

davidbrucehaiku:

Dante's *Paradise*

By David Bruce



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WORDPRESS EDITION

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Canto 1: GOD'S GLORY

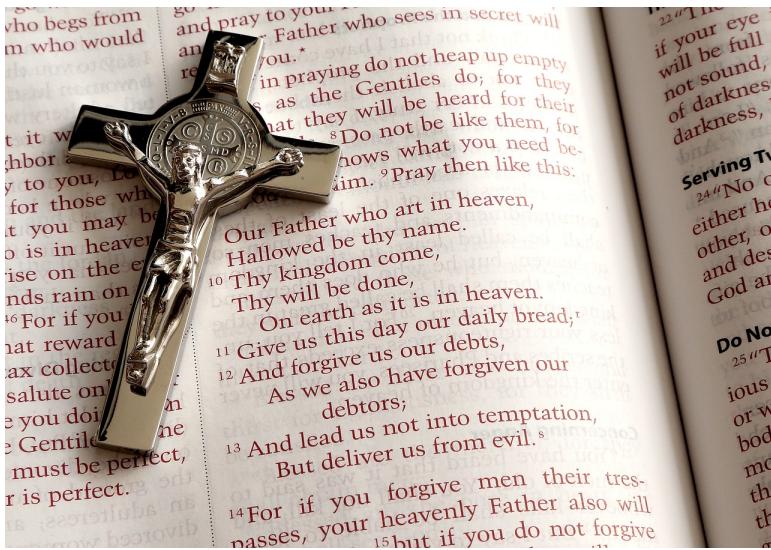


<https://pixabay.com/en/milky-way-stars-night-sky-923738/>

You see God's glory
More clearly or less clearly
Based on your merit

NOTE: God's glory can be seen throughout the universe, which God created, but you see that glory more or less clearly according to your merit.

Canto 1: POWERLESS MEMORY

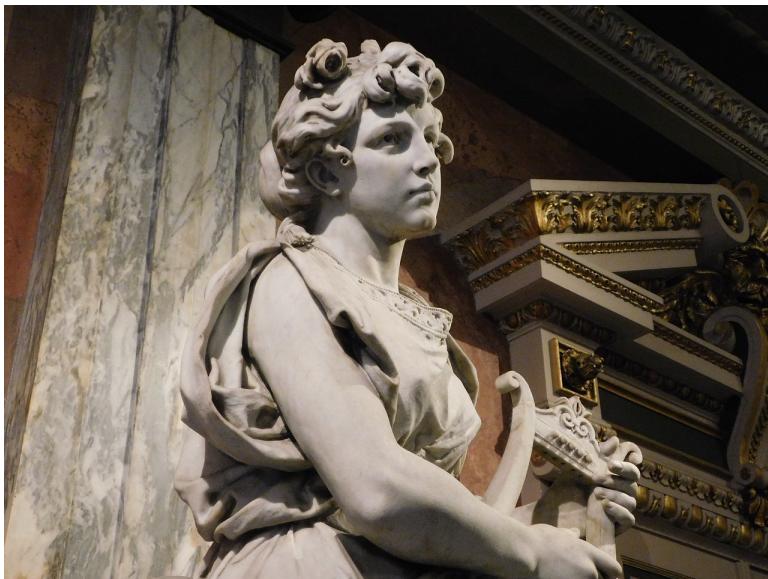


<https://pixabay.com/en/bible-rosary-prayer-pray-holy-706662/>

Experience God
Memory is powerless
You can't remember

NOTE: Dante the Poet has traveled throughout the Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise, but his memory of the experience of God is vague. In Paradise, the angels and saved souls experience God continually. This is true of people who have had mystical experiences. During the mystical experience, everything is clear. Afterward, little is remembered.

Canto 1: INVOCATION



<https://pixabay.com/en/muse-statue-mythology-sculpture-1896827/>

Apollo, help me now

Before, I asked the Nine Muses

Now I need more help

NOTE: Dante the Poet needs help to write the *Paradise*. Previously, he asked the Nine Muses for help in writing, but because the *Paradise* has a mightier theme, he also needs the help of Apollo. Parnassus, the mountain of creative endeavor, has two peaks: One is devoted to the Nine Muses, and the other is dedicated to Apollo.

Canto 1: DANTE RISES



<https://pixabay.com/en/sunrise-space-outer-globe-world-1756274/>

Soul is purified

Dante's soul: lighter than air

Dante starts to rise

NOTE: Now that Dante's soul is purified, it is lighter than air and so he starts to rise from the Forest of Eden on his way to Paradise. Because Dante is a medieval person, God allows him to experience things as a medieval person would. Medieval people believed that the Earth is the center of the universe. Above the Earth is a Sphere of Air and a Sphere of Fire; above these two Spheres is the Moon. Dante passes through these Spheres on his way to the Moon.

Canto 1: TRANSHUMANIZED



<https://pixabay.com/en/light-bulbs-light-bulb-light-energy-1125016/>

**Dante's different
He's become more than human
He's transhumanized**

NOTE: By purging his sins, Dante has become different, and this difference has to be expressed with a new word: He's become transhumanized. Now, although he doesn't realize it at first, he rises.

Canto 1: RISE OR FALL



<https://pixabay.com/en/water-drop-liquid-splash-wet-1761027/>

Either rise or fall

Weighed down by sin? Then you fall

Purified? You rise

NOTE: Our souls find their proper place in ultimate reality. Weighed down by sin? The soul falls into the Inferno. Weighed down by sin, but sincerely repented in life? Soul goes to the Mountain of Purgatory temporarily. Purged of sin? Soul rises to Paradise.

Canto 2: A DIFFICULT JOURNEY



<https://pixabay.com/en/dawn-sunset-waters-sea-ship-3361172/>

Trip to Paradise

This journey is difficult

Need ship, not small boat

NOTE: Dante the Poet warns his readers that the *Paradise* will be much more difficult to understand than the *Inferno* or the *Purgatory*. It will be a great help if you have long sought the bread of Angels — knowledge of God.

Canto 2: MOON



<https://pixabay.com/en/moon-blue-sky-universe-celestial-1527501/>

Moon waxes and wanes

Faith in God waxes and wanes

Moon is just like faith

NOTE: As Date rises to Paradise, he will stop at various places to talk to people and learn. The Moon is associated with faith, and Dante will talk to people who can teach him about religious vows.

Canto 2: MOON'S DARK SPORTS



<https://pixabay.com/en/full-moon-moon-night-sky-dark-415501/>

**Dark spots on the Moon
God's glory can be seen as
Brighter or darker**

NOTE: One way of looking at the dark spots of the Moon is that this is an example of God's mark on the universe. Listen to me carefully: God's glory is seen in

the entire universe, which He created. The dark spots of the Moon are an illustration of this: In some places God's glory can be seen more clearly. In some places God's glory can be seen less clearly. This is a poetic way of looking at the dark spots and is not intended to deny the scientific explanation.

Canto 3: FACES



<https://pixabay.com/en/model-face-beautiful-2303361/>

Pale and indistinct
Faces appear now in Moon
They are truly real

NOTE: At each stop on his way to Paradise, Dante will have the opportunity to speak to saved souls and learn from them. Here, in the Moon (yes, he is *in* the Moon), he sees pale and indistinct faces. At first, he thinks they are reflections, but they are real.

Canto 3: DONATI FAMILY MEMBERS



<https://pixabay.com/en/the-dome-of-the-sky-outdoor-nature-3314003/>

One in Inferno

One is here in Paradise

One on the Mountain

NOTE: Dante meets Piccarda Donati, who is in Paradise. Earlier, he met her brother Foresi, who is climbing the Mountain of Purgatory. Another brother, Corso, will be condemned to the Inferno when he dies in 1308. (The year Dante sees Piccarda on the Moon is 1300.) Your family does not determine where you end up in the afterlife; your freely willed actions determine that.

Canto 3: WE ARE HAPPY HERE



<https://pixabay.com/en/moon-craters-on-the-moon-957565/>

Moon is lowest sphere

We want only what we have

We are happy here

NOTE: Piccarda Donati appears to Dante on the Moon, the sphere closest to the Earth. Dante asks if she wants to be on a highest sphere, but she replies that the souls in Paradise are all perfectly happy, no matter on which sphere they will appear to Dante. God's will and the saved souls' will are perfectly aligned.

Canto 3: PARADISE IS NOT EMPTY



<https://pixabay.com/en/concert-crowd-audience-people-768722/>

No one is perfect

Paradise is not empty

God is merciful

NOTE: Piccarda Donati broke a religious vow, yet she is in Paradise. If we had to be perfect to get into Paradise, Paradise would be empty.

Canto 3: BREAKING OF RELIGIOUS VOWS



<https://pixabay.com/en/nun-church-jesus-roman-catholic-1562043/>

The Empress Constance
Also broke a religious vow
Just like Piccarda

NOTE: Both the Empress Constance and Piccarda Donati took vows to become nuns, but both were forced to marry by male relatives who sought political alliances and advancement.

Canto 4: WHERE DO THE SOULS OF THE SAVED GO AFTER DEATH?



<https://pixabay.com/en/dawn-sun-mountain-landscape-sky-190055/>

The saved souls live in
The Mystic Empyrean
Feel eternal joy

**NOTE: The Mystic Empyrean is God's dwelling place;
it is Paradise.**

Canto 4: EDUCATION



<https://pixabay.com/en/dark-full-moon-luna-moon-night-1853877/>

**Souls appear on Moon
And the other planets to
Educate Dante**

NOTE: Just as in the Inferno and on the Mountain of Purgatory, Dante talks in Paradise to souls who can help educate him. Each soul whom Dante talks to has something to teach Dante.

Canto 4: ABSOLUTE WILL AND CONDITIONED WILL



<https://pixabay.com/en/wine-corks-heart-wine-cork-love-1567598/>

People of good will
Are sometimes forced to do wrong.
Should they then be blamed?

NOTE: In some cases, they can be blamed. Absolute will means absolutely wanting to do something. It is like

a cork submerged in water: The cork will continue to try to reach the surface even when something is forcing it to stay under water. Conditioned will means wanting to do something, but the will is or can be conditioned to do something else. Both Piccarda Donati and the Empress Constance had conditioned will. They wanted to stay in the convent and keep their religious vow, but both of them were forced to leave the convent and get married. Their wills were conditioned; later, even when they could have fought to escape and return to the convent, they did not. Because of that, their merit is lesser than that of other saved souls.

Canto 4: SAINT LAWRENCE



Source: Anonymous, Mexican Painter, mid-19th century, via Wikimedia Commons

Lawrence kept his vow
His absolute will was strong
He was grilled alive

NOTE: Saint Lawrence, a deacon of the Church of Rome, was ordered to hand over the treasures of the Church. He gathered a group of ill and poor people and called them the treasures of the church although he knew, of course, that his tormentors wanted material treasures. His tormentors tortured him and grilled him alive. He told them that one side was done, so turn him over and eat. His absolute will refused to allow his will to be conditioned and give up the Church's material treasures — thereby violating his oath to protect the Church's treasures — although the alternative to allowing his will to be conditioned was a horrible death. Absolute will never consents to doing the wrong thing, no matter the consequences.

Canto 5: RADIANT



<https://pixabay.com/en/forest-hope-radiant-zen-sunflare-396025/>

Get closer to God

And become more radiant

Gain a perfect sight

NOTE: Souls who get closer to God or know that others are getting closer to God become more radiant. Beatrice knows that Dante is getting closer to God and so she becomes more radiant. A perfected soul in the Mystic Empyrean — the dwelling place of God — can see the Eternal Good.

Canto 5: GOD'S GREATEST GIFT



<https://pixabay.com/en/money-purse-bank-note-euro-leather-494163/>

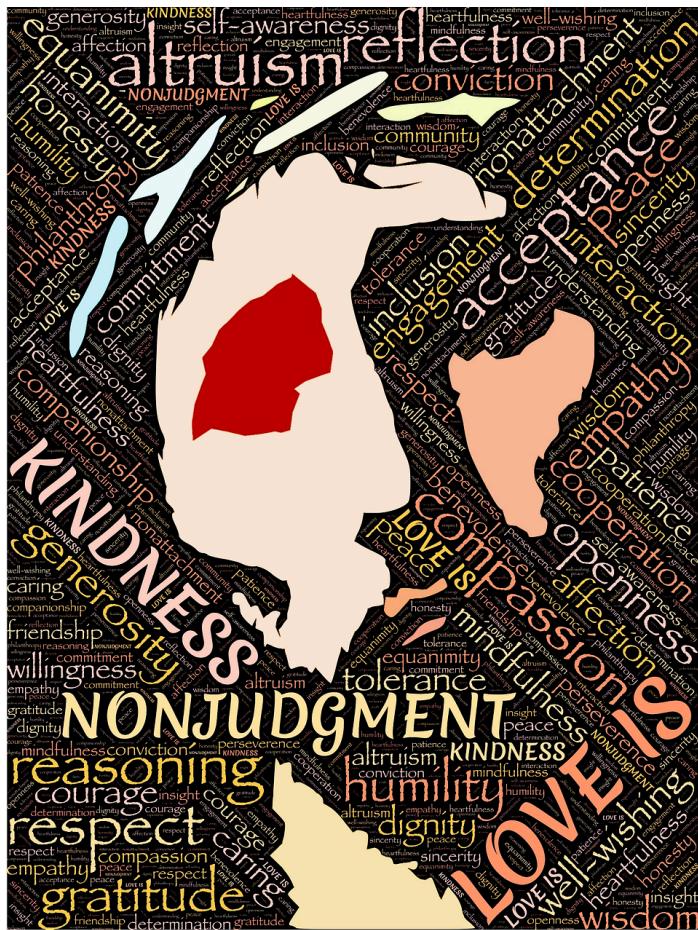
When we make a vow

— Free will is God's greatest gift —

Sacrifice free will

NOTE: God's greatest gift to us is free will: It is a gift that is like God. When we make a vow, we sacrifice free will. For example, we can make a religious vow of voluntary poverty. If we do that, we sacrifice free will: We are no longer free to make and keep as much money as we can.

Canto 5: GOD'S CONSENT



<https://pixabay.com/en/love-jesus-prophet-holy-man-christ-1221455/>

God on High consents

Only to good vows. Bad vows

Don't get His consent.

NOTE: Vowing to donate disposable income to a good charity is a good vow. Vowing to make a human sacrifice of your daughter is a bad vow.

Canto 5: RELIGIOUS VOW BROKEN?

VOLUNTEER



<https://pixabay.com/en/volunteer-hands-help-colors-2055042/>

Broke religious vow?

If Church agrees, substitute

A greater value

NOTE: Sometimes, we may break a religious vow, perhaps because of something out of our control. We can go to the Church and ask that a substitute vow be made. The substitute vow must be of greater value than the value of the original vow. For example, we may agree to volunteer to work a certain number of hours at a charity, but we find that we cannot do that. In that case, if the Church agrees, we can make a monetary donation instead of volunteering, but the value of the

monetary donation must be of greater value than the hours of volunteer work. Or, if we agreed to make a monetary donation and find that we cannot, then if the Church agrees, we can volunteer to work a certain number of hours at the charity, but the value of the hours of volunteer work must be of greater value than the monetary donation.

Canto 5:VOWS



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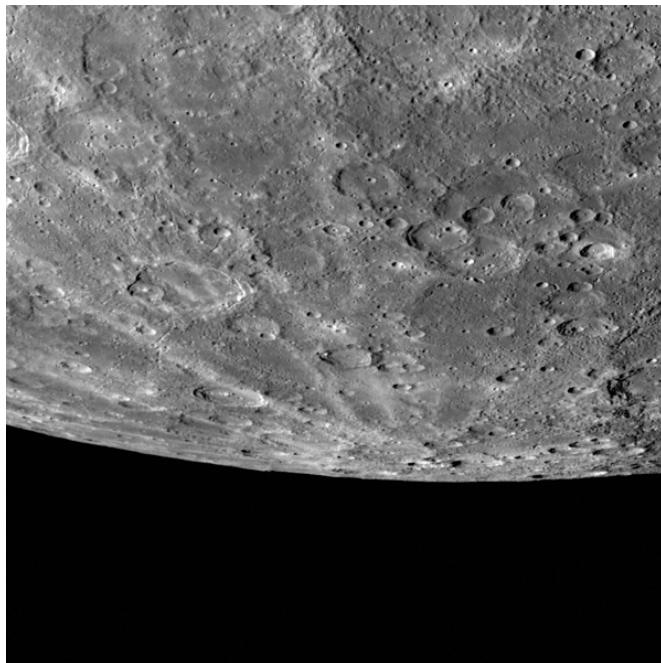
Don't rush to make vows.

Make vows for a good reason.

Avoid rash bad vows.

NOTE: Make vows carefully and only for a good reason. If you make a rash bad vow, know that God does not approve of it. It is better not to keep a rash bad vow than it is to keep it.

Canto 6: MERCURY



Source: Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain)

**The Sun obscures it
Souls thought about Earthly fame
More than they should have**

NOTE: The souls that appear to Dante on the planet Mercury accomplished great things, but they were overly concerned about lasting fame on Earth; therefore, they appear on a planet that is difficult to see because it is so close to the Sun.

Canto 6: POLITICS



<https://pixabay.com/en/politics-political-election-letters-2361943/>

Theme of Politics

Very important in the

Divine Comedy

NOTE: Obviously, Canto 6 in the *Inferno*, Canto 6 in the *Paradise*, and Canto 6 in the *Paradise* have the topic of politics in common. In the *Inferno*, we get the small picture: We learn about the politics of one city only: Florence. In *Purgatory*, we get the middle picture: We learn about politics in Italy. In *Paradise*, we get the big picture: We learn about the politics of the empire as a whole. That Dante writes about politics in Canto 6 of each part of his *Divine Comedy* shows how carefully organized this poem is.

