or Deities is not remote from Aristotle's spirit, and is entirely germane to Dante's conception of it. (Compare Conv. ii. [4]; and also Parad. ii. 139-144. . . .) The principle of lines 28-30 underlies all Aristotle's philosophy; but perhaps Dante had specially in mind the passage in the Metaphysics where Aristotle says that what moves other things, though itself unmoved, is 'the object of longing' or 'the object of intellectual apprehension'; and adds that 'the principles of these two are identical.' Albertus (with whom Thomas substantially agrees) interprets them as meaning appetibile bonum and intelligibile bonum, 'that which asserts itself as good to our desire' and 'that which asserts itself as good to our intellect.' He goes on to explain that the former may be delusive and may be resisted, but the latter 'pro-
voketh our longing without let and without intermediary; because there is no need that it should first announce itself as good through the sense in order to stir the appetite; nor is there any clog to it on the part of the receiving intellect, since the thing loved is good in itself and . . . winneth the undivided longing of him upon whom it is poured" (TC). See Inf. VII, 74, and Par. XXVIII and XXIX.

37. sterne: "Unfolds," from the Latin sternit.

40. Sterne = lo sterne. autore: God.

42. Io ti farò vedere ogne valore: See Exod. 33:19: "Ego ostendam omne bonum tibi." ("I will make all my beauty pass before you.")

43. Sternilmi tu = tu me lo sterni.

44. preconio: "Preconio" is a Latinism. The reference is most probably to the Gospel of John (and this most appropriately, since Dante is speaking with him), for his is the most "theological" of the four Gospels, opening solemnly and mysteriously (see "arcano" in this verse) with the announcement of the Incarnation, God's great sacrifice to man: "In principio erat Verbum." ("In the beginning was the Word.") See also Ioan. 3:16. Some interpreters, however, have held that the reference is to Apoc. 1:8 (see n. to vs. 17). Those who adopt such a view should bear in mind that, for Dante, the author of the fourth Gospel and the author of the Apocalypse are the same author. grida: "Proclaims."

45. bando: "Heralding."

46. Per intelletto umano: That is, the philosophical arguments which a pagan such as Aristotle was able to formulate by purely human reason.

47. e per autoritadi: Cf. vs. 26. These are scriptural authorities. The method of basing a demonstration in theology on both Aristotle and the Scriptures is, of course, constant with Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, to name but
two theologians. *concorde* (from the Latin *concordes*) = *concordi*.

48. *d'i tuoi amori a Dio guarda il sovrano*: “The highest of your loves looks to God.” In the examination of a Christian’s love, this is the supreme test. Cf. *Purg.* XVII, 97.

49–51. *Ma di ancor ... morde*: This is an odd combination of metaphors, but such mixing is common in Dante, as every reader knows by now.


53. *l’aguglia di Cristo*: John. The four beasts of Apoc. 4:7 are traditionally identified with the four Evangelists. St. John is the “flying eagle.”


55. *Però = perciò. morsi*: The metaphor continues from vs. 51.

56. *lo cor volgere a Dio*: Again, the supreme test. Cf. n. to vs. 48.

57. *caritate*: Love of God is more specifically signified by *caritas* than by *amor*.


59. *la morte ch’el sostenne perch’ io viva*: Cf. I I Joan. Apos. 4:7-9: “Carissimi, diligamus nos invicem, quia caritas ex Deo est, et omnis qui dignit ex Deo natus est et cognoscit Deum. Qui non dignit non novit Deum, quoniam Deus caritas est. In hoc apparuit caritas Dei in nobis, quoniam Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum ut vivamus per eum.” (“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God. And everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this has the love of God been shown in our case, that God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through him.”) The reader should not forget that
in Dante’s time the apostle John was commonly regarded as the author of the three epistles as well as of the Gospel and of the Apocalypse. \( \text{el} = \text{egli} \) (Christ, both God and man).

60. \textit{quel che spera ogne fede com’ io}: Salvation, eternal beatitude, and the vision of God.

61. \textit{la predetta conoscenza}: See vss. 25-45.

62–63. \textit{tratto m’hanno . . . riva}: The metaphor takes the reader back as far as \textit{Inf. I}, 22-27, the first simile of the poem (see the note corresponding to those verses). See also \textit{Purg. XVII}, 91-139; \textit{Purg. XVIII}; and the opening of \textit{Purg. XIX}.

64–66. \textit{Le fronde . . . porto}: Dante is saying that he loves the various creatures of God’s creation (the leaves of His garden) that make up the world, in proportion to the goodness which their Maker (the eternal Gardener) in His predestination has bestowed upon them. The good Christian should love God alone for Himself and love creatures only insofar as they participate in the goodness of God. Cf. \textit{Ioan. 15:1}: “Ego sum vitis vera, et Pater meus agricola est.” (“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser.”) Again Dante chooses a metaphor from John. The examination on love ends at this point, and therewith the entire “entrance examination” on the three virtues, conducted by the three apostles who represent those virtues.

68–69. \textit{e la mia donna . . . “Santo, santo, santol”} These words of praise (and now Beatrice joins all the host in chanting them) constitute a “passing mark” for the whole examination that could hardly be higher, for these are words which the Seraphim chant around the throne of God, according to \textit{Isa. 6:2-3}, and which the four animals chant around the throne in \textit{Apoc. 4:8}.

70–71. \textit{E come a lume . . . ricorre}: “And as one is awakened by a keen light, because of the spirit of sight running to meet. . . .” Cf. \textit{Conv. III}, ix, 7-10, where the act of sight is described scientifically. Also see \textit{Conv. II}, ix, 5, where Dante
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speaks of the "nervo per lo quale corre lo spirito visivo" ("nerve along which the visual spirit runs").

70. *si disonna:* Impersonal and passive.

72. *gonna:* "Coat" or membrane of the eye. In Conv. III, ix, 13, it is termed a tunic ("tunica").

73. *aborre:* "Shrinks" (from looking too intently). The infinitive is *aborrire.*

74. *nescia:* "Unknowing," "senseless." *vigilia:* "Awakening."

75. *la stimativa:* The faculty which discerns (the form *estimativa* is also common). This faculty is referred to by circumlocution in Purg. XXIX, 49 (see n. to that verse). See B. Nardi (1949), pp. 172-73.

76. *quisquilia:* "Mote."

78. *rifulgea da più di mille milia:* The radiance of Beatrice's eyes would have been visible a thousand miles away.


81. *un quarto lume:* A fourth light has now joined the other three—presumably it did this while Dante was blinded. This proves to be Adam, hidden by his own radiance like all other souls here.

83. *vagheggia:* "Lovingly contemplates." Cf. Purg. XVI, 85; Par. X, 92; and passim. The subject is "l'anima prima," Adam.

84. *la prima virtù:* The power of the "fattor" (vs. 83), God. Cf. Par. X, 3; Conv. III, vii, 5.


85. *fronda:* "Bough." *flette:* "Bends."

87. *soblima:* "Uplifts."
88. *feci io*: “So I stood” (i.e., with bowed head). *in tanto in quant*: “While.”

89. *stupendo*: “Amazed.” *mi rifece sicuro*: Dante raises his head again.

91–93. *O pomo . . . nuro*: Dante as poet delights in circumlocutions that distinguish Father Adam from the rest of the human race, who descended from him. Cf. Par. VII, 26: “quell’ uom che non nacque.” Now he addresses him as “pomo” (one would think that since Adam’s great sin was by way of a *pomo* the term might be avoided in his presence!) and as “padre antico,” each circumlocution serving to identify him among all men. “Pomo” is clear enough in its meaning, as is “padre antico” when one realizes that the meaning of “nuro” (from the Latin *nurus*) is “daughter-in-law” in the sense of “wife of any descendant.”

94. *a te supplico*: For the dative construction, cf. the Latin *tibi supplico*. The requirements of the rhyme cause a shift of accent from *supplico* to *supplìco*. Cf. Par. VI, 91, “replìco,” and *passim* for other instances of such a shift.

95. *tu vedi*: That is, you see in God my wish to know from you.

97. *Talvolta un animal coverto broglia*: It is not clear, in vss. 97–99, just what kind of creature the poet has in mind—a falcon, or cat, or little pig in a sack, or a horse covered with its trappings? *broglia*: Cf. the Provençal *brolhar*, “to move,” as well as the French *brouiller*.

98–99. *si che l’affetto . . . ’nvoglia*: “So that its desire [or feeling] is perforce revealed by the response that its wrapper makes to it.”

99. *la ’nvoglia*: The modern Italian is *involucro*. Cf. “coverta,” vs. 101. For a like notion respecting these spirits, covered as they are by their radiance, see Par. VIII, 54, the image of a silkworm: “quasi animal di sua seta fasciato.”

100. *primaia = prima.*
101. *la coverta:* The soul’s covering is, of course, pure radiance, spiritual and not material.

102. *quant’ ella a compiacermi venia gaia:* “How joyously it came to do me pleasure.”


106. *speglio = specchio* (i.e., as *passim,* the mind of God).

107-8. *che fa di sé . . . pareglio:* “Which makes itself a [complete or perfect] image of other things, while nothing makes of itself a [perfect] image of it [the mirror].” God reflects everything, but nothing can wholly reflect God. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 57, a. 2, resp.: “Deus per essentiam suam, per quam omnia causat, est similitudo omnium.” (“By His essence, by which He causes all things, God is the likeness of all things.”)

108. *lui = a lui,* corresponding to “a l’altre cose.” *pareglio:* Cf. the French *pareil.* Here the adjective is used as a noun.

109-42. *Tu vuogli udir . . . sesta:* Dante addresses four questions to Adam, who first formulates and then answers them. The questions are answered, however, not in the order in which they are put, but in the order of their importance. First comes the reply to question number three: What was the real nature of Adam’s sin? Then follows the answer to question number one: How long ago was he created? Next comes the reply to question number four, which concerns the language that the first man invented and spoke. And last is offered the answer to question number two: How long did Adam stay in the Garden of Eden?

109. *quant’ è che:* “How long it is since.”


111. *così lunga scala:* The ladder of contemplation which
reaches from the summit of the mountain all the way to God. The reader will recall the image of the ladder in connection with the heaven of Saturn, heaven of the contemplatives (Par. XXII, 68-75).

112. quanto fu diletto: In this construction “diletto” is probably a noun.


114. e che fei: This anticipates Adam’s answer (vss. 124-38) in which he makes it clear that he did create or “make” the language he spoke.

115. Or: The word clearly signals the beginning of the answers, which now follow. non il gustar del legno: For the notion as applied to the tree of the Garden of Eden, cf. Purg. XXXII, 43-44.

117. il trapassar del segno: “Transgressing the bound.” Adam’s sin was disobedience, caused by pride (see Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. II-II, q. 163, a. 1) not gluttony, though gluttony resulted from that sin (cf. Purg. XXIV, 116-17). See also Augustine, De civ. Dei XIV, xii-xiv.

118. Quindi onde mosse tua donna Virgilio: “Therefore, in the place whence your lady drew Virgil,” i.e., in Limbo. See Inf. II, 52-69.

119. volumi: “Revolutions,” i.e., solar years in the sense expressed in the following tercet with the phrase “tutt’ i lumi de la sua strada,” that is, all the signs of the zodiac.

120. questo concilio: The “assembly” of the blessed (cf. Purg. XXI, 16) for which Adam longed for centuries before he was taken from Limbo by Christ (Inf. IV, 55).

121. lui: The sun. lumi: The signs of the zodiac (cf. vss. 119-20).

factum est omne tempus quod vixit Adam anni nongenti triginta, et mortuus est.” (“The whole lifetime of Adam was nine hundred and thirty years; then he died.”)

Adding the number of years that Adam lived on earth (930) to the number of years he spent in Limbo (4,302) gives a total of 5,232 years between the creation of Adam and the Crucifixion (cf. Purg. XXXIII, 62), hence 6,498 years between the Creation and the date of the journey (i.e., 5,232 years before the Crucifixion + 1,266 years after the Crucifixion (cf. Inf. XXI, 112-14).

123. *in terra fu'mi:* “Mi” here is the familiar so-called pleonastic reflexive in its distancing function, the distance in this case, concerning Adam’s life on earth, being one both of time and of space: “down on earth and so long ago,” as it were. For a similar example of the pronoun in this function, cf. Purg. XXII, 90.

124-26. *La lingua . . . attenta:* “The ‘unaccomplishable task’ which Nimrod’s people attempted was the building of the Tower of Babel: Gen. xi, 4-9. Cf. Inf. XXXI, 77-78; Purg. XII, 34.—Dante evidently changed his opinion on this subject, for in Vulg. El., I, vi, 5-7, he had said that Adam’s language was spoken by all men until the confusion of tongues, and by the Hebrews after that event. His study of human speech doubtless led him to the conclusion that an unwritten language could not last without change through many generations” (Gr). See B. Nardi (1949), pp. 217-47, and the Enciclopedia dantesca under the first “Adamo” entry.

126. *Nembròt:* Cf. Inf. XXXI, 77; Purg. XII, 34-36.

127-29. *ché nullo effetto . . . durabile:* “For no product of reason was ever permanent for all time, because of human inclination, which varies with the sky” (Gr). “Il cielo” in the singular refers to the heavenly spheres, the turning of which constitutes the operation of Nature, as every reader of the poem knows by now; and reason, in its purely human aspect, within the realm of Nature, is a human construction. As for
man’s variability (as of all other things within the realm of Nature and beneath the sphere of the moon), cf. Par. V, 98-99, where, of Dante himself, it is said: “io che pur da mia natura / trasmutabile son per tutte guise!” See also De vulg. eloqu. I, ix, 6: “cum . . . homo sit instabilissimum atque variabilissimum animal” (“since . . . man is a most unstable and changeable animal”).

130. *Opera naturale è ch’uom favella*: “It is a natural operation for man to speak’; hence he always does speak, in some fashion” (Gr).

131–32. *ma così o così . . . v’abbella*: Nature here appears as the subject of this statement and is almost personified in the usual sense of “the operation of the heavenly spheres on the sublunar world.” Nature leaves it to man to speak as he pleases, literally “as it suits him” (“secondo che v’abbella”). For the notion in the scholastic view of language in this regard, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 85, a. 1, ad 3: “Significare conceptus suos est homini naturale; sed determinatio signorum est secundum humanum placitum.” (“It is natural to man to express his ideas by signs, but the determination of those signs depends on man’s pleasure.”) The idea is common to scholastic thought. See P. Rotta (1909), pp. 186-87.


134. *I s’appellava*: “We do not know where Dante got the idea that the first name of God was I. This letter is the initial of Jehovah, and also of Jah: cf. Ps. lxviii (Vulg. lxvii), 4 (‘extol him . . . by his name Jah’). Moreover, standing for the number 1, it is the symbol of unity. See D. Guerri, ‘Il nome adamitico di Dio’ in *Di alcuni versi dotti della ‘Divina Commedia,’* 1908” (Gr).

136. *El*: “El is the Hebrew name. St. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, VII, i: ‘Primum apud Hebraeos Dei nomen El dicitur.’ (‘The first name of God with the Hebrews was El.’)” (Gr). The names Jehovah and Elohim are the two chief names used for the Deity throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

> ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos,
> prima cadunt; ita verborum vetus interit aetas,
> et iuvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
> debemur morti nos nostraque. . .

As forests change their leaves with each year’s decline, and the earliest drop off: so with words, the old race dies, and, like the young of human kind, the new-born bloom and thrive. We are doomed to death—we and all things ours.

139–42. *Nel monte . . . sesta*: Adam now replies to the second question (see vs. 112), and many readers (especially readers of Milton) will be surprised to learn how brief a time our first parents sojourned in the Garden of Eden: only a little more than six hours! Among the various estimates (Genesis has nothing precise to say on the matter), Dante chose one of the shortest, that of Petrus Comestor (whom the poet mentions in *Par.* XII, 134), *Hist. schol.*, *Liber Genesis* XXIV: “Quidam tradunt eos fuisse in paradiso septem horas.” (“Some hold that they were in the garden for seven hours.”) This brief time is said by Dante to have been “from the first hour to the one that follows the sixth, when the sun changes quadrant” (that is, passes from the first quadrant, or 90°, to the second), i.e., from sunrise (6:00 A.M., apparently, at the time of the Creation, when the sun was in Aries—see *Inf.* I, 37-40) to the hour that follows noon.


140. *con vita pura e disonestà*: I.e., “before my sin and after.”

142. *l’ora sesta*: Students of the numerical architecture in the *Commedia* may find it significant that, by answering this question last, the poet is able to present, as the last word, the number *six* explicitly expressed (“sesta”), but the number seven in actual meaning (the seventh hour). Since there are
thirty-three cantos in the *Paradiso*, this last word of the present canto may be seen to mark off the remaining area of the poem, made up of seven cantos. This is the more remarkable, architecturally, since the first seven cantos of the *Inferno* were marked off as such by the special beginning of *Inf.* VIII (see n. to *Inf.* VIII, 1-2). Thus a seven-canto area at the beginning and the same at the end underscore a "framing" number seven. On this number as the central number of the whole structure, see C. S. Singleton (1965).
1-5. *Al Padre . . . l’universo*: The host of souls seen in the eighth heaven now sing the Gloria Patri of the liturgy of the Church: “Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum.” (“Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, even as in the beginning so now and ever throughout all time.”) In this particular context, following Dante’s brilliant passing of his entrance examination, this represents the highest mark conceivable! A soul out of time, a living man in this case, now crosses over to the “celestial Athens” (see n. to *Par. XXVI*, 1-79) that lies ahead and above. The reader will not forget, in such a context, the “Gloria in excelsis” (*Purg. XX*, 136) that was sung by *all* Purgatory when Statius was liberated therefrom, and as it was sung for him, so is it sung for each soul when it has finished its period of purgation. Thus here all Paradise joins in the singing (though this is a little hard to conceive, and many commentators insist that it is only the souls of the eighth circle who sing). The poet’s language is hyperbolic in the visual field as well, for what the pilgrim sees now seems to him “un riso de l’universo,” no less, the radiance of all the triumphant souls in their joy over this wayfarer’s successful progress toward God.
8. *integra*: Pronounced *integra* in modern Italian; here the word means "perfect."

9. *sanza brama sicura ricchezza*: The souls of the elect enjoy full beatitude, as the reader was told by Piccarda as the journey entered into the first of the heavens (see *Par.* III, 64-85). Nor do they fear ever to lose this condition. It is truly a "secure wealth," as is here declared.

10. *face* (from the Latin *faces*) = *faci* (cf. "concorde" in *Par.* XXVI, 47). The four "torches" are the lights of Peter, James, John, and Adam.


13-15. *e tal ne . . . penne*: If the planets Jupiter and Mars were birds and should molt and exchange feathers with each other, Jupiter would turn red and Mars white. Cf. *Purg.* II, 14, and *Par.* XIV, 87, for the red color of Mars; for Jupiter's whiteness, see Dante's comment in *Conv.* II, xiii, 25: "Giove è stella di temperata complessione, in mezzo de la freddura di Saturno e de lo calore di Marte." ("Jove is a star of temperate composition betwixt the cold of Saturn and the heat of Mars.") Dante notes that Jupiter "intra tutte le stelle bianca si mostra, quasi argentata" ("shows white among the stars, as though of silver"). Cf. *Par.* XVIII, 96. Thus Peter's effulgence reddens for indignation, as will now be clear. Grandgent judges the figure "whimsical." It is curious, at least. However, the early commentator Buti does not find it too far-fetched to compare planets to birds, observing: "Le penne dei pianeti s'intendono li colori de' raggi dei quali risplendono, come le penne de li uccelli appaiano diverse, per diversi colori che dimostrano." ("By feathers of the planets we are to understand the colors of the rays wherewith they are resplendent, just as the feathers of birds appear diverse because of the different colors which these display.")

15. *cambiassersi = si cambiassero.*

16. *comparte*: "Distributes" (cf. *Inf.* XIX, 12). Perhaps the most striking example of the direction of providence in
the configuration of the souls in a given sphere is the great eagle formed by the lights (souls) in the heaven of Jupiter (note there too an association with birds). See Par. XIX.

17. vice: “Vice” (from the Latin vices) is actually a plural here (cf. “face,” vs. 10), meaning “turns” in speaking, singing, silence, movement, rest. officio: The specific function each soul must serve.

19–21. Se io mi trascoloro ... costoro: St. Peter has blushed red with shame, and as he explains the cause of his indignation all the souls of this heaven will also blush. Hence the change from white to red comes to affect the whole heaven in this sense.

22–24. Quelli ch’usurpa ... Dio: The reference is to Boniface VIII, and Peter’s denunciation of him, with the phrase “il luogo mio” used three times, could not be couched in stronger language.

22–23. il luogo mio ... mio: For the repetition of “il luogo mio,” cf. Ier. 7:4, where “the temple of the Lord” occurs three times.

23. vaca: “Is vacant.” Some commentators would take this to mean that Boniface’s very election to the supreme office was invalid, but it is necessary to consider the perspective of this judgment from Heaven, looking down to earth, and the very important qualifying phrase “ne la presenza del Figliuol di Dio” (vs. 24). It is not the validity of Boniface’s election to the office that is pointed to, but the corruption which he brought to the office, he and his curia.

It seems well not to forget other verses concerning Boniface (among them, Purg. XX, 85-90), where he is recognized as the true vicar of Christ on earth. Those verses express indignation from quite another—a human and earthly—perspective. As the reader will soon see, there is yet to come a still more terrible thrust at him (Par. XXX, 148).

24. ne la presenza: “In the sight of.”

25. cimitero mio: St. Peter’s “burial place” is Rome, where
he suffered martyrdom (see Par. IX, 139-41). cloaca: “Sewer,” one which carries all the blood that is being shed in Rome, and near Rome, among Christians (see Inf. XXVII, 85-90) as well as all the corruption of the papal court.

26-27. 'l perverso . . . sù: This is Satan, of course. Cf. Inf. XXXIV, 121-26.

27. si placa: “Is well pleased,” “is content.”

28-29. Di quel color . . . mane: Cf. Ovid, Metam. III, 183-85:

qui color infectis adversi solis ab ictu
nubibus esse solet aut purpureae Aurorae,
is fuit in vultu visae sine veste Dianae.

And red as the clouds which flush beneath the sun’s slant rays, red as the rosy dawn, were the cheeks of Diana as she stood there in view without her robes.

28. che: The subject of “dipigne” in vs. 29. per lo sole avverso: “The sun being opposite.”

32. di sé sicura: Certain of her own blamelessness. fallanza: An archaic form of fallo, some blameworthy act.


34. così Beatrice trasmutò sembianza: Commentators debate the exact meaning here. Does Beatrice blush as do Peter and all the other souls, even the whole heaven? Or does she grow pale? Certainly, as many have pointed out, a passage in the Convivio (IV, xxv, 7) can appropriately be brought to bear here, as a gloss:

Lo pudore è uno ritraimento d’animo da laide cose, con paura di cadere in quelle; sì come vedemo ne le vergini e ne le donne buone e ne li adolescenti, che tanto sono pudici, che non solamente là dove richiesti o tentati sono di fallare, ma dove pure alcuna imaginazione di venereo compimento avere si puote, tutti si dipingono ne la faccia di palido o di rosso colore.
Pudicity is a shrinking of the mind from foul things, with the fear of falling into them; as we see in virgins and in good women and in the adolescent, who are so modest that not only where they are urged or tempted to err, but where only a bare imagination of venereal pleasure can find place, are all painted in the face with pale or with red colour.

But, as is clear, this gloss would allow for either blush or pallor. And the implied simile of vss. 35-36 adds the implication that her countenance grows “dark” in some way comparable to the darkness that came over the earth at the Crucifixion. In any case, this must carry out the first part of the true simile (vss. 31-33), but the answer is left unclear.

35-36. e tale eclissi . . . possanza: Cf. Matt. 27:45: “A sexta autem hora tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram usque ad horam nonam.” (“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.”) Also see Luc. 23:44-45; Mar. 15:33.

36. la suprema possanza: Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh—God and man.

37. procedetter = proseguirono. sue: St. Peter’s.

39. piuè: “More,” that is, than his voice had changed.

40. Non fu la sposa di Cristo allevata: St. Peter’s terrible denunciation of the corrupt papacy and Rome begins here and extends through vs. 66. It is the most impressive of all the denunciations of its kind in the poem, because it is pronounced by St. Peter himself, the first and greatest of popes (cf. Inf. II, 24), but the reader will recall many another in the course of the poem, such as that pronounced by Dante as he stood over the simoniac pope Nicholas III (Inf. XIX, 90-117). allevata: “Established and nurtured.”

41. Lin: St. Linus, generally considered the immediate successor to Peter as pope. Jerome gives the year A.D. 67 as the date of his accession; others place it in the year A.D. 64. He is said to have been beheaded by one Saturninus in 76 or 79.
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Cleto: St. Cletus (or Anacletus), pope from ca. A.D. 79 to ca. A.D. 90, was the successor of St. Linus. He was martyred under Domitian.

42–43. per essere ... lieto: Cf. I Pet. 5:1-4:

Seniores ergo qui in vobis sunt, obsecro consenior et testis Christi passionum, qui et eius quae in futuro revelanda est gloriae communicator: pascite qui in vobis est gregem Dei, providentes non coacte sed spontanea secundum Deum, neque turpis lucrui gratia sed voluntarie, neque ut dominantes in clericis sed forma facti gregis ex animo; et cum apparuerit princeps pastorum, percipietis immarcescibilem gloriae coronam.

Now I exhort the presbyters among you—I, your fellow-presbyter and witness of the sufferings of Christ, the partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed in time to come—tend the flock of God which is among you, governing not under constraint, but willingly, according to God; nor yet for the sake of base gain, but eagerly; nor yet as lording it over your charges, but becoming from the heart a pattern of the flock. And when the Prince of the shepherds appears, you will receive the un­fading crown of glory.

Compare the denunciation in Inf. XIX, 90-117.

44. Sisto e Pio e Calisto e Urbano: Sixtus I was pope (ca. 115-125) during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. Pius I, pope from ca. 140 to ca. 155 or 157, was contemporary with the Emperor Antoninus Pius. Callistus I, pope from 217 to 222, was succeeded by Urban I as pope from 222 to 230. All four were known as early martyrs.

45. fletu: “Weeping,” from the Latin fletus. The tears were shed for the persecutions and martyrdoms of the early Church.

46–48. Non fu ... christianò: Peter is saying that the first popes never intended that their successors should treat the Guelphs (papal supporters) as sheep and the Ghibellines as goats. Cf. Matt. 25:31-33.
49-51. né che le chiavi . . . combattesse: Nor, Peter continues, was it intended that the keys that were consigned to him should become an emblem on a standard. For the keys, cf. Purg. IX, 117-19; Par. XXIV, 35; and Matt. 16:19. Members of the papal troop sent against Frederick II in 1229 wore this token on their shoulders and were called *chiavisegnati* ("those marked by the keys"). In Dante's own time the pope was warring against Christians (see Inf. XXVII, 85-90).

50. *signaculo* = *segnacolo*, "ensign," "emblem," from the Latin *signaculum*.

52. *figura di sigillo*: The papal seal bears the image of St. Peter.

55-56. *In vesta . . . paschi*: Cf. Matt. 7:15: "Attendite a falsis prophetis, qui veniunt ad vos in vestimentis ovium, intrinsecus autem sunt lupi rapaces." ("Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.")

55. *vesta* = *veste*.

57. *difesa di Dio*: God's providential prevention of these terrible things. *perché pur giaci?* "Pur" here has a function similar to that in Inf. V, 21, denoting continuation. Freely, this means: "Why do you continue to refrain from intervention?" For this kind of question addressed to the Lord, cf. Ps. 43[44]:23-24: "Exurge, quare obdormis, Domine? exurge, et ne repellas in finem. Quare faciem tuam avertis?" ("Awake! Why are you asleep, O Lord? Arise! Cast us not off forever! Why do you hide your face?") The reader will recall other passages where the poet addresses the Deity in similar anguish. Cf. Purg. VI, 118-20, for example. But Dante never lost faith in the ultimate intervention of God's providence, a faith which is expressed here (vss. 61-63) by St. Peter.

58. *Caorsini*: Cahors, capital of the ancient province of Querquy in southern France, was a nest of usury (see Inf. XI,
50). John XXII, pope from 1316 to 1334, came from that
town. He is referred to by Dante in Par. XVIII, 130-36.
Guaschi: The predecessor of John XXII, Clement V, was a
Gascon; he is mentioned in Inf. XIX, 82-87; Purg. XXXII,
148-60; Par. XVII, 82. The Gascons had generally the reputa-
tion of being avaricious and grasping (see Villani, VIII,
80).

59. principio: "Beginning."

61-63. Ma l'alma provedenza ... concipio: Dante's optimism
and abiding faith in God's providence, so often expressed
throughout the poem, return, after the dismay expressed. The
reference to Scipio Africanus obviously looks to a temporal
power, as directed by God, to restore order and justice to the
world; many similar passages in the poem, beginning with
the very first canto, express the confidence that such will be
the way God will choose (cf. Inf. I, 101-11, and the n. to
Inf. I, 101-2). See also the De monarchia in its total thesis in
this regard.

61. Scipio: Scipio Africanus the Elder, who conquered Han-
nibal and thus saved Rome. See Conv. IV, v, 19.

62. difese a Roma: "Defended for Rome." la gloria del
mondo: It was the "glory" of the Romans that they con-
quered and governed the whole world.

63. soccorrà = soccorrerà. io concipio: St. Peter is read-
ing in the "book" or seeing in the "mirror" that is the mind
of God, hence this is no personal revelation, but vouchsafed
by God's providence.

64-66. e tu, figliuol ... ascondo: The living man on this ex-
ceptional journey is solemnly charged by St. Peter himself to
disclose to the living that which he, Peter, has not concealed
from him. The poet's mission is a lofty one indeed, in this
respect.

64. per lo mortal pondo: The phrase clearly stresses the fact
that the pilgrim is a living man, here in the flesh, and thus
one who bears a "weight" which will cause his sojourn in
these lofty regions to be brief. This point is brought out more emphatically toward the very end of the poem (Par. XXXII, 139). Cf. also Par. I, 73-75.

65. ancor giù: “Back down to earth.”

67-72. Sì come di vapor...soggiorno: These lines present the strange and lovely picture of an inverted snowstorm. Dante sees “the ether grow beautiful, flaked with triumphant vapors”—the swarm of bright spirits returning to the Empyrean—“just as our air flakes downward with frozen vapors” in midwinter when the sun is in Capricorn: “when the horn of the Sky Goat and the Sun touch each other.” It must be remembered that “wet vapors” produce rain, snow, and hail, while wind, lightning, and meteors are caused by “dry vapors.” The reader may recall an inverted rain referred to by Dante in Vita nuova XXIII, 25. These inversions (such as that of the inverted “plant” of time itself in vss. 118-19 of the present canto) are contributing to an experience which the reader will undergo as he passes, with the pilgrim Dante, from time to eternity, from the universe with earth at the center to a universe that has God as its center: a complete change in gravitation, from the material to the spiritual.

70. etera: Cf. Par. XXII, 132.

71. fioccar: The verb is intransitive here. vapor triunfanti: The flames of those who are already part of the Church Triumphant.

72. avien = avevano.

73. viso: “Sight.” suoi = loro, “their.”


75. li = gli (my sight). li tolse il trapassar del più avanti: “Prevented it from passing beyond.” “Mezzo” is the subject of “tolse.” “Il più avanti” is used substantively.


78. *se' vòlto:* "How you have revolved."

79. *Da l'ora ch'io avea guardato prima:* See *Par.* XXII, 127-54. Repeating explicitly a previous downward look at the material universe, this amounts to a kind of "farewell" gaze earthwards, from this point so near the confines of that universe (for the tenth heaven, the Empyrean, is a purely spiritual heaven, and only one material heaven, the ninth, remains). It will be recalled that this eighth heaven is also the one from which Scipio Africanus the Younger, uplifted thereto, according to Cicero's *De re publica,* saw the universe beneath him (see n. to *Par.* XXII, 127-54).

80-81. *i' vidi mosso ... clima:* "Compare xxii. 124-154. The 'climata' are latitudinal divisions which may be applied equally to the heavens and the earth. There is some difference of usage amongst the mediaeval geographers, but it seems probable that Dante regarded the Twins, in which he was situated, as lying on the upper confines of the first clima. The passage, therefore, seems to mean simply, 'I had revolved, with the first clima, through a whole quadrant' " (TC). See E. Moore (1903), pp. 101-5.

But perhaps the entire passage, vss. 80-87, presents serious difficulties generally for the modern reader, who would profit from the clear explanation and illustration which Grandgent gives it: "When Dante once more gazes down at the earth, he finds that during the interval since the end of his previous observation (XXII, 133-153) he has traversed 90°, or a quarter of the whole circumference. Six hours, then, have elapsed. At the close of the first look, he was on the meridian of Jerusalem; he is now in line with the Strait of Gibraltar, having covered the whole length of the Mediterranean, whose extent was curiously exaggerated by the ancients (cf. IX, 82-87). Had the sun been under Gemini (but so placed as not to obstruct his sight), he could have beheld, from his present viewpoint, the whole western hemisphere,
from Jerusalem to the Island of Purgatory; but, as he tells us (ll. 86-87), 'the sun was ahead of me, distant a sign and more beneath my feet.' The signs of the zodiac are, of course, all in the eighth heaven. Dante is in Gemini; and the sun is 'in,' or under, Aries. Between Gemini and Aries is Taurus. We may suppose that the poet is at or near the western extremity of Gemini, and we know that the sun is in line with a point something less than a third of the way from the eastern end of Aries. Each of the twelve signs is 30° long. A line drawn from Dante to the center of the earth, and a line drawn from the sun to the same point, would then be separated by an arc of not more than 40°. It follows that some 40° of Dante's field of vision, on the eastern side, is in the dark, or at least in the twilight. Instead, therefore, of seeing clearly to the Phoenician coast, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, he sees 'almost the shore' (1. 83)—perhaps as far as Greece. It should be remembered that all this Mediterranean region was observed by him at the time of his first inspection.” See Fig. 3.
Thus, beyond Cadiz, Dante from this lofty point is able to see the “mad track,” or, more exactly, the “mad fording” of Ulysses. This is the second time since it was first recounted (in Inf. XXVI) that Ulysses’ journey has been remembered. The first was, most significantly, at the moment when Dante, issuing from Hell, came to stand on the shore of the mountain of Purgatory to look out over the waters offshore where Ulysses and his crew had perished (see Purg. I, 131-32, and nn. to Purg. I, 132 and 133). Ulysses’ journey may be called a “varco,” for he sailed from one shore, that of the Strait of Gibraltar, almost to another, that of the mountain-island of Purgatory. When (in Purg. I) this “varco” was first recalled, Dante had just come from Hell to stand on the shore of this mountain-island, had accomplished, that is, a kind of fording himself. This was followed by the arrival of the boatload of souls on a journey which had followed the attempted course of Ulysses’ fording, and again the notion of “fording” is brought out, by the phrase “tra liti sì lontani” (Purg. II, 33). In short, the wayfaring Dante and the souls of those who pass to Purgatory both complete successfully a fording which is denied Ulysses.

And now, as the pilgrim is about to cross over from “the human to the divine, from time to eternity” (Par. XXXI, 37-38), his last glance earthwards takes in the “mad crossing” of Ulysses: again he stands on a “shore” that will forever be denied to the ancient hero.

“Nearly the shore” (see n. to vss. 80-81), the Phoenician shore, where Europa mounted the back of Jupiter disguised as a bull (see Ovid, Metam. II, 833-75, especially vss. 868-69).

The word marks a definite recall to the previous time when Dante looked down (Par. XXII, 151).

See the quotation from Grandgent in n. to vss. 80-81. “Separated,” “distant.”
88. *donna*: From an original Provençal word, *domnejar*, which had much the same sense as here. The verb is used three times in Dante’s works: *Rime* LXXXIII, 52; *Par.* XXIV, 118; and the present verse. Essentially amorous in significance, the word means “to court,” or (like *vagheggiare*, which is often used in the poem) it may mean “to gaze amorous upon.”

