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**DISCOURSE
ON THE
RIGHT REVEREND SIMON
GABRIEL BRUT-E,**

DISCOURSE

ON THE

Right Reverend Simon Gabriel Brute, D. D.

BISHOP OF VINCENNES,

PRONOUNCED IN MT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH,

AUGUST 19th, 1839,

ON THE OCCASION OF A SOLEMN SERVICE

FOR THE REPOSE OF HIS SOUL,

BY THE

Reverend John McCaffrey,

SUPERIOR OF THE SEMINARY AND PRESIDENT OF

THE COLLEGE

OF

MT. ST. MARY'S.

EMMITSBURG:

M'CLEAN, DUPHORN AND TROXEL PRINTERS,

1839.

To the Students of Mt. St. Mary's Seminary and College:

MY DEAR FRIENDS!—

At your request I have consented to the publication of the following discourse: to you I dedicate it. You have thought it meet, that some tribute of respect to the memory of Bishop Brut-e should proceed from an institution, which he so long supported and adorned by his learning, talents and virtues. Your solicitude in this regard indicates the best feelings and is honorable to your character. My discourse was not indeed prepared with such a view. It was hastily thrown together, almost entirely in the course of a single night, for the edification of those, who attended the solemn service on the following day. Although some weeks have since elapsed, I have not found leisure to do much more than add some incidents to the imperfect sketch of Bishop Brut-e's life and assure myself, by obtaining the testimony of others, of the accuracy of all my statements.

I inscribe this discourse to you with the cheering hope, that you will always imitate the virtues, which you so much admired.

With hearty good wishes for your success in your laudable pursuits, and for your happiness in time and eternity, I am

Your affectionate friend,

JOHN McCAFFREY.

Mt. St. Mary's College, October 21st, 1839.

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A DISCOURSE.

Wisdom hath delivered from sorrow them that attend upon her. She conducted the just through the right ways, and showed him the kingdom of God and gave him the knowledge of holy things; made him honorable in labors and accomplished his labors.*

* Wisdom, Chapter X, Verses 9th and 10th.

If there is something melancholy, there is also something beautiful in the spectacle before me. You have come together in obedience to the best feelings of the heart, as well as to the voice of religion. It is in the true spirit of christian charity, that you offer up united prayers to God, in behalf of one, whose memory this congregation and this neighborhood must ever cherish and hold in veneration. For if the best endowments of mind and heart may claim our admiration; if illustrious examples of virtue and piety merit our tributes of respect; if the most active zeal and benevolence exerted in our favor demand the expression of our gratitude; then do we owe the fullest homage of our admiration, reverence and gratitude to the memory of Bishop Brut-e. But what to him now are the feeble tributes, which we may offer to his memory? Will the voice of panegyric reach his distant grave and pierce the hollow chambers of the ear, that is closed to every sound, until the Archangel's trumpet shall awaken all the dead? Will any honors we can pay him, light up a single smile on the eye, which is darkened by the cold mists of death? Ah! if Religion came not to our aid; if with her lamp of truth she did not show us, that charity stops not at the grave, and that the souls even of the friends of God may need and can be benefited by our prayers; gratitude herself would be powerless. Vain would be the tender, yet generous feelings, that swell the bursting heart, when the hand of death robs us of a friend, a benefactor, or some cherished object of the purest affections. Nothing would be left us, but useless regrets, unavailing sighs or impious murmurs against the unrelenting decrees of a mysterious Providence. But religion seeks not to stifle these irrepressible emotions. She employs and directs them. She calists the sympa-

thies of the living in behalf of the dead. She consecrates their mourning, by purifying their sorrow of its selfishness. She teaches grief to find a comforter in charity. She turns the groans of lamentation into the whispered prayers of faith and piety.

Among my hearers, there are those, who owe to the zeal of Mr. Brut-e their conversion to the Holy Catholic Church : there are many, who learned from him to walk in the paths of virtue and christian perfection : there are widows and orphans, who, in their distress, found a sure relief in his benevolence : there are the poor and humble, to whom he was always a friend and father : there are few indeed, who have not, in some way or other profited by his ardent charity, and the shining example, which he set of every christian virtue. Do they truly wish to prove their heartfelt gratitude ? Our holy faith teaches them how to do it. Let them pray for their benefactor : let them unite in the offering of the holy sacrifice for his departed spirit. While we thus endeavor to acquit ourselves of a great debt of gratitude, the image of this holy man will occupy our minds : And, as he was an instrument in the hands of God to bring us many blessings, while he lived ; so will the remembrance of his virtues be profitable to us, now that he is dead. For his bright example, however imperfectly exhibited, will not only have a tendency to soothe our sorrow for his loss ; but it cannot fail to instruct and edify us—inciting us, as I trust in God it may, to “be imitators of him, as he was of Christ.”

Simon Gabriel Brut-e was born at Rennes, in the province of Little Brittany in France, on the 20th day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-nine. His father was a gentleman of wealth and respectability, who held the office of Director of the royal domains in Brittany, and died in seventeen hundred and eighty-six. The fortunes of his family were soon scattered by the storms of the French Revolution, and his mother was reduced to the necessity of keeping a printing office and a book store for the support of her children. The first care of these virtuous parents was to bring up their son in the fear and love of God : they were equally zealous to cultivate by a proper education those native talents, which soon gave promise of a brilliant career. He acquired in boyhood and youth habits of study, or of close and patient mental application, which he retained through life. In spite of that modesty, which prevent-

ed him from ever speaking in his own praise, I could learn from a long and intimate acquaintance with him, and from the testimony of others, that, in the public schools of his native city, he was distinguished and eminently successful. His after life proved it. His mind was too rich in treasures of classic lore, too amply furnished from the armouries of science, for him to have been a dull or careless student. Whether he conversed with a friend, or lectured to a class, or heralded the message of salvation from the pulpit; the evidences of profound knowledge, as well as of remarkable genius, incessantly flashed before you. Whatever he once read or studied, he remembered. Even in the last years of his life, when his attention seemed to be absorbed in theology and the other branches of ecclesiastical learning, he recited with ease all the fables of La fontaine, entire scenes of Racine and Corneille and the finest passages of other French writers or of the Latin poets. Though less familiar with the Greek classics, he had read them with advantage as well as pleasure, and turned to good account his knowledge of their language in the study of the Greek fathers of the Church. At one time he had it in view to enter the French Polytechnic school, and, for this reason, he pursued a very extensive course of mathematical science. Subsequently he had the best opportunities in the medical school of Paris of penetrating deeply into the mysteries of Chemistry and Natural Philosophy. He improved them with his usual diligence. While he devoted himself to severer studies, he gave some share of attention to music and drawing; and in the latter of these accomplishments he attained a proficiency which in after years was a source of pleasure and advantage to himself and a means, which he often happily employed, for the purpose of interesting and instructing others. His studies were interrupted by the revolutionary troubles and he spent about two years in his mother's printing establishment, during which he learned and practised the business of a compositor. It would appear, that he was led to this, much less by inclination, than by the reverses, which his family had sustained and the dangers of the times. Accordingly we soon find him in a sphere better suited to his tastes and intellectual habits. In the year seventeen hundred and ninety-nine, the twentieth of his age, he entered the medical school of Paris, where for three years he attended the lectures of the first masters of the age. In selecting an employ-

ment for life, he was guided by a sincere desire of obeying the divine will and doing good to men, and he looked forward to the medical profession, as one, in which he might consecrate his talents and knowledge to noble and philanthropic uses. This choice made had the effect, much less of narrowing the range of his studies, than of giving them a definite aim and stimulating his exertions to the utmost. From his own particular sphere of intellectual labor, he surveyed the whole circle of the sciences; and he saw, that each reflected light on all the others, while all with uniform consent showed forth the power and majesty, the wisdom and the goodness of the "Father of lights," from whom all knowledge emanates and to whom all the glory of it should always be referred. With the ardour therefore of an enthusiastic votary of truth, he courted useful information, wherever it was to be found.

