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ART. I.—THE THREE IDEAS.

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EVER since the time of Plato, at least, the three so-called ideas of the True, the Beautiful, the Good, have found free expression in the literature of the civilized world. The language of common life, as well as that of the schools, has recognized them, and has stamped them with its richest, best, most significant characters. No terms in any language speak more expressively to the intelligence and the feelings of men than those which denote these ideas.

That these terms in universal language are not meaningless symbols, denoting mere zeros of thought or phantoms of fancy, that they are on the contrary signs of actual verities, not a doubt seems to have arisen. The recognition and acceptance of the ideas as such verities have been unhesitating as they have been universal.

That these ideas, further, stand in some vital relationship to one another has also been accepted with a kind of spontaneous, instinctive faith. Universally has it been believed that the perfectly good must be in beauty and according to truth; that pure beauty must be in like conformity to truth and goodness; and that the true must of its own native tendency go forth in beauty and also be a blessing. In some respects it has been supposed they must be one and the same, while yet in some other respects they must be diverse; although the precise character of this identity and diversity may have escaped recogni-

on a boundless scale. This, however, does none the less leave man's interpositions to be natural; God's the alone supernatural.

Our final estimate of this volume is that it is characterized by a vigor, originality, and boldness, not always the result of blindness, which if they often run into extravagance, often also present searching, fresh, suggestive views of the subjects discussed, which may be profitably studied. But it should be read with that judicial discrimination which goes like a magnet through a mixture of sand and iron-filings. We do not think the author's classifications and subdivisions even to the "forty-sixth fact of consciousness" will help us much. But we think that the work, with all drawbacks, has decided power, and we rejoice in the main results reached, of a true dualism between mind and matter, man and God, God and nature; in the normal authority he, whether consistently or not, ascribes to the word of God, and in his strong assertion of the fundamental Christian and Evangelical doctrines.

While we would concede all reasonable liberty in introducing new words, demanded by the necessities of growth in thought, we think our author has carried it beyond reasonable bounds, and especially has deformed his work with formidable vocables ending in *ness*, such as *desirefulness*, *aspiringness*, *excellentsness*, *sensationalness*, etc.

ART. X.—NOTICE OF DR. BURNS BY DR. MCCOSH.

LIFE AND TIMES OF REV. R. BURNS, D.D., Toronto, by Rev. R. F. Burns, D.D., Montreal.

I am not sure that any man of his age left a more valuable legacy to the Church of Scotland than John Burns, Surveyor of Customs at Borrowstounness in West Lothian, who devoted four sons to the ministry: James Burns of Brechin, William Burns of Kilsyth, George Burns of Corstorphine, and Robert Burns of Paisley; and reared two daughters worthy of the brothers, Mrs. Provost Guthrie of Brechin, and Mrs. Professor Briggs of St. Andrews. The best known of this family was Dr. Robert Burns, first of Paisley and then of Canada. Like "Old Mortality" he renewed the memorial of many an old Scotch worthy, who was disappearing from the view of his countrymen; and not a few will rejoice that he has left a son who has raised this tombstone over his father's grave in the shape of a lively and candid biography. The work begins with an autobiography, containing sketches of some of the eminent men he

met with in his early public life. Had he lived to complete it, it would have contained a series of portraits of the men of action in the religious world of Scotland, during the past eventful age. The remainder of the volume is by Dr. Burns' son, and is particularly valuable for the account of the religious condition of Canada.

He was born in 1789, and died at Toronto in 1869. At this moment I have a picture before my mind's eye of the man and of his ways. He was middle-sized, stout, but not fat or flabby, active in all his movements, and with an open, somewhat Luther like countenance. "His general bearing was genial and kind. He loved story telling; his fund of anecdotes was inexhaustible. An overflowing treasury of incidents and illustrations with first rate conversational powers, made him the best of the company. The puckering of the lips, the sparkling of the eyes, and the wreathing of his countenance with smiles, would be the precursor of some happy hit." His conversation was particularly felicitous when he related anecdotes of the famous men of the Church of Scotland, whom he had met with in his early years, or heard of in the ages preceding.

He was too busily employed in active work to become a man of erudition, but he had extensive reading and knowledge in a certain line for which he had a strong predilection. He was well acquainted with Church history generally, but especially with the history of the Church of his fathers. He unkennelled out of dust and cobwebs sixty volumes of Wodrow's letters and became editor of Wodrow's History, both of which throw great light on the state of Scotland in the 17th and early part of the 18th century. His memory, as his friend Dr. Guthrie remarked, was a perfect miracle both as to its fulness and accuracy. But he was particularly distinguished for his extraordinary energy and activity. I remember that on one occasion when I staid all night with him in Dr. Guthrie's, for whom we had been preaching, I found in the morning when I came down at the usual hour to breakfast that he was there, but had been out two hours previously attending a committee meeting of a benevolent society, and visiting the house of a poor woman burdened with special affliction.

