



The Warburg Institute & the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici,
Centro Internazionale di Studi Bruniani "Giovanni Aquilecchia" (CISB)

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GIORDANO BRUNO

AND

THE RELATION OF HIS PHILOSOPHY TO
FREE THOUGHT

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK
LIBERAL CLUB, OCT. 30, 1885

BY

THOMAS DAVIDSON

The Warburg Institute & the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici,
Centro Internazionale di Studi Bruniani "Giovanni Aquilecchia" (CISB)

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Prefatory Sketch of Bruno's Life

BOSTON

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1886



GIORDANO BRUNO.

GIORDANO BRUNO, whose proper name was Filippo, was born in 1548, at Nola, an ancient Etruscan town about twenty-two miles from Naples. His father was a soldier. At the age of fourteen, he began the study of Logic and Dialectic. Soon after, he entered the Dominican order, became a priest, and performed priestly functions till 1576, when he reached the age of twenty-eight. Before that, he had twice been in trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities, once because he set aside the images of the saints and told a fellow-monk that he might be better employed than in reading about the seven joys of the Virgin Mary, and once because he uttered certain Arian or Unitarian views. To get out of difficulty, he went to Rome in 1576; but, being called to account there also, he laid aside his monk's attire and escaped to Noli, some forty miles from Genoa, where he remained four months, teaching grammar to boys and astronomy to grown people. He then went, by way of Turin, to Venice, and there printed a tract on the signs of the times, the first of his published works, apparently. Soon after, he went to Padua, resumed his monk's dress, and travelled, as a beggar probably, by the way

of Chambéry to Geneva. Here he arrayed himself in hat and sabre, and came out as a secular teacher, calling himself professor of theology. This was in 1579, three years after he had left Naples. How long Bruno remained at Geneva is not altogether certain; but what is certain is that he got into very great difficulties with the Protestants, who treated him with much rigor, but whom he, no doubt, sufficiently provoked by his radical ideas. At all events, he acquired no love for Protestantism in Geneva, and left it after a few months' stay. It is worth noting that, while there, he made his living by correcting proofs for a printer. From Geneva, he went to Toulouse, where he taught, took a doctor's degree, and held a professorship for two years. At the end of that time, the civil war drove him to Paris. Here he taught for five years, and was introduced to King Henry III., who was so astonished at his wonderful memory as to inquire whether he did not owe it to magic. Here he published several small works in Latin. At the end of five years, he went to England, bearing a letter from the king to the French ambassador there. In the house of this ambassador he lived for two years and a half, lecturing in various places and holding communication with all the great men of the time. He was even introduced to Queen Elizabeth, who spoke Italian to him. His account of his doings at Oxford, and his description of English life, as seen in London, are curious and racy, but by no means flattering. Here he printed several of his works,—notably, the comedy, *Il Can-*

delajo, which added to his reputation. When the French ambassador returned to France, Bruno, not finding himself at home in England, or among Protestants, returned with him; but, finding the country in great disorder, he betook himself to Germany, and, after wandering about for some time, settled in Wittenberg. Here he taught for two years, under the auspices of the Lutherans. Later, he went to Prague, where he taught for six months, thence to Brunswick, where he taught for a year. Here he must have been held in high esteem; for he delivered the funeral oration over his patron, Duke Julius. This seems to have been in 1591. About that time, Bruno went to Frankfort on the Main, to attend to the printing of some works in Latin. Here he lived in the Carmelite monastery, and seems to have been kindly treated by the monks, although the abbot thought him a man with no religion, which, from his point of view, was no wonder.

From Frankfort, through the medium of his publishers, Bruno was induced to return to Venice, being invited thither by a Venetian nobleman, Giovanni Mocenigo, who wished to learn from him his wonderful arts of memory and of originating ideas,—subjects on which Bruno, following Lulli, had written several works. As might have been expected, the foolish nobleman was disappointed in his desire to learn to be a genius like Bruno; and Bruno, weary of his task, was preparing to return to Frankfort, when Mocenigo seized him, with the aid of some gondoliers bound him, and threatened that, if he did not teach him his art,

it should go hard with him. When Bruno asserted that he had done his best, Mocenigo, by the advice of his confessor, denounced him to the Inquisition as a heretic, denying the most sacred dogmas of the Church,—transubstantiation, for example. Bruno was arrested on the 23d of May, 1592, and thrown into prison. On the 29th and 30th of the same month, he was examined; and, on the second of June, he handed in a list of his works, so that these might also be examined. The Venetian inquisitors seem to have treated Bruno with considerable gentleness; and he might possibly have escaped with some slight punishment, as Galilei did, later on, had his extradition not been demanded by the pope. The Venetian government hesitated for some time; but, finally, in the following year, 1593, he was delivered up, carried to Rome, and thrown into the dungeons of the Roman Inquisition. Here he lingered for seven years, subjected to every kind of annoyance and importunity. Finally, as he would not recant, he was degraded, excommunicated, condemned to death, and handed over to the civil authorities with the mocking recommendation that he should be dealt with as gently as possible, and put to death without effusion of blood; that is, at the stake. On the 17th of February, this sentence was carried out; and Bruno perished in the flames, at the age of fifty-two. When the calendar of the Church of the Future comes into operation, Saint Filippo Bruno's day will be a great festival. In the Positivist calendar, his name occupies a very modest place beside and below that of poor, timid,

sentimental Pascal, in the month of Descartes !
 Could irony go farther ?

**Giordano Bruno's Philosophy and Free
 Thought.**

Man is a rational animal. Such is the logical definition of him given in the old times, and still valid. The distinguishing mark of man is his rationality, or, more strictly perhaps, his intelligence. Now, the essence of intelligence is that it places the intelligent being in relation to the entire universe, to the Infinite. Sensation, on the other hand, as such, is essentially a relation to the finite. But intelligence is a passive faculty. When we know, it is the universe that acts upon us, and not we that act upon the universe. The universe is not altered by our knowing it. Still, like every other passive faculty, intelligence has an active side,—a side whereby we may, and do, react upon the universe, and modify it. This active side of intelligence we call freedom. Intelligence, man's very essential nature, is essentially correlated with freedom. The two are inseparable. Without intelligence there is no freedom possible; without freedom there is no intelligence possible. Intelligence and freedom begin exactly at the point where sensation and instinct cease. Instinct is unfreedom.

It is a common mistake to speak of the freedom of the will. There is no such thing. Freedom is utterly distinct from will, standing to it in the relation of master to slave. Will is simply instinct, in so far as it obeys the dictates of freedom; and freedom is conformity to intelligence.

The free man is simply the man who, in all cases, follows what his intelligence tells him is best. But, although intelligence is distinct from will and its natural master, it is, nevertheless, of no use without will, since it is through will that it is enabled to act upon the outer world and modify it. And not only so, but the will, in order to be effective, requires the physical frame; and this frame, in order to perform its proper functions, must be strong and unfettered.