But what is most important for us and especially for the youthful portion of my auditory to observe, is this: that while he zealously devoted himself to the pursuit of knowledge, he was equally and still more zealous in the pursuit of virtue; while he prepared himself by laborious study to render service to his fellow-men, he never forgot that higher service, which he owed to God. His virtuous parents, and especially his mother,—a woman of admirable character,—a parent equally enlightened and affectionate,—had inspired his heart in childhood with sentiments of tender piety. She had built all her hopes of his usefulness and happiness on the only sure foundation of religion. She had taught him in times, which tried the souls of Christians, to be always ready to lay down his life for the faith,—to shed his blood, if necessary, for the love of God. You are aware, that France was then, by her own terrific example, teaching the world a great moral and religious lesson. Her revolutionary rulers had proscribed Christianity and made infidelity and impiety the law of the land. History has told you the horrors, that ensued. While this unhappy country was deluged with the blood of her best and noblest sons; while the cross was torn from its elevation and trampled in the dust; while churches were pillaged and desecrated and the faithful obliged, as the primitive martyrs, to meet in silence and darkness, at the risk of their lives, for the celebration of the divine mysteries; while the priests, who had not been exiled or guillotined, were hunted as wild beasts, shot down in the fields, hung to the lamp posts or reserved for the slow tortures and solemn

mockeries of judicial murder; the prisons were every where crowded with those, who were too noble-minded to conceal or abjure their faith: and these heroic sufferers were refused the consolations of religion, or could receive them only from such, as were willing to stake their lives upon the charitable mission. Simon Gabriel Brut-e, then but a boy of tender years, with a full knowledge of the risk he ran, and with his fond mother's hearty consent, was employed to convey the blessed sacrament to the prisoners in his native town of Rennes. In the disguise of a baker's boy, protected only by his innocence and premature discretion, or rather by his good angel, who fondly bore him company on such errands,—he supplied the victims of persecution, not only with that bread, which nourishes the body, but with the bread of angels—the food which gives life to the soul. He made his own first communion in the parish church of St. Germain, in 1791, and the scenes of horrible impiety and bloody persecution, which he witnessed soon afterwards, but confirmed his faith and animated his piety. He saw and shared the apprehension, the alarm, the secrecy and danger, with which God was worshipped and his mysteries dispensed to the faithful: He saw, and as we have noticed, he sympathised with heroic confessors imprisoned and exposed to death for their attachment to Religion: He saw the sanctity of the cloisture sacrilegiously invaded and helpless nuns, who had hoped to spend their days in retirement and prayer, cast out upon a heartless world by ferocious monsters, who professed to be the friends of liberty and humanity: He saw the procession of venerable priests and heard them chanting in solemn harmony the 'Miserere' and 'De profundis,' as they marched, a noble band of martyrs, from the tribunal of injustice to the place of execution: He saw numbers of innocent victims of every class led as lambs to the slaughter, because of their unwavering allegiance to the faith "once delivered to the saints." Thus familiar in his early years with the elevating spectacle of Religion triumphant over suffering and death, his soul was nerved for heroic deeds of virtue and he understood and felt in its full force the exclamation of St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? * * * * * in all these things we overcome, because of him that hath loved us." (*.) But

* Rom. C. VIII. V 35 and 37.

greater trials yet awaited him. Though trained to piety betimes and accustomed to regard religion as a pearl above all price; though even in the very morning of life he had girded himself for mortal conflict, with a courage not unworthy of the martyr's crown: yet had he need of all the deep impressions graven upon his soul, and of no ordinary strength of mind, and of a fortitude, which Heaven only could bestow, to pass with principles unshaken and piety unimpaired through the medical schools of the French Capitol. Infidelity sat on the professorial chairs, which were then indeed "the chairs of pestilence;" and impiety reigned among the licentious students, who received instruction from them. The lecturers, such men as La marck, Fourcroy and Pinel, never lost an opportunity of venting a sophism or a sneer against religion: the auditors never applauded so heartily, as when these poisoned shafts were flung amongst them. The boldest Atheism and the grossest materialism were studiously professed; and it was assumed as an established truth, that death is annihilation and that man, like the beasts of the field, having no God and no accountability, should have neither hopes nor fears beyond the grave. Yet there was a noble band of youths, who would not bow down to the idols, which impious men had erected; but, like the children of Israel in the fiery furnace, passed unscathed through the midst of the flames. "For the angel of the Lord walked with them, and the fire touched them not at all, nor troubled them, nor did them any harm." (*) Need I say, that the subject of this discourse was of their number? that he could neither be entangled in the meshes of infidel sophistry, nor driven from the profession and practice of his faith by the sneers of profligate fellow-students, nor decoyed into vice by their persuasions and example? On the contrary, he was the advocate of good morals and defender of religion, among those who scoffed both at morals and religion: he was a model of piety, where piety was most unfashionable and to a weak and coward mind would have appeared no longer respectable. His zeal for the honor of God and the interests of truth would not permit him to be always silent, when both were attacked; and with the christian portion of the medical students he entered into a plan of defence, which was ultimately attended with success. When the infidel sneer or sophism of the professor was received by others with applause,

* Daniel III, C. 50th V.

they expressed moderately but firmly their disapprobation. The ablest of their number selected for his thesis a subject allied to some great question in Natural Theology and offered a triumphant refutation of the materialism and other false but favorite theories of their teachers. The gauntlet thus boldly flung down was not taken up by the Professors, and the author of the thesis, without challenge or objection, won the highest honors. These contests at length attracted the vigilant attention of the government; and a hint thrown out in the columns of its official organ, that the First Consul, who believed religion the essential basis of society and was laboring to re-establish it, could not without displeasure learn, that it was exposed to be assailed and insulted in the public schools, had the effect of confining the lecturers to their appropriate themes. Assuredly it was by keeping a strict guard over his passions and not without the grace of God communicated through its regular channels, fervent prayer and the frequent reception of the sacraments, that this virtuous youth preserved himself from the prevalent contagion, and by a prudent but independent course, triumphed over the difficulties of his situation. He acquired therefore a rich fund of useful knowledge from the teaching of men, who, though distinguished for eminent genius and vast research, yet in the pride of their hearts would not acknowledge the supremacy of God, nor refer to him the honor of the gifts, which had been lavished on them; but he acquired none of their baleful and demoralizing scepticism. On the contrary, he saw more clearly the evidences of truth by observing how darkened and deformed the noblest minds became, when its light no longer beamed on them: "because," to repeat one of his favorite quotations from St. Paul, "when they know God, they did not glorify him as God, nor gave thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened: for professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."* He perceived better than ever, amid the dismal scenes of impiety, which he was compelled to witness, the loveliness of virtue and the beauty of holiness and the calm but sweet satisfaction of a life of Christian piety. Already then, that Wisdom, "which delivereth from sorrow them that attend upon her, conducted him through right ways, and showed him the Kingdom of God." For often in these times of trial had he raised his soul to heaven and breath-

* 1st Ep. Rom. 1st Chap. V. 21 and 22.

ed the spirit of that beautiful prayer of Solomon: "God of my fathers and Lord of mercy, * * * thy wisdom, which knoweth thy works, which then also was present, when thou madest the world and knew what was agreeable to thy eyes and what was right in thy commandments,—send her out of thy holy Heaven, and from the throne of thy majesty, that she may be with me and labor with me, that I may know what is acceptable with thee."*