89. *ridure* (from the Latin *reducere*) = *ridurre*. Such northern Italian forms were occasionally used by Tuscan poets (e.g., *condure, redure, trare*). See E. G. Parodi (1957), p. 237. Cf. *Par.* XXII, 21: “redui.”

91–93. *e se natura . . . piture*: “And if nature or art ever made bait of human flesh or paintings of it, to catch the eyes in order to possess the mind” (Gr). For some reflections on this basic aesthetic principle of art as Dante saw it and practiced it in the *Divine Comedy* and other works, see C. S. Singleton (1969).

91. *fé* = *fece*, in the sense which Grandgent has seen: “ever made.”


96. *viso*: “Face,” but especially the eyes.


98. *del bel nido di Leda*: “Leda’s nest” is the constellation of Gemini, in which Dante has been while in the sphere of the stars (see *Par.* XXII, 110-20); it is so called because the twins Castor and Pollux were the children of Leda. According to late versions of the story, Jupiter visited Leda in the form of a swan, and she brought forth two eggs, from one of which issued Helen, and from the other the twin brothers Castor and Pollux. (Cf. Ovid, *Heroides* XVII, 55-56.) At their death Jupiter placed the twins among the stars as the

99. *ciel velocissimo*: The ninth heaven, or *Primum Mobile*, which contains no bodies, neither stars nor planets, but is the outermost of the moving spheres, imparting its motion to the rest. It is bounded by the Empyrean. For its rapidity, see *Conv.* II, iii, 8-9, where Dante writes:

Veramente, fuori di tutti questi, li cattolici pongono lo cielo Empireo, che è a dire cielo di fiamma o vero luminoso; e pongono esso essere immobile per avere in sè, secondo ciascuna parte, ciò che la sua materia vuole. E questo è cagione al Primo Mobile per avere velocissimo movimento; chè per lo ferventissimo appetito ch'è 'n ciascuna parte di quello nono cielo, che è immediato a quello, d'essere congiunta con ciascuna parte di quello divinissimo ciel quieto, in quello si rivolve con tanto desiderio, che la sua velocitade è quasi incomprehensibile.

But beyond all these the Catholics assert the empyrean heaven, which is as much as to say the heaven of flame, or the luminous heaven; and they assert it to be immovable, because it hath in itself with respect to every part that which its matter demandeth. And this is the cause of the *primum mobile* having the swiftest motion, because by reason of the most fervid appetite wherewith every part of this ninth heaven, which is next below it, longeth to be conjoined with every part of this divinest, and tranquil heaven, it revolves therein with so great yearning that its swiftness is scarce to be comprehended.

*impulse*: “Thrust,” from the Latin *impellere*.

100. *vivissime*: “Quickest,” as compared with the eight heavens revolving within it (see n. to vs. 99). This reading has been much debated, some texts having “vicissime” or “vicinissime.” Petrocchi, however, for reasons completely cogent (see his long note on this, in vol. I, *Introduzione*, pp. 245-47) has accepted “vivissime,” which stresses the ex-
treme rapidity of this heaven. *eccelse*: This is the highest of the moving heavens.

101. *uniforme = uniformi*. All the parts of this ninth heaven are said to be uniform, in contrast with the other heavens, since unlike the others it contains no planet or star.

101–2. *ch’i’ non so dire . . . mi scelse*: In the other heavens the place chosen for Dante has been either the planet contained by each or the constellation. But in this ninth heaven, where there are no such bodies, Dante cannot say just where he was received into it, what place Beatrice chose for him therein.

103. *’l mio disire*: The desire to know just where he is, in this last of the material heavens.

106–8. *La natura . . . meta*: “Natura” here means specifically “the natural property or principle in virtue of which”; cf. a similar use in Par. IV, 131. But a more general sense of the word is also part of the meaning, since the whole operation of Nature in this Aristotelian-Ptolemaic universe is synonymous with the turning of the spheres, which begins with the Primum Mobile.

106–7. *che quieta il mezzo*: The natural principle holds the earth motionless at the center of this universe.

107. *tutto l’altro*: All the nine revolving heavens or spheres.

108. *meta*: A primary meaning of *meta* in Latin is “boundary” or “limit.” Thus, according to the way in which a *meta* may be regarded, it may signify either “beginning” or “end.” In this case it is being viewed as “beginning,” for here, in the Primum Mobile, is initiated the whole movement of all the spheres.

109–11. *e questo cielo . . . piove*: “La mente divina” is synonymous with the tenth, or Empyrean, heaven. See Conv. II, iii, 8-9, quoted in n. to vs. 99. The passage continues (Conv. II, iii, 10-11):

E quieto e pacifico è lo luogo di quella somma Deitade che sola [sè] compiutamente vede. Questo loco è di spi-
riti beati, secondo che la Santa Chiesa vuole, che non può dire menzogna; e Aristotile pare ciò sentire, a chi bene lo ’ntende, nel primo De Celo et Mundo. Questo è lo soprano edificio del mondo, nel quale tutto lo mondo s’inchuiide, e di fuori dal quale nulla è; ed esso non è in luogo ma formato fu solo ne la prima Mente, la quale li Greci dicono Protoñè. Questa è quella magnificenza, de la quale parlò il Salmista, quando dice a Dio: “Levata è la magnificenza tua sopra li cieli.”

But still and tranquil is the place of that supreme deity which alone completely perceiveth itself. This is the place of the blessed spirits, according as holy Church, which may not lie, will have it; and Aristotile likewise seemeth to agree hereto (to whoso rightly understandeth) in the first Of Heaven and the World. This is the sovran edifice of the world, wherein all the world is included, and outside of which there is nought; and it is not itself in space, but was formed only in the primal mind, which the Greeks call protoñè. This is that “magnificence” whereof the Psalmist spoke when he saith to God: “Thy magnificence is exalted above the heavens.”

The reader will note that as the journey approaches this end (the mind of God and the vision of God) the question of where something is arises frequently (“dove” is here used as a noun, as in Par. III, 88; XII, 30; XXII, 147). The general principle affirmed in these verses will be repeated in the cantos ahead: namely, that the location of things (each of the revolving heavens, for instance) can only be determined by reference to that which contains it, or finally by reference to the one Absolute, whether this be the all-containing Empyrean heaven (the mind of God, as above) or God as a fixed point (Par. XXVIII, 95).

111. l’amar che ’l volge: See the quotation from the Convivio in n. to vs. 99, where Dante terms this amore an “appetito” and “desiderio.” la virtù ch’ei piove: The power which it (the ninth heaven) transmits to the rest of the world. See Par. II, 112-32.
112–14. *Luce e amor* . . . *intende*: On the “light” and “love” of the Empyrean heaven, see the quotations from the *Convivio* in nn. to vss. 99 and 109-11. Grandgent sums up the matter as follows: “‘Light and love envelop it round about, as it envelops the other heavens; and that belt (the Empyrean, or Heaven of light and love) is governed only by him (God) who girds it.’ Every sphere except the ninth is surrounded by another sphere; but the ninth, the outermost sphere of the material universe, is surrounded only by the world of spirit, the Heaven of light and love, the Empyrean, which is the Mind of God. Moreover, every material heaven is directed by an order of angelic Intelligences; but in the Empyrean the only governing Intelligence is the Lord, in whom it exists.” The nine spheres are turned by intellection: cf. *Par.* VIII, 37, where the poet cites that *canzone* of the *Convivio* (*canzone* I, 1, *Conv.* II) which, in its first verse, with “‘intendendo,’” brings out this principle, a principle which derives ultimately from Aristotle’s conception. “Intende” here (vs. 114) concerns this principle, as applied to God and His tenth heaven.


115–16. *Non è suo moto* . . . *questo*: This statement relates to the principle of the *dove*, as glossed in n. to vss. 109-11. The outermost, or tenth, heaven, which is motionless, “measures” the ninth, or Primum Mobile, because it contains it; this ninth heaven “measures” the other eight, on the same principle. The essentially hierarchical nature of the principle is clear.

116. *mensurati* = *misurati*, “measured,” but also “regulated.”

117. *come diece da mezzo e da quinto*: Just as ten is determined by five (its “half”) and two (its “fifth”).

118–19. *e come il tempo* . . . *fronde*: The unit of time is the day, which is determined by the revolution of the Primum Mobile, which transmits that motion to the other spheres; the other spheres are included in the total revolution which
makes time. Some readers have judged this metaphor grotesque, mainly because of the inversion involved: time grows downward, having its roots in the Primum Mobile, where it originates, and since the movement of this ninth heaven is invisible to mortals (no heavenly body being contained in it), the “roots” of this potted plant are hidden. The reader should see the inversion in the context of others: the upside-down trees of Purgatory (Purg. XXII, 133-34; XXXII, 40-41), the inverted snowstorm of the present canto (vss. 70-71), and yet other inversions to come. Benvenuto aptly terms the ninth sphere the “radix temporis” (“root of time”).

121–23. Oh cupidigia . . . onde: The whole metaphor may remind the reader of other metaphorical waters in the poem, including the first simile (Inf. I, 22-27). See also Inf. II, 107-8, and Inf. VI, 7-21, which describes the constant downpour on the gluttons who were never satisfied and who lay face down and hence did not raise their eyes. Cf. the figure of “amor torto” as a stream (Par. XXVI, 62-63). A flood of water and incessant rain becomes the dominant feature of the figure here and leads at once into what is another principal theme of this poem at so many points, degeneration in the human race (see, e.g., Purg. XIV, near the center of the poem, where in vss. 86-87 human degeneration is seen to have its cause in cupidity of earthly things, as here now in Paradise). And this will now lead into that other familiar theme, of humanity without proper guidance, either spiritual or temporal, which is even closer to the exact center of the whole poem (Purg. XVI, 94-129).

126. bozzacchioni: “Abortions.” The word is still used in Tuscany to designate plums that are spoiled on the tree by too much rain.

127. son reperte: From the Latin repertae sunt.

129. pria fugge che le guance sian coperte: Before the child becomes a man, with a beard (cf. Purg. XXIII, 110), faith and innocence are fled.

132. per qualunque luna: At no matter what time or season.
“Luna,” however, suggests a period of fasting such as is prescribed by the Church according to a lunar calendar (Lent).

134. *loquela intera:* This matches “lingua sciolta” in vs. 131.

136–38. *Così si fa . . . sera:* This is a much-debated tercet, but the most plausible view of its meaning is the following. “He who brings morning and leaves evening” is obviously the sun. Now Circe was the daughter of the Sun and, according to the familiar story, had the power to change men into beasts. It is also possible that the “old witch” seen in the second dream of Purgatory (*Purg. XIX*, 7-24) represents Circe, since she declares that she turned Ulysses from his way, and she certainly symbolizes the sins of upper Purgatory, among which is avarice, or cupidity, the keynote of Beatrice’s present discourse. Thus Circe, daughter of the Sun, would represent worldly goods generally, viewed as tempting man and turning him from heavenly things. “Aspetto” can here bear the meaning of “sight.” On the basis of these several possible meanings in the detail, Beatrice is saying that the white skin of human nature (the innocent child) turns “black” (i.e., is corrupted by sinful desire) as soon as it looks upon worldly goods, that is, at the first sight of them (“primo aspetto”), in their power to tempt. Thus Circe is called “bella” in precisely the sense of having this power as temptress. Such an interpretation of this notoriously difficult tercet has the merit of fitting perfectly into the line of Beatrice’s discourse, from vs. 121 to the end of the canto. For the many other interpretations, see the *Enciclopedia dantesca* under the entry “Circe.” For Circe as the daughter of the Sun, cf. Virgil, *Aen. VII*, 11; Ovid, *Metam. XIV*, 346.

139. *facci = faccia.*

140–41. *pensa che . . . famiglia:* See the end of n. to vss. 121–23.

143. per la centesma ch’è là giù negletta: “Through an inaccuracy in the Julian calendar, which made the year of 365 days and 6 hours, the solar year gained over the standard year about one day in a century; in the course of something less than 90 centuries, then, January would have been pushed into the spring, if the error had not been corrected (as it was in 1582 under Gregory XIII, when the present calendar was adopted). The line means: ‘But before 9000 years have gone by,’ i.e., ‘within a little while’” (Gr). The statement thus represents a familiar form of irony, through overstatement.

144. raggeran: Other editors have followed the reading “ruggiran.” See Petrocchi, vol. I, Introduzione, pp. 247-48. The verb “raggeran” obviously brings in the heavenly bodies, with the influence which they “ray down” upon earth, and the stars can bring the needed temporal leader, through God’s providence. See Purg. XXXIII, 40-45; Inf. I, 101-5, and the corresponding notes.

145. fortuna: “Storm.”

146-48. le poppe . . . fiore: In this figure the “umana famiglia” (vs. 141) which is sviata for lack of leadership of the temporal monarch so long awaited, becomes a fleet of many, many ships (“classe,” from the Latin classis), which, as a result of the storm, will turn to sail in the opposite (and correct) direction. Then, with a shift of metaphor of the sort which the poet delights in, the final verse returns to the metaphor of vs. 126.
1. 'ncontro a: Beatrice's judgment on the present deplorable condition of the human family is adverse, hence “against.”


3. quella che 'mparadisa la mia mente: The whole verse reflects perfectly the role which Beatrice has had as guide, all the way through Paradise, and “la mia mente” keeps to the proper focus on the allegory. 'mparadisa: The verb was created by Dante; cf. “inciela,” Par. III, 97.

4. doppiero: A large torch (termed duplerius in medieval Latin) consisting of two candles.

5. che se n'alluma retro: “Who is illuminated by it from behind himself.” The reflexive construction is thus passive in meaning.

6. o in pensiero: Or even before he is expecting it.

8. li = gli. el: “It,” the truth.

9. con esso: “With it,” the glass or mirror. come nota

11. ch’io feci: “I became.”

12. onde a pigliarmi fece Amor la corda: “Corda” is used here in the sense of “noose” or “snare,” formed by a cord or small rope. (Cf. Inf. XVI, 106-8.) “Amor” represents the typical personification of the god of love, as common in the early love lyric and in Dante’s Vita nuova; and in this sense the reference goes back to the time when Dante first became enamored of Beatrice, as recounted in the Vita nuova. Here, of course, Beatrice’s eyes, as mirrors revealing something sacred and mysterious, have the function they have had since she became the guide in this journey. Cf., for example, Purg. XXXI, 118-23, where they are said to mirror the griffin in his dual nature. Vision with Beatrice is always fundamentally by reflection, in the allegory of the three lights. See C. S. Singleton (1958), p. 18 and passim.

13–39. E com’io ... s’invera: Dante now turns from gazing on the image reflected in Beatrice’s eyes to behold directly a symbolic vision that represents the relation of God to His first creatures, the angels.

13. tocchi = toccati.

14. volume: “Revolution,” i.e., heaven. Cf. Par. XXIII, 112; XXVI, 119. “Quel volume” is this very ninth heaven, the Primum Mobile.

15. quandunque nel suo giro ben s’adocchi: Apparently whenever someone gazes intently upon this heaven one sees the astounding vision which is now presented (vss. 16-39). This can only mean a gazing in absorbed contemplation, of course, and points to the basic allegory through the Paradiso, which is that of a rising in contemplation, by the “ladder” which reaches all the way to the Empyrean (Par. XXI, 29; XXII, 68). In climbing this ladder, the verse is implying, one would always come upon such a vision in the ninth heaven, acknowledged heaven of the angels.
16. *un punto*: The point represents God symbolically and most appropriately. “In Dante’s new vision God appears as a microscopic point of exceeding brightness. The center of a circle is like the Almighty in its immobility and its lack of extension. Minuteness is a token of indivisible unity; and the one Indivisible Unit is the center and source of all light” (Gr). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 3, a. 7; q. 11, aa. 2-4.


20. *locata con esso*: “Placed near it” or “placed beside it,” as the next verse makes clear.

21. *come stella con stella*: The comparisons continue to be with heavenly bodies and phenomena, all suggesting that Dante is here looking upwards to the symbolic vision disclosed to him.

22–23. Forse cotanto . . . dipigne: “Cotanto is to be connected with *distan*te in l. 25, and *cotanto distante* is correlative with *quanto appresso*: ‘as near as’ . . . ‘so far away’ . . .” (Gr). The distance suggested is “quite near,” as compared with other distances in the heavens, among stars and planets. Cf. *Par.* X, 67-69.

23. *alo*: “Halo,” from the Latin *halos.* *luce*: “Light,” the moon or a star. “Luce” is the object of the verb “cigner.” *’l = lo,* as also in vs. 24: “che ’l porta.”

25. *igne*: From the Latin *ignis,* “fire.”

26–27. *si girava . . . cigne*: The “motion that circles the world with the greatest velocity” is the Primum Mobile or ninth heaven, where Dante now finds himself. See also *Purg.* XXXIII, 90; *Par.* I, 123; XIII, 24; XXVII, 106-8.

This reference, comparing the innermost circle in the vision with the ninth heaven of the material universe, is a signal of a correspondence that will be developed now.

27. *mondo*: The universe.
28. circumcinto: “Girt round.”

31–33. Sopra seguiva . . . arto: The reader may note that only the seventh sphere in Dante’s vision receives as much as a whole tercet in this enumeration. For other pointers to the number seven as a special number, see Par. XXVI, 141-42, and the n. to Par. XXVI, 142.

31. sparto: “Widespread.”

32. ’l messo di luno: Juno’s messenger is Iris, the rainbow. Cf. Purg. XXI, 50-51; Par. XII, 12.

33. intero: That is, if the rainbow were a complete circle and not an arc. arto: “Narrow.” Cf. Inf. XIX, 42; Purg. XXVII, 132.

34–36. Così l’ottavo . . . l’uno: In the spiritual world of Dante’s vision each successive circle of fire, counting out from the innermost to the outermost, moves more slowly in proportion to its distance from the point of light.

37–38. e quello . . . pura: And the innermost of the wheels of fire, closest to the point of light, is the brightest and purest (“sincera”).

38. cui: “Cui” is the dative here, depending on “distava.” “La favilla” is the subject.

39. credo: The verb represents Dante’s continuing attempt to understand the symbolic vision before him. What he believes is, of course, the truth in this regard. però che = perciò che. di lei s’invera: “Partakes of its truth.” Vss. 107-8 of this canto can serve as a further gloss.

40. cura: Dante’s doubt and desire to know and understand.

41-42. Da quel punto . . . la natura: This clearly reflects Aristotle’s statement in the Metaphysics summarizing his speculations on the unmoved mover as final cause and supreme good. In the Latin translation of Aristotle known to Thomas Aquinas this reads (Metaphys. XII, 7, 1072b): “Ex tali igitur principio dependet caelum et natura.” (“It is
on such a principle, then, that the heavens and the natural world depend."

Aquinas, in his commentary on this point in the *Metaphysics*, states (*Exp. Metaphys. XII, lect. 7, n. 2534*):

*Ex hoc igitur principio, quod est primum movens sicut finis, dependet caelum, et quantum ad perpetuitatem substantiae suae, et quantum ad perpetuitatem sui motus; et per consequens dependet a tali principio tota natura, eo quod omnia naturalia dependent a caelo, et a tali motu eius.*

Hence it is on this principle, i.e., the first mover viewed as an end, that the heavens depend both for the eternity of their substance and the eternity of their motion. Consequently the whole of nature depends on such a principle, because all natural things depend on the heavens and on such motion as they possess.

Typically, Aristotle speaks of "the heaven" in the singular (as does Dante frequently, here and elsewhere), but the meaning is plural, meaning all the revolving heavens. Nature is synonymous with those revolving heavens. But "il cielo e tutta la natura" is not tautological, for "tutta la natura" points to the operation of the heavens and their influence on the earth at the center and on all things on earth.

It may be noted that here begins, for the reader, the sure experience of a "turning inside-out" which is the culmination, in a sense, of the other experience of "turning upside-down" (see n. to *Par. XXVII, 67-72*). The reader is led into this through Dante's puzzlement and Beatrice's explanation, and the whole matter can be most simply stated in terms of circumference and center. Up to now we have been moving with the wayfarer within a universe that has the motionless earth as the center, and the "mind of God," the Empyrean, as the circumference. But now, in this symbolic vision, the center is shown to be a point, which is God, the circumference is the order of angels which preside over the sphere of the moon—and the earth is nowhere! This experience, as it is prepared for and then finally achieved, is one of the most impressive of the whole poem.
43. *li = gli. congiunto:* “Near.”

44–45. *e sappi che . . . punto:* In the vision before the wayfarer the innermost wheel of fire is made up of the highest order of angels, the Seraphim, as we are soon to realize from Beatrice’s explanation. But the correspondence between the Seraphim and the Primum Mobile over which they preside is already emerging, for the knowledgeable reader, from the touches concerning the rapid movement and the “fiery love,” for in Aristotle’s conception, which Dante follows, the heavens move through desire for the unmoved mover.


46. *mondo:* “Universe.”


49. *mondo sensibile:* The physical (material) universe, the nine spheres with the earth at the center.


50–51. *tanto più divine . . . remote:* In the material universe each heaven, counting out from earth, is more “divine” than that immediately beneath it, a principle of hierarchy which, in the medieval conception of the universe, is always remembered.

51. *centro:* The earth.

52. *disir:* The desire to understand what is stated in vss. 55–56.

53. *miro:* From the Latin *mirus,* “marvelous.” *angelico templo:* “Angelic temple” signals the fact that this ninth heaven is indeed the “heaven of the angels” and that this, consequently, was (for the poet) the appropriate place for them to be seen as they are and for them to become the central concern and theme.
54. *che solo amore e luce ha per confine*: The wayfarer still has the material universe surrounded by the Empyrean as his "world picture," which explains his puzzlement. Cf. *Par.* II, 112.

55–56. *udir conveniemi . . . modo*: It seems best to understand "essempio" as "model," or "original," and "esemplare" as the "copy." Thus "essempio" is the symbolic vision before Dante's eyes, with God as a point at the center (a purely spiritual "model," in which the wheels of fire *seem* spheres, but are orders of angels), and "esemplare" is the physical universe bounded by the Empyrean, with the earth at its center surrounded by nine material spheres. Cf. the verb "asemplare" as used in *Vita nuova* I.

55. *conveniemi = mi conviene*.

60. *tanto, per non tentare, è fatto sodo*: Few, if any, philosophers have attempted to solve the problem of the relation of the spiritual to the material world, and this "knot," for not being tried ("per non tentare"), has become hard ("sodo").

63. *intorno da esso t'assottiglia*: "Sharpen your wits on it."

64. *Li cerchi corporai*: "The material heavens." The modern reader should bear in mind that in Dante's conception, as in that of Thomas Aquinas and many another philosopher following Aristotle, these heavens are both form and matter conjoined. *arti*: Cf. vs. 33.

65–66. *secondo il più . . . parti*: The "material heavens" contain, each in itself, a *virtù*. For this virtue and the way in which it is shed upon the earth, see *Par.* II, 112-38.

67. *Maggior bontà vuol far maggior salute*: What has just been termed a *virtù* is now called a "bontà," or goodness, viewed as a beneficent influence shed downwards. *vuol far*: "Needs must" (no act of volition is implied).

68. *maggior salute maggior corpo cape*: "Corpo" is the subject here, "salute" the object. "Cape" (present indicative of *capere*, "to contain") implies "capability" to contain. Hence
“the greater the material heaven or sphere, the greater its capacity to contain virtù or goodness,” with the proviso that follows.

69. s’elli ha le parti igualmente compiute: “If all its parts are complete,” i.e., if it is perfect in all its parts. The qualification is already pointing to the ninth heaven, the Primum Mobile, which is indeed “complete” in all its parts, being entirely “uniform” therein (see Par. XXVII, 100-101 and n. to Par. XXVII, 101).

70–71. costui che tutto quanto ... seco: The Primum Mobile where Dante and Beatrice now find themselves. The demonstrative denotes proximity.

70. rape: “Drags,” “pulls,” from the Latin rapit.

71. l’altro universo: All the other spheres contained by the Primum Mobile. seco = con sé, i.e., by its motion. corrisponde: This is the cardinal point awaited in Beatrice’s discourse, of course.

72. cerchio che più ama e che più sape: The “circle that loves most and knows most” is the innermost circle of fire, made up of myriads of sparks which represent the Seraphim, the highest order of angels, distinguished always for their most ardent love of God, but here also for their knowledge or vision of God. Cf. Conv. II, v, 9, where Dante notes that the Seraphim “veggiono più de la Prima Cagione che nulla angelica natura” (“see more of the first cause than any other angelic nature”).

73–75. per che, se tu ... tond e: Dante is invited to take the measure of the problem of correspondence in terms of virtù, applied now to the wheels of fire or orders of angels (“le sustanze che t’appaion tondè”), which means of course that the order of the Seraphim, which seems (“parvenza”) smallest in its circling, is actually the greatest.

76–78. tu vedrai ... inteligenza: The correspondence between the “esempio” (the wheels of fire in the present vision) and the “esemplare” (the wheels or material spheres
of the physical universe)—the point that has so puzzled Dante, vss. 46-56—is now evident: it is a correspondence of greater size of the material heavens to the greater love and knowledge of each of the orders of angels that presides over a given heaven.

78. *a sua intelligenza*: With respect to the order of angels from which the virtù comes to a given heaven. The singular is used for the plural.

80. *l'emisferio de l'aere*: The air that envelops the earth, our atmosphere.

80–81. *quando soffia . . . leno*: The wind-gods were often represented as heads blowing a threefold blast from the middle and the two corners of their mouths. See the description of Ristoro d’Arezzo, *Della comp.* VII, 3 (pp. 232-33). According to Brunetto Latini (*Tresor* I, cvi, 14) the direct north wind brings clouds and cold, the northwest wind brings snow and hail, while the northeast wind keeps off rain and clouds. It appears evident that Dante is here speaking of the northeast wind.

81. *leno = lene*, “mild.”

82. *per che = per cui. roffia*: The word in Tuscan usage, in Dante’s time, apparently meant the refuse of tanned hides (see E. G. Parodi, 1957, p. 283), hence the meaning here is “impurity,” mists, and the like.

83. *ne*: “In consequence.”


85. *così fec’io = così rimasi io. provide*: “Bestowed upon me.”

88. *restaro = restarono*, “had ceased.”


90. *come i cerchi sfavillaro*: “The sparks into which the fiery
rings resolve themselves represent the individual angels that compose the orders. Every angel constitutes a species by itself, but nevertheless it belongs to one of the nine orders, and never leaves it (cf. l. 91)” (Gr).

91. *incendio*: “Incendio” is the object of “seguiva.” *suo*: I.e., loro.

92. *l numero loro*: In *Conv.* II, v, 5, Dante states that the angels are “quasi innumerabili” (“as it were, innumerable”). Thomas Aquinas declares as much in *Summa theol.* I, q. cxii, a. 4, ad 2, quoting Dan. 7:10: “Millia millium ministrambant ei et decies millies centena millia assistebant ei.” (“Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him.”) Aquinas is making the point that “sic ministrantium numerus ponitur indenitatus, ad significandum excessum” (“thus the number of those who minister is indefinite, and signifies excess”).

93. *più che l doppiar de li scacchi s’inmillia*: “S’inmillia” is a verb invented by Dante; cf. “s’incinqua,” *Par.* IX, 40; “s’intrea,” *Par.* XIII, 57. Its meaning here is “reaches into the thousands.” The “doppiar de li scacchi” refers to an old story according to which the inventor of the game of chess asked of the king of Persia, as a reward, one grain of corn for the first square, two for the second, four for the third, eight for the fourth, and so on, with successive doubling through the sixty-four squares of the chessboard. The total is about eighteen and one half million, million, million. The Provençal poets Peire Vidal and Folquet de Marseille both refer to this tale.

94. *osannar*: “Hosanna sung.”

95–96. *che li tiene . . . fuoro*: That is, the fixed point holds each and every angel to its appointed place in the order of the circlings.

95. *ubi*: Latin adverb meaning “where.” For “ubi” again, see *Par.* XXIX, 12; and cf. “dove,” its Italian equivalent, which is used as a noun in *Par.* XXVII, 109 and elsewhere.
in the poem. It may be noted that *ubi* as a substantive is commonly used in scholastic Latin.

97. *dubi = dubbi*. Dante is wondering about the orders of the angels.


100. *i suoi vimi = i loro vimi*. “Vimi” (from the Latin *vimen*) are the “bonds” or respective rings to which they are bound, elsewhere termed “incendio” (vs. 91) or “cerchio d’igne” (vs. 25).

101–2. *per somigliarsi ... soblimi*: Some commentators would interpret “per somigliarsi” as meaning “because they resemble,” others take the phrase to mean “in order to resemble.” The latter meaning is certainly more in keeping with the following verse and is the correct one. The reader is to see that the Trinity itself is made up of three “circlings,” and the meaning of the “point” will open up to that meaning. Cf. *Par.* XXXIII, 116, “tre giri,” and 127, “circulazion.”

101. *ponno = possono*.

102. *e posson quanto a veder son soblimi*: Cf. I Ioan. Apos. 3:2: “Similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est.” ("We shall be like to him, for we shall see him just as he is.") *soblimi = sublimi*, “exalted.” Their possibility of resembling God is proportionate to the loftiness of the vision which they have of him. Circling is a sign of “intellection,” which is “vision,” in one of its common meanings.

103. *amori*: For the word as applied to the angels, cf. *Par.* XXIX, 18. *li = gli*, standing for the dative *loro*, as it often does in spoken Italian. It here refers to the two orders of the Seraphim and the Cherubim. *vanno = vanno*. The form was used in southern Tuscany and in Umbria. See E. G. Parodi (1957), p. 254.

105. *per che ’l primo ternaro terminonno*: “‘Therefore,’ when God created the world ‘they closed the first triad.’ The
Thrones, like the Cherubim and the Seraphim, receive God within them. . . . The line is very obscure; but the idea seems to be that the designation ‘Thrones’ is appropriate because these angels form the bottom of the highest set, the sovereign angels being (so to speak) seated upon them. According to Dionysius (De Caelesti Hierarchia, VII), the Thrones are so called because they are remote from everything earthly, are close to the highest, receive the divine advent without matter and without motion, carry God, and are fit for divine offices” (Gr). See Par. IX, 61-63; Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 108, a. 5. It will be noted, here and in the following verses, that the nine orders of angels are carefully divided into three triads. terminonno = terminarono. The tense is narrative, as Grandgent indicates above with the phrase “when God created the world.” The ending -onno is characteristic of Lucca and Pisa and is here adapted to the rhyme, even though, in De vulg. eloqu. I, xiii, 2, Dante actually condemns this as of the Pisans.

106-14. e dei saper . . . procede: As vs. 114 suggests, that which is observed in these verses interrupts the exposition of the angelic orders as such to state the nature of the blessedness of them all. Here, as elsewhere, Dante takes his stand with those philosophers and theologians (Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, and the Dominicans generally) who assigned primacy to the intellect rather than to the will (this latter position being more commonly held by the Augustinian-Franciscan school). Vss. 109-11 take a very clear and explicit stand in the matter. Cf. Par. XIV, 40-42, and passim.

107. sua veduta = loro veduta.

107-8. si profonda . . . intelletto: Cf. vs. 39.

110. atto che vede: “The act of sight.”

111. quel ch’ama: The act of loving, which belongs to the will, not to the intellect or to sight, as such. poscia seconda: “Follows after.”

113. che grazia partorisce e buona voglia: “Che” (i.e., mer-
cede) is the object of "partorisce," of which "grazia" and "buona voglia" constitute the dual subject. On the point of doctrine, cf. Par. XXIX, 61-66. "These are the 'steps': Grace begets good will, Grace and good will constitute desert, desert determines the degree of sight, and sight is the source of love" (Gr). Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 62, a. 4.


117. che notturno Ariete non dispoglia: "Nocturnal Aries" indicates autumn, because in that season (September 21-October 21) Aries is the constellation opposite the sun.

118. sberna: From the Latin exhibernare, "sings," as the song of birds in the spring. Cf. svernare. See "verna," Inf. XXXIII, 135. The cognate expression in this sense is found in early Provençal poetry: the birds celebrate the spring with their song. "Osanna" is the object of the verb.

119. melode = melodi. Or quite possibly "melode" is the plural of meloda. tree = tre. See "èe" (vs. 123), which is used in rhyme here, as it frequently is in the poem (see, for example, Inf. XXIV, 90, and Purg. XXXII, 10).

120. s'interna: "Threefolds itself." The verb is created by Dante. Cf. "s'intrea," Par. XIII, 57.

121. gerarcia = gerarchia. dee: "Divinities," orders of angels. The term has been applied to angels before (Purg. XXXII, 8). Here it should be noted that the three names of the orders are feminine.

124. tripudi: "Dances," i.e., orders of angels in their round dance. "Ludi," in rhyme (vs. 126), bears a similar suggestion of sport, diversion, play.

126. l'ultimo è tutto d'Angelici ludi: Since this verse concludes the exposition of the angelic orders, the reader might review the whole through the following note by Grandgent: "The nine rings represent the heavenly Intelligences, which
fall into three hierarchies, each composed of three orders: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; Dominations, Virtues, Powers; Principalities, Archangels, Angels. They preside respectively over: the Primum Mobile, the Starry Heaven, the sphere of Saturn; the spheres of Jupiter, Mars, the sun; the spheres of Venus, Mercury, the moon. All these names of angels occur in one place or another in the Bible, but with no suggestion of system; five of them are mentioned by St. Paul (Ephesians i, 21, and Colossians i, 16), who had visited Paradise. St. Ambrose, Apologia Prophetae David, V, 20, enumerates nine angelic choirs; but for an exact designation and classification of the orders—with a lengthy but confused account of their functions—we must look to a fifth or sixth century Neoplatonic Greek treatise, De Caelesti Hierarchia, sometimes called the Pseudo-Dionysius. . . . The matter is discussed by St. Thomas in the Summa Theologiae, Prima, Qu. cviii, and by Dante in the Convivio, II, [v]. The present canto corrects an error of arrangement made by the author (and others) in his previous description—a shifting of Thrones, Dominations, Powers, and Principalities. In this chapter of the Convivio, 7-11, Dante informs us that the three hierarchies contemplate respectively the three persons of the Trinity—Power, Wisdom, and Love, embodied in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And inasmuch as each person can be regarded in three ways—in itself, and in its relation to each of the other two—every hierarchy is divided into three orders. St. Thomas ascribes to the nine orders the following functions: Seraphim, love; Cherubim, sight; Thrones, taking and holding; Dominations, command; Virtues, execution; Powers, judgment; Principalities, direction of nations; Archangels, direction of leaders; Angels, direction of individuals.” See the Enciclopedia dantesca, under the entry “angelo.”

127-29. Questi ordini . . . tirano: The principle of hierarchy is now reaffirmed in terms of operation, here the attraction upwards toward God.

127. di sù tutti s'ammirano: All the angels of a given order gaze upon God, of course, both in the symbolic representa-
tion of the wheels of fire and in actuality, but the suggestion here is that each order looks with ecstasy or wonder ("s’ammirano") on the next higher order and each in turn sheds its knowledge and influence on the next lower order, so that the whole hierarchical chain, so to speak, pulls toward God, higher pulling lower (exceptions must be granted in the case of the highest order, the Seraphim, who gaze directly on God, and in that of the lowest, the Angels, who have no order below them which they “pull” upwards).

128. vincon: “Prevail.”

130. Dionisio: Dionysius the Areopagite, an eminent Athenian, whose conversion to Christianity by the preaching of Paul is mentioned in Actus 17:34. He is said to have been the first bishop of Athens and to have been martyred in that city about A.D. 95. There is a tradition that he visited Paris, and an attempt has been made to identify him with St. Denis (third century), the patron saint of France. In the Middle Ages he was universally credited with the authorship of works on divine names, on mystic theology, on ecclesiastical hierarchy, and on celestial hierarchy, all of which now bear the name Pseudo-Dionysius and are admitted to be the productions of a Neoplatonist or of Platonists of the fifth or sixth century. The work on celestial hierarchy, De caelesti hierarchia, was translated into Latin in the ninth century by Johannes Scotus Erigena and became the medieval textbook of angelic lore. Dante mentions Dionysius in Par. X, 116-17.

