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A Discourse

BY THE

REV. FERGUS FERGUSON,

DALKEITH.

EDINBURGH:
ANDREW ELLIOT, PRINCES STREET.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

This discourse was delivered in the East United Presbyterian Church, Dalkeith, on Sabbath the 31st ult. The greater portion of it appeared in the *Scotsman* newspaper of the following morning; but several passages, indispensable, not only to the completion of particular parts, but to the whole structure and influence of the discourse, were not given in the *Scotsman's* report. It is now published as it was delivered. A few sentences only, not in any way essential to the end for which it was delivered, have been changed, and one or two altogether cancelled.

It is no part of the object of this discourse to vilify any one. Nor can it be justly characterized as a "trampling on the grave of one who knew and deplored, with the keenest anguish, his own sins." Those who think so, mistake the motive that led to its production. It is not a light matter to be in a position of such responsibility as to feel compelled to undertake such a task. The question here raised for calm and candid consideration is

simply this:—Should we place the life and works of a certain man in a position that is hostile to the best interests of humanity? To answer such a question we must look at the *facts* of the case. It is not mere sentiment, and far less is it scurrility, that will put down the facts of history, or the truth of God ; and in the end it will doubtless be found, that those who have consulted the interests of the living, have been also the most faithful to the memory of the dead.

February, 1869.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS COMMEMORATE

THE

BIRTHDAY OF ROBERT BURNS ?

“A good name is better than precious ointment ; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.”—ECCLESIASTES vii. 1.

A NEW form of idolatry seems about to arise in our midst—the worship of certain men of genius. In its higher form, it is the worship of mere intellect, whether accompanied with moral worth or no. In the instance to which we are about to refer, it is deification or adoration of genius, dissociated from Christian principle ; and in some of its lower forms, it passes into a glorification of debauchery. In every form, it is substantially and practically man worshipping himself, and that, in the end, becomes devil-worship. It is therefore a form of Antichrist, ingeniously adapted to an intellectual age, and as such the minister of the Gospel is bound to notice and denounce it.

Our text may appropriately stand at the head of

such a subject. It speaks of the value of a good name ; and it compares the day of one's birth with the day of his death.

Ointment is precious, especially in eastern lands, because it preserves and beautifies the life of the body. A good name is more precious, because it embalms, in beauty and fragrance, the life of the soul. The true name of a good man is his character, fame, or reputation. It is that which expresses and perpetuates his whole life. *The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.** It shall rot in spite of all the poisonous concoctions made to preserve it.

The day of a good man's death is better than the day of his birth. The day of his birth introduced him to Time ; the day of his death introduces him to Eternity. The one event is therefore greater than the other, as Eternity is greater than Time. Besides, in this case, the first is an introduction to the conflict, sorrow, and uncertainty of time ; while the second is an introduction to the peace, felicity, and security of eternity. His birth in time is rather an introduction to death ; whereas his death is but his introduction or birth to his true life. Of the two events, then, that which the more deserves to be commemorated, if we should commemorate either, is the death rather than the birth ; because it is the greater and happier event of the two. Even of Jesus Christ, we commemorate the death rather than the birth. This commemoration should

* Proverbs x. 7.

swallow up every other ; and if men only saw the signification of this festival, they would have no desire for any other.

From another point of view, it would be true of every man, as well as of the good man, that the day of death is better than the day of birth. If we entertained the opinion of the sceptic, whom Solomon sometimes represents as speaking in his books, and saying, that all life is vanity, then it would be absolutely true that death is better than life. And this is just the dismal philosophy of Burns, who teaches that "*Man was made to mourn,*" and that the only recompense he has to comfort him, in such miserable condition, is simply death. Did we accept this teaching, and insist at the same time on celebrating some point of a life so inexplicably unhappy as man's, we should select his death rather than his birth ; since, according to this philosophy, we are bound to conclude of every man, that it would have been better for him had he never been born. Indeed, there seems to be a want of common sense in celebrating any man's birthday after he is dead. We celebrate the birthday of kings and queens while they live, but not after they are dead. Also, in private life, we sometimes celebrate the birthday of friends while they are alive ; but who would think of making a rejoicing on the occasion of the birthday of a dead relative? But man was not made to mourn. He was made for glory, honour, and immortality ; and if he mourns, it is because he has made himself

