

TH
EV 18

THE RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF ALEXANDER WHYTE

By

HELEN L. EVANS

A. B., Midland College

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N. Y.
April, 1951

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
HATFIELD, PA.

18520

TABLE OF CONTENTS

18520

**BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY**
HATFIELD, PA.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	iv
A. The Problem Stated and the Present Study Justified.	iv
B. Subject Delimited.	v
C. Procedure and Sources.	v
I. ALEXANDER WHYTE: SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND BACKGROUND.	1
A. Introduction	1
B. Early Life and Preparation	1
1. Family and Home	1
2. Education	2
3. Teaching Career	3
4. Ministry in Glasgow	3
C. His Ministry	4
1. Free St. George's, Edinburgh.	4
2. Moderatorship, Free Church of Scotland.	5
3. Principalship, New College, Edinburgh	5
D. His Death.	6
E. Summary	7
II. FORMATIVE FACTORS IN DR. WHYTE'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT.	8
A. Introduction	8
B. Early Influences	8
1. His Family and Home Background.	8
2. Individuals	9
3. Innate Sensitivity and Hunger for Knowledge	11
4. The Church of His Youth	13
C. Influences in His Ministry	15
1. Contemporary Men.	15
a. John Henry Newman.	15
b. Henry Drummond	17
c. Marcus Dods.	18
2. The Church of His Maturity.	19
3. The Principalship of New College.	20
D. His Use of the Bible	20
E. His Wide Reading	23
1. Puritan Writers	24
a. Thomas Goodwin	24
b. John Bunyan.	26
2. Mystic Writers.	28
a. William Law, English Mystic.	28
b. Jacob Boehme, German Mystic.	30

Gift of Author

28538

May 21, 1951

Chapter	Page
c. Teresa of Spain.	31
3. His Unbiased Evaluation	33
4. Relationship of Writers to Whyte's Per- sonality and Preaching.	34
a. His Imagination.	34
b. His Emphasis on Sin and Grace.	36
c. His Evangelical Message.	37
F. Summary.	38
 III. INFLUENCE OF DR. WHYTE IN HIS TIME.	 40
A. Introduction	40
B. As Minister.	40
1. Preacher.	40
2. Pastor.	44
3. Religious Educator.	48
C. As Lecturer.	51
D. As Writer.	52
E. Among Students	56
F. In His Church.	57
G. Summary.	60
 IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.	 62
A. Summary.	62
B. Conclusion	65
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 68
A. Primary Sources.	68
B. Secondary Sources.	69

INTRODUCTION

THE RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF ALEXANDER WHYTE

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem Stated and the Present Study Justified

In a day when men are prone to charge mediocrity and lack of intellectual and moral performance in themselves and in their brothers to an earlier lack of opportunity, or to unfortunate childhood experience, it is refreshing to turn to the study of an Alexander Whyte. This is an investigation into the life of one who began with an extreme social and economic handicap, who yet was found in his most productive years a mature Christian leader of outstanding importance in religious and intellectual circles. Alexander Whyte exerted profound and widespread influences in his community, church, and nation, and produced soul-enriching effects in the individuals who came within his sphere of activity.

James Barrie, Scotch author and fellow-townsmen of Whyte, wrote, "To know Dr. Whyte was to know what the Covenanters were like in their most splendid hours."¹ Alexander Gammie, a Scotch minister, recently wrote, "There has been no preacher in living memory of greater personality,

.

1. Alexander Gammie: Preachers I Have Heard, p. 13.

preaching power, and abiding influences than Dr. Alexander Whyte."¹ As a writer, Dr. Whyte's influence is still felt. Dr. Samuel Shoemaker of Calvary Episcopal Church, New York City, said of his Bible Characters, "The finest I know on the characters in the Old and New Testaments which he treats."²

These tributes, but especially the character and personality of Dr. Whyte--achieved as they were in the face of normally discouraging factors--give real justification for the study of his religious development.

B. Subject Delimited

It is not the purpose of this thesis to give a detailed biography of Alexander Whyte. The brief sketch of his life is helpful in order to appreciate the heights he attained, and to give some basis for understanding his personality and growth.

A further reason for going beyond the biographical study is that such material is somewhat limited. Only one biography is available, hence this study goes beyond what others have written about Whyte to what he has revealed about himself in his sermons and lectures.

C. Procedure and Sources

.

1. Ibid., p. 11.
2. "My Ten Best Books," Religion in Life, XIX (Autumn Number, 1950), p. 506.

The main sources which will be used as the basis for this thesis are:

1. The Life of Alexander Whyte, D. D., by G. F. Barbour.
2. Sermons of Alexander Whyte.
3. Appreciations by Dr. Whyte.
4. Lectures on characters by Whyte.

After a brief survey of the life of Alexander Whyte will follow the various factors of influence throughout his life, including his home, contemporary influences, and the contributions of selected writers as revealed in Dr. Whyte's writings. Finally a chapter will be devoted to the outreaching of these influences through Whyte's own activities--the contributions of his life.

CHAPTER I

ALEXANDER WHYTE: SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND BACKGROUND

THE RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF ALEXANDER WHYTE

CHAPTER I

ALEXANDER WHYTE: SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

A presentation of the life and activities of Alexander Whyte provides a necessary backdrop against which the several and widely differing influences in his life will be set in relief, and against which will be measured the full religious growth of Alexander Whyte. This chapter is a brief account of his biography.

B. Early Life and Preparation

1. Family and Home.

In Kirriemuir of Scotland, on January 13, 1836, Alexander Whyte was born in the home of his mother, Janet Thomson. His parents were never married. Something of the strong character of his mother is seen in her refusal to marry John Whyte upon his urging, feeling that the marriage would have added to an initial error another which must have given the air of falsehood to her entire life. John Whyte left Kirriemuir soon after his son was born.

.