How impressive should his example be to the young and ardent, but too often the unwise student. Let such remember, that he whom I propose as a model and of whom I speak with knowledge derived from long and intimate acquaintance, was not the consecrated minister of God, nor yet the secluded ecclesiastic aspiring to a place before the holy altar, at the period in his history, to which I have referred. He was living in the midst of the world, qualifying himself for a secular profession, and beset with more than the ordinary dangers of youth. Indeed there was every thing, that could seduce him from the service of God and the care of sanctifying his soul. There was the ardent and vigorous pursuit of science, with hundreds of emulous competitors: there was the bustle and the giddy dissipation of the gayest capital in the world; there was the tumult and enthusiastic excitement of Paris, while the star of Napoleon was in the ascendant, and the tidings of victory after victory flushed and almost maddened the youthful minds of France. With infidel teachers and impious and libertine fellow students, his ears tingled incessantly with the echoes of irreligious sophistry and blasphemy, while he could scarcely avert his eyes from the contagious spectacle of vice and profligacy. Yet he retained his innocence and his religion. He was virtuous, pious, exemplary. How then should they blush, who with every thing around them pointing to religion and piety, complain of the difficulties of practising their christian duties and leading virtuous lives! How little steadiness of principle or stability of character must they have! How slight the temptations, compared with those which he overcame, that are sufficient to make them traitors alike to conscience and to God! And what shall be thought of their vain pretences and excuses, when at the day of judgment such examples as his shall rise up to condemn them and put the miserable sophistry of their passions to everlasting shame!

* Wisdom, Ch. 9, V. 9 and 10.

The subject of our discourse had studied with ardour and success, and he graduated as a Doctor of Medicine in the year 1803 with the highest honors of the school. Among twelve hundred fellow students, and I know not how many competitors, the first place was accorded to him by the impartial voice of his professors. They proudly complimented and encouraged their distinguished pupil; and all his friends predicted a brilliant career in the profession, which he had chosen and the knowledge of which he had so honorably mastered. But God had ordained otherwise. Returning to his native city, he gave the benefit of his advice and attendance gratuitously to the poor of that place, while he remained there; but he never sought to establish himself in the practice of medicine. Yet he did not relinquish the profession in disgust. He always honored it, as one of the noblest, to which a highly gifted and philanthropic man can devote himself. When a priest and even when elevated to the Episcopacy, he acknowledged, on all proper occasions, his attachment to a profession, to which he still felt himself linked by many pleasing associations and by the remembrance of years of honorable study. Delightful as his conversation was to all, and to men of science in particular, it was peculiarly so to the student or to the practitioner and professor of medical science. They often expressed their astonishment, that, after the lapse of twenty or thirty years, engrossed by pursuits of a very different order, he retained so perfect and minute a knowledge of all, that he had studied in his youth, under the great masters of the French Capitol.

If then he turned his thoughts to a higher calling, it was from the purest motives and not without intimations of the divine will. His tried fidelity to his Creator in the days of his youth, his fervent prayers and ardent love of God and charity towards men, his holy eagerness to purify and strengthen and enrich his soul by frequently and worthily approaching the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist, were regarded by his heavenly father with smiles of divine complacency; and he was rewarded with a vocation to a state of greater perfection and more abundant blessings. Sensible of the awful importance of a right decision in such a case, he reflected maturely, invoked the light of heaven, took the advice of a prudent director and then, obedient to the divine voice within, he entered the Seminary of St. Sulpitius at Paris, a candidate for the holy priesthood. You have regarded

him as an example for youthful students in the world : from this moment he becomes the model of those, who belong to the Sanctuary. If he has been pious and edifying in the lively and dangerous scenes, through which he has passed, he is much more zealous for the sublime virtues of his holy vocation, in the retirement to which God has called him. If he sought, with ardour and unremitting toil, for secular knowledge, while he destined himself for a secular profession ; with still greater ardour and more unremitting toil, even with a holy enthusiasm and in the true spirit of patient, self-denying labor, does he pursue that knowledge which ought to adorn the ecclesiastical profession. It is thus only he could have acquired those immense stores of erudition, which for so many years caused him to be consulted by men of letters, by learned ecclesiastics, even by the highest dignitaries of the church in these United States, as a sort of oracle or a living library of sacred erudition. Besides those treasures of knowledge, which he bore away from his earlier studies, as the children of Israel carried the spoils of Egypt into the Holy Land ; he became intimately conversant, (more so perhaps than any other man this country has ever seen,) with the writings of the Father of the Church and the primitive sources of Ecclesiastical History. He turned his attention to the Hebrew language, in consequence of its importance in relation to the sacred scriptures, which were now his constant study. Scholastic theology he acquired thoroughly, and he grew familiar with all the great defenders and ornaments of religion in every age. Hence there were few subjects indeed, on which he was not able, when consulted, to throw a strong light, no matter what depth of research or extent of reading the understanding of them required. Now it is true, that he was always a student ; that however arduous and manifold his duties, he always found leisure to extend the circle of his acquirements ; that no man ever husbanded more carefully the precious gift of time, and none, in any walk of life, could have evinced a greater enthusiasm for knowledge : Yet assuredly, if he had not laid the foundations of his ecclesiastical learning both deep and strong, while he studied in a Seminary, he never could have reared upon them that solid and magnificent edifice, which so long commanded the admiration of all that beheld its towering height and the goodly proportions of its structure.

But we would entertain a very erroneous opinion of his occupation at this period, did we imagine, that learning, however noble or holy, was his chief pursuit. His great object, and that to which every thing else was subservient, was his sanctification. His studies were all carried on at the foot of the cross; and like St. Paul, he sought "to know nothing, but Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1) His constant care was so to discipline himself, that he might truly and perseveringly "deny himself and take up his cross and follow." (2) his meek and patient redeemer. His most ardent desire was, that "Christ might dwell by faith in his heart, and that being rooted and founded in Charity, he might be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth; to know also the charity of Christ which surpasseth all knowledge." (3) His occupation therefore was not only nor chiefly study: it was prayer: it was meditating on holy things, "a conversation in Heaven" with the Saints and the King of Saints and Angels: it was dedicating himself unreservedly to the service of God, and offering his heart with all its affections, as a holo caust on the altar of divine love. It was a constant striving to conform himself in all things to the image of Christ: it was, (for he knew well the vanity and hollowness of all pretensions to contemplative piety, not founded on humility and confirmed by self-denying practice,) it was implicit obedience to the directions of his superiors, and the prompt and willing discharge, before God and as an offering to God, of every duty, which they assigned to him.

If he catechised the children of some parish in the city, it was in the spirit of our blessed redeemer, when he said: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven;" (4) if entrusted with the cleansing and decorating of the sanctuary, he fulfilled the duty with those sentiments, which led holy David to exclaim: "How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord: Better is one day in thy house above thousands:" (5) if called upon to minister as an assistant to the priest at the altar; he felt himself honored by the sacred dignity of the office: he stood before the victim offered up to God in the holy sacrifice, as if he stood by the cross of Calvary, with Mary

1. 1st Cor. 2d C., 2d V. 2. Matthew XVI. 24. 3. Ephes. C. 3d, V. 17, 18, 19. 4. St. Matth. C. 19, V. 14. 5. Ps. 83.