to mourn. Hence the instinctive emotion of humanity is to rejoice at a birth, and to weep at a death. *There is joy when a man is born into the world,** but there are tears in the house of death—tears for those who are left behind, rather than for those who are taken away. However, what we would remark here is, that were man made to mourn, as Burns teaches his disciples, it becomes absurd in those disciples to make merry over any part of their master's life. If it were their duty to commemorate appropriately any date in that life, they should sit in sackcloth and ashes on the anniversary of the death. Had Burns been one of the greatest and best of men, and had such celebrations been in any sense right and proper, it is the anniversary of his death that should be celebrated.

Again: were we to accept the teaching of a certain popular school of literary men, we should believe that all men are to be saved at last. By these writers, mere death, whatever the character of a person at death may be,—mere death is represented as deliverance from all evil, and as the wide, unconditional door to universal purification and restoration. One of this school, who frequently writes in a way calculated to produce unbelief in a fundamental doctrine of the Word of God, viz., the doctrine of the future and eternal punishment of the wicked, informs us, that

“Hades and death
Shall vanish away like a frosty breath.”

* John xvi. 21.

If that is this author's interpretation of the passage: *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire,** it is, both in its imagery and meaning, the simple and precise opposite of what the whole chapter of Revelation, from which it is taken, plainly declares. In *The Bridge of Sighs*, an unfortunate woman who has drowned herself is thus spoken of:

“All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.”

And again:

“Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.”

That is to say, a sinner has only to die—yea, has only to consummate the guilt of a life-time with the awful act of suicide, in order to be delivered from all defilement and deformity. Strange doctrine! The wild spring of the suicide, as she plunges into the river, carries the soul into Paradise; and from the slime of the Thames one may be dragged out immaculate. All this is expressed with great apparent beauty, tenderness, and humanity; but, when properly considered, it is one of the cruellest and most inhuman of doctrines.

In keeping with this poor vein of sentimentality, is the style in which the death of Burns is spoken of by those who make merry over the date of his birth. A recent editor of the poems thus writes of Burns ‘as he lay in his last sleep’: “Mighty is the

* Rev. xx, 14.

hallowing of death to all, to him more than to most. As he lay stretched, his dark locks already streaked with unnatural gray, all unworthiness fell away from him—every stain of passion and debauch, every ignoble word, every ebullition of scorn and pride,—and left pure nobleness.” The simple meaning of this is, that sin and its consequences belong to the body alone, and not to the soul; and, consequently, although the soul has been the chief sinner, and not the body, the soul has only to pass into eternity, in order to be delivered from all sin, which is supposed to be left behind in time. There *is* a way of deliverance from all sin, and *through death*; but it is not the way by which all go, in coming simply to the termination of the present life. Those who understand the Word of God know that; and those who do not understand, or do not regard the authority of the Word of God, have no call whatsoever to tell us anything of what happens to a man at death, since they cannot know anything of the matter. A great living critic writes as follows on the miserable crisis to which Burns came, at Dumfries:—“Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns: clear poetical activity, madness, or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable; for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it; and yet Burns had an iron resolution; could he but have seen and felt, that not only his highest

glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him: and he passed, not softly, yet speedily, into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!” We speak here with sadness, and desire also to speak with reverence. It is not for us to pronounce upon the eternal condition of any person. All we can say here is, that God is righteous, and will render that which is just and merciful to every man. But, if it would be the greatest presumption in one to sit in judgment, and pronounce words of condemnation as to the final state of another, is it less presumptuous, on the part of certain literary critics, to set themselves up as independent lights on the great question of human destiny, when they give no evidence of having fully submitted themselves to the authority of God's Word, which is the only reliable and satisfactory light we have, or can have, upon the matter? What right has any man to speak of a “still country” to which all alike go, irrespective of the moral characters they have formed here? We repeat, if he does not accept the teaching of the Bible upon the subject, he knows nothing about the matter. Our master-poet in the English tongue had more wisdom than talk in the style of some of our modern critics

regarding the future state. Had he known so confidently about the "still country" to which a.l go at death, he would never have proposed the question, "To be, or not to be." When *Hamlet* stands on the brink of that abyss, sadly soliloquizing, the future is to him an "*undiscovered country*," and it is the dreams that may break the sleep of death, and "the dread of something after death," that give him pause. One thing is certain to all who accept the Word of God as their guide, and that is, that a man's moral character at death fixes his condition in eternity. '*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*'*

It is only, therefore, with the recorded life and works of Burns that any of us has anything to do. If that was a good life, then the day of his death was better than the day of his birth; and if it is dutiful or desirable to commemorate any day, the former is more appropriate than the latter.

