

WILLIAM C BURNS



SCOTLAND: CROSS of St. ANDREW



ENGLAND: CROSS of ST. GEORGE



SINGAPORE



MALAYSIA

GRANDFATHER
of
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIANS

by

Timothy Tow

WILLIAM C BURNS

1815 - 1868

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of
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INTRODUCTION

My maternal great grandfather, Tan Khai-Lin, also known as Tan Su-Chuan, was born in 1838 into the family of a Manchu mandarin in the prefectural city of Chaon-chow-foo. He lost his father at an early age, and grew up under the tutelage of his widowed mother. A good student, he became a lover of books and calligraphy. He was a model of a filial son with a gentle disposition.

In 1859 when he was 21 years of age, he came from the inland capital to Swatow (Santou) the coastal city to look for a job. As he passed by the Mission Hall at Seng Peng Street where Rev George Smith the missionary was preaching, he was gripped by the Word. Seeing how gladly such an intelligent and cultured young man had drunk in the Gospel, the missionary invited him to stay. After several days of further inquiry into the Truth, Tan returned to his hometown. When he declared to his mother the joy of his newfound faith, she became deeply distressed. However, Su-Chuan prevailed upon her with the Truth. Thus, he was permitted to make the trip to Swatow again. Having been fully catechised he was baptised the same year, the first convert of the English Presbyterian Mission. (His mother followed suit after three years.)

Attached to the Mission Hall at this time was a clinic. When the clinic was shifted out some years later, the premises were converted into a school for the training of preachers. This training school began with an enrolment of four students. Tan Su-Chuan who all these years had understudied the missionaries tutored the students. He was elected elder and appointed to the pulpit of the First Church in Swatow. He served also several other churches such as were in the Kit-Yang — Poo-Sua circuit.



*Rev Tan Khai-lin
(Su-Chuan)
the author's Great grandfather
1838 - 1893*