It appears, then, that, before the rational human being can act rationally and humanly,—that is, before a man can be in actuality a man, and not a slave,—three conditions are necessary: (1) intelligence, involving freedom of choice; (2) a will, obedient to free intelligence; and (3) a strong, unfettered body. By interfering with the development or action of any one of these, the path to true manhood can be blocked. If the intelligence be stunted by ignorance or repressed by unintelligible dogma, its freedom is impaired, and the will is left to act simply as instinct, without goal or guidance. If the will be perverted by selfishness, by desire for sensual indulgence, ease, or applause, then its operations are subject to all the uncertainty of these passions, and have no steady direction toward universal good. If the body be fettered or enfeebled, whether in brain, nerves, or muscles, then the impulses of the will are fruitless. In any one of these cases, man is enslaved, and cannot reach true manhood. Still worse is his position, when all the obstacles mentioned are thrown in his way at once, as has generally been the case

throughout his entire history. Ignorance, dogma, selfishness, weakness, and bondage have combined, like evil demons, to block his path, and hold him back from the heights of free manhood. Nay, they have even found a powerful ally in man himself, who, for the most part, has not only preferred ignorance, dogma, selfishness, weakness, and bondage to knowledge, truth, generosity, strength, freedom, but has even decried, slandered, beaten, bruised, and murdered those individuals of his race who, in all simplicity and manliness, have sought to bring him to a better frame of mind.

Perhaps at no time in the world's history did the demons obstructive to human progress enter into such a nefarious conspiracy as they did in the centuries which we are wont to call the Dark Ages. At that time, dogma banished knowledge and suppressed freedom of thought and inquiry; selfishness, in the forms of competitive worldly and other-worldly ambition, guided the wills of the strong to all forms of political and social oppression; while feudalism bound men's bodies to the soil, and made them drudge out their lives for mere pitiful subsistence. In a word, ignorance left the will to be guided by instinctive selfishness; and this selfishness debauched, enfeebled, and bound the body, until men almost ceased to be men. To say that they became brutes would be to libel those poor things that cannot speak for themselves.

From the triple bonds welded on mankind during the Dark Ages, they have, under the influence

of a few great spirits, Messiahs, and martyrs, been slowly freeing themselves. Considerable progress has already been made; but there is still much to make, ere man be truly man. He is still, as Tennyson says, "half akin to brute." Slavery, in the narrow sense of bondage to a single master, and serfdom, or attachment to the soil, are at an end, or nearly so. Heresy, or disbelief in dogma, can no longer be punished by imprisonment or burning at the stake. Intelligence is, in the main, free from physical impediments. Now, we may think what we like or can, and in the main say openly what we think, without risk of personal violence. But this is all the progress we have made. How small it is compared with what has yet to be made! Let us look at the other side. If slavery proper and serfdom are at an end, they have found a worthy successor in the form of wage-slavery, due in the main to the supineness of the State in allowing the introduction of machinery, without seeing that its benefits are distributed among those whose labor—that is, whose means of livelihood—it takes away. Men do not cease to be slaves, because they are allowed to change masters, so long as they must have a master or starve. Cold, hunger, wretchedness, forcing to theft, beggary, or prostitution, are sufficiently merciless slave-drivers. Men can never cease to be slaves until they have such a share in the soil and in the products of industry as shall prevent them from being forced to sell their labor as a commodity, and themselves as temporary slaves, in a labor-and-slave-glutted market. And

so long as men are slaves, compelled to spend their entire strength in obtaining a meagre subsistence for the body, so long are they disinherited of well-nigh all that belongs to them as sons of humanity, of all the uncounted treasures of art, science, and moral opportunity which humanity has been slowly accumulating. What are these treasures to the millions whose lives are spent in toiling for the mere necessities of life, and who have to compete with each other in lowness of wages for every wage-slave's place that is vacant, or can be made so? What opportunity have these millions to press forward to the heights of manhood? Is not their way blocked?

Again, although no Church claiming to be the organ of the supernatural, and using the arm of the civil power, can any longer condemn us to the pillory or the stake for questioning her unintelligible dogmas, is thought in reality free? Has dogma ceased to hold sway? By no means. The pillory, the stake, and the block, like slavery and serfdom, have found worthy successors in the social ostracism, contempt, and disabilities inflicted upon those whom intellectual piety and earnestness compel to reject and, on occasion, openly to condemn the current popular beliefs. The means whereby the present punishment of heretics is inflicted are the pulpit and the public press, which, for effectiveness, hold about the same relation to the pillory and the block as the spinning-jenny does to the old pendent spindle. Is not honest atheism still a heresy, liable to be punished with social contempt and even political disabilities? Is not Mr.

Bradlaugh still excluded from the English Parliament for this heresy?* Is not the man who is bold enough to declare that he is not a Christian looked upon as likely to be a bad man, and are not his virtues misconstrued? And what shall we say of the socialist and communist, not to speak of the anarchist and nihilist? Are they not, to a large degree, political and social outcasts, liable to be hunted from country to country at the will of unjust governments? Is there any unprejudiced consideration and discussion of their views by those who condemn them? I leave you to answer.

It is apparent, then, that, although we have made some progress toward personal and intellectual freedom, we are very far from having attained either. What we have accomplished is simply this: we have broken down those obstacles to personal and intellectual freedom which were set up by law; we have caused personal and intellectual bondage to lose the support which they formerly had in legal enactments. That is all. Personal and intellectual bondage still exists in fact, and will never cease to exist until, on the one hand, the poor cease to be dependent upon the rich for the opportunity to labor and to earn, and until, on the other, ignorance and blind faith have given place to knowledge and insight.

But, if the case stands thus badly with personal and intellectual freedom, it stands still worse with moral freedom. Toward this, it is questionable whether we have made any progress at all since

* Since this was written, Mr. Bradlaugh has been allowed to take his seat; but it is not yet secure.

the Dark Ages. Men's wills are still swayed by passion as much as ever. They live and act by instinct, which rules, instead of serving, their intelligence. Indeed, perhaps at no time since the decay of the Roman Empire were men's actions so little guided by intelligence, and so much by vulgar ambition and other forms of selfishness, as they are now. What men labor and struggle for are the things that enslave,—ease, comfort, place, power, pleasure,—not the things that free,—intelligence, love, moral energy. Read the daily papers, which most faithfully represent what the mass of our people care to hear and think about, and then tell me whether I am right or not.

