

The words of the Bride, "He set in order charity in me," were interpreted to ^{indicate} the process by which God, through grace, coordinates man's loves, his appetites and impulses, according to Divine priorities. If a man's love is ordered, he is free from all internal conflict; he is doing God's will; he is free to make contact with God.¹⁹ Augustine, in the City of God, (15,22) makes this very clear:

Every creature, since it is good, can be loved both well and badly: well that is, when order is preserved; and badly when order is disturbed. If the Creature be truly loved, ...He cannot be loved badly. For even love itself is to be loved in orderly wise. Therefore it seems to me that a brief and true definition of virtue is the Order of Love; on account of which in the Holy Canticle the Bride of Christ, the City of God, sings, "Set in order love in me."

The whole process of the Divine Comedy can be viewed as the setting in order of love in Dante the pilgrim. The overwhelming order of the Comedy's structure reflects the order of the universe, and of God's mind! when that order is totally integrated into the pilgrim, he is "revolved by the Love that moves the sun and the other stars."²⁰ This will be more fully discussed in the last section of this essay.

Another concept originating in the allegorization of the Song which is important to the Comedy is the mystical significance of the hour of noon in Medieval theology. Origen interpreted Sheba's plea in Chapter 1:6, "Shew me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou liest in the midday, lest I begin to wander after the flocks of thy companions," as a prayer for direct contact of the soul with God. Dante carefully calculates the time

sense of the Divine Comedy so that the pilgrim will exit from Eden exactly at noon and, as mentioned before, noon is the earth-time throughout timeless Paradise. Following the direction set out by Origen and Bernard, Dante does not stop at using noon as a symbolic time, but sets up a dialectic between the full light of the sun and shadow. As it works itself out in the Comedy, shadow represents God's mercy and noon his untempered Judgment or Truth.²¹ While man is in the flesh, he needs the shadow in which to hide, but at the final union he can endure noon, for he will be "strong for all that can delight" him.²²

Noon was traditionally considered the perfect hour of the day in the Middle Ages.²³ It was at noon on Easter that Christ ascended to God from Hell and likewise Easter noon when Dante the pilgrim entered Paradise. "The hour of noon," Dante wrote in the Convivio, "is the noblest in the whole day and the one of the greatest virtue."²⁴ He describes the pilgrim's passing "beyond humanity" in Paradise, Canto 1, line 65, as occurring when he looks at the noonday sun as reflected in Beatrice's eyes.²⁵

In this light, it becomes clear why Eden is described as having foliage which "tempered to my eyes the new day," in Purgatorio 28. The Garden of Eden, we learn in line 10, is not at the very top of the mountain, but is in the shadow of the crest. It is a place of special grace, where mercy abounds. Here the weak flesh is reconciled to the pilgrim's willing spirit and prepared in the protection for total exposure to the sun in Paradise. The River Lethe is described as one "which conceals nothing though it flows quite dark under the perpetual shade which never lets sun or moon

shine there."²⁶

Because the Lethe represents an extreme of divine mercy, washing away not only sin but all memory of sin, it is in "perpetual shade." Matilda is characterized in line 43 of Canto 28 as "one who warmest thyself in Love's beams." She is already totally pure and at one with God, thus she does not need the shade. Again, in Canto 29, she is described as a "nymph...wandering alone, one...choosing to see the sun." In contrast, Dante is one who chooses to "avoid the sun" as they walk together, one on each side of the Lethe. Only after the waters of that river and the Eunoe will Dante be capable of sustaining eternal Noon. He gets a foretaste of the light, however, even before the two rivers, when "the air before us under the green shade became like a blazing fire and the sweet sound was now heard as songs."²⁷ This signals the pageant of the Church Militant and the first touch of revelation, which will introduce Beatrice.

