



BRUNO MONUMENT.

The Bruno Memorial

THE HISTORY CHANNEL[®] made the statement, in its program "The Inquisition," that the Bruno Memorial that stands before the Vatican was erected in 1820; that is an absolute falsehood! The implication that this falsehood conveyed was that the Catholic Church might have approved the Memorial in regret for having murdered -- burned alive! -- the greatest mind of the Renaissance. We must do what we can to counteract this great lie that so many Americans saw, and thought they were getting factual History. We will present the real truth about the Bruno Memorial as completely as possible, and we will cite irrefutable Historic References to prove the truth of our facts. Even so the true History will not reach the great number of people, and thus cannot undo the great harm that one showing of the 'The History Channel' has done.

The Bruno Memorial in Rome was erected by Freethinkers during the great Freethought movement that flourished in America and Europe from the Eighteen Sixties to the early Nineteen Twenties. This Bruno Monument was financed by donations collected from individual Freethinkers world-wide. The great American Orator and Infidel, Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, was invited to deliver the Dedication Oration for the Bruno Monument in Rome, but had to decline because of prior commitments. Following is the reply that Col. Ingersoll made to the invitation to deliver that Dedication; we quote two full pages from the Ingersoll Biography by Kittredge.

'INGERSOLL: A Biographical Appreciation' By Herman E. Kittredge, 1911, Chapter VII., page 148-149: (This complete book is on Bank of Wisdom CD-ROM #1)

"IN 1889, the Rationalists of Europe and America having conjointly provided for the erection of a life-size statue of Bruno, in the Campo dei Fiori at Rome, on the spot where he was burned at the stake, February 17, 1600, by order of the papal Inquisition, Ingersoll was invited by the international committee to deliver the oration unveiling the memorial mentioned.

We can imagine with what wealth of feeling, -- what triumphant inspiration, -- the orator of universal liberty would have risen in the shadow of the Vatican to pay to the memory of him whom he had already styled "the first real martyr" that debt of gratitude and historic justice which had so long been overdue; and we can imagine also, but

with regret, how much the world of art and letters was the loser because of his inability to accept an invitation which, coming from a source so truly representative of emancipated thought, was to him especially pleasing. Of the sublime heights which he would have attained had he accepted, we catch a glimpse from the critical viewpoint of the eminent English Rationalist George Jacob Holyoake, who, in commenting on the great orator's loftiness and originality, said: --

"When his subject was Bruno, upon whom many pens had exhausted all the terms they knew, Ingersoll's first words were: **'The night of the Middle Ages lasted for a thousand years. The first star that enriched the horizon of this universal gloom was Giordano Bruno. He was the herald of the dawn.'** "

But although the orator of the better age which Bruno so clearly foresaw, and for which he so nobly gave his life, was unable to pay in Rome the tribute of his gratitude, he rendered substantial aid at home, not only as the head of the committee representing the United States on the international committee, but as indicated in the following characteristic letter opening the American subscription: --

“LAW OFFICE, ROBERT G. INGERSOLL
40 WALL STREET,
NEW YORK, FEB. 8, 1889.

T. B. Wakeman, ESQ.,
Treasurer of the Bruno Monument Committee.

"MY DEAR SIR: It gives me great pleasure to inclose my check for one hundred dollars (\$100).

I shall never be quite satisfied until there is a monument to Bruno higher than the dome of St. Peter's.

Yours very truly,

R. G. INGERSOLL."

To find the words of the person who did deliver the Oration for the unveiling of the Bruno Monument we need go to page 853 of **'400 Years of Freethought'** by Samuel P. Putnam, 1894. (This book is on Bank of Wisdom CD-ROM #2)

THE BRUNO MONUMENT.