If, now, we ask : Why, while we have made some progress toward personal and intellectual freedom, so far at least as the law is concerned, are our wills still bound in worse than mediæval bondage? the answer will not be hard to find. Freedom, which alone can direct the will to the good and free it from the bondage of instinct, is only the obverse of intelligence; only a choosing of the good, recognized as such by the intelligence. Without a developed intelligence, freedom cannot act, and man must be the slave of instinct. But, at the present day, the intelligence of the great majority of men and women is stunted by ignorance and repressed by dogma, persistently held up from tens of thousands of pulpits as something superior to knowledge. Dogma is ignorance, and ignorance and freedom are utterly incompatible. Thus, dogma not only deprives men of intellectual freedom, but, as a necessary consequence, it

also robs them of moral freedom, by leaving their actions to be guided by instinct and prejudice.

Looking back upon what has been said and recapitulating it, we may say that the two great obstacles to human advancement which still remain to be overcome, and which it is our duty, and the duty of all good men, to labor with all our might to overcome, are wage-slavery and ignorance, including dogma. Universal industrial co-operation and universal education are the battle-cries of the future. It is these that will call forth the heroes and martyrs of the future; it is these that will be borne on the banners with which the coming generations will march across the ruins of capitalist factories and dogmatic churches to the serene heights of freedom, whose throne is set upon three pillars,—intelligence, human love, heroism.

But the heroes and martyrs of these two great causes are not all in the future. Some of them loom up as examples to us from the past. Especially numerous and noble have been the martyrs of enlightenment. Of these there are two that stand out above all the rest, like great peaks, round whose stainless summits the lightnings of heaven play,—two inspired prophets whose deaths mark epochs in the history of the human race. These two are Sôkratês and Giordano Bruno.

It would be instructive, if we had time, to draw a parallel between these two great men, and to show that they differed just as the needs of their epochs differed, each being just the martyr that his epoch required, in order to transform it. Each was

a new force in the world, unlike anything that had ever appeared before. Plato says that Sôkratês was like no other man, past or present; and the same was true of Giordano Bruno. Each was a thorough radical, in the best sense of that word. Each appealed from imagination to reason, from fable to truth, from the authority of ancient tradition to the authority of present fact. Each denied the popular, external gods of his time, in favor of the inner god whose throne is in every human soul, and who is not to be distinguished from that soul. Each was executed for atheism, because he did not conform to fashion in the matter of gods. Sôkratês was the human giant who began the successful struggle against polytheism. Giordano Bruno was the still greater giant who began the struggle against external monotheism,—a struggle which is still going on, with no uncertain issue.

But, though there are so many points of resemblance between the ancient and the modern martyr of enlightenment, there are also many points of difference. Sôkratês was a brave citizen of a free State, of the State which laid the foundations of human freedom; while Giordano Bruno was a poor monk in a universal Church, which for hundreds of years tried to stifle human liberty. Sôkratês rarely left his native city. Bruno wandered, homeless, under the ban of the Church, from land to land,—over Italy, Switzerland, France, England, Germany. Sôkratês strove to manifest the divine in man, Bruno to reveal it in all nature. Sôkratês, finding his contemporaries devoted solely

to physical nature and neglecting the marvels of spiritual nature, much to the detriment of truth and thought, strove to draw their attention to the nature of truth and morality. Bruno, on the other hand, finding his contemporaries wholly given up to disputes about the spiritual nature and altogether overlooking, or even despising, physical nature, thereby losing much essential truth, strove to direct them to the study of physical laws. And the fates of the two men were widely different. Both were condemned and executed, but under what diverse circumstances! Sôkratês, as he leaves the judgment hall, calmly says to his judges: "But now it is time for us to depart, me to death, you to life. And which of us goes to the better thing, God alone knows." Bruno, after having spent seven years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, leaves the inquisitorial palace with this fierce remark, which was likewise a prophecy, "Ye pronounce judgment upon me perhaps with more fear than I shall receive it with." Nothing is more dramatic than the death-scene of Sôkratês, as sketched by the master-hand of Plato. The Greek martyr drank the hemlock quietly in his prison-cell, in the midst of weeping friends, among whom no word was said that could disturb the calm of his departing spirit.

Bruno's death-scene, as described by an eye-witness, is one of the saddest and most barbarous on record. "To-day," says Kaspar Schoppe, "he was led to the stake. When he was on the point of delivering up his spirit, the image of the crucified Saviour was presented to him; but, with an angry

and troubled look, he repelled it. And so he died miserably by burning, and went, I suppose, to proclaim in those other worlds which he imagined to exist the way in which blasphemous and impious men are treated by the Romans." Such were the feelings of the bystanders at the death of the lonely martyr, Giordano Bruno. After the death of Sôkratês, his friends buried his body decently and with honor, and so worshipped his memory and continued his work that, in less than a generation, his name was known throughout the civilized world, as a synonym for all that was noblest and wisest. He became the great saint of the Hellenic world, and a bronze statue was erected to him in one of the most public places of Athens. Nay, it is even said that his accusers were punished with exile and death. When Bruno died, nothing was left of him to bury. His noble dust was scattered to the winds of heaven. And then no friends arose to keep his memory green. His very works, published in many lands during his weary wanderings,—works whose contents cost him his life,—were burned, concealed, and forgotten; and his name, whenever it was mentioned, either by Catholic or Protestant, was made a synonym for all that is godless, blasphemous, arrogant, obstinate, and foolish. Hegel, writing in 1830, says: "Among both Catholics and Protestants, his writings were declared heretical and atheistic, and therefore burned, exterminated, and kept secret. . . . His writings are rare, often forbidden. In the Dresden library, they are still among the forbidden books; and, therefore, in Dresden they

are not shown." This was in 1830. Eight years later, the English historian Hallam, though he tries in a mild way to defend Bruno from the charge of atheism, talks of his "self-conceit," and declares that "he deviates so often into rhapsodies of vanity and nonsense that it is difficult to pronounce whether he had much knowledge of the [physical] science." No statue has yet been erected to Bruno. But it is to aid in obtaining means for the erection of one on the spot where he was martyred that I am speaking here to-night, and I doubt not that in a few months this tardy token of slow-grown honor will be conferred on his memory. And this honor will, I trust, be like other things of slow growth,—enduring. If there is any name in the history of free thought and enlightenment that ought to call forth all our sympathy and enthusiasm and prompt us to liberality, it is that of Giordano Bruno. As he is the greatest of martyrs to modern science, so he ought to be its greatest saint. If there is any event from which the modern era, which is distinctly the era of man, as the grandest known expression of the divine, dates, it is the martyrdom of Giordano Bruno. Perhaps, too, the day will come when the era of man will be so dated; for, in spite of its long, lethargic negligence, the world is slowly coming to recognize that Giordano Bruno was one of its Messiahs, a man truly inspired, a man of infinite heroism, a martyr and a saint. The whole Christian world melts into compassion and amazement over the sufferings of Jesus of Nazareth. I see no reason to suppose that they were more than a fraction

compared with those of Giordano Bruno. Jesus suffered no imprisonment: Bruno passed seven years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, exposed to all the insults and threats of Roman inquisitors. Jesus died in the midst of weeping relatives and friends: Bruno died in the midst of a crowd that only jeered at his sufferings. Jesus, ere he died, shrieked out to God, asking why He had forsaken him: Bruno died without a shriek or a groan, knowing, as every great soul knows, that his God was within him, and could not forsake him, unless he forsook himself. Which, let me ask, was the greater sufferer? Which was the greater hero? I will not ask which died for the higher and truer principle.