The shadow will not protect man forever; in the Last Days, the "day will break and the shadows retire." Christ will "return ...like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel." This passage from Chapter 2:17 of the Song was read as apocalyptic by Origen and Bernard. When the "beloved" comes again, mercy's shadow will disappear in the Noon of Judgment and resurrected man will meet God.²⁸ There will be no justice/mercy dichotomy in God's behaviour toward man, for mercy relates to the sins of the weak flesh and at the Final Judgment, the flesh will not need mercy. It will be strong, transformed, and at one with the soul and God..

SECTION III

As was mentioned at the end of the last section, the first appearance of imagery from the Song of Songs is in Eden, the place where the body is restored to innocence and transformed, as in resurrection. This appearance is not surprising, for, since Origen, Christians had found it nearly impossible to avoid allusions to the Song when writing of the resurrection and final union with God. In order to see how Dante uses this imagery, we must examine those Cantos in which it is concentrated. They are Cantos 29 to 33 of Purgatorio, and 10 to 15 and 23 to 33 of Paradiso.

Eden, as described in Canto 28, recalls the atmosphere surrounding the lovers in the Song; it is in the traditional lyric mode, a lush spring garden. In Eden as in the garden of Solomon, "Winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come... the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise my love, my beautiful one, and come." (Song of Songs 2:11-13) Eden is bursting with fertility, the very air is "impregnated" with the invisible seed of plants which God's potency has brought forth without seed. The garden represents the peak of earthly life and is described in lush, sensuous terms. This description sets the tone for Canto 29, in which Dante meets his true love.

At moment supernatural elements are introduced into Eden, Dante employs bride imagery for the first time in the Comedy. The seven trees, turned to seven candlesticks of Revelations, move "towards us so slowly that they would have been outstripped

by newmade brides."¹ Where nature is at its acme, it blends into the divine, for "where God rules immediately, natural law is of no effect."² The Song of Songs was thought to deal with this strange state where natural and supernatural overlap, as was discussed earlier in connection with the sensual apprehension of God.

After the pageant of the Church Militant has arranged itself under the trees, in the beginning of Canto 30, Beatrice is heralded:

One of them, like a messenger from heaven, called three times, singing: "Veni, sponsa, de Libano," and all the others after him. As the blessed shall rise at the last trump each eager from his tomb, the reclar voice singing Hallelujah, there rose up on the divine chariot at the voice of so great an elder, a hundred ministers and messengers of eternal life, who all cried: "Benedictus qui venis," and, throwing flowers up and around, "Manibus o date lilia plenis," (Purgatorio 30:11-21)

This passage not only identifies Beatrice with the spouse who is invited to come from Lebanon to be crowned in Chapter 4:8 of the Song, but also associates the Song specifically with resurrection.

The chariot, representing the earthly church, has stood empty to this moment and needed Beatrice to be fulfilled; for the bride is, allegorically, the Resurrected Church.³ The chariot alone is lacking, like the Hebrew Law, of the Spirit. At mention of the Old Testament Bride and Groom, the company of saints responds with the message of the New Testament, "Benedictus qui venis," "blessed art thou who cometh."⁴ Because the Song was read as a prefiguration of the final nuptial feast, the response of the saints to hearing a line from the Song is to return with a corresponding passage from the New Testament that pertains to

the Second Coming of Christ.

In this context, however, the blessing also refers to Beatrice, since she is about to come into view. The elders are described as being as eager as the resurrected at the last trump. The appearance of Beatrice, thus, is parallel to the Second Coming of Christ, in that it is associated with the joy of the risen church. Throwing lilies up to create a "cloud of flowers," the elders quote from the Aenid, thereby completing Dante's familiar triune of truth, the Old and New Testaments and Classical Literature. The flowers shade Dante from the beauty of Beatrice's face the way dawn clouds shaded him from the sun. She is like the sun, revealing all in the eyes of truth, but Dante is incapable of sustaining the sight without protection of the shade. To reinforce her identification as a bride-type, Beatrice is wearing a white veil. Dante cannot look at her, but he feels the "hidden virtue" of "old love's great power," which had already pierced me before I was out of my boyhood..."⁵ With Solomon, Dante could say: "Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck."⁶ This idea of the wound of love is important to Dante's mystical thought, and will be discussed in the next section.