1. G. F. Barbour: The Life of Alexander Whyte, Seventh Edition, pp. 3, 15.

To provide for herself and her son, Janet Thomson worked as a farm woman, her son accompanying as soon as he was old enough. When he grew older, Alexander worked at herding cattle to add to the household income.¹

Although Kirriemuir had been a village almost entirely inhabited by weavers since about 1640, it was the shoemaker's trade Alexander chose for his apprenticeship, which he began at the age of twelve upon his mother's urging. He completed his apprenticeship, but as soon as possible left the trade to pursue his education.

2. Education.

Formal instruction was managed with difficulty in Alexander's early years. Shillings for school fees were available only in the intervals of his mother's work.

When he finished the Kirriemuir school and began teaching, he continued the studies preparatory to entering the University of Aberdeen in his spare and night hours. David White, minister in the town of his teaching appointment, figured greatly in stimulating Whyte and in teaching him English composition, Latin, and Greek, necessary for the university course.²

From teaching, Whyte moved on to the University, where in spite of his sketchy preparation and lack of

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 18.
2. Ibid., pp. 41-43.

opportunity he proved an eager student, and from which he graduated in 1862 after four years, with honors in philosophy.¹ During this time he received some financial assistance from his father, who was in America.²

His theological education he acquired at New College, a Free Church institution, in Edinburgh. His support in these years came from his work as missionary assistant in St. Luke's Free Church.³

3. Teaching Career.

As soon as he had completed his trade apprenticeship, Whyte took his first teaching position. Often it was necessary to learn overnight the lesson he must teach the seniors next day, and his salary was less than he would have earned as weaver or shoemaker. Nonetheless, it was the first step on the oft-traveled path to the university for those whose means were limited.⁴ In this fact, and in the opportunity he found for further study, lies the importance of his teaching years.

4. Ministry in Glasgow.

The four years Alexander Whyte served as assistant and colleague minister in Glasgow at Free St. John's were in the nature of preparation for his career at Free St.

.

1. W. Robertson Nicoll: Princes of the Church, pp. 314-315.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 47.
3. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 316.
4. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 38, 40.

George's in Edinburgh. He was ordained in December, 1866, toward the beginning of his Glasgow ministry. In these four years, Whyte proved his preaching ability, his concern for individual souls, and his awareness of the church's place in the community.¹ Many calls from distant churches came to him. The esteem in which he was held is illustrated by the words of Dr. Roxburgh, his senior minister, who upon each call gave unhesitating and definite advice, "This is not for you," but in regard to the call from Edinburgh said, "This is what I have been keeping you for, and you must go."²

C. His Ministry

1. Free St. George's, Edinburgh.

In 1870 Alexander Whyte accepted the call to Edinburgh as Dr. Candlish's colleague. In a few years Candlish died and Whyte was left alone with the charge of the largest and most influential congregation of his Church.³ Whyte served as minister of Free St. George's until 1916, the year of his resignation, but continued preaching until 1917.⁴

In 1880 Alexander Whyte received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh. He was best known for forty years as "Dr. Whyte of Free St.

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 130-134.
2. Ibid., p. 146.
3. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 318.
4. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 577-578.

George's."¹

Besides his preaching the greater features of his ministry at Free St. George's were his large classes for Bible study, his regular and large prayer meeting groups, and his popular lecturing.

Because his ministry at St. George's is the longest portion of his ministry, and because the emphases in Whyte's ministry during these years are so inseparable from the far-reaching influence he had, discussion of them has been reserved for the discussion of his contributions in Chapter III of this thesis.

2. Moderatorship, Free Church of Scotland.

In 1898 Dr. Whyte was called to the Moderator's chair of his Church. While his primary duty was to preside over the annual sessions of the General Assembly, he did much effective work through his travels into the Hebrides² and the Highlands, encouraging leaders and laymen alike.

3. Principalship, New College, Edinburgh.

Dr. Whyte became principal of New College in 1909, succeeding Dr. Marcus Dods and holding the position for nearly nine years although past seventy years of age when elected.³ He was highly successful in winning the personal

.

1. Ibid., pp. 228-229.
2. Ibid., pp. 414-425.
3. Ibid., pp. 489-490.

confidence and love of the students. In addition, his years as principal helped in relating the life of the college to the community and to the entire church.¹

D. His Death

During the last several years of his life, Dr. Whyte's health was carefully watched over and protected, for he suffered from a weak heart. To the very end of his life Dr. Whyte was both diligent and faithful in his great loves --to his Lord for his salvation, to his family and friends, and for life itself. His last written words a few days before his death, penned under considerable suffering, requested a daily copy of the Glasgow Herald, that he might follow the program of a Student Christian Movement conference.²

On January 6, 1921, Dr. Whyte passed quietly from this life. Upon hearing of his father's death, the eldest son telegraphed from Marseilles, "Pater felix." A Dr. Cairns told his students in Aberdeen, "The mould was broken when God made him, and sent him to Scotland." The highest tribute perhaps was made by Dr. Alexander Smellie, who said, "He was like his Master, for he loved perfectly and to the end."³

.

1. Ibid., p. 497.
2. Ibid., p. 640.
3. Ibid., p. 643.

E. Summary

The life of Alexander Whyte has been considered from the standpoint of his family background, his education, and the work in which he was engaged.

Marked with the stigmata of illegitimacy and poverty, and helped by his mother and friends, Alexander Whyte persevered until he completed his university and theological training. His brief teaching career in his early years was a natural interlude for a youth of limited means who desired to continue his education.

Likewise, his ministry in Glasgow was a period of training and preparation for his long Edinburgh ministry. During the Glasgow ministry, there came into Whyte's consciousness many of the later, more apparent emphases of his Edinburgh work.

His activities as minister of Free St. George's in Edinburgh were expanded in later years to include his election as Moderator of his church for 1898, and to embrace several years as principal of his church's institution of higher learning in Edinburgh, the New College.

How extensive and forceful his influence was came to light in the tributes expressed at the time of his death.

With such a sketch of his life as preparation, the influences which came to bear upon Alexander Whyte may be approached.