As I have said, the world is slowly coming to accept the truth with regard to Bruno, even in spite of Hallam and other respectable Philistines or Pharisees. He was, perhaps, not altogether forgotten at any time. As we shall see, one of his works, at least,—a play called *Il Candelajo*,—was known to Shakspeare (who may very well have known the author), and is several times quoted from in no less a work than “*Hamlet*,” written probably in the very year in which Bruno suffered martyrdom. As we shall further see, his philosophy was known to Spinoza (born in 1632, died 1677), who, in all probability, borrowed his pantheism from it, and to Leibniz (1646–1716), who certainly derived his monadism from it. But, though largely drawn upon during the seventeenth century by some of the greatest minds, Bruno was little mentioned, and his value little appre-

ciated, until the appearance of Brucker's *Critical History of Philosophy*, in 1731. Brucker, being a follower of Leibniz, naturally felt a great deal of interest in Bruno's doctrine of monads, and accordingly devotes considerable attention to him. From that time on, Bruno's name, with some account of his tenets, appears in all the histories of philosophy,—in Fülleborn's, Buhle's, Tennemann's, Ritter's, Hegel's, Erdmann's, Schwegler's, Ueberweg's, etc. But the first person that really made Bruno's name current was Jacobi, who pointed out that he had forestalled the chief ideas of Spinoza. Through Jacobi, apparently, Bruno became known to Hamann, Kant's friend and a great authority in matters of education, as well as to Herder; and both these men were deeply influenced by him. Jacobi's work was published in 1785. In 1802 appeared Schelling's dialogue, entitled *Bruno, or The Natural and Divine Principle of Things*, which bears about the same relation to Bruno that Plato's dialogue, *Parmenides*, does to that philosopher. After Schelling came Hegel, whose most remarkable faculty was his power of appreciating the great thinkers of the past. In his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, delivered at different times and places from 1805 to 1830, Hegel does justice to the great Italian pioneer. We may object to Hegel's system as much as we like, and nobody can well do so more than I; but no one will question his power and depth or his ability to understand and appreciate systems of thought. Let us then place beside the opinion of Bruno, expressed by the unphilosophical Eng-

lish Hallam, the view of him entertained by the German philosopher, Hegel. He says:—

“The leading characteristic of Bruno’s writings is, at bottom, a wonderful inspiration,—the inspiration of a self-consciousness which feels the spirit [the universal Spirit] dwelling in it, and knows that its essence is one with all essence. There is something of Bacchic frenzy in this grasp of such a consciousness. It overflows in order to utter this wealth, and so become an object to itself. But it is only in knowledge that the spirit reproduces itself as a whole. If it has not attained a sufficient degree of scientific culture for this, it can only seize whatever forms it can find, without giving them any proper arrangement. Such manifold, unordered wealth do we find in Bruno, whose explanations, in consequence, frequently assume a vague, confused, allegorical appearance, a mystic enthusiasm. To his mighty inner inspiration, he sacrifices all his personal interests,—it would leave him no rest. It is easy to say that he was ‘a restless spirit, incapable of getting along with himself.’ Whence came this restlessness? He could not get along with the finite, the bad, the common,—that was the reason of his restlessness. He had risen to the one universal substantiality, he had done away with the division between self-consciousness and nature, and with the consequent degradation of both. The result of this degrading division had been that, though God was conceived to be in self-consciousness, he was, nevertheless, looked upon as something external to it, something different from

it, another reality. Nature was made by God,—was his creature, not his image. God's goodness was displayed only externally in final causes, final aims. Bees make honey to feed men, the cork-tree grows to furnish corks for bottles." Hegel's proud sarcasm is quite a match, I think, for Hallam's supercilious sneer. From Hegel's time, Bruno has become more and more a subject of interest, reverence, and study. His Italian works were published in two volumes, at Leipzig, in 1830, by Adolf Wagner. And, in 1835, an attempt was made by A. F. Gfrörer to publish his Latin works, at Stuttgart; but only a small part of them could be found, and the series was discontinued. Most of them have now been recovered, and are now in process of publication in Italy, under the auspices of Prof. Fiorentino. A considerable number of monographs have been written on Bruno, the most important of which are Bartholmès's *Jordano Bruno* (1846-47); *Ein Blutzuge des Wissens* (1867), by Scartazzini, the great Dante scholar; and the *Life of Giordano Bruno*, by Domenico Berti, the present Italian minister of agriculture (1868). This last was followed by a supplement containing the text of the documents relating to Bruno's extradition, imprisonment, and execution. A few years ago, when I was living in Italy, and had excellent opportunities for obtaining all accessible information respecting Bruno and his work, I conceived the idea of writing a book, entitled *Giordano Bruno, his System and his Times*, when I saw announced, among Trübner's forthcoming publications, *The Life and Works of Giordano*

Bruno, I immediately wrote to Mr. Trübner, to inquire the nature of the forthcoming work, and learned that the author was a distinguished scholar, who had collected everything obtainable respecting Bruno and his work. I therefore abandoned my project, delighted to know that there was a fair prospect of soon seeing Bruno's system rendered accessible to the English-reading public.

On the 7th of January, 1865, the Roman students assembled in the Campo de' Fiori, lighted a fire on the spot where Bruno had been burned, and consigned to the flames the Papal Encyclical, published a month before. Then the hierarchy which had condemned Bruno remembered his prophetic threat and began to tremble. And it was time. Five years more, and Rome, by an overwhelming vote of its people, aided by the arms of Victor Emanuel, passed out of the hands of the pope and became the free capital of free Italy, whose freest and noblest men are now seeking to honor the memory of her martyred son with a statue, to be raised on the spot where, in the agonies of death, he turned away in anger from the crucifix.

Thus, though Bruno died a lonely, unpitied martyr, and his fame has grown but slowly, that growth has been very sure and continuous. All that it now requires to make it immortal is that his philosophical system should be made fully known to the world; and this, as we have just seen, is soon likely to be accomplished. When this takes place, it will be found that Bruno was not only a brave martyr, which men have often been for a bad cause, but that he was a martyr for the most

sacred of all causes, the cause of pure truth. It will be seen that, instead of being a hot-headed dreamer, as he is slanderously believed to have been, he was one of the profoundest thinkers that the world has ever seen,—a thinker from whom we have even now much to learn, and who is destined to be the guiding star of future thought.