The dark or shining history of four hundred years of Freethought cannot be more fittingly closed than with the superb picture of the Bruno monument. It fronts the Vatican, with the sunrise of Liberty upon its face. The pope crouches before it, and the shadows of superstition flee away. The heart of the multitude is filled with joy. It is an auspicious moment, and a glorious prospect opens from this gleaming shaft into the boundless future. All the races of the world will sometime hail this glad hour of freedom and progress. America has contributed her noble share. Her gold has been poured forth with the congratulations of her mighty people. Through her generosity this great gift has been made to humanity. As the morn and the evening come, and the stars glitter and the flowers grow, so shall these jeweled stones gather the light of the centuries, and from this lofty and dauntless form shall shine the prophecies of to-morrow. To the millions that will yet rejoice upon this planet, let the voice of regenerated Italy be borne -- the Italy of the future, of thought, of freedom, of science, and of human brotherhood.

PROFESSOR BOKO'S ADDRESS

AT THE BRUNO CELEBRATION,

(ROME, JUNE 9, 1889.)

(Translated by Prof. Thomas Davidson.)

This inauguration ought to be celebrated by a people in silence, as a solemn act of religion, and the few words with which I shall break the silence, already made, shall be purely explanatory.

The papacy feels less sorrow over the 20th of September, 1870, when the national troops took possession of Rome, than over the 9th of June. The former was a conclusion; this is a beginning. Then Italy entered Rome, the goal of its progress; to-day Rome inaugurates the religion of thought, the principle of another age. The goddess of reason does not enter Rome intolerant -- Rome, which opened the pantheon to all religions, nor do new idols come to claim worship here, where still re-echoes the living word of Christ: "After me no prophets shall arise."

The nations assembled here are clearly aware that, as the year 313 was fixed by imperial decree in Milan, as the era of the Christian

religion, so this 9th of June is fixed in Rome, by the consent of free peoples, as the era of the religion of thought.

Is it, then, a religion? And is this the age and this the place for such a thing?

If in the most populous city of Europe two queens -- Mary and Elizabeth, Bruno's contemporaries -- seek each other's heads, and the one leaves hers in the hands of the other, the struggle is one between two dogmas of two revealed religions. If between these two an Italian exile offers himself up to an idea which fulfills in humanity the destiny of man, this is the religion of thought.

On this spot he was burnt, and his ashes did not appease dogma; on this spot he rises again, and the religion of thought demands no vengeance.

It demands toleration for all doctrines, for all forms of worship, and chiefly for that of justice. Instead of contemplation, it demands labor; instead of credulity, examination; instead of obedience, discussion; instead of prayer, reparation and work. The articles of this religion will be the discoveries of science, just compacts between nations, and universal exhibitions of universal labor.

This faith has no prophets; it has thinkers. If it seeks a temple, it finds the universe; if it seeks an inviolate asylum, it finds the conscience of man. It has had its martyrs, it insists from this day on that reparation shall not be posthumous.

Rome may make this proclamation. Here have been celebrated the millenaries of the successive religions. All the gods of the earth met in the universal pantheon -- here, where law had become universal, and the church bade fair to become catholic. Here, too, it is possible to fix the new millenary, which shall replace the catholic of one man by the catholicity of human thought.

And this is the time forecast by Bruno. Many, indeed, marry and ugly are still the prevailing hypocrisies; but their impotence against this living bronze determines the meaning of the memorable civil celebration. When we honor him here, we imply that a great part of him is here alive

and speaks to us in that philosophy of nature which is not merely a doctrine, but a destiny.

With regard to this succession of ideas and civilizations, any other monument, to prince or tribune, would bear some indication of country and of place. Before this monument, politics, art, customs, language become fragments; systems and confessions cloak their peculiarities; the priestly orders hide their rule; nations forget their boundaries, and man feels himself equal to himself.

No voice of hatred can issue from this monument. The last word of every great burnt-offering has been: Forgive them! Pope Aldobrandino, who decreed the crown to Tasso and the stake to Bruno, ignored the doubts of the one, the affirmation of the other, but was himself tormented by those doubts and that affirmation.

Nor against his successor, who regards this monument with anxious eye, shall one word go hence to darken the light of this hour. He is not happy, that old man, a victim, first of all -- and more than Bruno -- to his own dogma, which forbids him to utter the good wish stirring in every Italian bosom to his Italian fatherland. He feels that, while Italy and the civilized world are here, in the bitter desert that surrounds him, there echo these words of a murdered philosopher: "Persevere, O Nolan, and be assured that at last all will see what thou seest, that all men of good conscience will pronounce a favorable judgment on thee. Impress the knowledge of the infinite universe, before which there is no greatness that endures."