CHAPTER II
FORMATIVE FACTORS IN
DR. WHYTE'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER II
FORMATIVE FACTORS IN
DR. WHYTE'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

A. Introduction

Something of the extent of Alexander Whyte's religious growth has been seen in the preceding biographical chapter. In Chapter II the influences which contributed to this attainment will be discussed. Attention will be particularly focused on the molding elements of his early years, on the effect of contemporary men in his life, and on the results of his extensive reading in his person and ministry, the latter including his use of the Bible and his intimate acquaintance with certain devotional writers.

B. Early Influences

1. His Family and Home Background.

Barbour and Nicoll were agreed that the person who figured most in Alexander Whyte's childhood religious training was Janet Thomson, his mother.¹ She was faithful in worship and prayer and in attending the Sunday services regularly. The day's services were later discussed by mother and son. She believed both prayer and work were virtues, and once told a friend that from his birth she had

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 21; Nicoll, op. cit., p. 314.

especially asked for wisdom for her son.¹

The shadow over his early home contributed to Dr. Whyte's directness in dealing with moral issues, and likewise to his sympathy and understanding toward those who came to him in perplexity or in remorse.² Dr. Whyte himself revealed that he was conscious of this stigma. While he was Moderator he once spoke of the death scene of Dr. Candlish, saying to Dr. Rainy, then principal of New College, that he had only envied him for one thing--the kiss Candlish had given him at that time. But, added Whyte, ". . . it is only born gentlemen and gentlemen born again who could have treated a poor nameless youth as Candlish treated me."³

2. Individuals.

Dr. Whyte gave particular recognition to three persons who greatly influenced his spiritual awakening during his childhood years--his mother; James Kennedy, his Sunday school teacher; and Daniel Cormick, his minister.⁴

Except for Robert Murray M'Cheyne, James Kennedy's influence would have been negligible. When Alexander was seven years old M'Cheyne visited Kirriemuir for revival meetings. Paying tribute to Kennedy in later years, Dr. Whyte pointed out that there was a great difference in his teaching

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Ibid., p. 23.
3. Ibid., p. 25.
4. Ibid., p. 27.

after M'Cheyne's visit.¹ Just a few weeks before his ministry closed, Dr. Whyte sent the following message to a gathering celebrating the jubilee of a teacher friend.

And tell them not to be weary in well-doing. For seventy years hence old men will call their names blessed, as I call the name of my old teacher--James Kennedy.²

Daniel Cormick, while not the greatest in the pulpit, was yet widely known for his personal and pastoral gifts. It was he whom young Alexander had as his minister until he was twelve years old. To him, likewise, Whyte paid tribute.

No minister all round about had less strength of some kinds than Daniel Cormick; but . . . he was by far the most successful minister of them all . . . The delightful stories of Mr. Cormick's unworldliness of mind, simplicity of heart, and beauty of character crowd in upon me at this moment till I can scarcely set them aside.³

The influence of Daniel Cormick upon Whyte was both direct and indirect. It was to Mr. Cormick that David White, a later friend, had gone when he began to awaken to his spiritual needs as a minister. Cormick counseled, prayed, and walked with David White till he ". . . was honoured of God to lead one of the ablest men I ever knew into that grace in which he himself stood."⁴

David White was minister of the Free Church in Airlie, where Whyte had his second teaching position. The

.

1. Ibid., p. 22.
2. Ibid., p. 23.
3. Ibid., p. 25.
4. Ibid., p. 27.

service which he rendered to young Whyte was fourfold. First, he helped him to see the important relationship between scholarship and his calling. Further, Whyte's later composition owed much to Mr. White's instruction in good English style. As has been indicated, the knowledge of Latin and Greek necessary for Whyte's university course was made possible by Mr. White.¹ Probably the greatest service he contributed was his encouragement of Whyte's desire to enter the ministry, for he was reassuring as to Whyte's intellectual and spiritual powers.²

3. Innate Sensitivity and Hunger for Knowledge.

How early these spiritual powers began to awaken in Alexander Whyte was revealed through this experience. Returning from church one Sunday, young Alexander dropped behind his mother. When she questioned him he said he had been with the Doctor, who had stopped him and given him candy.

"And did he say anything to you?" "He said he hoped I was a guid boy." "I hope you told him what was true." "Na; if I'd done that, I was feared he would ha' ta'en back the sweeties." Evidently the habit of severe self-judgment began early with Alex Whyte.³

The youth Alexander was also conscious of his intellectual capacities. In a letter to his father, Whyte revealed both awareness and humility in light of the know-

.

1. Cf. ante, p. 2.
2. Barbour, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

ledge that he had ". . . a head and a heart above my fellows . . . Had I been an ordinary youth I would be past needing help." Then Whyte proceeded to express his gratitude to God for such privilege.¹

Growing up in the weaving community of Kirriemuir, Whyte gained wide and profound knowledge of human nature, both in its weakness and in its strength.

The letters written from his teaching post in Airlie to a youthful friend in Kirriemuir revealed Whyte's inner struggle as he met with hindering circumstances and with the difficulties of the searching discipline to which he subjected himself. Those who knew him at the time he took up his university training held that strength and eagerness were the outstanding characteristics of his face. That the inward discipline which he practiced bore fruit was revealed in the refinement and spiritual beauty of his face in later years.²

William Robertson Nicoll, who had known Dr. Whyte long and well, said in later years that his ". . . main characteristic was his intense humility."³ Austere as he was at times, before God he was most gentle. He could not endure controversy. If he thought he had offended in some outburst of passion, he would humble himself completely be-

.

1. Ibid., p. 47.
2. Ibid., p. 58, 617.
3. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 323.

fore the individual he thought he had wronged. His characteristic humility, however, was not a base feeling, passing into a sense of inferiority. It was rather an "evangelical humility."¹

In considering his hunger for knowledge, it is necessary only to mention some earlier experiences. By the time he herded cattle² Alexander had acquired a passion for books. Such a great passion it was that it brought down upon him the rebukes and oaths of a farmer's wife when he once read while the cattle wandered into the cornfield.³ When he worked at the shoemaker's bench he often propped up a book at reading distance. Said one of the elders of his village years later, "Ay, and a gey puir shoemaker he was, but he's been a fine preacher to many folk in Edinburgh who were sair needing it!"⁴ And in Airlie, somewhat unfortunately, he was later described as ". . . the mannie that could never speak to you for readin'."⁵

4. The Church of His Youth.

Alexander Whyte was born during the height of a conflict in the Church of Scotland. This conflict led in 1843 to a secession which established the Free Church of Scotland, the church of Whyte's ministry. The conflict was

.