But the question of the propriety of one day as compared with another, is subordinate to the real question, which is: In view of all that we know of Robert Burns, is it becoming in professing Christians, and is it conducive to public or private morality, to perpetuate by a regular public celebration his memory? We think there can be but one answer, and that a negative answer, to such a question. Viewed as a whole, in the outcome and sum-total of

* Rev. xxii. 11.

his earthly existence, we regard Burns as a gigantic failure; and the chief worth of his career is, that it is fitted to serve as a great and impressive warning to every age. He had the finest gifts, and he made a very poor use of them—poor, compared with the excellence of his genius. As to that—the splendour of his endowments—there is, of course, no difference of opinion. If not among the very greatest of our world-commanding intelligences, he is not very far beneath them. The reception his words have received throughout the world, and the sympathy elicited by his sad career, indisputably prove him to have been a man of extraordinary mark and significance. Had he been faithful to God, to himself, and to his position, who can tell what he might have been to the world? But he failed—failed in his work as a poet, failed in his character as a man, failed in his philosophy of life, failed in the term of his earthly existence, and failed even in gaining an adequate livelihood. We believe, therefore, that to regard such a career as a successful and commendable one, and to celebrate it accordingly with jubilation, and singing, and laughter, and other kinds of applause, is to mistake the whole meaning of it, and to make the influence of Burns still more than it has already been, a source of incalculably greater evil than good.

1. *He failed repeatedly in the path of his secular calling.* At Irvine, at Mossgiel, at Ellisland,—as a farmer, as a flax-dresser, as an exciseman. The plea cannot here be set up, that, being a man of

genius, he was incapacitated for succeeding at an ordinary calling,—being a Pegasus, he could not run in traces with common, unwinged creatures; for, if there are men of genius so ethereal and impracticable as to be unable to attend to their earthly interests, Burns was not a man of that description. He seems to have had a universal talent; and if he had duly cultivated it, could have succeeded in any path of human effort. Dugald Stewart said of him, "From his conversation, I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities." We cannot say, therefore, that Burns did not succeed in business through lack of ability. And what was the cause? It is not far to seek. It was simply his own idleness, pride, and profligacy. He failed at Irvine, because the premises took fire "while he was welcoming the New Year's morning after a Bacchanalian fashion." It was the most simple and direct way of ruining any business. At Mossiel he had to contend with sour land and bad seed; but it was his business to look after that. Commoner men have had to contend with the same, and have still made an honourable thing of life. His own father had a harder battle to fight than he, and was not altogether unsuccessful. At Ellisland his farm again went to wreck. His boast of independence at the plough-tail was now seen to be hollow. Then he fell back upon his excise-work—his last stake; and how did he manage that? While eating the bread of the Government, he was

going about scattering seditious sentiments against the Government. At one time he was a sentimental Jacobite, at another time a truculent Radical. And yet he complained that he was not promoted in the service of the Government! The strongest Government can scarcely afford to be so amiable as to promote servants of that description.

2. *His character as a man was of the worst description.* He was a *seducer*, and he gloried in it. He destroyed the character and happiness of others, and added neglect to other baseness. He was rebuked by the Church, and then he attacked the Church. He was a *drunkard*, being frequently in "scenes of swaggering riot." He was animated by a *Satanic pride*. Only think of the following, which he penned in sober earnest: "I never thought mankind very capable of anything generous; but the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh, and the civility of my plebeian brethren (who perhaps formerly eyed me askance) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species." Could there be a deeper Mephistophelean sneer at both high and low than that? And then mark what immediately follows: "I have bought a pocket copy of Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments, the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, Satan." Now, who is the Satan of Milton? He is the head of all rebellion and misery in the Universe. He is

the hater and defier of God and man. He is the proud, blaspheming archfiend, who utters such words as these, and many more of like import:—

“Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven!”