Canto 6: JUSTINIAN



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Law Codifier
Eastern Roman Emperor
Teacher of Dante

NOTE: On Mercury, Dante meets the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian, who had the Roman law codified — put in an orderly fashion. Before Justinian, Roman law was disorderly. Many emperors had made many laws, and no one really knew what the law was, and so no one had any way of knowing what was legal and what was illegal. Justinian had people clean up the law — get rid of the old, outdated laws, and make sure that the current laws made sense. In addition, he had a commentary and a textbook of the law created — that way, people could study the law and so know what was legal and what was illegal. As always, when Dante talks to someone in the afterlife, that person has something to teach him. Certainly, law is important, and it is important that people know what the law is. Law is one of the most important things that a secular ruler needs to take care of.

Canto 6: SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE



Source: Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain)

Pope and religion

We must think right about God

Emperor and state

NOTE: Before creating the Justinian Code, Justinian had to learn to think correctly about God. In fact, he had to get rid of his heresy. (This heresy is known as the Eutychian or Monophysite Heresy.) Christian dogma regards Christ as having two natures: He is fully human, and He is fully divine. However, Justinian regarded Christ as having but one nature — Dante thought that Justinian believed that Christ was divine, not human. Dante seems to be saying that to be a great ruler, you have to get the answers to the ultimate questions right. If you are going to be a great ruler, you have to think correctly about God. The Pope really was a good spiritual leader, and we see that Justinian has established the right relationship between church and

state. The Pope handles religious questions, while Justinian handles legal, secular questions. And now that Justinian is in Paradise, he can see clearly that the Pope got the answers to the religious questions right.

Canto 6: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY



Source: Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain)

Belisarius

Great general wages war

Boss codifies law

NOTE: Justinian was able to codify the Roman law because he had a great general named Belisarius. Justinian delegated authority to Belisarius to wage war when needed; this allowed Justinian time to pay attention to important civil matters. (In the image, Justinian is in the center, and Belisarius may be the bearded man to his right.)

Canto 6: ROMEO DI VILLENEUVE



Source: Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain)

very competent
found good husbands — royalty
for boss's daughters

Romeo di Villeneuve is a person who did great deeds, but whose great deeds went unrewarded. The name Romeo means “a pilgrim to Rome.” He got good husbands for the four daughters of a count named Raymond Berenger; in fact, each daughter married a king or the brother of a king. However, because of Romeo’s success other people envied him, and he lost his position. Romeo then begged for his bread in exile. In a similar position, Pier della Vigne committed suicide. Soon, Dante will be in a position in the Land of the Living where he will have to taste others’ bread — if he resists the temptation to commit suicide.

Canto 7: *PARADISE PATTERN*



Source: Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain)

Dante describes scene

He talks to one of the souls

Beatrice helps him

NOTE: Dante follows a certain pattern in *Paradise*: 1) When Dante arrives at a new planet or star, he describes the scene. 2) Dante then talks to one of the souls on the planet or star. 3) Dante then talks with Beatrice about any questions that he has, and Beatrice answers his questions. Note on illustration: Painting depicting Dante and Beatrice by Ary Scheffer.

Canto 7: JUST AND UNJUST PUNISHMENT



<https://pixabay.com/en/church-window-church-window-535155/>

Christ's crucifixion

— Human and divine nature —

Was just and unjust

NOTE: Christ is fully divine and fully human. When Christ was crucified, the punishment of his human nature was justified. He paid the debt that Adam owed for the first sin. No one should be punished today because of what Adam did long ago. The punishment of Christ's divine nature, however, was unjust. That sin was avenged and paid for with the destruction of

Jerusalem in 70 C.E. No one should be punished today because of what a few Jews (and Romans) did long ago.

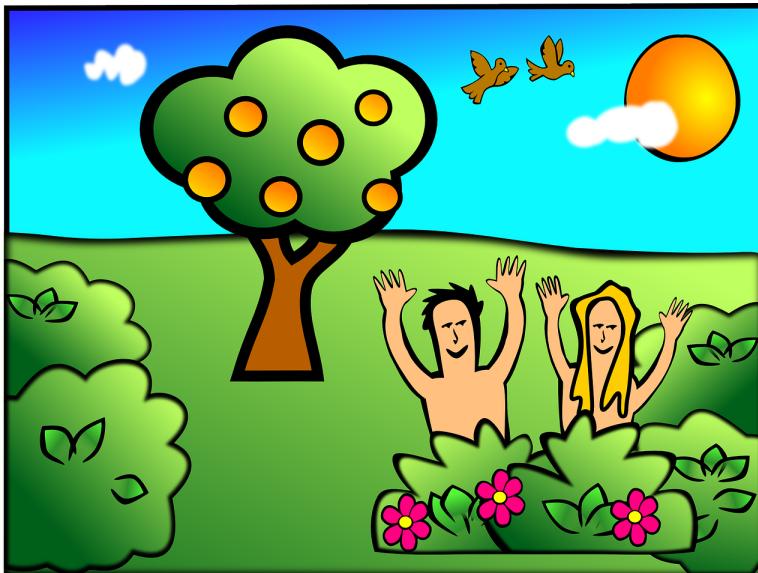
Canto 7: GOD'S GIFTS



<https://pixabay.com/en/newborn-baby-portrait-girl-3540499/>

**God's gifts to humans:
The soul's immortality
And humans' free will**

Canto 7: RESURRECTION



<https://pixabay.com/en/paradise-eden-adam-and-eve-146120/>

God gave us our souls

Made Adam's and Eve's bodies

We are immortal

NOTE: Whatever God makes is incorruptible. God made and gave us our souls. God directly made the bodies of Adam and Eve. Therefore, we are immortal, and our souls and bodies will be resurrected.

Canto 8: BEATRICE'S BEAUTY



<https://pixabay.com/en/solar-system-sun-mercury-venus-439046/>

She's more beautiful
The closer she gets to God
And to Paradise

NOTE: Dante knows that Beatrice and he have traveled to Venus from Mercury because Beatrice is more beautiful. In Dante's medieval cosmology, the Earth is the center of the universe and Paradise is furthest away from Earth. In the journey he takes to Paradise, he travels from Earth to the Moon to Mercury to Venus to the Sun to Mars to Jupiter to Saturn to the constellation Gemini to the Primum Mobile and finally the Empyrean, aka Paradise. The illustration shows our modern view of the solar system.

Canto 8: CHARLES MARTEL

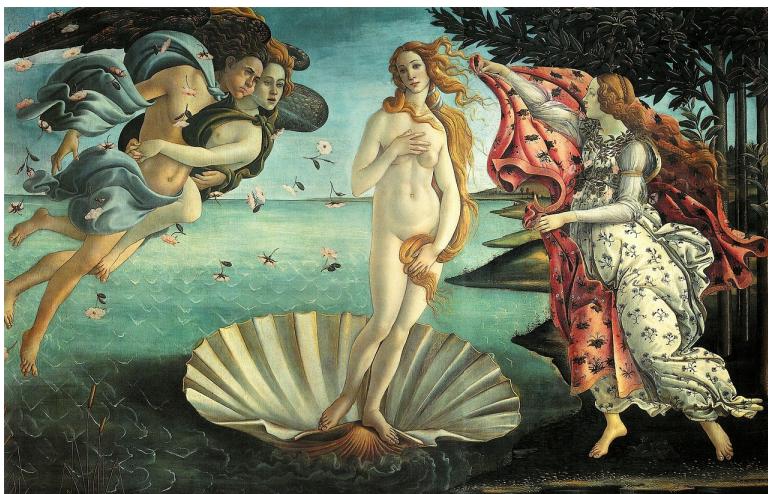


<https://pixabay.com/en/lily-red-blossom-bloom-daylily-3495722/>

Some good, worthy souls
Can reach Paradise early
He's been dead five years

NOTE: Charles Martel is in Paradise despite dying only five years earlier. Some saved souls spend hundreds of years climbing the Mountain of Purgatory. He died in 1295, and the year Dante the Pilgrim visited Paradise is 1300.

Canto 8: VENUS



<https://pixabay.com/en/painting-la-nascita-di-venere-63186/>

The planet of love

Heredity is the theme

Parents and children

NOTE: Who do good parents sometimes produce bad children? Why do bad parents sometimes produce good children? According to Charles Martel, a friend whom Dante meets here on Venus, temperament does not come from parents. Rather, Providence modifies temperament to make people different. (And yes, we do have free will.) Charles Martel talks about the influence of Heavenly Bodies, but we would talk about the influence of DNA. Charles Martel says that we are given different temperaments, and we ought to choose an

occupation that is suitable for the temperament we have. Of course, Venus is named after the Roman goddess of love.

Canto 8: WORK



<https://pixabay.com/en/king-crown-history-romania-1304612/>

Be fit for life's work

A priest should not be a king

Work should fit one's skills

NOTE: We have various capabilities and potentialities. A person who would be a good priest ought not to become a bad king. A person who would be a good king ought not to become a bad priest. Your life's work and your capabilities and potentialities should match.

Canto 9: EARTH'S SHADOW



<https://pixabay.com/en/venus-earth-size-comparison-planet-11588/>

Earth has a shadow

Its highest point is Venus

It touches Venus

Dante is clever in the way he organizes *The Divine Comedy*. In the *Inferno*, in Canto 9 we go through the Gates of Dis. In the *Purgatory*, in Canto 9 we go through the gates of *Purgatory* (we go from Prepurgatory into Purgatory Proper). In the *Paradise*, in Canto 9 we go from the planets that are touched by the shadow of the Earth to the Sun, which is not touched by the shadow of the Earth and thus is purer), according to Dante. Dante believed that the Earth cast a cone-shaped shadow, and the highest point the shadow reached was the planet Venus.

Canto 9: VENUS' EXCESSIVE LOVERS



<https://pixabay.com/en/couple-making-out-young-people-731890/>

**People who lived with
Excessive sexual desire
Talk with Dante here**

NOTE: Dante does not tell us of his friend Charles Martel's specific sins, but we do meet three other excessive lovers in this canto.

Canto 9: FORGIVENESS



<https://pixabay.com/en/girl-lady-hand-rosary-pray-woman-706667/>

Cunizza says this:

“Gladly I forgive in me

“That which caused my fate.”

NOTE: This is a joyous utterance. People in Paradise do not beat themselves up because of their sin. They know that God forgives them, and they forgive themselves. Cunizza da Romano was the lover of Sordello, one of the late repentant of the Prepurgatory. She had many lovers, but in later life, she repented and did many good deeds.

Canto 9: PRAISE



<https://pixabay.com/en/heart-hand-romantic-love-sunset-3549572/>

Paradise has praise:
Cunizza praises Folquet,
And Folquet Rahab.

Cunizza was the lover of Sordello, one of the late repentant of the Prepurgatory. He abducted her from her husband (or perhaps she left her husband for him). She had lots of husbands and lovers: four husbands and two lovers. Folquet (c. 1160-1231) was a famous troubadour. Folquet, of course, loved women, and his love made him suffer. Rahab is the whore of Jericho; she helped the Old Testament general Joshua conquer

the city. Rahab hid two of Joshua's scouts, and she is an ancestor of Christ.

Canto 9: CORRUPTION



<https://pixabay.com/en/handcuffs-money-corruption-economy-2070580/>

Earth's shadow corrupts
Moon, Mercury, and Venus
Souls there lacked something

NOTE: On the Moon, Mercury, and Venus, we see souls who are associated with a planet for negative reasons. The shadow of the Earth touched and corrupted these Spheres. First, the souls seen on the Moon did not keep their religious vows. Second, the souls seen on Mercury were excessively concerned about Earthly fame. Finally, the souls seen on Venus are those who took passionate love to an extreme. On the Sun and on the other planets we have yet to visit, the souls we will see will be

associated with these Spheres for a positive reason — for something they had and have rather than for something they lacked.

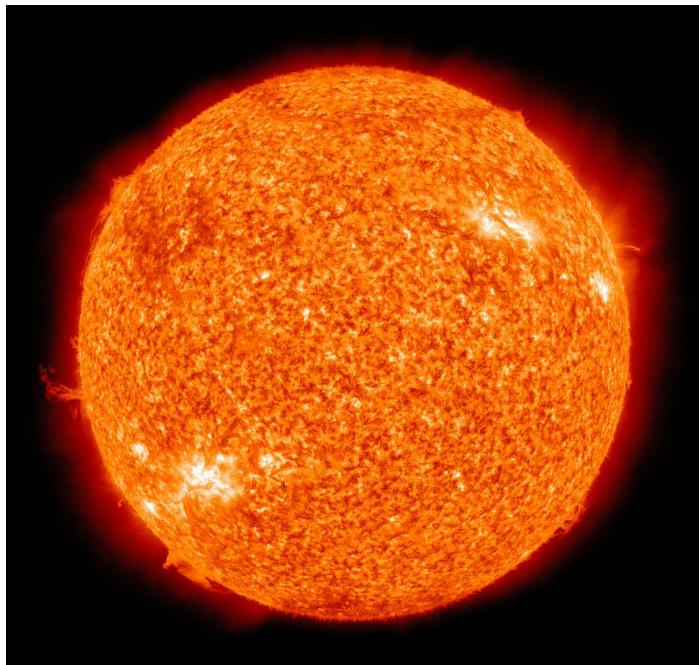
Dante saw souls who were associated with a planet for negative reasons:

Moon: Faith (Souls Who Did Not Keep Their Religious Vows)

Mercury: Hope (Souls Who Were Excessively Concerned with Earthly Fame)

Venus: Love (Souls Who Loved Excessively)

Canto 10: THE SUN



[https://pixabay.com/en/sun-fireball-solar-flare-sunlight-
11582/](https://pixabay.com/en/sun-fireball-solar-flare-sunlight-11582/)

Symbol of wisdom

Dante meets souls of the wise

Light equals wisdom

NOTE: Here Dante will see many souls of the wise, and he will speak to Saint Thomas Aquinas and to Saint Bonaventura.

Canto 10: WISDOM



<https://pixabay.com/en/books-reading-pages-textbooks-1149959/>

Wisdom's communal
— we share it and build on it —
And cumulative

NOTE: Two facts about wisdom are that it is communal and it is cumulative. Think about the way that we accumulate knowledge throughout history. One of the great inventions has been writing because we can now write down what we learn. A person can study *The Divine Comedy* for years and have wonderful insights into the epic poem, but when that person dies, those insights can be lost unless that person has written down his or her thoughts. When a person writes a book that

appears in a library, that person is making his or her insights available communally — someone else can read that book and learn those insights. In addition, the other people who read that book can build on its insights. They can publish their own books that contain their own insights. These insights can build up over the years. For one thing, we don't need to keep reinventing the wheel generation after generation. The wheel has already been invented. New generations can figure out better ways of using the wheel.

Canto 10: SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS



Source: Wikimedia Commons (Public Domain)

A very wise man
Medieval philosopher
A learned scholar

NOTE: We regard Saint Thomas as the dominant Catholic theologian. Dante's opinion of Saint Thomas agrees with our opinion of him. Saint Thomas was born in 1224, and he died at age 50 in 1274. Dante was born in 1265, so he was nine years old when Saint Thomas died. The Catholic Church canonized Saint Thomas in 1323. Dante died in 1321, so he had been dead for two years when Saint Thomas was canonized. To canonize someone is to declare someone a saint. An important fact about Saint Thomas is that he was a Dominican monk. Aquinas believed in both revealed truth, such as the revelations that we have in Scripture, and in discovered truth, such as we find by using our reason. He argued that the two kinds of truth were compatible. Moses Maimonides, a great Jewish thinker, believed the same thing.

Canto 10: SEEKERS AFTER WISDOM



<https://pixabay.com/en/hillary-clinton-hillary-clinton-1754429/>

3

Siger and Thomas

True seekers after wisdom

Sometimes disagree

1

NOTE: Both Siger of Brabant and Saint Thomas Aquinas are among the wise saved souls in Paradise. Siger of Brabant was a Belgian whose beliefs opposed those of Saint Thomas. For example, Siger thought that the world could have always existed. He also doubted that the soul is immortal — since he is in Paradise, he has happily discovered that he was wrong about that.

He and Saint Thomas Aquinas had philosophical disagreements while they were alive, but they get along well in Paradise. Siger of Brabant was even accused of heresy, and yet we see him in Paradise. What can Dante learn from this? He can learn that many disagreements between scholars are not between good people and bad people. He can learn that people of good will can disagree. Sometimes, people are mistaken, but they are still true seekers of wisdom.

Canto 11: SAINT THOMAS PRAISES SAINT FRANCIS



<https://pixabay.com/en/statue-garden-art-1002552/>

No jealousy here

Thomas now praises Francis

They are not rivals

NOTE: Thomas Aquinas is a Dominican monk, and yet he talks about the Franciscans in Canto 11. Here Saint Thomas praises Saint Francis, the founder of the Franciscans. Saint Thomas will also criticize his own order, the Dominicans, on Earth. Later, Saint Bonaventure, a Franciscan, will praise Saint Dominic. Both the Franciscans and the Dominicans were founded as reform orders. Both Saint Francis and Saint Dominic want the Church to be strong. (The photo is of a statue of Saint Francis.)

Canto 11: POVERTY AND HUMILITY



<https://pixabay.com/en/st-francis-catholic-saint-holy-1758485/>

Saint Francis preached both
Poverty, humility
Lessons for Dante

NOTE: Saint Thomas Aquinas talks about and praises Saint Francis, who is a very good role model for Dante. Soon Dante will be exiled from Florence and have to eat the bread of others, and Dante has already said that after he dies he will spend a lot of time on the first story of the seven-story mountain of Purgatory, purging his sin of pride.

Canto 11: GIFTS OF MIND, HEART



<https://pixabay.com/en/girl-white-fun-kid-literature-3038974/>

The gifts of the mind

Wisdom's focus can vary

The gifts of the heart

Saint Dominic's focus is on the gifts of the mind, and Saint Francis' focus is on the gifts of the heart. Both saints are wise.

Canto 11: REFORM



[https://pixabay.com/en/sacré-cœur-basilica-basilica-church-286428/](https://pixabay.com/en/sacr%C3%A9-c%C3%A9ur-basilica-basilica-church-286428/)

Repenting one's sins

Francis; Dominic

Getting doctrine right

NOTE: The Church needed — and needs — to be reformed, and these two saints in different but complementary ways sought to reform it. Saint Francis stressed repentance of one's sins to make oneself closer to God. Saint Dominic stressed getting doctrine right. Praise of one of the reformers is also praise for the other reformer because both reformers had the same goal in mind: Reform the Church to make it stronger.