1. Ibid.
2. Cf. ante, p. 2.
3. Barbour, op. cit., p. 19.
4. Ibid., p. 31
5. Ibid., p. 44.

over the patronage system, which, among other things, gave civil powers the right to impose upon a congregation a ministerial nominee without the congregation having any voice in the decision.¹ Young Alexander's mother so strongly supported the party who fought against the "intruding" of an unpopular candidate on an unwilling congregation that she gained the nickname of "non-intrusion Janet."²

In Kirriemuir was one of the groups called the "Auld Licht Anti-Burghers," who claimed spiritual independence in its most exacting forms, and who even withdrew from the secession movement, refusing any kind of compromise, especially on the relation of the church and state. While their experience of religion was in some ways narrow, yet they did the work which was most needed in Scotland at that time--a reestablishment of essential personal piety. Much of the good surrounding Alexander Whyte's boyhood was due to the shining of the "Auld Licht."³

American revivalism methods were beginning to be used in Scotland,⁴ and the revival in which M'Cheyne figured⁵ was an expression of this influence. During Whyte's years at the University in Aberdeen another revival movement swept across northern Scotland. It is noteworthy that the two pre-

.

1. David C. Somervell: A Short History of Our Religion, Second Edition, p. 302.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 24.
3. Ibid., pp. 11-13.
4. John Macleod: Scottish Theology, p. 246.
5. Ante, p. 7.

dominating features of the revival of '59 were two distinctive marks of Dr. Whyte's own message--a deep sense of sin¹ and experience in the power of prayer.

C. Influences in His Ministry

1. Contemporary Men.

a. John Henry Newman.

In the tribute to John Newman by Mr. Nicoll, editor of the British Weekly, the dominant qualities of Newman's personality and work were highlighted. Nicoll, Barbour, and Whyte agreed on the main features of Newman's life and work. Known for his delivery, for his poetry, and for his literary style, Newman's outstanding gift was his ability to write² sermons. His other gifts served this one in his career.

It was Newman's keen insight into the soul, its peril, the terror of the sinner's future, his reverence of spirit, and the perfection of his English style which captured Whyte's attention to such a great degree. Volumes of Newman's selected sermons were favorite gifts from Whyte to his friends.

Dr. Whyte carried on correspondence with Newman about the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation for inclusion in his Commentary on the Shorter Catechism.³

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 100-101.
2. Nicoll, op. cit., pp. 28-33; Barbour, op. cit., pp. 172, 194, 297; Alexander Whyte: Thirteen Appreciations, pp. 283-358.
3. Barbour, op. cit., p. 241-248.

Cardinal Newman's poem, "The Dream of Gerontius," was one which Whyte said he would like at his bedside in the closing hours of his life,¹ and which ". . . every man should have by heart who has it before him to die."²

Dr. Whyte's breadth of view naturally brought him into collision with those whose religious sympathies did not embrace anyone outside Protestantism. Students who heard him as he began his ministry at Free St. George's were aware that he leaned heavily on Newman, but, said one of them, ". . . it was always a Newman evangelized."³

It is unlikely that Newman's theology or interpretation had any undesirable influence on Whyte's thinking. Whyte himself traced Newman's slipping away into the folds of Catholicism. Although Dr. Whyte upon one occasion named Newman along with Rainy, Athanasius, and Dorner as masters from whom he learned his Christological philosophy, yet in his study of Newman he said of Newman's sermons, ". . . but one thing they are not, they are not what God intends the Gospel of His Son to be to all sinful and miserable men."⁴

In a letter to Dr. James Denney, Nicoll charged⁵ Whyte with basing his lectures on justification by works. Strangely enough, Dr. Whyte made this very charge against

.

1. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 317.
2. Alexander Whyte: Newman, an Appreciation, p. 135.
3. Barbour, op. cit., p. 154.
4. Whyte, Newman, an Appreciation, p. 93.
5. Thomas H. Darlow: William Robertson Nicoll, p. 340.

Newman.

After all is said in praise of these extraordinary sermons, this remains, that Newman's constant doctrine is that doctrine which the Apostle discarded with Anathemas, --salvation by works . . . When I am again overtaken of one of my besetting sins . . . I never take down Newman for my recovery and my comfort. . . .

For Newman's preaching--and I say it with more pain than I can express--never once touches the true core, the real and innermost essence, of the Gospel.¹

It would seem that Nicoll's charge, made in 1894, may have risen either from his personal disapproval of Newman (nothing is said of Newman's theology in Nicoll's tribute in the British Weekly), or from an incomplete knowledge of Whyte's preaching emphases. The writer found no indication in Whyte's lectures to justify such a charge, nor did any of the other sources, limited to be true, hint at such a fallacy. Further, Nicoll showed no hesitancy in putting Whyte's sermons before the public, for the British Weekly for several years took his Sunday evening sermons into an innumerable number of places.² It is difficult to think of an emphasis on works coming between the two significant distinctions of Whyte's preaching--sin and grace.

b. Henry Drummond.

Unlike Dr. Whyte's acquaintance with Newman, that with Henry Drummond was a personal friendship. In the British Weekly tribute again are found the prominent features of Drummond's personality--his humility, simplicity, joyousness,

.

1. Whyte, Newman, an Appreciation, pp. 93-97.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 394.

his concern for the individual, his endowments as writer¹ and orator. These qualities alone would have attracted Dr. Whyte.

It was through student work that Dr. Whyte was first drawn to Henry Drummond. Invited by Drummond to assist with a student religious movement in Edinburgh University, Dr. Whyte contributed largely by his sympathy and occasional lectures. One student present at these conferences felt that they laid part of the foundation for the British Student Christian Movement. Barbour believed that for Whyte this conference (1885) was a ". . . definite stage in the advance towards his later enthusiasm for Christian unity."²

Drummond's work with young people intensified Whyte's own relation with them. As a result of this relationship Dr. Whyte fostered cooperation between Free St. George's and student social undertakings.

c. Marcus Dods.