“Farewell remorse! all good to me is lost;
Evil, be thou my good.”

Burns carries Milton's Satan in his pocket that he may give it his admiring study. This may help us to understand his doctrine of independence, which showed itself in a bitter hatred of all who had been more fortunate than himself, with a heartless neglect of those who were immediately dependent upon him. The natural end of such false doctrine of independence was, that the last letter he wrote was a despairing cry for a few pounds to keep him from the horrors of a jail. Need we add after this, that, if not a blasphemer, he was *a very profane man*? He had the great impiety deliberately to compose in verse, and to hand down to others, statements attributing his errors and vices to his nature, that is, to his Maker. One's difficulty here, in the substantiation of such charges, is not the difficulty of finding sufficient evidence, but the fact that the proofs are so gross and palpable as to be unfit for quotation. He has the daring impiety, in the near prospect of death, to palliate his sins by addressing the Almighty thus:—

“Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.”

The same weak excuse is often given by transgressors for their sins. They blame every one but themselves; they blame their nature; they blame God. The unmanliness of this, as well as the impiety of it, is very deplorable. True it is, we are under temptation; but what is a man here for—what is the worth of him, if he does not make every effort to resist temptation? And this is the man we are to applaud—one who, with superior abilities, had not the common virtue to keep himself from open immorality! Again: Burns not only thought and uttered, but handed down to posterity, the following open and unqualified blasphemy:—

“I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,
By Passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.”

He was a *vain* as well as a proud man. He frequently parades the fact that he is the rustic bard. He is greatly enraged at the slightest touch of offence—he who so greatly wronged others. He came forward as the denouncer of the hypocrisy and cant of his time. These bad qualities are only too prevalent in every time, and cannot be too strongly denounced. But in order to serve the cause of truth effectually, a man requires not only to level the shafts of his wit and sarcasm

at what is false; but to show, at the same time, that he really loves and obeys the truth, and is not a canting hypocrite himself. To expose falsehood in such a way as to leave the impression that everything is hollow, and that all religious profession is a pretence, is to do incalculable mischief; and Burns did that. What is hypocrisy and cant, but to say one thing and do another; to sneer at proud men, and be as proud as Lucifer one's self; to condemn immorality in others, and excuse it in one's self; to shudder in print at seduction, and yet be a seducer; to recommend others to control their passions, and have no self-control? That was what Burns was and did. There is no greater hypocrisy or cant in this world than for a man to paint beautiful pictures of a well-spent Saturday evening, and spend his own Saturday evening in the public-house; to extol in verse the "big ha' Bible," and make his own life an outrage on the Bible; to write sweet things about love, and pretty things about heaven, and then go away personally to sprawl in the mire of obscenity; to sit down, with his legitimate wife and children beside him, to indite sentimental ditties to old and new sweet-hearts. Is there anything manly, or heroic, or beautiful, or sincere in that? The whole matter of the multifarious love-affairs of Burns is very disgusting. He seemed to think it particularly handsome in himself, that he, a great poet, should condescend to marry the woman whom every law of justice and honour compelled

him to marry; and some of his admirers seem to regard him as a phenomenon too great to be dealt with by the eternal, moral laws of God. He was uncommon, and moral law is so common-place, that it must except him. That is the sophistry of Satan, by which, it is thought, some may escape. If the consciences of multitudes were not besotted, they would revolt at once from the idea, that any kind of greatness can give a license to sin. The more force of being one has, the greater is the obligation resting upon him to use it in accordance with moral law; and the dazzling genius of Burns should no more blind us to his great inconsistency and sin, than the superb intellect of the devil should blind us to the fact that he is the enemy of God. It is an easy thing for a man of genius to write beautiful and immortal sentences about virtue, or about anything else. Having the gift, it is an enjoyment to him to use it. But if that is all, if he does nothing more than *write* about virtue, what does it matter to himself or the world? Beautiful words are nothing, if they are not related to beautiful actions; and if the author of fine sayings cannot, or will not, reduce them to practice in his own life, what right has he to expect that the world at large will do so? It is the vice of a literary age, that it is content with words rather than deeds. Hence the sentimental adulation of mere genius, dissociated from Christian principle, and manly and consistent action. Jesus Christ *did not write anything*: HE LIVED THE TRUTH. If the

present age spent less time in writing good words, and gave itself more to the honest performance of what it already knows sufficiently well, it would be an unspeakable advantage to it.