Canto 11: SAINT FRANCIS MARRIED LADY POVERTY



<https://pixabay.com/en/st-francis-garden-statue-1150674/>

Saint Francis chose these:
Voluntary poverty
Lady Poverty

NOTE: Poverty is not necessarily a good thing. Christians and everyone else should work to relieve poverty. It is much better that all people have food, shelter, and clothing than that some people be so poor that they have to do without. If poverty has any advantage, it is that a poor person is more likely to lack pride and more likely to turn to God than a rich person is. But voluntary poverty can be a very good thing indeed. Saint Francis chose voluntary poverty. He renounced trying to gather as much material wealth as he could so that he could do the work that God wanted him to do. Saint Francis figuratively married Lady Poverty.

Canto 11: MANY SOURCES OF WISDOM



<https://pixabay.com/en/little-girl-praying-people-wishing-1894125/>

Other traditions

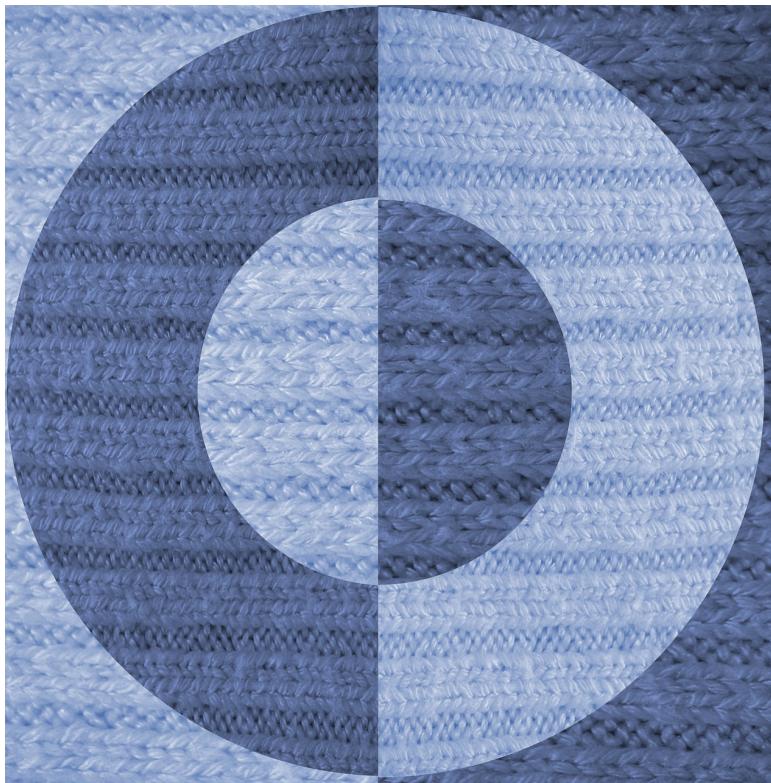
Many sources of wisdom

Other religions

NOTE: That Saint Thomas tells us about Saint Francis shows something about wisdom. Don't be afraid to learn from other sources and from traditions other than your own. Although Saint Thomas is a Dominican, he knows that there is wisdom to be learned from the story of Saint Francis. One of the things that we may do today is to learn from religions other than our own. We may want to investigate Zen Buddhism to see what we

can learn from it. (Dante, if he were alive, may or may not agree.)

Canto 12: UNDERSTANDING PARTS AND WHOLES



<https://pixabay.com/en/wool-knit-texture-dark-light-blue-829422/>

wisdom consists of
understanding parts and wholes,
among other things

NOTE: The moment that Saint Thomas Aquinas stops speaking, the circle of souls he is in begins to revolve

and dance again. Before it has revolved in a complete circle, a second circle of souls joins it.

Two facts about wisdom are that it is communal and it is cumulative. We see that it is communal because these souls are in groups. We see that it is cumulative because a second group of souls has joined the first group of souls. The two wheels of souls are interacting with each other. One of the things that this means is that wisdom consists of, in part, understanding parts and wholes. Wisdom is, in part, understanding the way that things fit together and the way that things interact with each other.

Canto 12: TWO CIRCLES OF SOULS



<https://pixabay.com/en/rainbow-thunderstorm-weather-sky-2317424/>

Two circles of souls
The circles fit together
And they interact

NOTE: The second circle of souls interacts with the first group of souls, matching motion with motion and song with song. The two groups fit together. They are like two rainbows — the two rainbows that appear when the goddess Juno calls Iris to appear to her. One rainbow indicates that Iris is the messenger of the gods; the other rainbow indicates Iris' double splendor when she attends to the queen of the gods. Wisdom is doubly splendid.

Canto 12: ST. BONAVENTURE



<https://pixabay.com/en/library-church-architecture-white-2544157/>

**St. Bonaventure
Second Franciscan founder
Enjoyed book learning**

NOTE: For 17 years, beginning in 1257, St. Bonaventure served as the superior of the Order of Friars Minor. He served so well that he is sometimes called the second founder of the Franciscans. The Order of Friars Minor is commonly known as the Franciscans.

Canto 12: CIRCLES OF WISE SOULS



<https://pixabay.com/en/rainbow-arch-rainbow-colors-436183/>

Circles of twelve souls

Famous in church history

Each soul a wise soul

NOTE: The circles headed by St. Thomas Aquinas and by St. Bonaventure have 12 souls each, including their leaders. Each person is wise and famous. Some are written about in the Bible. Others are famous church leaders and philosophers. St. Thomas Aquinas and Peter Damian argued that philosophy is the handmaiden of theology: Philosophy serves theology.

Canto 12: THE GOLDEN MEAN



<https://pixabay.com/en/rule-pressure-stamp-wont-come-here-1752536/>

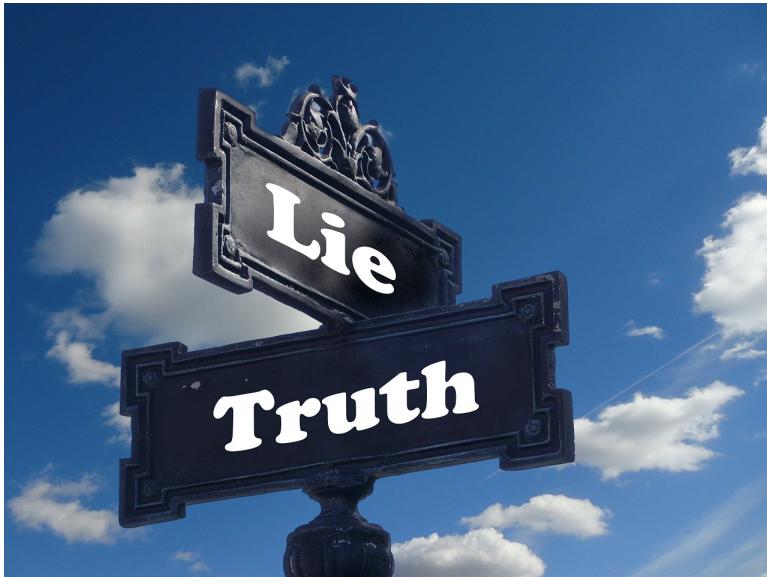
find the Golden Mean
not too lax and not too strict
the middle is best

NOTE: Franciscan monks from Acquasparta wanted to relax the rules of the Franciscan order too much. Matthew of Acquasparta relaxed the rules so much that abuses arose. Ubertino of Casal harshly kept the rules. A Golden Mean is needed. The rules should be neither too lax nor too harsh. Having too lax an enforcement of too few rules is wrong. Matthew of Acquasparta made this mistake. Having too rigid an enforcement of too many rules is wrong. Ubertino of Casal made this mistake.

In a later age, when Mother Teresa founded her order of nuns, the Missionaries of Charity, she at first wanted them to eat only what the poor ate: bread and salt. However, she soon realized that that was too strict. To do good work among the poor, her nuns needed to eat

more than bread and salt. However, Mother Teresa was careful not to relax the rules too much. Sometimes, in some places, she thought that her nuns were living too luxuriously, so she got rid of some of the luxuries.

Canto 12: SINCERE SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH



<https://pixabay.com/en/truth-lie-street-sign-contrast-257160/>

People of good will

Sincere seekers after truth

They can disagree

NOTE: In the two circles of wise souls, Thomas Aquinas has his in-the-living-world adversary Siger of Brabant on his left, and Saint Bonaventure has his in-the-living-world adversary the Abbot Joachim of Flora on his left. The Abbot Joachim of Flora was a Cistercian monk who predicted an approaching final age of history, which he believed would be the age of the everlasting gospel. Saint Bonaventure strove to combat

this belief. Once again, we see that two scholars who were rivals on Earth are side by side in Paradise. Once again, we learn that two people of good will can disagree over what is to be regarded as truth. Once again, we see two people of good will who strove to know the truth on Earth. We see that two people of good will can both be sincere seekers after truth even if they arrive at different conclusions.

Canto 13: SOLOMON



<https://pixabay.com/en/the-thinker-rodin-rodin-museum-489753/>

practical wisdom
needed to be a wise king
that's what he asked for

NOTE: Saint Thomas Aquinas tells Dante, “A second person has never arisen with as much wisdom as Solomon had.” Solomon was a king, and he asked God for the wisdom that would make him a good king. Solomon was without equal in the particular gift of wisdom that he received from God. Solomon asked for wisdom to rule well as a king, and he received it. In addition, Saint Thomas Aquinas said that a second person has never *arisen* with as much wisdom as

Solomon had. Adam and Jesus did not arise in the sense that Solomon and other human beings arise. Solomon and other human beings arose from the physical matter of the universe in conjunction with the laws of nature that govern matter and energy. God directly created Adam and the incarnation of Jesus out of the dust of earth. When God acts directly, as when he created Adam and as when Christ acquired His human nature, the result is perfect. Love (Holy Spirit) and Vision (God's Son) and Power (God the Father) work together to infuse spirit into matter, and the result is perfect. Solomon's wisdom does not equal the wisdom of Adam and, of course, Jesus.

Canto 13: JUDGE THE ENTIRE LIFE



<https://pixabay.com/en/gavel-auction-law-hammer-symbol-2492011/>

Judge the entire life

God sees the entire picture

Of a person's life

NOTE: When we judge a life, we need to judge an entire life. An evil man can repent at the last minute, just as a brier can eventually produce a rose. A good person can become evil at the end of his life, just as a ship that has made a long voyage can end up sinking back home in its own harbor. Aristotle said that in order to determine whether a man was happy, we need to look at the whole of that man's life. After he has died, we will be able to tell if he was happy. God sees the whole picture — we don't. God knows the end of a person's life and whether or not they repented. Chances are, most or all people will be surprised by some of

**those who make it to Paradise, and by some of those
who end up in the Inferno.**

Canto 14: DELIGHTS IN PARADISE



<https://pixabay.com/en/caudata-strelitzia-3317114/>

**Saved? Then such delights
Await you in Paradise!
Do not fear dying.**

Canto 14: SAVED SOULS REUNITED WITH BODIES



<https://pixabay.com/en/puzzle-heart-love-two-hearts-1721592/>

Bodies joined with souls

More complete and more perfect

Brilliance will increase

On the Day of Judgment, the saved souls already in Paradise will be reunited with our bodies, and then they will be more complete and more perfect and therefore more pleasing to themselves and to God. Their brilliance will increase.

Canto 14: RADIANT SAVED SOULS



<https://pixabay.com/en/fantasy-transcendence-composing-2437944/>

**Radiant saved souls
Are radiant forever
These saved souls love God.**

Q. Will the souls retain their radiance eternally?

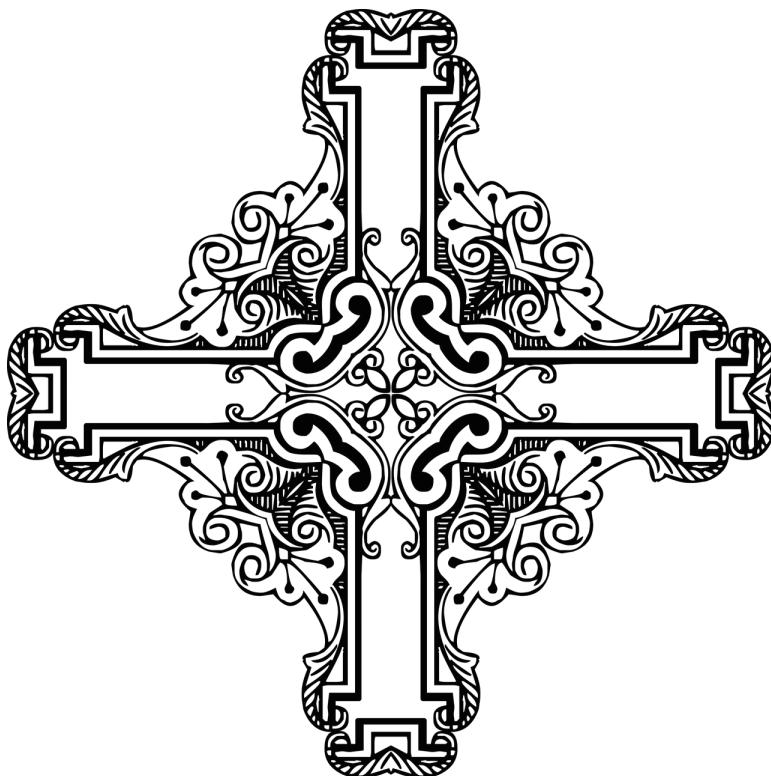
A. The souls will retain their radiance forever. The radiance comes from their love of God.

Q. If the souls do retain their radiance, how will they be able to withstand each other once their bodies are restored to them on the Day of Judgment?

A. When the souls are reunited with their bodies, they will retain their radiance. In fact, their radiance will grow even brighter. God will strengthen their eyes so

that they are able to withstand the radiance of the other souls.

Canto 14: THE SYMBOLIC CROSS



<https://pixabay.com/en/vintage-ornamental-decorative-1801502/>

The Symbolic Cross

The cross of the Crusaders

It is a Greek cross

NOTE: The Symbolic Cross that Dante sees on Mars is the cross of the Crusaders. It is a Greek cross, which means that the two parts that make up the cross are of

equal length. The Symbolic Cross is made up of the saved souls who are associated with the planet Mars.

Canto 15: MARS



[https://pixabay.com/en/mars-planet-cosmos-stars-sky-
land-2051747/](https://pixabay.com/en/mars-planet-cosmos-stars-sky-land-2051747/)

Planet of courage

Named for Roman god of war

Crusaders are here

Canto 15: VITAL DESTINIES



<https://pixabay.com/en/dante-florence-statue-sculpture-3080922/>

Aeneas, Dante

Both have vital destinies

So hard to achieve

NOTE: Aeneas' destiny is to lead the surviving Trojans to Italy, where they will become important ancestors of the Romans. He succeeded in achieving his destiny, despite much difficulty. Dante's hard-to-achieve destiny is writing *The Divine Comedy*.

Canto 15: FLORENCE



<https://pixabay.com/en/italy-tuscany-florence-dom-3603046/>

Florence has declined
People avoided luxury
Used to be peaceful

NOTE: Cacciaguida is shocked by the Florence of Dante's day. In Cacciaguida's day, the people of Florence were much more moral.

Canto 15: CACCIAGUIDA



<https://pixabay.com/en/knight-crusader-isolated-2939429/>

Died in the Crusades
Dante's great-great grandfather
Became a martyr

NOTE: Cacciaguida, Dante's great-great grandfather, fought and died in the Second Crusade. Because he was a martyr, he instantly entered Paradise. Cacciaguida is an important name. *Guida* means guide, and *caccia* means chase or hunt. Cacciaguida is going to be Dante's guide. Cacciaguida will tell Dante directly of his upcoming exile, and he will tell Dante about what should be his life's work and how to accomplish it. We can say that Dante is hunting for his life's purpose or mission; Cacciaguida will tell him what that ought to be.

Canto 16: PRIDE IN ANCESTORS



<https://pixabay.com/en/lincoln-memorial-washington-dc-1809428/>

Pride in ancestors

Justified if they inspire

Us to act better

NOTE: Pride is one of the deadly sins. Farinata, a very proud man, is in the Inferno. Dante is proud of his ancestor Cacciaguida. Is he backsliding? No. Pride in ancestors is justified if they are models who inspire us to act better.

Canto 16: FLORENCE HAS CHANGED



<https://pixabay.com/en/florence-italy-duomo-europe-1066314/>

Wives live, sleep alone

Florence has changed for the worse

Much factionalism

NOTE: In Cantos 15-16, Cacciaguida talks about how Florence has changed from his day to Dante's day. In Cacciaguida's day, Florentine husbands stayed home. In Dante's day, husbands travel on business, leaving their wives at home: The husbands travel to France, buy merchandise at one of the great fairs there, and then return to Italy and sell the merchandise at a profit. Also, since Cacciaguida's day, extreme factionalism has arisen in Florence. This extreme factionalism is between

**the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, and between the White
Guelphs and the Black Guelphs.**

Canto 16: BUONDELMONTI FAMILY



<https://pixabay.com/en/wedding-love-white-bride-romantic-437969/>

Buondelmonte Factionalism in Florence Jilted bride-to-be

NOTE: Cacciaguida wishes that the Buondelmonti family had never come to Florence because they are the family whose coming started the factionalism in Florence. This is what happened: Buondelmonte was engaged to be married, but he had a chance to make a better marriage, so he jilted his bride-to-be. This was, of course, a major insult to her and her family, and members of her family murdered Buondelmonte. This led to factionalism in Florence, and the split of its citizens into the Guelf and the Ghibelline groups. The

first Guelf is Buondelmonte, and the first Ghibelline is his murderer.

Canto 17: EXILE



<https://pixabay.com/en/man-walk-senior-movement-forest-3609083/>

A clear prophecy

Dante will soon be exiled

Dante is worried

NOTE: In the Inferno and the Purgatory, Dante heard many hints that he would be exiled, but his ancestor Cacciaguida clearly tells him that he will be exiled. Of course, this worries Dante.

