

The Reconciliation of Reason and Faith in Gothic Period of Medieval Europe

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Abstract:

The term Gothic refers to a style of art and architecture and to the period of their development in Western Europe, which lasted from the middle of twelfth century into the fourteenth century in Italy and later in other European countries. During the period, there appeared one conflict--reason verse faith. Some of the medieval thinkers, artists and literary writers tried to find ways to reconcile the conflict. The author in this paper applies the cultural expressions and traces of thought in Gothic architecture, Philosophical investigation and literary work, the interdisciplinary method to explore the truth of this historical moment.

The contrast between an exterior all intellect (reason) and an interior all spirit (faith) of the architectures of the Abbey of St. Denis and the Cathedral of Notre Dame vividly shows us this reconciliation of reason and faith. Aquinas's natural law (philosophy) is knowable by finite human minds, while divine law (theology) is made known to human minds by God. Equipped with reason and faith, man can achieve the full knowledge of the universe. Guided by Virgil, the Human knowledge and reason, and by Beatrice, the Divine knowledge and faith, Dante finally receives God's grace and love when his vision is improved and soul purified.

Key Words: Gothic period, reconciliation, reason and faith

1. INTRODUCTION

The term Gothic refers to a style of art and architecture and to the period of their development in western Europe, which lasted from the middle of twelfth century into the fourteenth century in Italy and later in other European countries. During the period, there appeared one conflict—reason versus faith. Some of the medieval thinkers, artists and literary writers tried to find ways to reconcile the conflict. This is a cultural moment that has drawn the attention of the author. She likes to ask what cultural expressions and traces of thought in Gothic architecture, philosophical investigation and literary work yield evidence for such a moment. The evidences will be interdisciplinary which means the use of artifacts or cultural traces from three fields—architecture, philosophy and literature—the author will explore the truth of this historical moment.

2. THE RECONCILIATION OF REASON AND FAITH IN GOTHIC PERIOD OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE THROUGH ARCHITECTURE, PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

Before the reconciliation of reason and faith is presented, their definitions are necessary to be given as basis for a better understanding of what is being discussed. From the historical point of view, “reason and faith are both sources of authority upon which beliefs can rest. Reason generally is understood as the principles for a methodological inquiry, whether intellectual, moral, aesthetic, or religious. Thus it is not simply the rules of logical inference or the embodied wisdom of a tradition or authority. Some kind of algorithmic *demonstrability* is ordinarily presupposed. Once demonstrated, a proposition or claim is ordinarily understood to be justified as true or authoritative. Faith, on the other hand, involves a stance toward some claim that is not, at least presently, demonstrable by reason. Thus faith is a kind of attitude of trust or assent. As such, it is ordinarily understood to involve an act of will or a commitment on the part of the believer” (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

Looking at the history of 11th and 12th century, it is found that Gothic art is the product of a society which is casting off the bondage of Feudalism, full of vitality, and in the process of progression. The social system was relatively open. The power of the king was limited by the Magna Carta and the political situation was stable. The commerce and trade naturally developed and flourished in the cities. The style of architecture was also affected by the abbot, archbishop, friar, and clergy who were not only interested in the spiritual soul of the disciples but also interested in secular life. They became more important roles in the society and had more desire in power and material wealth. So they promoted building large churches not only for worshipping God, but at the same time demonstrating their own pride. The Gothic cathedral re-echoes the achievements of Western thought in the 13th century, the achievements of classic scholasticism. Scholasticism is the name for the characteristically medieval blend of philosophy (reason) and divinity (faith). The Gothic architect with this Western soul of the eternal explorer and inventor, always lured by the untried, aims at a contrast between an exterior all intellect (reason) and an interior all spirit (faith). Outside we are faced with a frank exposition of the

complicated structural mechanism. Inside the cathedral we cannot and are not meant to understand the law governing the whole (Pevsner 114).