These are large claims, and I doubt not that to many they will seem exorbitant. I hope in what remains of my lecture to prove to you that they are not. What, then, were Bruno's views? What was there so opposed to the dogmas of the Church in them that the Church should think it necessary to condemn him to a cruel death? What, moreover, was there in them that justifies us in calling him a martyr, not only to truth, but to free thought? The answer to the first of these questions will involve answers to the other two. What, then, were Bruno's peculiar views?

These must be divided into two classes: (1) his physical views, (2) his metaphysical views. Let no one shrink when he hears that Bruno held "metaphysical" views. John Stuart Mill says that, until we have a metaphysics, we shall never be sure that we really know anything. And Bruno happily lived before the rise of the strangest of all superstitions, that crude dogma of Positivism, which, on pain of scientific anathema, forbids all men to have any dealings with the demon of metaphysics. In spite of this, when I was in Paris some years ago, Mr. Lafite, the present head of the French Positivists, told me that he was writing a book on the metaphysics of Positivism. I could

not help asking whether his next book would not be on the theology of Positivism. He did not see the point of the remark; and, indeed, Dr. Bridges denies that the Positivists are atheists. Indeed, no scientific system that means really to explain anything can be without a metaphysics, since all explanation whatsoever is in metaphysical terms. At all events, Bruno was a metaphysician; but his metaphysics were very closely bound up with his physics, and indeed seem, in a great measure, to have had their origin in the impulse given to physical science by the then recent astronomical theories and discoveries of Copernicus.

Astronomical theories do not seem to bear very closely upon human affairs, and yet few things so much contributed to overthrow the mediæval ideal of human existence and to introduce the modern one as the astronomical theory of Copernicus: albeit, it was put forward timidly, and the work embodying it dedicated to a pope. Although this work appeared in 1543, five years before Bruno's birth, the Copernican theory found little acceptance or currency for nearly a century.*

It seemed so harmless that the Church did almost nothing to oppose it, until it was propounded and rendered familiar by Galilei, who was tortured and made to recant in 1616 and 1633. One of the very earliest adherents of the Copernican system was Giordano Bruno, who not only accepted it, but drew from it all the consequences, both physical and theological, which the world has been

* Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, vol. ii., p. 318; vol. iii., p. 394.

slowly drawing in the last three hundred years. The most important and fundamental of these consequences was one of which Copernicus had never dreamt,—namely, that there is not only one solar system, but many; and that the universe is infinite. This view seems now so much a matter of course that it is hard to believe that, in the sixteenth century, Giordano Bruno was perhaps the only man who held it, and certainly the only man who saw its bearings.

It is hard for us who are familiar with the true view to conceive what an inspiration it was to the man in whose soul it was first revealed, how it new-created the universe to him, and filled him with a living fire of enthusiasm, which even the dungeon and the stake could not quench. As Froude says: "The floor of heaven, inlaid with stars, had sunk back into an infinite abyss of immeasurable space; and the firm earth itself, unfixed from its foundations, was seen to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe. In the fabric of habit which they had so laboriously built for themselves, mankind were to remain no longer." With the flash of the eye of genius, Bruno saw, from the Pisgah peak of the Copernican doctrine, the whole promised land of modern thought and science, in its essential outlines. I doubt whether any man, even up to our own day, has seen it again as clearly as he did.

"The universe is infinite," said Bruno to himself; "and every part of an infinite is necessarily infinite. I am part of the infinite: therefore, I am infinite." This was the sublime syllogism

which made Bruno a moral hero and a deathless martyr. It may seem a very rash syllogism; but, I think, the more carefully we consider it, the more thoroughly shall we be convinced of its truth. - It can be shown in the most direct way that no number of finite parts will make an infinite whole. It follows at once that the parts of the infinite must be infinite, or, which is the same thing, that the infinite has, strictly speaking, no parts, but only modes, and that each of these modes is the infinite itself under a particular form.

I am afraid that this will seem to some of you mere gibberish; and you will perhaps say to yourselves, "Bruno must have been a dreamer, not to say a fool, to stake his life for any such vague proposition as this." I shall be sorry, indeed, if any one arrive at this conclusion; for Bruno's doctrine, when fully comprehended, proves not only to be true, but also to be so important a truth as to be the only possible basis for free thought or, indeed, of any freedom whatsoever. The subject of this lecture is the relation of Bruno's philosophy to free thought. I am now able to state this relation, which is this: that Bruno's fundamental thought, for which he sacrificed his life, is the sole and essential condition of free thought, that free thought can have no other foundation. Not only is it the irresistible solvent that will melt the triple fetters of servitude welded upon the human spirit during the Middle Age, but it is the strong barrier that will in the future prevent a new triple servitude from being imposed upon it by the theory of evolution as

at present construed. Let us see if we can make this clear.

And, first, as regards the enslaving doctrine of the Middle Age. The fundamental concept of this doctrine was this: God is all in all; man is a finite creature, the work of God's hands, made out of nothing, dependent in every way upon God, utterly unfree save by the grace of God, having no rights whatsoever as over against God, who may, and probably will, condemn him to eternal pain for the sin of his first ancestor, unless, by chance, he has heard of a revelation made at a particular moment in an obscure corner of the world, and has proved traitor to his intelligence, in order to swear a blind allegiance to the bearer of this revelation. This is even a mild putting of the mediæval view, which was by no means confined to the Middle Age and the Roman Church, but is not without adherents in our own time. From the *Evening Post* of the 10th of this month, I copy a quotation from a memorial made by the first missionaries to India to the governor of Bombay, in 1813: "We looked upon the heathen; and, alas! three-fourths of the inhabitants of the globe had not been told that Jesus had tasted death for every man! We saw them following their fathers in successive millions to eternal death. The view was overwhelming." Overwhelming to the pitiful missionaries apparently, but by no means so to their omniscient, omnipotent, all-loving God! And it was this God and his characteristics and interests that the Church professed to represent. The best and the

worst thing that we can say about it is that it did fairly represent them. For there can be no question that, if this theory of the relation between God and man were true, the Church was right, and is right now. The only way to undermine its position was to deny and disprove the doctrine that lay at the foundation of it; and this was just what Bruno did, and what the Church, true to her theoretical rights, burnt him for doing.

