



"TRUTH BEARS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*Lucretius.*

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NO. 9.

## Giordano Bruno.

Not from without us, only from within,  
Comes or can ever come upon us  
light  
Whereby the mind keeps ever truth in  
sight.  
No truth, no strength, no comfort man  
may win,  
No grace for guidance, no release from  
sin,  
Save of his own mind's giving. Deep  
and bright  
As fire enkindled in the core of night  
Burns in the mind where once its fire has  
been.  
The light that leads and quickens  
thought, inspired  
To doubt and trust and conquer. So  
he said  
Whom Sidney, flower of England,  
lordliest head  
Of all we love, loved: but the fates re-  
quired  
A sacrifice to hate and hell, ere fame  
Should set with his in heaven Giordano's name.

Cover thine eyes and weep, O child of  
hell,  
Grey spouse of Satan, Church of  
name abhorred,  
Weep, withered harlot, with thy weep-  
ing lord.  
Now none will buy the heaven thou hast  
to sell  
At price of prostituted minds, and swell  
Thy loveless list of lovers. Fire and  
sword  
No more are thine: the steel, the  
wheel, the cord,  
The flames that rose round living limbs,  
and fell  
In lifeless ash and ember, now no more  
Approve thee godlike. Rome re-  
deemed at last  
From all the red pollution of thy past,  
Acclaims the grave, bright face that  
smiled of yore  
Even on the fire that caught it round  
and clomb  
To cast its ashes on the face of Rome.  
—[Selected.]

## The Second Stage of Free- thought: Enterprise.

BY G. J. HOLYOAKE.

"Better wild ideas than no ideas at all."—[Professor Nichol at Horsham.]

THE emancipation of the understanding from intimidation and penal restraint soon incited thinkers of enterprise to put their new powers to use. Theology being especially a forbidden subject and the greatest repressive force, inquiry into its pretensions first attracted critical attention.

In every century forlorn hopes of truth had set out to storm one or other of the ramparts of theology. Forces had been marshalled by great leaders and battle often given in the open field; and unforeseen victories are recorded, in the annals of the wars of infantine Rationalism, against the full grown powers of superstition and darkness. In every age valiant thinkers, scholars, philosophers and critics, even priests in defiance of power, ecclesiastical and civil, have, at their own peril, explored the regions of forbidden truth.

In Great Britain it was the courage of insurgent thinkers among the working class—whom no imprisonment could intimidate—who caused the right of free speech and free publicity to be finally conceded. Thus rulers came around to the conclusion of Caballero, that "tolerance is as necessary in ideas as in social relations."

As soon as opinion was known to be emancipated, men began to think who never thought before. The thinker no longer had to obtain a "Ticket of Leave" from the churches before he could inquire; he was free to investigate where he would and what he would. Power is, as a rule, never imparted or acquired in vain, and honest men felt they owed it to those who had won freedom for them that they should extend it. Thus it came to pass that independence was an inspiration to action in men of intrepid minds. Professor Tyndall, in the last words he wrote for publication, said: "I choose the nobler part of Emerson, when, after various disenchantments, he exclaims, 'I covet truth!'" On printing these words the Westminster Gazette added: "The gladness of true heroism visits the heart of him who is really competent to say this." The energies of intellectual intrepidity had doubtless been devoted to science and social progress; but as philosophers have found, down to Huxley's day, all exploration was impossible in that direction. Murchison, Brewster, Buckland and other pioneers of science were intimidated. Lyell held back his book on "The Antiquity of Man" twenty years. Tyndall, Huxley and Spencer were waiting to be heard. As Huxley has justly said, "there was no thoroughfare into the Kingdom of Nature—By Order—Moses." Hence, to examine theology, to discover whether its authority was absolute, became a necessity. It was soon seen that there was ground for skepticism. The priests resented criticism by representing the skeptic of their pretensions as being skeptical of everything, whereas they were only skeptics of clerical infallibility. They indeed did aver that branches of human knowledge, received as well established, were really open to question, in order to show that if men could not be confident of things of which they had experience, how could the churches be confident of things of which no man had experience—and which contradicted experience?