At the sound of this appeal, we mark no absentees; because there are no absences at epochal dates, and the nations that are here, and those that are not here, are equally represented. There are present, along with you, the longing ones, in the way of whose coming distance, poverty, wretchedness, or some government less civilized than the nation has placed obstacles. There are present those who have accepted the teaching of the Nolan, and those who, for late shame, deny that they slew him. Those who have begun to count an age by this day are present. In Bruno's universe there are no excommunications; the human race enters it whole.

O world-wide Rome! to-day thou dost truly reconcile thyself with the catholic word, pronounced not by dogma, but by the concordant thought of the nations.

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Another tribute to Giordano Bruno was the efforts of Freethought to create a new era, and a new calendar, based on the murder of Bruno in AD 1600. This new calendar was used by several Freethought magazines for many years after it was originated as described below. The date, as used in practice was, for, say 1882, EM 282; the EM standing for "Era of Man." The page quoted is page 852 of '**400 Years of Freethought.**'

THE PAINE HALL CALENDAR.

"In an article in the New York "Truth Seeker" of Oct. 29, 1881, Mr. T.B. Wakeman, of New York, in referring to the remark of Dr. Draper -- in the doctor's famous book, "The Conflict between Religion and Science" -- that possibly posterity may unveil a statue of Bruno "under the dome of St. Peter's at Rome," was moved to say, "But would it not be a surer and a nobler monument than any 'enduring bronze' could ever be, to date the calendar of the New Era of Science and Man from the year 1600 'as its year *one*'?"

This and other words in connection, in their turn, moved Mr. G.N. Hill, of Boston, to offer in the Paine Memorial, on the 29th of January, 1882, a resolution, of which the following is an amended copy:

Resolved: That in everlasting commemoration of that rise of Science and Freethought -- the two best friends humanity has ever had -- which began during the sixteenth century of the superstitious "Year of our Lord;" and in *perpetual honor*, also, of the heroism of that glorious teacher of Reason and noble Martyr for Science and Man, Giordano Bruno, of Italy -- so inhumanly burned at the stake by the Christians at Rome, on the 16th day of February, 1600, for proclaiming scientific facts -- *therefore*, in future, all records and other official documents of the Investigator Freethought Society, of Boston, Mass., shall bear date from a Calendar, beginning its year 0 -- or starting point -- on the 1st day of January, A. D., 1600; thereby placing our Society -- and all persons also adopting it -- entirely out of the bedeviling fog of the age of Bible faith

with its "Year of Grace 1882," and into the humane light of the "Age of Reason" and YEAR OF SCIENCE 282.

With the necessary change from the first of January, 1600, to the first of January, 1601, this calendar has been adopted quite extensively."

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Who was Bruno, and what did he say and do that so frightened or/and so enraged the most evil and powerful political force in Western Civilization at that time -- the Roman Catholic Church -- that it committed the unforgivable crime of burning alive this magnificent Thinker? For a short Biography of Bruno we will go to Chapter VI -- page 51 -- of **'400 Years of Freethought.'**

"CHAPTER VI.

PHILOSOPHY: BRUNO AND SPINOZA.

WE are now to consider philosophical advance -- represented by Bruno and Spinoza in one direction, and Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hamilton, and Comte in another. What is philosophy? Bruno defined it to be the search after unity. This certainly was the sense in which Bruno and Spinoza were philosophers; this was the goal of their ceaseless effort, the unity of the universe -- the one in the many, the harmony of all worlds, all life, matter and spirit, God and man. If they did not solve the problem aright they certainly adorned their age with the brightest productions of human genius. They have given a noble impulse to Freethought. They have been the source of many a golden stream of poesy over the fields of time. The world will never cease to be a debtor to these immortal dreamers.