Exteriors of the Abbey of St. Denis



Fig. 1 Front facade of Westwork



Fig. 2 The Gothic transept

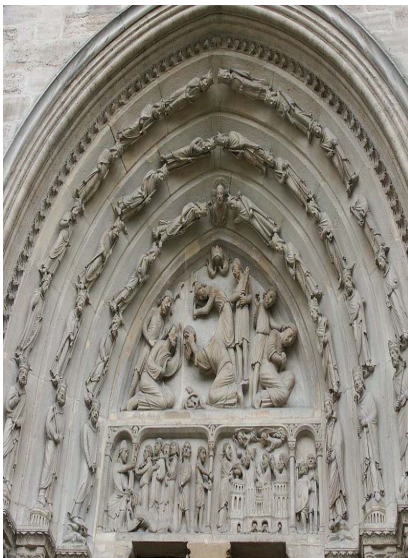


Fig. 3 Tympanum with the beheading of Saints Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius

The Abbey of St. Denis (Adams 278) and The Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris (280) were the two typical Gothic churches in this period. The reconciliation of reason and faith, like the

hierarchy, the structural logic, the mysticism and the reason, was presented in Gothic architecture. The pictures of the exterior and interior of the cathedrals will be listed for easier observation.

Interiors of the Abbey of St. Denis



Fig. 4 The nave

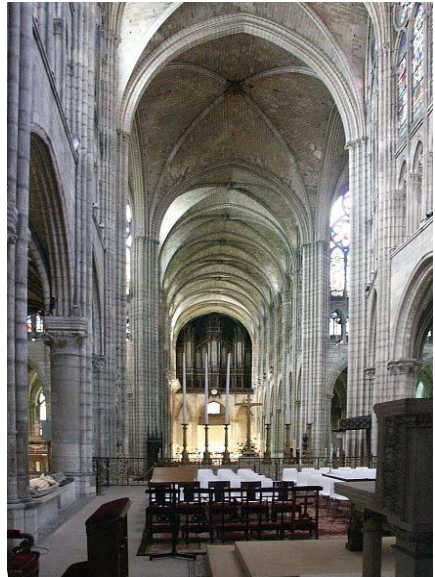


Fig. 5 The Choir

The innovative rib vaults rest on pointed arches. These light vaults allow for the elimination of the walls as well as lessening the need for such weight-bearing outer walls so that they can now be filled with stained glass.



Fig. 6 Stained glass window with Infancy of Christ and roundel detail of the Massacre of the Innocents

The Abbey of St. Denis became the monastic inspiration for city cathedrals and is known as the cradle of Gothic art. Abbot Suger the reformer of the Abbey tightened the discipline at the abbey and insisted on following a strict version of the Benedictine rule (278). Suger made the decision to rebuild the abbey church of St. Denis. This proved to be a momentous decision that changed the course of intellectual and artistic history in the West. Suger believed that the lavish art in churches inspired the faithful. He added two towers at the entrance and a triple portal and extended the length of the nave. Each chapel had two tall, pointed windows, called lancets, so that outdoor light could stream into the interior. The two important structural developments were the rib vaults, made by the intersection of pointed arches (map 11.5, p 279) and an increase in the size of windows, made possible by the ribbed vault construction. The pointed arch permitted greater height and a sense of greater delicacy than the Romanesque round arch. The larger size of windows coupled with greater use of stained (colored) glass, it flooded the interior with light and color. The dazzling play of light and color indicated God's presence at St. Denis. Suger did transform St. Denis into a vision that elevated the soul to new heights of mystical experience. The exteriors, the façade, the transept and the tympanum, presented the intellectual rigor, concentrated sculptural density, and subtle progression of weight and texture indicating the human logic and reason. The blend of the exterior of human intellect and the interior of religious spirit is the best mark of the reconciliation of reason and faith.

Exteriors of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris



Fig. 7 Side view of the Cathedral



Fig. 8 Views of the apse and flying buttresses



Fig. 9 West façade



Fig. 10 The Virgin tympanum

The coronation of Mary is another typical scene represented in Gothic art here. As Queen of Heaven, she is seated by Christ as a crown is placed on her head.