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## Our New World.

### Giordano Bruno, the Solar System, and the New Era.

An Address Delivered February 17, Era of Man 300, Before the Thought Exchange at Silvertown, Oregon, in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Burning Alive of Bruno by the Christians at Rome, February 17, 1600 (Christian Era).

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MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—The 17th of February is one of the great memorial days of the year; and this year it is especially so, from the fact that it is the 300th anniversary of the effective publication by the Christians of the true knowledge of the Solar System. For this they really made known and effective by the burning alive of Giordano Bruno, its great exponent, at Rome, on the 17th of February, "A. D. 1600". The consequences of this new astronomy, and of this consequent awful Christian murder, are now first beginning to be perceived by a larger part of the civilized world; and it is coming to be felt that this greatest discovery in astronomy, and this heroic martyrdom properly mark a New Era in the history of the human race.

It was, therefore, natural and proper that the American Secular Union, and the Freethought Association of America, as representatives of the Liberals of America, should have recommended, as they did at their last Congress in Boston, that Scientists, Liberals and Freethinkers of every kind should make a Memorial of these events by special Memorial meetings on this day. Let us, then, address ourselves to the duty of this hour.

First, we must learn why the discovery and recognition of the heliocentric astronomy will be found in its ultimate consequences to be by far the greatest event in the history of the human race. Speculations and advances towards this true theory of the world were made by ancient Pythagoras and by DeCusa and others. That is well known, and is fully stated by Profs. Draper and White.\* But the three great thinkers to whom we chiefly owe our knowledge of the new and true word are certainly Nicholas Copernicus, Giordano Bruno and Galileo;

\* See particularly White's "Warfare of Science with Theology", Vol. 1, p.122, for a most interesting statement; also Draper's "Conflict Between Religion and Science", pp. 167-177.

but of these three, Bruno was the only one who, as far as we know, not only recognized clearly the discovery, but foresaw and accepted the consequences—even unto the most awful sacrifice. The idea seems general that this discovery was made all at once, like a new device in mechanics or a combination in chemistry. Far different was its working out and confirmation. The steps were very gradual which led to that result. It was first made out that there was a great difference between the planets and the fixed stars; then that two of the planets, Mercury and Venus, did have orbits about the sun; then that the sun was very far off; then that the earth was round; then that it revolved on its axis; then how could all this be reconciled with the theory that the stars and the sun with those said two planets rotating around it, ALL daily rotated around our earth? All this now seems too absurd to state, but it took the good Copernicus about thirty years to work it out. We call him good, because such he was, as well as truly great. Born at Thorn in Prussia in 1473, he died aged 70 in 1543. By all means read up how he was a mathematician and scientist, a doctor of medicine (always giving a part of his time as such freely to the poor), and finally a member of a monastic order. As a monk in a little town in Poland he seemed protected in his great desire to philosophize freely and to publish the results of his astronomical speculations. They were delayed because they might be dangerous; but finally his great book, in Latin of course, "De Orbium Coelestium Revolutionibus", was brought to him on the day of his death. We are told that when his hand was laid upon it, he seemed to recognize it with a smile. It was well for him that he did not survive this publication, as the sad fate of his great successors would doubtless have been his. The book was dedicated to Pope, Paul III., to ensure protection, but it was forthwith condemned as contrary to the Holy Scriptures, Aristotle and the Church. It was placed upon the "Index" of books prohibited by the church, and was not omitted therefrom until 1835. Its circulation was certainly very small, and yet it is doubtful if any book has ever more profoundly affected mankind. It has been reprinted several times and copies of it may be found in our larger libraries, where it is inspected, and even read, with reverent interest. The diagrams of the