133. Ma Gregorio da lui poi si divide: Gregory, in Moral. XXXII, xiii, 48, arranges the angelic orders thus: Seraphim, Cherubim, Powers; Principalities, Virtues, Dominations; Thrones, Archangels, Angels. This sequence is followed by Brunetto Latini in the Tresor (I, xii, 5) and by Dante in Conv. II, v, 6. Elsewhere Gregory has a still different arrangement. See G. Busnelli (1911b); P. Toynbee (1911).

134–35. sì tosto . . . rise: The suggestion is that Gregory, in passing through the heavens to his eternal reward in the Empyrean, was shown the present symbolic truth concerning the
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hierarchical ordering of the angels. Seeing the truth, he laughed at himself and his mistake, then and there!

137. mortale: Dionysius.

138. chi 'l vide qua sù: St. Paul, who was "caught up to the third heaven" (II Cor. 12:2-4). Cf. Inf. II, 28. gliel discoperse: In fact, in De caelesti hierarchia (VI) Dionysius affirms that he learned this truth directly from Paul.
1–6. *Quando ambedue . . . dilibra:* At the vernal equinox, when, at dawn and at sunset, the sun and the moon are opposite each other on the horizon, one rising and the other setting.

1. *ambedue li figli di Latona:* “Latona’s children” are Apollo and Diana, the Sun and the Moon.

2. *coperti del Montone e de la Libra:* The sun is in Aries (the Ram, “Montone”), the moon is in Libra (the Scales).

3. *fanno de l’orizzonte insieme zona:* “The two luminaries ‘belt themselves with the horizon’: the horizon line bisects them both” (Gr).

4–6. *quant’è dal punto . . . dilibra:* “As long as is the time between the moment when the horizon runs through the middle of the moon and the sun and the moment when the horizon no longer touches either body, i.e., about a minute.”

See M. Porena (1930), pp. 201-6. “The sun and the moon, exactly balanced for an instant on opposite sides of the horizon, suggest to the poet the figure of a gigantic pair of scales, suspended from the zenith. And just as, in a balance, one scale immediately goes down, and the other up, so one of the
two luminaries rises above the horizon and the other sinks below it” (Gr).

4. cenìt = zenit.


6. si dilibra: “Is unbalanced.”

7. tanto: “’So long’: correlative with the quanto of l. 4. The simile of the sun and moon in balance is used to convey the idea of one instant of intermediate stillness and suspense—the silence that intervenes between Beatrice’s speech at the end of the last canto and her discourse that begins in l. 10” (Gr). The simile also serves to open this canto with a sweeping universal kind of view, which “uplifts” and introduces the amplitude of the act of creation itself, which Beatrice is now to present.

8–9. Beatrice, riguardando . . . vinto: Thus the stage is set for Beatrice’s exalted discourse on the act of creation, as she gazes intently on the point which, symbolically, is God. This is the second of two cantos dealing essentially with angelology. For a reader unfamiliar with the standard procedure of a summa of theology, it should perhaps be pointed out that the poem is proceeding thematically in the opposite direction to that of a summa: the journey moves ever upwards, toward God, and here comes to a treatise on angels, in these two cantos so near the end, whereas a summa begins with God, in its first section of questions, and then passes to the creation or procession of creatures from God (cf. Summa theol. I of Thomas Aquinas as it passes from question 43 to question 44), beginning with the highest creatures, which are the angels.

10. dico: “Declare.”

12. là ‘ve s’appunta ogne ubi e ogne quando: Beatrice is looking fixedly at the point which is God, in the symbolic vision, but her declaration means that she is actually seeing reflected in the mind of God (not in this heaven but in the Em-
Dante's thought and wish, as so often she and the other blessed have done. *s'appunta:* "Are centered." The phrase "ogne *ubi* e ogne *quando*" is the dual subject of the verb. Here the vision which has God as center rather than circumference is fully affirmed. All space and all time depend on the one Absolute. *ogne ubi e ogne quando:* "*Ubi*" (the Latin adverb) is here used as a noun. (On the similar use of the Italian adverb *dove,* see n. to *Par.* XXVIII, 95.) For *ubi,* cf. *Par.* XXVIII, 95, and for *quando* (also Latin here), see *Par.* XXI, 46, where it is the identical, but Italian, form.

13-18. *Non per aver . . . amore:* These two tercets present the act of creation (a creation *ex nihilo,* be it remembered) as motivated in God not by any desire to add to His own goodness (which is inconceivable, since He is *all* goodness), but by a desire to have other beings, creatures, who might share in that goodness—consequently God's creation is essentially an overflowing or opening-up of His love. This is the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in *Summa contra Gentiles* II, 46, which extends to the creation of intelligent creatures: "Ad productionem creaturarum nihil aliud movet Deum nisi sua bonitas, quam rebus aliis communicare voluit secundum modum assimilationis ad ipsum." ("The only thing that moves God to produce creatures is His own goodness, which He wished to communicate to other things by likening them to Himself.") Aquinas continues:

*Similitudo autem unius invenitur in altero dupliciter:*
*uno modo quantum ad esse naturae, sicut similitudo caloris ignis est in re calefacta per ignem; alio modo secundum cognitioinem, sicut similitudo ignis est in visu vel tactu. Ad hoc igitur quod similitudo Dei perfecte esset in rebus modis possibilibus, oportuit quod divina bonitas rebus per similitudinem communicaretur, non solum in essendo, sed etiam in cognosendo. Cognoscere autem divinam bonitatem solus intellectus potest. Oportuit igitur esse creaturas intellectuales.*

Now, the likeness of one thing is found in another thing in two ways: first, as regards natural being—the likeness
of heat produced by fire is in the thing heated by fire; second, cognitively, as the likeness of fire is in sight or touch. Hence, that the likeness of God might exist in things perfectly, in the ways possible, it was necessary that the divine goodness be communicated to things by likeness not only in existing, but also in knowing. But only an intellect is capable of knowing the divine goodness. Accordingly, it was necessary that there should be intellectual creatures.

Cf. Par. VII, 64-66.

14. splendore: “Dante is careful in the use of splendor for reflected, not direct light. (Epist. ad Can Grand., [XIII, 53-65] and Conv. iii. 14 [3-1]) Therefore we must not understand this passage as declaring the manifestation of his own glory to be God’s motive in creation, but rather the conferring of conscious being, the sense of existence, upon his creatures. ‘In order that his creatures (i.e. his reflected glory, his splendor) might be able to say: I am’” (TC).

15. Subsistio: Latin, meaning “I am.”


17. comprendere: The infinitive is used as a noun and signifies both spatial and intellectual comprehension. i = gli.

18. s’aperse: The verb suggests the opening of a flower. Cf. Par. XXII, 56, and Conv. IV, xxvii, 4: “E convieni aprire l’uomo quasi com’una rosa che più chiusa stare non puote.” (“And man should open out like a rose that can no longer keep closed.”)

19–21. Né prima . . . acque: Time has reference only to created things; for God, all time is present, and “before” and “after” have no significance. Therefore we may not say that God was inactive “before” the act of creation. See Augustine, Conf. XI, 13:

At si cuiusquam volatilis sensus vagatur per imagines retro temporum, et te, deum omnipotentem et omni-
creantem et omnitenentem, caeli et terrae artificem, ab opere tanto, antequam id faceres, per innumerabilia saecula cessasse miratur, evigilet atque adtendat, quia falsa miratur. nam unde poterant innumerabilia saecula praeterire, quae ipse non feceras, cum sis omnium saeculorum auctor et conditor? . . . Cum ergo sis operator omnium temporum, si fuit aliquod tempus, antequam faceres caelum et terram, cur dicitur, quod ab opere cessabas? id ipsum enim tempus tu feceras, nec praeterire potuerunt tempora, antequam faceres tempora. si autem ante caelum et terram nullum erat tempus, cur quaeritur, quid tunc faciebas? non enim erat tunc, ubi non erat tempus.

. . . Tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient. anni tui nec eunt nec veniunt: isti autem nostri eunt et veniunt, ut omnes veniant. anni tui omnes simul stant, quoniam stant, nec euntes a venientibus excluduntur, quia non transeunt: isti autem nostri omnes erunt, cum omnes non erunt. anni tui dies unus, et dies tuus non cotidie, sed hodie, quia hodiernus tuus non cedit crastino; neque enim succedit hesterno. hodiernus tuus aeternitas: ideo coaeternum genuisti, cui dixisti: ego hodie genui te. omnia tempora tu fecisti et ante omnia tempora tu es, nec aliquo tempore non erat tempus.

If any giddy brain now wildly roves over the images of fore-past times, and wonders with himself, that thou the God Omnipotent, All-creator and All-supporting, Maker of heaven and earth, didst for innumerable ages forbear to set upon such a work, before thou wouldst make it: let him wake himself and consider well; since he wonders at mere false conceits. For how could innumerable ages pass over, which thyself hadst not made; thou being the author and creator of all ages? . . . Seeing therefore thou art the Creator of all times; if any time had passed before thou madest heaven and earth, why then is it said, that thou didst forbear to work? For that very time hadst thou made: nor could there any times pass over, before thou hadst made times. But if
before heaven and earth there were no time, why is it then demanded, what thou didst? For there was no then, whenas there was no time.

... Whereas thou art still the same, and thy years shall not fail. Thy years neither go nor come; whereas these years of ours do both go and come, that in their order they may all come. Thy years stand all at once, because they stand: nor are those that go thrust out by those that come, for they pass not away; but these years of thine shall all be ours, when all time shall cease to be. Thy years are one day; and thy day is not every day, but to-day: seeing, thy to-day gives not place unto to-morrow, for neither comes it in place of yesterday. Thy to-day is eternity: therefore didst thou beget him co-eternal to thyself, unto whom thou saidst: This day have I be­gotten thee. Thou hast made all times; and before all times thou art: nor in any time was time not.

See also Conf. VII, 15.

21. lo discorrer di Dio sovra quest' acque: “The moving of God upon these waters” means the act of creation. See Gen. 1:2: “Et Spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas.” (“And the spirit of God was stirring above the waters.”) The figure is particularly appropriate here, because the ninth sphere was often called the “aqueous heaven.” See B. Nardi (1944), pp. 307-13.

22. Forma e materia, congiunte e purette: The poet is speaking of pure form (i.e., spirit without matter: the angels), pure matter (i.e., matter without spirit: the stuff of which the earth was made), and form and matter conjoined (i.e., the heavens). Aristotle, in De anima II, 2, 414a, distinguishes between form, matter, and a compound of the two. See E. G. Parodi (1918b), p. 131. Cf. Par. VII, 64-72; 130-38. purette: “Unmixed,” “absolutely pure.”

23. usciro ad esser che non avia fallo: This threefold creation “issued forth” into an existence that was faultless, perfect. avia = aveva.
24. *come d’arco tricordo tre saette*: Not only is the creation by a triune God threefold, bearing the imprint of its own number upon itself, but the figure of the three-stringed bow and three arrows expresses aim, intention in itself. Cf. *Par.* I, 119; IV, 60; VIII, 103.

25–27. *E come in vetro . . . intervallo*: "It was a received point in the Aristotelian physics that light occupies no time in diffusing itself through a translucent medium or substance. Beatrice, then, declares that the creation of the Angels, of the *Prima Materia*, of the physical heavens (and also time and space) was instantaneous. The successional creation recorded in *Genesis* was a subsequent process of evolution which took place in time, and through the instrumentality of the Angels" (TC).


29. *raggiò*: "Shot forth."

31–32. *Concreato fu ordine . . . sustanze*: "Concreato" may well bear a technical philosophical meaning in this context, as may be seen from the following passage in *Summa theol.* I, q. 45, a. 4, resp., which begins: "Creari est quoddam fieri." ("To be created is, in a manner, to be made.") Aquinas continues:

Fieri autem ordinatur ad esse rei. Unde illis proprie convenit fieri et creari quibus convenit esse; quod quidem convenit proprie subsistentibus, sive sint simplicia, sicut substantiae separatae, sive sint composita, sicut substantiae materiales. Illi enim proprie convenit esse quod habet esse, et est subsistens in suo esse. Formae autem, et accidentia et alia huiusmodi non dicuntur entia quasi ipsa sint, sed quia eis aliquid est; ut albedo ea ratione dicitur ens, quia ea (1) subiectum est album. Unde, secundum Philosophum (7 Metaphys., text. 2), accidentia et formae, et huiusmodi quae non subsistunt, magis sunt coexistentia quam entia; ita magis debent
dici concreata quam creata; proprie vero creata sunt subsistentia.

Now, to be made is directed to the being of a thing. Hence to be made and to be created properly belong to whatever being belongs to; which, indeed, belongs properly to subsisting things, whether they are simple things, as in the case of separate substances, or composite, as in the case of material substances. For being belongs to that which has being—that is, to what subsists in its own being. But forms and accidents and the like are called beings, not as if they themselves were, but because something is by them; as whiteness is called a being, forasmuch as its subject is white by it. Hence, according to the Philosopher (Metaph. vii, text. 2) accident is more properly said to be of a being than a being. Therefore, as accidents and forms and the like non-subsisting things are to be said to co-exist rather than to exist, so they ought to be called rather concreated than created things; whereas, properly speaking, created things are subsisting beings.

Regarding Aquinas' reference to Aristotle, see Metaph. VII, 1, 1028a.

Seen in this light, “ordine” and “costrutto” do not belong to being, the existence of the angels, but co-exist with those creatures.

31. costrutto: There is some doubt among commentators as to the syntax of “costrutto,” but the above view would strongly suggest that it is a noun along with the noun “ordine.”

32. e quelle furon cima: The verb “furon” is narrative in meaning here: the substances, i.e., the angels, “became” the summit.

33. puro atto: “The three kinds of beings above named were arranged in due order. At the top (cima) were ‘those in which pure activity was produced,’ i.e., the angels, which, having no body, are pure intelligence, or ‘form’; and form,
or character, begins to operate as soon as it exists, and continues to operate completely and incessantly. The angels have no powers that are not in constant and full activity” (Gr). See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 50, a. 2. “Act or actuality is opposed to potentiality. Man’s intellect is ‘possible’ or ‘potential,’ that is to say, we know potentially much that we do not know actually, and (in another but allied sense) are potentially thinking and feeling many things that we are not actually thinking and feeling; whereas the whole potentialities of an angel’s existence are continuously actualised” (TC).

34. pura potenza tenne la parte ima: “Pure potentiality” is characteristic of brute matter (or materia prima), which is capable of no independent activity. ima: From the Latin imus, “lowest.”

35. mezzo: The material heavens. strinse: “Bound”; the subject is “vime” in the following verse.

36. vime: “Tie.” Cf. Par. XXVIII, 100. che già mai non si divima: Spirit and matter are always united in the spheres. divima: “It is untied.” The verb is probably Dante’s invention.

37–39. Ieronimo vi scrisse . . . fatto: A curious Latinizing construction: “Jerome wrote you down a long lapse of ages from the creation of the angels.” Jerome’s opinion—that the angels existed countless ages before the creation of the world—is recorded by Thomas Aquinas in Summa theol. I, q. 61, a. 3, together with the contrary view, which was generally held by the Greek fathers, as Aquinas’ reference to Gregory of Nazianzus suggests. Article 3 opens with the following “objection”:

Videtur quod Angeli fuerint creati ante mundum corporum. Dicit enim Hieronymus (super epistolam ad Titum, cap. 1 . . . Sex millia nondum nostri temporis complentur annorum; et quanta tempora, quantasque saeculorum originesuisse arbitrandum est, in quibus Angeli, Throni, Dominationes, ceterique ordines Deo
servierunt! Damascenus etiam dicit (in 2 lib. orthodox. Fidei, cap. 3, circa fin.): *Quidam dicunt quod ante omnem creationem geniti sunt Angeli, ut theologus dicit Gregorius. Et primum quidem Deus excogitavit angelicas virtutes et coelestes; et excogitatio opus eius fuit.*

It would seem that the angels were created before the corporeal world. For Jerome says (*In Ep. ad Tit.* i. 2): *Six thousand years of our time have not yet elapsed; yet how shall we measure the time, how shall we count the ages, in which the Angels, Thrones, Dominations, and the other orders served God?* Damascene also says (*De Fid. Orth.* ii): *Some say that the angels were begotten before all creation; as Gregory the Theologian declares, He first of all devised the angelic and heavenly powers, and the devising was the making thereof.*

But in the response Aquinas allows the view expressed by Jerome:

*Circa hoc invenitur duplex sanctorum doctorum sententia. Illa tamen probabilior videtur, quod Angeli simul cum creatura corporea sunt creati.*

*Angeli enim sunt quaedam pars universi; non enim constituant per se unum universum; sed tam ipsi quam creatura corporea, in constitutionem unius universi conveniunt. Quod appareat ex ordine unius creaturae ad aliam. Ordo enim rerum ad invicem est bonum universi. Nulla autem pars perfecta est a suo toto separata. Non est igitur probabile quod Deus, *cuius perfecta sunt opera*, ut dicitur Deut. 32, 4, creaturam angelicam seorsum ante alias creaturas creaverit.*

*Quamvis contrarium non sit reputandum erroneum, praecipue propter sententiam Gregorii Nazianzeni, cuius *tanta est in doctrina christiana auctoritas, ut nullus unquam eius dictis calumniam inferre praesumpserit, sicut nec Athanasii documentis, ut Hieronymus dicit.*

There is a twofold opinion on this point to be found in the writings of the Fathers. The more probable one holds that the angels were created at the same time as corporeal creatures. For the angels are part of the uni-
verse: they do not constitute a universe of themselves; but both they and corporeal natures unite in constituting one universe. This stands in evidence from the relationship of creature to creature; because the mutual relationship of creatures makes up the good of the universe. But no part is perfect if separate from the whole. Consequently it is improbable that God, Whose works are perfect, as it is said Deut. xxxii. 4, should have created the angelic creature before other creatures. At the same time the contrary is not to be deemed erroneous; especially on account of the opinion of Gregory Nazianzen, whose authority in Christian doctrine is of such weight that no one has ever raised objection to his teaching, as is also the case with the doctrine of Athanasius, as Jerome says.

Clearly, Dante is not so tolerant of Jerome’s view.

39. l’altro mondo: “The rest of the universe.”

40-41. ma questo vero . . . Spirito Santo: “This truth” refers to what is stated in vss. 22-24 and 28-30. Thus Dante finds firm scriptural support for the one view he so positively affirms. Cf. Ecclus. 18:1: “Qui vivit in aeternum creavit omnia simul.” (“He who lives throughout eternity created all things at the same time.”) It was also argued from Gen. 1:1 that there had been no long previous creation: “In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram.” (“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”) Thomas Aquinas, in Summa theol. I, q. 61, a. 3, ad 3, does make reference indeed to the opening words of Genesis as the text which supports the one view of simultaneous creation.

41. li scrittor de lo Spirito Santo: In De mon. III, iv, 11, Dante writes: “Nam quanquam scribe divini eloquii multis sint, unicus tamen dictator est Deus, qui beneplacitum suum nobis per multorum calamos explicare dignatus est.” (“For though the scribes of the divine utterance be many, one is he who dictates to them, even God, who has deigned to set forth his will to us by the pens of many writers.”)
42. *agguati*: “Agguati” is formed on the verb *guatare* and means “watch,” “consider.”

43-45. *e anche la ragione . . . cotanto*: Beatrice here passes from revelation to reason, as scholastic theology so often does. One might say that, typically, she passes to the authority of Aristotle. See the Busnelli-Vandelli edition of the *Convivio*, vol. I, p. 124, col. 1, where the quotation “si aliquae substantiae essent non moventes, essent otiosae” (“if certain substances were not movers, they would be idle”) from Aristotle is given with reference to Averroës’ commentary on the *Metaphysics*, but where it is pointed out that Albertus Magnus attributes these words to Plato.

To be sure, Aristotle and the Arab commentators on him conceive of all the Intelligences as being “movers,” whereas Christian thought came to conceive of the angels as of two kinds, the “contemplatives” and the “movers.” Dante’s own opinion as expressed in the *Convivio* (II, iv, 9-13), where the poet argues precisely this point, may be cited here:

Nessuno dubita, nè filosofo nè gentile nè giudeo nè cristiano nè alcuna setta, ch’elle non siano piene di tutta beatitudine, o tutte o la maggior parte, e che quelle beate non siano in perfettissimo stato. Onde, con ciò sia cosa che quella che è qui l’uma natura non pur una beatitudine abbia, ma due, sì com’è quella de la vita civile, e quella de la contemplativa, inrazionale sarebbe se noi vedemo quelle avere la beatitudine de la vita attiva, cioè civile, nel governare del mondo, e non avessero quella de la contemplativa, la quale è più eccellente e più divina. E con ciò sia cosa che quella che ha la beatitudine del governare non possa l’altra avere, perchè lo ’ntelletto loro è uno e perpetuo, conviene essere altre fuori di questo ministerio che solamente vivano speculando. E perché questa vita è più divina, e quanto la cosa è più divina è più di Dio simigliante, manifesto è che questa vita è da Dio più amata: e se ella è più amata, più le è la sua beatanza stata larga: e se più l’è stata larga, più viventi le ha dato che a l’altrui. Per che si con-
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chiude che troppo maggior numero sia quello di quelle creature che li effetti non dimostrano. E non è contra quello che par dire Aristotile nel decimo de l'Etica, che a le sustanze separate convegna pure la speculativa vita. Come pure la speculativa convegna loro, pure a la speculazione di certe segue la circulazione del cielo, che è del mondo governo; lo quale è quasi una ordinata civilitade, intesa ne la speculazione de li motori.

No one—neither philosopher, nor Gentile, nor Jew, nor Christian, nor any sect—doubts that either all of them, or the greater part, are full of all blessedness, or doubts that these blessed ones are in the most perfect state. And inasmuch as human nature, as it here exists, hath not only one blessedness but two, to wit that of the civil life and that of the contemplative life, it were irrational did we perceive those others to have the blessedness of the active that is the civil life, in guiding the world, and not that of the contemplative life, which is more excellent and more divine. And inasmuch as the one that hath the blessedness of guiding may not have the other, because their intellect is one and continuous, there must needs be others exempt from this ministry whose life consists only in speculation. And because this life is the more divine, and because in proportion as a thing is more divine it is more like to God, it is manifest that this life is more loved by God; and if it be more loved, its share of blessedness hath been more ample; and if it be more ample, he hath assigned more living beings to it than to the other. Wherefore we conclude that the number of these creatures is very far in excess of what the effects reveal. And this is not counter to what Aristotle seems to say in the tenth of the Ethics, to wit that the speculative life alone fits with the sejunct substances, for if we allow that the speculative life alone fits with them, yet upon the speculation of certain of these followeth the circulation of the heavens, which is the guiding of the world; which world is a kind of ordered civility perceived in the speculation of its movers.
The whole argument rests on the basic principle that everything is created for a purpose (the movers for moving) and that the fulfillment of that purpose is the perfection of the thing.

46. *questi amori:* Cf. vs. 18.

49–51. *Né giugneriesi . . . alimenti:* On this question (standard in a *summa* of theology), see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 63, a. 6, which bears the heading: “Utrum aliqua mora fuerit inter creationem, et lapsum Angeli” (“Whether there was any interval between the creation and the fall of the angel”). The response is:

*Circa hoc est duplex opinio.*

*Sed probabilior et sanctorum dictis magis consonans est quod statim post primum instans suae creationis diabolus peccaverit. Et hoc ncesses est dicere, si ponatur quod in primo instanti suae creationis in actum liberi arbitrii proruperit, et cum gratia fuerit creatus, ut supra diximus, quaest. 62, art. 3. Cum enim Angeli per unum actum meritorium ad beatitudinem perveniant, ut supra dictum est, quaest. 62, art. 5, si diabolus in primo instanti, in gratia creatus, meruit, statim post primum instans beatitudinem accepisset, nisi statim impedimentum praestitisset peccando.

Si vero ponatur quod Angelus in gratia creatus non fuerit, vel quod in primo instanti actum liberi arbitrii non potuerit habere, nihil prohibet aliquam moram fuisse inter creationem et lapsum.

There is a twofold opinion on this point. But the more probable one, which is also more in harmony with the teachings of the Saints, is that the devil sinned at once after the first instant of his creation. This must be maintained if it be held that he elicited an act of free-will in the first instant of his creation, and that he was created in grace; as we have said (q. 62, a. 3). For since the angels attain beatitude by one meritorious act, as was said above (q. 62, a. 5), if the devil, created in grace, merited in the first instant, he would at once have re-
ceived beatitude after that first instant, if he had not placed an impediment by sinning.

If, however, it be contended that the angel was not created in grace, or that he could not elicit an act of free-will in the first instant, then there is nothing to prevent some interval being interposed between his creation and fall.

Dante expresses his opinion in the *Convivio* (II, v, 12), where what becomes in the present passage “the count to less than twenty” is expressed simply by “tosto”: “Dico che di tutti questi ordini si perderono alquanti tosto che furono creati, forse in numero de la decima parte.” (“I say that out of all these orders some certain were lost as soon as they were created, I take it to the number of a tenth part.”)

49. giugneriesi = si giungerebbe.

51. turbò il suggetto d’i vostri alimenti: “Alimenti” is used for *elementi* (see Petrocchi, vol. I, *Introduzione*, p. 231). The entire meaning of the phrase has been the subject of much discussion, with the specific meaning of “suggetto” as the main problem. It is possible to understand that “suggetto” means the *substrate* of the elements, the *prima materia*, at first formless, “the elaboration of the elements being the subsequent work of the Angels and the heavens” (*TC*). (Cf. *Par.* VII, 130-38.) However, it is not possible to overlook the account of Satan’s fall to earth and his place at the center of the earth as clearly set forth in *Inf.* XXXIV, especially vss. 118-26, and (though there is evidently an inconsistency here between two views as expressed in the poem) to understand “il suggetto d’i vostri alimenti” to mean “that one of your elements that underlies the rest,” i.e., earth. The verb “turbò” seems to point back to the account of Satan’s fall, since the earth actually shrank away from him (*Inf.* XXXIV, 122-26).

52. *L’altra*: I.e., *parte*, meaning the good angels of vss. 58-60. *quest’arte*: “This art” is the angels’ circling of the point, a circling which here symbolically represents intellection that is both contemplation and action, since by intelle-
lection the angels turn the heavens. See Dante’s *canzone* as
cited by Charles Martel in *Par.* VIII, 37, and the correspond-
ing note. “Arte,” in itself, seems to stress the turning of the
heavens more than it does contemplation, but “circuir” (vs.
54) must include both contemplation and moving.

55-57. *Principio del cader . . . costretto*: *Inf.* XXXIV pro-
vides the best gloss on these verses, but *Par.* XIX, 46-48,
should also be remembered: Satan was the “first proud crea-
ture,” “the highest of all creatures,” but “for not waiting on
the light he fell unripe” (see n. to *Par.* XIX, 48). “Prin-
cipio” here may well have not only a temporal sense (“be-
inning”), but also a causal sense, for Satan induced the
other bad angels to become bad. See Thomas Aquinas, *Sum-
ma theol.* I, q. 63, a. 8, resp.:

> Peccatum primi Angeli fuit aliis causa peccandi,
non quidem cogens, sed quadam quasi exhortatione inducens.

> Cuius signum ex hoc apparat quod omnes daemones
illi supremo subduntur, ut manifeste apparat per illud
quod dicit Dominus Matth. 25, 41: *Ite, maledicti, in
ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius.*
Habet enim hoc ordo divinae iustitiae, ut cuius sugges-
tioni aliquis consentit in culpa, eius potestati subjatur
in poena, secundum illud 2 Pet. 2, 19: *A quo quis su-
peratus est, huic servus addictus est.*

The sin of the highest angel was the cause of the others
sinning; not as compelling them, but as inducing them
by a kind of exhortation. A token thereof appears in
this, that all the demons are subjects of that highest one;
as is evident from our Lord’s words: *Go* (Vulg., *Depart
from Me*), *you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was
prepared for the devil and his angels* (Matth. xxv. 41).
For the order of Divine justice exacts that whosoever
consents to another’s evil suggestion, shall be subjected
to him in his punishment; according to (2 Pet. ii. 19):
*By whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the
slave.*

The essence of Satan’s pride (“not waiting for the light”) in-
volves a basic tenet in the matter which, on its simplest statement, is as follows: all the angels were first given a “natural” light, consistent with their nature, but God was to give them, in a second instant, that light by which He sees Himself and that light by which—and only by which—a creature may see God in direct vision (cf. *Par. XXX*, 100-101 and n. to *Par. XXX*, 100-102) which is known in theology as the light of glory. Satan and the others who followed his example did not wait for God’s bestowal of this light, but presumed to attain to it by their own natural powers. In this way, Satan aspired to be “similis altissimo,” as it is stated in Isa. 14:14: “Similis ero Altissimo.” (“I will be like the most High.”) He did not recognize his creaturely dependence on God, as did the good angels (vss. 58-60). On the light of glory, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 20-23.

58–60. *Quelli che vedi . . . presti:* “Modesti” stresses the opposite of pride, namely humility, the recognition of the creature’s dependence on the Creator and His goodness, i.e., His great gift of intellection (“tanto intender”), while “presti” points to their natural endowment for intellection, which they had in their first moment of creation (see preceding note).

59. *riconoscer:* For this use of the verb, cf. *Par. XXII*, 113; XXXI, 84.

61–63. *per che le viste . . . volontate:* The angels who waited for the bestowal of the higher light, the light of glory, received that light (here termed “grazia illuminante”). Their merit (“merto”) was precisely that humility and their waiting upon the Lord to bestow that higher light. With that bestowal they were forever confirmed in this highest grace, and accordingly they are now bound thereby to the good and to do the good. They have fullness of vision and of will, and they cannot sin. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 62, a. 8, resp.:

Angeli beati peccare non possunt.

Cuius ratio est quia eorum beatitudo in hoc consistit quod per essentiam Deum vident. Essentia autem Dei
est ipsa essentia bonitatis. Unde hoc modo se habet Angelus videns Deum ad ipsum, sicut se habet quicumque non videns Deum ad communem rationem boni. Impossibile est autem quod aliquis quidquam velit vel operetur, nisi attendens ad bonum, vel quod velit divertere a bono, inquantum huiusmodi. Angelus igitur beatus non potest velle vel agere, nisi attendens ad Deum; sic autem volens vel agens non potest peccare. Unde Angelus beatus nullo modo peccare potest.

The beatified angels cannot sin. The reason for this is, because their beatitude consists in seeing God through His essence. Now, God’s essence is the very essence of goodness. Consequently the angel beholding God is disposed towards God in the same way as anyone else not seeing God is to the common form of goodness. Now it is impossible for any man either to will or to do anything except aiming at what is good; or for him to wish to turn away from good precisely as such. Therefore the beatified angel can neither will nor act, except as aiming towards God. Now whoever wills or acts in this manner cannot sin. Consequently the beatified angel cannot sin.

65–66. che ricever . . . aperto: The degree of openness depends on love (caritas) which is a result of foreordained disposition. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 62, a. 5, resp.:

Angelus post primum actum charitatis, quo beatitudinem meruit, statim beatus fuit.

Cuius ratio est quia gratia perficit naturam secundum modum naturae, sicut et omnis perfectio recipitur in perfectibili secundum modum eius. Est autem hoc proprium naturae angelicae quod naturalem perfectionem non per discursum acquirat, sed statim per naturam habeat, sicut supra ostensum est, art. 1 huius qu., et qu. 58, art. 3 et 4. Sicut autem ex sua natura Angelus habet ordinem ad perfectionem naturalem, ita ex merito habet ordinem ad gloriariam; et ita statim post meritum in Angelus fuit beatitudo consecuta. Meritum autem beatitudinis non solum in Angelo, sed etiam in homine esse
potest per unicum actum: quia quolibet actu charitate informato homo beatitudinem meretur. Unde relinquitur quod statim post unum actum charitate informatum Angelus beatus fuit.

The angel was beatified instantly after the first act of charity, whereby he merited beatitude. The reason whereof is because grace perfects nature according to the manner of the nature; as every perfection is received in the subject capable of perfection, according to its mode. Now it is proper to the angelic nature to receive its natural perfection not by passing from one stage to another; but to have it at once naturally, as was shown above (a. 1; q. 58, aa. 3, 4). But as the angel is of his nature inclined to natural perfection, so is he by merit inclined to glory. Hence instantly after merit the angel secured beatitude. Now the merit of beatitude in angel and man alike can be from merely one act; because man merits beatitude by every act informed by charity. Hence it remains that an angel was beatified straightway after one act of charity.


69. aiutorio: From the Latin adiutorium, a word that is used frequently in the Bible. Dante uses the form more than once in the Convivio (e.g., III, x, 8).

70–72. Ma perché . . . vole: With these verses begins what Beatrice eventually will term a digression (vs. 127): a denunciation of erroneous and deceitful practices on earth in willfully teaching false doctrine.

70. vostre scole: Cf. Purg. XXXIII, 85.

71. si legge: It is taught in the lectures of doctors of theology. For this use of leggere, cf. Par. X, 137; XXVI, 18.

72. ’ntende e si ricorda e vole: “These are the precise powers which Dante believed the disembodied human soul actually to possess before assuming its provisional aerial body. (See Purg. XXV. 83.) As far as intelligence and will are con-
cerned, the assertion is equally true of the Angels, but not so as to memory” (TC).

73. dirò: “I shall explain.” veggi = vegga.

75. lettura: The noun corresponds in meaning to the verb leggere as it is used in vs. 71.

76. Queste sustanze: The angels. fur = furono.

76-77. poi che fur gioconde . . . Dio: I.e., from the moment when the good angels were granted the light of glory, which made it possible for them to have direct vision of God (“faccia” suggests the conception of vision face to face).

77-78. non volser viso da essa: In their direct vision of God the angels are fully satisfied, for therein they see all things as well (“da cui nulla si nasconde”). They have therefore no reason to turn away from gazing on Him, and they do not do so.

79. però = per ciò. non hanno vedere interciso: Nothing ever intervenes between their mind and the image of all things in God. interciso: “Intercepted.”

80-81. non bisogna . . . diviso: “‘They have no need of remembering by reason of interrupted concept.’ Forgetfulness is the intervention of a new concept between the former one and the consciousness. With the angels, no concept, or perception, is ever interrupted by another.—St. Thomas inclines to the opinion that angels do not need—and therefore do not possess—memory, but he admits the possibility of their possessing it in a certain sense, if memory be considered as a faculty of the mind: Summa Theologiae, Prima, Qu. liv, Art. 5. Cf. St. Augustine, De Trinitate [X, 11]. Dante is more positive than his masters. Angels have only intelligence and will” (Gr). See E. Moore (1917), pp. 154-56. E. G. Parodi (1918b, p. 132, n. 1) notes that Thomas Aquinas uses the term dividendo in describing forgetfulness in Summa theol. I, q. 58, a. 4, which is entitled: “Utrum Angeli intelligent componendo et dividendo” (“whether the angels understand by composing and dividing”). Cf. De mon. I, iii, 7, where
Dante, in speaking of intellection in the angels, refers to it as “sine interpolatione” (“continuous”).

82. *si che là giù, non dormendo, si sogna*: “So that on earth men dream waking dreams” (Gr).

84. *ma ne l’uno è più colpa e più vergogna*: In those who preach what they do not believe there is malice involved; they are the worse set.


85. *un sentiero*: The way of the truth is one.

87. *l’amor de l’apparenza e ’l suo pensiero*: “The love and thought of mere show.”

88. *si comporta*: “Is suffered.”

89. *posposta*: “Put aside” (preferring to deal in false reasonings).


93. *con essa*: “Con” here, rather than the usual *a*, expresses greater adherence.

94. *Per apparer*: In order to cut an impressive figure, for mere show. Cf. “apparenza” in vs. 87. *face = fa.*

95. *trascorse*: “Amply developed,” “expatiated on.”