Canto 17: SALTY BREAD



<https://pixabay.com/en/bread-multigrain-bread-bread-crust-3484107/>

In Florence, no salt

— How salty the bread is here! —

Exile means changes

NOTE: Cacciaguida makes a reference to something that most modern Americans would not know. People in Florence do not put salt in their bread, and so when they travel outside of Florence and eat bread, they notice how salty the bread. Dante will have to eat different kinds of food than that he is used to getting in Florence. Dante will be in unfamiliar places. He will eat the food of other people, and he will stay at the homes of other people. Of course, when you do that, you are not

home. You are not in control. To an extent, you have to do what other people want you to do.

Canto 17: A PARTY OF ONE



<https://pixabay.com/en/light-bulbs-light-bulb-light-energy-1125016/>

A party of one

Avoids bad factionalism

Critic of both sides

NOTE: After Dante is exiled from Florence, he considers joining a faction that will let him return to Florence while exiling many members of the other political party. Dante decides that this is bad factionalism and that he is better off being a party of one who criticizes the evils of bad factionalism (when it occurs) of all political parties.

Canto 17: DANTE'S MISSION



<https://pixabay.com/en/justitia-goddess-goddess-of-justice-2638601/>

Speak truth to power

Truth angers the powerful

Write *magnum opus*

NOTE: Dante's *magnum opus* (great work) is *The Divine Comedy*. It will take courage to write *The Divine Comedy* because powerful people can be dangerous. Cacciaguida tells Dante to tell the truth.

Canto 17: CRUSADERS



<https://pixabay.com/en/dante-alighieri-dante-poet-1272594/>

Crusader with sword

Cacciaguida, Dante

Crusader with pen

NOTE: Both Cacciaguida and Dante are Crusaders.
Cacciaguida wielded a sword in the Second Crusade;
Dante wielded a pen when he wrote the *Divine Comedy*.

Canto 18: SOLDIER-SOULS



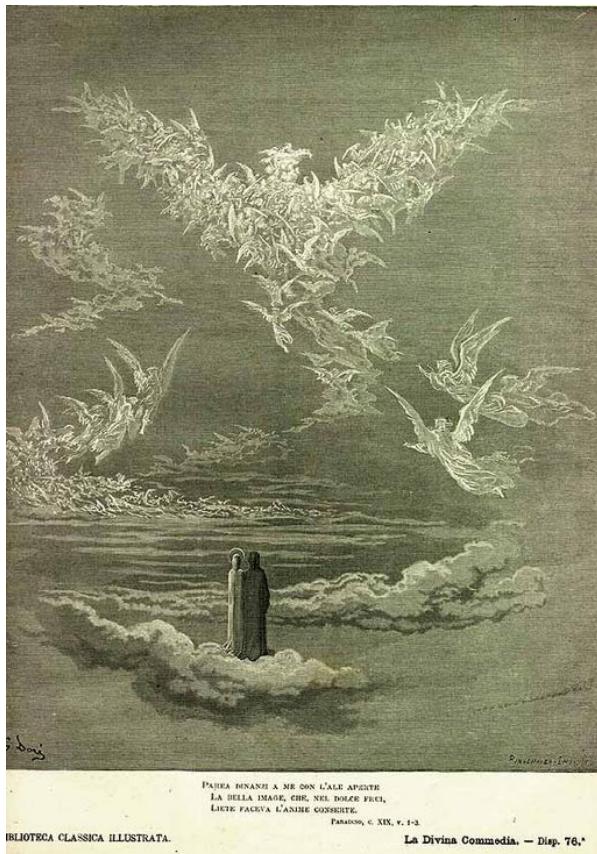
<https://pixabay.com/en/wood-nature-tree-outdoors-people-3319865/>

Charlemagne, Roland,
William of Orange, Joshua,
Godfrey, and Guiscard

NOTE: Before Dante leaves Mars, Cacciaguida identifies some of the soldier-souls with him. Charlemagne was the restorer of the Western Empire; he was what we call the Holy Roman Emperor, but he called himself the Roman Emperor. Roland, Charlemagne's nephew, fought the Saracens in Spain. (The Saracens are the Muslims; Saracens was a popular term for Muslims during the Crusades.) William of Orange fought the Saracens in southern France. Joshua was the successor of Moses and the conqueror of the Holy Land. Moses himself never made it to the Holy

Land. Duke Godfrey was the leader of the First Crusade. He fought the Saracens in the Holy Land, and became the first Christian King of Jerusalem. The 11th-century Robert Guiscard fought the Saracens in Sicily and in southern Italy, and he founded the Norman dynasty there.

Canto 18: THE ROMAN EAGLE



BIBLIOTECA CLASSICA ILLUSTRATA.

PADUA DENANTI A ME SON L'ALE APERTTE
LA DELLA IMAGO, CHE, NEL DOLCE FUCI,
LICETE FACEVA L'ANIME CONSCIE.

PARADISO, c. XIX, v. 1-3.

La Divina Commedia. — Disp. 76.*

Engraver: Gustave Doré

the last letter — M —
transforms into an eagle
symbol of justice

NOTE: The souls on Jupiter spell out the message “*DILIGITE IUSTITIAM QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM*” letter by letter, and after the final letter, the souls form a Roman eagle. The eagle is a symbol of the Roman empire, so why do the souls form this symbol? They do it because of Roman law, which Dante had great respect for. Dante makes the Roman eagle a symbol of justice.

Canto 18: RULERS OF EARTH, LOVE JUSTICE



<https://pixabay.com/en/justice-judgmental-justitia-justitia-9016/>

Souls on Jupiter

— “Rulers of Earth, love justice” —

This is their advice

NOTE: The souls on Jupiter are lovers of justice. They agree with the first verse of the apocryphal book Wisdom of Solomon: “Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth: think of the Lord with a good (heart,) and in simplicity of heart seek him” (Saint James Version). The souls on Jupiter spell out this Latin message: “*DILIGITE IUSTITIAM QUI IUDICATIS TERRAM.*” Mark Musa translates the

message in this way: “LOVE JUSTICE, YOU WHO RULE THE EARTH.”

Canto 18: UNJUST EXCOMMUNICATIONS



<https://pixabay.com/en/money-dollars-success-business-1428594/>

Source of revenue

Man excommunicated

Pays to cancel it

NOTE: Supposedly, Pope John XXII excommunicated many people and then reversed the excommunications. Reversing excommunications was a source of revenue.

Canto 18: IMAGE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST



<https://pixabay.com/en/gold-ingots-golden-treasure-513062/>

**Popes worship image
Of John the Baptist printed
On Florence's gold coins**

NOTE: Dante bitterly criticizes Popes who are more concerned about acquiring wealth than serving God.

Canto 19: PAGANS



<https://pixabay.com/en/aphrodite-cyprus-ayia-napa-1963122/>

**Pagans spurn beliefs
Of real Christianity,
Judaism, Islam.**

NOTE: A pagan does not hold the religious beliefs of Christianity, Judaism, or Islam. A pagan does not believe in what the followers of these religions would call the one true God. (The sculpture is of Venus — Greek name: Aphrodite.)

Canto 19: OMNIBENEVOLENT



<https://pixabay.com/en/baby-family-fun-soap-bubbles-grass-3369543/>

God is always good

What God does is always just

God makes no mistakes

NOTE: God is omnibenevolent, omniscient, and omnipotent. What God does is always just, and if we don't understand why something God does is just, it is because our knowledge does not reach the level of God's knowledge.

Canto 19: “CHRIST! CHRIST!”



<https://pixabay.com/en/truth-lie-street-sign-contrast-257160/>

Some who call “Christ! Christ!”

Are Christians in name only

They are far from God

NOTE: On the Day of Judgment, being Christian is enough to get you into Paradise, but merely saying you are Christian is not enough to get you into Paradise.

Canto 19: KINGS WHO DO BAD DEEDS

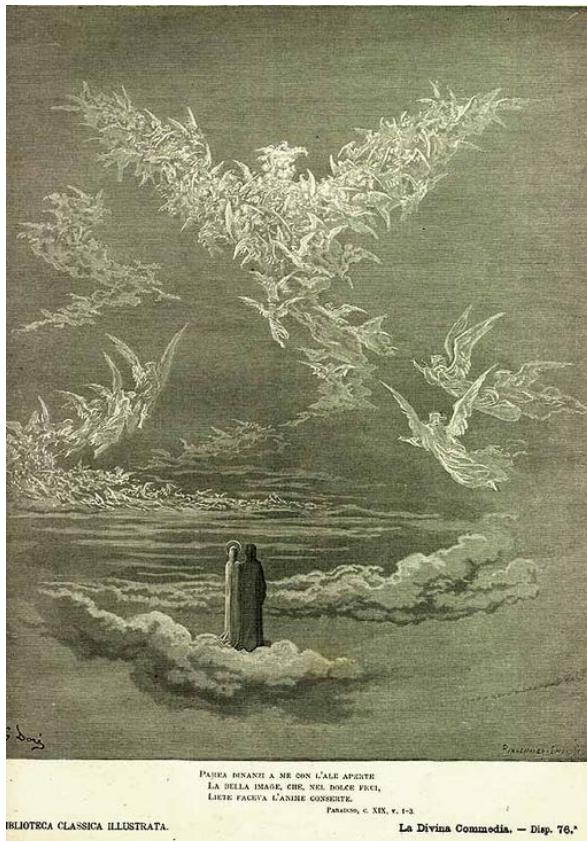


<https://pixabay.com/en/rattlesnake-toxic-snake-dangerous-653642/>

Some Kings are paltry
But shorthand is needed to
Record their bad deeds

NOTE: The Eagle asks, “What will the pagans say to the Kings of Christian countries when the pagans see the Book of Judgment that God keeps and read about the bad deeds of ‘Christian’ Kings?” The Eagle tells Dante, “Frederick II of Sicily is so paltry a man that he will be allotted little space in the Book of Judgment, but the Recording Angel will need to write in shorthand in order to fit in the tiny space the records of his numerous evil deeds.”

Canto 20: BRIGHTEST AND WORTHIEST



BIBLIOTECA CLASSICA ILLUSTRATA.

PADRA BINANCI A ME SON L'ALE AUGUSTE
LA BELLA IMAGE, CHE, NEL DOLCE PECI,
LUTE FAGU'A L'ANDRE CONSCENTE.

Paradiso, c. XIX, v. 1-3.

La Divina Commedia. — Disp. 76.*

Engraver: Auguste Doré

Brightest and worthiest

Six souls make the Eagle's eye

Includes two Pagans

NOTE: The six souls that make up the Eagle's eye are the brightest and worthiest of those who championed justice on Earth. They are two Jews, two Christians, and two Pagans. The Jews are King David and King Hezekiah of Judah. The Christians are the Emperor Constantine and King William II, the Good, of Naples and Sicily. The Pagans are the Roman Emperor Trajan and Ripheus.

Canto 20: MOTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES



<https://pixabay.com/en/sculpture-constantine-york-history-70620/>

Bad consequences

Donation of Constantine

But a good motive

NOTE: The Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire east to Constantinople in 330 CE. This left the Popes in charge of Rome. Dante believed that the Donation of Constantine was disastrous because it made the Popes greedy, although Constantine himself had good motives when he made his donation. The Donation of Constantine is a document giving the Popes authority in the West, including Rome, Italy, Greece, Judea, and Africa, while Constantine would hold power in the West, in Byzantium. In historical fact, the Donation of Constantine turned out to be a forgery, although Dante was not alive when the forgery was discovered. Constantine's Donation may have had very bad consequences, but his motive was good when he made the Donation, and so he is in Paradise. From this we learn that our good motives will get us into Paradise, and that the bad consequences of actions that we do with a good motive will not keep us out of Paradise.

Canto 20: THE ROMAN EMPEROR TRAJAN



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Trajan lived again
Accepted Christ and then he
Died as a Christian

NOTE: According to a medieval legend, Pope Gregory the Great (died 604 CE) was so impressed by the story of Trajan and the woman whose son had been killed (On his way to fight a battle, Trajan speaks to a poor widow who wishes him to give her justice for her son who has been killed. Trajan hesitates, but he does as the poor widow wishes) that he prayed so fervently for Trajan that the emperor was taken from Limbo and brought back to life. While alive for the second time, Trajan accepted Christ, and he then died as a Christian.

Canto 20: RIPHEUS OF TROY



<https://pixabay.com/en/statue-louvre-paris-aeneas-534340/>

He so loved justice
That implicit faith saved him
He died a Christian

NOTE: Ripheus is a very minor character in Virgil's *Aeneid*; only a few lines are devoted to him. He died in the Trojan War, but we learn that he was most just of all the Trojans. Ripheus, over a thousand years before Christ, so believed in and loved justice that he received God's grace. Even though he had never heard of Christ, he died a Christian. (The statue shows the famous scene of Aeneas carrying his aged father away from Troy.)

Canto 20: BE SLOW TO JUDGE



<https://pixabay.com/en/gavel-auction-hammer-justice-legal-3577254/>

Eagle gives advice

Living ones, be slow to judge

God is the true judge

NOTE: We should be slow to judge, or perhaps it is best if we don't try to decide specifically who should go to Heaven and who should go to Hell. We don't have the whole picture; God does. Someone may be very disagreeable, but perhaps that person, unknown to us, suffers constant pain.

Comment on Canto 20: *APOCATASTASIS*



<https://pixabay.com/en/sunflowers-field-woman-yellow-3640938/>

An upset verdict

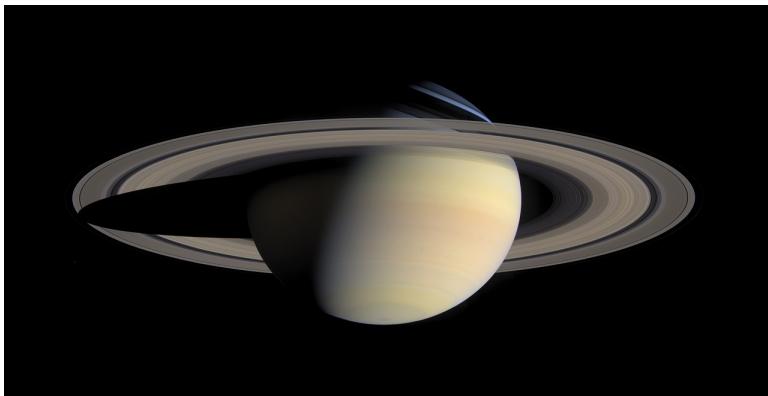
All will be well for all will

Achieve Paradise

NOTE: God is merciful and omnibenevolent: He is an all-loving God. We have a hard time understanding eternal punishment. Interestingly, some Christian mystics, including Julian of Norwich, and some Christian theologians, including Origen, believe in *apocatastasis*. They believe that all will be well for everybody in the end. In other words, everybody will make it to Paradise in the end. The word “*apocatastasis*” means an upset verdict — someone may

have been sentenced to eternal damnation, but if that verdict is upset, then that person will make it to Paradise. If everyone, including the worst sinners of all time, eventually makes it to Paradise, it would be a triumph for Unconditional Love. Please note, however, that *apocatastasis* is not mentioned in *The Divine Comedy*.

Canto 21: SATURN



<https://pixabay.com/en/planet-saturn-saturn-s-rings-67672/>

Temperance planet

Planet of moderation

The mean between extremes

NOTE: One should not be temperate in some things. One is Love. Unconditional Love is not temperate. However, even though Beatrice's beauty is not temperate — she becomes more and more beautiful the closer she rises to Paradise — she demonstrates temperance in how she handles her beauty. For example, she does not smile at me because she knows that if she were to smile, her beauty would blast me to ashes, the way that Semele was blasted to ashes when she asked Jupiter to reveal himself to her in all his glory. In ancient mythology, mortals cannot look at gods in all their glory and survive. This may be why the gods and goddesses so often disguise themselves as

mortals when they come among **Humankind**. Temperance can be thought of as the mean between extremes. Too much courage makes one foolhardy. Too little courage makes one cowardly. The mean between these extremes makes one a brave person. But one cannot be temperate when it comes to adultery. One affair is one too many affairs.

Canto 21: CONTEMPLATIVES



<https://pixabay.com/en/monk-man-monastery-archway-cowl-2173524/>

They are temperate
They do not overindulge
in food, sex, or wine.

NOTE: On Saturn, the planet of temperance, we find the contemplatives. The contemplatives contemplate God, and possibly they occasionally enjoy a direct experience of God. Contemplatives are temperate. They do not overindulge in food, sex, or wine. Why does Dante regard temperance as so important? Temperance is important if we are to develop and use our other

virtues. Temperance is a foundation for the other cardinal virtues (wisdom, courage, justice).

Let's say that you are addicted to food, sex, and wine. Will you be wise, brave, and just?

- If you are drunk all the time, you won't read books or study or think much.
- If you eat way too much, you won't be able to rescue a child from a burning house because you are too fat to climb in the window so you can rescue the child.
- If you are addicted to sex, you won't be a just judge because all a pretty (or handsome) defendant has to do to get a verdict of "innocent" is to sleep with you.

Canto 21: THE LADDER



<https://pixabay.com/en/artwork-head-jacob-s-ladder-arrow-797/>

Dante sees ladder
Means Spiritual Vision
It is a symbol

NOTE: Four planets are devoted to the cardinal virtues: wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance. Each planet has a symbol.

The Sun is devoted to wisdom. Its symbol is the Circle, which is a symbol of Divine Infinity: Infinite Power, Infinite Knowledge, and Infinite Benevolence.

Mars is devoted to courage. Its symbol is the Cross, which is a symbol of Human Salvation.

Jupiter is devoted to justice. Its symbol is the Eagle, which is a symbol of Earthly Order.

Saturn is devoted to temperance. Its symbol is the Ladder, which is a symbol of Spiritual Vision.

People of the Middle Ages were very concerned about these things: Divine Infinity, Human Salvation, Earthly Order, and Spiritual Vision.

