

From centre to the circle, and so back
From circle to the centre, water moves
In the round chalice, even as the blow
Impels it, inwardly, or from without.
Such was the image glanc'd into my mind,
As the great spirit of Aquinum ceas'd;
And Beatrice after him her words
Resum'd alternate: "Need there is (tho' yet
He tells it to you not in words, nor e'en
In thought) that he should fathom to its depth
Another mystery. Tell him, if the light,
Wherewith your substance blooms, shall stay with you
Eternally, as now: and, if it doth,
How, when ye shall regain your visible forms,
The sight may without harm endure the change,
That also tell." As those, who in a ring
Tread the light measure, in their fitful mirth
Raise loud the voice, and spring with gladder bound;
Thus, at the hearing of that pious suit,
The saintly circles in their tourneying
And wond'rous note attested new delight.

Whoso laments, that we must doff this garb
Of frail mortality, thenceforth to live
Immortally above, he hath not seen
The sweet refreshing, of that heav'nly shower.

Him, who lives ever, and for ever reigns
In mystic union of the Three in One,
Unbounded, bounding all, each spirit thrice
Sang, with such melody, as but to hear
For highest merit were an ample meed.
And from the lesser orb the goodliest light,
With gentle voice and mild, such as perhaps
The angel's once to Mary, thus replied:
"Long as the joy of Paradise shall last,
Our love shall shine around that raiment, bright,
As fervent; fervent, as in vision blest;
And that as far in blessedness exceeding,
As it hath grave beyond its virtue great.
Our shape, regarmented with glorious weeds
Of saintly flesh, must, being thus entire,
Show yet more gracious. Therefore shall increase,
Whate'er of light, gratuitous, imparts
The Supreme Good; light, ministering aid,
The better disclose his glory: whence
The vision needs increasing, much increase
The fervour, which it kindles; and that too
The ray, that comes from it. But as the greed
Which gives out flame, yet it its whiteness shines
More lively than that, and so preserves
Its proper semblance; thus this circling sphere
Of splendour, shall to view less radiant seem,
Than shall our fleshly robe, which yonder earth

Now covers. Nor will such excess of light
O'erpower us, in corporeal organs made
Firm, and susceptible of all delight."

So ready and so cordial an "Amen,"
Followed from either choir, as plainly spoke
Desire of their dead bodies; yet perchance
Not for themselves, but for their kindred dear,
Mothers and sires, and those whom best they lov'd,
Ere they were made imperishable flame.

And lo! forthwith there rose up round about
A lustre over that already there,
Of equal clearness, like the brightening up
Of the horizon. As at an evening hour
Of twilight, new appearances through heav'n
Peer with faint glimmer, doubtfully descried;
So there new substances, methought began
To rise in view; and round the other twain
Enwheeling, sweep their ampler circuit wide.

O gentle glitter of eternal beam!
With what a such whiteness did it flow,
O'erpowering vision in me! But so fair,
So passing lovely, Beatrice show'd,
Mind cannot follow it, nor words express
Her infinite sweetness. Thence mine eyes regain'd

Power to look up, and I beheld myself,
Sole with my lady, to more lofty bliss
Translated: for the star, with warmer smile
Impurpled, well denoted our ascent.

With all the heart, and with that tongue which speaks
The same in all, an holocaust I made
To God, befitting the new grace vouchsaf'd.
And from my bosom had not yet upsteam'd
The fuming of that incense, when I knew
The rite accepted. With such mighty sheen
And mantling crimson, in two listed rays
The splendours shot before me, that I cried,
“God of Sabaoth! that does prank them thus!”

As leads the galaxy from pole to pole,
Distinguish'd into greater lights and less,
Its pathway, which the wisest fail to spell;
So thickly studded, in the depth of Mars,
Those rays describ'd the venerable sign,
That quadrants in the round conjoining frame.
Here memory mocks the toil of genius. Christ
Beam'd on that cross; and pattern fails me now.
But whoso takes his cross, and follows Christ
Will pardon me for that I leave untold,
When in the flecker'd dawning he shall spy
The glitterance of Christ. From horn to horn,

And 'tween the summit and the base did move
Lights, scintillating, as they met and pass'd.
Thus oft are seen, with ever-changeful glance,
Straight or athwart, now rapid and now slow,
The atomies of bodies, long or short,
To move along the sunbeam, whose slant line
Checkers the shadow, interpos'd by art
Against the noontide heat. And as the chime
Of minstrel music, dulcimer, and help
With many strings, a pleasant dining makes
To him, who heareth not distinct the note;
So from the lights, which there appear'd to me,
Gather'd along the cross a melody,
That, indistinctly heard, with ravishment
Possess'd me. Yet I mark'd it was a hymn
Of lofty praises; for there came to me
"Arise and conquer," as to one who hears
And comprehends not. Me such ecstasy
O'ercame, that never till that hour was thing
That held me in so sweet imprisonment.

Perhaps my saying over bold appears,
Accounting less the pleasure of those eyes,
Whereon to look fulfillleth all desire.
But he, who is aware those living seals
Of every beauty work with quicker force,
The higher they are ris'n; and that there

I had not turn'd me to them; he may well
Excuse me that, whereof in my excuse
I do accuse me, and may own my truth;
That holy pleasure here not yet reveal'd,
Which grows in transport as we mount aloof.