96. *Vangelio = Vangelo.*

97–102. *Un dice . . . rispuose*: See Matt. 27:45: “A sexta autem hora tenebrae factae sunt super universam terram usque ad horam nonam.” (“Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.”) “To explain this darkness at the Crucifixion, some said that the moon left its course to make an eclipse, others that the sun
hid its own rays. Dionysius ([Par.] XXVIII, 130) favored the first explanation, St. Jerome the second. Both are recorded by St. Thomas in *Summa Theologiae*, Tertia, Qu. xlv, Art. 2. The second theory has the advantage of accounting for an obscuration 'over all the land' ['super universam terram'], whereas an ordinary eclipse would darken only a part of it. The miraculous eclipse recorded in the Bible 'answered for the Spaniards and the Indians—at the two extremes of the habitable world—as well as for the Hebrews'” (Gr). Cf. Mar. 15:33; Luc. 23:44.

100. *mente* = *mentisce* (from the infinitive *mentire*), though the form *mente* is still found in literary use. The word is pronounced *mènte*.

102. *rispuose* = *corrispuose*.

103. *Lapi e Bindi*: Lapo and Bindo seem to have been very common names in Florence. They were originally nicknames for Jacopo and Ildebrando, respectively.

104. *per anno* = *ogni anno*.

105. *quinci e quindi*: “Here and there,” i.e., on every hand.


108. *non le scusa non veder lo danno*: Cf. *Purg.* XXII, 47, “per ignoranza,” and what Statius affirms in that canto. Ignorance is no excuse when it is a matter of certain fundamental notions and articles of faith which every good Christian is bound to hold.

109. *convento*: “Congregation,” i.e., the apostles. Cf. Mar. 16:15: “Et dixit eis: Éuntes in mundum universum, praedicate evangelium omni creaturae.” (“And he said to them, ‘Go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature.’”)

111. *ma diede lor verace fondamento*: See I Cor. 3:10-11: “Secundum gratiam Dei quae data est mihi, ut sapiens architectus fundamentum posui. . . . Fundamentum enim aliud
nemo potest ponere praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Iesus.” (“According to the grace of God which has been given to me, as a wise builder, I laid the foundation. . . . For other foundation no one can lay, but that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus.”)

112. quel tanto: “That alone,” i.e., the true foundation. For this use of tanto cf. Par. II, 67; XVIII, 13. sue = loro, the apostles’.

114. fero = fecero. scudo e lance: The “shield” is clearly for defense, and the “lance” for their attack on false beliefs.


117. gonfia il cappuccio: “The cowl [of the preacher] puffs up” with self-satisfaction. e più non si richiede: And the congregation hearing the sermon asks for nothing else but this sort of “wind” (vs. 107).

118. Ma tale uccel nel becchetto s’anni da: Devils are termed ucelli in Inf. XXII, 96, and XXXIV, 47, as well as here. Thus a devil is nestling in the “hoodtail” as in a pocket, waiting to snatch the preacher’s soul. For a similar notion, cf. Inf. XXVII, 117.

120. la perdonanza di ch’el si confida: “What kind of indulgence it places its trust in.”

121. per cui: Through such trust placed in promises of indulgence (“promise,” vs. 123).

123. ad ogne promession: “To any promise.” si correrrebbe = si accorrerebbe, they “would flock.”

124. Di questo: On this credulity of the people. sant’ Antonio: The order of St. Anthony, here the subject of “ingrassa,” with “porco” as the object. This is St. Anthony the Great, the Egyptian hermit (not to be confounded with his namesake of Padua), who was born in Upper Egypt (ca. 250) and died at the age of 105. He is regarded as the found-
er of monastic institutions, the disciples who followed him in his retirement to the desert having formed, as it were, the first community of monks. His symbol is a hog (perhaps as a type of the temptations of the devil, or possibly as a token of the power ascribed to him of warding off disease from cattle), which is generally represented lying at his feet. His remains were miraculously discovered long after his death and transported to Constantinople, whence ca. 960 a portion of them was transferred to Vienne in Provence. The monks of the order of St. Anthony kept herds of swine, which they fattened with the proceeds of their alms, and which were allowed to roam the streets of towns and feed at public charge. They were regarded by the common folk with superstitious reverence, a fact which the monks turned to account when collecting alms. For a famous story concerning one of the order, see Boccaccio, Decam. VI, 10. A story of the evil fate which befell a Florentine who tried to kill one of these hogs of St. Anthony forms the subject of one of Sacchetti’s stories (Novelle CX).

125. e altri assai che sono ancor più porci: These others, even more “swinish,” are concubines, natural sons, and the like, the object of “ingrassa” along with “il porco” of the preceding verse.

126. moneta sanza conio: False money, i.e., false indulgences.

127. sîam digressi: From the Latin digressi sumus. By such a touch, all that Beatrice has said in vss. 70-126 is viewed as a “digression.”

127–28. ritorci li occhi . . . strada: Turn back your eyes, i.e., your mind, toward the true path, that is, the “way” of vs. 129. Such a turn of phrase, with the stress on eyes, points to the journey to God as the true concern and to that journey as an intellectual ascent from truth to truth, especially in the Paradiso (cf. Par. IV, 124-32).

129. sî che la via col tempo si raccorci: The time allotted to their stay in this heaven is growing short, as is their time for
the intellectual journey as such, i.e., what remains to be said here in the ninth heaven.

130. *Questa natura*: Angel kind. *sì oltre s’ingrada*: “Rises by degrees so high in numbers.” Hierarchy is stressed by the verb invented by Dante.


135. *determinato numero si cela*: This ambiguous verse must mean: “No definite number is discernible.” For this use of “cela,” cf. *Par.* XVI, 80. Thus Daniel’s thousands indicate that the number of the angels is greater than man can conceive.

136. *La prima luce, che tutta la raia*: The light of God shines upon all the angelic kind (“la” refers to “questa natura,” vs. 130).

137. *per tanti modi in essa si recepe*: Every angel constitutes a species by itself, hence no two perceive God alike, i.e., no two receive of His light alike. *per tanti modi*: “In as many ways.” *recepe = riceve.*

138. *a chi s’appaia*: “With whom it [the light] unites.” Some editors have “che” instead of “chi”; but see Petrocchi’s note explaining his preference for the more personal form *chi.* There is the suggestion of “matching,” that is, to each angel is given all of the light that it is able to receive.

139. *però che = per ciò che.*

139–40. *a l’atto che concepe segue l’affetto*: Again the poet takes his stand on this issue (see *Par.* XXVIII, 109-11, and the note to *Par.* XXVIII, 106-14). The “act that conceives” is the act of intellect, whereas “affetto” refers to the will, where love is seated.

140–41. *d’amare la dolcezza . . . tepe*: Hence, even as the re-
ception of the light varies with each angel, so also its love varies in measure depending on the light received, i.e., on its vision of God.

141. tepe: A Latinism, meaning “is tepid,” i.e., less fervent than in other angels.


143. eterno valor: God; cf. Par. I, 107; X, 3.

143-44. tanti speculi: The angels who reflect God’s light, which shines in each one of them (the figure should be connected with vss. 14-18 of the present canto).

144. si spezza: Literally, “divides” or “breaks” Itself, that is, “gives of Itself” to each. Cf. Par. XIII, 55-60.

145. uno manendo in sé come davanti: Vs. 60 of Par. XIII expresses almost exactly this idea of God’s “self-contained-ness.” manendo = rimanendo.
1-3. *Forse semilia . . . piano*: "Dante is about to describe the aspect of the sky, with the stars gradually fading, a little before dawn. 'The sixth hour (i.e., noon) is glowing' some '6,000 miles away from us.' Noon is separated from sunrise by a quarter of the earth's circumference—that is, according to our author's geography (*Conv.*, III, v, 11), by 5,100, a quarter of 20,400. If noon, then, is 6,000 miles off, sunrise must still be 900 miles (or about an hour) away. The sun is below our horizon on one side, and the earth's conical shadow, projected into space, is correspondingly above our horizon on the other. As the sun rises, the shadow sinks; and when the middle of the sun shall be on the horizon line, the apex of the shadow will be on the same plane in the opposite quarter. An hour before dawn, therefore, 'this earth is already bowing its shadow down almost to the level bed' of the horizon” (*Gr*). See also *Conv.* IV, viii, 7; E. Moore (1903), pp. 58-59.

2. *ci*: This is the adverb of place, conjoined in meaning with "lontano."

4. *'l mezzo del cielo*: This is not the meridian, but the whole atmosphere visible above and reaching all the way to the heaven of the stars. "Mezzo" is thus used here in the meaning
4. Dante’s view of the sky a little before dawn

of a medium through which we see any object (cf. Purg. I, 15; XXIX, 45; Par. XXVII, 74). *a noi profondo:* “Deep above us.”

5. *comincia a farsi tal:* The “mezzo” begins to be brightened by the dawn so much that . . .

5–6. *ch’alcuna stella . . . fondo:* The first stars to disappear would be those in the east, near the oncoming dawn.

6. *parere = apparire.* The infinitive is used as a noun. 

*questo fondo:* “This bottom” of the universe, the earth’s surface.

7. *ancella:* Aurora, the dawn. Cf. Purg. XII, 81; XXII, 118.

8–9. *l ciel si chiude di vista in vista:* Concerning the term *vista* as applied to stars, see Par. II, 115, and XXIII, 30. Cf. also the use of *parvenza* in Par. XIV, 71.

9. *la più bella:* This is possibly Venus, which is the brightest star (planet) towards dawn. Cf. Purg. I, 19–21.


10. *il triunfo:* The circling orders of angels. *lude:* From the Latin *ludit,* “sports.”

11. *vinse:* See Par. XXVIII, 16–18.

12. *parendo inchiuso da quel ch’elli ’nchiude:* See n. to Par. XXVIII, 41–42. This verse is the final seal on the mystery: the point which is God in the symbolic vision that has been before Dante’s eyes in this ninth heaven is also the circum-
ference of the whole universe in the sense that the tenth and last heaven is the Empyrean, which is the mind of God. For the “fade-out” of this symbolic vision, see *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 180, a. 5, ad 2, where Thomas Aquinas quotes from the *De caelesti ierarchia* of Dionysius:

Dicit enim Dionysius . . . quod *angelorum hierarchias manifestat nobis divina claritas in quibusdam* *symbolis figuratis, ex cuius virtute restituimur in simpulum radium,* idest, in simplicem cognitionem intelligibilis veritatis. Et sic intelligendum est quod Gregorius dicit, quod *contemplantes corporalium rerum umbras non secum trahunt,* quia videlicet in eis non sistit eorum contemplatio, sed potius in consideratione intelligibilis veritatis.

For Dionysius says . . . that *the Divine glory shows us the angelic hierarchies under certain symbolic figures, and by its power we are brought back to the single ray of light,* i.e., to the simple knowledge of the intelligible truth. It is in this sense that we must understand the statement of Gregory that *contemplatives do not carry along with them the shadows of things corporeal,* since their contemplation is not fixed on them, but on the consideration of the intelligible truth.

13. stinse = estinse (*estinguere*).

14. *per che = per la qual cosa,* “therefore.” *tornar:* “Tornar” depends on “costrinse” in vs. 15.

15. *nulla vedere e amor mi costrinse:* “Nulla vedere” (“seeing nothing”) and “amor” are the subjects of “costrinse.”

16. *Se quanto infino a qui di lei si dice:* The poet’s affirmation here includes all the early praise of Beatrice, to be found in the *Rime,* in the *Convivio,* and, above all, in the *Vita nuova.*

17. *conchiuso:* “Gathered together.” *una loda:* “In one single praising” (a praising that will be attempted here, at this point in the poem).

18. *vice:* A Latinism, meaning “turn,” “moment,” i.e., right
here, at this point in the narrative. Some commentators take the term to mean “office,” but see Par. XXVII, 17, where it is paired with “officio.”

19. *si trasmoda*: “Transcends measure.” The verb is formed on the Latin *modus* in this sense, with *trans-* added.


21. *solo il suo fattor*: These are strong words, for they exclude all creatures, even the angels.

22. *mi concedo*: “I declare myself,” “I confess myself.”

23. *punto di suo tema*: Some especially difficult passage to be rendered in the matter undertaken.

24. *soprauto = superato*, “surpassed.” *comico o tragedo*: The modern reader needs to remember that a “comic poet” is one who writes in familiar style, whereas a “tragic poet” is one whose style is exalted. See Dante’s *Letter to Can Grande* (*Epist.* XIII, 30). Thus the *Comedy* (cf. *Inf*. XVI, 128) is written by a *comico*, whereas the Dante of the *canzoni* (in the *Rime*, the *Vita nuova*, and the *Convivio*) is a *tragedo*, as was Virgil in writing the *Aeneid* (cf. *Inf*. XX, 113).

25. *come sole in viso che più trema*: “Viso” is to be understood here as “eyes” (as also in vs. 28), which, with the modifying phrase, means: “the weakest eyes.” Cf. *Conv.* III, *canzone* II, 59-60: “Elle soverchian lo nostro intelletto, / come raggio di sole un frale viso.” (“They transcend our intellect, as the sun’s ray a feeble vision.”)


28. *il suo viso*: The reference is primarily to Beatrice’s eyes, but it is also to the beauty of her countenance. This verse takes us back, in its affirmation, to Dante’s first sight of Beatrice when he was nine years old (as related in the *Vita nuova*). The total statement here, as the verses continue, amounts to the highest praise yet bestowed on Beatrice and
the beginning of a kind of “goodbye” to her in the poem, which will terminate in the paean addressed to her in Par. XXXI, 79-90.


31. desista: The subject of the verb is io (understood), the object is “mio seguir.”

33. come a l’ultimo suo ciascuno artista: ‘‘As every artist (must stop) at his utmost.’—Now that Beatrice has reached her own home, the Empyrean, she is seen in her full beauty, which defies description” (Gr). For analogous points, see Par. XIV, 79-81; XVIII, 8-12; XXIII, 22-24, 55-63.

34. Cotal: “Such,” that is, in all her indescribable beauty. bando: “Heralding.” Cf. Purg. XXX, 13; Par. XXVI, 45.

35. tuba: I.e., tromba. “Tuba” is a Latinism. Cf. Par. VI, 72, and passim. deduce: A Latinism, meaning “to draw out” (a term in spinning). The word is used in connection with wax in Par. XIII, 73.

36. sua materia terminando: The signal of the approaching end of the poem is clear and emphatic here.

37. spedito duce: A leader whose duty has been discharged. For spedito in this special sense, cf. Par. XVII, 100.

38-39. Noi siamo . . . luce: It has been Beatrice’s role as guide to lead Dante to the last heaven. She has fulfilled that role now, and her words explain even more clearly the sense of “spedito” above.

39. maggior corpo: The Primum Mobile, or ninth heaven, which is indeed the “biggest body” since it is the largest in circumference of all the material heavens and surrounds them. ciel ch’è pura luce: The Empyrean, a purely spiritual heaven, as the following tercet makes clear. See n. to Par. I, 4.

40-42. luce intellettuale . . . dolzore: The tercet, as it further defines the nature of the Empyrean, presents the pattern of
a "trinity," light to love to joy. The order is significant, for light, intellectual light, coming first, stresses seeing (intellec­tion), which pertains to intellect; love, which is of the will, follows on seeing (see Par. XXVIII, 109-11, and the n. to Par. XXVIII, 113). Joy, which is fulfillment of intellectual desire to see and of love resulting from the seeing, is that which completes the triad. On joy as the culminating experience of love fulfilled, see Purg. XVIII, 33, and n. to Purg. XVIII, 32-33.

42. dolzore = dolcezza. The word is a Provençalism, common in the early Provençal poets.

43-45. Qui vederai . . . giustizia: "In the Empyrean are two victorious armies, the 'soldiery' of blessed souls that resisted temptation, and the host of good angels that triumphed over the bad" (Gr). Cf. Purg. XXXII, 22; Par. XVIII, 124; XXXI, 2.

44-45. e l’una in quelli aspetti . . . giustizia: By a very special privilege the wayfarer, a living man who has attained to this ultimate goal, is to be shown the human souls of the elect as they will be seen after the Last Judgment, when they will have their bodies (glorified bodies) again. Here the poet is quite on his own, for no accepted doctrine concerning the attainment of this pinnacle of contemplation on the part of a living man allows any such privilege. But now the poet allows it and crowns his poem with such embodied vision (by special privilege), thus climaxing the whole structure with the kind of vision which is the very substance of his poetry (see C. S. Singleton, 1969, pp. 25-29). Human souls that have been flames, without human countenance or bodily semblance throughout most of the Paradiso, are now to be seen in their glorified bodies. The reader will recall that the wayfarer had had the desire to see souls in this embodied way during the upward journey (Par. XXII, 58-60). This was denied him then, but the promise was made that is here fulfilled (Par. XXII, 61-63), and he was told that the ladder of contemplation is capable of attaining to such vision (Par. XXII, 68).
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It may also be recalled at this point that the wayfarer was clearly told that only two have risen to Heaven in their bodies—the resurrected Christ and His mother, Mary (Par. XXV, 128)—at a point where Dante tried to see if St. John was in Paradise with his body, which John denied.

45. che tu vedrai: This is one among many assurances of his own personal salvation that Dante receives in the course of his journey. The first of these was expressed by Charon (Inf. III, 91-93).

46. discetti: “Scatters,” from the Latin disceptare.

47. spiriti visivi: The spirits (or sense) of sight. Cf. Par. XXVI, 71, and n. to Par. XXVI, 70-71.

47-48. sì che . . . obietti: “So that it [the flash] deprives the eye of the effect of stronger objects,” i.e., of sight of any objects, said to be “stronger” because of the dazed eyes. This understanding of the verse is confirmed in the second term of the simile, vs. 51. “Forti,” that is, is to be referred to the eyes, in this sense, not to actual objects as “stronger” in themselves.

49-51. così mi circumfulse . . . m’appariva: Cf. Actus 22:6, St. Paul’s words concerning his own experience of the blinding light that came to him on the road to Damascus: “Factum est autem eunte me et appropinquante Damasco, media die, subito de caelo circumfulsit me lux copiosa.” (“And it came to pass that, as I was on my way and approaching Damascus, suddenly about noon there shone round about me a great light from heaven.”) Also see Actus 22:11: “et cum non viderem prae claritate luminis illius” (“and as I could not see because of the dazzling light”). The poet’s phrasing here seems to echo deliberately Paul’s words, a fact which is highly significant, for St. Paul was the prime example of one who was “caught up to Heaven” in the experience of rapture and is cited as such in most discussions of the experience of rapture, an experience which Dante is now beginning to have. See C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 15-23. Paul’s experience has been recalled more than once in the
poem up to this point: cf. *Inf.* II, 28, and *Par.* XXVIII, 138-39, and see the echo of Paul's own words respecting his rapture in *Par.* I, 5-6. Also see n. to *Par.* I, 5-9, and *Epist.* XIII, 79.

52. *l'amaro che queta questo cielo*: God's love and the love of God make the Empyrean the "heaven of divine peace" (*Par.* I, 122; II, 112; and *passim*).

53. *accolg: *"Receives," "welcomes." The understood object of the verb is "every soul as it joins the company of the elect," having risen from Purgatory to this place. *salute*: The term is used in the equivocal sense it has in the *Vita nuova* (XI, 3), for example, where of Beatrice it is said: "e quando questa gentilissima salute salutava" ("and when this most gentle lady gave salutation"). That is, "salute" has its normal meaning of "health," "weal," "salvation" (see, for example, *Inf.* I, 106) and also bears the suggestion of *saluto*, meaning "salutation," "welcome," as if the light were a welcoming light.

54. *per far disposto a sua fiamma il candelo*: The reader will do well to bear this metaphor in mind as the pilgrim advances now through higher and higher vision to the ultimate. He is the "candle" that must be gradually rendered able to bear the "flame," that is, this vision which so exceeds normal human capacity (vs. 57). Thus he undergoes a transformation and an enabling process, from here on to the end. *candelo = candela* (*Par.* XI, 15).

57. *me sormontar di sopr' a mia virtute*: The experience which Dante begins to have now is that of rapture, which all theologians agree is one that is far, far above natural human power, a fact declared in the opening verses of the *Paradiso* (I, 4-9) and in *Epist.* XIII, 78-82.

58. *mi raccesi*: The verb continues the metaphor of the "candelo," vs. 54.


60. *non si fosser difesi*: "Would not have withstood it."
61-63. *e vidi lume ... primavera*: Compare Dan. 7:10: "Fluvius igneus rapidusque egrediebatur a facie eius." ("A swift stream of fire issued forth from before him.") Also see Apoc. 22:1: "Et ostendit mihi fluvium aquae vitae, splendidum tamquam crystallum, procedentem de sede Dei et Agni." ("And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb.") Cf. Isa. 66:12. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones de diversis* XLII, 7, says: "Torrente voluptatis potantur iusti." ("The just shall drink of the torrent of delight.") Dante makes of this traditional river a symbol of grace, or, more specifically, of the light of glory. See C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 15-23.

61. *rivera*: "River." Cf. *Inf.* XII, 47; *Purg.* XXVIII, 47. Because of subsequent transformations, the reader should note that he quite naturally imagines this "river" to be flowing more or less horizontally between its two banks, like any river.

63. *primavera*: For *primavera* in this sense of "spring flowers" or "spring flowering," cf. *Purg.* XXVIII, 51. As will now be disclosed, these flowers which cover the banks are (in prefatory vision, that is, for the moment incomplete) the souls of the elect, even as the "sparks" (vs. 64) will prove to be the other *milizia* of Heaven, the angels, who nestle in the flowers. Angels are compared to bees by St. Anselm (see G. Busnelli, 1911a, p. 232).

65. *d'ogne parte*: On either bank of the stream.

66. *quasi rubin che oro circunscrive*: "Like rubies set in gold." *rubin* = *rubini*. When it is understood that these are angels who assist in the transmission of love, their red color will seem most appropriate since red is the color of love. In this first incomplete vision, the "gold" obviously suggests that the "flowers" that grow on the banks are of golden color, even as the "river" itself.

68. *miro*: "Marvelous," from the Latin *mirus*.


71. *vei = vedi*. The form was used in prose in early Italian. See E. G. Parodi (1957), p. 258.


73. *bei = beva*. The reader is soon to see what an extraordinary “drinking” this proves to be.

75. *il sol de li occhi miei*: Cf. *Par*. III, 1. Such an epithet for Beatrice is common enough, by implication, but to use it here is to stress the action as being primarily in terms of vision.

76. *li topazi*: The metaphor changes for the angels, from ruby to topaz, which may seem somewhat curious since the topaz is characteristically yellow. However, yellow topaz is sometimes made red by heating, and perhaps the poet is suggesting just this, since these precious stones, first called rubies, are aflame with love and are the bearers of love.

77. *l’ rider de l’erbe*: The “mirabil primavera” of vs. 63.

78. *son di lor vero umbriferi prefazi*: “Prefazi” (from the Latin *praefatio*, literally, a saying beforehand) can be understood metaphorically as “preface,” of course, and with its adjective “umbriferi” as a veiled preface of what is to be disclosed, that truth or real nature of these “flowers” and “bees” and this marvelous “river.”


80-81. *difetto da la parte . . . superbe*: This affirmation continues the metaphor of the candle that must be disposed to receive the flame. Cf. vs. 54.

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82. fan tin = fantino, i.e., bambino. rua: Literally, "plunges," from the Latin ruat. Cf. Inf. XX, 33.

84. l’usanza sua: His usual nursing time. The implied simile presents an innocent and humble Dante hungry now for the higher and truer vision promised him.

85–86. per far . . . occhi: "To make better mirrors of my eyes" continues the stress on seeing by reflection which has prevailed throughout the journey with Beatrice and was there at the beginning: cf. Purg. XXXI, 109-23. On this kind of vision as belonging to the second kind of light which Beatrice represents, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 23-31. Here, at the point of transition from guidance by her kind of light to guidance by another, the light of glory, Dante’s eyes rather than Beatrice’s become the mirrors. This touch, clearly stressing vision by contemplation, may recall Rachel (Purg. XXVII, 104-8), who sat before her mirror all day to look upon her own eyes. And in the heaven of the contemplatives (Saturn) the word specchi is used in exactly the sense it has here (Par. XXI, 17).

87. che si deriva perché vi s’immegli: "Which pours forth that we may better ourselves there," i.e., improve our vision on the upward way. The implication is that any pilgrim who attains to this high place in the journey "where the candle must be made able to bear the flame" (vs. 54) would undergo this experience—and perhaps that any soul on its upward way to the beatific vision would also be made ready in this way, though this is not clearly stated. s’immegli: This could be the impersonal construction, but it might also imply that "one," "we," is the subject of the reflexive verb.

88–90. e si come di lei . . . tonda: This moment of "drinking" in this striking way (which so stresses vision as the medium of the journey) is one of the most impressive in the long line of events which gradually transform the wayfarer. There was another such transforming moment signaled at the beginning of the upward journey with Beatrice, where the verb trasumanar was used and Glaucus’ metamorphosis
was recalled (Par. I, 67-71). And since the wayfarer now drinks of a river, his drinking of Lethe may also be remembered (Purg. XXVIII, 130-33; XXXI, 100-102), which was also a necessary preparation for higher vision at that point, through reflection in Beatrice’s eyes as mirrors (Purg. XXXI, 121-23).

88. *lei:* The “onda” (vs. 86).

88-89. *la gronda de le palpebre:* “The eaves of my eyelids” are the lashes.

90. *di sua lunghezza divenuta tonda:* The light from God, first seen as a river and therefore as a horizontal flowing (this being a “veiled preface” of the reality there), now becomes a downstreaming light, vertical from horizontal. Since the wayfarer is passing now, in vision, from time to eternity, the reader should be aware of the full burden of symbolic suggestion involved in this transformation, since the downpouring light becomes, by reflection, a great circle: a river is a familiar symbol of time, whereas the circle is the symbol of eternity. In a single verse, with the terms “lunghezza” and “tonda,” the poet has conveyed such a “crossing over.”

91. *larve:* “Masks,” from the Latin larva. See the word already used in this sense, Purg. XV, 127. The simile operates, of course, within the frame-notion of “umbriferi prefazi,” vs. 78.

93. *la sembianza non sua:* The semblance of flowers adorning the banks of the river, in the first “unripe” vision (vss. 62-63), for the human souls, and the sparks for the angels.

94. *maggior feste:* Figures more joyous or “festive.”

95. *vidi:* “Note the insistence on the reality of the vision of Heaven, implied in the repetition of *vidi* in rhyme with itself in ll. 95, 97, 99” (Gr).

96. *ambo le corti del ciel:* The two militias (vs. 43), angels and human souls, are now termed “courts.”
97–99. *O isplendor... vidi*: The tercet constitutes an invocation on the part of the poet, not to the *Muses* now, but to the very light of God.

100–102. *Lume è là sù... pace*: The tercet presents the downstreaming light of God in terms that define it specifically as the light of glory, and it is no accident that this occurs with a verse numbered 100, in a canto numbered 30! See Thomas Aquinas, *In Isaiah prophetam expositio* I, 1:

> Est enim quaedam visio ad quam sufficit lumen naturale intellectus, sicut est contemplatio invisibilium per principia rationis: et in hac contemplatione ponent philosophi summam felicitatem hominis. Est iterum quaedam contemplatio ad quam elevatur homo per lumen fidei sufficiens, sicut sanctorum in via. Est etiam quaedam beatorum in patria ad quam elevatur intellectus per lumen gloriae, videns Deum per essentiam, inquantum est objectum beatitudinis; et hoc plane et perfecte non est nisi in patria: sed quandoque ad ipsam raptim elevatur aliquis etiam existens in hac mortali vita, sicut fuit in raptu Pauli.

There is [1] a kind of vision for which the natural light of intellect suffices, such as the contemplation of invisible things according to the principles of reason; and the philosophers placed the highest happiness of man in this contemplation; [2] there is yet another kind of contemplation to which man is raised by the light of faith, as are the saints in this life [*in via*]; and [3] there is that contemplation of the blessed in Heaven [*in patria*] to which the intellect is uplifted by the light of glory, seeing God in His essence, as the object of beatitude—and this contemplation is not full and perfect except in Heaven; yet sometimes one is uplifted to this contemplation by rapture even while still in this mortal life, as was Paul when in rapture.


100. *che visibile face*: “Che” is the subject, “creatore” (vs. 101) the object of the verb. *face = fa.*
101. *a quella creatura*: This means, in the context, both angels and human creatures, for they, and they alone, are capable of the beatific vision, through the light of glory.

102. *ha la sua pace*: Cf. Par. III, 85, and see Augustine, *Conf.* I, 1: “Fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.” (“Thou hast created us for thyself, and our heart cannot be quieted till it may find repose in thee.”)

103. *E’ = egli* (the “lume” of vs. 100). *si distende* = *si estende*.

103-5. *E’ si distende . . . cintura*: It should be remarked that, as the following verses then explain, the downstreaming light of glory is first seen primarily as reflected light and will continue, by implication, to be seen primarily thus. The journey still moves with Beatrice, and reflected light is the kind of light by which she guides in the journey. Of course she and Dante will look up directly to see the human souls and angels, but they will see them by a light that is thrown back from the convex surface of the Primum Mobile (surely one of the most astounding conceptions and images known to poetry!). Thus we now learn how it is that the light became round (vs. 90). It does so in a pool of reflected light or, given its dimensions—larger than the disk of the sun itself (vs. 105)—it were better called an “ocean.”

106-8. *Fassi di raggio . . . potenza*: The whole material universe forms a globe, whose exterior is that of the Primum Mobile. The downpouring light of glory descends upon the convex outer surface of the Primum Mobile and, reflected upon its surface, becomes the circular ocean of light that appears as the “floor” of Paradise.

106. *Fassi = si fa*.

108. *che prende quindi vivere e potenza*: From this ray of God’s light striking upon it, the Primum Mobile takes its motion (“vivere,” motion being its very life) and the power (“potenza”) which it transmits to the other heavens in a hier-
archical descent to the earth at the center. Cf. Par. II, 112-23; XXVII, 106-14.

109-11. *E come clivo . . . opimo:* This remarkable simile presents, in its first term, the image of a hillside with a pool or lake at its base which reflects that base in its greenery and its flowers. The important symbolic point is that such an image is deliberately calculated to continue the stress on seeing by *reflected* light (see notes above), the verb *specchiarsi* appearing in both terms of the simile (vss. 110 and 113): that is, the whole amphitheater or rose of the blessed in their seats is first seen by reflection.


110. *si specchia, quasi per vedersi addorno:* The hillside is, as it were, personified, gazing at its own beauty in the mirroring water. But see n. to vss. 112-14, on the corresponding “specchiarsi” of vs. 113.


112-14. *sì, soprastando . . . ritorno:* Thus, “all of us who have returned on high,” that is, all the elect (human souls), are seen by Dante reflected in the ocean of light at the center of what will be called a rose and is actually an amphitheater. Some commentators are inclined to misunderstand the verb “specchiarsi” here. Strictly speaking, to match the same notion in the first term of the simile, this would mean that the blessed “look down” into the ocean of light which is the “lake” at the center in order to see themselves therein, as in a mirror. But this cannot be the meaning intended by the poet, since all souls seated in the amphitheater look upwards, to enjoy their vision of God face to face, not downwards, to see themselves (an absurdity from the doctrinal point of view). Thus it is the wayfarer who sees the reflection, not the blessed, and the verb *specchiarsi* can bear such a meaning here perfectly well: “vidi specchiarsi” (“I saw reflected”). The repetition “intorno intorno” clearly implies that Dante sees the amphitheater in its whole extent and circumference,
which would not follow from the image of the hillside reflecting itself at its base.


115–17. *E se l’infimo . . . foglie*: These verses, exclaiming over the almost inconceivable size of this amphitheater, refer back to the statement of vss. 103-5, where we were told that the reflected ocean of light is bigger than the sun in its circumference. Now we are reminded that this means, of course, that the lowest tier of the amphitheater encloses that ocean of light; therefore, how vast in circumference must be the uppermost tiers! But the image shifts from that of an amphitheater to that of a single rose with its sections termed petals, and this striking image, rich in connotation, will remain dominant now in this and the next two cantos.

118–20. *La vista mia . . . allegrezza*: We no longer see with Dante by reflected light, but the wayfarer now surveys (“prendeva,” “took in”) the entire amphitheater directly.

120. *il quanto e ‘l quale*: “The extension and the nature” of the whole scene of the blessed in their seats, termed an “allegrezza” with reference to their festivity there (cf. vs. 94, “feste”), in their enjoyment of the ultimate beatitude: the direct vision of God.

121. *Presso e lontano, lì, né pon né leva*: “There, nearness and distance neither add nor subtract,” i.e., make no difference.  

    pon = pone (porre).

122. *sanza mezzo*: “Directly,” without mediation of the secondary powers of the world of nature (the “legge natural” of the following verse).

123. *nulla rileva*: “Does not apply,” “is inoperative.”

124. *Nel giallo*: “Into the yellow” is to be connected with “mi trasse Beatrice” in vs. 128. The “yellow of the rose” is its center, the sea of light which has already been termed “fulvido” (in vs. 62) when it first appeared as a “river.” Here, in his astounding imagery, the poet draws upon the
imagery of John in Apoc. 4:6: “Et in conspectu sedis tamquam mare vitreum simile crystallo.” (“And before the throne there is, as it were, a sea of glass like to crystal.”)

125. *si digrada e dilata e redo/e*: “Which expands, and rises in steps, and gives off fragrance.” *redo/e*: From the Latin *redoet*. This verb, rare even in Latin, is used transitively here, “odor di lode” (vs. 126) being its object.

126. *al sol che sempre verna*: The one flower, so vast in size, this rose, blossoms and is fragrant through all eternity under the light of God, its “sun,” declaring His glory through its beauty and especially its fragrance, which, out of metaphor, is the love and praise that rise from its petals (the souls of the elect) to the Creator above, whom they now see face to face.

*sempre verna*: “Makes eternal spring.” The verb is not to be confused with *vernare* (from *hibernare*), meaning “to pass the winter” (*Inf.* XXXIII, 135; *Purg.* XXIV, 64). Here the form derives from the Latin *vernare*, meaning “to bloom,” “to renew itself,” “to make spring.”

It should be noted that the sun above, which is God, is not seen directly by the wayfarer (nor by the reader, in consequence) until the very end of the poem. Our view of the rose is by reflected light. This, as noted above, is a very important fact, symbolically and in terms of the three lights of the journey.

127–29. *qual è colui ... stole*: “Colui” refers to Dante, of course, i.e., to “mi,” the object of “trasse.”

129. *convento*: “Assembly.” Cf. *Purg.* XXI, 62; *Par.* XXII, 90. *bianche stole*: See Apoc. 3:5: “Qui vicerit sic vestiatur vestimentis albis.” (“He who overcomes shall be arrayed thus in white garments.”) Also see Apoc. 7:13: “Hi qui amicti sunt stolis albis, qui sunt et unde venerunt?” (“These who are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence have they come?”) Cf. *Par.* XXV, 88-96.

130–32. *Vedi nostra città ... disira*: The image of a city could scarcely fail to appear in this context and these verses,
for it is so central to the Christian concept of Heaven: the
city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the “true city” (Purg.
XIII, 95), and “Rome” (Purg. XXXII, 102: “quella Roma
onde Cristo è romano”).

131. scanni: The term appears early in the poem (Inf. II,
112) when Beatrice in Limbo refers to her seat in Heaven
as a “beato scanno,” and it has been used throughout the
Paradiso.

132. poca gente più ci si disira: “Men are so wicked, and the
end of the world is so near, that only a few more souls are ex­
pected in Paradise” (Gr). Cf. Conv. II, xiv, 13: “Noi siamo
già ne l’ultima etade del secolo.” (“We are already in the
final age of the world.”)

As for the few empty seats still available in the amphithe­
era, the reader will learn soon (Par. XXXII) that the assem­
bly is divided down the middle into two sections wherein are
seated those of the elect who lived in B.C. time and those
who lived in A.D. time. Obviously, the empty seats are all in
the A.D. section, for the B.C. section became full following
the harrowing of Hell. (See Fig. 5, p. 534.)

It should also be remembered that, according to accepted
doctrine, humankind was created by God to replace the fallen
angels. See Conv. II, v, 12, where Dante refers to this.