Canto 21: PETER DAMIAN



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

He is qualified

Contemplative reformer

Does a lot of good

NOTE: Because Pope Stephen IX wanted to reform the Church, he found the best man for the job, and he made him a cardinal. (Of course, other reformers existed.) A Simonist pope such as Pope Boniface VIII would have made cardinal whoever offered him the greatest amount of money. Compare the people who are made cardinals in the two systems. A Simonist wants to be made cardinal but is not qualified to be a cardinal. Peter Damian is qualified to be a cardinal, but he resists being made cardinal until he is convinced that he can do a lot of good as cardinal.

Canto 22: GOD'S VENGEANCE



<https://pixabay.com/en/paragraph-attorney-judge-process-1161140/>

Arrive too early?

So think the guilty, but not

So the innocent

NOTE: At the end of Canto 21, after criticizing the bad deeds of bad popes and bad cardinals, the contemplative souls give a cry of righteous zeal that shakes Dante, although he cannot make out the words. In Canto 22, Beatrice tells Dante that God's vengeance arrives at exactly the right time, although the guilty think it arrives too early and the innocent think it arrives too late.

Canto 22: MYSTIC EMPYREAN

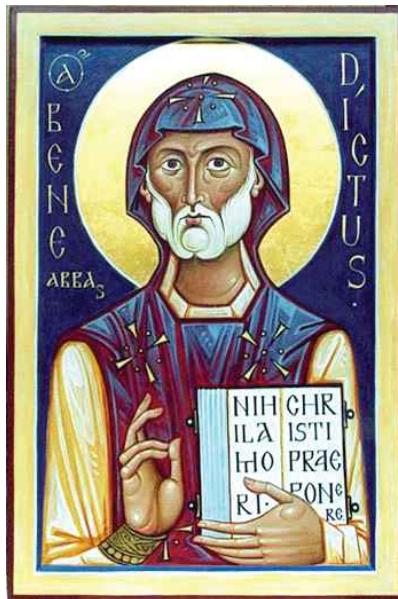


<https://pixabay.com/en/beach-horizon-nature-ocean-1850250/>

No space and no time
All wishes are good, fulfilled,
Perfect, ripe, and whole

NOTE: The Mystic Empyrean is the dwelling place of God. The concepts of space and time do not apply there, although we sometimes metaphorically use space and time words (such as “there”) when talking of the Mystic Empyrean. The Mystic Empyrean is a place where souls are perfected and so all wishes are good, perfect, ripe, and whole — and fulfilled.

Canto 22: SAINT BENEDICT



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

known as the founder
of western monasticism,
great missionary

NOTE: Saint Benedict was a 6th-century Italian monk. In the Rule of Saint Benedict, which most Western Catholic monks follow, the monks are contemplatives, they live in a cloister, and they pray in a group many times a day. Lots of pagans were around Monte Cassino when Saint Benedict founded his monastery there, and so Saint Benedict acted as a missionary, converting pagans to Christianity. Saint Benedict was a great

missionary. Why? He was a contemplative. Contemplatives pray, and they have discipline. They have roots in spiritual discipline. Dante suggests that it is a good idea for us to be also rooted in spiritual discipline. If you want to make positive changes in the world, you need to have good roots.

Canto 22: BUILD ON GOOD WORK OF OTHERS



<https://pixabay.com/en/church-dom-chapel-altar-religion-3024768/>

Reform the old church

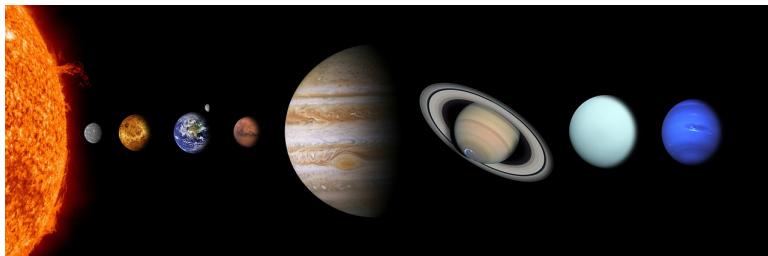
Build on good work of others

Don't destroy the church

NOTE: We build on good work of others. Certainly scientists learn from the work of other scientists, and then they push on and hope to make new discoveries. (The past really does affect the future, either positively or negatively. If you are obese now, you have probably been overeating for a long time.) People in different historical eras need different things, but we can build on the good work that has been done before us. Saint Peter did not want silver and gold. Saint Benedict

stressed praying and fasting. Saint Francis was humble. In Saint Francis' day, what was needed was humility, and so he was humble. However, he also prayed and fasted, as Saint Benedict recommended. He also did not need silver and gold, just as Saint Peter recommended. Did Saint Francis build a new church? No, he reformed the old church. He built on the foundations that had been made by others.

Canto 22: OUR PALTRY EARTH

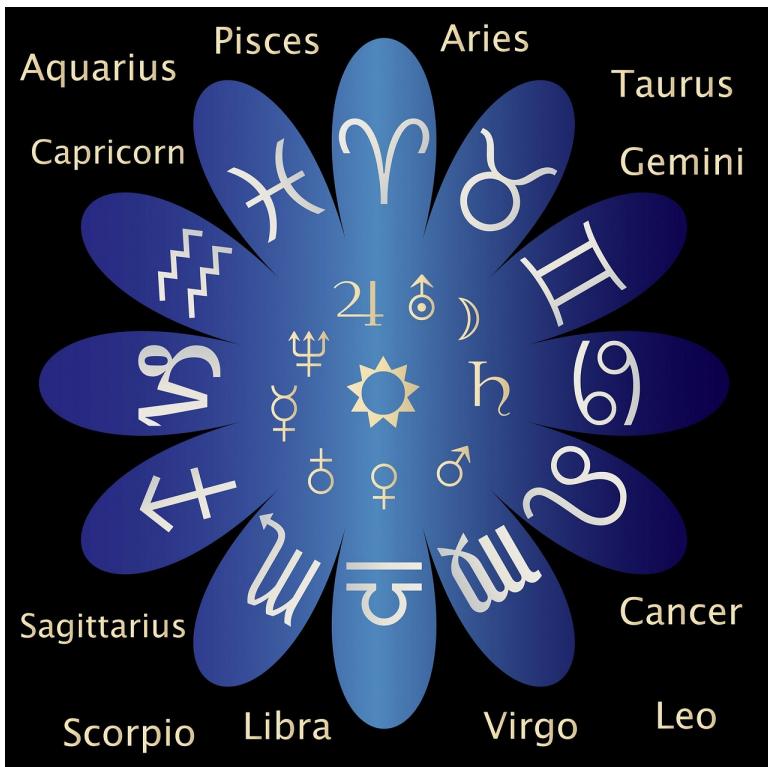


<https://pixabay.com/en/solar-system-sun-mercury-venus-439046/>

Dante looks at Earth
It seems so paltry from here
In the eighth sphere

NOTE: At the end of Canto 22, Dante moves on the Gemini constellation in the sphere of the fixed stars — the eighth sphere in Dante's Ptolemaic view of the universe (the first seven spheres are the seven planets, counting the Sun, that Dante's times knew about), and he looks back at the Earth, which seems paltry when viewed from the heavens. The Earth is our abode for now, but it is not the center of value of the universe. The center of value of the universe is actually beyond the universe, in the realm in which God dwells.

Canto 23: FRUITS OF CHRIST'S TRIUMPH



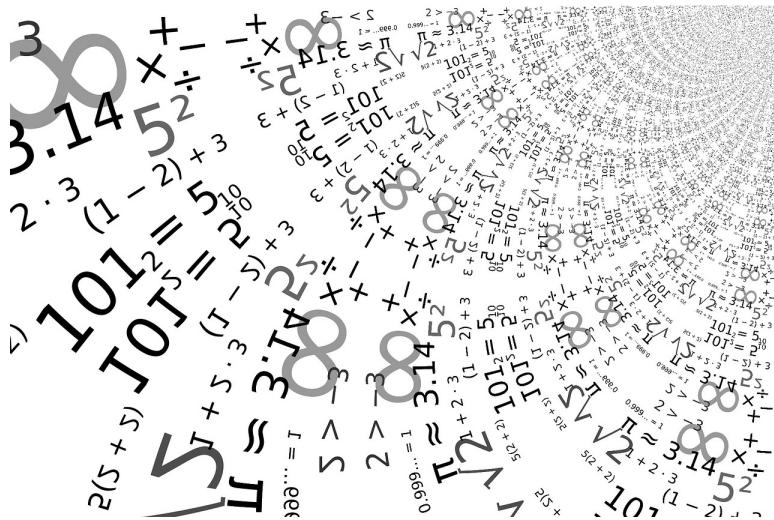
<https://pixabay.com/en/astrology-birth-sign-birth-signs-220339/>

The triumphant Christ
Dante sees saved souls who are
Fruits of Christ's triumph

NOTE: In the constellation Gemini in the Sphere of Fixed Stars, Dante's mind expands with the Vision of Christ, and he is able to see saved souls who are fruits of

Christ's triumph. His eyes, however, are not yet strong enough to see Jesus Christ. Of course, Beatrice's eyes are strong enough to see Him.

Canto 23: INEFFABILITY



<https://pixabay.com/en/pay-numbers-infinity-digits-filling-hole-937884/>

Poem has mighty theme

I am mortal: I stagger
when I lift this theme

NOTE: Dante is aware that he has seen many things in Paradise that he cannot describe in words. Such things as Beatrice's smile he has to skip in writing the *Paradise* because he cannot adequately describe them. This will continue to be a theme in the *Paradise*.

Canto 23: “*REGINA COELI*”

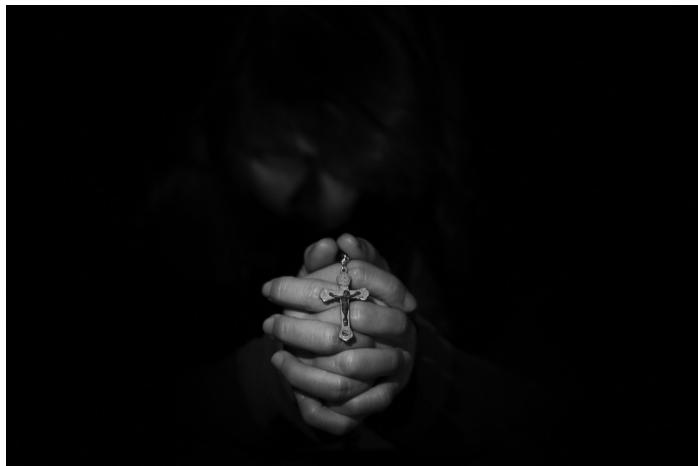


[https://pixabay.com/en/church-interior-painting-
columns-170454/](https://pixabay.com/en/church-interior-painting-columns-170454/)

Mary, Heaven's Queen,
Rejoice, alleluia, for
He has arisen

NOTE: Much song is in Paradise. In Canto 23, the Apostles and other saved souls sing the “*REGINA COELI*” as Mother Mary leaves.

Canto 24: WHAT HAS DANTE LEARNED?



<https://pixabay.com/en/sorrow-forgiveness-sad-sadness-699606/>

What has Dante learned?

Faith, hope, and love (charity)

He will take a test

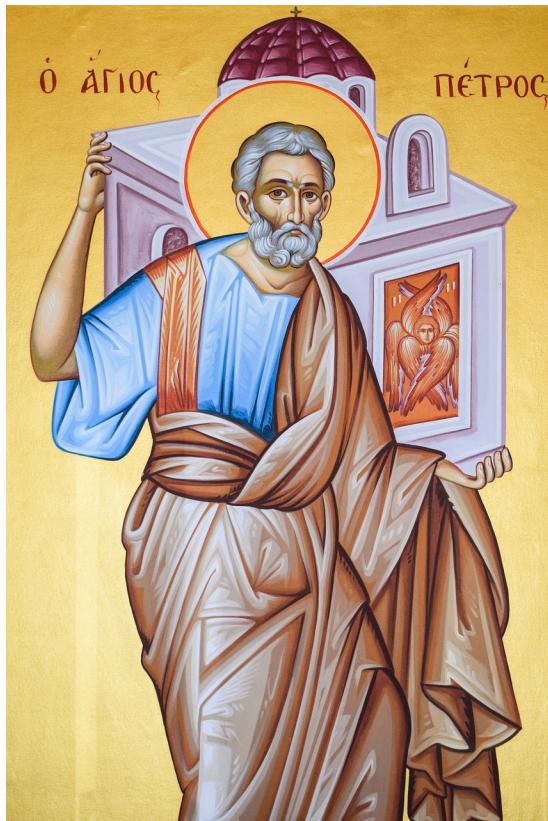
NOTE: One purpose of the examination is to see what changes his journey has wrought in Dante. What has he learned by taking this journey? Three apostles will examine Dante in the virtues faith, hope, and love:

Saint Peter: Faith

Saint James: Hope

Saint John: Love

Canto 24: SAINT PETER



<https://pixabay.com/en/st-peter-saint-iconography-painting-2176658/>

The virtue of faith

Saint Peter examines Dante

Peter denied Jesus

NOTE: Peter examines Dante in the virtue of faith. This is the same Peter who denied three times that he knew Jesus after the Romans took Jesus prisoner. Peter sinned, but he repented, and he became an effective spreader of Christianity, with the result that he knows a lot about faith and that he is now in Paradise. The story is told in Matthew, chapter 26.

Canto 24: WHAT IS FAITH?



<https://pixabay.com/en/pray-hands-praying-hands-prayer-2558490/>

things-hoped-for substance
evidence of things not seen
faith's definition

NOTE: Dante has done his reading for the examination. Saint Peter is the author of 1 Peter and 2 Peter in the New Testament; these books are letters. Dante has read these books, as well as the writings of Paul, including Hebrews. Dante's definition comes from Paul's letter to the Hebrews (11:1): "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (King James Version).

Canto 24: DOES DANTE HAVE FAITH?



<https://pixabay.com/en/religion-faith-cross-light-hand-3452571/>

**Yes, he has faith of
An excellent quality
It's not counterfeit**

Canto 24: EVIDENCE FOR FAITH



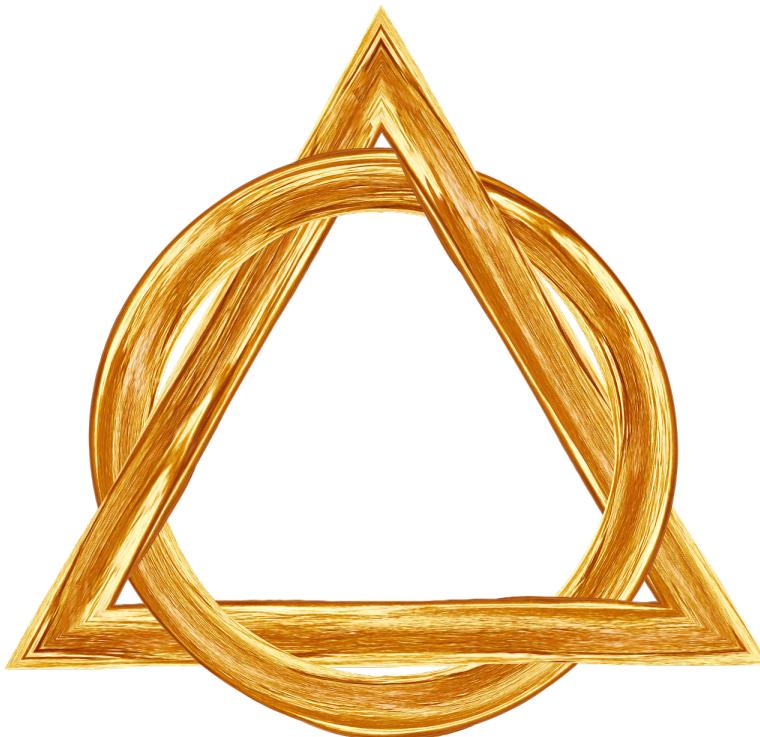
<https://pixabay.com/en/flower-life-crack-desert-drought-887443/>

Miracles occur
And people become Christians
If no miracles
And yet still belief
Then that is a miracle
Greatest of them all

NOTE: Miracles occurred, and people became Christians. Suppose that the miracles did not occur. If

people became Christians without witnessing the miracles that spurred them to become Christians, then that would be even more of a miracle than the miracles we read about in the Bible!

Canto 24: WHAT DOES DANTE BELIEVE?



<https://pixabay.com/en/holy-trinity-triangle-circle-gold-893202/>

Dante does believe
in three eternal Beings,
One as well as Three

NOTE: Dante believes in the Holy Trinity.

Canto 24: TWO SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE



<https://pixabay.com/en/child-reading-bible-bed-african-945422/>

Two sources of knowledge

Reason and revelation

Both are important

NOTE: Dante has learned much not only from Holy Scripture (Moses, which refers to the first five books of the Bible; the Prophets; the Psalms; the gospel, and from Peter and Paul), but also from philosophers such as Aristotle. When Dante refers to God as the “eternal Who, unmoved, moves all the heavens” (Mark Musa’s translation of 24.131), he is using Aristotelian language. In this definition, we have a combination of creed and cosmology. Of course, as Dante moves upward in the

Heavens toward Paradise, he is engaging in cosmology. We have two sources of knowledge here: revelation (as in Scripture) and reason (as in the study of Nature, including the heavenly bodies). In other words, we can learn some things through reason, and we can learn other things through revelation. The two kinds of knowledge, if in fact they are knowledge, do not conflict. God created the universe, and God created the physical laws of the universe, including those that guide evolution. Importantly, by using our reason, we can learn some things about God.

Canto 15: DANTE'S HOPE



<https://pixabay.com/en/dante-divine-comedy-divina-comedia-1578147/>

For all of his life

Dante hoped to return home

He never made it

NOTE: Following his exile, Dante hoped to return to Florence, but he never made it. He died and is entombed in Ravenna, Italy. He has a tomb in Florence, but it is empty. The photograph is of the empty tomb in Florence.

Canto 25: WHAT IS HOPE?