Magdalen, and the beloved disciple and Mary, the Mother of Jesus; and he retired saying within himself: "How terrible is this place! this is no other but the house of God and the gate of Heaven." (1) Thus for five years did he spend his time in retirement, devoted to sacred study and pious exercises, living in a numerous community, respected and beloved alike by equals and superiors and giving an example of the humility, simplicity and obedience, which should always characterise the young ecclesiastic. Thus did he "choose to be an abject in the house of his God;" and as "the sparrow findeth herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself, where she may lay her young;" so did he find himself a home even by "thy altars, O Lord of hosts!" and there having in his heart disposed to ascend by steps, he went from virtue to virtue, (2) "having thy word for a lamp to his feet and a light to his paths;" (3) and taking "the Lord for the portion of his inheritance and of his chalice." (4) In this manner he prepared himself for the great end, at which he aimed—the worthy reception of the holy order of priesthood. He knew its sublime dignity and becoming holiness: he foresaw and armed himself against its dangers. How often he repeated to himself and to others that saying of St. Chrysostom: "the priest is another Christ." How beautifully and feelingly he developed the lessons conveyed to the clergy even more than to the laity in those words of St. Paul: "Let a man so look upon us as the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." (5) How eloquently he would describe the peculiar prerogatives and happiness of the holy and edifying priest, "the faithful dispenser,"—the true "man of God!" And with what profound feeling he would weep over that scene of sadder ruin and desolation, than any which Jeremias has lamented—the beauty of holiness departed from the sanctuary,—its lights extinguished,—its stately columns, once its strength and ornament, fallen, broken and dishonored,—stumbling-blocks to them, who would enter into the house of God! With such conceptions of the sublime dignity and awful responsibility of the sacerdotal profession, he received the ordination and entered on the duties of a minister of Christ. This took place on the feast of the most holy Trinity, in the year 1808. Remarkable events are not to be looked for in the retired

1. Gen. C. XXVIII. V. 17. 2. Ps. LXXXIII. 3. Ps. CXVIII. V. 105.

4. Ps. 15. 5. Cor. C. IV. V. I.

life of a pious ecclesiastical student. Yet an occasion arose for the exhibition of a marked trait in his character. A friend of his and former fellow-student had fallen under the suspicion of the imperial government. He was deprived of his liberty and threatened with loss of life. Deeply interested in his behalf and convinced of his innocence, Mr. Bru-te sought in vain to have his case revised. As a last resource, he prepared a memorial to the Emperor; and for want of a better opportunity to present it, he seized one, which he thought was offered him while serving mass in the imperial Chapel. When mass was ended, he flew from the sanctuary, in the hope of anticipating the Emperor, as he hastily retired by a private passage. Failing in the attempt, he flung his memorial before him; but here too he was foiled by the rapidity of Bonaparte's motions and came near being bayoneted by the gens d'armes in attendance. The imprudent boldness of the seminarian, which might indeed have been attended with serious consequences, was censured by his superiors; but the devoted fidelity of the friend was admired by all.

After his ordination, Mr. Bru-te became a member of the society of St. Sulpitius. He believed it to be the will of his heavenly master, that he should consecrate his talents to the important labor of educating aspirants to the holy ministry. He knew what great services this society had rendered to religion in France and he saw in it illustrious models of every priestly quality. Of its members he ever afterwards spoke in terms of sincere attachment and profound respect. He entertained a peculiar veneration for the superior General, the Abb-e Emery—a man, whom even Napoleon, having tried in vain to bend his inflexible integrity to his own despotic will, was compelled to admire for his conscientious firmness and unaffected piety;—and he used to say, that he had never met with any one, in whose character all the virtues were so happily blended, all the good qualities of mind and heart so well proportioned and so nicely balanced. An early proof was given of the regard in which the talents of the young priest were held. Soon after he had taken holy orders, he was offered the appointment of assistant chaplain to the Emperor. He declined the offer and, in obedience to his Bishop, repaired to the Seminary of Rennes, where he was immediately appointed Professor of Theology, an office, which he filled, with equal honor and ability until he embarked for America in the

summer of 1810, in company with Mr. Flaget, the present venerable and saintly Bishop of Bardstown. The voice of his superiors was to him the voice of God: and dearly as he loved his country, his friends, his fond relatives and that admirable mother, who first taught him to place all his hopes in heaven and loved to mark his progress from virtue to virtue and from step to step in the holy ministry, until he stood in the very presence of the "God of Gods in Sion;" still, without a moment's hesitation, he broke these cherished ties and, in the spirit of the Apostles, went forth to preach the gospel in a far off foreign land. He arrived in the United States on the 9th of August 1810 and immediately joined his brethren of the Sulpitian Society at Baltimore. He was Professor of Philosophy in St. Mary's College, until the 15th of December 1815, when he was chosen President. The College under his government advanced in reputation. Before his elevation to the presidency, he took an active part in vindicating its character and the religious belief of its professors against certain charges, brought forward by the Presbytery of Baltimore in a "Pastoral Letter" and reiterated, though not sustained, in a "Defence of the Pastoral." In a spiritual Dialogue, pregnant with wit and learning, he exposed to merited contempt the blundering misrepresentations and declamatory virulence of the assailants of St. Mary's. He proved his zeal and charity at this period by spending his vacations in missionary excursions to places, where the Catholics had not the benefit of a resident pastor. The confidence of his worthy associates was manifested by the post which they assigned him: nor was he less respected and beloved by Archbishop Carroll, whose long and honorable course of eminent services to religion and his country was now drawing to its close. Accustomed as Mr. Brut-e was to the splendor, which surrounds the high ecclesiastical dignitaries of Europe, he found something inexpressibly noble and affecting in the humble circumstances, the simple dignity of manners and apostolic labors of this venerable prelate.

In June 1818 he resigned his office in the College at Baltimore and removed to Mt. St. Mary's. From this period until his elevation to the Episcopacy, our own institution and our own neighborhood became the theatre of his talents and virtues: and here, comparatively hid from the gaze of the world, he found room for the exercise of them all. His duties were multiplied and various,

and required to discharge them well no ordinary share of zeal, industry and versatility of powers. He was confessor to the Sisters of Charity and for many years pastor of the congregation of Emmitsburg, while he frequently exercised in this congregation some of the most arduous functions of the holy ministry. In one Ecclesiastical Seminary, he lectured on sacred scripture and was professor of Theology and of Moral Philosophy. In the college, he taught at different times Natural Philosophy and various other branches. True greatness dignifies whatever sphere it moves in. His genius and learning were conspicuous, when they expatiated through the palace-halls of the Queen of Sciences,—Divinity: they were not less admirable, when they descended to the humble task of teaching youth Geography or explaining the little catechism to children. As Paul planted and Apollo watered, but God gave the increase: (1) so, having the immediate direction of the ecclesiastical students and the chief care of instructing them, he nurtured with pious solicitude and zeal the growing seminary, which the venerable Mr. Dubois had devoted all his energies to plant and rear: and the labors of both were rewarded by Heaven with abundant fruits. His cheerful piety, amiable manners and lively interest in the welfare of his pupils, were sure to win their hearts: his eminent holiness of life secured not only respect but veneration. His exhortations to virtue and piety could scarcely fail of effect; because he recommended only what he practised himself. No standard of christian or priestly excellence, to which he pointed, could appear too high; since he was himself a living instance of its attainment. If forgetful of this Earth he always pointed and allured to Heaven, he also lead the way. His piety was most tender and affectionate; and he showed clearly by his example what it is to love God with one's whole heart and whole soul and with all the powers of one's mind. In all things he was a model to those subject to his direction. His hours of sleep were few, and long before the morning's dawn he arose to converse with his God and give to him the first fruits of the day. During these early meditations, his soul, absorbed in heavenly contemplation and intimate union with its Creator, was largely visited with the refreshing dews of divine grace: and when he approached the altar and offered up the holy sacrifice, his heart, already full to overflowing, was always overpowered