We are not here picking out mere blemishes in the biography of Burns. We are not speaking of excesses merely. We assert that his life, as recorded for us, was radically a false life. An evil principle ran through the whole of it, and that was the only unity it possessed. It is in vain to point to the fine precepts that occasionally flowed from his pen. A garment of beautiful words, even when it is woven of nothing else, will not make a wicked man a righteous man. A fair image, in the service of a foul thought, is like a jewel in a swine's snout. And a considerable number of the words of this writer are anything but beautiful or fragrant. They are simply abhorrent to all right-minded men. His admirers point to *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. Do those admirers always imitate the cotter, in closing the day or the week with a solemn service, beginning with the words:—"Let us worship God!" or do they not, in too many cases, imitate their master's practice rather than his precept, ending one week in "scenes of swaggering riot," and beginning another, not in the house of God, but in a ramble through the fields? In vindication of their hero, they point in triumph to his allusion to the "big ha' Bible;" as if the Bible were complimented, and Burns exonerated, by his making a reference to it. Here, again, it is pertinent to ask: Are the parties,

who adopt this line of defence, uniformly characterized for their knowledge of the contents of the "big ha'-Bible," or rather for their acquaintance with the interiors of public houses? These are questions worth considering.

3. *He failed in his work as a poet.* A writer already referred to, who is regarded by many as the greatest living critic in literature, thus speaks of Burns's Poems as works of art: "They seem to us no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him; brief, broken glimpses of a genius that could never show itself complete; that wanted all things for completeness—culture, leisure, true effort, nay, even length of life. His poems are, with scarcely an exception, mere occasional effusions; poured forth with little premeditation; expressing, by such means as offered, the passion, opinion, or humour of the hour. Never in one instance was it permitted him to grapple with any subject with the full collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it in the concentrated fire of his genius." "We can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of Poems: they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense; yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favour, does not appear to us, at all decisively, to come under this last category. It is not so much a poem, as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead." "The piece does

not properly cohere." "It is a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-coloured spectrum painted on ale-vapours." That is the opinion of Mr. Carlyle as to this point.

But, apart from the question of artistic finish, we may ask: What is the 'mission' of the poet? Is it not to lead men in the paths of virtue; to inspirit them by his melodious strains to wage valiantly the sore conflict of life; to stand in the van of the world, and associate his name with great ideas; to translate into song the true philosophy of life; to sing of peace rather than of war; to open the mystic imagery of the universe; in a word, to show the identity of the beautiful and the true, that men may be led to love and obey truth? But how much, or rather how little, of all this was performed by Burns? He extolled the debasing pleasures of Epicureanism. He taught men to laugh at what is shameful. He preached a doctrine of independence that ruined himself, and will as certainly ruin every one who acts upon it. He issued poetical indulgences for sin, and that is one ground of his popularity. He never rose into the region of great ideas. There can be nothing great in life without reverence, and Burns jested with the most sacred and terrible realities. Man must have a form of worship. Burns played the mountebank in the house of God. We sigh for liberty—for deliverance from the bondage of sin: Burns tells us that "Freedom and Whisky gang thegither." We require strength under affliction: Burns talks in

darker and more hesitating terms than a pagan moralist. We look for some hope in the hour of death: Burns could only make a vague reference to the goodness of God.