<https://pixabay.com/en/blur-close-up-girl-woman-hands-1867402/>

**Hope's definition:
The certain expectation
Of future glory**

NOTE: This is how Dante answers the question “What is Hope?

**“Hope,” said I, “is the certain expectation
Of future glory, which is the effect
Of grace divine and merit precedent.”**
(Longfellow 25.67-69)

Canto 25: TO WHAT DEGREE DO YOU POSSESS HOPE?



<https://pixabay.com/en/hands-open-candle-candlelight-1926414/>

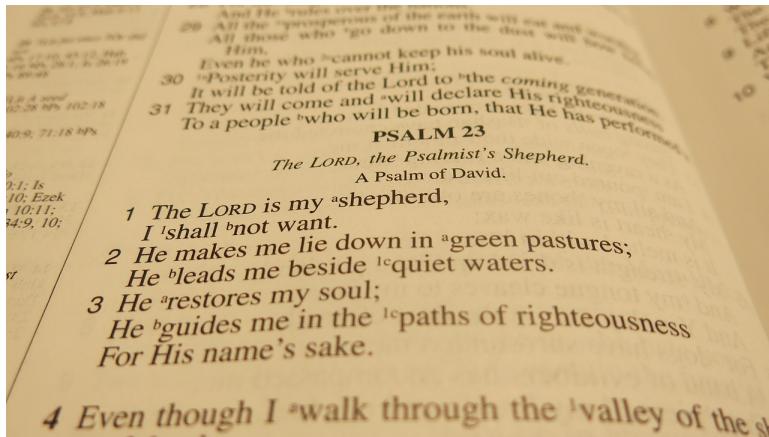
Beatrice answers

For Dante lest he should seem

To be very proud

NOTE: Pride is out of place in Paradise, and so Beatrice answers this question for Dante. Dante's hope is very great, and so he has been allowed to visit the afterlife before his death.

Canto 25: WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR HOPE?



<https://pixabay.com/en/bible-scripture-psalm-psalm-23-450298/>

Source of Dante's hope?

David, singer of the Psalms

Among other stars

NOTE:

“From many stars this light comes unto me;

But he instilled it first into my heart

Who was chief singer unto the chief captain.”

(Longfellow 25.70-72)

Canto 25: WHO HAS BODIES IN PARADISE?



<https://pixabay.com/en/sun-dawn-schönwetter-nature-bright-3130638/>

Jesus and Mary —

All the rest receive bodies

On Day of Judgment

NOTE: Dante has heard that Saint James' soul was allowed to rise to Paradise with his body, so he stares at Saint James, but Saint James' soul is so bright that it blinds Dante. Saint James, however, tells Dante that only Jesus and Mary have souls in Paradise now. On the Day of Judgment, everyone else, including those souls in the Inferno and on the Mountain of Purgatory, will receive their souls.

Canto 26: LOVE IS BLIND



<https://pixabay.com/en/eye-iris-pupil-vision-eyeball-3221498/>

Temporarily
Dante is blind; Beatrice
Will restore his sight

At the end of Canto 25, Dante becomes blind. In Canto 26, he will remain blind during Saint John's examination of him on the subject of love, and then Beatrice will restore his sight. Similarly, Saul became blind on the road to Damascus, and then Ananias restores his sight. Saul then became Paul, and later he became Saint Paul.

Canto 26: WHAT IS YOUR SOUL SET UPON?



<https://pixabay.com/en/religion-faith-worship-church-864393/>

John asks this question:

What is your soul set upon?

Dante answers, “God.”

Canto 26: REASON AND REVELATION



<https://pixabay.com/en/mind-think-spirit-soap-bubble-767592/>

Sets soul on God — Why?

Reason and revelation

Reach same conclusions

NOTE: What made Dante set his soul on God? Dante answers that both reason and revelation did that. Reason refers to philosophical arguments, and revelation refers to sacred Scripture. Many people

believe that both reason and revelation lead to the same conclusions. C.S. Lewis, the great defender of Christianity, believed this. So did Saint Thomas Aquinas, another great defender of Christianity.

Canto 26: WHY WAS ADAM BANISHED FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN?



<https://pixabay.com/en/adam-and-eve-religion-albrecht-dürer-60581/>

Banished from Eden
For what reason? Adam says,
“Disobedience”

NOTE: Why was Adam banished from the Garden of Eden? Adam answers that he was banished for disobedience, not for the tasting of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil:

“Now, son of mine, the tasting of the tree
Not in itself was cause of so great exile,
But solely the o'erstepping of the bounds.”

(Longfellow 26.115-117)

Canto 26: HOW LONG DID IT TAKE ADAM TO SIN?



<https://pixabay.com/en/adam-and-eve-church-window-church-798376/>

Just over six hours

Sinned a little after noon

Created at dawn

NOTE: Dante asks Adam the first man some questions, including how long it took him to sin after being created. Adam was created at about 6 a.m. (sunrise) and he sinned and was banished from the Earthly Paradise at just after noon. Therefore, Adam lived without sin for just over six hours. He also asks how long Adam spent on Earth and in Limbo. Adam lived 930 years on Earth and 4,302 years in Limbo. And he asks Adam which language he spoke. Adam spoke a language that became extinct before the attempt to build the Tower of Babel.

Canto 27: CORRUPTION OF PAPACY



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Vacant papacy

Boniface hardly a Pope

Reform is coming

NOTE: Saint Peter harshly criticizes Pope Boniface VIII, even saying that the papacy is vacant because Boniface VIII is unworthy of being called a Pope. He even says that Boniface VIII's corruption has turned the papacy into a sewer. A real Pope does not value gold and silver and does not engage in hurtful politics. Saint Peter also says that reform is coming. The photograph shows the tomb of Pope Boniface VIII.

Canto 27: BEATRICE'S CRITIQUE



<https://pixabay.com/en/emotion-greed-sin-deadly-america-2676703/>

Beatrice's critique

Bad people are greedy sheep

They lack good shepherds

NOTE: Saint Peter criticizes bad Popes, and Beatrice criticizes greedy people. People on Earth need good rulers. This should not surprise us.

Canto 27: THE PRIMUM MOBILE



<https://pixabay.com/en/ball-abstract-pattern-lines-443852/>

**It is the ninth sphere
Gives motion to other spheres
God gives it movement**

NOTE: The ninth sphere is the next sphere that Dante will visit. This sphere is the Primum Mobile, or the Prime Mover. We can regard it as the created universe's outermost sphere. Aristotle spoke about the Prime Mover. It is that which gives motion to the other spheres. It is moved by God. What is beyond the ninth sphere is not located in space or time.

Canto 28: THE MYSTIC EMPYREAN



<https://pixabay.com/en/dove-bird-animal-feather-plumage-2516641/>

beyond space and time
the goal of Dante's journey
it is Paradise

NOTE: While still in the Primum Mobile, Dante looks ahead to where he is going. The Mystic Empyrean lies beyond the Primum Mobile. Actually, “lies beyond” is misleading, as the Mystic Empyrean does not exist in space and time. However, because we are human beings who exist in space and time we have to use language metaphorically when we speak of the Mystic Empyrean. The Mystic Empyrean is the goal of Dante’s journey. It is Paradise: the place where God dwells. Of course, here again “place” is a word that is used metaphorically.

Canto 28: GOD AND THE ANGELS



<https://pixabay.com/en/angel-wing-angel-wings-god-2683074/>

point of brilliant light
nine rings of fire surround it
God and the angels

NOTE: Dante sees a point of brilliant light while looking at the Mystic Empyrean. Nine rings of fire surround it. The closer a ring of fire is to the point of brilliant light, the faster it moves. The nine whirling rings of fire are the nine orders of angels. The point of brilliant light is God, Whom Dante is seeing from a distance. What Dante sees seems to him to be the reverse of what we see in nature. We see the Earth as the center, and the spheres around the Earth become

more and more divine the farther they are from Earth. Here, however, the point of brilliant light is divine, and the rings of fire whirling around are holier the closer they are to the point of brilliant light. Of course, what is Dante is seeing now is ultimate reality, and not the inside-out version of reality that we get on Earth.

Canto 28: THREES



[https://pixabay.com/en/girls-buddy-three-dresses-
beauty-1487823/](https://pixabay.com/en/girls-buddy-three-dresses-beauty-1487823/)

angelic orders

Beatrice names them in threes

three trios of threes

NOTE:

When Beatrice names the orders of the angels, she does so in threes:

The Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones

The Dominations, Virtues, and Powers

The Principalities, Archangels, and Angels

Threes play an important part in *The Divine Comedy* because of the Trinity.

Canto 28: LAUGHED IN PARADISE



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Gregory the Great
Got order of angels wrong
Laughed in Paradise

NOTE: Pope Saint Gregory the Great (590-604 CE) had a different way of listing the orders of angels than what Dante sees in Paradise, and of course Gregory the Great was mistaken. When he reached Paradise, he realized that he had been mistaken — and he laughed! The person who listed the angels correctly was Dionysius the Areopagite, who converted to Christianity because of the preaching of Saint Paul.

Canto 29: WHEN WERE THE ANGELS CREATED?



<https://pixabay.com/en/ascension-celestial-planet-heaven-1568162/>

At the same time as
The Earth and Heavenly Spheres
They were created

NOTE: By creating the angels, God created reflections of Himself. When God created the angels, He also created the Heavenly Spheres and the Earth. Each order of angels is associated with a Heavenly Sphere. The angels were created at the same time as the Heavenly Spheres and the Earth.

Canto 29: QUICK REBELLION



<https://pixabay.com/en/revolution-protest-insurrection-30590/>

Before you can count

— Some angels fell from Heaven —

From one to twenty

NOTE: Some of the angels rebelled against God very quickly — quicker than you could count to 20 after the creation of the universe. The presumption of Lucifer caused the rebellion.

Canto 29: LOYAL ANGELS



<https://pixabay.com/en/library-books-education-literature-869061/>

the light of glory
a direct vision of God
loyalty's reward

NOTE: God rewarded the loyal Angels with greater vision and greater intelligence. God gave them the light of glory so that the Angels have a direct vision of God. They received the light of glory as a gift of God, a gift that God gave them because of their merit. A creature who receives God's grace and lovingly accepts it is worthy of it.

Canto 29: DO UNFALLEN ANGELS NEED MEMORIES?



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Angels gain knowledge

— Angels need no memories —

Directly from God

NOTE: According to Beatrice, unfallen angels do not have memories because they have no need of memories. They get their knowledge directly from God, and so they have no need to memorize things. By the way, According to Beatrice, mortals cannot count the numbers of the unfallen angels.

Canto 29: BAD PREACHERS AND THINKERS



<https://pixabay.com/en/white-male-3d-model-isolated-3d-1834100/>

put on a show of wits —
get so carried away they
leave the one true path

NOTE: Why does Beatrice condemn bad philosophy and bad theology? Because bad philosophy and bad theology lead to bad preaching. Philosophy can be used

correctly, and it can be misused. It is misused when it is used simply to score points against someone else. It is used correctly when it is used to find out the truth. Arguments can be made sincerely, but bad arguments can be used deviously to mislead others. Philosophy is very useful. It can be used to understand whatever can be understood by human reason. Being an intellectual can be dangerous unless you use your intelligence and knowledge to seek the truth that can be understood by human reason. If you use your intelligence and knowledge to score points against others or to put on a show of how smart you are, then you are misusing your intelligence and knowledge. Sometimes, bad preachers and thinkers talk over the heads of their listeners.

Canto 29: JESUS DIDN'T SAY THIS



<https://pixabay.com/en/garbage-waste-container-waste-2729608/>

Not words from Jesus:

**“Now go forth and preach garbage
Feed your lambs with air”**

Canto 30: INEFFABLE



[https://pixabay.com/en/sun-holding-sunset-yoga-female-
2571158/](https://pixabay.com/en/sun-holding-sunset-yoga-female-2571158/)

Beatrice's beauty
In Mystic Empyrean
Is ineffable

NOTE: Throughout the *Paradise*, Beatrice's beauty has increased the closer she came to God. Now, here in the dwelling place of God, her beauty is ineffable and the great Dante cannot describe it. The only One Who could properly describe Beatrice's beauty would be the One Who made it.

Canto 30: LIGHT



<https://pixabay.com/en/columns-hallway-architecture-greek-801715/>

God prepares Dante:
Blinded by light that strengthens
His eyes so he can see

NOTE: Dante has to be prepared for this final vision in the Mystic Empyrean. He is blinded — briefly — but when his vision returns, it is very strong. He can now see more clearly than ever before.

Canto 30: THE ROSE



<https://pixabay.com/en/rose-pink-white-tender-rose-bloom-3657098/>

a river of light;
with better vision, Dante
sees it is a rose

NOTE: Dante sees a number of things in the Mystic Empyrean. He sees a river of light. The banks of the river have flowers. He sees sparks of light going back and forth between the river and the riverbanks. However, more is to be seen here. Beatrice tells him that he has to drink the water of the river — with his eyes. That will allow him to see even more. Dante does this, and he sees that the sparks of light are actually angels and the flowers are actually the souls of the Blessed in

Paradise. The angels go back and forth from the souls and God. They bring graces from God to the souls, and they bring praises from the souls to God. Dante describes the souls of the Blest as forming a Rose. This Rose has more than a thousand tiers; it is gigantic. What Dante is seeing now is ultimate reality. The Rose is almost completely filled with souls, although a few empty spaces remain for future saved souls. We should note that the laws of physics do not apply in the Mystic Empyrean, which is beyond space and time. Dante can see each face of the Blest clearly.

Canto 30: HOLY ROMAN EMPEROR HENRY VII



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Henry the Seventh
Holy Roman Emperor
Henry's soul is saved

NOTE: One of the empty places in the Rose is reserved for Emperor Henry VII. Of course, in 1300, he is still alive; therefore, he is not in the Rose right now. Henry VII becomes Holy Roman Emperor, but he goes to

Italy, something that the Pope does not like. As we know, there was often a power struggle going on over who would control Italy. Dante fully supported the Holy Roman Emperor. In Dante's perfect government, the Holy Roman Emperor would control secular matters in Italy, while the Pope would control religious matters in Italy. Unfortunately, Henry VII died in 1313, as he was approaching Rome. Dante believed that Henry VII would have done good things for Italy had he lived.

Canto 30: DANTE IS SAVED

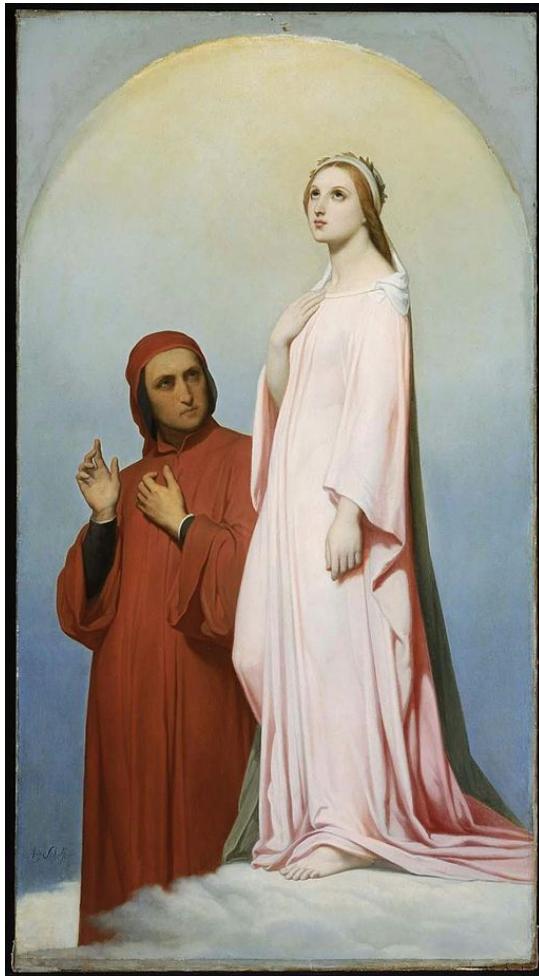


<https://pixabay.com/en/cornucopia-thanksgiving-autumn-fall-1789664/>

Dante's soul is saved —
will return to Paradise
On the Judgment Day

NOTE: Beatrice lets Dante that he is saved. She tells him that he will now see the angels and the saved souls not as points of light but in the form that he will see them again on Judgment Day. She also tells him that he will be eating at this nuptial feast. The goal of Dante's journey through the afterlife was to save his soul; that goal has been achieved.

Canto 31: BEATRICE



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

**Beatrice led Dante
Out of bondage to freedom
She is in the Rose**

NOTE: Beatrice's job is done: She has led Dante out of bondage to freedom. Sitting in the Rose, she smiles at Dante and then looks at God.

Canto 31: SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX



Source: Antoon Claeissens — *Saint Bernardus before the Virgin and Child* (Wiki Commons; Public Domain)

helps Dante to see
the beatific vision;
Dante's final guide

NOTE: Dante's new guide is Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. He lived in the 12th century (1090 or 1091-

1153), and he was a member of the Cistercian religious order.

Saint Bernard was a number of things that are important to Dante:

- 1) He was a contemplative.**
- 2) He was a reformer.** As a reformer, he wrote to the Pope. He advised the Pope to focus on spiritual things and to cease his focus on political things.
- 3) He was a preacher.**
- 4) He was a poet.**

Saint Bernard is Dante's final guide.

One of the things that Saint Bernard did was to call for the Second Crusade. This is the Crusade in which Cacciaguida, Dante's ancestor, died as a martyr. This Crusade was a failure. Twenty-one years after his death, Bernard was canonized. Saint Bernard helps Dante to see the beatific vision — the vision of the Trinity.

Canto 31: GUIDES AND SYMBOLS



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Saint Bernard: symbol

Of light of revelation

Helps Dante see God

NOTE: We can look at each of Dante's three major guides — Virgil, Beatrice, and Saint Bernard — as symbols:

Virgil: The Symbol of the Light of Human Reason

Beatrice: The Symbol of the Light of Revelation

Saint Bernard: The Symbol of the Light of Mystical Contemplation. It is Saint Bernard who prepares Dante to see God more clearly. Only Mystical Contemplation can do that. Saint Bernard himself is said to have had a vision of God during his lifetime.