Giordano Bruno was the first man in modern times that took the truly scientific view of the supreme power in the universe and of man's relation to it. He maintained that God is not one thing, and nature another, and his creation; but that God and nature are one and the same thing, distinguishable only by mental abstraction. God apart from nature, nature apart from God, are both abstractions. Abstracting the power of nature from its manifestation, we call it God; putting manifestation and power together, we call the latter the soul of the world; taking the separate manifestations by themselves and relating them individually to the supreme power, we call them monads, or souls, or spirits, or intellects. Let me translate literally Bruno's own words: "There are three kinds of intellect,—the divine, which is all; the mundane, which does all; the other particular intellects, which become all." One is at first somewhat surprised to hear Bruno speak of three intellects; but this surprise ceases, when one remembers that this is only a form of expression borrowed from Aristotle. Bruno's meaning, to be sure, is very different from Aris-

tote's; but the phraseology is the same. Both mean that intelligence has three aspects,—Being, process, and the result of process. Intellect, regarded as being, we call God; regarded as process, we call it nature; regarded as the result of process, we find a world of particular existences, ordered in accordance with an intelligible law. This is exactly the modern scientific point of view, the view toward which all thought, even that of the unmovable Catholic Church, is irresistibly tending.

Let me quote a few more sentences from Bruno: "As to the efficient cause, I maintain that the universal physical efficient is the universal intellect, which is the first and fundamental faculty of the soul of the world, which is its universal form. . . . The universal intellect is the intimate, most real and proper faculty of the soul of the world. This is the identical one which fills all, illuminates the universe, and directs nature in fitly producing its species, and thus stands related to the production of natural things, as our intellects to the analogous production of rational species (or ideas)."

"We have, therefore, an internal principle of form, eternal and subsistent."

"The universe is one, infinite, immovable. One, I say, is the absolute possibility, one the act, one the form or soul, one the matter or body, one the thing, one the being, one the greatest and best, which, since it plainly cannot be comprehended, is illimitable and interminable, and therefore unlimited (infinite) and untermiated, consequently immovable. It has no locomotion, because there

is no outside whereto it could transport itself, since itself is all. It does not generate, because there is no other being which it could desire or expect, since it has all being. It does not decay, because there is nothing else into which it can change, seeing it is everything. It can neither diminish nor increase, because it is infinite; and to the infinite nothing can be added, and from it nothing can be subtracted, because the infinite has no proportional parts. It cannot undergo any modification, because there is nothing outside of it, by which it could be modified or affected. . . . It is not matter, because it is neither figured nor figurable, neither terminated nor terminable. It is not form, because it does not give form or figure to anything else, seeing it is all, is a maximum, is one, is the universe. It is neither measurable nor measure. It is not comprehended in anything, because there is nothing greater than it. It is not comparable, because it is not one thing and another, but is one and the same. Being one and the same, it has not being and being; and, because it has not being and being, it has not part and part, it is not compound. It is a term of such a sort that it is not a term; it is form in such a way that it is not form, matter in such a way that it is not matter, soul in such a way that it is not soul; because it is all indifferently and therefore one—the universe is one.

“It is not only possible, therefore, but necessary, that the incomprehensible best and greatest (absolute) should be all, through all, in all, because,

being simple and indivisible, it can be all, through all, in all. Hence it was not vainly said that Jove fills all things, inhabits all parts of the universe, is the centre of that which has one being in all things, and by which all is one. This, being all things, and comprehending in itself all being, brings about this result,—that everything is in everything. But, if this be so, you will ask me: Why then do things change? Why does particular matter force itself into other forms? I reply that change is not seeking another being, but another mode of being. And this is the difference between the universe and the things of the universe, because there is nothing that comprehends all being and all the modes of being. Of the things in the universe, each one has all being, but not all the modes of being.”

All this is expressed in language deeply dyed in scholasticism, in which Bruno was reared. Nevertheless, it is not only a full expression of the profoundest views of modern scientists, but is a better expression of the truth than any of these, so far as I know, has found. Here we find shadowed forth not only the doctrines of the correlation of forces, the persistence of force, the identity of force and matter, the identity of matter (when properly defined) and spirit and so on. Indeed, in spite of many faults of expression which were unavoidable, Bruno, the first real pioneer of modern thought, grasped its chief and fundamental outlines, its spirit, better than any one that came after him. In the white heat of the new birth, he saw the outlines of the future world of thought

with unparalleled clearness. Successive thinkers have only elaborated different sides or portions of his great, comprehensive view; and these sides, slowly and painfully filled in by experiment and deduction, are, in their union, slowly rising into the imposing structure of modern science and thought. Modern philosophy and modern science are little more than a filling out of Bruno's grand outline, and I think this outline would be much sooner filled up if it were better known than it is to philosophers and men of science.

We have seen that Bruno distinguished three aspects of intellect,—Being, which is all, Process, which produces all, and Existence, which is the result of Process. These are not three things, but three inseparable aspects of the same thing. They are the true ultimate distinctions that exist in all that is in the universe. They were dimly seen by Aristotle; they were made objects of idolatry in the mythical Christian Trinity. Viewed objectively, they are force, time, and space; viewed subjectively, they are spirit, feeling, and intelligence; viewed ontologically, they are the ideal, the moral, and the real.* No philosophy that does not accept

*In using the term intellect here, I ought to note that I do not mean by it conscious intelligence, which is merely an act of intellect under certain circumstances. Anaxagoras, who first introduced the term, or rather its Greek equivalent, *νοῦς*, had no intention of making it equivalent to consciousness; and the same is true of Aristotle, Plotinus, and the Schoolmen. The Latin term *intellectus* means a gathering between, a bringing of many things into one or under one; a making one thing present to many; in one word, universality. Now, universality, when it is raised to a high power, to a white heat, so to speak, becomes luminous, and results in consciousness. If we would but remember this, we might find little to object to in the assertion that the world displays an intelligible order, and seems the product of intellect.

these three aspects of being as final, and do justice to them as such, can ever give us a satisfactory account of the universe or make life seem rational and worth living. Whoever would hope to profit by Bruno's patrimony must take it entire.

This, however, is just what succeeding thinkers have failed to do. They have divided up Bruno's patrimony among them. In fact, the three inseparable parts of it have been taken as the whole by three different classes of thinkers, who together have been the producers of modern thought; and it is this single fact that explains why all modern thought is so little satisfactory. The best representatives of these three classes of thinkers are Spinoza, Leibniz, and Hegel. The first of these tries to found a philosophy on pure being, the second upon particular existence, the third upon process; and each tries to deduce from the one aspect which he adopts the other two aspects. You may search modern thought through, and you will find but one thinker that cannot be classed along with one or another of these great names, and that one is a Roman Catholic, a man altogether irrational and fanatical whenever the dogmas of the Church are in question. I mean Rosmini, who, Catholic as he is, is the true spiritual son of Bruno. Rev. Heber Newton tells that "Bradlaugh does not look like a child of Cardinal Newman, but he is." So Rosmini does not look like a child of Bruno, but he is.

