

Looking into his first-born with the love,
Which breathes from both eternal, the first Might
Ineffable, whence eye or mind
Can roam, hath in such order all dispos'd,
As none may see and fail to enjoy. Raise, then,
O reader! to the lofty wheels, with me,
Thy ken directed to the point, whereat
One motion strikes on th' other. There begin
Thy wonder of the mighty Architect,
Who loves his work so inwardly, his eye
Doth ever watch it. See, how thence oblique
Brancheth the circle, where the planets roll
To pour their wished influence on the world;
Whose path not bending thus, in heav'n above
Much virtue would be lost, and here on earth,
All power well nigh extinct: or, from direct
Were its departure distant more or less,
I' th' universal order, great defect
Must, both in heav'n and here beneath, ensue.

Now rest thee, reader! on thy bench, and muse
Anticipative of the feast to come;
So shall delight make thee not feel thy toil.
Lo! I have set before thee, for thyself
Feed now: the matter I indite, henceforth
Demands entire my thought. Join'd with the part,
Which late we told of, the great minister

Of nature, that upon the world imprints
The virtue of the heaven, and doles out
Time for us with his beam, went circling on
Along the spires, where each hour sooner comes;
And I was with him, weetless of ascent,
As one, who till arriv'd, weets not his coming.

For Beatrice, she who passeth on
So suddenly from good to better, time
Counts not the act, oh then how great must needs
Have been her brightness! What she was i' th' sun
(Where I had enter'd), not through change of hue,
But light transparent—did I summon up
Genius, art, practice—I might not so speak,
It should be e'er imagin'd: yet believ'd
It may be, and the sight be justly crav'd.
And if our fantasy fail of such height,
What marvel, since no eye above the sun
Hath ever travel'd? Such are they dwell here,
Fourth family of the Omnipotent Sire,
Who of his spirit and of his offspring shows;
And holds them still enraptur'd with the view.
And thus to me Beatrice: "Thank, oh thank,
The Sun of angels, him, who by his grace
To this perceptible hath lifted thee."

Never was heart in such devotion bound,

And with complacency so absolute
Dispos'd to render up itself to God,
As mine was at those words: and so entire
The love for Him, that held me, it eclips'd
Beatrice in oblivion. Naught displeas'd
Was she, but smil'd thereat so joyously,
That of her laughing eyes the radiance brake
And scatter'd my collected mind abroad.

Then saw I a bright band, in liveliness
Surpassing, who themselves did make the crown,
And us their centre: yet more sweet in voice,
Than in their visage beaming. Cinctur'd thus,
Sometime Latona's daughter we behold,
When the impregnate air retains the thread,
That weaves her zone. In the celestial court,
Whence I return, are many jewels found,
So dear and beautiful, they cannot brook
Transporting from that realm: and of these lights
Such was the song. Who doth not prune his wing
To soar up thither, let him look from thence
For tidings from the dumb. When, singing thus,
Those burning suns that circled round us thrice,
As nearest stars around the fixed pole,
Then seem'd they like to ladies, from the dance
Not ceasing, but suspense, in silent pause,
List'ning, till they have caught the strain anew:

Suspended so they stood: and, from within,
Thus heard I one, who spake: "Since with its beam
The grace, whence true love lighteth first his flame,
That after doth increase by loving, shines
So multiplied in thee, it leads thee up
Along this ladder, down whose hallow'd steps
None e'er descend, and mount them not again,
Who from his phial should refuse thee wine
To slake thy thirst, no less constrained were,
Than water flowing not unto the sea.
Thou fain wouldst hear, what plants are these, that bloom
In the bright garland, which, admiring, girds
This fair dame round, who strengthens thee for heav'n.
I then was of the lambs, that Dominic
Leads, for his saintly flock, along the way,
Where well they thrive, not sworn with vanity.
He, nearest on my right hand, brother was,
And master to me: Albert of Cologne
Is this: and of Aquinum, Thomas I.
If thou of all the rest wouldst be assur'd,
Let thine eye, waiting on the words I speak,
In circuit journey round the blessed wreath.
That next resplendence issues from the smile
Of Gratian, who to either forum lent
Such help, as favour wins in Paradise.
The other, nearest, who adorns our quire,
Was Peter, he that with the widow gave

To holy church his treasure. The fifth light,
Goodliest of all, is by such love inspired,
That all your world craves tidings of its doom:
Within, there is the lofty light, endow'd
With sapience so profound, if truth be truth,
That with a ken of such wide amplitude
No second hath arisen. Next behold
That taper's radiance, to whose view was shown,
Clearliest, the nature and the ministry
Angelical, while yet in flesh it dwelt.
In the other little light serenely smiles
That pleader for the Christian temples, he
Who did provide Augustin of his lore.
Now, if thy mind's eye pass from light to light,
Upon my praises following, of the eighth
Thy thirst is next. The saintly soul, that shows
The world's deceitfulness, to all who hear him,
Is, with the sight of all the good, that is,
Blest there. The limbs, whence it was driven, lie
Down in Cieldauro, and from martyrdom
And exile came it here. Lo! further on,
Where flames the arduous Spirit of Isidore,
Of Bede, and Richard, more than man, erewhile,
In deep discernment. Lastly this, from whom
Thy look on me reverteth, was the beam
Of one, whose spirit, on high musings bent,
Rebuk'd the ling'ring tardiness of death.

It is the eternal light of Sigebert,
Who 'scap'd not envy, when of truth he argued,
Reading in the straw-litter'd street." Forthwith,
As clock, that calleth up the spouse of God
To win her bridegroom's love at matin's hour,
Each part of other fitly drawn and urg'd,
Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet,
Affection springs in well-disposed breast;
Thus saw I move the glorious wheel, thus heard
Voice answ'ring voice, so musical and soft,
It can be known but where day endless shines.