Beatrice is described in military terms, since she is the spirit of the Church Militant, the earthly church.⁷ She reproaches him in "stern pity" for presuming to "approach the mountain" and this creates shame in him. She rebukes the pilgrim with the sin which seems universal, the misuse of his potential. By virtue

of the stars and heavenly grace, Dante "in his early life was such potentially that every right disposition would have come to marvellous proof in him." With his loss of innocence, he lost his potential, except so far as it was sustained by the presence of Beatrice. In Eden, in her presence, there is hope that his potential will be realized and that his innocence will be restored.

Eden has a special significance for Dante; he posits it as the "goal" of earthly man, the place in which "human virtue" reaches perfection. The "goal" of spiritual man is the "enjoyment of the Divine Aspect, whereto human virtue cannot attain without the help of divine light, and which is meant by the Heavenly Paradise." One can come to Eden if guided by "moral and intellectual virtues," such as embodied in Virgil in the Inferno and Purgatorio. Paradise can be reached only "through spiritual teachings which transcend human reason," such as embodied in Beatrice.⁸

"Here," Matilda tells Dante in Purgatorio 28, line 131, "the human root was innocent," The earthly Paradise is seen as the place to which the earthly body naturally aspires to return; it is the home prepared for the body by Providence. In Eden the body was free from death, old age, disease and deformity. In Paradiso 7, line 140, Beatrice tells Dante that his life, his soul, was created directly by God. "He so enamours it of Himself that it desires Him ever after. And from this thou canst also argue your resurrection, if thou recall how human flesh was made at the time of the making of both the first parents." What God creates directly is more "pure" than that which reproduces itself through seed. The body was originally created directly by God,

but since the fall, it has reproduced itself in an "animal" fashion. The prelapsarian body was pure and at one with God and with the soul, which is still individually, directly generated by God according to Statius, in Purgatorio 25. What Beatrice implies in the above passage is that the body, like the soul, is "enamoured" of God and wishes to return to him in the resurrected form. She also identifies that form with the original innocent state of the body. This identification is made again in Paradise 26, when Dante addresses Adam, "O fruit that alone wast brought forth ripe..." Here Dante implies that all bodies, or "fruit" will someday be as Adam's was, "ripe," that is, fully realized in terms of earthly virtue; that is, innocent.

It seems that ~~in~~ in Eden, Dante's body undergoes treatment which makes it similiar to the prelapsarian body. That treatment consists of fire and water. Before he could enter Eden, Dante had to undergo the purgation of lust by fire; loss of lust liberated his true spiritual love for Beatrice, and potentially for Christ. Because he is still capable of guilt and shame for past deeds, he is not totally freed from all traces of sin by the curtain of fire. He must yet undergo the baptism of two rivers, the Lethe and Eunoe.⁹ The former washes away all memory of sin and the latter restores all memory of virtue. Thus, through fire and water, Dante is "restored" to complete affirmation of his complete self, body and soul. He comes forth "remade, even as new plants renewed with new leaves, pure and ready to mount to the stars."¹⁰ "Crowned and mitred over himself" by Reason, Dante is free to let his "pleasure be his guide." He is free to feel "the sun that shines

on his brow, see the grass, the flowers and trees."(Purgatorio 27, line 36.) Innocent bodily pleasure is now possible, for Dante has been restored to innocent, prelapsarian accord with his physical impulses.