Interiors of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris



Fig. 11 Nave



Fig. 12 Ribbed Vault

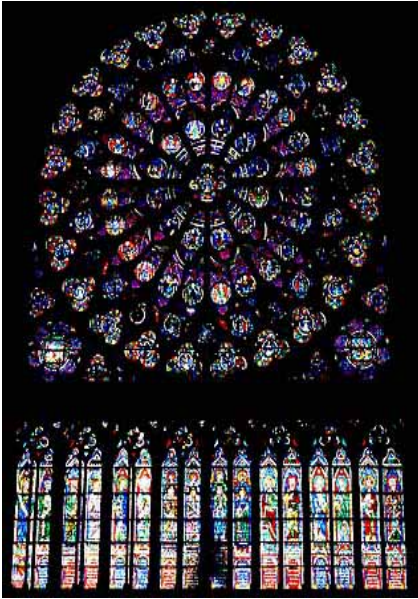


Fig. 13 The rose window

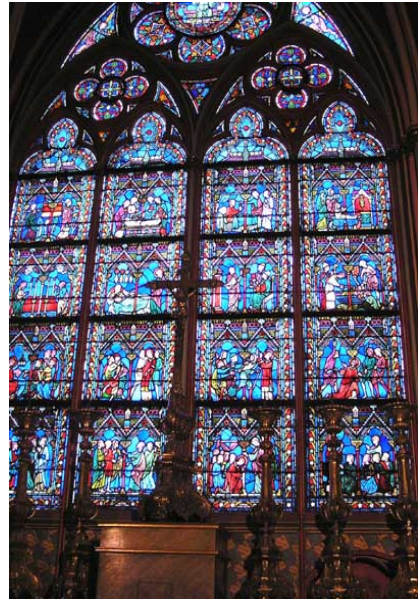


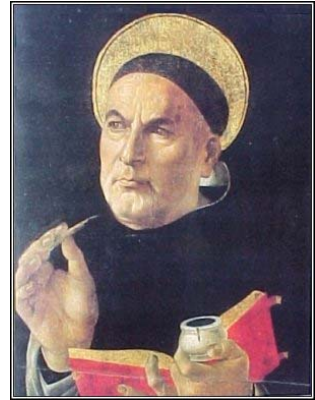
Fig. 14 Stained glass windows with biblical stories

The Cathedral of Notre Dame is located, as was the king's palace, on the Ile de la Cite, a small island in the River Seine, which divides Paris into its Left and Right Banks. It is probably the most famous image in French Gothic art. The ideas of Suger about light, color, and space launched the Gothic style. In addition to expanding the window area and using pointed arches, Gothic builders developed flying buttresses. These were visible in the side view of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris (figure 11.6 Adam 280). The flying buttresses, the innovation of the cathedral, supported the walls from outside. The flying buttresses and buttresses, though by no means without the fascination of intricate pattern, would chiefly appeal to reason, and was, not fantastic and irresponsible but conducted by logic, indeed an expression of the same high tension as governed the interiors.

In the interior (figure 11.8) soaring vaults are locked in place by circular keystones. By the time the north rose window (figure 11.11) was in place, Gothic builders had developed the rayonnant (radiant) style, in which shapes of glass seemed to radiate from the small circle at the center. The rose window in the cathedral represented Virgin Mary and the light through the window was believed as the God since God was regarded as the sun shining onto the earth. People walking into the cathedral seemed to soar spiritually and they felt they were in heaven. The Gothic cathedral demands all our emotional and intellectual powers. People's intellectual and reasoning power in architectural engineering are presented in a way of the carvings on the walls and the innovative ribbed vault arches. Those strokes of carvings are intricate, delicate and deep which demonstrate human being's power of logic, meticulousity, rationality, and deep

thinking. All these human reason power combined with their faith in God prove their reconciliation of the both. These qualities of man may make them soar and reach and even touch the hands of God.

Apart from architecture, philosophy is another historical trace for presenting the reconciliation of reason and faith, particularly the philosophy of the late middle ages, which is the scholasticism. Scholasticism tried to impose a sense of order on the world and to deal with apparent contradiction of reason and faith. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274) from Italian noble family, a Dominican friar, was a man of genius living at a time when Western intellectualism and education reached a peak in the first flowering of the great universities. He is considered today a model of what the open-minded student may achieve in rethinking the problems of reality, knowledge, and human life with the aid of what is best in contemporary science and learning. His most influential work was the *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas sought to resolve the conflicts between reason and faith, or more specifically between philosophy and theology, which is the central theme in the thought of Aquinas. Reason had limitation in understanding God. He said that people must go beyond reason and embrace faith. In other words, the knowledge we acquire from our senses leads us to intuit the existence of God and the immortal soul.