In the illustration, Saint Bernard has a vision of the Virgin Mary, who is attended by two angels.

Canto 31: SAINT ANNE



Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Most souls in the Rose

**Look at God, but Saint Anne looks
at Holy Virgin**

NOTE:

Most of the souls look at God. The one exception is Saint Anne, who looks at Mary, her daughter, with love.

The rose is well organized. It is very symmetrical:

- **Half of the Rose is complete, and half of it is not yet complete.**
- **The half of the Rose that is complete is the half that is made up of pagans such as Ripheus and Old Testament souls such as Adam. These souls believed in the Christ Who was to come. Many, many Jews are in Paradise.**
- **The half of the Rose that is not yet completed is devoted to those who believed in the Christ Who had come. These souls are from New Testament times onward. This half of the Rose is nearly complete, indicating that the Day of Judgment is near.**
- **We have contrasts in the Rose: young and old, male and female, Old Testament figures and New Testament figures. We remember that the wisdom we talked about in the cantos set on the Sun involved complementarity. We have complementarity here in the Mystic Rose.**

Canto 32: PREPARATION TO SEE GOD



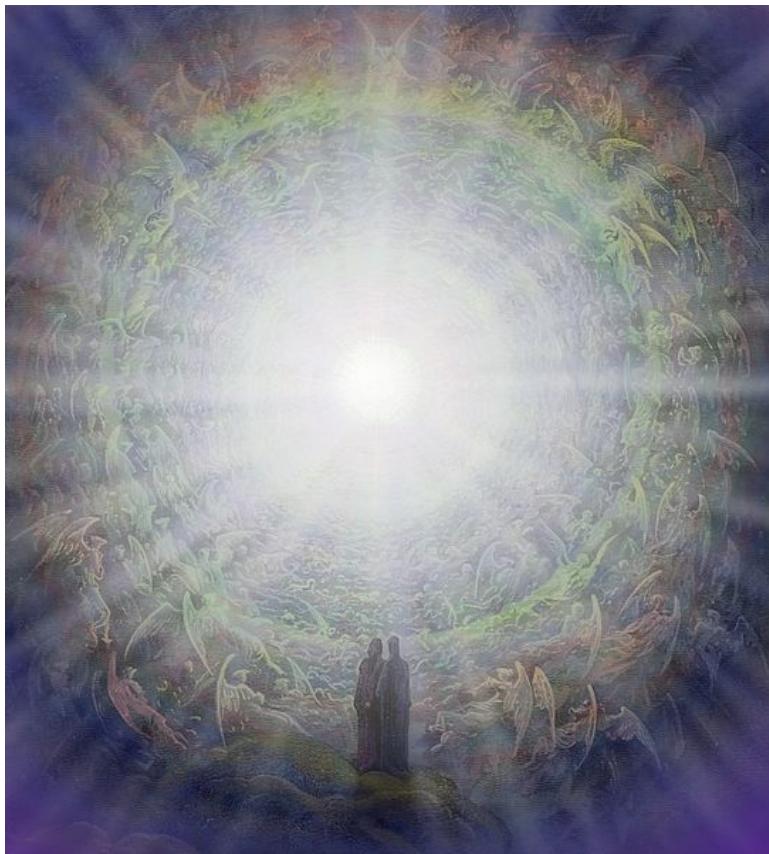
Engraver: Gustave Doré

**Saint Bernard will get
Dante ready to see God:
He studies the Rose**

NOTE: Saint Bernard will get Dante ready to see God. He does that by having Dante study the Mystic Empyrean all of its saved souls and good angels. Saint Bernard identifies some of the saved souls in the Rose.

The illustration is of Canto 31 and shows Dante and Beatrice looking at the Mystic Empyrean.

Canto 32: PARADISE



Engraver: Gustave Doré (Public Domain, with color modifications)

**No mistakes are made
And nothing occurs by chance
No sorrow present**

NOTE: In Paradise are no mistakes, no chance, no sorrow, no thirst, and no hunger. Children, however, are in the Rose.

Canto 32: DANTE IS READY



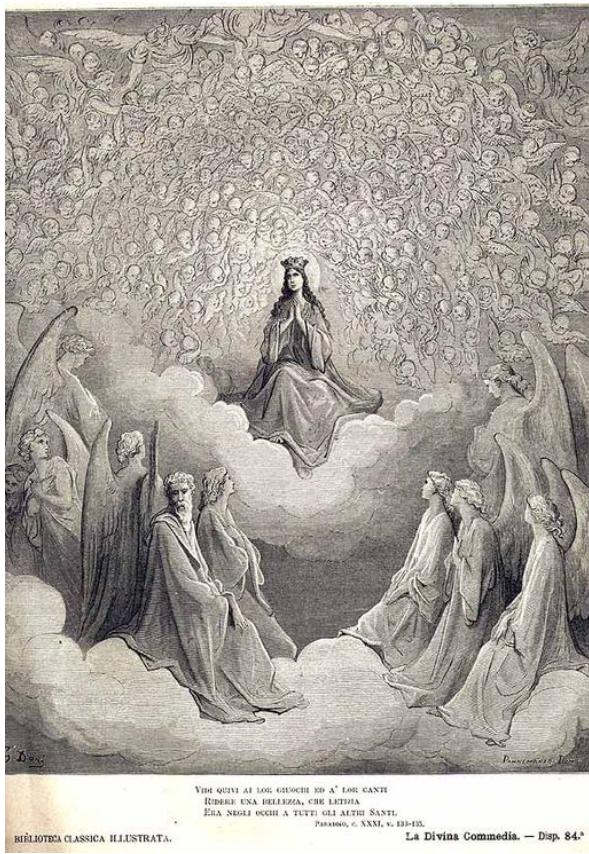
Source: Wiki Commons (Public Domain)

Dante is ready

To see God: Saint Bernard prays
for that to happen

NOTE: Now it is time for Dante to see his final vision. He will see God the Trinity. He will see God, Who is Love. Saint Bernard will pray to Mary that Dante be allowed to look at the Trinity. In Paradise, souls are very helpful. Saint Bernard's prayer will be answered positively.

Canto 33: PARADOX



BIBLIOTECA CLASSICA ILLUSTRATA. — La Divina Commedia. — Disp. 84.^a

Engraver: Gustave Doré, *Madonna* (Public Domain)

oh, Virgin Mother,
most humble, most exalted,
daughter of your son

NOTE: The language that Saint Bernard uses in the beginning of his prayer to Mary is the language of paradox.

This is a definition of paradox:

In literature, the paradox is an anomalous juxtaposition of incongruous ideas for the sake of striking exposition or unexpected insight.

Source: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_\(literature\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradox_(literature))

The language of paradox is not the language that we use in everyday life. Dante must use a new kind of language because of the things that he is trying to describe at the end of *The Divine Comedy*.

Dante is trying to describe the “ineffable” — something that cannot be described adequately in words. In other words, he is trying to eff the ineffable, and to do that, he has to use language that is not ordinary language.

Canto 33: PRAYERS TO MARY



[https://pixabay.com/en/church-interior-painting-
columns-170454/](https://pixabay.com/en/church-interior-painting-columns-170454/)

All the saved souls pray:
Let Dante be allowed to
See God face to face

NOTE:

In his prayer to Mary, Saint Bernard asks Mary for a favor, but a favor for Dante, not for himself.

In his prayer to Mary, Saint Bernard prays that Dante be allowed to see God face to face.

In his prayer to Mary, Saint Bernard says that he burns to help Dante.

In his prayer to Mary, Saint Bernard prays that Dante be protected when he returns to Earth as a living man.

The last time that Beatrice is referred to in *The Divine Comedy*, she is adding her prayer to that of Saint Bernard. Beatrice — and the other souls in Paradise — are praying to Mary that she allow Dante to see God face to face.

Canto 33: INADEQUACY



<https://pixabay.com/en/paradox-truth-reality-nondualistic-2953473/>

language, memory
inadequate to describe
Dante's sight of God

NOTE:

Dante goes back to Earth where he writes *The Divine Comedy* and tries to remember what he saw in his final moments in Paradise, something that is difficult for him to do.

Two themes in this section of the last canto of *The Divine Comedy* are these:

1. The inadequacy of language.

2. The inadequacy of memory.

Both language and his memory fail Dante as he tries to describe the sight of God. How can he remember and explain the paradox of the Trinity?

In one instant, Dante forgets much of his vision. He forgets in that one instant more than the sea-god Neptune has forgotten in the 2,500 years since he saw the *Argo*, the first ship, which was captained by Jason.

The sight of the *Argo* was remarkable to Neptune, and the sight of God was remarkable to Dante.

Canto 33: GOD



<https://pixabay.com/en/sisters-girls-summer-fun-931131/>

God's love binds all things
in a book whose scattered leaves
make up creation

NOTE: This is part of what Dante sees when he experiences God's presence.

Canto 33: BABY TALK

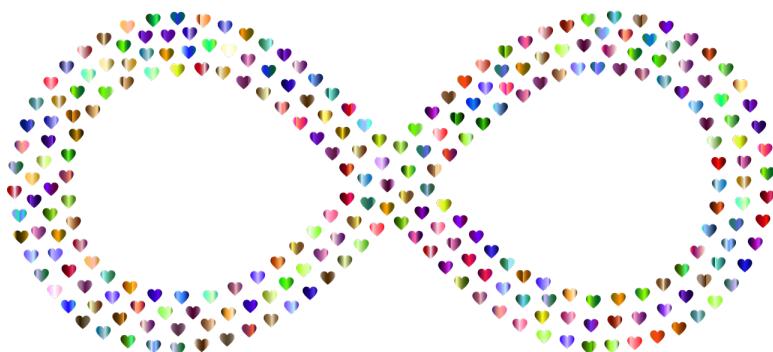


<https://pixabay.com/en/baby-boy-call-child-communication-164003/>

Experience of God
Described by a great poet
How well? Baby talk

NOTE: Dante is one of the world's greatest poets, but he calls his efforts to describe what he saw in his last few moments in Paradise as baby talk. How can one describe the mind of God? How can one describe the Trinity?

Canto 33: NO BOREDOM



<https://pixabay.com/en/infinity-infinite-repeating-loop-1837430/>

It is not boring

Our experience of God

See infinite perfections

Paradise will not be boring. When saved souls are in Paradise, they will experience God. That experience will never grow boring. Not only is God infinite, but also we continue to grow in Paradise. We grow more and more able to experience God.

God is perfect, and God never changes, but our ability to see deeper into the mind of God grows, and our experience of God's perfection changes. Paradise is never boring. In Paradise, we experience more and more of God's infinite perfection. That perfection never comes to an end, and no matter how much God reveals

to us of His perfection, more of His perfection remains to be revealed.

Of course, God is perfect, and God never changes, but our experience of God can change.

Similarly, our experience of great works of literature such as *The Divine Comedy* can change, even though the words of *The Divine Comedy* remain the same. Students often prefer the *Inferno*, perhaps because they are sinning. Middle-aged adults such as myself often prefer the *Purgatory*, perhaps because we are regretting our sins. Religious people such as nuns and priests often prefer the *Paradise*, perhaps because they are readying themselves to see God.

Canto 33: EXCERPT FROM DANTE'S PARADISE: A RETELLING IN PROSE BY DAVID BRUCE

Dante the Poet, back on Earth and writing *The Divine Comedy*, thought, *What I saw reached such heights that both memory and language fail me.*

I am like a person who has had a dream and has woken up. Although he cannot remember the dream, he still feels the effect that the dream had on him.

The vision I had fades, but I can still remember the sweetness I felt while having the vision.

Other things fade in the same way. Footprints made in the snow fade when sunshine strikes the snow. The Sibyl would write down her prophecies on leaves — one letter to a leaf — and their meaning would fade when the wind blew and mixed up the leaves.

Now, God, I pray to You as I write: Please give me back a small part of what I experienced when I saw You face to face in Paradise. Let me remember now a small part of what I saw then. And I pray to You to give me enough command of words to reveal to future generations even one small spark of Your Being.

God, if knowledge of Your Being can return briefly to my mind, and if my words can capture even a small part of Your Being, men will know more about Your might.

I remember looking at the Eternal Light. The Light strengthened me so that I was able to see it. If I had looked away from the Light, my senses would have been overpowered and I would have fainted.

I remember that I kept looking at the Eternal Light. My strength grew, and my vision grew.

*I remember that my vision united with the Eternal Light.
By the grace of God, I saw within the mind of God.*

I remember that contained within the mind of God is a book bound by love; that book is the universe. And in the mind of God are all forms and all essences of things. The essence of all things is found in the mind of God. I saw also substance, aka matter, and accident, aka the phases of matter, conjoined and how the two are related. And my words now can give only a hint of what I knew then.

I remember that I saw the conjoining of the temporal and the eternal in the mind of God. I know that I saw that because now as I write this, my heart is joyful.

But in one instant I forgot more than has been forgotten in the 2,500 years since Neptune, god of the sea, looked up in the water and saw the keel of the Argo, the first ship, which took Jason and his Argonauts on their journey to find the Golden Fleece. Both Neptune and I saw something marvelous, but the journey of the Argo 2,500 years ago can be remembered with more clearness than I can remember what I saw recently when I looked into the mind of God.

But my mind looked deeply and intently, and the more it saw, the more it wanted to see.

Anyone who looks within the mind of God is transformed and never wants to look away. In the mind of God is everything that is good. If something is not within the mind of God, then that thing is defective.

But now, when I describe the little that I remember of my vision, my words are like the babbling of a baby that still feeds at the mother's breasts. My words are mere baby talk.

God is perfect, and God never changes, but as my ability to see deeper into the mind of God grew, my experience of God's perfection changed. Paradise is never boring. In Paradise, we experience more and more of God's infinite perfection. That perfection never comes to an end, and no matter how much God reveals to us of His perfection, more of His perfection remains to be revealed.

I remember that I saw three circles of different colors all occupying the same space. The first circle reflected the second circle, and the first and second circles reflected the third circle. The Father begets the Son, and the Father and the Son produce the Holy Spirit.

My words as I try to describe this are weak, and “weak” is too weak a word to describe my words’ weakness!

Only God fully understands the mind of God, and God fully loves.

I remember that I looked at the three circles, and one of the circles bore the image of a Man — the incarnation. I stared.

A geometer can try to square the circle — something that is impossible. I remember that like that geometer I tried to understand this new mystery, to understand how the image of a Man can fit in the circle. But my finite human mind could not understand.

I remember that a flash of understanding hit me, and I saw and I understood. I cannot tell you what I saw and understood, but I experienced and felt the Infinite Love that moves the Sun and the other stars.

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Appendix A: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

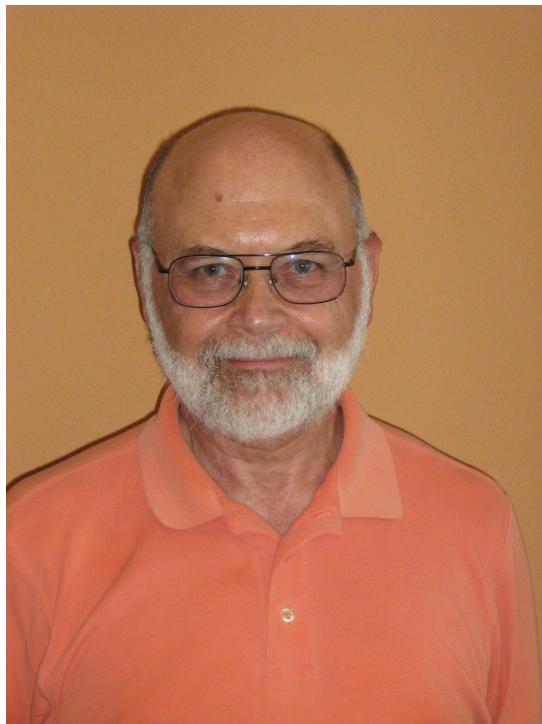


Photo: David Bruce

The *Paradiso*?

In haiku? Who would do that?

I'm not a smart man.

NOTE: Of course, I'm not retelling the *Paradise*. These haiku are notes that tell a few main points about this great epic poem.

Appendix B: INFERNO, PURGATORY, and PARADISE

Here are links to my retellings of Dante's *Inferno*, *Purgatory* and *Paradise*.