It is impossible to say how closely Dante means the reader to identify the pilgrim's transformed body in Eden with the resurrected body which every Christian expects in the Last Days, but judging from the evidence above, there seems to be quite a bit of similarity. As Charles Williams puts it, "He is as near as he can be before death to the risen body."¹¹ According to orthodox Christian tradition, "Before the resurrection of the bodies, there cannot be that lapse of the souls into God, which is their perfect and supreme state; nor, surely would the spirit require the company of the flesh if it could be consummated without it."¹² Dante's claim to ignorance of whether he went to Paradise in the body or in the soul alone in Canto I, then, probably is made to avoid the charge of heresy. It would have been considered heresy for a poet to claim any certain knowledge about the "supreme joy" of the final union or even about the nature of the resurrected body.. To make conjecture in poetry about that consummation was considered hubris by the church; for, 'The Beatific Vision is not for the present life, but is reserved for the final state of existence: to those who at last are able to say, "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see Him as He is..." There is no man however wise or holy, there is no prophet who is able, or was able to see Him

in this mortal body as He is; yet those who shall be found worthy shall do so when their bodies shall be found immortal." This assertion of the impossibility of seeing God as He IS except in the resurrected body is made by Bernard.¹³ Since Bernard is present when Dante in the Comedy does "see" God, the reader can assume that his writing, quoted above, is not being contradicted, but fulfilled by Dante's lapsing "into God." Dante's body must be close to the state of the final resurrected body, for he receives the "supreme joy," which would be impossible were he in the soul alone. Therefore, the reader can assume that his body in its transformed condition does accompany the pilgrim in his journey through Paradise.¹⁴

Returning to discussion of the Pageant of the Church Militant, we must consider the question of the allegorical significance of Beatrice in the last Cantos of Purgatorio. This question has been the subject of critical debate for centuries, but one theory in particular is of interest to the purposes of this paper. It maintains that Beatrice symbolizes the Eucharist in the Sacrament of Communion in the Pageant.¹⁵ Beatrice is the center of the pageant in Eden as the Host was in Corpus Christi pageants held in Dante's time.¹⁶ Her position and the singing of "Benedictus qui venis," which is sung before Communion in the Mass and before Beatrice appears in the chariot, make the theory seem plausible. But the meaning of the sacrament and of the Host, especially, is of more vital concern here. Partaking of "Christ's Body," in the form of the Host is necessary to salvation. It

is a prerequisite for becoming part of the one Body at the last Trump, a prerequisite for resurrection.¹⁷ If Beatrice does represent the Host, then she is identified once more with the doctrine of resurrection.¹⁸

Beatrice, according to L.A. Fisher, stands for "revelation in the sense of the tie which binds man to God, for union with Him...Beatrice is the symbol of the sacrament of the altar, crown and center of all Christian worship as well as the chief means of grace and salvation; at once the burden of Church and its glory; communion is the last legacy of Christ, made possible by His two-fold nature, which carries earth to heaven and brings down heaven to earth."¹⁹ It is only through grace received through the sacraments that man may achieve his "final blessedness, the visio Dei."²⁰ The Eucharist is figure and essence united; it is not a metaphor for Christ's body, according to Catholic doctrine, but literally IS that Body, through the miracle of transubstantiation. Beatrice likewise, is not a metaphor for the tie between man and God, but literally is that tie; she literally carries Dante to God.²¹

The Eucharist symbolizes the presence of Christ in the Church. Thus, Beatrice, by representing the Eucharist, represents that presence in the Pageant of the Church Militant. She has a dual nature; she is Beatrice, the woman once known as Florentine, and she is the "presence of Christ." The mystery of dual nature, at the heart of so much Christian mysticism and at the heart of the Comedy, is reflected many times in the Pageant. Two dual

natures, the Griffin and Beatrice, gaze at each other, reflecting one another in their eyes. This resembles, on a fleshly level, what Dante will describe in Paradise 33 as the existence in action of the Trinity: "The one seemed reflected by the other as rainbows and the third seemed fire breathed forth equally from one and the other." At this stage, in Eden, however, Dante is not strong enough to realize the implications of the two creating fire of a third in their gazing at each other. He can only look into Beatrice's eyes with "a thousand desires hotter than flame." Beatrice, as the symbol of the Eucharist, represents the "Groom" as well as the "Bride." She is the Bride, in that she represents her own soul and the Resurrected Church as One Body. That one body, as mentioned previously, is made possible through partaking of the Eucharist, the "Groom." Thus, in another instance of her dual nature, she represents the end and the means to the end. She is the essential center of the Church in the Peageant as the Eucharist is the essential center of the Church on earth.