I admit that Dr. Burns was at times imprudent; but so I suppose was also Elijah when he opposed Jezebel, and the Baptist when he denounced Herodias, and John Knox when he set himself against the wiles of Mary Queen of Scots. He was not of those evangelicals who deplore so terribly the evils of a past age or in a distant part of the world, but who have never a word to utter against the sins that appear in their own church and congregation. He was ever ready to face the evil before him, and this whatever odium it might cost him. He belonged to that type of Scotch character of which the archetype was John Knox, "One who

feared not the face of man." On occasions he did rash deeds and uttered inconsiderate expressions. But he was not vindictive even at the moment, and was never known to be revengeful. A shallow youth, desiring to annoy him by unearthing a buried controversy, asked him if he would let him have a copy of a long forgotten pamphlet which he had issued during the heat of it—he replied, "No, but I once published a discourse on young men be *sober minded* and if you come across a copy I would advise you to study it."

At the early age of 22 he was settled as minister at Paisley, in the church of the famous Wotherspoon. As a preacher he was not refined nor recherché, but was clear, manly, full of historical knowledge and Scripture quotation, with pointed application, all founded on sound old doctrine, which I confess I much prefer to the New England essay exposition, without heads or particulars, of the individual man's own cogitations, of which, and it is a significant fact, both New York and Boston are becoming sick. As a parish minister he had much to do with the poor, and took an active part in the steps which were used to elevate them. His eager nature and his burning desire to bring up the Church of Scotland to its ancient standard, led him to engage deeply in the ecclesiastical controversies that arose. He vigorously opposed Pluralities, that is, the system of allowing ministers to become professors, and, at the same time, to continue to draw the stipend of their parishes of which they still professed to take the pastoral oversight. But he was particularly zealous in his efforts to deliver Scotland from the blighting influence of *moderatism*, and to secure to the Christian people their ancient privileges. The memoir at this point brings us in connection with the great men of Scotland during one of the most memorable periods in the history of that country.

He joined heartily with the lion-hearted Dr. Andrew Thomson, of Edinburgh, and the sagacious Dr. McCrie, in seeking the abolition of Patronage in the Church of Scotland. He cherished the idea that the old church might keep her endowments and yet be free from all secular control. As a compromise Lord Moncrieff and others, in 1834, proposed not to abolish but to limit Patronage and preserve the independence of the church, and Chalmers was led to join this movement. Dr. Burns was never sure of the middle course, but was quite willing to give the Veto Act (so it was called, because it gave a veto to the people to be sanctioned by the ecclesiastical judicatories) a fair trial. In looking back on that struggle in which I began at that time to take an interest, I feel (as I felt at the time) that the bolder course which openly attacked Patronage would have been the wiser course, because the only one which would have rallied around it the people of Scotland,

both those who revered the past, and those who, looking to the future, were at that time insisting on the passage of the Reform Bill. But I am now satisfied that neither the bolder nor the more cautious course could in any circumstances have secured the expected end. The very considerations which led statesmen to look with favor on an Established Church as an engine of government, led them to look with jealousy on a free church, with its zeal and independence. Besides, I have grave doubts whether popular election would always be safe in the hands of parishoners—all of whom would become church members whether pious or no',—who had not to pay for the support of the ministers elected. It is certain that these noble men, Chalmers, and Candlish, and Cunningham, and Buchanan, and Guthrie, were led by a way they knew not to a better issue than they contemplated.

Burns' visit to the United States to raise funds for the Free Church is still remembered—especially his visit to Princeton. He came there along with Dr. Cunningham. How we should have liked to be present at the interview of these two great men, who so drew to each other, Dr. Hodge and Dr. Cunningham; so like each other in the simple grandeur of their character, in their massive intellectual powers, their profound erudition and their comprehensive theological convictions. But we have at present to do with Dr. Burns. He arrived at the time when the great temperance agitation was at its height. The people of Princeton were curious to know what the distinguished stranger thought of their country. He said to them that there were some things about them which he liked, but told them that they kept abominable brandy, as he found on taking a glass at a railway station!! It may be interesting to mention that he changed his views and his practice soon after, and in Canada became an ardent supporter of the Temperance Reformation. I believe he did a still more imprudent act. At the table of a high-class lady in Virginia he talked against the iniquity of slavery in the presence of the ebony waiters, who showed their white teeth as they giggled approvingly. There is a story told of Dr. Cunningham breaking up an engagement in New York to hasten to help Dr. Burns out of his difficulties. When I heard this I confess I was impressed with the courage of the one man more than with the wisdom of the other, who, on coming home, found every paving stone in Edinburgh scribbled over by the boys of the city with the words, "send back the money."

