

science, and common sense. He also believes that the scriptures, when properly interpreted in the light of their own claims, will forever maintain their place above all merely human productions. He claims that subscription to creeds is not merely useless, but positively injurious when it covers more than the essentials of Christianity. The unity of the spirit is not uniformity of belief, nor a similarity of explanation. In 1882 he was tried by the London conference for holding views contrary to the teaching of the Methodist Church on (1) the scriptures, (2) the atonement, and (3) the future. The supposed heresy was found in a letter of sympathy written by Rev. Dr. Burns to his old friend, Rev. Dr. Thomas, of Chicago, and published in the Chicago papers. He defended his position, and showed that his views were not merely biblical, but also in full harmony with the leaders of thought and public teachers in Methodist universities. He was almost unanimously acquitted on all the charges, separately and conjoined. Touching the trial and its result, the *Christian Guardian*, edited by the Rev. Dr. Dewart, a born controversialist, said: "The acquittal of Dr. Burns was not a result of any special pleading or explaining away of his words on his part. He stated his views, and defended them in a manly and candid manner. There was no attempt to shirk the responsibility of his written or spoken words. We are glad the matter has ended as it has done. We never had any doubt that Dr. Burns was in everything essential soundly Methodist, though he is an independent thinker, and expresses himself with more than ordinary freedom of language." Since then he has been very busy conducting the college, delivering addresses, lecturing (upon faith and free thought), preaching at anniversaries, and writing articles for magazines, papers, etc. He is a reformer in politics, opposed to an irresponsible house of lords, or senate, is a free trader, and believes that government should legislate for a more equitable division of the fruits of labour among the working classes—that nothing else can save us from communism. He takes a deep interest in missionary work, and has written several radical articles on the subject. He has endeavoured to make the college not merely a school for the so-called accomplishments, but a place where the solid studies of a university course could be obtained; and he is gratified to find that a large percentage of his students are in the regular college course preparing for gradu-

ation. Both as a man and a theologian Dr. Burns is highly esteemed by his brother ministers, and his liberal and enlightened policy has won for him many warm friends, both within the pale of the church and outside of it. He was married on the 15th of June, 1863, to Sarah Andrews, of Devonshire, England. The union has been a most happy one. Mrs. Burns is pre-eminently adapted to aid in his present work; indeed she does more in college management now than he does himself. He has four children—two sons and two daughters.

Cowan, James, Hardware Merchant, London, Ont., was born at Dalry, County of Kirkcudbright, Scotland, on the 14th January, 1832. He is a son of John Cowan and Margaret, whose maiden name was Carson. John Cowan was a merchant in Dalry, and died at the age of forty-eight; and the mother died when in her forty-first year. Eleven children were left, nine sons and two daughters, the subject of this sketch being the seventh son in succession. He had only reached his seventh year when his parents died; and before fifteen summers passed over him he left home to learn the business of an ironmonger. His education consisted in what he obtained at the schools of his native place before he set forth to learn his profession. He served five years as an apprentice and two years as foreman, with A. Dobie, ironmonger and jeweller, Castle Douglas, Scotland. Leaving there in May, 1853, he went to Durham, England, where he tarried for three months with Mr. Marshall, ironmonger and cooper. In August, 1853, he proceeded to Dewsbury, Yorkshire, remaining there for six months as clerk with John Smith, ironmonger and nail manufacturer. In May, 1854, he started off for Liverpool, to manage a hardware business for Mrs. Lightfoot, whose husband had died, her business being somewhat embarrassed. He left for home in August of the same year, married Elspeth Wells on September 1st, and sailed from Liverpool on the ship *West Point*, on September 22nd, arriving at New York on 22nd October, 1854. The ship had cholera on board, and twenty passengers and four seamen died of the terrible disease. Mr. Cowan obtained employment with Messrs. Windle & Co., on Maiden Lane, for about two months, and afterwards for a short time in a carpet store in Brooklyn. In May, 1855, he departed for Canada, and was three months with John Bain, hardware merchant in Hamilton, Canada West. On