

ORDERED LIVES.

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D.

Only the other week, astronomers were watching eagerly the transit of the planet Mercury across the sun. On the basis of calculations made beforehand, the precise moment was predicted when the planet would pass a given point. The predicted time varied from the actual time by but a single second.

This accuracy of prediction was possible because the physical universe is governed by laws. There is no such thing as chance in nature. Wherever science goes, it brings back proofs that a directing and controlling Mind has been carrying out its wise and far-reaching designs. As our knowledge of the world about us grows, the conviction is deepened and strengthened within us that the hand that made it is divine. "In the beginning God."

Not less true is it that our own lives are being ordered by the same wisdom and power. In the deepest sense, we do not choose the path in which we shall walk; it is chosen for us. We do not select our duties; they are appointed to us. One before whom the whole course of our life is spread out, like the chart on which the navigator sees his way from port to port, is bringing us, often by strange and perplexing ways, to the haven of His own rest.

SPARKS FROM OTHER ANVILS.

Southern Presbyterian: We have need to be on our guard against Mormon missionaries. At a conference held in Atlanta, last week, twenty-four missionaries from that body were present. They are in earnest in trying to make converts to their errors. We must watch.

Cumberland Presbyterian: The chief difficulty in the administration of discipline is in securing that kind of proof which is necessary to sustain an unquestionable verdict. The people who know the facts are often unwilling to tell those facts because of their desire to avoid unpleasant disturbance of their social and business relations. The whole problem is a very serious one, but it would be less serious if it received the attention which it deserves.

Christian Intelligences: Have we had sorrow? It was appointed by a loving Father; was meant for our good and should not unduly afflict us. Do our sins rise up to accuse us? Christ is our advocate and will answer for us. No need, therefore, any longer to carry them as a burden. Have we made mistakes? Be only careful not to repeat them. The ablest general is proved such not by never making a mistake, but by being quickest to discover and correct it.

Michigan Presbyterian: We do not question that the Psalms of David were inspired productions; but that they are all equally adapted for all religious purposes is a different matter. The limit seems to be reached when a Christian denomination not only insists that these psalms in English verse are to be the only metrical products for devotional use; but that they are all to be used, no matter what expressions they contain. Recently in attending a preparatory service at a United Presbyterian church we had either to keep silent or join in singing such unpoetical and un-devotional phrases as these: "I'm sinking in deep mire;" and "My throat is also dried." Both expressions might have been literally true, and both are capable of being spiritualized; but it is hard to sing them in a strictly devotional spirit to the tune "Dennis," which, by the by, certainly was not used either by King David, or Asaph, or the sons of Korah.

Some people spend all their lives saying the things they regret and regretting the things they didn't say.

A LEADER IN FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.*

By Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, D.D.

"Highland blood is hot. It easily boils in revolt against the perpetuation on Canadian soil of conditions at all analogous to those that roused the great soul of the Scottish Reformer who never feared the face of man." Thus does Principal MacVicar's son and biographer begin the chapter in his father's life, headed, *The Emancipation of the French Canadian.*

Donald MacVicar, being what he was, a brave, outspoken man, and with convictions strong and at white heat, it was inevitable that, being a pastor and religious teacher in Montreal, he should be captured by the evident subjection of the majority of the inhabitants of that city and province to a church that has ever loved to rule, and their equally evident need of a full gospel, which alone could work their emancipation.

Principal MacVicar was a man to attract notice in any crowd, tall, erect, stalwart, with eagerness and decision in every movement—you turned to look after him in the street. "There is a masterful man," you say, "a man of great enterprises." The impression strengthens when he rises to speak from pulpit or platform. He has a strong grip. He is quite sure of himself. He has thought out his subject. His purpose is definite; and as he marshals his arguments, adding link to link to the chain, which by and by you see to be unbreakable, his Highland fervor growing in intensity as he proceeds, you no longer wonder at the influence this great man of God wielded in his congregation, in his college, in the administration of affairs. He was a born leader. He rejoiced in the gift; and from first to last of his more than forty years of public service, subordinated it to no sinister or unworthy end.