The central theme of Thomas Aquinas's thought in his vast and complete system can be traced from different aspects while here in this paper the author intends to see the relation from his analysis on natural law (philosophy/reason) and divine law (theology/faith) and the discussion on revelation and theology. Aquinas divided law into six main categories: (1) eternal law; (2) natural law; (3) human law; (4) divine law; (5) the Old Law; and (6) the New Law. Natural law and divine law are our major concerns here. According to Aquinas, eternal law is the norm whereby God governs the universe, most of which is unknowable by finite human minds, whereas natural law (philosophy) is that aspect of the eternal law that is knowable by finite human minds and applicable to human life, while divine law (theology) is that aspect of the eternal law that is made known to human minds by God through historical revelation (Novak 45). Aquinas believed that human reason is limited, not being able to understand God's revelation, where the natural law only allows man to embrace partly and imperfectly the divine law. However, as the human reason continues to develop, the God reason (divine law) will be more apprehended in the natural law (Liu 291). For a philosopher, to discover natural law is to discover what is divine within the universe, especially as it pertains to the human condition. It is the very apex of worldly human knowledge. For a theologian, divine law is more than natural law. As such, it is not discoverable naturally, that is, by universally accessible human reason. Divine law is supernatural, but not irrational. For a philosopher, natural law is either identical

with divine law, or divine law is inferior to natural law. For a theologian, natural law is at best an indispensable element within a larger divine story (Novak 47). On God's grace, in Aquinas's thought, grace brings nature to its true perfection (ST II-I, q. 99, a. 2. qtd. from Novak 47). Natural law must somewhat or other be seen as being contained within the divine law itself. Natural law can be seen as the precondition for divine grace, the greatest manifestation of which heretofore is the revelation of divine law. The humanly knowable world into which revelation can possibly enter must be a world in which natural law is discernable and respected. In Aquinas's thought, God's grace can help man accept and believe the perfect good and the highest happiness of God incomprehensible to human reason. Thus, this grace essentially becomes the bridge between reason and faith. Aquinas claimed that natural law represents the rational cognition of human being toward happiness. Reason based on the guided will controls desire and emotion, and guides its upright, brave and prudent virtue to realize human goal; divine law comes directly from God's revelation and wisdom and it is the direct gift of God's grace, based on which man realizes its supernatural goal and gains higher sacred virtue. Thus, Aquinas pointed out clearly how man keeps the desire and will to know God and how God's revelation becomes the guide for human reason, so that he explained the way how man may realize his supernatural goals from his own natural goals through God's grace. Aquinas believed that human reason is natural and human being first makes efforts to realize his goals through his natural reason. However, man finds that he can not come to salvation by reason alone; he relies on grace to gain his revelation. Aquinas had a famous quote "Grace does not destroy but perfect nature" (Liu 302), which explains the essential thought of natural law.

Now we will look at the discussion on the revelation and theology to seek more understanding of the relation. In some of Aquinas's writings, Aquinas said faith is not theology. Faith is a habit or quality of understanding given to man by God, so that he may assent to certain divine truths on divine authority but without fully understanding them. In this sense, faith is needed by all men, if they are to achieve everlasting life with God. Such faith requires no study; it is a gift of God. Theology is a demonstrative science beginning with data of faith and using information and techniques from the other areas of human knowledge to achieve an expert understanding of what can be known about divinity in this life. The famous slogan of medieval intellectualism goes: "faith seeking understanding" (Bourke 284).

Extracts from Aquinas's large writings will be quoted here to demonstrate the reconciliation of reason and faith. In the extract of "Why One Should Believe"¹ in *Sermon on the Creed*, Aquinas answered to the question "Isn't it stupid to believe what is not seen; shouldn't we refuse to believe things that are not seen?" that the imperfection of our understanding takes away the force of this difficulty. As a matter of fact, if man could know perfectly all things visible and invisible, it would be stupid to believe what we do not see. However, our knowledge is so imperfect that no philosopher has ever been able to make a perfect

¹ *Sermon on the Creed*, Prologue. Tran. V.J.B.

investigation of the nature of one fly. We read that a certain philosopher spent thirty years in solitude, so that he might study the nature of a bee. If our intellect is so feeble, then, isn't it stupid to refuse to believe anything about God, other than what man can know by himself? And so, against this objection it is stated in Job 36: 26: *Behold God is great, exceeding our knowledge*; in Ecclus. 3: 25: *For many things are shown to thee above the understanding of men*; in I Tim. 1:12: *I know whom I have believed, and I am certain*; Ecclus. 2:8: *Ye that fear the Lord, believe Him*. What Aquinas said here is what God knows is far more and better than our human mind can achieve and human reason is so limited that we need to believe in God in terms of its sacred wisdom. Hence, "no one should doubt concerning the faith; rather, he ought to believe things pertinent to faith more than what he sees; for man's sight can be deceived but God's knowledge is never mistaken" (Bourke 285-87).