I. Cor. C. III. V. 6.

by mingled emotions of reverential awe and gratitude and love, and often found relief in copious tears. He descended to the discharge of his ordinary duties ; but, like Moses, he bore the marks of converse with his God, and, as words of heavenly wisdom fell from his tongue, you could readily fancy, that his lips, like those of Isaias, had been touched by the seraph with living coals of fire from the altar. His time was all divided between prayer and labor. He loved so well "the beauty of the house of the Lord, and the place, where his glory dwelleth," (1) that he would spend whole hours kneeling before the blessed sacrament ; and eventually he made it a rule, whenever it was practicable to recite the divine office in this holy presence. Thither he would repair on returning from a long journey during the rigours of winter, and until he had satisfied this devotion, no persuasions could induce him to attend to his personal comfort ; at other times, unless he was engaged in active duties, you would find him in the midst of his splendid library, surrounded by the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the church, and whatever besides is most rare and valuable in science and literature, pursuing his devoted studies with intense application and wonderful activity of mind, or committing to paper for the benefit of others the results of his profound investigations. His recreation was but variety of labor. When his wearied mind demanded its turn of relaxation, the most arduous bodily toil succeeded : and this round of exertions mental and corporeal was kept up with an elasticity of spirits and activity of mind truly surprising. After a journey of fifty miles performed on foot in a single day, book in hand, praying and reading by turns, and scarcely stopping to take the simple refectio that nature required, he would meet his friends in the evening with a freshness of spirits and gaiety of conversation, which could not be surpassed. If as a pastor he had made an appointment, no obstacle could hinder him from keeping it. The mountain torrent swollen with wintry rains and overflowing its banks could not stop him. If other means of crossing it were not at hand, he plunged into its freezing tide and amid masses of floating ice swam to the opposite shore. No sacrifice of comfort ; or necessary repose, neither hunger nor thirst, nor summer's heats nor winter's colds could check his enthusiastic zeal or cause him to fail in punctuality to his engagement. But his charity

1. Ps. 25.

towards the poor was perhaps the most edifying trait in his character. It did not consist in merely pitying their miseries and exhorting others to relieve them. He was in the habit of visiting them in person, and in his own hands he bore the assistance which they needed and he was able to procure them,—thus literally “feeding the hungry and clothing the naked.” His benevolence was ingenious in obtaining means for its exercise. Many a time he stripped himself of garments necessary to his own comfort, to bestow them on some shivering victim of poverty. But he seemed to delight in suffering himself, that he might alleviate the sufferings of others. Ingratitude on their part but inflamed his charity the more. The bigot, who drove him from his door by day, could not prevent him from bringing clothes and provisions to his needy family by night. However careful he might be to conceal his extraordinary good works, the general tenor and spirit of his conduct could not be hidden from the young ecclesiastics, whom he taught by word and example.

As a Professor of theology, he excelled chiefly in two things— a vast erudition, which left nothing unexplored, and a singular power of generalising, which enabled him to grasp his whole subject and handle it with ease by bringing all its details under a few grand principles. In exhibiting and supporting these principles he put forth all his strength. After adducing the evidence, which his extensive reading readily furnished, elucidating it by his luminous explanations, and applying the logical tests with cautious judgment and impartial rigour, his excursive mind brought in a rich and almost gorgeous profusion of analogies and illustrations from every part of the wide domains of human knowledge. Thus qualified for the task of directing and instructing ecclesiastics, he was able to render immense services to religion. Time will not permit me to unfold the proofs of his usefulness in this regard: but there is scarcely a diocese in this country, which is not indebted, (some of them very largely indebted,) to his zeal, piety and learning and his great success in communicating his own spirit and knowledge to those whose ecclesiastical education he directed. If many worthy and highly useful missionaries have gone forth from Mt. St. Mary's, to bear the blessings of religion to those, who had them not before or were but ill-provided with them; it is under God owing in a great degree to Mr. Bru-te. If the bold assailants of our faith

have been made to repent their temerity by its able defenders, no small proportion of these issued from the school, and were armed for the defence by the learning of Bishop Bru-te. If Mt. St. Mary's has contributed more than her quota both of priests distinguished for zeal, piety and eloquence and of the Bishops, who in one portion of the church adorn the mitre by their learning, talents and virtue; who can wonder, marvel at this, who knows aught of the transcendant genius, the deep erudition, the apostolic spirit and bright example of Bishop Bru-te?

Let us turn to other spheres, in which he labored with equal devotion and similar success. He was for many years the spiritual director of the Sisters of Charity, at St. Joseph's in our vicinity, and the main auxiliary of Mr. Dubois, under whose superiorship, the sisterhood arose from the humblest beginnings to a state of prosperous maturity. It was Mr. Bru-te's arduous and responsible task to strengthen the vocation, foster the piety, enlighten and confirm the virtue and fan into a burning flame the charity both of the novices and professed Sisters. He and the venerable superior were both men of God: to God they recommended all their undertakings, trusting in him alone for success; and his grace was with them and his blessing on their labors. Look abroad and behold the fruits of their zeal in the charitable institutions, which adorn the land and avert from it the anger of Heaven. The helpless orphan has found a mother to feed and clothe and comfort its distress, and teach its infant tongue to lispen the blessed name of Jesus. The raving maniac is soothed and calmed and readily yields obedience to the sweet voice of heavenly charity. The destitute sick enter the public hospital or infirmary assured of having a tender nurse, whose soft tones shall charm away the pains of disease or cause them to be patiently borne, for the love of their suffering Saviour. When pestilence stalks through the land and friends and neighbors flee from the house of infection, and "they that were near stand afar off," (1) charity leads her humble daughters there, fearlessly to inhale the breath of contagion and to be the servants of those, who else would have none to keep them: and there are angels of mercy bending over the bedside of the dying, who, while they wipe away from the sunken brow the clammy sweat of death, fix the dimmed eye on the sign of salvation and turn its expiring glance to Heaven. Under God we are indebted—humanity,

charity, religion is in no slight degree indebted for these blessed results to the ardent zeal of Bishop Dubois and Bishop Bru-te.

Let the pious congregation of Emmitsburg tell how fruitful were the labors of their beloved pastor. Let this whole neighborhood attest the happy effects of his missionary toils, his instructions, his prayers, his unquenchable charity. Where is the poor man's cottage, that he has not entered as a messenger of peace and mercy? Who was sick and he did not visit and comfort him? Who was in want, and he did not afford him, poor though he was himself and always wished to be,—some charitable relief? What road was there so rough, what weather so inclement, what night so dark, that he would not fly on foot and alone to minister the sweet consolations of religion? Did scandals arise? How his soul burned within him, until the scandal was extinguished and the evil remedied! Were neighbors at enmity? I have seen him cowering under the fury of a winter storm, and pelted with driving sleet and snow, as he returned a considerable distance from the blessed work of reconciliation. It was the anniversary of that day, on which our Saviour died to make our peace with God. But who can recount the innumerable instances of his disinterested zeal, his burning charity, his heroic self-denial? How many of his virtuous deeds—how many acts of benevolence, now known to none but God, will be brought to light before the assembled universe on the great day, where every one shall receive his proper retribution! of his extraordinary piety and holiness I need say nothing to this congregation: for, though his was eminently “a life hidden with Christ in God,” (1) yet the flame of divine love, that glowed in his breast, was too strong and bright to be concealed; and much more than he desired, “did his light shine before men, so that seeing his good works they glorified their Father, who is in Heaven.” (2) When you beheld him at this altar offering up the spotless lamb, that takes away the sins of the world, you knew, that you beheld indeed the “man of God,” the worthy “minister of Christ” and faithful “dispenser of the mysteries of God.”—When he proclaimed to you the truths of the gospel, you were sure, that you listened to the message of Heaven. Even those, who could not understand him, because of his imperfect pronunciation of our language, often went away deeply moved and edi-

1. Col. 3.3. 2. Matth. 5, 16.

fied; although they could not account for this effect nor explain it otherwise, than by saying, that he appeared to them, not as a man, but as an angel, speaking to their souls in the name and by the authority of God. But for those, who did understand him well, what a rich spiritual repast was afforded by his eloquence—for he was eloquent in spite of his defects of idiom and pronunciation! How pleased were they to hang upon his accents! How did they love to follow the eagle flights of his genius! How soon did their faith shake off its heavy slumbers, as conscience from the deep abysses of the heart responded to his bold appeals, and the smallest spark of clarity rose into a consuming flame, and hope grew strong within them and began to fix a steady look on Heaven! And how much more eloquent in the cause of virtue than eloquence itself was the powerful pleading of his example!