The usual apologies made in behalf of Burns cannot be accepted. To his defence of himself we have already referred. His genius is supposed to present some excuse for him. But that genius was either an evil force or a good force. If an evil force, there is an absolute end to all justification. If a good force, it gave him all the greater advantage over common men in the conflict with evil. The age in which he lived has been blamed. It was, as a whole, a bad, worldly, shallow age; but we are not speaking of any mere creature of circumstances. We are speaking of a man of unusual force and originality; and to condone the faults of such a man, on the ground that he was no worse, or not much worse, than the ordinary men around him,—a ground on which the weakest man can have no hope of justification,—is, to say the least, a singularly unsatisfactory way of putting the matter. It is said; "If he drank hard, it was in an age when hard drinking was fashionable." "Thousands of ordinary blockheads" drank hard. Is that any excuse for a man who was not a blockhead drinking hard? It is said: "His own age treated him harshly, and we of this time should speak kindly and respectfully of him. He was given as a great, and priceless gift to the eighteenth century, and that blind or ungrateful century made him a gauger

of ale-barrels." The simple fact is, that it was on Burns's own repeated and earnest application that he was made an exciseman. "Well, then," it is further said, "we offer no apology for his errors: let us accept the good that is in him, and reject and forget the bad." That, unfortunately, cannot be done.

"The evil that men do lives after them."

Burns lives as a whole, or not at all. From the form in which his writings, as a whole, exist, you can no more divide his influence—extracting the sweet and wholesome from the poisonous, than you can divide a principle. They have *one* influence, and that influence we believe to be evil.

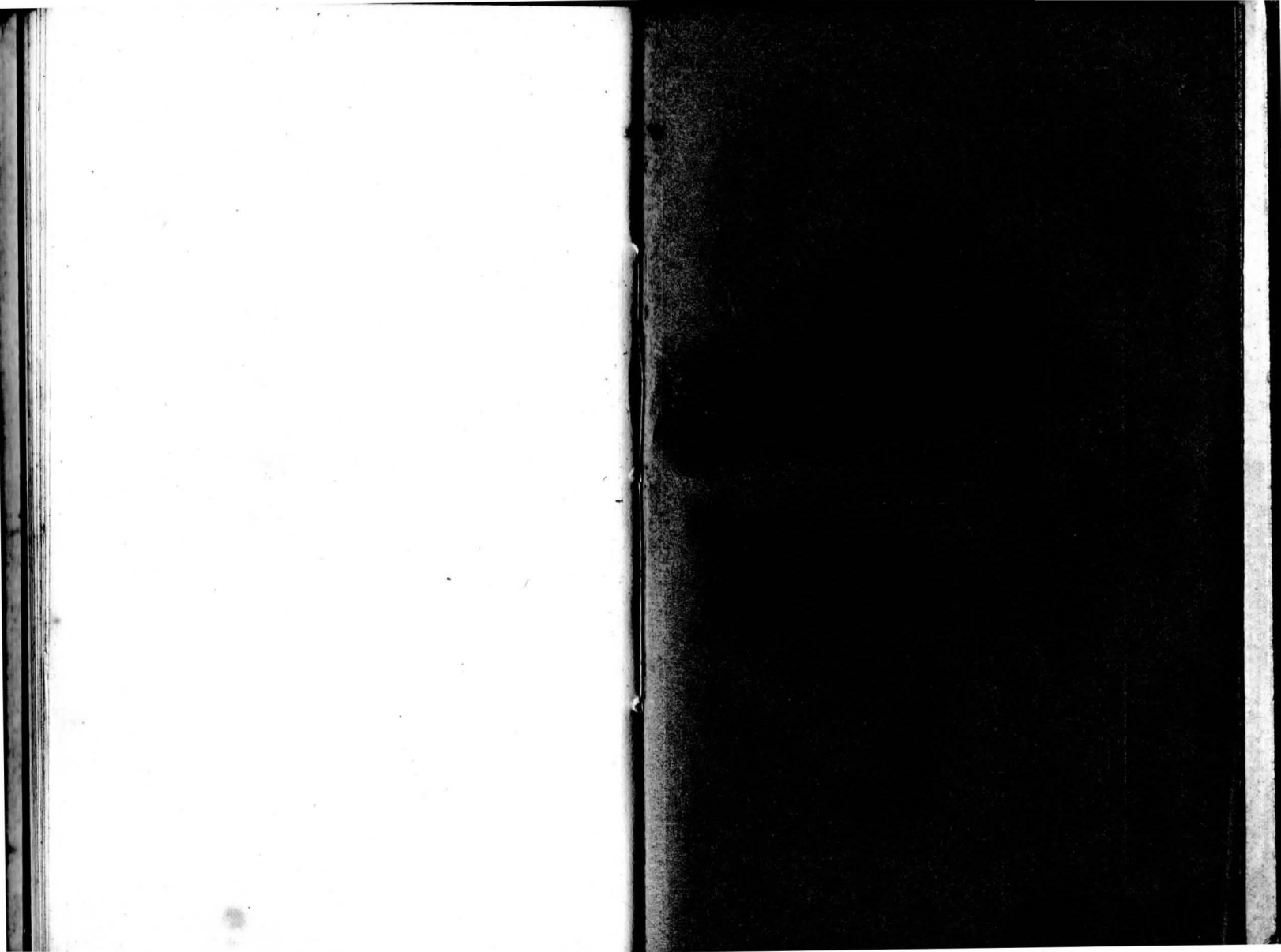
We have said enough—some will perhaps think more than enough. Is not poor Burns dead? Should we not speak of the dead with kindness and respect, whatever their errors may have been? Why not allow him to sleep? That is just what we say: Why not allow him to sleep? Why bring him to mind at all? Why continue, year after year, to feast and sing over such a baleful memory? There is a Robert Burns who is dead. The man who, in the last century, was born in Ayrshire, and buried in Dumfries-shire. With *him* we have nothing to do. But with the Burns of literature we have to do. He is not dead yet. He lives, and, judging by the present temper of the world, is likely to live for some length of time. When will he be buried? He moves up and down in the world, a great, por-