Another extract is "Why Faith Is Necessary for Mankind"² in *Exposition of Boethius on the Trinity*. Aquinas said that it is due to a defect on our part that divine and necessary things are not apparent, for they are most knowable in their own nature. Thus, we are not immediately equipped at the start to investigate such things, because it is incumbent on us to proceed from things that are in their own nature less knowable, and rather secondary, to the things that are in their nature more knowable and primary. Yet, since the things that we know at the beginning are known through the force of the things that we learn later, it is also necessary for us to have some acquaintance with those things that are most knowable in themselves; this can not be done without believing. And there are other divine matters for the full knowledge of which human reason in no way suffices. Hence, it is said in Isa. 7:9: *Unless you have believed, you will not understand* (Bourke 288, 290). Faith is not demonstrable knowledge that can be attained by human mind, but can only be achieved through the gift given by God to man and this gift of faith can lead man to full knowledge when the beatitude is complete.

One more extract comes from Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, Part I, the first question on the Nature and Extent of Sacred Doctrine, article one: Whether besides the Philosophical Discipline It Is Necessary to Have Another Doctrine? Aquinas replied that it is necessary for man's salvation that there be a doctrine in accord with divine revelation, besides the philosophical studies. First, man is ordered toward God as an end which surpasses the grasp of reason, according to the text of Isa. 64:4: *Eye hath not seen, O God, besides thee, what things thou hast prepared for them that wait for thee*. Now the end should be known in advance by men who ought to order their intentions and action toward the end. Hence, it is necessary to the salvation of man that some things be made known to him through divine revelation, things that exceed human reason. It is also necessary for man to be instructed by divine revelation concerning those things pertaining to God that can be investigated by human reason. For, the truth about God as investigated by human reason could come to but few men after a long time with the admixture of many errors. Yet, on the knowledge of this truth the whole salvation of

² *Exposition of Boethius on the Trinity*, III, 1, c. Trans. V.J.B.

man depends, for salvation lies in God. Therefore, in order that salvation might come to men, both more fittingly and more certainly, it is necessary that they be instructed concerning divine matters through divine revelation (Bourke 298).

In sum, Thomas Aquinas's interpretation on the reconciliation of reason and faith is that through scientific experiments, human logic and reason, man can learn about part of the knowledge of the universe which is knowable to human mind, and through faith, divine revelation and grace, man can learn about the other part of the knowledge of the universe which is unknowable to human mind with human intellect alone. Man equipped with both reason and faith can reach the full knowledge of the universe and reach the highest good and happiness. A poem of Virgil (Ancient Rome poet, BC 70-19) will best explain the thought of Thomas Aquinas and also start the next historical trace of Dante, the literary giant of medieval time in further exploring the relation of the two beliefs.

So far as reason plead

Can I instruct thee; beyond

That point, wait

For Beatrice; for faith is here thy need.³ (Liu 301)

The literary giant Dante and his *Divine Comedy* are the specific evidences for the interpretation of this historical moment. Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) was born in Florence Italy. He was devoted to the city. His family saw to it that he was well-schooled and he studied rhetoric at the University of Bologna. He was one of the most learned Italian laymen of his day, intimately familiar with Aristotelian logic and natural philosophy, theology and classical literature. Like Aquinas, Dante wished to summon his audience to the practice of philosophical wisdom which is embedded in his own poetry. He wrote the great medieval poem *Divine Comedy* (1308-1321) and it is an epic vision of a journey in three parts through hell (Inferno), purgatory (Purgatorio), and heaven (Paradiso) and it is, first and foremost, a pilgrimage of the poet's soul. Dante calls his traveler the Pilgrim, who in fact is the author himself. The poem has a strictly controlled poetic structure which reflects the influence of Thomas Aquinas and the hierarchy of scholasticism. The repeated groupings of three like ABA, BCB or CDC also echo the Trinity and the three-part organization of Gothic cathedrals (Adam 292). His work reflects the reconciliation of reason and faith.



³ I can only instruct you within the scope of reason; beyond there, you can only wait for Beatrice, the faith (真福者) to help; for now and here, only faith is what you need. Beatrice is the goddess in Divine Comedy.