Oh, my beloved brethren! if much shall be required of them to whom much is given, (1) (and we are assured of this by the oracles of divine truth,) what a fearful account shall they have to render, on whom the blessings of such a man's ministry shall have been lavished in vain! and on the other hand, to indulge a more cheering sentiment how great should be your gratitude to God, who sent his favored servant to this portion of his vineyard and left him so long among you; so that you have been in a manner brought up in faith and piety at his feet, and have looked up to him, as he moved in your midst doing good to all, not as to one of this world, but almost as to a superior being descended on a mission of mercy and love and caring only to allure and win you back to that Heaven, which he regarded and taught you to regard as your true country and your only home.

But the time arrived when this "burning and shining light" was to be placed on the golden candlestick of the Apostles. A Bishop was required for Vincennes.—one worthy to be the first occupant of a newly erected see; and the eye of the distant Father of all the Faithful, piercing the obscurity of our mountain solitude, rested on the distinguished qualifications of Mr. Bruce. I know that he would gladly have avoided this appointment. I know that he would have preferred our humble retirement to any post of honor,—I need not add of emolument, for that he ever disdained as unworthy of a priest. A splendid episcopacy he would undoubtedly have declined. But to make new sacrifices,—to

1. Luke 12, 48.

take up his lot in poverty and privation among entire strangers—to go far from whatever was dear to him on Earth,—to be an instrument in the hands of Providence for spreading the glad tidings of salvation and causing God's name to be honored in the rising West, and to use his influence in his mother country to procure missionaries and other means for carrying on the work of redemption in the land of his adoption,—this his spirit of self-denial, his zeal, his charity would not permit him to refuse. In any case it would have been a trial to his conscience to have exercised even the right of respectful remonstrance, when the visible head of Christ's church had spoken. He dared not do so, when that voice called upon him to make so many sacrifices and endure so much. He therefore bowed his head to a thorny mitre and in the fall of 1834 proceeded towards his distant diocese. He left us; but he never forgot his beloved mountain. Twice he revisited us. Twice his fond looks wandered over this cherished spot, whose very name was endeared to him by his tender devotion to the mother of God; where every object wore the charm of old familiarity, and where he had hoped to spend the quiet evening of his days, and, when his sun of life had set, to mingle his remains with those of former friends, who seemed to await him in their peaceful mountain graves. The first time he was on his return from Europe. He had stood amid the ruins and resurrection of the Eternal city: he had received the blessing of the common father of the Christian world and he had been honored with marks of his peculiar esteem and favor. With inexpressible emotions of thankfulness and joy, he had offered up the victim of salvation in the Eucharistic sacrifice on the tombs of the Apostles: He had also scanned with the eye of genius and cultivated taste the noble productions of ancient and modern art, plunged into the labyrinths of Rome's great libraries, and by the evidences of his enlightened curiosity and profound erudition, as well as of his virtuous simplicity of manners, won the admiration of the first scholars of the age,—if such men as Cardinal Angelo Mai and Cardinal Mezzofanti. At Vienna he had been ushered into palaces, courted by the great, the learned and the pious, treated with marked respect by the imperial family. He had also revisited for the last time his own "beautiful France," and there he had found himself encircled by affectionate relatives and devoted friends, honored by the noble and

powerful and admired by all:—and it was after all this—all this, which he had left without a sigh, that he returned to his beloved Mountain and left it with a sigh, that he could not again bury himself in its peaceful obscurity.

He was consecrated Bishop in the Cathedral of St. Louis on the feast of St. Simeon and St. Jude, and accompanied by the venerable Bishop of Bardstown and his former pupil, the Bishop of Cincinnati, he took possession of his Episcopal see on the fifth of November following. At Vincennes he found himself in the most trying circumstances. He was a stranger, poor and alone. He saw around him little more than the wrecks of the Catholic faith and discipline of the original settlers. Looking abroad he beheld indeed an immense field for labor; but the ground was almost unbroken. Every thing was to be commenced and all was to be effected by himself. Destitute as he was of every human means of success, he applied with courage to his allotted task, and while he freely exposed himself to “the heat and burthen of the day,” he prayed with fervor and confidence to the “Lord of the harvest, that he would send laborers into his harvest.” (1) In less than eight months he had travelled more than a thousand miles on horseback, over roads almost impracticable; had visited every part of his extensive diocese and was as familiar with the minutest circumstances regarding its missions and those of the west in general, as if the whole of his valuable life had been devoted to them exclusively. He then proceeded to Europe to procure the succours which he needed. How he was there received, you have heard; and you may still better judge from the successful issue of his visit. More than twenty missionaries accompanied him on his return: and he obtained from the charity of our Catholic brethren in the old world, considerable resources for establishing schools, building churches, founding an asylum for destitute orphans, and celebrating the holy mysteries with becoming dignity. (2) His previous residence

1. Matthew 9, 38.

2. As he crossed the Atlantic nine times, and such occasions always elicited new proofs of his characteristic virtues, I shall give the words of an eye witness of his conduct, who accompanied him on his last voyage. “Nothing could surpass his kindness and attention to all during the voyage from Europe. He had obtained a special permission from his Holiness to celebrate mass on board the vessel; but the passage was so tempestuous, that we could rarely enjoy that consolation. We had thirty days continued storm, part of the time the helm

at Vincennes, though brief, had made so favorable an impression on the minds of all, that, on his return from Europe, he was greeted by the citizens of all denominations, with every possible mark of esteem and respect. Now commenced a new series of labors. There was no station in his diocese, which he did not visit repeatedly. At home he was at once the Bishop, the pastor of the Congregation, the Professor of Theology, the father of his family, (for so he always designated his Ecclesiastics,) the benefactor of the poor, and the affectionate friend of all. In a short time he had opened a College, established at his own expense a free school, which is attended by from seventy to eighty pupils, and founded another for girls together with an orphan asylum, under the superintendance of the Sisters of Charity. In order to carry on these various schemes of beneficence and actuated by a spirit of humility and self-denial, he submitted to many privations, which his declining health could ill sustain. The Bishop, Clergy, Seminarians and scholars of the College occupied the same house, took their meals in the same refectory and in every respect constituted but one family. He reserved no privileges to himself: he would have no advantages or comforts which he could not share with all. His labors were so multifarious and burthensome, that they would scarcely be credible to those, who did not know his wonderful activity of mind and powers of endurance. In addition to the occupations, I have already mentioned, he taught Theology in his Seminary, gave lessons in French in one of his Academies, furnished a large amount of historical and antiquarian information to the literary

lashed, dead lights up and the sea breaking tremendously over the ship at every instant. We were nearly all very unwell. The good Bishop alone was calm, as when seated in his own library,—sharing all the inconveniences of a protracted voyage and bad accommodations,—neglecting himself and attending with unwearied solicitude to the wants of every one. Night and day was he beside the berths of those, whom sickness rendered incapable of assisting themselves.—Even the poor deck passengers (most of them Dutch) had a large share of his good offices. Amidst all this, he found time to write a great deal, prepared an immense quantity of matter for his European correspondence, and held from time to time the most interesting and instructive conversations on the political and religious state of America, and particularly on the field of our future labors. The most minute circumstances regarding the Western missions were familiar to him. His comprehensive mind grasped the whole at a single glance and his habits of analysis aided by a powerful memory enabled him to retain all that was valuable.”

