MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. WM. C. BURNS, M.A.,

MISSIONARY TO CHINA

FROM THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY THE

REV. ISLAY BURNS, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY,

FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

“Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions (or hardships), do the work of an evangelist, make  
full proof of thy ministry.”—2 Tim. iv. 5.

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PREFACE.

THEdifficulty I anticipated in writing the Biography of one so nearly related to me was very soon for­gotten as I proceeded with my task, and felt more and more deeply how utterly insignificant are all such earthly ties, in presence of the higher relations of that eternal kingdom in which my lamented Brother so entirely lived. If, while he was still with us, it was possible for those most closely connected with him in some measure to know him “after the flesh,” one instantly felt so soon as he had passed within the veil that henceforth we could know him so no more.

The materials from which the narrative has been drawn are—1st, My own personal recollections and those of other intimate friends; 2d, Private letters addressed chiefly to members of his own family; and 3d, Copious journals, extending over the whole period of his home ministry, and continued, though in a briefer and more fragmentary manner, during the early years of his residence in China. From these last I have quoted very largely, but not more so I believe than those who are really interested in his work would wish me to have done. Indeed, the difficulty often was merely to *extract* from a docu­ment, which many readers doubtless would have wished to possess entire.

To the many friends to whom I have been in­debted for valuable materials, I have made acknow­ledgment in the course of the work at the places where their communications have been used; but I would here specially mention the names of the late Rev. Dr. Burns, of Toronto, who contributed the tenth chapter; the Rev. Duncan M‘Gregor, M.A., of Dun­dee, and the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick, of Dublin, who furnished the graphic sketches of my Brother's labours in Edinburgh and Dublin; and the Rev. Carstairs Douglas, M.A., of Amoy, to whose loving and painstaking endeavours I am indebted for almost all the precious memorials from China which enrich the closing chapters.

My single aim has been to present a true and life-like picture of him whose footsteps I had un­dertaken to trace; and that thus being dead he may yet speak, just as he spoke while he was with us, to the praise of that divine grace which he so greatly magnified, and by which alone, as he so profoundly felt, he was what he was.

FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW,  
*December 6th, 1869.*

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