Bruno was not a man of science like Galileo or Darwin. He was not a plodder, infinitely painstaking, slow, patient, wary, advancing step by step. He assimilated the discoveries of his time with wonderful accuracy -- but rather by genius than by investigation; and he leaped to conclusions far beyond even the daring speculations of Galileo and Kepler. Philosophy was his domain, not science. He was not analytic -- but synthetic. He was a creator -- a builder -- out of the facts furnished by others. A more active or richly-gifted man never was on this planet. He was like a flame. He was born for agitation -- for controversy. He called himself "The awakener of sleeping minds." He was indeed that.

He was an intellectual athlete. He was armed and equipped for battle at every point. His learning was prodigious -- and it was wrought together like chained lightning. No wonder the church dreaded this imperious knight whose armor was always shining, whose blows were always telling. And what a glorious philosophy he proclaimed -- beautiful and enchanting as the sweet poetry of Shelley. Indeed, Shelley is the modern Bruno, and the magnificence of the poet's genius is the twin glory of the sixteenth-century martyr. If we desire to realize the spirit of Bruno, and the splendor of his powers, we must read Shelley. The one interprets the other. On the firmament of time they shine with the same intensity. One might think that the poet was singing of the philosopher in this glowing music:

"He is made one with nature; there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that power may move,
Which has withdrawn his being to its own,
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from below, and kindles it above."

Bruno proclaimed the immanence of God; that nature, at no point, was separate from God -- but everywhere was his flowing divinity. Nature is the universal mother. There was no real discord. There was no creation -- but constant emanation. As Goethe sings, Nature is the "garment we see Him by." God is not on a throne, but is an eternal presence. There is no need of any priest -- only the open soul.

Bruno infuses matter with the noblest qualities. Spirit is not degraded by any association with it. As I understand Bruno, he makes matter and spirit co-eternal, both unbeginning and unending. They are two different expressions of the same being, which being is incomprehensible in itself. But matter and spirit, however different their expression, are one in God -- the universal soul. The word God to Bruno was simply the term for the unity of existence. He did not define God, or give him any character or personality, or any attribute except simply to make him the totality of existence, all-embracing.

As Goethe sings:

“The all-enfolding,
The all-upholding,
To head and heart the force
Still weaving its eternal secret
Invisible, visible round our life.”

And Pope declares the same:

“ See through this air, this ocean, and this earth,
All matter quick and bursting into birth!
Above, how high progressive life may go;
Around, how wide; how deep extend below.
From nature’s chain, whichever link you strike,

And modern science still echoes the thought in Tyndall: "I prolong the vision backward across the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that matter which we, in our ignorance, have hitherto covered with opprobrium the promise and potency of every form and quality of life."

Bruno does not identify the universe with God. It is the expression of God -- but not God himself. Withdraw God and the universe would cease to be, but Bruno seems to affirm that so long as God is, so long must he constantly express himself in the universe; that is, God must, in his very nature, be action, eternal action; he cannot be merely a thought, or a dream, or a sleep. Therefore the universe is co-eternal with God. The relation of the universe to God is not one of identity, but of expression, or revealing. The universe is the constant revealing of God, and is one with God in the sense that language is one with the thought it expresses, The universe is the language or the word of God.

It is best, however, to give Bruno’s own words, so that we may most clearly understand his pantheistic philosophy. He says: “There is only one absolute possibility, one only reality, one only activity. Whether it be form or soul, matter or body, it is but one -- one only being, one sole existence. Unity is, therefore, perfection; its character is impossibility of being comprehended, in other words, it possesses neither limit, bound, nor definitive determination. The one is infinite and immense, and therefore immovable; it cannot change its place, because outside of it there is no space; it is not engendered, because all existence is only its

own existence; it cannot perish, because it can neither pass into nor transform itself into anything else. It cannot increase nor diminish, because the infinite is susceptible neither of augmentation nor of diminution. It is liable to alteration neither from without, because nothing exists outside of it, nor from within, because it is at once, and at the same time, everything it can become. Its harmony is an eternal harmony since it is unity itself. Because it is self-identical, it cannot form two beings; it has not two kinds of existence, because it has not two modes of being; it has not different parts, for it is not composite. It is in the same manner, the whole and parts, all and one, limited and unlimited, formal and informal, matter and void, animate and inanimate. In the universe solid body does not differ from a mathematical point, nor the center from the circumference, nor the finite from the infinite, nor the infinitely great from the infinitely little. The universe is only a center, or rather its center is everywhere, its circumference no-where.”