INFERNO: CANTO 1

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2016/12/31/dante
s-inferno-canto-1/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2016/12/31/dante-s-inferno-canto-1/)

INFERNO: CANTO 2

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/01/dante
s-inferno-canto-2/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/01/dante-s-inferno-canto-2/)

INFERNO: CANTO 3

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/02/dante
s-inferno-canto-3/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/02/dante-s-inferno-canto-3/)

INFERNO: CANTO 4

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/03/dante
s-inferno-canto-4/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/03/dante-s-inferno-canto-4/)

INFERNO: CANTO 5

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/04/dante
s-inferno-canto-5/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/04/dante-s-inferno-canto-5/)

INFERNO: CANTO 6

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/05/dante
s-inferno-canto-6-retelling-the-gluttonous/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/05/dante-s-inferno-canto-6-retelling-the-gluttonous/)

INFERNO: CANTO 7

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/06/dante
s-inferno-canto-7-the-wasters-hoarders-wrathful-and-
sullen/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/06/dante-s-inferno-canto-7-the-wasters-hoarders-wrathful-and-sullen/)

INFERNO: CANTO 8

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/07/dante
s-inferno-canto-8-retelling-the-boatman-phlegyas-and-
filippo-argentii/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/07/dante-s-inferno-canto-8-retelling-the-boatman-phlegyas-and-filippo-argentii/)

INFERNO: CANTO 9

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/08/dante
s-inferno-canto-9-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/08/dante-s-inferno-canto-9-retelling/)

INFERNO: CANTO 10

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/09/dante
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INFERNO: CANTO 11

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/10/dante
s-inferno-canto-11-retelling-virgil-teaches-dante/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/10/dante-s-inferno-canto-11-retelling-virgil-teaches-dante/)

INFERNO: CANTO 12

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/11/dante
s-inferno-canto-12-retelling-the-minotaur-and-the-
river-of-boiling-blood/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/11/dante-s-inferno-canto-12-retelling-the-minotaur-and-the-river-of-boiling-blood/)

INFERNO: CANTO 13

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/12/dante
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INFERNO: CANTO 14

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/13/dante
s-inferno-canto-14-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/13/dante-s-inferno-canto-14-retelling/)

INFERNO: CANTO 15

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/14/dante
s-inferno-canto-15-retelling-ca/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/14/dante-s-inferno-canto-15-retelling-ca/)

INFERNO: CANTO 16

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/15/dante
s-inferno-canto-16-retelling-the-violent-against-nature-
continued/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/15/dante-s-inferno-canto-16-retelling-the-violent-against-nature-continued/)

INFERNO: CANTO 17

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/16/dante
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INFERNO: CANTO 18

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/17/dante
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flatterers/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/17/dante-s-inferno-chapter-18-retelling-panders-and-seducers-flatterers/)

INFERNO: CANTO 19

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/18/dante
s-inferno-canto-19-retelling-the-simonists/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/18/dante-s-inferno-canto-19-retelling-the-simonists/)

INFERNO: CANTO 20

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/19/dante
s-inferno-canto-20-retelling-the-soothsayers-and-
fortune-tellers/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/19/dante-s-inferno-canto-20-retelling-the-soothsayers-and-fortune-tellers/)

INFERNO: CANTO 21

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/20/dante
s-inferno-canto-21-retelling-the-grafters/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/20/dante-s-inferno-canto-21-retelling-the-grafters/)

INFERNO: CANTO 22

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/21/dante
s-inferno-canto-22-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/21/dante-s-inferno-canto-22-retelling/)

INFERNO: CANTO 23

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/22/dante
s-inferno-canto-23-retelling-the-hypocrites/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/22/dante-s-inferno-canto-23-retelling-the-hypocrites/)

INFERNO: CANTO 24

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/23/dante
s-inferno-canto-24-retelling-the-thieves-including-
vanni-fucci/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/23/dante-s-inferno-canto-24-retelling-the-thieves-including-vanni-fucci/)

INFERNO: CANTO 25

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/24/dante
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thieves/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/24/dante-s-inferno-canto-25-retelling-the-transformation-of-thieves/)

INFERNO: CANTO 26

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/25/dante
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ulyssesdiomed/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/25/dante-s-inferno-canto-26-retelling-evil-advisers-ulyssesdiomed/)

INFERNO: CANTO 27

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/26/dante
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INFERNO: CANTO 28

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/27/dante
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INFERNO: CANTO 29

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/28/dante
s-inferno-canto-29-retelling-the-falsifiers-alchemists/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/28/dante-s-inferno-canto-29-retelling-the-falsifiers-alchemists/)

INFERNO: CANTO 30

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/29/dante
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impersonators-counterfeitors-and-liars/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/29/dante-s-inferno-canto-30-retelling-the-falsifiers-evil-impersonators-counterfeitors-and-liars/)

INFERNO: CANTO 31

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/30/dante
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INFERNO: CANTO 32

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INFERNO: CANTO 33

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/01/dante
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INFERNO: CANTO 34

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/02/dante
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PURGATORY: CANTO 1

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/03/dante
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PURGATORY: CANTO 2 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/04/dante
s-purgatory-canto-2-retelling-new-souls-arrive-in-
purgatory/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/04/dante-s-purgatory-canto-2-retelling-new-souls-arrive-in-purgatory/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 3 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/05/dante
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PURGATORY: CANTO 4 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/06/dante
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PURGATORY: CANTO 5 RETELLING

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PURGATORY: CANTO 6 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/08/dante
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PURGATORY: CANTO 7 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/dante
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negligent-princes/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/dante-s-purgatory-canto-7-retelling-prepurgatory-the-negligent-princes/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 8 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/10/dante
s-purgatory-canto-8/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/10/dante-s-purgatory-canto-8/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 9 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/11/dante
s-purgatory-canto-9-retelling-prepurgatory-first-
prophetic-dream-and-saint-peters-gate/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/11/dante-s-purgatory-canto-9-retelling-prepurgatory-first-prophetic-dream-and-saint-peters-gate/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 10 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/12/dante
s-purgatory-canto-10-retelling-first-ledge-pride-
purgatory/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/12/dante-s-purgatory-canto-10-retelling-first-ledge-pride-purgatory/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 11 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/13/dante
s-purgatory-canto-11-retelling-first-ledge-
aldobrandesco-oderisi-provenzan/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/13/dante-s-purgatory-canto-11-retelling-first-ledge-aldobrandesco-oderisi-provenzan/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 12 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/14/dante
s-purgatory-canto-12-retelling-first-ledge-exempla-of-
pride/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/14/dante-s-purgatory-canto-12-retelling-first-ledge-exempla-of-pride/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 13 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/15/dante
s-purgatory-canto-13-retelling-second-ledge-envy-sapia/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/15/dante-s-purgatory-canto-13-retelling-second-ledge-envy-sapia/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 14 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/16/dante
s-purgatory-canto-14-retelling-second-ledge-envy-
guido-del-duca-rinier-da-calboli/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/16/dante-s-purgatory-canto-14-retelling-second-ledge-envy-guido-del-duca-rinier-da-calboli/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 15 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/17/dante
s-purgatory-canto-15-retelling-third-ledge-anger/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/17/dante-s-purgatory-canto-15-retelling-third-ledge-anger/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 16 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/18/dante
s-purgatory-canto-16-retelling-third-ledge-anger-
marco-lombard/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/18/dante-s-purgatory-canto-16-retelling-third-ledge-anger-marco-lombard/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 17 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/19/dante
s-purgatory-canto-17-retelling-fourth-ledge-sloth/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/19/dante-s-purgatory-canto-17-retelling-fourth-ledge-sloth/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 18 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/20/dante
s-purgatory-canto-18-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/20/dante-s-purgatory-canto-18-retelling/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 19 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/21/dante
-purgatory-canto-19-retelling-fifth-ledge-avarice-and-
wastefulness/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/21/dante-purgatory-canto-19-retelling-fifth-ledge-avarice-and-wastefulness/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 20 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/22/dante
s-purgatory-canto-20-retelling-avarice-and-
wastefulness-hugh-capet/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/22/dante-s-purgatory-canto-20-retelling-avarice-and-wastefulness-hugh-capet/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 21 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/23/dante
s-purgatory-canto-21-retelling-fifth-ledge-avarice-and-
wastefulness/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/23/dante-s-purgatory-canto-21-retelling-fifth-ledge-avarice-and-wastefulness/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 22 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/24/dante
s-purgatory-canto-2-retelling-sixth-ledge-gluttony-
statius/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/24/dante-s-purgatory-canto-2-retelling-sixth-ledge-gluttony-statius/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 23 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/25/dante
s-purgatory-canto-23-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/25/dante-s-purgatory-canto-23-retelling/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 24 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/26/dante
s-purgatory-canto-24-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/26/dante-s-purgatory-canto-24-retelling/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 25

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/27/dante
s-purgatory-canto-25-retelling-seventh-ledge-lust-body-
soul-relationship/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/27/dante-s-purgatory-canto-25-retelling-seventh-ledge-lust-body-soul-relationship/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 26 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/28/dante
s-purgatory-canto-26-retelling-seventh-ledge-lust-guido-
guinizelli-and-arnaut-daniel/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/02/28/dante-s-purgatory-canto-26-retelling-seventh-ledge-lust-guido-guinizelli-and-arnaut-daniel/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 27 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/01/dante
s-purgatory-canto-27-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/01/dante-s-purgatory-canto-27-retelling/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 28 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/02/dante
s-purgatory-canto-28-retelling-forest-of-eden-matelda/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/02/dante-s-purgatory-canto-28-retelling-forest-of-eden-matelda/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 29 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/03/dante
s-purgatory-canto-29-retelling-forest-of-eden-pageant-
of-revelation/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/03/dante-s-purgatory-canto-29-retelling-forest-of-eden-pageant-of-revelation/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 30 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/04/dante
s-purgatory-canto-30-retelling-forest-of-eden-exit-of-
virgil-entrance-of-beatrice/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/04/dante-s-purgatory-canto-30-retelling-forest-of-eden-exit-of-virgil-entrance-of-beatrice/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 31 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/05/dante
s-purgatory-canto-31-retelling-forest-of-eden-lethe/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/05/dante-s-purgatory-canto-31-retelling-forest-of-eden-lethe/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 32 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/06/dante
s-purgatpry-canto-32-retelling-forest-of-eden-pageant-
of-church-history/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/06/dante-s-purgatpry-canto-32-retelling-forest-of-eden-pageant-of-church-history/)

PURGATORY: CANTO 33 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/07/dante
s-purgatory-canto-33-retelling-forest-of-eden-
purgation-completed/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/07/dante-s-purgatory-canto-33-retelling-forest-of-eden-purgation-completed/)

PARADISE: CANTO 1 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/dante
s-paradise-canto-1-retelling-beatrice-and-dante-rise-
from-eden/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/dante-s-paradise-canto-1-retelling-beatrice-and-dante-rise-from-eden/)

PARADISE: CANTO 2 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/dante
s-paradise-canto-2-retelling-moon-dark-spots/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/09/dante-s-paradise-canto-2-retelling-moon-dark-spots/)

PARADISE: CANTO 3 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/10/dante
s-paradise-canto-3-retelling-piccarda-and-the-empress-
constance-unfulfilment-of-religious-vows/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/10/dante-s-paradise-canto-3-retelling-piccarda-and-the-empress-constance-unfulfilment-of-religious-vows/)

PARADISE: CANTO 4 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/11/dante
s-paradise-canto-4-retelling-location-of-souls-the-
absolute-versus-the-conditional-will/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/11/dante-s-paradise-canto-4-retelling-location-of-souls-the-absolute-versus-the-conditional-will/)

PARADISE: CANTO 5 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/12/dante
s-paradise-canto-5-retelling-moon-compensation-for-
broken-vows/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/12/dante-s-paradise-canto-5-retelling-moon-compensation-for-broken-vows/)

PARADISE: CANTO 6 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/13/dante
s-paradise-canto-6-retelling-mercury-roman-emperor-
justinian/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/13/dante-s-paradise-canto-6-retelling-mercury-roman-emperor-justinian/)

PARADISE: CANTO 7 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/14/dante
s-paradise-canto-7-retelling-mercury-the-mystery-of-
redemption/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/14/dante-s-paradise-canto-7-retelling-mercury-the-mystery-of-redemption/)

PARADISE: CANTO 8 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/15/dante
s-paradise-canto-8-retelling-venus-charles-martel/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/15/dante-s-paradise-canto-8-retelling-venus-charles-martel/)

PARADISE: CANTO 9 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/16/dante
s-paradise-canto-9-retelling-venus-cuanza-folquet-
rahab/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/16/dante-s-paradise-canto-9-retelling-venus-cuanza-folquet-rahab/)

PARADISE: CANTO 10 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/17/dante
s-paradise-canto-10-retelling-sun-saint-thomas-aquinas/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/17/dante-s-paradise-canto-10-retelling-sun-saint-thomas-aquinas/)

PARADISE: CANTO 11 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/18/dante
s-paradise-canto-11-retelling-sun-saint-thomas-aquinas-
praises-saint-francis-of-assisi/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/18/dante-s-paradise-canto-11-retelling-sun-saint-thomas-aquinas-praises-saint-francis-of-assisi/)

PARADISE: CANTO 12 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/19/dante
s-paradise-canto-12-retelling-sun-saint-bonaventure-
praises-saint-dominic/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/19/dante-s-paradise-canto-12-retelling-sun-saint-bonaventure-praises-saint-dominic/)

PARADISE: CANTO 13 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/dante
s-paradise-canto-13-retelling-saint-thomas-aquinas-
discusses-solomon/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/dante-s-paradise-canto-13-retelling-saint-thomas-aquinas-discusses-solomon/)

PARADISE: CANTO 14 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/21/dante
s-paradise-canto-14-retelling-sun-solomon-mars-
symbolic-cross/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/21/dante-s-paradise-canto-14-retelling-sun-solomon-mars-symbolic-cross/)

PARADISE: CANTO 15 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/22/dante
s-paradise-canto-15-retelling-mars-cacciaguida/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/22/dante-s-paradise-canto-15-retelling-mars-cacciaguida/)

PARADISE: CANTO 16 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/23/dante
s-paradise-canto-16-retelling-mars-cacciaguidas-
florence/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/23/dante-s-paradise-canto-16-retelling-mars-cacciaguidas-florence/)

PARADISE: CANTO 17 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/dante
s-paradise-canto-17-retelling-cacciaguidas-prophecy/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/dante-s-paradise-canto-17-retelling-cacciaguidas-prophecy/)

PARADISE: CANTO 18 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/25/dante
s-paradise-canto-18-retelling-jupiter-lovers-of-justice/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/25/dante-s-paradise-canto-18-retelling-jupiter-lovers-of-justice/)

PARADISE: CANTO 19 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/26/dante
s-paradise-canto-19-retelling-jupiter-symbolic-eagle/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/26/dante-s-paradise-canto-19-retelling-jupiter-symbolic-eagle/)

PARADISE: CANTO 20 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/27/dante
s-paradise-canto-20-retelling-two-pagans-in-paradise-
ripheus-and-trajan/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/27/dante-s-paradise-canto-20-retelling-two-pagans-in-paradise-ripheus-and-trajan/)

PARADISE: CANTO 21 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/28/dante
s-paradise-canto-21-retelling-saturn-symbolic-ladder-
saint-peter-damian/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/28/dante-s-paradise-canto-21-retelling-saturn-symbolic-ladder-saint-peter-damian/)

PARADISE: CANTO 22 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/29/dante
s-paradise-canto-22-retelling-saturn-saint-benedict/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/29/dante-s-paradise-canto-22-retelling-saturn-saint-benedict/)

PARADISE: CANTO 23 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/30/dante
s-paradise-canto-23/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/30/dante-s-paradise-canto-23/)

PARADISE: CANTO 24 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/31/dante
s-paradise-canto-24-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/03/31/dante-s-paradise-canto-24-retelling/)

PARADISE: CANTO 25 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/01/dante
s-paradise-canto-25-retelling-gemini-saint-james-
examines-dantes-hope/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/01/dante-s-paradise-canto-25-retelling-gemini-saint-james-examines-dantes-hope/)

PARADISE: CANTO 26 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/02/dante
s-paradise-canto-26-retelling-gemini-saint-john-
examines-dantes-love-adam/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/02/dante-s-paradise-canto-26-retelling-gemini-saint-john-examines-dantes-love-adam/)

PARADISE: CANTO 27 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/03/dante
s-paradise-canto-27-retelling-gemini-heavens-wrath-at-
the-sinful-church-the-primum-mobile/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/03/dante-s-paradise-canto-27-retelling-gemini-heavens-wrath-at-the-sinful-church-the-primum-mobile/)

PARADISE: CANTO 28 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/04/dante
s-paradise-canto-28-retelling/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/04/dante-s-paradise-canto-28-retelling/)

PARADISE: CANTO 29 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/05/dante
s-paradise-canto-29-retelling-primum-mobile-the-
creation-and-fall-of-angels/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/05/dante-s-paradise-canto-29-retelling-primum-mobile-the-creation-and-fall-of-angels/)

PARADISE: CANTO 30 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/dante
s-paradise-canto-30-retelling-mystic-empyrean-the-
river-of-light-the-mystical-rose/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/06/dante-s-paradise-canto-30-retelling-mystic-empyrean-the-river-of-light-the-mystical-rose/)

PARADISE: CANTO 31 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/07/dante
s-paradise-canto-31-retelling-mystic-empyrean-saint-
bernard/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/07/dante-s-paradise-canto-31-retelling-mystic-empyrean-saint-bernard/)

PARADISE: CANTO 32 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/08/dante
s-paradise-canto-32-retelling-mystic-empyrean-saint-
bernard-and-the-saints-in-the-rose/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/08/dante-s-paradise-canto-32-retelling-mystic-empyrean-saint-bernard-and-the-saints-in-the-rose/)

PARADISE: CANTO 33 RETELLING

[https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/09/dante
s-paradise-canto-33-retelling-saint-bernard-prays-to-
mary-the-trinity-and-christs-dual-nature/](https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/2017/04/09/dante-s-paradise-canto-33-retelling-saint-bernard-prays-to-mary-the-trinity-and-christs-dual-nature/)

Appendix C: Some Links

David Bruce's Lulu Bookstore (Paperbacks)

<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/brucebATohioDOTedu>

David Bruce's Amazon Author Bookstore

<https://www.amazon.com/David-Bruce/e/B004KEZ7LY>

David Bruce's Smashwords Bookstore

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/bruceb>

David Bruce's Apple iBookstore

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/artist/david-bruce/id81470634#see-all/top-books>

David Bruce's Barnes and Noble Books

https://www.barnesandnoble.com/s/david%20bruce/_N-8qa

David Bruce's Kobo Books

<https://www.kobo.com/us/en/search?query=David%20Bruce&fcsearchfield=Author>

davidbruceblog #1

<https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com>

davidbruceblog #2

<https://davidbrucemusic.wordpress.com>

davidbruceblog #3

<https://cosplayvideos.wordpress.com>

Free davidbrucehaiku eBooks (pdfs)

<https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/patreon/>

Free eBooks by David Bruce (pdfs)

<https://davidbruceblog.wordpress.com/patreon/>

Free eBook: YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIND

<https://wordpress.com/post/davidbrucemusic.wordpress.com/5755>

Appendix C: SOME BOOKS BY DAVID BRUCE

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Dido of Carthage: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text

Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings

Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose

The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling

From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica

The History of King Leir: A Retelling

Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose

Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose

Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica

John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling

John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling

King Edward III: A Retelling

Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling

The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems

Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose

- William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A Retelling in Prose*
- William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose*

Children's Biography

Nadia Comaneci: Perfect Ten

Personal Finance

How to Manage Your Money: A Guide for the Non-Rich

Anecdote Collections

250 Anecdotes About Opera

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