

REV. DR. DUNCAN

All Canadian Presbyterians in general and Montreal Presbyterians in particular who take a serious interest in the life of the Church will hear with regret of the death of the Rev. George Duncan M.A.; D.D. to shake the dust of his native land from his feet; also the past rabip of the Presbyterian Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in order to be received as minister of the historic parish kirk of Govan in Scotland. And verily what is our loss is Govan's gain for the Rev. Dr. Duncan has endeared himself to all classes of this community and more especially will his loss be the keener felt by the members and adherents of that church where he has labored so loyally and long on Dorchester street. It was little wonder therefore that at a meeting of the Presbytery of Montreal held in extraordinary session; his confreres were grieved by the news of his decision to go to Scotland and passed a resolution recording his resignation with regret.

During his stay in Montreal Dr. Duncan has proved himself a distinguished divine rich in wisdom and experience; a link with

the past and the intellectual movement of this century. He is a rare combination of scholar; man of letters and pastor. He was early in his career distinguished by his historical and literary abilities even before he entered the work of the Presbyterian Church. A great Canadian; a great Christian gentleman; great scholar and philanthropist—and through it all with a fine sense of the value of subtleties. Dr. Duncan leaves a niche in Presbyterian history of this city that it will be difficult to fill.

This distinguished Canadian divine is the son of the late Rev. Thomas Duncan; D.D. of St. James' Charlottetown; P.E.I. and later of St. Andrew's; Halifax; N.S. He was educated at Daniel Stewart's College; Edinburgh; Glasgow High School and the University of Glasgow; at the latter place pursuing his studies under the following distinguished scholars: Prof. K.C. Jebb later of Cambridge; Edward Caird later of Balliol; Lord Kelvin; John Veitch; George Ramsay and John Nicoll—a galaxy of scholars surely. And the learned Dr. Duncan made good use of his opportunities by the capture of all the prizes and scholarships worth while. Amongst his multitudinous successes he secured his M.A. with classical and higher philosophy honors; he was first prizeman in every class—Divinity; Church History; Biblical Criticism and Hebrew. He was first in the B.A. degree examination; Fellow of Theology—blue ribbon of college—won the Rae Wilson gold medal twice and he is noted in this latter connection that this unique distinction was in open competition with the students of all the four universities in Scotland. Subsequently he became principal John Caird examiner; was assistant to Professor Storey in church history and to Professor Hastie in divinity for a year during which he had wonderful opportunities of extending his own research work though not content with that he took a further twelve months term at the University of Jena; Germany. While at college this ambitious student dabbled in writing and was editor of the university magazine in conjunction with Sir Robert Horne; ex-Chancellor of the British Exchequer. Dr. Duncan acted as president; also of the Students' Settlement in the slums of Glasgow; where fourteen of his colleagues undertook this highly praiseworthy social welfare work. He was given the degree of F.S.A. for antiquarian research work; and holds a list of distinctions. In the year 1897 he began his ministerial duties with the pastorate of the smallest parish in Scotland—Glendowon; Perthshire; although this was in many ways a blessing; allowing the learned divine ample time for reading and writing. Amongst the friendships he made at this time were those of Lord Haldane; Lord Rosebery; Lord Arthur Balfour and the Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith—a formidable list; as the years have proved; of distinguished sons of Empire. In 1900 Dr. Duncan migrated to the parish of Glencairn and Dumfriesshire. Glencairn was and

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a very large parish with two churches and four chapels in the lens. Many distinguished men frequented Glencairn including the Bishop of London—Dr. Winnington Ingram; Archbishop of York—Dr. Lang and in addition to Thomas Carlyle his brother James whose wife was cousin to both the brothers. All these favored few were personal friends of Dr. Duncan. The doctor has achieved so much in his comparatively short life time as the years count that it is almost impossible to relate them all though we may mention that he was responsible for the introduction of consumptive shelters to Dumfriesshire; indeed his own manse he converted into a school for students reading for Glasgow; Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities. The doctor's piety remains evergreen and quite properly so at Glencairn. From these beautiful surroundings and memories he was called to Inveresk in 1907. During his stay here he set to work and organized the villages with churches and reading rooms. He took on at this period in addition to his duties as pastor the chairmanship of the parish council. In this parish lies the battlefield of Pinkie Burn; and the scene of Queen Mary's surrender. Lord Elphinstone of Carberry; Sir James Hope of Pinkie and Sir Charles Dalrymple of Newhailes all lived and co-operated in the work of this parish during the ministry of the subject of this brief and inadequate sketch.

Then came the call to succeed Dr. Wallace Williamson at St. Cuthbert's in Edinburgh in 1910 the latter having been translated to St. Giles Cathedral. Dr. Duncan was not long until he succeeded Dr. James McGregor in senior charge of thirty-five hundred communicants. There were four assistant ministers at St. Giles; a most beautifully equipped building a credit to Presbyterianism. Here Dr. Duncan again busied himself and reorganized the whole scheme of things in that parish with the result that thousands began attending the evening service. The strain however began to tell and owing to the three years' illness of his colleague Dr. Lyall Wilson he had to carry on practically alone and single-handed for four and a half years. Then he was commissioned to St. Stephen's Sydney; Australia and eventually was called to the Church of St. Andrew's at Montreal in 1914. He became first Minister of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in 1918 and since that time the history of the congregation has been one of steady progress.

In 1922 when called to Scotland the congregation by unanimous vote asked him to remain and he was thus retained. It is not perhaps well enough known that Dr. Duncan was the leader of the conference at Lambeth House on Presbyterian and Episcopalian reunion. He is an author of note his literary work embracing "The Enemies' "Modern Theories of the Resurrection" "Visions and Echoes" "Religion and Patriotism" "The University and Religion" "Education as an Ethical Influence

on National Life" "The Influence of German Philosophy on Modern Thought" "The Scot in Canada as well as an abundance of special articles pamphlets and reviews. He was while here president of Trafalgar School member of McGill University Corporation; Governor of Co-operating Theological Colleges; chaplain to the Royal Highlanders of Canada; chaplain to Royal Caledonian Curling Club in Canada as well as a member of United Services and University Clubs of Montreal and Edinburgh. His recreations embrace curling; golf and riding. Consider what a fine life is recorded herein. Dr. Duncan has accumulated what is incomparably better than worldly possessions. He has more of the milk of human kindness in his nature than most men and as Rev. John Chisholm said the other day "Nobody ever left his door hungry." Dr. Duncan is above all things a representative Briton—a Scot linked to Canada. He has played a great role and has capitalized his powers to the advantage of the Empire. As I see him in the street as I listen to him lecture I feel that here is a Briton careless of his personal aggrandizement when he can do the bidding of the King. His eye is not yet dimmed nor the buoyancy of his spirit lessened neither is his alertness of mind dulled or his brisk activities of body any the less. The Rev. George Duncan's name will be revered in this city and as the worthy son of a worthy sire his record will be emblazoned with Canadians who have won recognition for sterling worth. It would be impossible to exaggerate the good work that Dr. Duncan has achieved. Dr. Duncan can never have placed his wares into the shop window. He has always maintained reverence and dignity of worship. He firmly believes that Christendom is going to divide between social service and the faith and worship of historic Christianity. —Montreal Gazette.

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