Again he explains: “The supreme being is the substance of the universe, the pure essence of all life and reality, the source of all being, the force of all forces, the virtue of all virtues. If nature is the outward originating cause of all existence, divinity is its deeper foundation, and the more profound basis, both of nature and of each individual. God being the cause of all causes, the ruling principle of all existence, may become everything; being also perfect he is everything. In him existence and power, reality and activity, are inseparably united, indeed they cannot be conceived separately and apart from him. Not only is he alone the external cause of all things, he is also the inherent principle which maintains them in life. By means of his omnipresence and his boundless activity, the existence and motion of all beings constitute but one sole life, one immense and inexhaustible reality. The cause of all causation, the supreme being is at once the formal, material, efficient, and final cause of all that exists. He is the nature of all nature, being the universal cause and in perpetual action. He is the universal reason, in other words, the intelligence which conceives all and produces all. Being also the universal power -- that which determines and differentiates everything the world contains -- the supreme being is the soul of the world, the spirit of the universe, the hidden life of every form of existence. The infinity of God, his presence and activity in every part of creation, as well as its immeasurable totality. His omnipresence and persistent energy constitute the most wonderful character of his being.”

Bruno, notwithstanding his mysticism, was a born skeptic. Doubt with him was the starting-point of all philosophy and all reasoning. This is affirmed again and again in various parts of his works, and is exemplified in his own career. However much the abstractions of the Infinite and the One satisfied for the time his intellect and soothed his emotional needs, there was a prior stage of doubt of a sweeping and comprehensive character. "He who wishes to philosophize," says Bruno, "must begin by doubting all things." Bruno affirms that the human mind is made for knowledge and freedom. He lays it down that thought, by its own nature, cannot be the subject of punitive justice, for if sincere it can be no offense to God or human law. Thus political freedom is the outcome of his doctrines.

"Our opinions," he says, "do not depend upon ourselves; evidence, the force of circumstances, the reason, impose them on us. If no man, therefore, thinks what he wishes nor as he wishes, no one has the right of compelling another to think as he does. Every man ought to tolerate with patience, nay, with indulgence, the beliefs of his neighbor. Toleration, that natural faith graven upon all well-born hearts, the fruit of the enlightened reason, is an indispensable requirement of logic, as well as a precept of morality."

Bruno was an ardent worshiper of nature, because, in nature, he saw the ever-flowing divinity of the supreme being. He describes the charms of nature in the passionate language of a lover. Nature, moving, fluctuating, changing, instinct with life and energy.

Bruno was something like Milton, rather furious against personal enemies. One of his opponents he calls a pig. There was a kind of grim, elephantine humor in him -- a fierce cynical mockery, which gives a sort of grotesque light to his otherwise magnificently earnest spirit. Neither Bruno nor Milton was born to be a wit, but their efforts at comedy are worthy of preservation. Bruno erects Asinity into a goddess and sings her praises thus:

"O sainted Asinity. Ignorance most holy!
Stupidity most sacred! Devotion most profound,
Thou alone canst make us learned, good, and sound.
While human thought and study are void of value wholly.

Little availeth the search that men so fully

Employ by every art or science-operation,
Little availeth their sky-ward contemplation,
To gain the heavenly seat which is thy object solely.

What boots then, ye curious, your persistent exploration?
The wish to learn the secret of nature's lams and ways,
If the stars be water, earth, or fiery exhalation?
Holy Asinity despises wisdom's rays;

Folded hands and knees form her sole occupation,
Expecting from Providence the luck of better days;
All passes, nothing stays,
Save the fruition of that eternal peace,
Which God will give her after her decease."