Dante, realizing he has strayed from the “true way” into worldliness, tells of a vision where he travels through all the levels of Hell, up the Mountain of Purgatory, and finally through the realms of Paradise, where he is allowed a brief glimpse of God. During the journey the poet comes across a lot of obstacles where his lady, Beatrice, along with the Virgin Mary herself, sends the spirit of Virgil, the classical Latin poet, to guide Dante through much of his journey. But Virgil is not a Christian. To Dante he represents human knowledge and reason, which cannot lead a person to God. This pagan may not pass into the highest realms. Thus, Dante is finally led to Heaven by Beatrice, his own personal and unattainable incarnation of the Virgin, who represents divine knowledge and faith.

Some cantos from *Divine Comedy* will be quoted as the evidences to demonstrate how human reason is limited and how divine faith may lead a man to paradise where he is allowed to embrace the love of God and the highest good and happiness.

And he replied, seeing my soul in tears:

“He must go by another way who would escape

This wilderness, for that mad beast that fleers

(Inferno, Canto I, lines 87-90)

So it is that Virgil lets Dante know what he knows: it is not in the nature of the situation for him to be able to make the direct ascent; first he must descend through Hell. Virgil understands that the dark examination of person pathology and the shadow side of human nature is a required part of the healing journey. “It is another path that you must take,” Virgil says, “...if you would leave this savage wilderness” (Taylor and Finley 8).

“May you weep and wail to all eternity,

for I know you, hell-dog, filthy as you are.”

then he stretched both hands to the boat, but warily

the Master shoved him back, crying, “Down! Down!

with the other dogs!” Then he embraced me saying:

“Indignant spirit, I kiss you as you frown.

(Canto VIII, lines 37-42)

As Virgil and Dante are crossing, a muddy soul rises before them. It is Filippo Argenti, one of the Wrathful. Dante recognizes him despite the filth with which he is covered, and he berates him soundly, even wishing to see him tormented further. Virgil approves Dante’s disdain and embraces, kisses, and praises the pilgrim for being an “indignant spirit”. With such strong approval, the poet suggests there are people in life, or parts of one’s psyche that, once seen,

must be brutally refused or pushed away (Taylor and Finley 36). Virgil's human reason and knowledge guide and mentor Dante on the soul journey.

Then: "Blessed ones, till by flame purified
no soul may pass this point. Enter the fire
and heed the singing from the other side."

(Purgatorio, Canto XXVII, lines 10-12)

A little before sunset of the third day on the Mountain, the poets come to the further limit of the Seventh Cornice and are greeted by The Angle of Chastity, who tells them they must pass through the wall of fire.

My kindly escorts heard me catch my breath
and turn, and Virgil said: "Within that flame
there may be torment, but there is no death.

(Canto XXVII, lines 19-21)

Believe this past all doubt: were you to stay
within that womb of flame a thousand years,
it would not burn a single hair away.

And if you still doubt my sincerity,
but reach the hem of your robe into the flame:
your hands and eyes will be your guarantee.

My son, my son, turn here with whole assurance.
"Put by your fears and enter to your peace."
And I stood fixed, at war with my own conscience.

And seeing me still stubborn, rooted fast,
he said, a little troubled: "Think, my son,
you shall see Beatrice when this wall is past."

(Canto XXVII, lines 25-36)

Dante recoils in terror, but Virgil persuades him to enter in Beatrice's name. Virgil says that he needs to go through the flame to purify the body or to drive away all the human sins. There might be torture and torment when burned, but he won't be destroyed to death. He needs the

trust and sincerity of Virgil as his guide of reason and knowledge, and listens to him to go ahead and put aside his fears and stubbornness and enter the flame to get to the peace. He will also be able to meet his love Beatrice when crossing the wall of flame and embrace the love of angels and God (Dante, Purgatory 274).

“My son,” he said, “you now have seen the torment
of the temporal and the eternal fires;
here, now, is the limit of my discernment.

I have led you here by grace of mind and art;
now let your own good pleasure be your guide;
you are past the steep ways, past the narrow part.

See there the sun that shines upon your brow,
the sweet new grass, the flowers, and the fruited vines
which spring up without need of seed or plow.

Until those eyes come gladdened which in pain
moved me to come to you and lead your way,
sit there at ease or wander through the plain.

Expect no more of me in word or deed:
here your will is upright, free, and whole,
and you would be in error not to heed

Whatever your own impulse prompts you to:
lord of yourself I crown and mitre you.”