societies of Vincennes, wrote twice a month to every priest in his diocese and maintained an extensive correspondence with almost every part of Europe and America. (1) It is but a short time since he took possession of his episcopal see. He found a single priest and but two or three churches in his diocese. He has left twenty three missionaries in it, and in every town almost, besides many stations in country places, a temple has risen or is rising up to the honor of the living God. Though his health and strength, bending at last under the excessive toils and self-denials, which all his life-long he imposed on himself, were fast declining; he visited again and again every part of this sparsely settled portion of the West. Wherever might be found a handful of the faithful, to whom he could break the bread of life, thither his zeal urged him to repair; and thither he would go alone, on horse back, in every kind of weather, a lonely wanderer through the solitude of vast prairies or deep and gloomy forests, silently communing with his God and supported by the consciousness that he was toiling and suffering for the love of his Redeemer and the everlasting welfare of his fellow men. Broken down by his malady,—a wasting consumption, and pronounced incurable, he still proceeded on these errands of mercy, “going about,” like his divine master, “doing good to all.” Wherever he went he engaged in all the duties of an ordinary pastor. To assist and console the poor laborers on the public works, he visited them in person, heard their confessions, preached and said mass in their miserable dwellings, administered the sacraments and prepared the dying for the awful passage to eternity. Difficulties that would have disheartened and obstacles which might have been called insurmountable, but animated his zeal and charity. Having commenced a journey of four hundred miles, in such a state of bodily suffering, that he could not sit upright on his horse, he nevertheless completed it, without the intermission of a single day. Shortly before his death, he left Vincennes to visit a distant mission, which he had already visited thrice within the year, and though so weak and extenua-

1. He has been known to return from a day's mission, find thirty letters on his table, and answer every one before retiring to rest. He made it a rule never to indulge a second sleep the same night; so that, if he happened to awake at one or two in the morning, he instantly arose, lit his candle, and wrote or studied till day-light.

ted, that he could scarcely support his tottering frame; in the absence of the pastor he answered three distant sick calls on the same day; and almost dying, administered the consolations of religion to those, who appeared no nearer mortal dissolution than himself. His desire was "to spend and be spent himself for souls," (1) "that he might gain them to Christ;" and his motto seemed to be those beautiful words of St. Paul: "I do not count myself to have apprehended,"—that is to have reached the goal, "but one thing I do; forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching myself forth to those which are before, I pursue towards the mark for the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus." (2) Thus, my Brethren, from the beginning to the end of his life, do we find in him the words of my text fulfilled. "Wisdom conducted the just man through the right ways, and showed him the kingdom of God, and gave him the knowledge of holy things; made him honorable in his labors and accomplished his labors." The merits of such a man cannot be summed up in a few words. It is only by borrowing the language of sacred inspiration, that we can represent his character in worthy colors. I would therefore liken him to "Simon, the high priest," "who took care of his nation" and "obtained glory in his conversation with the people;" and apply to him the splendid eulogy, which we read of that great man, in the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiasticus.

"He shone in his days, as the morning star in the midst of a cloud; and as the moon at the full, and as the sun when it shineth; so did he shine in the temple of God. And as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds, and as the flower of roses in the days of the spring; and as the lilies, that are on the brink of the water; and as the sweet-smelling frankincense in the time of summer: and as a bright fire and frankincense burning in the fire: as a massy vessel of gold adorned with every precious stone: as an olive-tree budding forth, and a cypress-tree rearing itself on high, when he put on the robe of glory and was clothed with the perfection of power. When he went up to the holy altar, he honored the vesture of holiness; and when he took the portions out of the hands of the priests, he himself stood by the altar. And about him was the ring of his brethren: and as the cedar planted on mount Libanus, and as branches of palm

1. 2 Cor. 12. 15. 2. Philip C. 3, Vs. 13 and 14.

trées, they stood round about him, and all the sons of Aaron in their glory * * * * And finishing his service on the altar, to honor the offering of the most High King, he stretched forth his hand to make a libation, and offered of the blood of the grape. * * * * Then all the people together made haste and fell down to the earth, upon their faces, to adore the Lord their God, and to pray to the Almighty God the most High. * * * * Then coming down, he lifted up his hands over all the congregation of the children of Israel, to give glory to God with his lips and to glory in his name." (1)

Death, which could be no unwelcome visiter to one whose thoughts, hopes and affections all centred in a better world, found him full-handed of good works and longing only "to be dissolved and to be with Christ." (2) Invincibly patient and resigned under the severest suffering, full of tender piety, calm, collected and brightly exhibiting his characteristic virtues to the last, he set a beautiful example of the manner, in which a Christian should prepare himself to run his final race, and win the crown of a glorious immortality. As his strength diminished, his devotion increased. He sought no alleviation for his sufferings: on the contrary he was eager still to labor and endure, in the two field-view of doing good to others and resembling more his crucified Saviour. When unable to walk or stand, he would at least sit up and write to any, whom he could hope to benefit by his correspondence; and to those around him, he would speak on pious subjects, such as the love of God, conformity to his holy will, or devotion to the Blessed Virgin, with the unction of a saint and the ardour of a scraph. But six hours before his death, he wrote with his own hand, and not without much difficulty and pain, several moving letters to persons, who had unfortunately abandoned the practice of their faith, and to whom he wished to make this dying appeal in behalf of their souls, while the portals of Eternity were closing upon him. These last precious days of his life were thus entirely taken up in works of Charity, in instructing, edifying and consoling those, who were with him, and in intimate and affectionate communion with his God, whom he hoped soon "to see face to face" and to love and enjoy forever. He preferred often to be left alone, that he might the more freely indulge his pious feelings, and for this end he

1. Ecclesiasticus C. 50. 2. Phil. 1. 22.

would allow no one to watch by him at night; until his mortal agony had begun. When his friends affectionately sought to know what they could do to relieve his sufferings, he would answer them by pointing out some passage of sacred scripture or chapter of the Following of Christ, which he desired them to read to him, or by asking them to say some prayers for his happy death. No agonies of pain could extort from him a single expression of distress. "The will of God be done"—was the constant language of his lips, as it was the abiding sentiment of his heart. When preparing to receive the holy Viaticum, he wrote to us in the true spirit of saintly humility requesting the prayers of our Seminary and of the Sisterhood and begging pardon for whatever offence or bad example he had ever given to any one at either institution. A few days before his dissolution, the strength of his naturally vigorous constitution rallied for a time, and his physician promised him at least a temporary recovery; he told the physician he was mistaken, and, whether he knew it supernaturally or otherwise, named the exact time of his approaching departure. He gave himself, the orders for preparing his grave and as calmly directed the mode of sepulture and proper rites to be observed, as if he was discharging an ordinary duty. On the morning of the day before his death, he remarked to the Clergyman, who attended him with unwearied solicitude and affection: "my dear child, I have the whole day yet to stay with you—to-morrow, with God!" To another pious friend he used these simple but expressive words, "*I am going home.*" Heaven was indeed his *home*: he had always so regarded it: there was his treasure: his heart was there: he had ever longed to be with God and "see him, as he is;" and now the door of his Father's house was opening to him, and Angels were on the wing to meet his departing spirit and conduct it to its place of rest. He was happy therefore amid the pangs and terrors of death; for he trusted that he was but going home. After having received the last sacraments, he directed the departing prayers to be recited, which he answered devoutly and fervently until the last, and then on the morning of the 26th of June, at half past one o'clock, he calmly and sweetly surrendered his soul into the hands of his Creator. Oh how "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints!" (1) How different from the last mo-

ments of the poor deluded worldling—of the sinner trembling on the confines of this life, which he is loath to quit, and of Eternity, which he justly dreads to enter. But blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith, the spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow them. (1)

His death was deplored as a general calamity. He was especially lamented by the poor, the widow and orphan. The people of Vincennes felt, that they had lost a public benefactor. His own flock both clergy and laity, bewailed, as well they might, the death of such a pastor. All with one accord mourned for the scholar, the philanthropist and the saint. Crowds of persons of every rank, and of all denominations, visited his corpse and assisted at the ceremonies of his burial. The Mayor and civil authorities and learned societies of Vincennes passed resolutions to attend his funeral. The whole population poured forth to accompany in solemn silence, his honored remains to their last resting place on earth.