In another strain, more befitting his royal nature, he afterwards sings:

"Away from the prison cell, narrow and gloomy,
Where so many years error closely hath bound me,
Leaving the fetters and chains which around me
My foe's cruel hand hath entwined to entomb me.
Securely to the air my pinions I extend --
Fearless of all barriers, feigned by men of old,
The heavens I freely cleave -- to the Infinite I tend.
So leaving this, to other worlds my upward flight I wend.
Ethereal fields I penetrate with dauntless heart and bold,
And leave behind what others deem a prospect without
end."

And then, wonderfully, he seems to predict his own immortal
martyrdom:

"Since I my wings to sweet desire do lend,
The more the air uprises 'neath my feet,
The swifter on the gale my pinions beat,
And, earth despising, toward heaven I tend.
Nor for the son of Dædalus' guilty end
Feel I dismay, nay, rather buoyant heat;
His deadly fall I joyfully would meet.
Peer to such death, what life could mortal spend?
Soaring, I hear my trembling heart's refrain,

‘Where bearest me, O rash one? The fell steep
Too arduous is not climbed without much pain.’
‘Fear not,’ I answer, ‘for the fatal leap,
Serene I cleave the clouds and death disdain,
If death so glorious heaven will that I reap.’ ”

Such was the magnanimous soul of Bruno -- a mighty light indeed shining at the beginning of the Era of Man. Maurice says of him: "Grace and beauty of every kind speak to his soul, and exercise a dominion over him which one would fear must have often been too much for his judgment and loftier aspirations. His countenance testifies how mightily he must have been attracted, and how he must have attracted."

Professor Berti gives this description of Bruno: "Short in stature, agile in frame, of meager body, a thin and pallid face, thoughtful expression; a glance both piercing and melancholy; hair and beard between black and chestnut; a, ready, rapid, imaginative tongue, accompanied by vivacious gestures, a manner courteous and gentle. Sociable, amiable, and pleasant in conversation, like the Italians of the South; adapting himself without difficulty to the tastes, usage, and habits of another; open and candid, both with friends and foes, and as far from rancor and revenge as he was quickly moved to anger."

After fifteen years' wandering over Europe Bruno arrived at Venice about 1591. He paid occasional visits to Padua and gave private lessons to some German students. The chronology of Bruno's life shows that he could have had no personal acquaintance with Galileo, who did not commence lecturing at Padua until some months after Bruno's long incarceration had begun. On Friday, May 22, 1592, Mocenigo, of infamous memory, his former pupil and patron, and now his betrayer, forcibly entered the bed-chamber where Bruno was asleep, accompanied by his servant and five or six gondoliers of the neighborhood, and, on the pretext of wishing to converse with him, conducted him to a garret and then locked him in. He was removed on Saturday, the 23d of May, into the prison of the Inquisition. With this ends the free life of Bruno. Before him was a cruel captivity of eight, long years, terminating with the stake. He was sent, to Rome, January, 1593. "Never did malignant destiny," says the historian, "provide a fate so atrocious and pitiless as that which befell Bruno. His whole life had been a warfare with restriction. The limits of earth itself were too narrow for his soaring intellect. Incarceration in a dark and loathsome dungeon, for a man

whose every breath was an aspiration for freedom, whose every thought centered in her divine attributes, and whose every act was part of a life-long struggle to possess her, imparts to his lot a peculiar aspect of intense harshness and grim irony. What Bruno's trials were; how often his limbs were stretched on the rack; what other tortures, mental and physical, he was compelled to endure; what cunning and ruthless efforts were made by his jailers to break down his indomitable spirit; to crush, fully and finally, his irrepressible yearnings after freedom; to transform the Freethinker into a religious slave, we shall never know. The long duration of his imprisonment seems to imply that unusual pains were taken to convert a heresiarch whose fame was European." In 1599 Bruno was the only prisoner in charge of the Roman Inquisition whose incarceration commenced in 1593.