Again the relationship was that of close friends. Upon a survey of the letters of Marcus Dods³ the writer was struck with the qualities these two had in common, for many of the same appeared in some of Whyte's letters which were preserved.⁴ Perhaps the most striking characteristics they had in common were their humility, imagination, and humor.

.

1. Nicoll, op. cit., pp. 93-103.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 257.
3. Marcus Dods (ed.): Later Letters of Marcus Dods.
4. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 272, 308, 335, 422, 491.

Nicoll again underscored the qualities of the man in his tribute. Kindness, magnanimity, veracity, boldness of speech, humility, idealistic nature--all these were sufficient to draw such a one as Alexander Whyte to Marcus Dods.¹ Dods characterized Whyte as honest, outspoken, intelligent, and as having goodness and real happiness of spirit.²

Dr. Dods was Dr. Whyte's predecessor as Principal of New College.³ In speaking of Dods, Whyte said, ". . . Marcus Dods has been a support, and an enrichment, and an ornament to my intellectual and spiritual life, such as it is."⁴ It was the custom through long years for Dods, Drummond, Whyte, and two other friends to retreat together to the lakes and hills. Of these walks with Dr. Dods, Whyte said, ". . . I came home . . . certified, and strengthened, and encouraged, and refreshed, and made more ready for my pulpit work."⁵

2. The Church of His Maturity.

There was an interchange of influence between Dr. Whyte and his Church. It will be just as effective to leave further reference to the bearing of the Church on Dr. Whyte until the discussion of Whyte's contributions to

.

1. Nicoll, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-241.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317.
3. *Cf. ante*, p. 5.
4. Barbour, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
5. *Ibid.*

the Church. Here, however, it is necessary to point out that the struggle for church unity had the effect of strengthening Whyte's longing for the union, of increasing his dislike for intolerance and controversy, and of confirming his conviction that disunion could be supplanted with union.¹

3. The Principalship of New College.

The position as principal of New College came to Dr. Whyte in 1909 only after long indecision and reluctance on his part,² and after much urging by his friends and his Church. He continued his work as senior minister of Free St. George's. It would hardly be expected that election to such an office would have any great influence on a man of seventy-three. However, anticipation of contacts with young men preparing for the ministry and the sense that his own long, hard struggle for knowledge had been justified resulted in ". . . raising his spirits to a glow which could not be quenched."³ His remaining years were marked by a lighter vein⁴ than the arduous years of his prime.

D. His Use of the Bible

Dr. Whyte considered it a minister's special compensation that the Bible is, or may be, continually in his

.

1. Ibid., pp. 383, 436.
2. Ibid., pp. 490-493.
3. Ibid., p. 495.
4. Ibid., pp. 495-496.

hands, and so it was with him. To a nephew studying for the ministry he wrote, "The Bible deserves all our labour and all our fidelity; and we are repaid with usury for all the student-like industry we lay out upon it."¹

Constant use of a large, interleaved Bible was one foundation of Dr. Whyte's sermon and lecture preparation; methodical note-taking was the other. When the note pages in his Bible were filled, he turned to his system of subject-indexing. The notes he made consisted of his thoughts on the passages he read, illustrations for related use at a later time, and relevant material which he heard or gathered from time to time.²

Although Dr. Whyte kept abreast of the current biblical scholarship of his time, and even incurred criticism by using the writings of some who favored the trend, his chief concern was with the principle of free inquiry, and in finding a more secure basis for approaching the Bible than the old, inflexible theory of literal inspiration. However, in his later preaching he made even less use of modern scholarship. As his interpretation became less historical and more intuitive and psychological, the matter of higher criticism with its questions of historical sequence, date, and authorship was slowly relegated to the background of his thought.³

.

1. Ibid., p. 290.
2. Ibid., p. 288-289.
3. Ibid., pp. 171, 223-224.

In his two classes, the "Young Men's" and the "Young Women's," the Bible was the text for some years, but after ten years in Free St. George's, he began to move farther from the traditional "Bible Class" procedure. This came as a result of his extensive reading of the mystic and Puritan writers.¹ When the Bible was the text for the classes Dr. Whyte's directions for them to follow consisted of three or four (never more or less) questions to stimulate thinking during the next week.²

It must not be concluded, however, that Dr. Whyte used literature as a substitute for the Bible. Since the rest of the chapter will discuss the influence of certain writers on Whyte, his stand on the place of literature and the Gospel is taken up at this point. In the early years of his ministry, Dr. Whyte was criticized for using a book on Isaiah by Matthew Arnold, in which Arnold stressed the literary supremacy of the English Bible so much that he was thought to undermine its sacred character. It was this condemnation that fell upon Dr. Whyte.³ Only a few months before his death, in a letter to Dr. Smellie, Whyte expressed the following thought, presented here as representative of his thinking on the relative place of the Bible and of literature.

.

1. Ibid., pp. 318-319.
2. Ibid., pp. 169-170.
3. Ibid., p. 171.

Would that Arnold had turned his exquisite talent to religion instead of to poetry! And had exhibited the alone full fitness of true religion to the mind and life of the modern man, as he has conceived of pure poetry as enough for the modern man! . . . No, the hurt of our people is far too deep for mere literature, the best, to heal it. Only the Gospel can do that. ¹

E. His Wide Reading

Mention of the early age at which Alexander Whyte's passion for books sprang to life has already been made, ² as has his concentration on the mystic and Puritan writers. ³

As pastor of a large city church, Dr. Whyte could not have carried on his broad reading program had he not made a place for it in his year's schedule. ⁴ Long summer holidays of three or four months, and brief winter and spring holidays were arranged, during which times Dr. Whyte did wide and intensive reading. While his planning included some studies with his children (he earnestly desired them to inherit his own love for good books) and some general literature, ⁵ the bulk of his reading consisted of books and research centered around the lecture subjects which he anticipated using. ⁶ The years of his life might be outlined according to his literary interests during a particular period.