Who was he? The son of an Argyle-shire farmer, who emigrated to the western peninsula of Ontario when the future Principal was a child of four; Canadian bred, if not Canadian born; distinguished, even in his student days, as a teacher, trained in Knox College, Toronto, minister for a little over a year in Guelph, Ont., then for seven years in Cote Street (now Crescent Street) Church, Montreal; the first Principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal—indeed, in its infant years, practically the whole staff of the College; an ardent temperance advocate; a member of the Montreal Protestant Board of School Commissioners for thirty-one years, and its chairman for half of that period; and from 1875, till his death in 1902, the chairman and leading member of the Board of French Evangelization of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Dr. MacVicar's dream was an evangelized French Canada. "Holding forth the Word of Life," is the motto of his College; and that Word of Life, he held that the Roman Catholic should have, as fully and as clearly as the Protestant. His policy in the French work was not to break down, but to let in the light. "We do not hold," he said on one occasion, "that there is no saving truth in the Roman Catholic Church. But the truth that is there is covered over with such a mass of rubbish that few ever find it." To uncover the truth, might well describe his methods, and those of his co-workers in French evangelization; and it is this policy which has given the work its vitality and its deep and widespread influence.

The Old French Canadian Missionary Society, which some years before the Union of 1875, was merged in the work of the Presbyterian church, was the chief amongst a group of evangelizing

agencies, that sought to disseminate the Scriptures and scriptural teachings in French Canada. The very first forward step by the United church in practical, aggressive work, was the organization of the Board of French Evangelization, with Principal MacVicar at its head.

The agencies of the Board were and are three fold:

(1) **Colporteur.** The colporteur, with his Bibles and Testaments and books, has become a familiar figure in every county in Quebec, and many of the thousands who have found the Gospel light, received it in the first place from these humble, sincere, brave pioneer workers. Principal MacVicar believed thoroughly in the hand to hand method of the colporteur.

(2) **Schools.** The school is perhaps the one strongest and most effective agency in missions. To teach the young is quite the readiest and surest way of transforming the beliefs and the lives of men. The Montreal Presbyterian College trains French teachers and ministers in their own language. Scores of consecrated French students, a large portion of them Roman Catholic by birth, have been there prepared for efficient service. Upwards of 5,000 French-Canadian boys and girls have been educated in the Pointe-aux-Trembles schools, near Montreal, and have gone forth to be centres of light and good influence in their neighborhoods. The schools accommodate 250 pupils.

At a number of places, up and down the province, there are smaller schools, supported, as is Pointe-aux-Trembles, by the liberality of our Sunday Schools and church members.

(3) **Preaching.** We have seventy-four mission stations and congregations with 1,266 communicants in French Canada.

One of the most important results of all this work has been the general diffusion of knowledge and eagerness to know what is the truth, which is rapidly turning the French Canadians into a body of readers and of independent thinkers. That the priest and the bishop must at length take account of what their people think and will do, as well as of what they themselves desire, is owing chiefly to the work which comes under the name of French Evangelization.

Now and then, Principal MacVicar's prominence in this work brought him into active conflict with the Romish church. He never sought battle; but he did not flinch when it came. Some students of the Montreal College, who are now ministers, will recall the winter of 1876, when, with their professors and Principal, they helped to make up the body guard of Father Chiniquy, night after night, in the old Cote Street Church, when that irrepressible preacher was assailed by hard words and harder missiles. Principal MacVicar invariably appeared with the aged Father in the pulpit. It had become a fight for liberty of speech; and there was no holding back nor giving way, until that liberty was won.

Daily Bible Readings.

Daily Readings.—M. — Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5:17-21. T.—No works of supererogation, Lev. 16:6, 11-13. W.—Forgiveness symbolized, Lev. 16:15, 7-11. Th.—Christ the one Foundation, Matt. 16:13-20. F.—One Mediator, 1 Tim. 2:18. S.—Our Great High Priest, Heb. 4:14-16. Sun. Topic—A Leader in French Evangelization: Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D. Rom. 5:1-10.

"It is a rule of the road that two things should have precedence of all other traffic," said a solicitor at the Marlebone county court. "One is a fire engine and the other a funeral procession."

*Y. P. Topic, 26th January, 1908.—A Leader in French Evangelization, Rev. Principal MacVicar, D.D. Rom. 5:1-10.