133–38. E’n quel gran seggio . . . disposta: “The impressive
episode of a vacant chair in Heaven is found in severa!
medieval legends: in the Syriac version of the Visio S. Pauli,
in the vision of Tundal, and in the Dialogus Miraculorum
of Caesarius of Heisterbach. The homage which Dante, in these
lines, pays to his worshipped Henry acquires tremendous
force from the unfitness of a symbol of mundane sovereignty

It should be remembered, however, that in Dante’s view
(as made clear in his treatise De monarchia and throughout
the Divine Comedy) the temporal power of the emperor,
whoever he may be, is directly ordained by God, from
Heaven, so that a special seat for an emperor there is not a
total or entirely shocking incongruity. And an empty chair,
in the fictional date of 1300, registers the fact that in that year, in Dante's view, the seat of Empire is indeed empty.

135. *nozze:* For the “wedding” in Heaven, cf. *Purg.* XXXII, 75, and *Par.* XXIV, 1-3. See Apoc. 19:9. This is clearly yet another prediction of Dante's salvation. (See n. to vs. 45.) As for the prediction of the death of Henry VII, that was easily made at the time the poet was writing this canto, for Henry died in 1313.

136. *fia = sarà.* *agosta = augusta,* imperial, invested with imperial authority.

137. *l'alto Arrigo:* Dante is speaking here of the Emperor Henry VII. Henry, count of Luxemburg (born *ca.* 1275), was at the instance of Clement V unanimously elected emperor on November 27, 1308, in opposition to Charles of Valois, the candidate of the French king, Philip the Fair. Henry, who had been recommended to Clement by the Cardinal da Prato as “il migliore uomo della Magna, e il più leale e il più franco e più cattolico” (“the best man of Germany, the most loyal, the most honest, and the most catholic”) according to Villani, VIII, 101, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle on January 6, 1309. In the following June he sent ambassadors to Florence to announce that he was coming into Italy to receive the imperial crown, a ceremony which had been neglected by his predecessors for many years.

To this advent of Henry Dante looked anxiously for a settlement of the affairs of Italy and for a means to secure his own return to Florence. But his hopes were doomed to bitter disappointment. The emperor crossed the Alps in late October 1310, with a force of about 5,000 men, with less than 500 cavalry, and at first was well received. The cities of Lombardy opened their gates; Milan (where he assumed the iron crown, January 6, 1311) decreed a vast subsidy; Guelph and Ghibelline exiles alike were restored, and imperial vicars appointed everywhere. Supported by the Avignonese pontiff, who dreaded the restless ambition of his French neighbor, Philip the Fair, Henry had the interdict of the Church as well as the ban of the Empire at his command.
But this success did not last long. Tumults and revolts broke out in Lombardy; and at Rome, whither he went (early May 1312) to be crowned, Henry found St. Peter's in the hands of King Robert of Naples and the Tuscan Guelphs, so that the coronation had to take place, shorn of its ceremony, in St. John Lateran, on the southern bank of the Tiber (June 29, 1312). The hostility of the Guelphic league, headed by the Florentines, with King Robert as their acknowledged leader, compelled the emperor to hasten back to Tuscany, for the purpose of laying siege to Florence, which had persistently defied him. To counterbalance the opposition of the Guelphs, he was obliged to abandon his policy of impartiality and to identify himself with the Ghibellines, whose aid he secured by granting to their chiefs the government of cities. Meanwhile Clement V, yielding to the menaces of the French king, had secretly withdrawn his support from the emperor (Par. XVII, 82). Henry arrived before Florence in September (1312); but in October he was obliged to raise the siege and retire to Pisa, whence on August 8 of the next year he set out with the intention of reducing Naples. On his way south he was seized with illness, and on August 24, 1313, he died at Buonconvento near Siena. His somewhat sudden death, which was probably due to a malarial fever contracted at Rome, was currently ascribed to poison administered by a Dominican friar in the consecrated wafer. The emperor's body was taken to Pisa and interred in the cathedral, where a monument (removed in 1830 to the Campo Santo), ascribed to Giovanni Pisano, was erected to him.

138. *prima ch'ella sia disposta:* Dante wrote three letters with especial reference to the Emperor Henry VII—one addressed to the princes and peoples of Italy, exhorting them to receive him (*Epist. V*), the second to the rebellious Florentines who opposed his coming (*Epist. VI*), the third addressed to the emperor himself, beseeching him to come into Tuscany and chastise Florence without delay (*Epist. VII*). These letters make clear, as does the preceding note, in what sense Dante in retrospect had reason to view the advent of Henry into Italy as having taken place before she was ready to allow him to “set her straight.”
139–41. La cieca . . . balia: The words “la cieca cupidigia” have occurred before in the poem (Inf. XII, 49), as have similar denunciations of this besetting vice (see, for instance, Par. XXVII, 121-23). See also Dante’s words addressed to the Florentines in Epist. VI, 12, “o male concordes! o mira cupidine obcecati!” (“oh, harmonious in ill, oh, blinded by wondrous greed”) and VI, 22: “Nec advertitis dominantem cupidinem, quia ceci estis, venenoso susurrio blandientem.” (“Nor in your blindness do ye perceive the lust that hath sway over you, lulling you with poisonous whisper.”)

139. ammalia: “Bewitches.” This is the only instance of the use of this verb in the poem. It is formed on the noun malia (cf. Inf. XX, 123). For the conception of such bewitching, cf. Purg. XIX, 25-33. The overtones of meaning suggest that the bewitching blinds humankind and, in this case, the Italians who oppose the lofty Henry, as Dante’s letter, just cited, clearly states.

140. fantolino: “Babe.” Cf. Purg. XXX, 44, and passim. Also see “fantin” in vs. 82 of this canto.

142–44. E fia prefetto . . . cammino: The pope, or “prefect in the sacred court,” is Clement V. The poet has already denounced Clement and assigned him to the circle of the simonists in Inferno (Inf. XIX, 82-87). For particulars, see n. to Inf. XIX, 83. His treachery toward the Emperor Henry has also been referred to, prophetically (Par. XVII, 82). When in 1308, on the assassination of the Emperor Albert of Austria, the imperial crown became vacant, Clement was pressed by Philip to support (as some suppose, in fulfillment of the secret sixth condition of his election) the candidacy of his brother, Clement’s old enemy, Charles of Valois. Ostensibly the pope complied, but, dreading any further extension of the formidable power of France, he secretly exerted all his influence against Charles, and favored the claims of his rival, Henry of Luxemburg, who was elected as Henry VII. When the new emperor descended into Italy to assert his imperial rights, Clement for a time loyally cooperated with him; but, yielding to the menaces of the French king, he gradually
withdrew his support, leaving Henry to carry out his task alone, unaided, if not actually opposed, by the papal influence. Clement survived the emperor he had betrayed less than a year.

142. *fia* = *sarà*.

145. *sofferto* = *tollerato*.

146–48. *ch’el sarà . . . giuso*: Clement shall fall into the third pouch of the eighth circle of Hell, where simonists are planted upside down with burning soles. In the hole reserved for simoniaical popes, each new arrival pushes his predecessors farther down and takes his turn on top (*Inf.* XIX, 73-75), being thus “thrust down” into this hole.

146. *detruso*: “Thrust down,” from the Latin *detrusus*.


148. *farà quel d’Alagna intrar più giuso*: “Clement’s predecessor in simony is Boniface VIII: *Inf.* XIX, 51-57. He is called ‘the man of Anagni’ because he was born in that town, and in 1303 was assaulted and taken prisoner there: *Purg.* XX, 85-90. Anagni was known also as *Alagna* and *Anagna*. —These fearful words are the last spoken by Beatrice” (Gr). As such words, it may be added, they amount to a kind of last look earthwards and a last denunciation of cupidity on earth as the sin that most besets mankind there, a fact that was conveyed in the action of the poem at its very beginning, when the she-wolf proved to be the most troublesome of the three beasts blocking the wayfarer’s progress up the mountainside. The poem, on this point, comes full circle.

The poet’s indignation is righteous indignation, from his point of view, and this last denunciation of Boniface is just. Some readers of the poem may pause to wonder, however, over the fact that (since the poet Dante and the wayfarer Dante are one person, and since the poet writing his poem is the wayfarer returned to earth from this long journey) Dante shows no more charity toward Boniface than he did at the beginning (*Inf.* VI, 69) and in the many references
thereafter, culminating in this one. Has the wayfarer learned no lesson of Christian charity in the long journey to God, and does he, being now so near to God, not love his fellow man, not forgive? But one has only to entertain such reflections for a mere instant to realize that no such transformation of the Christian pilgrim is shown in this journey to God. Dante the character who returns to be Dante the poet is finally quite un­changed by his experience.

With such thoughts the reader should not forget, however, that these words are, after all, Beatrice’s and not, in the fiction of the poem, spoken by the poet, but only recorded by him.
1. *candida*: See *Par.* XXX, 129, the “convento de le bianche stole.” The adjective can also suggest the noun *candore*, which in itself connotes a “glowing.” Cf. *Par.* XIV, 37-39, and “candente” in *Par.* XIV, 77. *candida rosa*: “The figure of the rose seems to be Dante’s own, although Paradise is sometimes represented in roselike form in early Italian art. The rose, too, was sometimes used as a symbol of the Passion. On the fourth Sunday of Lent, the Pope blesses a gold rose (‘rosa aurea mixta cum balsamo et musco’), with a ceremonial that indicates an association of this flower with Christ and Heaven: see G. Busnelli, *Il concetto e l’ordine del ‘Paradiso’ dantesco*, I, 1911, 233-238. The Old French *Roman de la Rose*, the great literary success of the 13th century, made all western Europe familiar with the rose as a symbol of earthly love; Dante’s white flower is the rose of Heavenly love. It may be that a sight of the Roman Coliseum influenced his conception of the great amphitheater of Paradise (cf. Busnelli, I, 239-242). The figure of the rose is also an homage to Mary, who presides in the assembly. See Albertus Magnus, *De laud. b. Mariae Virginis*, XII, iv, 33: ‘Et nota, quod Christus rosa, Maria rosa, Ecclesia rosa, fidelis anima rosa.’ [‘And note that Christ is a rose, Mary is a rose, the Church is a rose, the faithful soul is a rose.’]” (Gr).
2. la milizia santa: Cf. Par. XXX, 43.

3. nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa: Cf. Actus 20:28: “Attendite vobis et universo gregi in quo vos Spiritus Sanctus posuit episcopos regere ecclesiam Dei, quam acquisivit sanguine suo.” (“Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops, to rule the Church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.”)

4. l'altra: I.e., the “milizia,” the angels.

5. la gloria di colui che la ’nnamora: Love is stressed here, as it is in the verses that recount the creation of the angels (see Par. XXIX, 18). But the seeing which precedes love is indicated by the “vede” of the preceding verse. See Par. XXVIII, 109-11.

6. la fece cotanta: See Par. XXIX, 59-60.

7. ape = api. “Ape” is from the Latin apes. s’infiora: “Enflowers itself,” dips into flowers. The simile of bees and flowers is first suggested as part of the “umbriferi prefazi” (Par. XXX, 78) seen by Dante in this last heaven (see Par. XXX, 64-65).

8. e una: I.e., e un’altra volta. si ritorna: Chimenz notes that this is the pleonastic reflexive, as indeed it is, in its distancing function.

9. là: To the hive. s’insapora: “Turns savory,” the nectar being changed to honey.

10. foglie: “Petals,” i.e., the blessed in their thrones in the great amphitheater. quindi: “From there,” i.e., from the rose.

11-12. quindi risaliva . . . soggiorna: The angels’ love is God, who so far in all this scene of the heavenly Paradise remains above and beyond any direct vision of Him on the part of Dante or the reader. Direct vision of Him will only be given at the end; here we still see by reflected light.
13. *Le facce tutte avean di fiamma viva*: Cf. Ezch. 1:13: “Aspectus eorum quasi carbonum ignis ardentium.” ("Their appearance was like that of burning coals of fire."")

14. *e l'ali d'oro*: Ruby red and gold were colors in the first “prefatory” vision (cf. *Par. XXX*, 66).

14–15. *e l'altro tanto bianco . . . arriva*: Cf. Dan. 7:9: “Vestimentum eius candidum quasi nix.” ("His garment was white as snow.") See also Matt. 28:3; Apoc. 10:1. This is the robe which angels wear, apparently, corresponding to the white “stole” (*Par. XXX*, 129) of human souls. The reader will recall a scene in Purgatory where angels descended wearing robes of a tender green color (*Purg.* VIII, 28-30), but there that color was a symbol of hope, whereas the angel that piloted the boat bringing souls to Purgatory had a white robe, but also white wings (*Purg.* II, 22-26). The angels who stand at the exits of the terraces in that second realm are robed in white (see, for example, *Purg.* XII, 89).

16–18. *Quando scendean . . . fianco*: It now appears that this simile of bees bearing nectar is actually the reverse of the normal activity of bees in nature, which is to bear from the flower to the hive. Here the “bees” bear their “nectar” from the hive (God) to the flower. For other inverted similes, see *Par. XXVII*, 71 and 118-19, and see nn. to *Par. XXVII*, 67-72 and 118-19.


17. *porgevan de la pace e de l'ardore*: Peace and ardor (love) are the “honey” which the angels bear to the petals of the great flower. This is in addition to the “honey” (to keep the metaphor) which each human soul receives by gazing directly upon God, through the light of glory. In connection with such a multiplication of love in Heaven the reader may recall a lesson on this subject in *Purg.* XV, 55-57.

18. *ventilando il fianco*: “By fanning their sides,” i.e., by the action of their wings as they fly upward. One should also
visualize the fluttering robes of the angels as well, even as in *Purg.* VIII, 29-30.

19-21. *Né l'interporsi . . . splendore:* These verses are clearly concerned to remove a doubt in the reader's mind: Would not the host of angels in their fluttering robes obstruct the vision of God which the human souls enjoy in their eternal beatitude? The "splendore" is the descending light of glory which makes such vision possible.

19. *'l disopra:* God, who is gazed upon in direct vision, face to face, by the souls, but not yet by Dante the pilgrim.

22-24. *ché la luce . . . ostante:* The opening verses of the *Paradiso* are an excellent gloss to these verses, as are those of *Par.* II, 112-48.

24. *essere ostante:* "Be an obstacle." See *Conv.* III, vii, 5, where Dante tells us that angels are diaphanous.

26. *frequente:* "Abounding." "Frequente" is a Latinism, from *frequens.* *in gente antica e in novella:* Members of the old (Hebrew) and the new (Christian) church. We are to see the distinction strikingly observed in the seating arrangement in the amphitheater.

27. *viso e amore:* The two terms correspond respectively to the activity of the intellect and that of the will. *tutto:* The adjective is here used adverbially: "entirely." *ad un segno:* God, who is the goal of all. By now, it will be noted, the Deity is definitely located as a point above (still not seen by reader or wayfarer), as is further brought out by the words "unica stella" in the following verse. It will be remembered that there was a time, in the total picture of all existence, when God was a circumference, not a center or a point. See n. to *Par.* XXVIII, 41-42.

28. *Oh trina luce che 'n unica stella:* The verse clearly indicates God in His tri-unity.

29. *scintillando a lor vista, sì li appaga:* By giving of His light, the light of glory (see *Par.* XXX, 100), which makes
it possible for the creature to gaze upon Him, God gives that creature the only peace that can ever completely satisfy (*appagare*). *appaga*: It seems best to understand this as the third-person form of the verb. See E. G. Parodi (1957), p. 398.

30. *guarda qua giuso a la nostra procella*: The “storm” referred to is that which is agitating all mankind in life on earth—and the reader knows well from the poem by now how great it is, in the poet’s view. The exhortation, turned earthwards in its focus, anticipates that of vss. 37-39.

31–36. *Se i barbari . . . sopra*: Perhaps the “barbarians” who served in the Roman army, or came for whatever reason to the city before it was destroyed by them, are meant, for then the Lateran and many another building in Rome (“l’ardua sua opra”) were truly splendid and amazing to behold.

31–33. *tal plaga . . . figlio*: “The ‘zone’ that is always ‘covered by Helice’ is the North. The nymph Helice or Callisto was transformed into the constellation of the Great Bear, and her son Arcas or Boötes into the Little Bear: *Met.*, II, 496-530, especially 515-17; cf. *Purg.* XXV, 131. The Bears, or Dippers, are close to the North Star” (Gr).

33. *ond’ ella è vaga*: “Whom she loves” (Gr).

34. *l’ardua sua opra*: “Her lofty buildings.”

35. *stupefaciens = si stupefacevano*. Laterano: Cf. *Inf.* XXVII, 86. The Lateran was the old papal palace in Rome, first the residence of emperors, then of popes down into Dante’s time. According to tradition it was given to Pope Sylvester by the Emperor Constantine and thus became the seat of Christian dominion. The present palace, dating from ca. 1586, was built on the ruins of the original structure, which was destroyed by fire in 1308 and was said to have belonged originally to the Laterani family.

36. *a le cose mortali andò di sopra*: “Surpassed all other mortal things,” i.e., man-made edifices.
37. *io, che al divino da l’umano*: On this verse and others in the present canto, Grandgent observes: “The verses of the present canto offer an unusual abundance of examples of hiatus and diaeresis, which would seem to indicate a slow, thoughtful, impressive delivery. In such cases as *cominciò / elli* and *farà / ogni* (where a final vowel is stressed) hiatus is the rule in our poet. Also, in words like *ardìa, fiata, gaudioso* (contrasted with *gaudio*), *glorìose, oriëntal, region, riaccesa, süadi*—mostly Latinisms—diaeresis is rather to be expected in the *Commedia*; although the number of such forms is uncommonly large in this canto. Very rare indeed, on the other hand, are lines comparable to 37, 47, and 53:

\[
\begin{align*}
i/o, & \text{ che } \text{/ al divino da l’umano}, \\
\text{menava } \text{/ i/o li occhi per li gradi}, \\
\text{già tutta mi/o sguardo avea compresa.}
\end{align*}
\]

On vs. 39 Grandgent also notes: “This phrase, the climax of the tiercet, is Dante’s last and bitterest fling at Florence.”

40. *compiuto*: “Filled.”

41. *tra esso e ’l gaudio*: “It [my amazement] and my joy together” (dual subject of the verb “facea”).

42. *libito*: “Pleasing.” Cf. *Inf.* V, 56. *non udire*: This refers to Beatrice’s silence.

43-45. *E quasi . . . stea*: It will be recalled that the journey was termed a pilgrimage (that is, the wayfarers were termed pilgrims) only after Dante’s arrival in Purgatory (see *Purg.* II, 63), where positive ascent began. The reader will remark how frequently, now at the end of the long upward way, the pilgrim simile and metaphor come into the poem, and often, as here, in a notably strategic way, for the very notion of pilgrimage raises the question of “whereto” and of “return home.” (See, for example, the opening verses of *Purg.* VIII.) A pilgrim may finally, in his outward journey away from home, reach “the temple of his vow,” as here implied, and then make his way back home, where he hopes to tell of all the wonderful things he saw. This, applied to Dante the wayfarer at this high terminal point, projects, by clear implica-
tion, his "return home"—and his poem is the telling of it all to those "back home." In short, the poem here, at the end, is using the pilgrim image so as to point to a return to earth which must necessarily be that of the living man who then writes the poem.

43. *si ricrea*: "Refreshes himself," "restores himself" after the hardships of the way.

44. *tempio del suo voto*: The shrine which he has vowed to visit.

45. *ridir*: To tell the people at home. *ello*: The *tempio*. *stea = stria*.

46-48. *su per la viva luce ... recirculando*: The pilgrim scans the whole amphitheater from where he stands, "walking" with his eyes over the whole, an "eye tour," as it were. The "viva luce," it should be remembered, is still *reflected* light (*Par. XXX, 106-8*).

49. *Vedea = vedev*. *suadi*: From the Latin *suadus*, meaning "conducive to" or "persuasive" in its commonest usage. In the present context, however, it seems best to take the meaning to be passive rather than active, thus "persuaded" to charity, i.e., "centered on" love, "all given to" love.

50. *d'altrui lume*: God's light. *fregiati e di suo riso*: "Radiant with their own smiles." This is *riso* expressed as a radiance. Cf. *Par. IX, 70-71*.

51. *atti*: "Demeanor." *onestadi*: "Decorum."

52-59. *La forma general ... Beatrice*: It will be noted that the verbs in these verses are all in the past descriptive, thus building up to the dramatic shift to the narrative past absolute at the surprise moment, "vidi" (vs. 59). And it is a moment when the reader is bound to recall another, when Dante had taken in, as it were, the whole procession at the top of Purgatory, including finally Beatrice at her appearance on the chariot, and turned, as he thought, to confide in Virgil, only
to find that Virgil was no longer with him (Purg. XXX, 40-54).

58. _Uno intendea, e altro mi rispuose_: “I expected one thing, but another presented itself to me.” _rispuose_: I.e., _corrispose_.

59. _sene_: “Elder,” from the Latin _senex_. The Latinism confers greater dignity on the figure and suggests much reverence toward him on the part of the poet. The term is repeated in vs. 94, modified with “santo.” This proves to be Bernard of Clairvaux, but identification is withheld until vs. 102, and full attention now centers on Beatrice and the “goodbye” to her. For particulars regarding Bernard, see n. to vs. 102.

60. _vestito con_: “Clad like,” i.e., dressed in the white “stole,” as are all the other blessed (Par. XXX, 129). _gloriose_: The adjective conveys the notion of _gloria_ in its full theological sense: those who now enjoy eternal beatitude, with a vision of God made possible through the light of glory. For an earlier use of the word in this sense, see _Vita nuova_, II, 1, where Dante refers to Beatrice (dead and already in Paradise) as “la gloriosa donna de la mia mente” (“the glorious lady of my mind”).

61. _gene_: “Cheeks,” from the Latin _genae_. Again a Latinism contributes to the dignity and reverence of the figure.

62. _pio_: Given the context, the primary meaning of the word is “loving.”

64. _Ov’ è ella?_ With this the poet has impressively dramatized the immediate and most anxious concern of the pilgrim for his Beatrice, no longer by his side, an over-riding anxiety which admits of no curiosity in regard to the identity of the “elder” who has replaced her.

65. _A terminar lo tuo disiro_: The desire is, of course, the innate desire of natural love, common to every human creature, to attain to God and to the vision of Him face to face. Cf. Purg. XVII, 127-29. The fact that this “sene,” who
proves to be St. Bernard, has been sent by Beatrice to bring about this *terminus* of all “unquiet hearts” says much about Beatrice’s limits as guide in the journey. On this point, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 23-31, and on Bernard’s specific role as Beatrice’s replacement, see pp. 20-23.


67–68. *e se riguardi ... rivedrai*: “Beatrice’s own seat is ‘in the third row from the top tier.’ The 1st row is that of Mary, the 2nd that of Eve, the 3rd that of Rachel, beside whom Beatrice sits: see *Inf.* II, 102; *Par.* XXXII, 8-9. Contemplation and Revelation sit side by side. The number 3 (as well as the number 9) has always been mysteriously associated with Beatrice: see *V.N.*, XXIX” (Gr). See Fig. 5, p. 534.

69. *che suoi merti le sortiro*: Despite the symbolism of the number three (see preceding note), this phrase concerning Beatrice’s merits focuses on her primarily as the particular human individual and soul that she was, for she now, like all the other particular souls in the great amphitheater, has her seat according to the original endowment of grace given to her by God when He “breathed” her immortal soul into existence. See *Purg.* XXV, 67-75; *Par.* XXXII, 61-66. Such a focus upon Beatrice leads to the striking change of address to her, a change from *voi* to *tu* (see n. to vs. 80). *sortiro* = *sortirono*. For this use of *sortire*, see *Par.* XVIII, 105.

72. *reflettendo da sé li eterni rai*: Beatrice, who had guided by reflected light, is now seen (as is the whole rose) by that same kind of light. The wayfarer does not attempt, as yet, to see God directly, by the light of glory, this experience being reserved for the last canto and the very end.

73–76. *Da quella region ... vista*: An “eye” at the very bottom of the sea “is not so far away” from the top of the earth’s atmosphere—the “region that thunders highest up” (cf. *Purg.* XXI, 43-57; XXXII, 111).

75. *qualunque*: I.e., *qualunque occhio mortale*.

76. *vista*: Eyes, or post of observation.
77. effige: “Image.”

78. per mezzo mista: I.e., “blurred by anything between.” Here, in this spiritual heaven, there is no air or atmosphere to impede vision. Cf. Par. XXX, 122-23.

79-87. O donna . . . potestate: The verses which now follow, in this final address to Beatrice, constitute not only a prayer, but a kind of paean in an original sense of the word: a hymn of praise, which serves, from this terminal point, to look back over the whole journey, from the first two cantos of the Inferno. The reader will note that the poem begins to come full circle, so to speak, at several such points here near the end. Cf. Par. XXXII, 133-38.

79. vige: “Is strong.”

80. soffristi: Dante has addressed Beatrice, without exception up to now, with the respectful second person plural (voi); but now with this verb in the second person singular (and then the confirming adjectives and subject pronoun tu), it is clear that in these final words to her he shifts to the more familiar second person singular. The reader who may be following the translation, which does not use thou or thee, will do well to take note of this shift, which should strike every reader with surprise and leave him wondering as to the reason for it. Would Dante the pilgrim become less respectful to Beatrice at such a point and in such a context? This is hardly conceivable. The shift clearly signals something else, namely the fact that Beatrice is no longer the guide (with a burden of allegorical meaning) but that, as she has taken her seat among the blessed, she is now seen as the individual historical personage, or the immortal individual soul, as she sits in eternal beatitude.

It will be noted, in the next canto, that Dante addresses St. Bernard with the familiar form and for the same reason (Par. XXXII, 100-102) even when he begins to speak with the words “O santo padre.” This is in sharp contrast with, for example, Dante’s shift from tu to voi in Purgatory (Purg. XIX, 95 and 131) when he realizes that he is speaking to the
soul of Pope Adrian V. Surely Dante would not show less respect to St. Bernard! But he addresses him immediately with the familiar form. Thus, insofar as Bernard can be viewed as the third guide in the journey, the reader may see, as he remembers the forms of address to the three guides as such, the pattern of *tu* with Virgil, *voi* with Beatrice (as long as she guides), and *tu* with Bernard.

It should be noted that Bernard cannot be a “light” in the sense that Virgil and Beatrice are such, as guides, for the third light is the light of glory, which is God’s very own light. See C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 20-23.

81. *in inferno lasciar le tue vestige*: That is, in Limbo (*Inf.* II, 52-108). With this turn of phrase the reader gets a glimpse of the analogy Beatrice-Christ, for it was to Limbo only that Christ descended in the harrowing of Hell (*Inf.* IV, 52-63). For a strong reinforcement of this analogy, see *Purg.* XXIX-XXXI and the pertinent notes, on the advent of Beatrice in the procession at the top of Mt. Purgatory. See especially *Purg.* XXX, 139-41. *vestige*: Cf. the form “vestigge” in *Purg.* XXXIII, 108.

82. *di tante cose quant’ i’ ho vedute*: The whole phrase depends on “grazia” and “virtute” in vs. 84.

83–84. *dal tuo podere ... virtute*: “I owe the grace and efficacy ... to thy power and goodness” (Gr). For the meaning of virtù here in the sense of “power,” and of a power which Beatrice specifically has, see Virgil’s words of recognition of her in Limbo, *Inf.* II, 76-78. Also see C. S. Singleton (1956).


85. *Tu*: The expressed subject pronoun is emphatic.

*m’hai di servo tratto a libertate*: Cf. Rom. 6:22. In *Summa theol.* II-II, q. 183, a. 4, resp., Thomas Aquinas writes:

Invenitur autem in rebus spiritualibus duplex servitus et duplex libertas: una quidem est servitus peccati; altera vero est servitus iustitiae. Similiter etiam est duplex libertas; una quidem a peccato; alia vero a iustitia,

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Now in spiritual things there is a twofold servitude and a twofold freedom: for there is the servitude of sin and the servitude of justice; and there is likewise a twofold freedom, from sin, and from justice, as appears from the words of the Apostle (Rom. vi. 20, 22), *When you were the servants of sin, you were free men to justice; . . . but now being made free from sin, you are . . . become servants to God.*

Now the servitude of sin or justice consists in being inclined to evil by a habit of sin, or inclined to good by a habit of justice: and in like manner freedom from sin is not to be overcome by the inclination to sin, and freedom from justice is not to be held back from evil for the love of justice. Nevertheless, since man, by his natural reason, is inclined to justice, while sin is contrary to natural reason, it follows that freedom from sin is true
freedom which is united to the servitude of justice, since they both incline man to that which is becoming to him. In like manner true servitude is the servitude of sin, which is connected with freedom from justice, because man is thereby hindered from attaining that which is proper to him. That a man become the servant of justice or sin results from his efforts, as the Apostle declares (ibid., verse 16): To whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or of obedience unto justice.

In this light the whole Divine Comedy might be said to have as its central theme the attainment of liberty, which is complete subjection to God's will. Cf. Purg. XVI, 80, and the corresponding note.

87. che = per cui. avei = avevi.

88. magnificenza: "Magnificence in mediaeval writings is often to be interpreted by the use of magnificentia in the Latin Aristotle. It is the translation of μεγαλοπρέπεια which means munificence, i.e. liberality or generosity, but on a grand scale" (TC). Cf. Ps. 70[71]:21: "Multiplicasti magnificentiam tuam." ("Renew your benefits toward me.")
custodi: "Preserve intact."

89-90. si che . . . disnodi: Dante's last words to Beatrice touch on the state of his soul at death, the overriding consideration in the matter of salvation, as all readers know by now. Virgil, in his dismissal of Dante, declared his will to be "sano" (Purg. XXVII, 140). Now the "prayer" concerns the entire soul, and the same adjective is used. The reader is surely expected to think that Dante's prayer is to be answered. Beatrice's smile down at him would seem to be the full assurance that it will be so.

91. Così orai: Thus the paean is explicitly termed a prayer, as it clearly is. si lontana: Cf. vss. 73-76.

92. parea = appariva. sorrise e riguardommi: Beatrice's
smile, as she looks down reassuringly to the man whom she has brought to spiritual freedom, provides an unforgettable last glimpse of her, the bearer of beatitude who first appeared to the poet when he was but nine years old (as recounted in the *Vita nuova*).

93. *poi si tornò a l’eterna fontana*: No reader can fail to feel the import of Beatrice’s last gesture, which serves to pass on to God above the full praise which belongs to Him and not to her or any other creature. In fact, Dante’s paean to her was under some sense of tension for the Christian reader in this regard, for his praise seemed to end with her and not to refer beyond her and above, to the true and only Power (and eternal source of power) capable of leading Dante to this high destination.

94. *assommi*: “Complete.”

96. *a che priego e amor santo mandommi*: Bernard now resumes his role as guide, sent by Beatrice. (Cf. vss. 65-66.) The perfect completion is, of course, the vision of God face to face at the end. But that time has not yet come, and Bernard’s words, as they continue, speak in terms of a further preparation of the pilgrim for that culminating experience, a “preparation” which has already begun (see *Par.* XXX, 52-54). See vss. 98-99.

99. *montar per lo raggio divino*: These words anticipate the terminal event in *Par.* XXXIII. But the reader will note that the pilgrim has not yet entered into any such event and that he continues to see by reflected light of the divine radiance, or the light of glory, as he enters upon the “eye tour” of the rose, which now begins with Mary, who is a rose herself (see n. to vs. 1).

100–102. *E la regina del cielo . . . Bernardo*: “Bernard’s devotion to the Virgin Mary is expressed in his four homilies, ‘De laudibus Virginis matris,’ and his nine sermons for the feasts of her Purification, Assumption, Nativity, etc., as well as incidentally in other works. It is noteworthy that he opposed the celebration of her Immaculate Conception. His
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contemporary, Peter Cellensis, says of him: 'He was the most intimate fosterling of Our Lady, to whom he dedicated not only one monastery, but the monasteries of the whole Cistercian order’” (TC).

101. ne farà = ci farà.

102. però = perciò. Bernardo: Only now is the replacement for Beatrice named. There has been some suspense in this regard, which now is resolved. St. Bernard, the great abbot of Clairvaux and preacher of the disastrous second Crusade, was born of noble parents in the village of Fontaines, near Dijon in Burgundy, in 1091. After studying in Paris, in 1113, at the age of twenty-two, he joined the newly founded Benedictine monastery of Citeaux, at the head of which was Stephen Harding, an Englishman. Two years later, in 1115, Bernard was selected by Harding to be the head of one of the branches that the increasing fame of Citeaux made it necessary to establish. He set out with a small band of devoted followers, journeying north until he came to a spot in the diocese of Langres in Champagne, where he made a clearing and founded his famous abbey of Clairvaux.

Bernard’s influence soon spread beyond the limits of his monastery, and from this time until his death he was one of the most prominent figures in the history of his time. After the death of Honorius II in 1130 his championship secured the triumph of Innocent II over his rival Anacletus; and in 1140 at the Council of Sens he secured the condemnation of Peter Abelard. The news of the capture of Edessa by the infidels in 1144 led Bernard, with the approval of the pope, to preach a new Crusade, which resulted in the disastrous expedition of Louis VII and Conrad III (1147-49). The failure of the Crusade was a crushing blow to Bernard, from which he never recovered, and though he continued to take an active part in public affairs, he gradually failed and died on August 20, 1153. He was canonized by Pope Alexander III in 1173.

Bernard’s numerous writings consist of epistles, sermons, and theological treatises, which are conspicuous for his devotion to the Virgin Mary, whence on his canonization he was
described as “alumnus familiarissimus Dominae Nostrae.” One of his most important works is the De consideratlonone (referred to by Dante in Epist. XIII, 80), written in the last year of his life and addressed to his disciple, Pope Eugenius III. It is precisely a work on contemplation which is the allegorical basis for the whole upward ascent to the culminating experience that Dante the wayfarer is now to have, with Bernard praying for it and then standing by.

103. Qual è colui che forse di Croazia: Readers of Petrarch might well remember here his famous sonnet (Rime XVI) beginning: “Movesi il vecchierel canuto e bianco.” (“The old man, white and pallid, sets out.”) Thus here yet another simile of pilgrimage, with continuing stress on this fact (see n. to vss. 43-45). forse: This touch allows that the pilgrim might come from any distant land, but “let it be Croatia.”

104. Veronica: The Veronica is the true image (vera icona) of the Saviour, left on a kerchief which a holy woman had handed him, on his way to Calvary, to wipe the sweat from his face. It was shown at St. Peter’s in Rome on certain days. Hosts of pilgrims went from afar to see it, as Dante tells us in Vita nuova XL, 1-7.

105. che per l'antica fame non sen sazia: “Who, having craved it for so long, cannot look enough.’—Some would read fama for fame” (Gr). See M. Barbi (1934), pp. 253-54.

106. fin che si mostra: “As long as it is exhibited.”

108. or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra? “Was your semblance really so!” “Or” is an exclamatory “now” with the overtone of “really.” It should be noted that the second person plural is used in this case, whereas the Deity is addressed with the second person singular (cf. the Lord’s Prayer of Purg. XI, 1-24).

109-10. la vivace carità: Love is stressed, with Bernard, who has already spoken in terms of love and lover (vss. 100-101).
110-11. *che 'n questo mondo . . . pace*: Bernard’s two principal qualifications to serve as final guide in the journey stem from his special devotion to the Virgin Mary and from his fame as one dedicated to mystical contemplation with special emphasis on the affective movement of the mind as it rises to God, an emphasis which later Franciscan thought and devotion adopted and stressed. It was believed that Bernard, in such meditation, had a foretaste of the peace of Heaven. In the *Meditationes piissimae* (XIV, 36-37), ascribed to Bernard, there is a rhapsody on the joys of contemplation. See also Bernard, *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum* XXIII, 15-16. As noted above, Dante in his *Letter to Can Grande* (Epist. XIII, 80) refers the reader of his *Paradiso* to Bernard’s work *De contemplatione*.

111. *contemplando, gustò di quella pace*: “Gustò” and “pace” stress precisely the affective aspect of the experience, the peace attained by the will, rather than the vision attained by the intellect. See preceding note.