.

1. Ibid., p. 630.
2. Ante, p. 13.
3. Ante, p. 22.
4. Barbour, op. cit., p. 547.
5. Ibid., pp. 453-457.
6. Ibid., pp. 320-321.

What he began as a child he continued until his death. Shortly before his passing he wrote to an aged friend, "I am giving myself up wholly to devotional and experimental reading and meditation. ."¹

Dr. Whyte did not confine himself to scholarly pursuit alone. He kept abreast of the times. While recuperating from his first heart illness, Dr. Whyte wrote the following reply to his assistant's question: "My newspapers these days? The Times, Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News, Dundee Advertiser, Perth Courier, Westminster, Daily News, Nation, British Weekly, etc."²

His library revealed the catholicity of his taste; his reading was broad, not narrow. Nicoll pointed out that because his ". . . culture was so wide and so true it carried his words into places seldom reached by a Free Church minister."³

1. Puritan Writers.

a. Thomas Goodwin.

In his tribute written shortly after Dr. Whyte's death, Mr. Nicoll stated, ". . . there is no doubt that Goodwin was the master influence of his life."⁴

While the writer feels it is impossible to define the greatest influence in Whyte's life, some support for

.

1. Ibid., p. 603.
2. Ibid., p. 551.
3. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 322.
4. Ibid., p. 317.

such a statement as Mr. Nicoll made was found in Whyte's own words and in his long acquaintance with Thomas Goodwin's works. Dr. Whyte was introduced to Goodwin during his third year in the university. From that time on, through his theological training and ministry, Goodwin was never out of his hands.¹ Whyte himself said, "I have read no other author so much and so often."² Only a few months before his death, Dr. Whyte recommended to the principal of New College that one of Goodwin's volumes be the subject of the next "Whyte Prize Essay."³

According to those who knew the Puritans well, Goodwin was considered the most philosophically minded of them all,⁴ and by Dr. Whyte he was termed, ". . . one of the savouriest of the Puritan preachers,"⁵ the ". . . most scriptural and by far the most suggestive of all the Puritan divines."⁶

Dr. Whyte felt that Goodwin excelled all others in his treatment of Paul and in his preaching of Jesus Christ.

. . . when I am led to open Goodwin again all my old love for him returns to me, and all my old indebtedness and devotion to him, till I give myself up again to his incomparable power and incomparable sweetness as an expounder of Paul and as a preacher of Jesus Christ.⁷

.

1. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, pp. 157-158.
2. Ibid., p. 158.
3. Barbour, op. cit., p. 625; cf. post, p. 57.
4. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, p. 166.
5. Alexander Whyte: Lord, Teach Us to Pray, p. 132.
6. Alexander Whyte: Commentary on the Shorter Catechism, p. 35.
7. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, p. 159.

As an evangelical preacher, Dr. Whyte particularly sought Goodwin in these areas of exegesis. And as one who shared with all others his favorite authors, Dr. Whyte found a companion in Goodwin in this also.¹ To read what Thomas Goodwin had to say about "party religion."² is to become aware that Dr. Whyte's thoughts on church unity clearly reflected Goodwin's views.

His "lifelong Goodwin" was one of the books Dr. Whyte listed as his desire to have at hand during the closing days of his life.³

b. John Bunyan.

Something of the esteem in which Dr. Whyte held John Bunyan is seen in the words he used in presenting certain of the characters of Bunyan's mind as they are found in The Pilgrim's Progress and The Holy War. Whyte spoke of the ". . . breadth of John Bunyan's mind, the largeness of his heart, and the tolerance of his temper."⁴ In appreciation of the reality of the characters, Whyte said:

John Bunyan is as fresh as Nature herself, and as free and full as Holy Scripture herself in the variety, in the individuality, and even in the idiosyncrasy of his spiritual portrait gallery.⁵

Dr. Whyte felt that Bunyan was successful in realizing his purpose--". . . to guide the progress of his reader's soul

.

1. Ibid., p. 171.
2. Ibid., p. 169.
3. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 317.
4. Alexander Whyte: Bunyan Characters, First Series, p. 201.
5. Ibid., p. 203.

to God"--because he brought to bear upon his writing all his gifts of ". . . insight and sense and humour and scorn."¹

In Canon Venables' judgment of John Bunyan that he was too introspective and attentive to his own spiritual condition and did not turn his mind enough toward the Savior,² there is found a suggestion of the criticism occasionally made of Dr. Whyte that he painted the world and the human soul too darkly.³ However, as those who sought out Dr. Whyte's preaching received his message of hope along with his message of sin,⁴ so Dr. Whyte points out the delicate balance between sin and hope in Bunyan's writing.

So far as my reading goes I do not know any other author who has at all done the justice to the saving grace of hope that John Bunyan has done both in his doctrinal and in his allegorical works.⁵

Dr. Whyte believed that Bunyan's greatest gift was his imagination. He felt that it was this that gave Bunyan his rank in English literature and as a writer of spiritual books.⁶ Dr. Whyte's lecture, "Bunyan and the Religious Use of the Imagination," given to various groups,⁷ bears witness to the importance he placed on Bunyan's creative ability.

To the sensitive nature of Dr. Whyte such a writer

.

1. Ibid., p. 215.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Whyte, Lord, Teach Us to Pray, p. xi.
4. Barbour, op. cit., p. 579; Whyte, Lord, Teach Us to Pray, p. xiii.
5. Alexander Whyte: Bunyan Characters, Second Series, pp. 51-52.
6. Barbour, op. cit., p. 653.
7. Ibid., p. 421.

as John Bunyan had natural appeal. Dr. Whyte indicated that he sought out such men as Bunyan because he needed the companionship of men who had gone through the same dark experiences he had encountered, and who were still company for him.¹ Besides this association, Dr. Whyte revealed that Bunyan's writings had sharpened his own insight into the human soul.

One thing the life-long admiration of John Bunyan's books has helped to kindle and burn into my mind and my imagination is this: What a universe of things is the heart of man!²

2. Mystic Writers.

a. William Law, English Mystic.

