

While it is a place of rest, there is also progress and development.

“ If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye win near him.”

In regard to Hell, Burns is fairly orthodox. It is a place of uncertain company, the abode of creatures abnormal. The chief punishment does not consist in what might be administered from without, but it is the awful agony of the soul looking backward, and knowing that Hell lies in the nature of the soul itself. This causes remorse, of which he says :

“ O burning hell ! in all thy store of torments
There's not a keener lash.”

He hints at the possibility of some being too evil to find admittance here. It is hard to say just where he would place them, perhaps annihilate them or turn them like the scape-goat into the wilderness.

“ Be sure her soul is not in hell—
The de'il could ne'er abide her.”

He had no sympathy with the Hell-fire preaching of his day :

“ The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip,
To haud the wretch in order.”

Man, the poet's fellow-toiler, is a creature not of circumstances, although those play an important part, and, in many instances, overthrow man and make him the toy of their caprice, but man within himself is born to a rich inheritance, which is his if he but enter in to possess it. It is his to work out his own greatness, not merely to touch the hem of duty's garments, but regally clad in royal purple to reign as king in nature's moral kingdom. Man, although civilized, is yet tainted with the customs of the savage. As the brute beast of the field, as the savage of the forest, one rises against another to the hurt of both. The fine art of Brotherhood has not been mastered. Each thinks and strives for self without counting