112. *quest’ esser giocondo*: This happy existence, the condition of the blessed, which, for the human creature, is of course the happiest that can be conceived. Bernard’s words thus initiate the invitation to begin the “eye tour” of the great amphitheater where the blessed sit, a tour that will occupy most of the next canto and is a preparation of the wayfarer for the supreme experience described in the final canto, as is stated in vss. 97-99.

114. *tenendo li occhi pur qua giù al fono*: Dante has already looked up almost to the rim of the amphitheater, to see Beatrice. Bernard now refers to the fact that Dante is looking at him and not upwards.

115-17. *ma guarda . . . devoto*: Bernard’s first exhortation to the wayfarer, as the “eye tour” begins, is that he should look first at Mary, truly the queen of heaven as he states it. Any other beginning for the tour would have been most unseemly on the part of Bernard, Mary’s great lover. But Bernard’s exhortation also follows a hierarchical principle requiring that one begin at the summit, which a
medieval poet would hardly fail to observe in any case. And the reader may pause to consider that with this focus on the Virgin Mary, here so near the end, the action of the poem is, in a sense, coming full circle, for it was due to Mary’s direct intervention in Heaven that the wayfarer was rescued from the dark slope at the beginning through that relay of grace that ended with Virgil’s coming to the man who was being pushed back into the darkness (Inf. I-II). Of course, ineffably higher than Mary but not directly seen as yet is the triune God whose “duro giudicio” was swayed by Mary (Inf. II, 96) and with whom the descent of grace originates. Mary was serving her familiar role as our advocate in heaven. The reader is soon to see that the focus returns to Mary with the prayer that opens the last canto of the poem, a prayer for another descent of grace here at the end, a prayer that the wayfarer may truly complete his journey. For the seating arrangement of Mary and many others to be named in the next canto, see Fig. 5, p. 534.

116. veggi = veda or vegga.

118–26. Io levai li occhi . . . seemo: Two similes now make it clear that Mary’s seat is on the highest rim of the amphitheater and in the best place on that rim, that being the eastern point (as if there were directions here in this spiritual heaven!). But the reader knows that the emphatic suggestion (through simile) that her place is indeed in the east puts Mary’s throne at the point where, on earth, we see the sun rise, and on the horizon of that east whither we turn to pray and according to which all medieval cathedrals were oriented. Cf. Purg. IV, 53-54; XXIX, 12; and the notes to these verses. On medieval world maps east, rather than north, is “up.” It will be remembered that Beatrice appeared finally in her procession at the top of Purgatory in the figure of a rising sun (Purg. XXX, 22-27).

120. soverchia: “Surpasses” in brightness.

121–22. quasi di valle . . . occhi: The phrase “di valle . . . a monte,” obvious in its meaning, is an established one, yet
to use it here, thus bringing in "monte" in the context of looking up to Mary there, would seem clearly to call to mind Ps. 120[121]:1: "Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium mihi." ("I lift up my eyes toward the mountains, whence help shall come to me.") And this too suggests the completion of a circle in the action of the poem, for this is what the pilgrim Dante did at the very outset of the journey (Inf. I, 16-18).

122. *parte ne lo stremo*: "A part of the highest edge" or "rim."

123. *l'altra fronte*: "The rest of the rim."

124-25. *E come quivi . . . s'infiamma*: The adverb "quivi" functions here, with its modifying phrase, as a noun, subject of "s'infiamma": "And as on earth the point of the horizon where the chariot pole of the sun is expected."

125. *Fetonte*: For Phaëthon and his unhappy attempt to drive the chariot of the Sun, see Inf. XVII, 106-8; Purg. XXIX, 118-20; Par. XVII, 3.

126. *e quinci e quindi*: "On either side."

127. *quella pacifica oriafiamma*: "The Oriflamme (*aurea flamma*) was the standard given by the Angel Gabriel to the ancient kings of France, representing a flame on a golden ground. No one who fought under it could be conquered" (TC). *oriafiamma = orifiamma* (French *oriflamme*).

128. *nel mezzo*: There where Mary will be seen with the thousand and more angels paying homage to her. Thus, through the total figure, Mary is seen to be throughout eternity as a rising sun on the horizon of this amphitheater.

130. *con le penne sparte*: This is clearly a posture of devotion and of angelic obeisance to the mother of the Son of Man. And it will be remembered that Mary is a human creature, and that man was created lesser than the angels. See Par. IX, 137-38.
132. *ciascun distinto di fulgore e d'arte*: According to established angelology, each angel constitutes in itself a distinct species. Cf. *Par.* XXIX, 136-38 and n. to *Par.* XXIX, 137. *arte*: "Ministry," in this instance the "giochi" and "canti" of the following verse. For "arte" in this sense, as applied to the angels, cf. *Par.* XXIX, 52.

135. *li altri santi*: The rest of the blessed (human souls). The phrase focuses on Mary as a human creature, like the rest. It should be remembered that she, like her Son, is here in her glorified body already and is the only purely human soul to have that radiant body before the Last Judgment (cf. *Par.* XXV, 127-28).

136. *divizia*: "Wealth." This is the modern Italian *dovizia*.

137. *imaginari*: It should be remembered that the faculty known as the *imaginativa* is primarily an image-receiving faculty (see *Purg.* XVII, 13, and n. to *Purg.* XVII, 13-18), and the verb in its meaning corresponds to that of the noun. However, in this context, since this is the voice of the poet speaking, it has the added meaning of "recovery in memory" of that which had been experienced in the receptive *imaginativa*. In this sense the verb takes on a less passive meaning.

140. *nel caldo suo caler*: Warmth or heat expresses love, *affetto*, and "caldo" with "caler" stresses this, with "affetto" following in the next verse. Bernard is the great lover of Mary, as noted above. Petrocchi has preferred the variant "caler" to "calar," which other editors have, for persuasive reasons, terming it a Latinism, the verb *ca/ere* in Latin meaning either "to grow warm" or "to feel warm." Here it is the infinitive used as a noun, in the objective focus, much as *disio* can refer to the object of desire (cf. *Purg.* XXXI, 54, and see "disiri," *Purg.* XXXI, 22). In objective reference, accordingly, "caler" is Mary, the object of Bernard's "calore." See the use of *piacere* which immediately follows in the opening of the next canto (*Par.* XXXII, 1).

142. *rimirar*: Dante had turned to Bernard and now turns again to gaze on Mary.
1. Affetto al suo piacer: “Lovingly intent on his delight.” The whole phrase is a kind of ablative modifier. “Piacer” is here the object of delight. Cf. Inf. V, 104; Purg. XXXI, 52; and passim. Compare “disio” in a similar objective focus in Purg. XXIV, 111. Thus “piacer” here signifies the Blessed Virgin, whose great lover Bernard was. contemplante: Again there is stress on Bernard’s qualification for his role here. See Par. XXXI, 111, and n. to Par. XXXI, 110-11.


3. parole sante: The use of the adjective may be compared with the use of the adjectives in “morta poesi,” Purg. I, 7, and “alta fantasia,” Par. XXXIII, 142. Bernard’s words are sante because they focus on and expound “holy” things.

4–6. La piaga . . . punse: The wound (vulnus or vulneratio) of original sin. See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I-II, q. 85, a. 3, resp.:

Per iustitiam originalem perfecte ratio continebat inferiores animae vires; et ipsa ratio a Deo perficiebatur ei subiecta. Haec autem originalis iustitia subtracta est per peccatum primi parentis, sicut iam dictum est, qu.
81, art. 2. Et ideo omnes vires animae remanent quodammodo destitutae proprio ordine, quo naturaliter ordinantur ad virtutem; et ipsa destitutio vulneratio naturae dicitur.

As a result of original justice, the reason had perfect hold over the lower parts of the soul, while reason itself was perfected by God and was subject to Him. Now this same original justice was forfeited through the sin of our first parent, as already stated (q. 81, a. 2); so that all the powers of the soul are left, as it were, destitute of their proper order, whereby they are naturally directed to virtue; which destitution is called a wounding of nature.

The reader may recall that the figure of Dante the wayfarer, as seen at the outset of the journey, exemplified the wound, in that he was “limping man.” See Inf. I, 30, and the note to that verse. On the loss of original justice, see C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 230-45.

“Mary is often represented as the counterpart of Eve. The word Ave, with which she is greeted, is the reverse of Eva; so says, among others, Dante’s son Pietro. St. Bernard, Sermo de Beata Maria Virgine, compares Mary to a rose, Eve to a thorn: G. Busnelli, Il concetto e l’ordine del ‘Paradiso’ dantesco, I, 1911, 227-228” (Gr).

It is interesting to note that the early commentary of Buti finds in the “richiuse e unse” of vs. 4 and in the “aperse” and “punse” of vs. 6 an instance of the rhetorical figure of hysteron proteron, which the poet uses elsewhere (Par. II, 23-24; XXII, 109-10): “Usa qui l’autore una figura di Grammatica; hysteronproteron, imperò che prima è pungere che aprire.” (“Here the author uses a grammatical figure: hysteron proteron, since ‘pricking’ precedes ‘opening.’”) Buti continues: “E così ne la sentenzia di sopra, prima è ungere la piaga che richiudere, et elli mette innanti chiuse, e poi unse; ecco che la sentenzia muta lo diritto ordine.” (“And thus in the preceding sentence salve is applied to the wound before it is closed, but he puts ‘closed’ first and then ‘applied the salve’; therefore, the sentence changes the nor-
Sapegno observes that the whole sentence is constructed in such a way as to place the memory of redemption before that of sin. Indeed this serves to commemorate the plan of providential history in terms of final cause, and to begin our “eye tour” of the rose with the note that Eve is seated at Mary’s feet is to begin to delight in that providential order which is thus manifest.

4–11. Maria . . . cantor: In the descending order of this seating arrangement one notes a chronological principle which allows the higher seat to the elder. It should also be noted that since seven, and seven only, are named in this line beginning with Mary, the number can scarcely be accidental. It was underscored before, in the count of the angelic orders first seen as wheels of fire. Cf. Par. XXVIII, 31-33, and the corresponding note; and see, on the number seven, C. S. Singleton (1965).

4. unse: “Dressed with ointment,” as a wound.

7. ordine: The “order” is the entire third tier of seats.

sedi: Plural of sedio (archaic for seggio).

8–9. siede Rachel . . . Beatrice: The seating arrangement here noted is true to Beatrice’s report to Virgil in Limbo. That Rachel stands for contemplation all readers know, from a certain dream—the third dream—in Purgatory (Purg. XXVII, 100-108; see nn. to Purg. XXVII, 100-108, 106). The number is significant here, and it was brought out in the first transmission of grace, as recounted by Beatrice to Virgil in Limbo (see Inf. II, 94-114), grace passing as it did from the Virgin Mary to Lucy (note, in Fig. 5, Lucy’s position directly opposite Adam in the rose), and then from Lucy to Beatrice. The reader will note from Fig. 5 that Lucy had to move through a whole semicircle of seats in order to go, as was said, to where Beatrice was sitting with ancient Rachel (Inf. II, 102).

It should be observed that to have Beatrice sit on Rachel’s right is to accord her an honored position, directly under
5. The celestial rose

none other than St. Peter, who sits to the right of the Virgin Mary.


10. *Sarra = Sara* (see Petrocchi’s justification of this older form). Sarah was the wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac.

   *Rebecca*: Rebecca, daughter of Bethuel and sister of Laban. Rebecca married Isaac, her father’s cousin, by whom she became the mother of Esau and Jacob (see vss. 67-69).

   *Judith*: Judith is the heroine of the book of Judith, in which she is represented as the ideal type of piety (Judith 8:6), of
beauty (11:19), and of courage and chastity (16:26). When Holofernes, general of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, was besieging Bethulia, Judith entered his camp, and, having by her beauty gained free access to his tent, she one night took advantage of his being in a drunken sleep to cut off his head with his own sword. She then returned to Bethulia with it and had it displayed upon the walls of the city. The Assyrians, struck with panic at the death of their leader, took to flight and were pursued with great slaughter by the Jews, who hailed Judith as their deliverer (Judith 10-15).

10-11. e colei ... can tor: Ruth, the Moabitish wife of Boaz, by whom she became the great-grandmother of David (Matt. 1:5-6), the “cantor” here referred to.

11-12. al cantor ... mei: David, who is thus named by circumlocution, even if his place in the amphitheater is not specified. Cf. Inf. IV, 58; Purg. X, 65 (where he is referred to as the “umile salmista”); and Par. XX, 37, where he is allowed the most honored place in the eagle, the pupil of its eye. “Fallo” here alludes to David’s adultery with Bathsheba (II Reg. 11-12) and his compassing the death of Uriah (II Reg. 11).


13. soglia: Tier of seats, as before.

14. giù digrada r: “In graded descent.”

14-15. proprio nome ... foglia: Actually Bernard will not rebegin the specific naming until vs. 118.

15. foglia: “Foglia” here means “petal” of the rose, i.e., each of the blessed in his or her assigned seat, as is even clearer from vss. 22-24, where the metaphor is used again.

16. settimo grado: See n. to vss. 4-11 on this singling-out of the number seven.

17. succedono Ebree: Thus a most remarkable feature of
the seating arrangement and total order of the rose is made manifest: the seats in the direct line below Mary are all occupied by Hebrew women of the Old Testament who, by such a line, together with one directly across from them (see vss. 31-36), divide vertically the entire amphitheater into two equal parts, from top to bottom.

18. dirimendo: "Parting." chiome: The "locks" of the flower are the tiers of seats, which are then termed "le sacre scalee" (vs. 21).

19-20. secondo lo sguardo . . . Cristo: "According to the look which faith turned on Christ," i.e., according as the faith of the Hebrews and of certain pagans looked forward to Christ to come, whereas the faith of Christians looks back to Christ crucified (see the principle in miniature in Par. XX, 105). Cato (Purg. I), Ripheus (Par. XX, 68), and presumably many another pagan must not be forgotten here.

20-21. queste sono . . . scalee: On the line of women as one great dividing line, Tommaseo observes that this wall both separates and unites: between the Old and New Testament these women are a bond, a bond of maternity, of expectation, of love.

   It should be noted that since B.C. time and A.D. time become the basis for this great dividing line, the Virgin Mary, in the topmost position of the line, figures as one who lived in both spans of time, even as did John the Baptist, who will occupy the top position in the line of men opposite.

21. scalee: The tiers of the amphitheater.

22. Da questa parte: This phrase suggests a gesture or pointing by Bernard as he utters the words. The reader knows that he and Dante are standing in the yellow center of the rose, on the floor of the amphitheater. They are presumably facing the line of Hebrew women that begins with the Virgin Mary, and so, significantly enough, they face towards her for this exposition, and Bernard must be pointing to the left of Mary (see Fig. 5, p. 534), which means to his right.

22-24. onde 'l fiore . . . venturo: Foglie in the sense of
“petals” is again used. Thus Bernard is saying, in metaphor, that all the b.c. half of the amphitheater is completely filled, no seats remain, and he is soon to say that the other half is almost full (in A.D. 1300, at least, the fictional year of the journey). This is according to God’s providential plan, as conceived by the poet. To take a view of the matter from outside the fiction of the poem (which is not presented as a fiction, of course) the reader should realize that the poet has given us a view of God’s providence in this respect that is, in a certain sense, astounding, even “absurd” according to some commentators (see Chimenz’ n. on Par. XXXII, 37-39). One has only to think how many souls of those who lived in b.c. time would have had to be taken forth from Limbo in the harrowing of Hell, for one thing! But also one might well ask: Did the actual Advent of Christ, opening the door to salvation, not count for more than this, i.e., for more than the salvation apparently effectuated in God’s plan for b.c. time?

The fact is that we glimpse here, in the poet’s conception, a completely overriding desire to witness, in God’s providential plan and His foreordained seating arrangement of His amphitheater, the principle of symmetry and balance, a principle everywhere apparent in His creation of the universe itself, which Dante’s great poem everywhere mirrors in itself. But that principle, carried out so exactly in the rose and its petals, puts something of a strain on Christian doctrine and a cardinal tenet of the faith, namely, that Christ’s coming did count for more than this balance with salvation out of b.c. time. The balance, this symmetry, we are asked in vss. 37-39 to wonder over, as we contemplate it.

25–27. da l’altra parte . . . visi: Bernard now points to his left and thus to the Virgin Mary’s right—the more honored sector because right is simply better than left, and Mary is the fixed point of reference (cf. Par. XXXIII, 3, “termine fisso”)—where sit those souls who lived in New Testament times.

25. intercisi: A Latinism, meaning “interspersed.” The semicircles in this sector are interspersed or “broken” by empty space, that is, some seats here and there are still vacant in the A.D. half of the rose.
26. *vòti = vuoti*. _semicirculi_: Actually this conception of two semicircular divisions is not made clear until we read of the other great dividing line that establishes this fact (vss. 31-36). _si stanno_: The reflexive here is the so-called pleonastic reflexive, serving its usual function of setting apart, of distinguishing.

In conceiving that, as of A.D. 1300, there are but few seats left in the A.D. sector, the poet is introducing an abiding conception in Christian doctrine, namely, that the end of the world and of time may be at hand. If the salvation of souls, the "harvest out of time" (cf. _Par._ XXIII, 20-21, and n. to _Par._ XXIII, 19-21), continues at a normal rate (whatever that might mean!), all seats are soon to be filled, and the curtain must then fall on the drama of salvation. The fact that only a few seats remain in the one sector has been noted by Beatrice already (see _Par._ XXX, 131-32). And Dante, in the _Convivio_ (II, xiv, 13), echoes the familiar notion, which is out of the Gospel truth, moreover, for more than once Christ himself spoke of the imminent end of the world. See n. to _Par._ XXX, 132.

30. *cerna = cernita*, "division," from the Latin _cernere_.

31-33. _quel del gran Giovanni . . . anni_: Here again, in his choice of the top figure in the great dividing line opposite Mary, the poet has chosen one who lived in both B.C. time and A.D. time, thus matching her. The poet's choice of John the Baptist finds ample support in the Gospels. See Matt. 11:11: "Non surrexit inter natos mulierum maior Ioanne Baptist a." ("Among those born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist.") Also see Luc. 7:28.

32. _sempre santo_: See Luc. 1:15: "Spiritu Sancto replebitur adhuc ex utero matris suae." ("He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.") _l diserto:_ Cf. _Purg._ XXII, 151-52. _l martiro:_ Cf. _Par._ XVIII, 135.

33. _l'inferno_: In Limbo, where John, after his death, had to wait some two years for the descent of Christ to the harrowing of Hell. _da_: The preposition has the value here of
John died in August and Jesus in April, two years later; thus John was in Limbo for some twenty months.

34. *cerner sortiro*: It "fell to their lot [in God's ordinance] to divide." Cf. the noun "cerna" in vs. 30.

35-36. *Francesco . . . giro*: Thus the poet has chosen for the highest seats, after that of the great John, only three names of saints (in contrast with the six of Hebrew women under Mary directly opposite), all of whom lived, it is clear, in A.D. time. Hence we are to admit another feature of God's symmetry and balance here: both Mary and John span B.C. and A.D. time. But the figures under Mary all belong to the Old Testament sector, whereas the three saints mentioned here (and presumably those unnamed who continue the line) belong to the A.D. half.

It will also be noted that St. Francis is given the highest place after John the Baptist and that this is not on any chronological principle, as in the Hebrew women, but solely, it would seem, on the principle of excellence. This being the case, it is interesting to note that St. Benedict rates a higher seat than St. Augustine. On St. Francis, see Par. XI, 43-117; on Benedict, see Par. XXII, 28-98. Augustine is barely named in the *Paradiso* (Par. X, 120).

40-42. *E sappi . . . si siede*: The dividing line running horizontally around the amphitheater half way down is now pointed to as one evidenced by all the children who are assigned to this lower half. Though the poem does not again make the point, the reader should remember that the adults who fill the two vertical dividing lines that begin with Mary and with John the Baptist must extend from the top to the very bottom. Therefore all in the lower half are children except these adults who extend the two lines beyond the half-way point.

Since the amphitheater slopes inward from its upper rim to its floor (the yellow center of the rose where Dante and Bernard are standing), it follows that, in actual number, there are fewer seats in the lower half than in the upper half. Still, even as before, the reader may be surprised at the poet's
conception (see n. to vss. 22-24), surprised in this case that so many children are saved, one half of all the elect (with the reservation just noted)! And there is another surprise here for any reader familiar with established opinion in medieval theology, for according to that opinion the bodies of all the elect will rise, at the Resurrection, in the aspect of the prime of life, no matter at what age they die. But we already know, since Bernard has been seen as an old man, that the poet does not intend to follow any such opinion. And now all the babes! The opinion of Thomas Aquinas is stated in *Summa theol.* III, Suppl., q. 81, a. 1, resp.:

> Homo resurget absque omni defectu humanae naturae; quia sicut Deus humanam naturam absque defectu instituit, ita sine defectu reparabit. Deficit autem humana natura dupliciter: uno modo quia nondum perfectionem ultimarum est consecuta; alio modo quia jam ab ultima perfectione recessit; et primo modo deficit in pueris, secundo modo deficit in senibus. Et ideo in utrisque reducetur humana natura per resurrectionem ad statum ultimae perfectionis, qui est in juvenili aetate, ad quam terminatur motus augmenti, et a qua incipit motus decrementi.

Man will rise again without any defect of human nature, because as God founded human nature without a defect, even so will He restore it without defect. Now human nature has a twofold defect. First, because it has not yet attained to its ultimate perfection. Secondly, because it has already gone back from its ultimate perfection. The first defect is found in children, the second in the aged: and consequently in each of these human nature will be brought by the resurrection to the state of its ultimate perfection which is in the youthful age, at which the movement of growth terminates, and from which the movement of decrease begins.

On the poet’s differing from this ruling in established doctrine, Grandgent remarks: “In his striking departure from current belief, Dante was influenced certainly by a desire for significant visible contrast and also, we may conjecture, by
that love of little children which he has more than once revealed. The sweet conception of an encircling sea of baby faces, all twittering with baby voices, must have charmed him as it charms us."

43. *per l'altrui*: “Altrui” is here possessive, thus “per l’altrui” (“through [the merit] of others,” i.e., of the parents, as will be made clearer as certain conditions are set forth).

44. *asciolti*: “Released” from the burden of original sin. See *Inf.* IV, 30 (“infanti”) and 33-39.

45. *prima ch’avesser vere elezioni*: These children died before reaching the age of free will or free choice.


49–51. *Or dubbi . . . sottili*: “Dante is silently wondering why, if these children never won merit by the exercise of their free will, some have higher seats than others. He learns presently that the degree of beatitude (symbolized by the height of the seat) is determined by predestination, not by one’s own acts” (Gr).

49. *dubbi = dubiti*. *sili*: “You are silent,” from the Latin *siles*.

50. *discioglierò = scioglierò*.

51. *li pensier sottili*: The subtle thoughts with which in vain you try to resolve a question of faith.

52–54. *Dentro a l’ampiezza . . . fame*: Not a particle of chance can find a place here in the rose. Everything has a definite cause. “Punto” contrasts with “ampiezza” (and how vast the rose is we have been told).

54. *se non come*: “Any more than.” The three conditions here named are obviously inconceivable in the state of eternal beatitude. See *Apoc.* 7:13-17:

Et respondit unus de senioribus et dixit mihi: Hi qui amicti sunt stolis albis, qui sunt et unde venerunt? Et dixi illi: Domine mi, tu scis. Et dixit mihi: Hi sunt qui
venerunt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine agni; ideo sunt ante thronum Dei, et serviunt ei die ac nocte in templo eius, et qui sedet in throno habitabit super illos: non esurient neque sitient amplius, nec cadet super illos sol, neque ullus aestus, quoniam agnus qui in medio throni est reget illos, et deducet eos ad vitae fontes aquarum; et absterget Deus omnem lacrimam ab oculis eorum.

And one of the elders spoke and said to me, “These who are clothed in white robes, who are they? and whence have they come?” And I said to him, “My lord, thou knowest.” And he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he who sits upon the throne will dwell with them. They shall neither hunger nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike them nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them, and will guide them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

55. *eterna legge:* God’s “eternal law” is His predestination, which is here witnessed, respecting the degree of beatitude in the seating of these babes, explicitly stated in vss. 58-60.

56-57. *giustamente ci si risponde . . . dito:* There is exact correspondence, even as there should be between the size of a ring and the finger it is to fit.

57. *ci si risponde:* I.e., *si corrispondono fra loro.* *Rispondere* is used impersonally.

58. *però = perciò.* *festinata:* “Hurried,” as it were, coming as babes to eternal beatitude, “a vera vita” (vs. 59). For *festinare* in this sense, cf. *Purg.* XXXIII, 90.

60. *intra sé qui più e meno eccellente:* The often-quoted scriptural verse from Ioan. 14:2, “in domo Patris mei mansiones multae sunt” (“in my Father’s house there are many
mansions”), is brought out by the assignment of higher and lower seats even to babes, for the reason now to be stated.

61. *Lo rege = il re*, i.e., God. *pausa = posa*, i.e., *riposa*, “is at rest.” “Pausa” is a Latinism.

62. *in tanto amore e in tanto diletto*: It will be recalled from the lesson in love at the center of the poem that love does not rest until it attains its object (in this case the vision of God face to face), and with the attainment comes joy (“diletto”). See *Purg.* XVIII, 28-33, and n. to *Purg.* XVIII, 32-33.

63. *è di più ausa*: “Ventures to aspire to more.” *ausa = oso* (cf. *Purg.* XI, 126; XX, 149; *Par.* XIV, 130). “Ausà” is a Latinism comparable to “pausa.”


66. *e qui basti l’effetto*: “And let the fact itself suffice” (that is, ask no further). Cf. *Purg.* III, 37, Virgil’s “quia”; also see *Par.* XX, 130-35; XXI, 91-99.

67–69. *E ciò espresso . . . commota*: Grandgent notes that “Jacob and Esau ‘struggled together’ in their mother’s womb” (Gen. 25:22-25[22-26]), and he calls attention to the following passages from the Bible. See Mal. 1:2-3: “Dilexi vos, dicit Dominus, et dixistis: In quo dilexisti nos? Nonne frater erat Esau Iacob? dicit Dominus; et dilexi Iacob, Esau autem odio habui.” (“I have loved you, saith the Lord. And you have said: Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau brother to Jacob, saith the Lord, and I have loved Jacob, but have hated Esau?”) Also see Rom. 9:10-15:

Non solum autem illa, sed et Rebecca ex uno concubitu
habens Isaac patris nostri: cum enim nondum nati fuissent aut aliquid boni egissent aut mali, ut secundum electionem propositum Dei maneret, non ex operibus sed ex vocante, dictum est ei: Quia maior serviet minori; sicut scriptum est: Iacob dilexi, Esau autem odio habui.

Quid ergo dicemus? Numquid iniquitas apud Deum? Absit. Moysi enim dicit: Miserebor cuius misereor. And not she only; but also Rebecca, who conceived by one man, Isaac our father; for before the children had yet been born, or had done aught of good or evil, in order that the selective purpose of God might stand, depending not on deeds, but on him who calls, it was said to her, “The elder shall serve the younger”; as it is written, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”

What then shall we say? Is there injustice with God? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.”

See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I, q. 23, a. 3.

67. vi: “To you” mortals.

70. Però = perciò.

70–72. Però, secondo . . . s’incappelli: “‘Therefore the heavenly light must crown us fitly, according to the complexion of that grace.’ Our halo, or reward, in Heaven is proportionate to the grace bestowed on us at birth. For s’incappelli, cf. XXV, 9. The odd expression, ‘the color of the hair of that grace,’ was evidently suggested by Esau’s red hair: Gen. xxv, 25. Esau, without apparent reason, differed in looks from Jacob, just as he differed from him in character and in divine favor” (Gr).

73. mercé: “Merit.” costume: “Conduct,” “actions,” as is made clear in vss. 76-84.

75. primero acume: The original endowment of spiritual sight and capacity for it, which is bestowed by God when He creates the soul.
76. *Bastavasi = bastava. Bastarsi* is an archaic reflexive form. *secoli recenti*: These first centuries are “new” in the sense of being fresh from creation. “New” is the original meaning of the Latin *recens*. The period referred to is the time from Adam to Abraham. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* III, q. 70, a. 2, ad 1:

Immediately after the sin of our first parent, on account of the knowledge possessed by Adam, who was fully instructed about Divine things, both faith and natural reason flourished in man to such an extent, that there was no need for any signs of faith and salvation to be prescribed to him, but each one was wont to make protestation of his faith, by outward signs of his profession, according as he thought best. But about the time of Abraham faith was on the wane, many being given over to idolatry. Moreover, by the growth of carnal concupiscence natural reason was clouded even in regard to sins against nature. And therefore it was fitting that then, and not before, circumcision should be instituted, as a profession of faith and a remedy against carnal concupiscence.

78. *la fede d’i parenti*: This faith in adults, in the first period, sufficed to render meritorious of salvation such of their children who died in their innocence.

79. *le prime etadi*: The division into “ages” here may reflect
the customary distinction of two ages from Adam to Abraham: the age from Adam to Noah, and that from Noah to Abraham.

80-81. convenne ai maschi . . . virtute: Thomas Aquinas (Summa theol. III, q. 70, a. 1, resp.) writes:

Baptismus dicitur sacramentum fidei, inquantum scilicet in baptismo fit quaedam fidei professio; et per baptismum aggregatur homo congregationi fidelium. Eadem autem est fides nostra, et antiquorum patrum, secundum illud Apostoli 2 Cor. 4, [13]: Habentes eundem spiritum fidei credimus. Circumcisio autem erat quaedam protestatio fidei . . . unde et per circumcisionem antiqui aggregabantur collegio fidelium. Unde manifestum est quod circumcisio fuit praeparatoria ad baptismum et praefigurativa ipsius secundum quod antiquis Patribus omnia in figuram futuri contingebant, ut dicitur 1 Corinth. 10, sicut et fides eorum erat de futuro. Baptism is called the Sacrament of Faith; in so far, to wit, as in Baptism man makes a profession of faith, and by Baptism is aggregated to the congregation of the faithful. Now our faith is the same as that of the Fathers of old, according to the Apostle (2 Cor. iv. 13): Having the same spirit of faith . . . we . . . believe. But circumcision was a protestation of faith; wherefore by circumcision also men of old were aggregated to the body of the faithful. Consequently, it is manifest that circumcision was a preparation for Baptism and a figure thereof, forasmuch as all things happened to the Fathers of old in figure (1 Cor. x. 11); just as their faith regarded things to come.

In Summa theol. III, q. 70, a. 2, resp., Aquinas continues:

Sicut dictum est art. praec., circumcisio erat praeparatoria ad baptismum, inquantum erat quaedam professio fidei Christi, quam etiam in baptismo nos profitemur. Inter antigos autem patres primus Abraham promissionem accepit de Christo nascituro, cum dictum est ei Gen. 22, 18: In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes
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terrae. Ipse etiam primus se a societate infidelium segregavit, secundum mandatum Dei dicentis sibi, Gen. 12, 1: *Egressere de terra tua et de cognitione tua.* Et ideo convenienter circumcisionis fuit instituta in Abraham.

As stated above (a. 1) circumcision was a preparation for Baptism, inasmuch as it was a profession of faith in Christ, which we also profess in Baptism. Now among the Fathers of old, Abraham was the first to receive the promise of the future birth of Christ, when it was said to him: *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* (Gen. xxii. 18). Moreover, he was the first to cut himself off from the society of unbelievers, in accordance with the commandment of the Lord, Who said to him (Gen. xii. 1): *Go forth out of thy country and from thy kindred.* Therefore circumcision was fittingly instituted in the person of Abraham.

For the metaphor of “wings” and “strength” ("virtute"), cf. Purg. XII, 95. In circumcision the male is singled out, in the belief that the guilt of original sin is transmitted through the male, beginning with Adam. Aquinas notes (*Summa theol.* I-II, q. 81, a. 5, resp.):

Manifestum est autem secundum doctrinam Philosopherum, quod principium activum in generatione est a patre, materiam autem mater ministrat. Unde peccatum originale non contrahitur a matre, sed a patre. Et secundum hoc, si Adam non peccante, Eva peccasset, filii originale peccatum non contraherent; e converso autem esset, si Adam peccasset, et Eva non.

Now it is evident that in the opinion of philosophers, the active principle of generation is from the father, while the mother provides the matter. Therefore original sin is contracted, not from the mother, but from the father: so that, accordingly, if Eve, and not Adam, had sinned, their children would not contract original sin: whereas, if Adam, and not Eve, had sinned, they would contract it.

82-84. *ma poi che 'l tempo . . . si ritenne:* “After the Crucif-
fixion, the unbaptized innocent children were ‘confined below’ in the Limbus: cf. Inf. IV, 30, 34-36. Since the Redemption, there has been no salvation without baptism in Christ” (Gr). See Summa theol. III, q. 70, a. 2, ad 3, where Aquinas writes: “Baptismus in se continet perfectionem salutis, ad quam Deus omnes homines vocat.” (“Baptism contains in itself the perfection of salvation, to which God calls all men.”) Aquinas then states: “Circumcisio autem non continet perfectionem salutis, sed figurabat ipsam ut fiendam per Christum.” (“On the other hand, circumcision did not contain the perfection of salvation, but signified it as to be achieved by Christ.”) See Summa theol. III, q. 62.

83. Cristo: Readers interested in numerology and the balance of symmetries expressed in numbers in this great structure may be interested to note that Cristo in rhyme with itself occurs four times in the poem, the present instance being the last. But this four were perhaps best construed as three plus one. See C. S. Singleton (1965). The other three instances also occur in the Paradiso: Par. XII, 71-75; XIV, 104-8; XIX, 104-8.

84. tale innocenza là giù si ritenne: “It is noteworthy that Bernard himself, in a treatise addressed to Hugo of St. Victor, shrinks from the appalling conclusion that unbaptized children are doomed to Limbo. See Inf. iv. ‘We must suppose that the ancient sacraments were efficacious as long as it can be shown that they were not notoriously prohibited. And after that? It is in God’s hands. Not mine be it to set the limit!’” (TC).

85–87. Riguarda omai . . . Cristo: The prompting of Bernard, urging Dante to look upon Mary’s face, brings the “eye tour” of the rose to a return upon itself and thus completes a circle, for Bernard began the tour with Mary. Her brightness alone can further dispose the pilgrim to greater vision, the vision of Christ which will be granted him at the end of the journey that is now so near. And it is with the vision of Christ, second person of the Trinity, that the whole experience will be concluded.
The reader will recall that the disposing of the pilgrim to this higher vision begins in Par. XXX, 52. But the pilgrim has yet to realize that Christ will not be seen at the end in any human form that resembles, in countenance, the features of his mother, as these verses seem to suggest.

88. *sopra lei*: In Mary’s face, the “*allegrezza*” being expressed in a radiance of beatitude.

89–90. *portata ne le menti . . . altezza*: The “*holy minds*” are the angels, also called Intelligences. They are pure spirit, pure mind, of course, even though they have, in the poet’s conception, the semblance of a body, as witnessed so often throughout the poem. They were created for Heaven, of course, and have wings to fly there. They were first glimpsed, as the final vision began to open up to the eyes of the pilgrim, as sparks that flew in and out of flowers (*Par. XXX*, 64-69) and then became bees in metaphor. In *Par. XXXI*, 7-9, and the verses following there, it is made clear that their chief occupation is to carry the blessings of beatitude to the petals of the rose.

91. *quantunque*: Cf. vs. 56, where the word bears the same meaning: “everything.”

93. *di Dio tanto sembiante*: “Such resemblance to God.” But see n. to vss. 85-87.

94. *amor*: The angel Gabriel. *che primo lì discese*: The exact meaning of “*lì*,” the emphatic adverb, is somewhat obscure. Most commentators take it to refer to the symbolic vision of the Annunciation which the pilgrim beheld in the eighth heaven (*Par. XXIII*, 94-96), and accordingly “*primo*” would refer to that preceding moment in the poem. But, though the angel Gabriel was there seen symbolically to descend as a light which circled Mary, declaring that he would continue to do so (*Par. XXIII*, 106-8) as Mary symbolically rose in what represented her Assumption, it was not said that he “sang” then the words he spoke to Mary at the Annunciation: “*Ave, Maria, gratia plena*.” It seems best, therefore, to take the “*primo*” and the “*lì*” of this verse to
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refer to the actual Annunciation to Mary, of which this now is the re-enactment and celebration in eternity of that great moment in time (Luc. 1:28). Note also how that moment in history is then explicitly celebrated in the poet’s verses (vss. 112-14) while Gabriel remains at the center of attention.