tentious influence—increasingly great, it would appear. He bulks in this century far more than in the last. "His centenary, the other year, girdled the planet as with a blaze of festal fire, and a roll of triumphal drums." If we have reason to believe that this Burns of literature, still living, and moving, and growing in our midst, is, on the whole, a power for evil, to speak of that power with a false and sentimental charity, is to perpetrate an infinite cruelty on the rising generation.

We, therefore, in our own sphere, under God, and for what it is worth, lift up a warning and protesting voice. We say to the young and thoughtless: Beware! Consider your way! An overwhelming majority can never make right that which is wrong. We see a great diabolical spirit rising up in our midst. It has laid its hand upon the mighty engines of literature, science, and art. It has entered every sphere, even the most sacred. It is the deification of mere intellect, genius, or force, apart from moral, that is, Christian principle. It dissociates genius from the grace of God, exalting the former, and casting contempt upon the latter. It praises a man in whom there is genius, without grace; and it neglects all those in whom there may be grace, but, as it thinks, no genius: although the latter character, in the true sense of the word, is *greater*, as well as better, than the former. This is clearly a spirit of great wickedness. In literature and art we see it in the works of those who subordinate truth to effect—whose

highest end is to produce a pleasing sensation. A writer of some prominence in his own walk declares, that the highest end of the novel is to please. Human love and passion, crime and woe, life and death,—all the splendours and horrors of man's destiny are used up merely as the materials for producing a pleasing picture. The leading of men to do right is no part of this aim. It is simply to please. In philosophy we see it in such a school as that of the Comtists or Positivists, who are issuing ponderous volumes of new philosophy, to teach men, that the highest wisdom is to follow the five animal senses ; that the religion of life is to worship the heroes of human history ; and that all other religions,—Christianity included,—with all metaphysics, must be thrown overboard. In science, we see it in the impudent quackery of those quidnuncs who assure us that man was originally an ape ; and that it is of far more importance to study rocks and fossils, than to study the word of the living God,—that in fact nature is everything, and the Bible nothing but an old fable. In religion, we see it in the elevation of the sensuous above the spiritual, to the extinction of the spiritual ; and in the degradation of the love of God to an affair of vestments and candles, stained windows, fine architecture, and fine music. In the fashionable life of the world at large, we see it in pride of position, pursuit of wealth, and every kind of frivolity. All these are but different forms of the one diabolical spirit ; and

they all amount to this : the worship of nature for the worship of God ; the worship of humanity for the worship of Christ ; the worship of Satan for the worship of the Holy Spirit. They are but varied forms of creature-worship, which become in the end devil-worship. Jesus Christ says : "BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM."



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