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It is a long way to travel back to the origin of a life that has now reached the maturity of over threescore years and ten, a period which covers so large a portion of the short history of this Province. The contrast between the little infant welcomed to the quiet home in Borrowstownness, and the venerable professor, whose portrait we this week present to our readers, is strange and striking.

Mr. John Burns, the father of Dr. Burns, was an officer of his Majesty's Customs, and 'a fine specimen of that sober, solid, fervent and truly patriarchal piety in which the Scottish nation and Scottish church are happily so rich.' The character thus described has not yet become merely historical. May the sons of such sires, whether in Scotland or scattered as they are all over the world, hold fast to the grave wisdom, the sturdy virtue and the heroic faith which distinguished a past generation. Mr. Burns was borne to the grave by his eight sons at the ripe age of eighty-six.

Dr. Robert Burns was born at Borrowstownness, Linlithgowshire, Scotland, in February, 1789. He was one of eight sons, three of whom besides himself became parochial ministers of the Church of Scotland, viz: the Rev. James Burns of Brechin, the Rev. William Burns of Kilsyth, and the Rev. Dr. George Burns of Corstorphine. Connected with the family are nigh a score of ministers, among whom may be mentioned the eloquent Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh, married to the eldest daughter of the late Mr. Burns of Brechin, Islay Burns, successor to Mr. McCheyne, of St. Peter's, Dundee, William C. Burns, missionary to China, and well known in Canada, both nephews of Dr. Burns, and his son Robert F. Burns, the amiable and excellent minister of St. Catherines, C.W.

Dr. Burns studied at Edinburgh, and was ordained minister of the Laigh Kirk, Paisley, formerly the parish of the celebrated Dr. Witherspoon, in July 1811. He remained pastor there for nearly thirty-four years, till March 1845, when he removed with his family to Canada. He received the degree of D.D., from the University of Glasgow, was F. R. S. E., and a member of the Antiquarian and other societies. While laboring diligently as a parochial minister, he identified himself with all the public questions which agitated his church and country. With an unwearied industry he gave much of his time to authorship. Among his works may be mentioned an elaborate volume on the *Scottish Poor Laws*, a work on the *Gairloch Heresy*, a volume on *Pluralities*, a *Life of Professor McGill of Glasgow*, and a host of smaller volumes and pamphlets. He edited *Wodrow's Church History*, in four large volumes, and collected the M.S.S. of

Wodrow and other old divines, some of which were published in connexion with the Wodrow Society. He was also for many years Secretary of the Glasgow Colonial Society, which had much to do with the planting of Presbyterianism in Canada. Brief as this sketch is, it will indicate a life of more than usual activity, energy and success, both as a pastor and as a man of letters, extending over a period of more than a quarter of a century.

Knox's Church, Toronto, which he accepted, and whither he removed in 1845. Immediately after his arrival he was elected Moderator of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. He remained pastor of Knox's Church till June, 1856, when he was appointed to the Chair in Knox's College, which he still fills. At the meeting of the Synod of the Canadian Presbyterian Church, in June last, he was again elected to the office of Moderator, which, however, he

comes to the close of a laborious career.

THE LIFE OF MAN.

Some have no other business in the world but to be born that they may be able to die; others float up and down two or three turns, and suddenly disappear, and give their place to others; and they that live upon the face of the waters are in perpetual motion, restless and uneasy, and being crushed with the great drop of a cloud, sink into flatness and a froth—the change not being great, it being hardly possible it should be more than nothing which it was before; others ride longer in the storm, it may be until seven years of vanity be expired, and then, peradventure, the sun shines hot upon their heads, and they fall into the shades below, into the cover of death and darkness of the grave to hide them. But if the bubble stands the shock of a bigger drop, and outlives the chances of a child, of a careless nurse, of drowning in a pail of water, or of being overlaid by a sleepy servant, or such little accidents, then the young man dances like a bubble empty and gay, and shines like a dove's neck, or the image of a rainbow, which hath no substance, and whose very imagery and colors are fantastical; and so he dances out the gaiety of his youth and is all the while in a storm, and endures, only because he is not knocked on the head by a drop of bigger rain, or crushed by the pressure of a load of indigested meat, or quenched by the disorder of an ill-placed humour; and to preserve a man alive in the midst of so many chances and hostilities is as great a miracle as to create him; to preserve him from rushing into nothing, and at first to draw him up from nothing, were equally the issues of an Almighty-Power. And therefore the wise men of the world have contended who shall best fit man's condition with words signifying his vanity and short abode.

Homer calls a man a *leaf*—the smallest, the weakest piece of a short-lived, unsteady plant. Pindar calls him *the dream of a shadow*. Another, *the dream of the shadow of smoke*. But James spoke by a more excellent spirit, saying, *Our life is but a vapour*, viz. drawn from the earth by a celestial influence—made of smoke, or the lighter parts of water, tossed with every wind, moved by the motion of a superior body, without virtue in itself, lifted up on high, or left below, according as it pleases the sun, its foster-father. But it is lighter yet, it is but *appearing*—a fantastic vapour, an apparition, nothing real; it is not so much as a mist, not a matter of a shower, nor substantial enough to make a cloud; for which you cannot have a word that can signify a verier nothing. Man is so vain, so unfix'd, so perishing a creature, that he cannot long last in the scene of fancy;



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Early in the year 1844, the late venerable Principal Cunningham and Dr. Burns were deputed by the Free Church of Scotland to visit the Churches in the United States and Canada. These delegates received a most hearty welcome from the American Churches, and the published letters of the late Dr. J. W. Alexander of New York, abundantly testify to the deep impression made by their sermons and addresses. Dr. Burns visited Canada, leaving Principal Cunningham in the United States; this led to his afterwards receiving a call from

declined on the ground of his health and advanced years.

Though Dr. Burns' natural strength is now somewhat impaired, he still retains great vigor both of body and mind. He has taken a leading share in the missionary efforts of the church in Canada, and has been unsparing of himself in his labors among the churches. He is remarkable for the extent of his general knowledge and for the ease and fluency with which he communicates it. We trust that the evening of a life of unwonted energy and activity may be calm and peaceful, as