97. cantilena: The term implies a solemn chant.

98. la beata corte: Both “courts” of Heaven, angels and human souls, are here seen as one, even though they were named as two courts in Par. XXX, 96.


100. comporte: “Deign.” Dante’s words express humble gratitude.

102. sorte: Cf. the corresponding verb sortire as repeatedly used in such a context, e.g., in vs. 34 of the present canto.

103–5. qual è...foco? The narrator Dante has already answered the question, of course, but the pilgrim Dante is now represented as one who asks it; and his question is phrased so as to celebrate again the great moment of the Annunciation and Gabriel’s enamorment of Mary, which continues throughout eternity.

103. gioco: I.e., festa, implying joyous celebration. Cf. Par. XX, 117.

105. par di foco: Cf. Par. XXIII, 94, where Gabriel is symbolically represented as a “torch” (“facella”).

106–7. la dottrina...Maria: Cf. “dottore,” as Bernard is termed in vs..2.

107. ch’abbelliva = che si abbelliva (cf. Par. XXII, 24).

108. stella mattutina: Venus. The reference adds further meaning to the context of love here.

109–11. Ed elli a me...sia: This and the following tercet,
in this final celebration of the angel Gabriel's great role, serve
to single him out among all the angels as the greatest, for the
poem nears its end and no other angel will be brought into
such central focus.

109. *Baldezza = baldanza.* The term bears a connotation of
pride, which can only be good pride here, pride in the great
role assigned to him. *leggiadria:* Joy of spirit and beauty
in bearing.

110–11. *quant' esser puote . . . lui:* The statement is clear
in its uplifting of Gabriel to the highest position among all
creatures (excepting Mary) be they angels or human souls.

111. *e sì volem che sia:* "And we are in accord," we (all
creatures, angels and men) are willing that Gabriel should
be so exalted—even as it is God's will that it should be so.
Cf. Par. III, 70-78; XX, 138.

112–13. *portò la palma giuso a Maria:* "Giuso" in this
phrase would seem to support the meaning of "lì" as con­
strued in vs. 94. See n. to vs. 94. Gabriel is commonly repre­
sentated in painting as bearing a palm frond in one hand, this
being the symbol of victory which declared Mary to be above
all other women.

114. *carcar si volse de la nostra salma:* When Christ, the
second person of the Trinity, chose to become flesh and take
on our burden of sin. Cf. Par. VII, 30-33. *carcar = cari­
car. volse = volle.*

115–16. *Ma vieni omaj . . . parlando:* "Omai" implies that
it is now time to get on with the "eye tour" of the rose, which
has paused for so long with Mary and Gabriel in the central
focus.

116. *i gran patrici:* The term, along with "Agusta" as ap­
plied to Mary (vs. 119), bears the explicit suggestion of em­
pire. These now are to be the greatest of those who sit in this
great colosseum. *patrici = patrizi,* the patricians of this
court of which Mary is the empress.

551
118. Quei due: These, as we are to be told, are St. Peter and Adam, to whom are assigned the highest seats of all (after Mary) on this (Mary's) side of the rose, for they are nearest to "the Empress."

119. Agusta = Augusta. Augusta was an established title for the wife of the emperor. Mary is, of course, the mother. Cf. "agosta," the corresponding adjective, in Par. XXX, 136; see also Inf. XIII, 68. The term "imperio" (vs. 117) has prepared the way for this.

120. son d'esta rosa quasi due radici: This use of "roots" as it comes in the context of the rose exalts these two to a place of the highest importance, after Mary's. Both are then termed "fathers," as the verses continue to focus on them.

121–23. colui che . . . gusta: It will be noted that Adam sits on the left of "the Empress," a place of less honor, obviously, than St. Peter's, on her right. In this we are to admire, as everywhere in the seating arrangement, the marvelous balance and symmetry in God's providential ordering, borne out on the grandest scale in having the whole rose divided into halves, with a B.C. half and an A.D. half. Adam is thus properly seated in the former. See Fig. 5, p. 534.

121. le s'aggiusta: "Is next to her." Cf. the Latin iuxta.

122. ardito gusto: Adam's tasting of the fruit was an act of pride, hence "ardito" as none other.

123. tanto amaro: All the bitter consequences of original sin are implied. Cf. Purg. I, 26-27, the lament that points to this, and Adam's own words in Par. XXVI, 115-17.

124–26. dal destro . . . venuto: St. Peter sits in the seat of highest honor—after Mary—on Mary's right.

124. venusto: "Ancient."

125–26. le chiavi . . . venusto: See Matt. 16:19. Cf. Inf. XIX, 91-92; XXVII, 104; Purg. IX, 117-20. The angel at the gate of Purgatory proper holds the keys to that realm. And now, by the turn of phrase here, the keys are said to be
“keys to this lovely flower,” the Rose. St. Peter’s keys were also remembered when Dante was passing his “entrance examination” with Peter himself (Par. XXIV, 35-36).

127-29. E quei . . . clavi: This is St. John, the author of the Apocalypse, who prophesied the difficult times and the calamities of the Church. Cf. Purg. XXIX, 143-44, and such prophecies as set forth in the dumb show of Purg. XXXII, 109-60, on the model of St. John’s prophecy.

128. sposa: The Church, as so often in the poem (Par. X, 140; XI, 32-33; XXVII, 40).

129. con la lancia: Cf. Ioan. 19:34: “Sed unus militum lancea latus eius aperuit.” (“But one of the soldiers opened his side with a lance.”) clavi: I.e., chiodi, referring to the nails that nailed Christ to the Cross. For the form, which is latinizing (clavi for chiavi), cf. the verb chiavare as it is used in Inf. XXXIII, 46; Purg. VIII, 137; Par. XIX, 105.

130. esso: Peter. St. John the Evangelist sits on Peter’s right, always the “better” side. lungo l’altro: Beside Adam.

131-32. quel duca . . . retrospect: Moses. See Exod. 16:14-35; for the manna given to the Israelites in the desert, see Exod. 16:14-16. As every reader of the account of the Exodus knows, the people led by Moses did indeed prove to be “fickle and backward-looking,” many times over.

133-35. Di contr’ . . . osanna: St. Anna, the mother of Mary, sits directly opposite St. Peter (see Fig. 5, p. 534). This gives her the position of honor, since it places her to the right of John the Baptist, so that in this respect her seat corresponds to that of Peter, to the right of Mary. To conceive that Anna keeps her gaze constantly on her daughter, on the opposite rim of the great amphitheater, even as all the while she continues to join in the chorus that sings the praises of the Lord, is a strikingly human touch introduced by the poet at this point. Mother gazes constantly at daughter, instead of gazing upwards to enjoy the direct vision of God!
135. *per cantare:* “While singing” or perhaps “despite her singing,” that is, she does not allow her singing to interfere with her gazing constantly upon her beloved daughter Mary.

136–38. *e contro . . . ciglia:* St. Lucy, who twice came to Dante’s aid, first in the relay of grace that took place in Heaven, as recounted by Beatrice in Limbo (see *Inf.* II, 97-108), then in carrying Dante up the steep mountain to the gate of Purgatory proper (*Purg.* IX, 52-63).

137–38. *che mosse . . . ciglia:* The reference is to the moment (*Inf.* I, 55-60) when the she-wolf was driving Dante back into the darkness (“where the sun is silent”) and to the moment then reported by Beatrice to Virgil, in *Inf.* II, when Lucy, having come to where Beatrice sat beside ancient Rachel, exhorted Beatrice to proceed to the rescue of her “faithful” one with words that refer to his being thrust back “on that flood over which the sea has no vaunt” (see *Inf.* II, 103-8). Thus, at the end of the poem the action is again coming full circle, in coming back to Lucy now, as to Mary (with whom it began) and to Beatrice, whose role was remembered in the paean addressed to her (*Par.* XXXI, 79-90).

138. *quando chinavi, a rovinar, le ciglia:* The words give to Dante’s falling back into the darkness (as told in *Inf.* I, 55-63) the connotation of falling asleep, that is, a falling back into the sleep of sin. See C. S. Singleton (1948), p. 274.

139. *Ma perché ’l tempo fugge che t’assonna:* Since, within the poem, this journey to the afterlife has never been termed a *dream*, but has always been presented as *real*, it is not possible to understand this verse, with the verb *assonnare*, to contradict this fundamental postulate of the experience. Many differing views have been held of the meaning (see *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, s.v. *assonnare*). The view that seems most persuasive in the total context would see in the phrase *che t’assonna*, modifying *tempo*, a clear reference to the accepted fact that the experience of rising so high, all the way to God, on the part of a man who is still mortal, must of necessity be of the briefest duration. (Cf. “mortal weight,” *Par.*
The blessed and the angels are privileged to gaze upon God through all eternity, but a mortal man can have the experience through the *light of glory* only momentarily. Thus Thomas Aquinas, under the standard heading "Of Rapture" (*Summa theol.* II-II, q. 175, a. 3, ad 2), states: "Divina essentia videri ab intellectu creato non potest nisi per lumen gloriae, de quo dicitur in psal. 35, 10: *In lumine tuo videbimus lumen.* Quod tamen dupliciter participari potest. Uno modo per modum formae immanentis: et sic beatos facit sanctos in patria. Alio modo per modum cuiusdam passionis transeuntis." ("The Divine Essence cannot be seen by a created intellect save through the light of glory, of which it is written [Ps. XXXV. 10 (36:9)]: *In Thy light we shall see light.* But this light can be shared in two ways. First by way of an abiding form, and thus it beatifies the saints in heaven. Secondly, by way of a *transitory passion* [italics added].") The "transitory passion" was the experience of St. Paul when rapt to the third heaven.

Thus St. Bernard, with his phrase *il tempo che t’assonna,* is (given the moment and the context) referring to the fundamental difference between the pilgrim’s mortal condition (his mortal weight that will pull him down) and the condition of the blessed, which is his own. “Your experience here,” he means, “is necessarily *transitory* and can last only for the briefest time.” Accordingly, the following simile of the tailor suggests, “Let us make the most of the time that is left to you.” *Assonnare* is thus not literal in its meaning but bears an allusion that makes it metaphorical. "Sleep" is a falling away from the final experience, which must happen soon, for the mortal man’s experience of the light of glory is most transitory. (On the *light of glory* see Singleton, 1958, pp. 15-23.)

The “falling away” from the vision will be insistently represented in the final experience as given in the last canto, but there as a “fading away” in the poet’s memory as he strives to regain a true recollection of the experience had.

The reader will note how the reference to sleep and a falling-back into sleep serves to clinch the coming “round to full circle” of the action, here so near the end. Dante was about to “fall asleep” at the beginning, i.e., fall back into the “sleep
of sin,” because of his burden of original sin (hence he was limping; see Inf. I, 30, with the corresponding note, as well as the note to vss. 4-6 of this canto). Now he is about to “fall asleep,” not in the sense of “sleep” at the beginning, but to “fall away” from the high experience of rapture here at the end, due to his “mortal pondo” (Par. XXVII, 64), because no living man can endure, except ever so briefly, any such experience.

140-41. come buon sartore . . . gonna: The reader will not fail to remark the very humble simile which this medieval poet uses here at the height of his great argument and so near to God. One imagines an everyday scene in a tailor shop in the Florence of Dante’s day, the tailor sitting cross-legged over his work and carefully measuring the amount of cloth he has left for making the skirt (gonna should be conceived as the typical garment of a man; see n. to Inf. XV, 24). How far we are from Milton and a Renaissance conception of the sublime! One does well to recall, in this connection, that Dante termed his style humble and low-pitched (Epist. XIII, 30: “comedia vero remisse et humiliter”) in justifying his title Comedia. And how constant the poet has been in maintaining this level of style from beginning to the very end, even now before God!

142-44. e drizzeremo . . . fulgore: The tercet states completely the final “act” of the Comedy in precise terms, and the reader should reflect (through such terms) on the cardinal fact that Dante the pilgrim, though in this Empyrean heaven he has been made ready for the final vision of God by all he has seen (cf. Par. XXX, 54), has been seeing by reflected light all the while and has never actually ventured to look directly upwards into the descending light of glory through which alone the vision of God face to face can be had (cf. Par. XXX, 100-103, where this is clearly stated).

It should be noted that God is specifically termed amore, “primo amore.” Thus God as the God of love is stressed by Bernard (whose accent on the affective nature of the final experience has been witnessed) here, as it is by the poet at
the very end and in the very last verse of the whole poem: “l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.”

144. quant' è possibil per lo suo fulgore: It is important to note the qualification made by the phrase “as far as possible” and to bear it in mind in reading of Dante's final experience as reported in the last canto, for that touch brings out an accepted point of doctrine regarding the beatific vision on the part of human soul or angel, on the part of any and all creatures, namely, that each sees according to the measure of the divine endowment of capacity made by the Creator when He creates the soul (cf. vs. 75, “primiero acume,” and the note to that verse). Hence what the poet reports as his own limit in the attainment of the beatific vision (Par. XXXIII, 139-41) should be viewed within the context of this qualification as expressed here by Bernard. And the final experience will indeed be represented as a penetration (“penètri” here). “Fulgore” signifies, of course, the light of glory.


146. movendo l'ali tue: Thus, the final upward penetration into the light of glory is presented as an upward flight in which the wayfarer strives to move his own “wings.” This cooperation on the part of the living man in the final gradual attainment of the supreme vision will be insistently brought out in the next canto. But it is God's grace that makes the cooperation effective. credendo oltreti: The phrase may recall Purg. XI, 14-15, in the paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer.

147. orando grazia conven che s'impetri: Other editors have adopted the punctuation: “orando, grazia . . .” But it seems better to understand “grazia” as the object of “orando.”

148. grazia da quella che puote aiutarti: Grace, through Mary, must now be sought, in Bernard's prayer opening the last canto. No reader forgets, of course, that it was grace ob-
tained through Mary's intervention that made the journey of this living man possible, a journey recounted in no fewer than ninety-nine cantos. And now the last lap of this journey, above and beyond Mary and all human creatures, is to be made possible by another intercession on her part. The way in which the action of the poem thus comes full circle and then extends beyond that circle in a final upward line may easily be represented by the simple diagram seen in Fig. 6,

![Diagram](image)

6. Diagram suggesting the return full circle of the action from the Virgin Mary to Mary and then the ultimate rise to the Transcendental One

which graphically brings out the presence, symbolically, of a Transcendental One, throughout the poem. Ninety-nine cantos have that one canto added to them in which the vision of God face to face is had and by which the perfect number one hundred is attained. This "plus one" feature is brought out in the number of verses allotted to each of the cantos (which vary in length, as the reader knows), in that in no canto is the total number of verses exactly divisible by three. The division by three always leaves a "plus one" verse.

149–51. *e tu mi seguirai* . . . *orazione*: Bernard continues,
with “affezione” and with “cor,” to stress the affective aspect of the final experience. It is love that finally attains the Object, or so he seems to imply. We know however that vision (which is intellec­tive) must precede the love that attains (which is of the will). See Par. XXVIII, 109-11. Bernard’s injunction also emphasizes the necessity of Dante’s cooperation (“tu mi seguirai... sì che... lo cor non parti”).

150. *parti* = *parta*, “separate.”

151. *orazione*: Thus the ninety-ninth canto is so designed that its last word is “orazione” and the number of its verses is 151, which (by the established practice in medieval numerology of adding the digits) presents the number seven, which is also found at the exact center of the whole structure. See C. S. Singleton (1965).
1–3. *Vergine Madre . . . consiglio*: Bernard’s prayer to the Blessed Virgin makes use of a phraseology that belongs to liturgical style, particularly in characteristic antitheses. As Sapegno observes, the opening of the prayer, in this first tercet, offers antithetical and contradictory attributes, if considered according to a *natural* criterion, whereas all are true on the *supernatural* plane: virgin and mother, daughter and mother of God, the most humble of creatures and the most exalted. He also notes in the liturgy such phrases as *Dei genitrix Virgo* (“Virgin mother of God”) and *genuisti qui te fecit* (“Thou didst give birth to Him who made thee”). All point, of course, to the inconceivable miracle of the Word made flesh, to incarnation of Deity. As readers of Chaucer well know, the English poet adapted a great part of this prayer in his *Second Nun’s Tale*, vss. 29-84.


3. *termine fisso*: This refers to God’s providential plan wherein Mary *ab aeterno* (from eternity) was chosen for her humble-exalted role. Her very seat in this heavenly rose underscores the fact, since, with her, B.C. time ends, so to speak, and A.D. time begins.
4-6. *tu se' colei* ... *fattura*: In *Conv.* IV, v, 5, Dante writes:

E però [che] anche l'albergo, dove il celestiale rege intrare dovea, convenia essere mondissimo e purissimo, ordinata fu una progenie santissima, de la quale dopo molti meriti nascesse una femmina ottima di tutte l'altre, la quale fosse camera del Figliuolo di Dio: e questa progenie fu quella di David, del qual [discese] la baldezza e l'onore de l'umana generazione, cioè Maria.

And because the abode wherein the celestial king must enter ought to be most clean and pure there was likewise ordained a most holy family from the which after many merits should be born a woman supremely good amongst all the rest, who should be the treasure house of the Son of God. And this family is that of David. And the triumph and honour of the human race, Mary to wit, was born from it.

5-6. *che 'l suo fattore* ... *fattura*: The Creator of human nature did not deem it unbecoming that He should make Himself a human creature (called, in the Holy Scriptures, the Son of Man).

7-9. *Nel ventre tuo* ... *fiore*: The flower, this rose, was part of God's providential plan, as we know, and it is very strikingly said to have germinated and blossomed in Mary's womb, in the conception of Jesus. The statement is made essentially in terms of love, and the verb *raccese* (*rekindled*) is used to underscore the fact that God, following Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, withdrew his special love from the mass of mankind. Cf., for the same great event, again in terms of love, the metaphor of *Purg.* X, 41-42.

10. *Qui*: The three opening tercets of the prayer (nor is the number accidental!) regard Mary and the Incarnation in the focus of time, of providential history. The “qui” turns the focus to Mary's *place* here in the rose. *A noi*: Bernard's words refer not only to the human souls that make up the rose, but to the angels who fly about it as well.

*meridiana face*: Literally, “noonday torch,” i.e., a “sun”
when it is brightest and warmest, both radiance and heat symbolizing love ("face di caritate"). It will be recalled that Mary was first seen as a sun dawning on the horizon (Par. XXXI, 118-29). She now becomes a "noonday sun."

11. *e guiso, intra ' mortali*: This turn of phrase, balancing the "qui" of Heaven, returns us to earth and history, to a focus that will end on the figure of Dante, the mortal man who has been uplifted to this highest of places from that lowly world.

12. *speranza*: "Hope" is very much of the mortal world and has no *active* place in the immortal world of the angels and the elect, despite the fact that St. James could represent that virtue and love it still (Par. XXV, 82-84). *vivace*: "Inexhaustible."

13. *Donna*: "Donna" is here used with its full etymological force of *Domina*, as applied to the "Queen of Heaven." It will be noted that, beginning with this term of address, three tercets now follow which exalt Mary to the highest, from the point of view of mortal hope, and which precede the specific grace implored in vss. 22-39, which terminate the prayer. *tanto vali*: "Thou dost so avail," i.e., in interceding with God on the part of mortal sinners.

14–15. *che qual vuol grazia . . . ali*: What Dante claims here is not, of course, literally so, or all prayers directed "directly" to God would be misdirected! But it is a becoming part of this highest of praise for Mary as uttered by Bernard, her great lover. In fact, St. Bernard had expressed it so in his *Sermones de tempore* (In vigilia nativitatis Domini III, 10): "Nihil nos Deus habere voluit, quod per Mariae manus non transiret." ("God wills that we should have nothing that does not pass through Mary’s hands.")


15. *disianza*: This is an archaic form for *desiderio*. *vuol volar sanz’ ali*: This seems to have been a standing phrase. See M. Barbi (1934), p. 254.
16–18. *La tua benignità*. . . *precorre*: Mary intervenes on behalf of the sinner, seeing his plight and need down in the world of mortals, and obtains grace for him without his asking for it. All readers will recall a cardinal instance of this very fact at the outset of this poem, for in the first canto of the *Inferno* we watched the wayfarer struggle alone and lose ground before the three beasts (and he was not seen to pray to Mary), only to learn later through Virgil's account of Beatrice's report to him that Mary had interceded on Dante's behalf, so that "stern judgment" was "broken thereabove" (*Inf.* II, 96).


19–21. *In te misericordia*. . . *bontate*: This third of the three tercets specifically dedicated to the praise of Mary is the culminating one. Note especially vs. 20–21, where it is said that *all* goodness to be found in any and all creatures is to be found in her.

20. *magnificenza*: The word may be understood as "munificence" as well as "magnificence" in the sense of "power to achieve lofty things."

22. *Or*: "Or" signals the beginning of the specific request that Bernard would make of Mary. *questi*: "This man."

22–24. *che da l'infima*. . . *una*: Many commentators have taken "lacuna" (which does indeed have "pool" as one of its meanings) to mean Cocytus, the lake of ice at the center of the earth. But this, in the context of what is then said concerning seeing the "spiritual lives" one after another, can scarcely be the meaning here, for Bernard would not omit reference to the journey down through Hell, nor exclude the souls of Hell from the experience of that "descent before ascent" which comprised one third of the whole. "Lacuna" should be taken to refer to the whole pit of Hell at the center of the earth. Cf. Dan. 6:7, 12, 17, where the "lion's den" is termed *lacus leonum*. Thus *lacuna* here should be construed...
as referring to the entire den of the cavity of Hell, and it should thus include the many souls seen in Hell.

Although the specific meaning of "lacuna" here would seem to be the cavity of Hell, we might well consider that, in a certain medieval view, the earth itself is infimo and that this may be a part of the meaning here. See A. O. Lovejoy (1936), pp. 101-2:

It has often been said that the older picture of the world in space was peculiarly fitted to give man a high sense of his own importance and dignity; and some modern writers have made much of this supposed implication of the pre-Copernican astronomy. Man occupied, we are told, the central place in the universe, and round the planet of his habitation all the vast, unpeopled spheres obsequiously revolved. But the actual tendency of the geocentric system was, for the medieval mind, precisely the opposite. For the centre of the world was not a position of honor; it was rather the place farthest removed from the Empyrean, the bottom of the creation, to which its dregs and baser elements sank. The actual centre, indeed, was Hell; in the spatial sense the medieval world was literally diabolocentric. And the whole sublunar region was, of course, incomparably inferior to the resplendent and incorruptible heavens above the moon. Thus Montaigne, still adhering to the older astronomy, could consistently describe man’s dwelling-place as “the filth and mire of the world, the worst, lowest, most lifeless part of the universe, the bottom story of the house.”

See n. to Par. XXII, 134-35.

In Dante’s phraseology the reference to “le vite spirituali ad una ad una” suggests a great chain of beings, reaching down, then up, leading (as an experience of the wayfarer) all the way to God.

25. supplica: “Supplica” with the dative is a latinizing construction. Cf. Par. XV, 85.

25–26. di virtute tanto: “For so much power.” Virtù has
been used frequently in the poem in this sense, and for the present context a first notable example might be recalled in Virgil’s address to Beatrice at the beginning (Inf. II, 76): “O donna di virtù.”

26-27. *con li occhi levarsi più alto*: The phrase should remind the reader that Bernard and Dante stand on the floor of the amphitheater, in the yellow center of the rose, and that the whole “eye tour” of that amphitheater has so far been by reflected light. That is, though Dante has perforce been standing at the center of the area where the descending light of glory strikes upon the convex surface of the Primum Mobile, hence has been standing in the direct downward line of that light, he has thus far not ventured to look *directly* up into that light nor to seek to see God through it, something he will now do, on Bernard’s urging, and through the grace that comes from Mary’s granting and God’s granting of the saint’s prayer. The remainder of this journey is up through the downpouring light of glory, up along its beam. Dante’s position, standing beside Bernard at the center of the rose, corresponds to that of the blessed where they sit gazing up into the light. It should be remembered that the light of glory was defined in verses numbered 100-102 (a tercet), in a canto numbered 30 or XXX. See n. to *Par.* XXX, 100-102.

27. *più alto verso*: The phrase is important in this context, for it introduces a modification that bears a touch of relativity. Is the wayfarer merely to *approach* God (“l’ultima salute”)? Is he not actually to *attain* to God, move upwards *all the way to Him*? The answer is yes, of course—otherwise this journey could not be said to reach its goal. Yet it should be recalled that each of the blessed—each of the human souls, that is, as well as each of the angels—attains to that *measure* of the beatific vision which an original endowment of grace (see “primiero acume,” *Par.* XXXII, 75, and the corresponding note) makes it possible for him to receive. So is it with this living man, who is now to be permitted to attain to *his own particular limit* of vision. And as the action of the poem narrows to this single and simple focus of attainment in these terms, the reader should remember that what this
mortal wayfarer reports of his limited experience is to be taken as just that: one living man’s final experience in what theological doctrine knows as “rapture.” St. Paul’s uplifting is always cited as the exemplary instance of rapture, the only difference being that Paul confessed that he could not give a report of what he saw, whereas this poet is now to strive (with all the labor and difficulty which he declares) to convey to the reader, in rhymed words, his own final experience: his vision of God, face to face, in rapture. l’ultima salute: “The beatific vision” termed “fine di tutt’ i disii” in vs. 46 and “sommo piacer” in vs. 33.

28–30. E io . . . scarsi: Bernard’s phrasing “che mai per mio veder non arsi,” with “arsi” in the preterite, points back to his own ardor, as a “contemplante,” when on earth he “burned” with the desire to have the experience in rapture which he now implores for this living man. See Par. XXXI, 111, and n. to Par. XXXI, 110-11.

29. prieghi: The use of “prieghi” here, then “priegeo” in the next verse, followed by “prieghi” (vs. 32) and “priegeo” again (vs. 34) clearly builds up a sense of ardor and urgency which Bernard puts into this his prayer to the Queen of Heaven.


31. perché: “That,” as the following subjunctive (“disleghi”) makes clear. disleghi: “Dispel.”

31–32. perché tu . . . tuoi: Cf. Boethius, Consol. philos. III, ix, 25-28:

Dissice terrenae nebulas et pondera molis
Atque tuo splendore mica! Tu namque serenum,
Tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere finis,
Principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus idem.

Cast off the earthly weight wherewith I am opprest,
Shine as Thou art most bright, Thou only calm and rest
To pious men whose end is to behold Thy ray,
Who their beginning art, their guide, their bound,
and way.
The reader should look closely at the original Latin of Boethius here, rather than at the English translation, for “terrenae nebulas” corresponds exactly to Bernard’s “nube,” and “pondera molis” points to what has already been termed the “mortali pondo” of the wayfarer (Par. XXVII, 64); see n. to Par. XXXII, 139. The living man brings clouds inherent in his mortal condition to this loftiest of all experiences, to the sight of God face to face; and these mists must be dispelled, a matter quite in line with the whole preparation for final vision which is stated in Par. XXX, 54, in terms of “making the candle able to bear the flame.”

32. co’ prieghi tuoi: It is Bernard’s prayer that Mary, in her turn, should pray for this.

33. sì che ’l sommo piacer: “Piacer” is here in the objective focus, as frequently in the poem, beginning with Inf. V, 104. It is now used in referring to God as the final goal (cf. n. to vs. 27). Other such phrasings may be recalled, for example, Par. VIII, 87: “là ’ve ogne ben si termina e s’inizia.” li = gli. sì dispieghi: “Be manifested to him.” The manifesting will indeed prove to be a gradual unfolding, which is the literal meaning of the verb dispiegare.

35-36. che conservi sani . . . suoi: Bernard’s particular request looks back to earth, to the return of this living man to the mortal world, where he will need Mary’s continuing guardianship, especially to keep him from the sin of pride, the pride he might feel in having been granted, while still among the living, this most extraordinary experience of the beatific vision (“tanto veder”). The phrases “vinca tua guardia” and “i movimenti umani” of vs. 37 make this meaning clear. That the wayfaring Dante while on earth prayed to Mary every morning and every evening we have been assured by the poet (Par. XXIII, 88-89), who has repeatedly caused his own ultimate salvation to be predicted in his poem, beginning with Charon’s words to him in Inf. III, 91-93.

38-39. vedi Beatrice . . . le mani: This is our last glimpse of Beatrice, the last mention of her name in the poem; and
the singling out of her in the impressive scene in which so many other blessed souls clasp their hands, as they join Bernard in his prayer, is the culminating tribute to Beatrice by this poet who first began to write of her in youthful verses, and then in the Vita nuova (XXVI, 6) as that “miracle on earth” which was leading him to God.

39. *per*: “Per” is the equivalent of the Latin *pro*.

40. *Li occhi*: Mary’s eyes, which of course can be clearly discerned by the wayfarer, even though he stands so far below her, since such is the nature of vision here (cf. Par. XXX, 121-23).


42. *son grati*: The verb in the present tense bears a touch of exhortation to mortals to direct their prayers to her.

43. *indi a l’esterno lume s’addrizzaro*: Mary’s looking down to Bernard, then turning her eyes to the eternal light, may be compared to Beatrice’s similar posture and act, after Dante addresses his paean to her (cf. Par. XXXI, 91-93).

44-45. *nel qual . . . chiaro*: It will be seen that the phrase “nel qual” brings out the point in the note to vss. 26-27, namely, that vision through the descending light of glory is an upward ascent reaching, for each creature, the limit of the individual capacity given at birth by God. Mary’s limit in this regard is thus the highest of any creature, including even that of the highest angel. For this concept, see Richard of St. Victor, In Cantica Canticorum explicatio XXXIX: “[Maria] supra angelos quoque est, quia eos puritate supergreditur, dum divinitatem clarius illis contemplatur.” (“Moreover, Mary is above the angels, because she surpasses them in purity, while she contemplates more clearly the divinity than they do.”) This is implied in earlier verses (Par. IV, 28-30). The verb “s’invii” here further brings out this most essential point, with its clear suggestion of penetration and of reaching, on the part of the creature, the limit of its powers.

As this kind of penetration up through the light to his own limit is now to begin on the part of the wayfaring Dante, it
may be well to recall the “coming full circle” again in the statement of such a truth, for it is emphatically affirmed in the opening verses of the Paradiso (Par. I, 7-9) in the phrase “appressando sé al suo desìre” and in the verb “si profonda.”

And, as the final lap of the wayfarer’s journey begins, the poem itself may be said to complete a circle, in its action, for it opened by focusing on a man struggling to attain to a light which was illuminating a summit, the summit of a mountain (Inf. I, 13-30). The scene there and the action was as simple as could be: a man, a light, and struggle to reach the light. The poem has returned, here at its end, to this simplest kind of “stage set” and to this line of action.

46-48. E io ch’al fine . . . finii: The first words of this tercet turn the focus of the action into the simplest possible terms, as noted: only an “io” now and a light to be penetrated, upwards to the “goal of all desires” (cf. Par. XXII, 61-65). Virgil’s promise to the wayfarer, as the journey reached a first but (as is now clear) subordinate goal, may be remembered (see Purg. XXVII, 115-17).

47. appropinquava: I.e., mi avvicinavo. sì com’ io dovea: Cf. Purg. XII, 7: “sì come andar vuolsi rife’mi.”

48. l’ardor del desiderio in me finii: The meaning of the verb in this verse is much debated, but one aspect of that meaning seems beyond discussion: “finii” cannot here be in a normal signification of “bring to an end.” Indeed, the context requires that the meaning be the exact opposite, i.e., “I brought the ardor of my desire to its highest intensity.” Bernard is urging the wayfarer on in precisely this sense, and the importance of the wayfarer’s co-operation in the final act is thus stressed—and continues to be stressed. The “desiderio” (here, and as it continues) is the desire to attain to the highest possible vision of the Godhead. This implies a maximum effort on the part of the wayfarer which can only succeed if grace from above uplights at every step. It should be noted, in any case, that the poet’s conception of the final act is not that of the mystic passive surrender, or the ideal of nirvana. Grace from above descends to help the struggling soul, but
it is a soul that itself *struggles* toward the final attainment. Some commentators (with a certain measure of justness) have viewed this final act of the poem as epic in its nature.

49-51. *Bernardo m’accennava . . . volea:* Strictly speaking, the poet is once more guilty of a momentary slip in maintaining the point of view, a slip that may be compared with that of *Purg.* XXI, 10-12 (which is perhaps the only other instance of this), for if, as is affirmed, he was “already such as Bernard desired,” he was indeed already completely intent on gazing into the light, and therefore could not have seen that Bernard was gesturing and smiling to urge that he do so. Bernard, in any case, disappears from the reader’s attention at this point, and the poem enters into the simplest of focuses: one actor (one who would *see*) and one goal, God.

52-54. *ché la mia vista . . . vera:* The action of the poem is now entirely a matter of vision (“vista”), of ever increasing vision, and of vision that is given from above, through grace, a fact which “venendo” stresses, for vision *comes* in this sense, and *becomes* ever clearer.

52. *sincera:* “Pure.”

53. *e più e più intrava per lo raggio:* The essential nature of this last stretch of the journey is thus declared, from the wayfarer’s point of view. He (i.e., his gaze) penetrates (cf. *Par.* XXXII, 143) farther and farther upwards through the descending light of glory, which sheds greater and greater grace upon him (i.e., greater and greater revelation). It is essential to follow this double movement: upwards on the part of the mortal man’s *seeing* (penetration to the highest mystery) and downwards on the part of the divine revelation (“venendo,” vs. 52).

54. *che da sé è vera:* Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 16, a. 5, resp.:

> Veritas invenitur in intellectu, secundum quod apprehendit rem ut est; et in re, secundum quod habet esse conformabile intellectui. Hoc autem maxime invenitur in Deo. Nam esse eius non solum est conforme suo in-

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tellectui, sed etiam est ipsum suum intelligere; et suum intelligere est mensura et causa omnis alterius esse, et omnis alterius intellectus; et ipse est suum esse et intelligere. Unde sequitur quod non solum in ipso sit veritas, sed quod ipse sit ipsa summa et prima veritas.

Truth is found in the intellect according as it apprehends a thing as it is; and in things according as they have being conformable to an intellect. This is to the greatest degree found in God. For His being is not only conformed to His intellect, but it is the very act of His intellect; and His act of understanding is the measure and cause of every other being and of every other intellect, and He Himself is His own existence and act of understanding. Whence it follows not only that truth is in Him, but that He is truth itself, and the sovereign and first truth.

But “vera” here stresses not only intellect in God and understanding, but Being as well. The verse looks to the origin of the high light, the light of glory (which is soon to be disclosed to the wayfarer), looks to God as the supreme Existence.

55-57. Da quinci innanzi . . . oltraggio: It is the poet’s voice that now breaks in upon the action, speaking in the present tense and reaffirming what is declared at the beginning of the Paradiso (a fact that should be clearly recalled by the reader, for through it he sees again how, thematically, this third can
tica of the poem comes full circle, how it describes a circle, as the Inferno and the Purgatorio do not). By now no reader of the Paradiso can fail to be aware that “circle” (and “circling”) is the dominant pattern of this last lofty realm, in so many ways; and he is soon to see that the very last image of the Paradiso is precisely circle and circling. The verses at the beginning should be remembered in this regard. See Par. I, 4-9:

Nel ciel che più de la sua luce prende
fu’ io, e vidi cose che ridire
né sa né può chi di là sù discende;
The poet now, returned to earth and struggling to go back over the way of the journey in memory, in order to report this final experience, step by step (as St. Paul had not done of his), becomes an active figure (as a voice) in the remaining narrative. The voice speaks, of course, in the present tense, for the poet's struggle is now. This now alternates from here on with the then of the narrative, and when the then and the now, as two lines of this final action, merge, the poem ends, in a focus of eternity.

55. maggio = maggiore.