Besides representing the Bride as the Church, Beatrice also figures as the Soul in communion with God.²² Only God, Dante says in Paradise 30, line 20, has "all the joy" of Beatrice's beauty. She is at once the Soul united to God and the means by which Dante is allowed to seek that union. She has "drawn (him) from bondage into liberty by all those ways, by every means that was in (her) power." She has made Dante's soul "whole."²³

The figure of Beatrice as the Soul is extended in Purgatory 32, where she is depicted sitting in the shade of the Tree of Knowledge, the blossoms of which make "the angels greedy for its

fruit and makes perpetual marriage feast in heaven." She is like the Beloved in Chapter 2:3 of the Song who sits under the shadow of her lover whom she desires and finds his fruit "sweet to (her) palate." This passage, as analyzed in our discussion of Origen, has been seen as central to the "mystical" meaning of the Song. It pictures the soul whose sins have been forgiven, covered by his shadow, and who tastes of God so that her charity may be ordered according to His desire. For further consideration of Beatrice as a bride figure, as the "beloved of the first lover,"²⁴ and for encountering other bride and groom figures, we must go on to Paradiso, where Beatrice as well as Dante is transformed.

Imagery from the Song of Songs is most highly concentrated in Cantos 10-14 and 23-33 of Paradiso. Paradiso 10 is the Sphere of the Sun, the home of the Wise, among them Solomon.²⁵ It opens with a description of God as the Lover, the active Trinity, "Looking on His Son with the Love which the One and the Other eternally breathe forth." God's love has ordered the heavens so that "he who contemplates it cannot but taste of Him." This connection between "tasting" Divinity and the order of love relates back to Chapter 2:3-4 of the Song, according to Origen and Bernard. The spouse tasted of the fruit of the Beloved and Charity was set in order in her; therefore the allegorizers connected the "taste" of God, through Communion or through revelation, with the ordering of human love by God so that it is God-centered. The Wise are eternally satisfied by the vision of the Trinity in action; they see "how He breathes forth and how He begets."²⁶ God, here, is

the Lover who begets. This sexual image suits the wise, who worked to bring forth God's will on earth and nurture its fruition. It also sets the tone of the Sphere of the Sun as one evolving out of imagery of creation, procreation and desire.

In the Sun, Dante experiences his first real foretaste of love, ordered as it should be. At Beatrice's command that he thank the Sun for the privilege of being one with it, Dante's heart swiftly "yield(s) itself to God with its whole assent." "All my love," the pilgrim writes, "was so set on Him that it eclipsed Beatrice in forgetfulness; nor did this displease her, but she smiled at it so that the splendour of her smiling eyes broke up the absorption of my mind and divided it on many objects."²⁷ For one moment, his love is capable of Right Order, but Beatrice's smile diffuses his concentration; his love is not yet grown to independent strength. Dante still needs Beatrice to reinforce him, but in the last Cantos, he will need her no longer. When his love is truly set in order, there can be nothing separating it from God.

Beatrice, the "beloved of the First Lover,"²⁸ has been portrayed throughout the Comedy as having a special connection with the sun and the light. Here eyes, we are told in Inferno Canto 1, line 54, are "kindled from the lamp of heaven." She has been sent to help Dante by Lucia, "the soul of light." In Purgatorio 6, line 46, Beatrice is called the "light between truth and the intellect." Again, in Canto 30 of Purgatorio, her appearance in the cart behind a cloud of lilies is compared to that of the sun "shaded so that through the tempering vapours

the eye could bear it long.". Gazing at Beatrice's eyes reflecting the griffin's, Dante is blinded temporarily as one whose eyes are "just smitten with the sun."²⁹ In Paradise, however, this connection is made more explicit. Beatrice gazes at the sun and the reflection from her eyes returns to the place of the wise "like a pilgrim that would return home," in the first Canto of Paradiso. The sight of the reflection in her eyes causes Dante to fix his eyes on the Sun, but he cannot sustain it long and must return to seeing it through Beatrice's eyes. This is a similar pattern to the one discussed earlier in Paradiso 10, when Dante's love is momentarily ordered toward God, but then must return to Beatrice as a mediator. The sight of the reflection in her eyes changes Dante within and causes him to pass "beyond humanity" (trasumanar) in Paradiso 1, line 70. Paradiso 3 begins with Dante's calling Beatrice "that sun which first warmed my breast with love."