Dr. Whyte's own words give expression to the importance he placed on the influence of William Law in his life. "The study of this quite incomparable writer has been nothing less than an epoch in my life."³

It was a red-letter day in my life when I first opened William Law, and I feel his hand on my heart and on my mind and on my conscience and on my whole inner man literally every day I live.⁴

According to Dr. Whyte's opinion William Law became a mystic through the influence of Jacob Boehme, the "unlettered German shoemaker" and mystic.⁵ In support of

.

1. Alexander Whyte: Our Lord's Characters, Tenth Edition, pp. 175-176.
2. Whyte, Bunyan Characters, Second Series, p. 36.
3. Alexander Whyte: Characters and Characteristics of William Law, p. vi.
4. Barbour, op. cit., p. 378.
5. Whyte, Characters and Characteristics of William Law, p. xxxviii.

this Whyte maintained that Law's writings became increasingly mature and enriching after he had learned to know¹ Boehme.

His own dislike for controversy was underlined and emphasized for Dr. Whyte in William Law's works. Whyte's biographer considered this the most significant practical effect of Law upon Whyte. From the time he took up the study of Law, Dr. Whyte kept as one of the governing principles of his life--whether in the home, congregation, or the larger church--the spiritual involvements and dangers² of controversy. In his reading of William Law, Dr. Whyte was particularly impressed by his change from a disputatious person in his early life to one who later had learned to control his controversial nature.³

A present-day writer has stated that W. R. Inge and Dr. Whyte were agreed that The Spirit of Love was Law's masterpiece,⁴ and in the words this author quotes from Dr. Whyte it is apparent that here again a writer's probing into the nature and origin of sin had drawn Whyte to him.

. . . . Law sets out in The Spirit of Love to give a profound and complete rationale of the origin and the nature of sin . . . and he tells what he sees in his own words, till it may safely be said that no man of a sufficiently open and sufficiently serious mind can read Law on these

.

1. Ibid., p. xxxix.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 383.
3. Alexander Whyte: The Walk, Conversation and Character of Jesus Christ Our Lord, pp. 267-268.
4. Stephen Hobhouse: Selected Mystical Writings of William Law, p. 276.

awful and unfathomable subjects without having his seriousness immensely deepened and his love to God and man for all his days fed to a seraphic flame.¹

A further reflection of William Law in Whyte's ministry is seen in the attention Law gave to the younger members of the clergy in his time.²

b. Jacob Boehme, German Mystic.

For Dr. Whyte, Jacob Boehme was the greatest of the mystics. Whyte finds agreement in Hegel when he calls Boehme the "father of German philosophy."³ Boehme arrived at his place as a philosopher through his study of the sin and suffering of those he observed.⁴ It was this keen observation of men, his study of character and conduct that Dr. Whyte especially appreciated in Boehme.⁵ He felt that it was the combination of Boehme's mind, heart, and soul that gave him high rank in the field of religion and literature.⁶

Although he finished his university years with honors in philosophy,⁷ Dr. Whyte's interest in philosophy during his ministry was a minor one. In Boehme, however, he found a satisfying correlation between philosophy and religious consciousness, as stated by Barbour.

Now, however, he found in the writings of "the illuminated

.

1. Ibid.
2. Whyte, Characters and Characteristics of William Law, p. xlvi.
3. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, pp. 35, 49.
4. Ibid., p. 70.
5. Ibid., p. 54.
6. Ibid., p. 36.
7. Ante, p. 3.

Behmen, [1] . . . a daring and unflinchingly idealistic view of the world as a whole allied with an equally penetrating and original exposition of the deep experiences of the Christian soul.²

Barbour hastened to point out that Dr. Whyte's interest in Boehme's mystic philosophy was not in the narrower philosophical sense, but in the practical and experimental relationships between mysticism and the Christian experience of redemption.³

On page after page of Dr. Whyte's sermons and lectures were expressions of his own self-examination and daily walk of faith. Indication of his early childhood sensitivity has already been given.⁴ In his acquaintance with Jacob Boehme, Dr. Whyte found both companion and complement for himself. Such is the implication in the following words, in which Dr. Whyte summarized what William Law found in Boehme.

Seek above every other search the one noble knowledge of thyself. For, only in the ever-deepening knowledge of thyself shalt thou come to know sin, and only in the knowledge of thyself and thy sinfulness shalt thou ever know aught aright of God . . . The kingdom of heaven, the throne of grace, the Son of God, the Holy Ghost, are all within thee.⁵

c. Teresa of Spain.

As in William Law and Jacob Boehme, so in Teresa Dr. Whyte found fellowship in the deep spiritual realms of

.

1. Dr. Whyte followed throughout his writings the older English translators' use of the form "Behmen" rather than "Boehme." Cf. Barbour, op. cit., p. 378 (footnote).
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 379.
3. Ibid., pp. 379-380.
4. Ante, pp. 11, 12.
5. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, pp. 226-227.

of his own life.¹

Of the subjects with which Teresa was chiefly concerned--herself, her sin, her Savior, and prayer²--Dr. Whyte stated that he was first drawn to her by her ". . . singular originality in prayer and her complete captivity to prayer."³

With Teresa it was prayer first, and prayer last, and prayer always. With Teresa literally all things were sanctified, and sweetened, and made fruitful by prayer. In Teresa's writings prayer holds much the same place that it holds in the best men and women of Holy Scripture.⁴

Not only in Teresa, but also in her father Dr. Whyte found confirmation of one of his own deep desires. Teresa's father was a reader of the best books, and worked hard to see that his children cultivated the same habit and taste.⁵

Dr. Whyte's circle of influence was widened by his warm appreciation of Teresa which, in book form, was read in many circles outside the Protestant and Scottish Church. Especially during his inactive years Dr. Whyte had contacts, and in some instances long conversation, with men of the Catholic faith.⁶

In Teresa Dr. Whyte once again found a highly practical mystic.⁷ After listing the wide range of activi-

.