56. che 'l parlar mostra: Some editors have accepted the reading “che 'l parlar nostro,” but Petrocchi's acceptance of “mostra” seems justifiable (see his note on this). The theme is not only that of memory’s shortcoming, but of the inability even to convey that which is remembered. Thus the poet's struggle is a double one, to remember and to express, each of these efforts falling short of full attainment, as subsequent verses now repeatedly affirm.

57. oltraggio: The best gloss to the meaning here is to be found in Par. I, 8: “nastro intelletto si profonda tanto.” In older Italian, as Sapegno points out, oltraggio did not have the pejorative connotation that it has in modern usage. (Cf. the English cognate outrage and the French outrance, all forms being based on the Latin ultra, “beyond.”) The meaning here is “excess,” but only in the sense of profondarsi tanto, as above, and since this penetration was made possible by God, it is not possible that the term should be pejorative: here there can be no hubris!

58–63. Qual è colui . . . essa: This simile of the dreamer trying to recall his dream should not suggest in any way that the actual experience reported is that of a dream. (See n. to Par. XXXII, 139.) This is a simile, after all!
59. *la passione impressa*: The “emotion” or “feeling” left by the dream.

60. *l’altro*: What was actually seen in the dream.

61. *cotal son io*: “Such am I.” The verb in the present tense emphatically declares that this is indeed the poet speaking, voicing his struggle *now*. It may be further observed that this voice which breaks into the narrative (in the past tense) affirms not only time, but place as well. Dante’s achievement in terminating his great structure should not be overlooked in this regard, nor taken for granted, for it should be noted that in its stress on place (down here on earth, where the wayfarer, now returned from his journey, speaks out as the poet) the poem bears explicitly and emphatically in its end the *return to earth* (see the note on the closing verse of the *Comedy*). *cessa*: “Falls away,” “fades out.”

62. *mia visione*: “Visione” is not to be understood as “dream vision,” of course (cf. *Par.* XXXII, 139), but simply as “that which I saw, and now see in memory.” Cf. *Par.* XVII, 128, where Cacciaguida uses *visione* in this sense as he enjoins Dante to “make manifest all his vision,” i.e., “everything you have seen.” *distilla*: “Drips,” drop by drop, as it were. Grandgent observes: “Both the sweetness and the thinness of the recollection are reflected by the tinkling rhyme in -illa.”

63. *il dolce = la dolcezza. che nacque*: The verb in the preterite moves the narrative back into the past again.

64–66. *Così la neve . . . Sibilla*: The theme of “fade-out of vision” is conveyed by some of the most beautiful verses in this ending of a great structure.


65–66. *così al vento . . . Sibilla*: The reference is to the Cumaean Sibyl or prophetess of Cumae in Campania, who was
consulted by Aeneas before he descended to the infernal regions and accompanied him on his journey, as is related in *Aen.* VI. The description here is borrowed from Virgil; see *Aen.* III, 441-52, where Helenus, son of Priam, king of Chaonia, describes to Aeneas how he is to consult the Cumaean Sibyl on his arrival in Italy:

huc ubi delatus Cumaean accesseris urbem
divinosque lacus et Averna sonantia silvis,
insanam vatem aspicies, quae rupe sub ima
fata canit foliisque notas et nomina mandat.
quaeque in foliis descripsit carmina virgo,
digerit in numerum atque antro seclusa relinquit.
illa manent immota locis neque ab ordine cedunt;
verum eadem, verso tenuis cum cardine ventus
impulit et teneras turbavit ianua frondes,
umquam deinde cavo volitantia prendere saxo
neque revocare situs aut iungere carmina curat;
inconsulti abeunt sedemque odere Sibyllae.

And when, thither borne, thou drawest near to the town of Cumae, the haunted lakes, and Avernus with its rustling woods, thou shalt look on an inspired prophetess, who deep in a rocky cave sings the Fates and entrusts to leaves signs and symbols. Whatever verses the maid has traced on leaves she arranges in order and stores away in the cave. These remain unmoved in their places and quit not their rank; but when at the turn of the hinge a light breeze has stirred them, and the open door scattered the tender foliage, never does she thereafter care to catch them, as they flutter in the rocky cave, nor to recover their places, nor to unite the verses; uncounselled, men depart, and loathe the Sibyl's seat.

67–75. *O somma luce . . . vittoria*: These three tercets constitute a final invocation by the poet, who no longer appeals to the Muses (*Inf.* II, 7; *Purg.* I, 8) or to Apollo (*Par.* I, 13), but to God himself and to that light "which in itself is true" (vs. 54). This is the last invocation in the poem and is followed by the closing verses which recount that which (invoked by grace) "returned *somewhat* to memory" (vs.
73), that which is the merest particle or glimpse of the supreme vision of God face to face. What grace grants to the poet's memory now will be passed on to future generations of readers and will, though the tiniest spark, be *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (for a similar use of "favilla," cf. the invocation addressed to Apollo, *Par.* I, 34, and for a similar entreaty in that invocation, see *Par.* I, 22-24).


69. *parevi = apparivi*.

73. *per tornare*: "By returning."

75. *tua vittoria*: Thy power and excellence whereby Thou dost surpass all things.

76–78. *Io credo . . . aversi*: For a similar statement, cf. *Par.* XXV, 118. Dante is able to "endure" the brightness of God's light of glory, a brightness increasing, as through it he draws ever nearer to the vision face to face. In vss. 100-102 we are to be told that it is not possible to turn away from this light.

78. *aversi*: "Averted."

79. *E' mi ricorda*: The impersonal use of the verb, now with the impersonal subject expressed, "e'" ("it")—literally, "it remembers me." *ardito*: "Bold" (but in a good sense). The adjective serves to keep to the fore the wayfarer's active participation in the final movement toward final vision, which is now declared.

80–81. *tanto ch'1' giunsi . . . infinito*: The upward movement through the ray of light has finally reached its goal, as a verse numbered eighty-one declares! (In medieval numerology it is expected that the digits be added together, and nine is the number of miracle, as every reader of the *Vita nuova* knows.)

81. *aspetto*: "Gaze." *valore infinito*: God is thus named "the Infinite Worth" as the journey in gazing attains to Him through the light of glory by which He sees Himself. See C. S. Singleton (1958), pp. 20-23.
82–84. Oh abbondante grazia ... consunsi: The exclamatory tercet looks ahead to the end of the action, i.e., the increase of vision, as expressed finally in vs. 142.

82. presunsi: "Presumed," but in the same good sense that was connoted by "ardito" before (vs. 79), for now it is emphatically affirmed that this "presumption" was through abounding grace from above.

84. la veduta vi consunsi: The wayfaring Dante will reach the limit of vision that was accorded him potentially at birth, by an original act of grace on the part of the Creator. See n. to Par. XXXII, 75.

85–87. Nel suo profondo ... si squaderna: The gradual advance in vision continues. It has been termed a penetration, and now "profondo" suggests "deep" mystery and further penetration thereunto. Thus, up through the light of glory, the wayfarer begins to see more particularly the Infinite Worth which has become visible, finally, through the light. This first sight of that Worth presents the aspect of the "all-containing" Godhead of established doctrine. (See Par. XIII, 53-54.) This, in one conception of the universe, was expressed in terms of the Empyrean heaven being the mind of God, thus obviously containing all. But now we come into ever clearer vision of God, not as a circumference, but as an all-containing center. See n. to Par. XXVIII, 41-42.

85. s'interna: "Is contained within itself" (it is possible that the poet intended the choice of verb in this case to reflect the Trinity or triune Godhead, a terno).

86. legato con amore in un volume: For the familiar metaphor of the book of the created universe, see C. S. Singleton (1949), pp. 37-41. This book is now seen to be contained in the Godhead and there bound by love.

87. ciò che per l'universo si squaderna: The book of the universe is contained in God and is bound there, whereas, as it exists outside of the Godhead, in the physical universe, it is "unbound" ("si squaderna"), it is so many separate quires
(Italian *quaderni*, from the Latin *quaterni*, “four each,” by fours, from *quattuor*, “four”). Thus a quire (*quaderno*), in the making of a medieval manuscript book, consisted of four sheets of paper or parchment, folded together to make eight leaves or sixteen pages, these quires being then bound together to make the book.

Now, even as “s'interna” in vs. 85 bears within itself the number three (*ter*), so *quaderno* (the noun from which the poet has formed the verb *squadernarsi*) exhibits the number four. This symbolism of a number three and a number four will again appear in the closing verses of the *canto* and concerns the established symbolism of *three* for spirit and of *four* for matter, the elemental world (the elements being four: fire, air, water, earth). Thus the book which is bound with love in God is, in the material universe created by God, “unquired” or reduced to so many “fours,” and their relations to each other. See n. to Par. XVII, 37-39.

88–90. *sustanze e accidenti . . . lume*: That which is here seen “bound” in God are the substances and accidents and their relationships which are scattered throughout the universe. A “substance” is that which subsists in itself (a creature, a person, or an angel, for example), whereas an “accident” is that which subsists, not in itself, but as a quality in some substance. For an extended discussion of the terms *sustanzia* and *accidente* in such meanings, see *Vita nuova* XXV (see C. S. Singleton, 1949, pp. 75-77), and see the frequent use of *sustanza* in this sense throughout the *Comedy*. Neither substances nor accidents exist in God, but may be seen reflected in Him as in that mirror that reflects all things (*Par. XXVI, 107*), and *as* reflected in Him they are seen to be “conflati insieme” (“fused together”), along with their relationships (“costume”), all this in such a miraculous way that the poet’s expression of it gives but the vaguest glimpse (“semplice lume”) or slightest notion of what he thus sees.

What the poet here observes is treated in a *summa* of theology in terms of the perfection of God. Thus Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* I, q. 4, a. 2, resp., writes:

*Cum ergo Deus sit prima causa effectiva rerum, oportet*
omnia rerum perfectiones praeexistere in Deo secundum eminentiorem modum. Et hanc rationem tangit Dionysius cap. 5 de divin. Nomin. (a med. lect. 1), dicens de Deo, quod non quidem hoc est, hoc autem non est; sed omnia est, ut omnium causa.

Secundo vero ex hoc quod supra ostensum est, quaest. 3, art. 4, quod Deus. est ipsum esse per se subsistens; ex quo oportet quod totam perfectionem essendi in se contineat. Manifestum est enim quod si aliquod calidum non habeat totam perfectionem calidi, hoc ideo est, quia calor non participatur secundum perfectam rationem; sed, si calor esset per se subsistens, non posset ei aliquid deesse de virtute caloris. Unde cum Deus sit ipsum esse subsistens, nihil de perfectione essendi potest ei deesse. Omnium autem perfectiones pertinent ad perfectionem essendi: secundum hoc enim aliqua perfecta sunt, quod aliquo modo esse habent; unde sequitur quod nullius rei perfectio Deo desit. Et hanc etiam rationem tangit Dionysius, 5 cap. de div. Nom. (a med. lect. 1), dicens, quod Deus non quodam modo est existens; sed simpliciter, et incircumscripte totum in se ipso uniformiter esse praecipit: et postea subdit, quod ipse est esse subsistentibus.

Since therefore God is the first effective cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way. Dionysius implies the same line of argument by saying of God (Div. Nom. v): It is not that He is this and not that, but that He is all, as the cause of all. Secondly, from what has been already proved, God is existence itself, of itself subsistent (q. 3, a. 4). Consequently, He must contain within Himself the whole perfection of being. For it is clear that if some hot thing has not the whole perfection of heat, this is because heat is not participated in its full perfection; but if this heat were self-subsisting, nothing of the virtue of heat would be wanting to it. Since therefore God is subsisting being itself, nothing of the perfection of being can be wanting to Him. Now all created perfections are
included in the perfection of being; for things are per­
fect, precisely so far as they have being after some fash­
ion. It follows therefore that the perfection of no one 
thing is wanting to God. This line of argument, too, is 
implied by Dionysius (loc. cit.), when he says that, 
God exists not in any single mode, but embraces all be­
ing within Himself, absolutely, without limitation, uni­
formly; and afterwards he adds that, He is the very 
existence to subsisting things.

91–93. La forma . . . godo: By “the universal form of this 
knot” is meant the absolute principle of this union, this “con­
flation” or fusion of all things temporal and eternal in the 
Creator (see the quotation from Thomas Aquinas in the pre­
ceding note). And this is such a supreme revelation to any 
mortal eye that the poet, in the very affirmation of his glimps 
of it, feels a glow of contentment which seems to confirm that 
his report is correct.

94–96. Un punto solo . . . d’Argo: Vs. 93 brings in the voice 
of the poet again, in the present tense (“mi sento ch’i’ 
godo”). Now that voice continues in a most remarkable re­
ference to the falling-away of memory of this his high experi­
ence. Thus one single moment of that experience, his “oltrag­
ggio” (vs. 57) as now recovered in memory, comports more 
forgetfulness (oblivion, loss of memory) “than twenty-five 
centuries have been for the adventure which made Neptune 
mavel at the shadow of Argo.” The expedition of the Argo­
nauts, under Jason, in search of the golden fleece (Inf. 
XVIII, 86-87; Par. II, 16-18) was thought to have occurred 
in the thirteenth century B.C. Philalethes computes the 
twenty-five centuries which Dante supposes to have elapsed 
between the date of his journey and that of the expedition of 
the Argonauts as follows: to the birth of Christ, 1,300 years; 
to the founding of Rome, 750 + 1,300 = 2,050 years; to 
the fall of Troy, 431 + 2,050 = 2,481 years; to the sailing 
of the Argo, 42 + 2,481 = 2,523 years, or rather more than 
twenty-five centuries. The Argo, a fifty-oared ship built by 
Argus, son of Phrixus (or of Danaus), was the first ship ever
built: hence Neptune's surprise at seeing it cast a shadow upon the sea.

97–99. *Così la mente mia... accesa*: The voice of the narrator returns, in the past tense, as always, and the “così” returns the reader to the line of the narrative. The verb *mirare*, here stressed by repetition, can always connote “marvel,” as it does in this case, and for a moment now the wayfarer remains “fixed” and “motionless” in his contemplation of the marvel that is disclosed to him: God in His perfection, as containing all things within Himself.

99. *faceasi = si faceva. accesa*: “Kindled,” with burning desire to see more and more.

100–102. *A quella luce... consenta*: “In that Light one becomes such that it is impossible ever to consent to turn from it to see aught else” (Gr). In *Summa theol.* I-II, q. 5, a. 4, resp., Thomas Aquinas notes that “perfecta beatitudo hominis in visione divinae essentiae consistit. Est autem impossible quod aliquis videns divinam essentiam velit eam non videre.” (“Man’s perfect Happiness consists in the vision of the Divine Essence. Now it is impossible for anyone seeing the Divine Essence, to wish not to see It.”) Aquinas continues: “Visio autem divinae essentiae replet animam omnibus bonis, cum coniungat fonti totius bonitatis. . . . Sic ergo patet, quod propria voluntate beatus non potest beatitudinem deserere.” (“But the vision of the Divine Essence fills the soul with all good things, since it unites it to the source of all goodness. . . . It is thus evident that the happy man cannot forsake Happiness of his own accord.”)

103. *però = perciò. 'l ben, ch'è del volere obietto*: Good is the object of the will, of volition, even as knowledge or seeing is the object of the intellect. Will and intellect, and their respective objects, must be kept in mind for a proper understanding of the end of the poem. We are now told that *all* good is contained in the Godhead, therefore it is impossible for the will to turn away from such an object. It is the end or goal of all desires (vs. 46).
104. tutto s’accoglie in lei: Cf. vss. 85-87.

104-5. e fuor di quella . . . perfetto: See n. to vss. 88-90 on the perfection of God.

106-14. Omai sarà . . . si travagliava: Three tercets stress again the inability of the poet to express what he saw. “Henceforth, even in the things I remember, my speech will fall shorter than that of a babe” (Gr).

107. fante: Cf. Par. XXX, 82: “fantin.”

109. sembianente: “Appearance,” but with the suggestion of “face,” and therefore already the suggestion of person, of a personal God. This is merely a suggestion, of course, for a face as such is not actually beheld here (unless in our human image within the Second Person), but such is not the meaning.

111. che tal è sempre qual s’era davante: Here the poet shows his responsibility to the dogmatic truth that God is unchanging in Himself, therefore the gradual revelation and increase of vision which he reports must be assigned to the mortal beholder, whose powers of vision are growing by the moment: “la vista che s’avvalorava in me guardando” (vss. 112-13). s’era davante: Si (“s’”) here is the pleonastic reflexive, distancing and identifying.

112-14. ma per la vista . . . si travagliava: The wayfarer’s powers of vision increase momentarily, as he changes (it being unthinkable that the object of his vision should change). The verb travagliare suggests, however, the struggle on the part of the wayfarer toward clearer and clearer vision (cf. the English travail).

115-17. Ne la profonda . . . contenenza: The object of vision, the triune Godhead, now becomes visible in Its triunity.

115. sussistenza: Cf. “sustanze” in vs. 88 and see n. to vss. 88-90.

116. parvermi = mi parvero, mi apparvero.
116–17. *tre giri* . . . *contenienza*: The reader will come to see that *giro* here means “circling” as well as “circle,” since it can also be termed a “circulazion” (vs. 127). It is important to conceive the concrete image so: the three “giri” are not motionless, but are spinning and are thus completely active, not stationary; and spinning in this instance (as everywhere in the *Paradiso*) symbolizes intellection and perfection in complete actualization. All is active in God, nothing is passive.

117. *di tre colori e d’una contenenza*: The poet’s phrase does complete justice to the theological truth: three persons in one nature, three colors in one and the same dimension.

118–19. *e l’un . . . reflesso*: One, the second *giro*, seems reflected from the first (cf. *Par*. XIII, 55-57), just as one arch of a double rainbow is reflected from the other (cf. *Par*. XII, 10-13). This is the second person of the Trinity, the Son begotten by the Father, the first *giro*.

119–20. *e l’terzo . . . si spiri*: This is the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, who is, by definition, the love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father. Cf. *Par*. X, 2, where the verb *spirare* is used to connote love. (Cf. also *Purg*. XXIV, 53, in this regard.) “Si” here is the pleonastic reflexive stressing identification. Fire symbolizes love, of course, for the third person *is* Love.

120. *quinci e quindi*: From the Father to the Son, and from the Son to the Father.

121–23. *Oh quanto . . . “poco”*: Again the poet’s voice conveying the familiar theme of the inexpressibility of this final experience.

122. *al mio concetto*: “Compared to what I remember now,” conceive now in memory.

122–23. *e questo . . . “poco”*: And what I now remember is such (i.e., so little) that it is not enough to say “little.” One should rather say “almost nothing.”

124–26. *O luce . . . arridi*: This remarkable tercet, turning—
indeed, circling—upon itself, expresses in its very movement the self-containedness of the Trinity, One and Three. The Light is addressed as one self-contained supreme Being.


125. *sola t'intendi*: The movement, the circling upon itself, begins. *e da te intelletta*: The understanding person is here the Son.

126. *e intendente te*: Now it is the Father who understands the Son. *ami e arridi*: This is the third person, the Holy Ghost, who is Love and the joy that comes from love. Cf. Matt. 11:27: “Nemo novit Filium nisi Pater, neque Patrem quis novit nisi Filius.” (“No one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son.”)

Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theol.* I, q. 34, a. 1, ad 3) writes: “Pater enim intelligendo se, et Filium, et Spiritum sanctum . . . concipit Verbum.” (“For the Father, by understanding Himself, the Son, and the Holy Ghost . . . conceives the Word.”)

127–32. *Quella circulazion . . . messo*: The reader is now brought into the final focus of the poem, which is on Christ, second person of the Trinity, as the phrases “sì concetta” and “lume reflesso” make clear. On the symbolical implications of such a final focus, see C. S. Singleton (1969), pp. 22-25.

129. *alquanto circunspetta*: How intently, how closely this wayfarer studies what is revealed to him! *circunspetta*: A Latinism, from *circumspicere*, meaning “scrutinized.”

130. *dentro da sé, del suo colore stesso*: “Our image,” Christ incarnate, the Word made flesh, second person of the Trinity, God who became man, is now exclusively focused upon and will be all the way to the end—the mystery of the Incarnation. How can our mortal flesh be any part of the Godhead, second person of the Trinity? And yet Christ has risen in the flesh (even as Mary, His mother is there, in her body) and flesh in “our image” must be here (for our faith must have it so)! Cf. *Par.* II, 37-42; XXV, 127-28; also Phil. 2:7.
Dante's phrases are emphatic as they insist on the mystery of the Word-made-flesh.

131. *pint a*: This does not suggest an addition of color, but simply affirms appearance, that which the wayfarer beheld.

*nostra effige*: "Our human image," Christ in the flesh, the Son of Man.

132. *per che 'l mio viso in lei tutto era messo*: The final focus of attention on the part of the wayfarer absolutely excludes all else: "tutto era messo."

133–35. *Qual è 'l geomètra . . . indige*: No poet was ever more daring in his final simile, in so long a poem, daring to bring into this very end the notion and image ("cold," as in geometry or mathematics!) of the geometer who studies the circle in the vain attempt to square it. "First readers" of the poem, students generally, are of course amazed at the simile, in its strong suggestion of calm, cool study of the greatest mystery of the Christian faith, the Incarnation. But so it is! And the amazement of the modern reader must arise from the abstractness, the geometrical nature, of the vision of God that terminates so long a journey. The poet's conception is Byzantine in nature and as far from the anthropomorphic as can be—except for the final scrutiny of "our effigy" in the second person, which is perhaps a corrective of the geometrical and abstract. But the reader who feels amazement at the geometrical abstractness of the final vision, face to face, should ask himself how he would present God to the reader, were he the poet. Would God the Father be an elder with a long gray beard, would the Son appear anthropomorphically as such (as in so many Italian paintings), and would the Holy Ghost be a dove? Would he have his poem end in such a vision of the Deity?


134. *per misurar lo cerchio*: In *De mon.* III, iii, 2, Dante notes: "Geometricon circuli quadraturam ignorat." ("The geometrician knows not how to square the circle.") See *Conv.* II, xiii, 27: "Lo cerchio per lo suo arco è impossibile
a quadrare perfettamente.” (“The circle, because of its curve, is impossible to square perfectly.”)

135. indige: “Is in need.”

136–38. tal era io . . . s’indova: The posture of cool scrutiny continues, scrutiny of the deepest mystery of the faith, the Incarnation. This geometer (in metaphor) really desires to square the circle, meaning to make out how the flesh, our human flesh and image, can be fitted, is fitted, into the circle of divinity.

137. si convenne: The verb expresses commensurability, which is precisely the principle that makes the squaring of the circle impossible, even for modern geometry. And incommensurability is at the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation: how can the Word have become flesh, when Word (divinity) and flesh are so incommensurate?

138. e come vi s’indova: “How it finds a place there.” “Indova” is a verb invented by Dante, based on the adverb dove.

139. ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne: Again the metaphor of “wings,” i.e., power for the upward flight to complete vision of the where and the wherefore. “Proprie penne” underscores the aspect of the wayfarer’s struggle in the attainment of vision, which the poet continues to keep to the fore, to the very end.

140–41. se non che . . . venne: The wayfarer’s wings were themselves not powerful enough to uplift him to the vision of the deepest mystery, but divine grace now intervenes to raise his sight and comprehension to that transcendental point. His mind, his power of vision, is uplifted by a flash, a lightning bolt from above, and the desired vision and comprehension is given to him, through highest grace. Established theology speaks of “man on the way to God” as a viator and of “man who attains to the beatific vision” as a comprehensor. The wayfarer, in his long journey, attains to the latter condition in these final verses. In a flash his desire to see, to comprehend, is granted him.
141. **voglia**: The term "voglia" should be carried forward by the reader to that of "disio" in vs. 143; they are synonymous. The desire (be it **voglia** or **disio**) is the desire of intellect, for comprehending vision.

142. **A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa**: The modern reader must take care to understand the term **fantasia** in its exact meaning. **Fantasia**, as noted before (see Purg. XVII, 25, where it is termed "alta"), is an image-receiving faculty, not image-making. Hence, to affirm that the high (high because of its object—cf. the analogous "morta poesi" of Purg. I, 7, and see the corresponding note) "fantasia" failed in its power at this point is equivalent to saying that the wayfarer reaches the limit of his capacity for vision, for the reception of images; that is, he cannot see (receptively) that which he desires to see (and seeing, it must be remembered, is a function of intellect and is, in the wayfarer, a desire of the intellect which is, at the moment, unfulfilled). See Dante’s comment in Conv. III, iv, 9:

> Nostro intelletto, per difetto de la virtù da la quale trae quello ch’el vede, che è virtù organica, cioè la fantasia, non puote a certe cose salire (però che la fantasia nol puote aiutare, ché non ha lo di che), sì come sono le sustanze partite da materia; de la quali se alcuna considerazione [sanza] di quella avere potemo, intendere non le potemo né comprendere perfettamente.

Our intellect, by defect of that power whence it draws whatsoever it contemplates (which is an organic power, to wit the fantasy), may not rise to certain things, because the fantasy may not aid it, for it hath not wherewithal. Such are the substances sejunct from matter, which, even though a certain consideration of them be possible, we may not understand nor comprehend perfectly.

Cf. also Par. XXIV, 24.

143-45. **ma già . . . stelle**: "Ma" has been preceded by an other "ma" (vs. 139) and a "se non che." The reader will
do well to keep his bearings with these qualifications and correctives. This “ma,” however, is the final one.

143. già volgeva: The reader will note that the subject of “volgeva” is effectively withheld until the final verse, when it emerges as “l’amor,” as love. And let it be noted at this point that all English translations of these last three verses of the poem are obliged (if they wish to keep “stars” as the very last word, which seems essential) to reduce the final sentence to a passive construction, which is symbolically incongruent with Dante’s positive active construction, with “l’amor” as the subject and first word of the final verse.  

il mio disio: In the context there can be no mistake about the meaning: the desire is the “voglia” of the wayfarer (viator) who suddenly, through an act of grace, becomes comprehensor, whose condition as such is analogous to that of the blessed, who enjoy through eternity the vision of God face to face. Why should this mortal man ever return to earth? How can he fall away from such a vision (cf. vss. 100-102)? The answer is evident: his is the experience of a living man, and he must fall from such high vision (which is like a flash of lightning) because of his “mortal pondo” (see Par. XXXII, 139). But for ever so brief a moment he has become, from viator in contemplation (and what a long via he has come!), a comprehensor, and he now has a foretaste of the beatitude that awaits him at the end of life.  

e ‘l velie: Coupled with “disio” (which is of the intellect, desire for vision), “velie” refers to the will specifically, which, of the two faculties of the immortal soul, is that which attains to the object which (in this case) is intellectually desired. Velle is Latin and as such expresses the fact that the attainment of the will (thus matching the desire of the intellect) is made possible from above, by grace descending. Thus desire (of intellect) and will to attain (of “velle,” a will that is both human and divine) emerge, at the end of this poem, as equally balanced as a wheel that evenly turns. See the verses which are the best gloss on this, at Par. XV, 73-81. Cf. also Par. XXVIII, 109-11 (intellect comes first, will follows, as here). See Thomas Aquinas, Summa theol. I-II, q. 3, a. 4, resp.
Ad beatitudinem, sicut supra dictum est, quaest. 2, art. 6, duo requiruntur: unum, quod est esse beatitudinis; aliud, quod est quasi per se accidens eius, scilicet delectatio ei adiuncta.

Dico ergo, quod quantum ad id quod est essentialiter ipsa beatitudo, impossibile est quod consistat in actu voluntatis. Manifestum est enim ex praemissis, art. 1 huius quae st., quod beatitudo est consecutio finis ultimi. Consecutio autem finis non consistit in ipso actu voluntatis; voluntas autem fertur in finem et absentem, cum ipsum desiderat, et praesentem, cum in ipso requiescens delectatur. Manifestum est autem, quod ipsum desiderium finis non est consecutio finis, sed est motus ad finem. Delectatio autem advenit voluntati ex hoc quod finis est praesens; non autem e converso ex hoc aliquid fit praesens, quia voluntas delectatur in ipso. Oportet igitur aliquid aliud esse quam actum voluntatis, per quod fit finis ipse praesens voluntati. Et hoc manifeste apparet circa fines sensibiles. Si enim consequi pecuniam esset per actum voluntatis, statim, a principio cupidus consecutus esset pecuniam, quando vult eam habere; sed a principio quidem est absens ei, consequitur autem ipsam per hoc quod manu ipsam apprehendit, vel aliquo huiusmodi; et tunc iam delectatur in pecunia habita. Sic igitur et circa intelligibilem finem contingit. Nam a principio volumus consequi finem intelligibilem; consequimur autem ipsum per hoc quod fit praesens nobis per actum intellectus; et tunc voluntas delectata conquiescit in fine iam adepto. Sic igitur essentia beatitudinis in actu intellectus consistit.

Sed ad voluntatem pertinet delectatio beatitudinem consequens, secundum quod Augustinus dicit 10 Confess. (cap. 23, ante med.), quod beatus est gaudium de veritate, quia scilicet ipsum gaudium est consummatio beatitudinis.

As stated above (q. 2, a. 6) two things are needed for happiness: one, which is the essence of happiness: the other, that is, as it were, its proper accident, i.e., the de-
light connected with it. I say, then, that as to the very essence of happiness, it is impossible for it to consist in an act of the will. For it is evident from what has been said (aa. 1, 2; q. 2, a. 7) that happiness is the attainment of the last end. But the attainment of the end does not consist in the very act of the will. For the will is directed to the end, both absent, when it desires it; and present, when it is delighted by resting therein. Now it is evident that the desire itself of the end is not the attainment of the end, but is a movement towards the end: while delight comes to the will from the end being present; and not conversely, is a thing made present, by the fact that the will delights in it. Therefore, that the end be present to him who desires it, must be due to something else than an act of the will.

This is evidently the case in regard to sensible ends. For if the acquisition of money were through an act of the will, the covetous man would have it from the very moment that he wished for it. But at that moment it is far from him; and he attains it, by grasping it in his hand, or in some like manner; and then he delights in the money got. And so it is with an intelligible end. For at first we desire to attain an intelligible end; we attain it, through its being made present to us by an act of the intellect; and then the delighted will rests in the end when attained.

So, therefore, the essence of happiness consists in an act of the intellect: but the delight that results from happiness pertains to the will. In this sense Augustine says (Conf. x. 23) that happiness is joy in truth, because, to wit, joy itself is the consummation of happiness.

144. *si come rota ch'igualmente è mossa*: "The circle, being the perfect figure, is an emblem of perfection; and circular motion symbolizes full and faultless activity. St. Thomas, *In Librum B. Dionysii De Divinis Nominibus*, Caput iv, Lectio 7: 'Et ideo circularitas motus animae completur in hoc quod ad Deum manuducit.' ['And therefore circularity completes the movement of the soul in that it leads to God.']" (Gr).
145. *l'amo che move il sole e l'altre stelle*: The last verse of the poem bears the image of Aristotle's unmoved mover, the spheres turning in desire of him, being moved by desire of him. As such, this vision of universal movement is from the earth, looking up. Thus the final verse of the poem returns the point of view to earth, with the *upward gaze* at stars here as at the end of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*. The final injunction in each case is “look upwards,” *up* being the right direction for our mind and heart. It is an injunction that was carefully built into the center of the poem as well (see C. S. Singleton, 1965). And was it not there at the beginning, too, in the figure of a wayfarer gazing toward the summit of a height illumined by the sun (“the planet that leads men aright by every path”) and longing to attain to it?
List of Works Cited
and of Abbreviations
ABBREVIATIONS

a. articulus
Aen. Aeneid (Virgil)
Anal. post. Posteriora analytica (Aristotle)
Anonimo fiorentino Commento alla Divina Commedia
d'anonimo fiorentino del secolo XIV
Conf. Confessiones (Augustine)
Consol. philos. Consolatio philosophiae (Boethius)
Conv. Convivio (Dante Alighieri)
Decam. Il Decameron (Giovanni Boccaccio)
De civ. Dei Ad Marcellinum De civitate Dei contra
paganos (Augustine)
Della comp. Della composizione del mondo (Ristoro
d'Arezzo)
De mon. De monarchia (Dante Alighieri)
De vulg. eloqu. De vulgari eloquentia (Dante Alighieri)
Epist. Epistolae (Dante Alighieri)
Eth. Nicom. Ethica Nicomachea (Aristotle)
Exp. Eth. Nicom. In decem libros Ethicorum ad Nico-
machum expositio (Thomas Aquinas)
Exp. Metaphys. In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum
expositio (Thomas Aquinas)
Georg. Georgics (Virgil)
ABBREVIATIONS

Gr Grandgent
Hist. Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem (Orosius)
Hist. schol. Historia scholastica (Petrus Comestor)
Homil. Quadragina homiliarum in Evangelia libri duo (Gregory I)
In Ezech. Homiliarum in Ezechielem prophetam libri duo (Gregory I)
Inf. Inferno (Dante Alighieri)
LCL Loeb Classical Library
lect. lectio
Metam. Metamorphoses (Ovid)
Metaphys. Metaphysica (Aristotle)
Meteor. Meteorologica (Aristotle)
MLN Modern Language Notes
Moral. Moralium libri, sive Expositio in librum b. lob (Gregory I)
Nat. hist. Naturalis historia (Pliny)
ojb. objectio
OFr Old French
Par. Paradiso (Dante Alighieri)
Phars. Pharsalia (Lucan)
Polit. Politica (Aristotle)
Purg. Purgatorio (Dante Alighieri)
q. quaestio
resp. respondeo
Rhet. Rhetorica (Aristotle)
Sent. Sententiarum libri quatuor (Peter Lombard)

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ABBREVIATIONS

Soph. elench.  *De sophisticis elenchis* (Aristotle)
Summa theol.  *Summa theologica* (Thomas Aquinas)
Suppl.  Supplementum
TC  Temple Classics
Theb.  *Thebaid* (Statius)
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“L’Amor che move il sole e l’altri stelle”: if one might only know what the poet’s feelings were when he conceived and finally wrote down that last of the 14,233 verses! A great vision of this life and of the next, a wondrous structure, “monument of unaging intellect” if ever human mind produced one, had been brought to completion, in all the symmetry, the balance, the harmony among the parts, that makes it the imitation of God’s created universe and of His providential plan for man and all creatures that it is and that it must have been conceived to be from a verse which reads: “Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita.”

One readily imagines that no poet could have endured a greater tragedy than Dante, had exile and then death at the age of 56 forced him to leave his Comedia unfinished—which would have meant that a structure (in 100 Cantos and in terza rima), designed to reflect God’s work in its completeness and perfection, would have failed of its goal. But at some time before that fatal date of mid-September, 1321, that last verse, speaking of Love to the very end, had been conceived and penned, and that Comedy to which Heaven and earth had set hand and which had made its author lean
through many years, was done, an "imitation" finished in its perfection.

The dividing line which, after such reflections on a poet's finished work, must be drawn by a commentator before speaking of the unfinished nature of his own work must be firm indeed, for reasons obvious to each and all who have followed him through to this last verse. His labors have not been poetic in the least, even his translation is in prose. In short, somewhat like M. Jourdain, he has been speaking prose throughout.

In some essential sense he now finds that the nature of his efforts were best set forth in a first Note to the reader, at the outset: so much so that one cannot do better than to quote that paragraph here:

"Many a problem in understanding awaits reader and commentator down the long unfolding line of this poem, hard problems indeed, in allegory, in symbolism, in patterns of meaning broad in nature and visible only from great pivotal points in this journey to God. Solutions to such problems will be attempted only in a supplementary volume which may well bear the title Essays and Excursuses. Meanwhile, the reader will have to bear with patience an ever-growing burden of unresolved meanings until he himself has won to the vantage ground of a fuller experience of the whole and to those vistas in retrospect through which a full, or a fuller, understanding of the total meaning may be had."

Thus, even with the completion of this sixth volume, an explicator's work remains unfinished. Perhaps, by its very nature, it will ever be so. But, at least, in this promised seventh volume, his work will be more nearly finished: se piacere sarà di colui a cui tutte le cose vivono, che la mia vita duri per alquanti anni. . . .

C.S.S.
