

When by sensations of delight or pain,
That any of our faculties hath seiz'd,
Entire the soul collects herself, it seems
She is intent upon that power alone,
And thus the error is disprov'd which holds
The soul not singly lighted in the breast.
And therefore when as aught is heard or seen,
That firmly keeps the soul toward it turn'd,
Time passes, and a man perceives it not.
For that, whereby he hearken, is one power,
Another that, which the whole spirit hash;
This is as it were bound, while that is free.

This found I true by proof, hearing that spirit
And wond'ring; for full fifty steps aloft
The sun had measur'd unobserv'd of me,
When we arriv'd where all with one accord
The spirits shouted, "Here is what ye ask."

A larger aperture ofttimes is stopp'd
With forked stake of thorn by villager,
When the ripe grape imbrown, than was the path,
By which my guide, and I behind him close,
Ascended solitary, when that troop
Departing left us. On Sanleo's road
Who journeys, or to Noli low descends,
Or mounts Bismantua's height, must use his feet;

But here a man had need to fly, I mean
With the swift wing and plumes of high desire,
Conducted by his aid, who gave me hope,
And with light furnish'd to direct my way.

We through the broken rock ascended, close
Pent on each side, while underneath the ground
Ask'd help of hands and feet. When we arriv'd
Near on the highest ridge of the steep bank,
Where the plain level open'd I exclaim'd,
"O master! say which way can we proceed?"

He answer'd, "Let no step of thine recede.
Behind me gain the mountain, till to us
Some practis'd guide appear." That eminence
Was lofty that no eye might reach its point,
And the side proudly rising, more than line
From the mid quadrant to the centre drawn.
I wearied thus began: "Parent belov'd!
Turn, and behold how I remain alone,
If thou stay not."—"My son!" He straight reply'd,
"Thus far put forth thy strength;" and to a track
Pointed, that, on this side projecting, round
Circles the hill. His words so spurr'd me on,
That I behind him clamb'ring, forc'd myself,
Till my feet press'd the circuit plain beneath.
There both together seated, turn'd we round

To eastward, whence was our ascent: and oft
Many beside have with delight look'd back.

First on the nether shores I turn'd my eyes,
Then rais'd them to the sun, and wond'ring mark'd
That from the left it smote us. Soon perceiv'd
That Poet sage now at the car of light
Amaz'd I stood, where 'twixt us and the north
Its course it enter'd. Whence he thus to me:
"Were Leda's offspring now in company
Of that broad mirror, that high up and low
Imparts his light beneath, thou might'st behold
The ruddy zodiac nearer to the bears
Wheel, if its ancient course it not forsook.
How that may be if thou would'st think; within
Pond'ring, imagine Sion with this mount
Plac'd on the earth, so that to both be one
Horizon, and two hemispheres apart,
Where lies the path that Phaeton ill knew
To guide his erring chariot: thou wilt see
How of necessity by this on one
He passes, while by that on the' other side,
If with clear view shine intellect attend."

"Of truth, kind teacher!" I exclaim'd, "so clear
Aught saw I never, as I now discern
Where seem'd my ken to fail, that the mid orb

Of the supernal motion (which in terms
Of art is called the Equator, and remains
Ever between the sun and winter) for the cause
Thou hast assign'd, from hence toward the north
Departs, when those who in the Hebrew land
Inhabit, see it tow'rds the warmer part.
But if it please thee, I would gladly know,
How far we have to journey: for the hill
Mounts higher, than this sight of mine can mount."

He thus to me: "Such is this steep ascent,
That it is ever difficult at first,
But, more a man proceeds, less evil grows.
When pleasant it shall seem to thee, so much
That upward going shall be easy to thee.
As in a vessel to go down the tide,
Then of this path thou wilt have reach'd the end.
There hope to rest thee from thy toil. No more
I answer, and thus far for certain know."
As he his words had spoken, near to us
A voice there sounded: "Yet ye first perchance
May to repose you by constraint be led."
At sound thereof each turn'd, and on the left
A huge stone we beheld, of which nor I
Nor he before was ware. Thither we drew,
find there were some, who in the shady place
Behind the rock were standing, as a man

Thru' idleness might stand. Among them one,
Who seem'd to me much wearied, sat him down,
And with his arms did fold his knees about,
Holding his face between them downward bent.

"Sweet Sir!" I cry'd, "behold that man, who shows
Himself more idle, than if laziness
Were sister to him." Straight he turn'd to us,
And, o'er the thigh lifting his face, observ'd,
Then in these accents spake: "Up then, proceed
Thou valiant one." Straight who it was I knew;
Nor could the pain I felt (for want of breath
Still somewhat urg'd me) hinder my approach.
And when I came to him, he scarce his head
Uplifted, saying "Well hast thou discern'd,
How from the left the sun his chariot leads."

His lazy acts and broken words my lips
To laughter somewhat mov'd; when I began:
"Belacqua, now for thee I grieve no more.
But tell, why thou art seated upright there?
Waitest thou escort to conduct thee hence?
Or blame I only shine accustom'd ways?"
Then he: "My brother, of what use to mount,
When to my suffering would not let me pass
The bird of God, who at the portal sits?
Behoooves so long that heav'n first bear me round

Without its limits, as in life it bore,
Because I to the end repentant Sighs
Delay'd, if prayer do not aid me first,
That riseth up from heart which lives in grace.
What other kind avails, not heard in heaven?"

Before me now the Poet up the mount
Ascending, cried: "Haste thee, for see the sun
Has touch'd the point meridian, and the night
Now covers with her foot Marocco's shore."