He was an eminent instance of the benefit arising from a man concentrating his energies on a single point. From an early date he was led to feel a deep interest in the British Colonies, and was Secretary to a Glasgow Society which sent out ministers to them. There was a

general rejoicing when he was induced, in 1845, to remove to Canada, where he became pastor of Knox's Church, Toronto, and professor in the theological college there. As a teacher he was brimful of historical knowledge, and clear in his enunciations of divine truth. But he did most good by his periodical visits to the churches. In his tours he would have preached three or four times a day at stations many miles apart. Many a poor widow yet lives to bless God because he brought the gospel to her and her sons and daughters in those remote woods. It will be written in the history of many a congregation that it was founded on the occasion of a visit paid by this burly Scotchman, who gathered around him the scattered Presbyterian families, who were then a seed, but have now become a mighty tree, scattering seed of their own.

The Canadian ministers will entertain you the whole of their longest winter nights with stories of his rashnesses in his missionary tours and in his discussion of public questions. But he did more good in Canada by his eagerness than any twenty of their wise men did by their prudence. While such men were sitting cozily by their stoves, Dr. Burns was out in the snows of Canada when no other living creature was abroad but the wild animals, and on one occasion he was in danger of being shot by a farmer as he looked out from his door into the drift and saw a grizzly snow-clad figure before him and concluded it was a bear. They tell an awful anecdote of his speaking out rather plainly to the dignified representative of royalty, whom they honor in Canada. But he was such a man as the present President of the United States would have liked to listen to, all the more that as he did so, and felt the sincerity of the speaker, he would not have been himself required to say much. I believe the present Governor (the noblest of all their governors) of the Dominion would have rejoiced to hear him speak so knowingly and feelingly of the state of the country in which His Excellency feels so deep an interest.

Quite as much as any man of his age, he helped to make the Presbyterian church in Canada what it is, the largest Protestant church in the Dominion. The various scattered members of that church are now happily joined in one organization. I should like to see that one organization brought into closer relationship with the Presbyterian church or Presbyterian churches of the United States, say by a Pan Presbyterian council or otherwise. I am not sure that you can find any where in the world a more intelligent and industrious class of farmers than in Upper Canada, men fitted both to face the cold of their winters, and to draw forth the fertility of their soil in summer. Let them, as they converse in their families and social gatherings, in the long winter nights, give the due meed of merit to the Presbyterianism and education which have made them and

their children what they are; and let them hand down to the generation following, the names of the devoted men who set up the means of salvation, and of intellectual and moral elevation among them.

J. McC.

ART. XI.—NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS.

It is worth while to notice the movements and discussions on these subjects, in bodies most closely affiliated with us, especially as those are not wanting among ourselves who feel that the degree of authority and minuteness, to say nothing of supposed needful modifications of some expressions, in our own standards, call for consideration. Our Assembly, at Detroit, was advised by the delegates of the established Church of Scotland, that this is a question of growing urgency in that body, in which the terms of subscription are more rigid than with us. We have elsewhere called attention to the able article on the subject by Prof. Blaikie in the last No. of the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*. And we quite agree with him that the true solution of the problem is that reached by our Church; that the assent required should not be to all and singular the words and phrases of that extended and minute formula, but to the "system of doctrine contained" in it as being that contained in the Word of God. That system is the Calvinistic system in some one or other of its modifications.

This subject has been much and long agitated among our Congregational brethren, who finally gave a formal, (they will hardly permit us to say, authoritative,) expression of their views, in the so-called "Doctrinal Basis" of the Oberlin Council. This too, or rather the right interpretation of it, has been the subject of earnest discussion among them. Among the ablest papers we have seen in regard to it is an article by Dr. W. W. Patton, editor of the *Advance*, in the *New Englander* for April, 1872.

He successfully defends the broad construction of that platform, which repudiates the authority of the old standards formerly embraced by the denomination and substitutes no other in their stead, except what it calls an "interpretation" of Scripture "in substantial accordance with the great doctrines of the Christian faith commonly called evangelical." The vagueness and incertitude of such a rule are obvious. What is an evangel to one sort is something else to another. In the practical application of this test, and in the absence of any definition of