

Alexander Search

PRIEST AND HANGMAN

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«Burn me that book well, hangman,
Burn it to the last leaf,
Put at the stake the apostate
Whose hand of truth was thief.

«Burn his house to the ground, man,
Starve his children and wife,
His friends disperse, dissever,
His followers put to the knife.

«His works, his books, his poems
To fire's oblivion fling;
Let ashes remain of all this.
Remains there anything?»

«Some that stand by on looking
Have tears within their eyes.»
«In the stake shall be their ending
And vain and lone their cries.»

«All's done, my lord.» — «Remaineth
There aught that was, of theirs?»
«Ashes» — «Throw them to the winds then;
Still aught of them appears?»

My lord, there still persisteth
The name they had of good.»
Trouble not; t'will be forgotten
As their ashes and their blood.»

«Nothing remaineth. — «My lord, yet
Aught can I not dispel:
Our name that will be ever
A curse and a living hell.»

We also shall be forgotten
As these shall cease to be.
What will remain then? — My lord, still
The name of Tyranny.»

«That also will remain not.»
«But the Cause of what we do,
Of this bad world will. «What thou meanest
My mind cannot construe.»

My lord, I mean 'tis useless
That all things be crushed and trod.
There will then stand out to be hated
The accursed name of God»

2-1-1908

Poesia Inglesa. Fernando Pessoa. (Organização e tradução de Luísa Freire. Prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes.) Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1995: 146.

Destinado ao volume «Death of God».