Of the three systems of philosophy built upon shreds of Bruno's patrimony, that of process, best represented by Hegel, is the one that now has the

widest currency. It has many apparently dissimilar forms, agreeing in little else except in adopting the process now usually called evolution as their first principle. Such are the systems of Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann, Comte, Darwin, and Spencer. Some of these, *e.g.*, the systems of Comte and Spencer, do not deny the existence of the other aspects of being; but they declare them to be unknowable. While one may object to these systems, if put forward as complete and ultimate systems of philosophy, one may regard them with much satisfaction when they present themselves as partial systems, due to that division of labor which is the characteristic of our times. If we would only supplement Darwinianism and Spencerianism by Spinozism and Leibnizism, we should have a most satisfactory philosophy, which might very fairly be called Brunism.

Now, I maintain, and I wish to show, that it is Brunism, and Brunism alone,—carefully developed, indeed, and elaborated,—that must form the theoretical basis of any social system in which man shall enjoy true freedom, and develop his powers to the fullest. The reason of this is that it is the only system which recognizes and makes provision for freedom in its very first principle. Bruno, as we saw, maintains that, “of the things in the universe, each has all being, but not all the modes of being.” This is only a way of saying that each real being is potentially the Absolute, and can realize the Absolute within himself. This, again, is only the philosophical way of saying that any being is free. For let us suppose that any

being, man, for example, did not contain all being,—that is, all the possibilities of being,—the result would be that he would be limited in his development, and his evolution would cease when the possibilities of being contained in him were all realized. His existence, if he then continued to live, would be absolute stagnation and monotony, which, after all, is death. For what is death but the cessation of power to receive new impressions and put forth new acts? But to receive impressions and to put forth acts is to realize possibilities: hence, the cessation of power to realize possibilities is death.

Still, it might be said man, even if he did not contain the absolute in potentiality, might be free within certain limits and for a certain time. I reply that even this would be impossible; and the best proof of this is that the freedom of the will, so called, has been uniformly denied by all persons who either denied the existence of any Absolute or refused to acknowledge that it is present in every human being. Mr. Spencer, for example, who is one of the latter class, pointedly denies the freedom of the will. Many of his followers find this denial leading to such absurdities in practice that they not unfrequently maintain that he does not make it, and accuse those who say that he does of either misunderstanding or misrepresenting him. I will therefore quote a sentence or two from his *Psychology*. He says that “every one is at liberty to do what he desires to do (supposing there are no external hindrances), all admit; though people of confused ideas commonly

suppose this to be the thing denied. But that every one is at liberty to desire or not to desire, which is the real proposition involved in the doctrine of free will, is negatived as much by the analysis of consciousness as by the contents of the preceding chapters."

"I will only further say that freedom of the will, did it exist, would be at variance with the beneficent necessity displayed in the evolution of the correspondence between organism and environment."

I shall not stop to point out the errors in fact and logic contained in these sentences. I merely wish to show that the ablest of modern deniers of the doctrine for which Bruno went to the stake—at which no beneficent necessity was displayed in the correspondence between his organism and environment—denies, likewise, man's freedom. And he must do this, if he is at all logical. For freedom, even in its faintest form, implies the existence of the Absolute in the persons who exercise it. If the human intelligence had to choose between finite, commensurable motives (and all finite things are commensurable), man, certainly, would not be free; but, as soon as he comes to choose between incommensurable motives,—*e.g.*, between an absolute, an infinite, on the one hand, and a relative and finite, on the other,—then he must be free. But, before he can choose or even reject the Absolute, the Absolute must be in him; for the power that comprehends the Absolute must be itself absolute, at least potentially. No one can comprehend that which he is not himself potentially. This is a

fundamental truth too often ignored in this form, though often enough repeated in another form; namely, that no one can comprehend what he has not experienced. But even this form is sufficient for our purposes. Since all experience is a modification of the thinking subject, any subject that experiences the Absolute must be capable of taking an absolute modification; that is, must be potentially the Absolute.

I do not wish here to discuss the question whether men grasp the Absolute or not. All I am concerned about is to show that, unless they do, there is no freedom possible for them, and that there is no more use in doing anything or talking about doing anything for human improvement than there is in counselling a stone to walk off to the moon, to escape being rained on. How clearly Bruno saw all this, we may learn from such expressions as "[the Absolute] is neither measure nor measured." "All the parts of the Infinite are themselves infinite." But we learn it best of all from the simple fact that, rather than admit that he was a finite, relative creature, dependent upon an environment or an organism, he chose to be burnt at the stake, thereby asserting a freedom which certainly could not have its origin in a merely physical organism, entirely subject to necessary laws. I repeat, therefore, that the philosophy of Bruno is the only one that is capable of affording a substructure for true freedom and endless evolution.

Thus far, I have dwelt mainly with Bruno's relation to what we may call speculative or theoretical

philosophy; and I have shown that all modern systems of thought are but more or less complete developments of the different sides of his system. It now remains for me to say a few words respecting his relation to the sciences, the physical and the moral.

As to the former, we have already seen that his astronomical views were very advanced,—indeed, that he had reached the modern view. We have also seen that he forestalled some of the most famous of modern theories, those of the persistence of force, the correlation of forces, the identity of force and matter and of matter and spirit. His view with regard to transformation in general is set forth in this remarkable passage: “What was seed becomes herb; from what was herb is made ear of corn; from what was ear of corn is made bread; from bread, chyle; from chyle, blood; from blood, seed; from seed, embryo; from embryo, man; from man, corpse; from corpse, earth; from earth, stone or anything else; and thus it goes on to *all the forms of nature*.” This passage has sufficient intrinsic interest, but this is heightened by an extrinsic circumstance of no small moment.

There can hardly be any doubt that Shakspeare had these words in mind when he wrote (Hamlet, V., 1):—

“Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till we find it stopping a bung-hole? thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of

that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?"*

"Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
Oh that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!"

But it was not only in astronomy and physics that Bruno had ideas far ahead of his time. In biology, he came very near the Darwinian theory, and arrived altogether at a doctrine of evolution. He says: "As from one and the same wax or other material are formed different and contrary figures, so from the same bodily material are formed all bodies, and from the same spiritual substance are all spirits" (he does not say, "are formed all spirits"). "Moreover, by reason of different causes, habits, orders, measures, and numbers in body and spirit, there are different temperaments and conditions, there are produced different organs, and there appear different species of things." This doctrine was no doubt suggested to him by Hêrakteitos and Aristotle; but, in his day, no one, perhaps, but himself held it. So much for Bruno's physical ideas.