In the Sun, Beatrice becomes the center of the circle of the wise, the "garland which surrounds with looks of love the fair lady who strengthens them for heaven." The last time in the Comedy Beatrice was the center of such a circle was in Purgatory under the Tree, where her handmaidens surrounded her. There, she represented the "soul" of the Church Militant, but here, in the sun, her special home, she seems to represent something else.³⁰ It has been suggested by numerous critics that Beatrice is a figure of Wisdom here.³¹ This interpretation of her role seems plausible, especially in view of Dante's conception of Wisdom put forth in his letter to Can Grande: "The friendship of God and man is in no way hindered by disparity...If this assertion should seem

unbecoming to anyone, let him hearken to the Holy Ghost who doth avow that certain men have been made participators in His friendship; for in the Book of Wisdom in reference to Wisdom, it is written: (Wisdom 7:14) "For she is a treasure unto men that never faileth; which they that use become partakers of the friendship of God." Beatrice functions in the Divine Comedy like Wisdom does in the Book of Wisdom, to bring man into the presence of God. As Wisdom, as well as the Eucharist, Beatrice functions to provide the link between man and God. Wisdom is a "self-adaptation of the inviolable spirituality of God to material conditions, as assumption of the necessary community of nature, in order to bring the infinite and eternal into space and time, which is essential to the righteous government of the world of sense perception."³² Through Beatrice, through Wisdom which allows man to separate out good from guilty loves, through the victory of Free Will, sense perceptions are set in order so that love many also be "set in order in me."

Since this essay focuses primarily on the Song among Solomon's work, it will not thoroughly discuss the influence of the Book of Wisdom on the Divine Comedy. Nonetheless, it seems appropriate here to discuss briefly certain similarities between Beatrice in Paradise and the female figure of Wisdom. The quality of wisdom, we are told in Chapter 7:25-27 of Wisdom is a "breath of the power of God and a clear effulgence of the glory of the Almighty; therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her. For she is an effulgence from everlasting light and an unspotted

mirror of the working of God and an image of his goodness. And she, being one, hath power to do all things; remaining in herself, reneweth all things and from generation to generation passing into holy souls she maketh men friends of God and prophets." Wisdom is a woman sexually undefiled, a virgin who reflects the light of God and brings man into his love. All of these things apply to Beatrice. "Her I loved," Solomon writes, "and sought out from my youth. And I sought to take her for my bride; and I became enamoured of her beauty...And the sovereign Lord of all loved her for she is initiated into the Knowledge of God... I determined therefore to take her unto me to live with me. Because of her shall I have immortality." (Wisdom 8:2-5) Beatrice was also loved from the poet's youth for her beauty, and because of her Dante is brought into eternal life.

It is interesting that Wisdom is portrayed as a bride by Solomon above because, like Sheba in the Song, Beatrice is a bride figure in the Comedy. "When a righteous man was sold by his brothers, Wisdom forsook him not," it is written in Chapter 10:13, "But from sin she delivered him. She went down with him into the dungeon, And in bonds she left him not till she brought him the sceptre of a kingdom, and authority over himself. And she gave him eternal glory. This can be applied to Beatrice's trip to Hell for Dante's sake, her freeing him to be "crowned and mitred" over himself through purgation, and her restoration of his body to innocence so that he could accompany her to "eternal glory." We can see from this discussion that Beatrice figures as the genius

of wisdom in the Sphere of the Sun, modelled perhaps on the character of Wisdom in Solomon's book. This, besides Beatrice's identification as a bride-figure like that in the allegorized Song, serves to reinforce her tie with Solomon and thus, magnify the importance of his possible influence on the Comedy as a whole.