On Thursday, January 14, 1599, Bruno was brought before the Congregation of the Holy Office, when eight heretical propositions, extracted from his works, were placed before him for recantation. Another summer and autumn roll slowly over his head, and on Tuesday, December 21st, he is again brought before the Congregation. On this occasion Bruno said, "he neither ought, nor wished, to recant. He had nothing to recant." Thus passed 1599. Three weeks of the new year had gone by and Bruno again stood before his inquisitors. Once more Bruno refused to recant. The resolution was thereupon made that Bruno be delivered over to the secular arm. This was done on Tuesday, the 8th of February. He was brought forth to die on Thursday, the 17th of February. "The scene must have been remarkable," says the historian. "The year 1600 was a jubilee year. There were then in Rome not less than fifty cardinals. The streets were crowded with pilgrims. In every direction might be seen troops of strangers dressed in the different, costumes of their own country, wending their way from one church to another, imploring pardon for their sins. There was ringing of bells, marching of processions, singing of penitential psalms, offering of vows and prayers at different shrines from morning till night." "While it might have seemed," says Berti, "that all hearts ought to have been inclined to mercy, and attracted lovingly to the gentle redeemer of humanity, the poor philosopher of Nola, preceded and followed by crowds of people, accompanied by priests carrying crucifixes, and escorted by soldiers, was wending his way to the Campo di Fiora, to die for freedom and the rights of conscience. As the lonely thinker -- the disciple and worshiper of the infinite -- passed through the streets clothed in the san-benito, but with head erect, and haughty, fearless glance, what thoughts must have passed

through his mind. The feeling of utter isolation could not but have been felt by him. He must have found -- it was the conclusion of his intellectual career, the inevitable destiny, too often, of the single-hearted truth seeker -- that he was alone in his researches, in his passionate quest for truth.

"At length he comes to the fatal spot where the stake had been erected. He submits himself to be bound, and in a few minutes the fire blazes round the martyr. But not a word or moan escapes the firm-set lips, no expression of suffering or weakness passes across the wan and pale, but still handsome, features. One single gesture of impatience he gives way to when his tormentors thrust the crucifix before his dying gaze. Then he averted his eyes with a threatening glance.

"Bruno died. His impassioned words were like thunder bolts and lightning shafts, and his course like that of a comet. Prometheus -- like, he brought the vital flame, not only from the single sun of our own system, but, from the numberless orbs scattered through space. His perpetual warfare was with darkness and voluntary blindness. The eagles and birds of daylight were glad in his presence; the owls and bats detested him. He disappears from earth in a flame of fire, giving him new birth and eternal freedom.

"Bruno was one of those gigantic intellects, those myriad-minded men, whose multifarious erudition, eclectic methods, and many-sided sympathies, render a summary of their operations very difficult, if not impossible. Like a survey of a widely extended landscape, or an enormous building, the conspectus will only be a piecing, more or less rude and imperfect, of separate and fragmentary points of view. Employing his own illustration of the infinite powers and feelings of the human mind, we might almost say of his own intellect that its center is everywhere, its circumference nowhere. A child of the sixteenth century, his speculations comprehend and sympathies embrace methods of thought, current ancient times on the one hand, and in our own day on other. The immense range of his studies is proved by the fact that there is hardly an author, certainly not a subject known in his day, to which he does not seem to have paid attention, and on which he has not thrown some light."

Bruno did not reach the unqualified Pantheism of Spinoza. Spinoza affirmed the absolute identity of the universe with God. The universe

was God, and God was the universe. The universe was not the expression, but the very being of God himself.

Draper says: “Bruno may be considered among philosophical writers as intermediate between Averroes and Spinoza. The latter held that God and the universe are the same; that all events happen by an immutable law of nature, by an unconquerable necessity; that God is the universe, producing a series of necessary movements or acts in consequence of intrinsic, unchangeable, and irresistible energy.”

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Such was the man, Giordano Bruno, that was burned alive by the Roman Catholic Church on February 17, 1600. Bruno was an unusual man; a thinking man who sought to make the world better and freer for his fellow men. But while his mind was capable of deeper thoughts and grander conclusions than other men, he was not unusual as a martyr to the Holy Inquisition. Except for those many who were burned for heresy simply to reap the profits from their confiscated property, the rest were thinking men and women of exceptional ability. Reason and intelligence has always been the great enemy of supernatural (impossible) religion, and there is nothing that false religion hates more than thought armed with facts.

Emmett F. Fields
Bank of Wisdom