*There are many other passages in "Hamlet" that show Shakspeare to have been familiar with the writings of Bruno, and some passages can be explained only by reference to these writings. Polonius asks Hamlet, "What do you read, my lord?" and the latter answers, "Words, words, words." So, in Bruno's *Candelajo*, Manfurio asks the pedant, Octavio, "What is the matter of your verses?" Where to the latter answers, "Letters, syllables, diction, and speech, parts near and parts remote." Hamlet says, "There is nothing, either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Bruno says, "Taken absolutely, nothing is imperfect or evil; only in relation to something else does it seem so, and what is evil to one is good to another." To be sure, the same thought occurs both in Hêrakteitos and Sophoklês; but it is highly improbable that Shakspeare

His view with regard to morals and their relation to religion may best be seen from the following words addressed by Momus to Jove: "It will be sufficient if you put an end to that lazy tribe of pedants, who, without doing good, according to the divine and natural law, consider themselves, and wish to be considered, as religious men, agreeable to the gods, and declare that it is not by pursuing good and shunning evil that men become worthy and pleasing to the gods, but by believing and hoping according to their catechism." Elsewhere, he makes Wisdom say: "Wherefore, it is an unworthy, foolish, profane, and reprehensible thing to think that the gods demand reverence, fear, love, worship, and respect for any other good end or utility than those of men themselves, inasmuch as being perfectly glorious in themselves, and therefore unable to add any glory to themselves from without, they have made laws, not so much to obtain glory from men as to communicate glory to them. Hence, laws and judgments fall short of the goodness and truth of law and judgment, just in proportion as they fail to order and approve, above all other things, that

knew either of these. Bruno, it must be admitted, may have derived it from Hêrakteitos, some of whose fragments he seems to have known. Hamlet, after soliloquizing to himself thus, "For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion," suddenly breaks off, and says to Polonius, "Have you a daughter?" Polonius replies, "I have, my lord." Hamlet says, "Let her not walk i' the sun: conception is a blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive." These words have no meaning till we know Bruno's doctrine that "the sun and man beget man" (*Sol et homo generant hominem*). I am not sure that any one ever thought of inquiring what book Hamlet is supposed by Shakspeare to be reading, when he is interrupted by Polonius; but I venture, from numerous indications, to conjecture that it was a volume

which consists in the moral actions of men with respect to each other." I doubt whether the Society for Ethical Culture could frame a better statement of the relation between ethics and religion than this of Bruno's. Reading this, we are at no loss to understand why Bruno, though he spent some time in Geneva, and afterward in Protestant England and Germany, never became a Protestant. He appears, from recently discovered documents, to have got into considerable trouble at Geneva; and no wonder, when he puts into the mouth of Wisdom words like the following, concerning the chief reformers: "While they say that all their care is about invisible things, which neither they nor anybody else ever understood, they maintain that, in order to obtain grace, all that is required is fate, which is immutable, but which is determined by certain affections and fancies on which the gods are especially fond of feeding." Indeed, his contempt for the doctrines of the reformers, who exalted faith as all-potent for salvation and despised works and a moral life, is without bounds. His treatment of the doctrine of predestination is not only contemptuous, but funny.

I think I need not say anything more to con-

of Bruno, and one containing that admirable comedy, *Il Candelaio*. Hamlet calls the author a "satirical rogue," but evidently enjoys him. I feel convinced that Shakspeare meant to indicate that Hamlet was a follower of Bruno; and it is worthy of notice that Bruno taught for two years (1586-88) at Wittenberg, the very university where Hamlet and his friends are said to have studied. We know, moreover, that about that time several young Englishmen and Scotchmen studied at Wittenberg; and, among these, Shakspeare may have found the prototype of his too curiously thinking Hamlet. (See *Philosophische Monatshefte*, vol. ii. pp. 495, sq.)

vince you that Bruno was one of the mighty, one of those strange, incomprehensible, pioneer geniuses that lived centuries before their time, destined, apparently, to lay out the tasks for many succeeding ages. He rose not only above the dogmas and superstitions of half-obsolete mediæval Catholicism, but, with equal ease and firmness, above the new follies of growing Protestantism. He belongs not to the sixteenth century, but to the nineteenth, and even to the *élite* of it. Great in philosophy, great in science,—physical and moral,—he was greater still in practice, in life and in death. No man ever labored more or suffered more, in order to be free himself and help others to be so. No one ever met death more firmly and heroically. Among the martyrs for truth and freedom,—those first essentials of manhood,—he occupies the highest place. Calvin and Luther and all the reformers are, or soon will be, matters of history; but Bruno will live on, and be honored as a present saint, as long as men love truth and freedom and heroism.

I cannot better close this long lecture than by reading a translation of two of Bruno's sonnets, in which the whole man, in his character, aspirations, and firm resolutions, is summed up. The former may be called his creed,—the expression of that which inspired him, and became the ruling power in his life. It is also a prayer, uttered in the true attitude,—that of firm, unwavering resolution to cling with the whole soul to the Highest, and never to lose sight of it in the chaos of outward wrong or inward passion. It is perhaps the

truest and manliest prayer that ever was uttered.
I prophesy that it will be often repeated in the
future.

"Cause, Principle and One, the Sempiterno,
On whom all being, motion, life, depend,
From whom, in length, breadth, depth, their paths extend
As far as heaven, earth, hell their faces turn :
With sense, with mind, with reason, I discern
That act, rule, reckoning, may not comprehend
That power and bulk and multitude which tend
Beyond all lower, middle, and superne.

"Blind error, ruthless time, ungentle doom,
Deaf envy, villain madness, zeal unwise,
Hard heart, unholy craft, bold deeds begun,
Shall never fill for one the air with gloom,
Or ever thrust a veil before these eyes,
Or ever hide from me my glorious sun."

The second is a statement of his purpose in
life and a prophecy of his death,—almost of the
manner of it. It shows us that he was perfectly
conscious of what he was doing and what it might
lead to. It shows, also, that he, poor, lonely, un-
recognized wanderer, had taken his life in his
hand, and was prepared to suffer the worst for the
sake of the glorious new revelation that had been
made in and to his soul.

"Since I have spread my wings to purpose high,
The more beneath my feet the clouds I see,
The more I give the winds my pinions free,
Spurning the earth and soaring to the sky.
Unwarned by Icarus' sad fate to ply
My flight near earth, I farther heavenward flee.
That I shall sink in death, I know must be;
But with that death of mine what life will die ?

"Across the air, I hear my heart's voice cry:
 'Where dost thou bear me, reckless one? Descend!
 Such rashness seldom ends but bitterly.'
 'Fear not the lofty fall,' I answer, 'rend
 With might the clouds, and be content to die,
 If God such glorious death for us intend.' "

Such glorious death God did intend; and the
 poet met it, as an exceptional honor, without fear,
 without complaint, without appeal. Such, in life
 and death, was Giordano Bruno, the first of mod-
 ern men, the Messiah of free thought and free life.



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