Returning to Canto 10 of Paradiso, then, we are introduced to the "fifth light which is the most beautiful among us" and which "breathes from such a love that all the world below hungers for news of it." Within the light is the "lofty mind to which was given Wisdom so deep that, if the truth be true, there never arose a second of such vision." This light is Solomon, whose royal wisdom is without comparison. After St. Aquinas introduces all twelve lights in the circle of the Wise, the circle of saints begins to rotate. Dante describes it thus:

Then, like a clock that calls us at the hour when the bride of God rises to sing matins to the Bridegroom that he may love her, when one part draws or drives another, sounding the chime with notes so sweet that the well ordered spirit swells with love, so I saw the glorious wheel move and render voice to voice with harmony and sweetness that cannot be known but there where joy becomes eternal. (Paradiso 10, line 139-)

It is fitting that imagery from the Song is introduced here in the Sphere where we meet its author. This passage draws together several concepts we have already considered; the bride must seek the Groom to delight in his love. Here, the wheel of the wise moves to tell the soul when God, her lover, might be sought. The image of the clock may seem mechanistic to us now, but in Dante's time, nearer the inception of the invention,

it seemed a marvelous example of order. Order, as has been pointed out in the Comedy, in the Song, and in this paper, is essential to unity with God. The chime of the clock, which symbolizes order, inspires the "well ordered spirit" to swell "with love." The chime is like the singing of the wise which projects such "harmony and sweetness" that it seems to Dante to partake of the final marriage supper of the Lamb, where "joy becomes eternal." Thus, even before Solomon has expounded on Resurrection, imagery attributed to him connects the idea of ordered love with final union of Christ and the Church/Soul.

The marriage imagery which ended Canto 10 extends itself to Canto 11, in Aquinas' exposition on the Church and St. Francis. In order that the Church, the "bride of Him who, with loud cries, wedded her with His sacred blood, should go to her Beloved secure in herself and faithfuller to Him," St. Francis and St. Dominic have been appointed by Providence to act as her guides. In Purgatory, they were described metaphorically as wheels of the chariot,³³ but here in Paradise, they are fully present as personalities who serve as her "guides on this side and on that." St. Francis, "all seraphic in ardour," was widely considered a contemporary vessel of Christ's spirit on earth.³⁴ After portraying Christ's marriage to the Church in Canto 11, Dante makes a parallel portrayal of St. Francis' espousal to Poverty. "She, bereft of her first husband, despised and obscure eleven hundred years and more, remained without a suitor till he came...nor did it avail her to have such courage and constancy that, where Mary stayed below, she

mounted on the cross with Christ." Christ, the eternal groom type, is mate to poverty as well as the Church. By preaching and observing poverty, he advocated independence from the misfortunes of the world, for "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." (Matthew 19:21) Poverty and Francesco are lovers whose "harmony and happy looks moved men to love and wonder and sweet contemplation and led them to holy thoughts, so that the venerable Bernard first went barefoot and ran after that great peace, and running, thought himself too slow."

St. Dominic, the other "wheel" of the chariot, is also portrayed in terms of marriage. He relates to wisdom as Francis did to love; he reflects "cherubic light" or the light of knowledge. Canto 12, line 60, reads: "When the espousals between him and the faith were completed at the holy fount where they dowered each other with mutual salvation, (his godmother) saw in her sleep the marvellous fruit that should spring from him and from his heirs." Dominic is "married" to the faith because his intellect communes with it to expand and explore theology, and to thus increase men's faith. Since marriage is an essentially sexual image, it is logical that he is seen as begetting heirs, or "fruit," in establishing the Order of Dominicans.

As two wheels of a chariot must move together, Love and Knowledge must move together, Dante seems to be asserting through identification of Francis and Dominic with the "wheels" of the church. This image is "cut free" and allowed to float in the