Transcendant virtue never dies. The grave but gives it sacredness and invests it with a brighter halo. The true christian character acquires beauty from the touch of death. We see new charms and feel an interest surpassing what we felt before. We would wish to know the steps, by which such a man became all that he was. I have very imperfectly sketched the history of Mr. Bru-te's life: the steps or process, by which he reached so high an eminence of holiness, can, I think, be very briefly stated. He was faithful through life to every duty, obedient to every intimation of the divine will, careful to husband and make the best use of every grace, which he received. Had it been otherwise; had he yielded to the temptations, which encompassed his youth, or neglected his golden opportunities of intellectual, moral and religious improvement, or failed to "stir up the grace, which was in him;" (1) how different would have been his lot and that of innumerable souls, for whose salvation, he was a chosen instrument in the hands of God! How many, as nobly gifted as he, and destined to a career of equal beneficence, have fallen, sadly fallen from their high estate, "to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, to stand in the way of sinners and sit in the chair of pestilence." But he was that "blessed man, whose delight is in the law of God; who meditates on that holy law both day and night, and

1. Apoc. 11. 13. 2. 2d Tim. 1. 6.

who is like a tree planted by the running waters, which keeps its leaf verdant and brings forth its fruit in due season: all whatsoever he doeth, prospers." (1) It was thus, my brethren,—for hallowed words alone can describe the growth of such a character; it was thus that he became "a burning and shining light" in the church of God,—a living evidence of the beauty, holiness and truth of our religion. I speak reflectingly: for I know that his example brought many, who wandered they knew not where, into the fold of Catholic unity. By its fruits in him they knew his religion: for his virtues were the genuine offspring of his faith. He but practised what he believed and taught. As a Xavier, a Vincent of Paul, a Fenelon or a Cheverus, he lived up to the standard of his creed, and his actions but embodied its spirit. Nor, my brethren, did his faith rest on insufficient grounds. He had studied the sacred scriptures, as few men have ever studied them. He had the leisure, the knowledge, the intellectual habits, the ardour of investigation necessary to succeed in such a study. There was no day, on which he did not peruse and revolve in mind a considerable portion of the sacred volume. He had read it in the languages of the original text, as well as in the modern versions. It was a favorite occupation,—a constant delight. And he brought to this study the greatest purity and singleness of mind, together with an unusual docility of heart and the spirit of fervent prayer. You, who knew him, can attest this: his whole life is the evidence of it. With the history of Religion he was not less familiar. Day and night for nearly forty years, this was the subject of his researches and meditations. He was always surrounded by the needful documents: and the vast libraries of European Capitols had opened their treasures to his investigations. If a thorough knowledge of ancient monuments and records could aught avail in the search for truth, he did not want this means of finding it. Nor was he by any means a stranger to the arguments of those, who reject the doctrines, which he held. There is no system of religious opinions, with the writings of whose ablest defenders he was not conversant. More than once have I known him both to surprise and enlighten the zealous sectary by opening before him the works of the founder of his religious denomination, or by pointing out in his confession of faith some assertion which had before escaped his attention. If then

1. Ps. 1.

the belief of a Catholic could rest on any lower foundation than the divine authority duly exhibited; if it could be based on individual opinion, most carefully and maturely formed, by exercising faculties of mind of the highest order on all the evidence, that belongs to the subject; it might be said of Mr. Bru-te's convictions, that such was their foundation. But faith is the gift of God. Revealed truth is a sacred deposit, which its heavenly author has committed to the custody of his church, having sealed it with the marks of divinity and promised to guard it with a preserving power, against which the gates of Hell shall never prevail." (1) The result therefore of Mr. Bru-te's varied reading and immense researches, was, not the formation of any peculiar system of opinions: it was not indifference or scepticism: it was not to set his mind adrift on the ocean of uncertainty, liable "to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine." (2) But it was a firm and unshaken belief in the divine revelation or a perfect submission of his mind to the truths brought down from Heaven by the son of God and preached by his Apostles, and a devoted attachment to the authority of the church, which has preserved and transmitted them, and which for this very purpose God himself built on the rock and girded with his own infallibility, which he commissioned its pastors to teach by his authority; and with his promise of divine assistance all nations to the consummation of ages. (3) Hence when he became himself a pastor of the church, he taught "as one having authority;" not as one broaching new opinions, but as the herald of immutable truth. In the defence of his faith he would cheerfully have encountered martyrdom. To communicate its blessings to his fellow-men, he left his country, friends and family, exerted all his energies for more than thirty years, courted innumerable hardships and privations, exhausted his strength and ultimately sacrificed his life; for he died, as you have seen, a victim to his heroic charity.


He has departed; but his good works remain: he yet lives in the fruits of his labors: his services to religion in this country can never be forgotten. Bishop Bru-te is no more; but his virtues have survived: his bright example shines steadily before your view and claims your imitation. If you truly revere his memory, follow that example: if you would honor his virtues,

1. Matth. 16, 18. 2. Ephes. 4, 14. 3. Matth. 28. 10 and 20.

practice them yourselves ; if you feel gratitude for his zéal and charity, forget not his lessons ; despise not the exhortations and entreaties, which he so often addressed to you. If you would prove to him that gratitude, pray for him : even he may need your prayers ; and should he not, your charity will not go unrewarded. But, my Beloved Brethren, be careful to draw from the consideration of his life the instruction, it is calculated to convey. Learn from him how to estimate at its true value the “supernal prize, for which we run.” Learn from him, that they who are in earnest about the salvation of their souls, do not lead an idle, tepid or effeminate, much less a vitious life. Learn from him, what kind of violence the Kingdom of Heaven suffers, and who are “the violent, that bear it away.” (1) Learn from him “to deny yourselves and take up your cross and follow” your divine leader. Learn from his example to love God above all things, with your whole heart and mind and strength and your neighbour as yourself ; to be zealous for every good work, merciful to the poor, charitable to all, and to seek your own sanctification in all things, by doing every thing for the sake of God and in conformity to his holy will. It is thus, my Brethren, we are admonished by inspired wisdom to “remember our prelates, who have spoken to us the word of God ; and considering the end of their conversation, to imitate their faith :” (2) and the same inspired wisdom has assured us, that he who “feeds the flock of Christ” entrusted to him, “and takes good care thereof, not by constraint, but willingly awarding to God : not for the sake of filthy lucre, but voluntarily ; nor as domineering over the clergy, but being made a pattern of the flock from the heart ; when the Prince of pastors shall appear, shall receive a never fading crown of glory.” (3)

1. Matthew 11, 12. 2. Heb. 13. 7. 3. 1st Pet. 5. 2, 3, 4.

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DISCOURSE

ON THE

Right Reverend Simon Gabriel Brute, D. D.

BISHOP OF VINCENNES,

PRONOUNCED IN MT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH,

AUGUST 19th, 1839,

ON THE OCCASION OF A SOLEMN SERVICE

FOR THE REPOSE OF HIS SOUL,

BY THE

Reverend John McCaffrey,

SUPERIOR OF THE SEMINARY AND PRESIDENT OF

THE COLLEGE

OF

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