(Canto XXVII, lines 127-143)

Dante and Virgil rise and race up the rest of the ascent until they come in sight of the Earthly Paradise. Virgil speaks his last words, for they come to the limit of Reason, and Dante is now free to follow his every impulse, since all motion of sin in him has been purged away (Dante, Purgatory 274).

Now Virgil, as Human Reason, is the first guide to the ultimate knowledge, until here he has finished his task and he can not go any further to the other side of the Mountain because reason is finite and God is infinite. The greater guide, in medieval concept, was Faith. Virgil can guide Dante to the recognition of sin and to its renunciation, which is to say, through Hell and to the summit of Purgatory. But once at that summit, the soul has achieved the Divine Mysteries. And there Beatrice (call her Divine Love) must take over. Beatrice becomes the second guide and will accompany Dante in his vision of Heaven.

There what we hold by faith shall be beheld,
not demonstrated, but self-known in fashion
of the initial truth which man believeth.

(Paradiso, Canto II, line 43-45)

Beatrice begins to give to Dante about the conditions and qualities he is encountering. Looking forward to the journey, the poet observes the moon and the reflected light. Dante, dimly aware of his inadequacy of his science, questions Beatrice as to the dark patches on the moon which he had thought due to the rarity of substance. Beatrice is correcting the pilgrim's misunderstanding of the nature of the moon and its reflected light. She says that the divine thing is not demonstrable, but it can only be known through faith (Dante, Paradiso 14).

The beginning of the fall was the accursed pride
of him whom thou didst see constrained by
all the weights of the universe.

Those whom thou seest here were modest to
acknowledge themselves derived from that same Excellence
which made them swift to so great understanding;

wherefore their vision was exalted with grace
illuminating and with their merit, so that they
have their will full and established.

(Canto XXIX, lines 55-63)

Beatrice as a guide and a teacher, she reminds the pilgrim that the fall had its beginning in the cursed pride of the one he saw, held in constrained by all of the world's weights, and then contrast to the chief of the Fallen Angels, the modesty, exalted vision and other virtues of the loyal angels, those whom he sees in Heaven here (Taylor and Finley 246). Those men with earthly desires can never come to understand and receive the love of God and never reach the

full achievements. Those angles embrace merit and modesty in receiving grace and will find exalted joy in their divine world and their vision can be established surely.

As divine love and beauty, Beatrice guides Dante through nine spheres of Heaven, instructing him the knowledge of divine, the grace, the love, the vision and finally takes Dante to his salvation of the soul. Beatrice leaves Dante with Saint Bernard who prays to Mary on behalf of Dante and Dante is allowed to see both Jesus and Mary. Dante ascends to a region beyond physical existence, coming face to face with God Himself, and is granted understanding of the Divine and of human nature. His vision is improved beyond that of human comprehension.

The reconciliation of faith and reason is perfectly revealed during the journey of Dante's soul purification, where Virgil, the Human Reason, guides Dante through Hell and to the top of Mount Purgatory, the limit of human discernment, and where Beatrice, the divine love and beauty, comes to take over the duty and continues to guide Dante to the Paradise to receive God's absolute love, the vision and the full knowledge of the universe.

3. CONCLUSION

The Abbey of St. Denis and the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris are the two representatives of Gothic architecture in France. The contrast between an exterior all intellect (reason) and an interior all spirit (faith) of the architecture vividly shows us this reconciliation of reason and faith. On the exterior, the ribbed vault construction, the pointed arch, the flying buttresses, the intricate carvings of the bible and dense sculptures demonstrate human intellect on architectural techniques, structural logic and reason. In the interior, the biblical stories are painted on the stained glass of different colors, and the rose window symbolizes Virgin Mary, and the large window is used to permit more sunlight into the cathedral, all of which create a mythical presence of God.

Aquinas's natural law (philosophy) is that aspect of the eternal law that is knowable by finite human minds, while divine law (theology) is that aspect of the eternal law that is made known to human minds by God. The natural law only allows man to embrace partly and imperfectly the divine law. Man finds that he cannot come to salvation by reason alone; he relies on grace to gain his revelation. Man's sight can be deceived but God's knowledge is never mistaken. Equipped with reason and faith, man can achieve the full knowledge of the universe.

The soul journey of Dante passes through the earthly Hell and Purgatory guided by Virgil, the Human knowledge and reason, who instructs him human knowledge; and then Dante ascends to Paradise guided by Beatrice, the Divine knowledge and faith, who teaches him the divine spirit; and finally he receives God's grace and love when his vision is improved and soul purified.

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