1. Whyte, The Walk, Conversation and Character of Jesus Christ Our Lord, p. 147.
2. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 21.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 11.
6. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 524, 613.
7. Cf. this aspect of Boehme, ante, p. 31.

ties in which she engaged Whyte summarized, "In one word, the more evangelically mystical any man is, the more full of vigour and all efficacy will that man be sure to be."¹

3. His Unbiased Evaluation.

While his biographer felt that Dr. Whyte was outstanding in his ability to disregard points of difference in the authors of whom he was so fond,² it is not to be assumed that Dr. Whyte was unaware of the shortcomings and variances of his literary and spiritual companions.

Although he called him the greatest of the mystics,³ Dr. Whyte felt that Boehme's writings on controversy, admirably though they were presented, were yet too polemic to be widely read and favored.⁴ Also, Dr. Whyte charged Boehme as well as Rutherford, another favorite, with drawing too much on the language and figures of married life in setting forth the relationship of the love of Christ and the soul of the believer.⁵

Fervent though his praise of Teresa was, Dr. Whyte did not fail to point out what he termed her "only weakness"⁶ --her servility.

Reference has already been made to Dr. Whyte's

.

1. Alexander Whyte: Bible Characters, Stephen to Timothy, pp. 239-240.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 391.
3. Ante, p. 30.
4. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, p. 56.
5. Ibid., p. 52.
6. Ibid., p. 14.

description of Newman's spiritual lack in his sermons.¹

Following is a criticism of Bishop Butler for his inadequate sermons on the Christian's love for God.

. . . as far as Butler's sermons on our love to God are concerned, the Son of God need never have come with His Father's message of love to us, nor need the New Testament Epistles ever have been written.²

Censure of Bunyan lay almost entirely in the literary aspect. Dr. Whyte felt that The Holy War, upon which he based one volume of lectures, did not measure up to The Pilgrim's Progress in literary style, or in conciseness and movement of the characters in it.³

The fact that Dr. Whyte was keenly aware of the need for discernment is revealed best in his own statement.

"You can get at the pure truth in print scarcely in anything."⁴

4. Relationship of Writers to Whyte's Personality and Preaching.

a. His Imagination.

Oft-repeated lectures on "Bunyan and the Religious Use of the Imagination,"⁵ and "The Literary and Religious Employment of the Imagination,"⁶ indicate the importance Dr. Whyte placed on the imagination. That this aspect of

.

1. Cf. ante, p. 17.

2. Alexander Whyte: Bishop Butler, an Appreciation, p. 33.

3. Alexander Whyte: Bunyan Characters, Series Three, pp. 5, 149.

4. Whyte, Our Lord's Characters, p. 26.

5. Cf. ante, p. 27.

6. Barbour, op. cit., p. 430.

his preaching developed through the years was stated by at least two besides Dr. Whyte. Barbour pointed out that his natural dramatic sense was enhanced by his study of the mystics.¹ The editor of his book With Mercy and With Judgment noted that Dr. Whyte's preaching was more imaginative² in the later period of his ministry. The editor of the sermons in Lord, Teach Us To Pray designated the imagination as one prominent feature of his preaching,³ as did Gammie.⁴

The imagination, Dr. Whyte himself said, ". . . is nothing less than the noblest intellectual attribute of the human mind."⁵

. . . in his imagination, man possesses, and exercises in in himself, a certain, and that a not very far-off likeness of the Divine Omnipresence, and the Divine Omniscience. For, by his imagination, a man can look behind, and before, and around, and within, and above.⁶

For effective prayer Dr. Whyte considered the use of the imagination essential. "It is but a bodily service to shut our outward eyes, and not at the same moment open the eyes of our inner man."⁷

Dr. Whyte's soaring and probing imagination was underscored by Dr. George Adam Smith as he spoke from Whyte's former pulpit three days after his death. He felt that it was Dr. Whyte's imagination, coupled with his experience,

.

1. Ibid., p. 224.
2. Alexander Whyte: With Mercy and With Judgment, pp. v-vi.
3. Whyte, Lord, Teach Us To Pray, pp. viii-ix.
4. Gammie, op. cit., p. 12.
5. Whyte, Lord, Teach Us To Pray, pp. 242-243.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 244

that enabled him to confront his people with the reality and results of sin.¹

b. Emphasis on Sin and Grace.

Both Nicoll and the editor of Lord, Teach Us To Pray recorded that Dr. Whyte felt specifically called to be a specialist in the study of sin.²

As Whyte dwelt increasingly with the Puritans and mystics, he found their expression of the struggle with sin and rejoiced in their fellowship.

. . . and when in Teresa, or in Boston, or in the Puritans, he finds confession of dryness and deadness of soul, he knows that he is passing through the same experience as some of the noblest saints of God.³

The writer feels that close association with these recorders of spiritual living increased Dr. Whyte's determination to delineate the horrors of sin to his people. To Dr. Whyte, these authors had set down deep but common human experience with sin. He observed, "A saint, indeed, is not a saint at all: a true saint is just a great sinner seeking to taste the love of Christ."⁴ In his sermon entitled, "Paul as the Chief of Sinners," Dr. Whyte called the roll of many favorites--Bunyan, Rutherford, Teresa, Boehme, Luther, Bishop Andrewes--when he quoted from each of them a significant expression of their own sin-consciousness.⁵ Whyte draws

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 300.
2. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 319; Whyte, Lord, Teach Us To Pray, p. xi.
3. Whyte, Lord Teach Us To Pray, p. xii.
4. Ibid., p. 154.
5. Alexander Whyte: The Apostle Paul, pp. 107-108.

almost completely from the Puritans for illustrative material in discussing sin in his Commentary on the Shorter Catechism.¹

In their emphasis on sin, neither his favorite writers nor Whyte himself were one-sided in their message. By the very nature of their sin-awareness the saints rose to new heights when they attempted to express the unfathomable grace they experienced in their forgiveness and fellowship with God.² As Dr. Whyte defended Bunyan against the charge that he was too introspective,³ so Dr. Whyte's listeners and readers defended him against the same accusation. The editor of his book Lord, Teach Us To Pray says:

For the total and final effect of such preaching is not depressing: it is full of stimulus and encouragement mainly because the vision of sin and the vision of difficulty are never far removed from the vision of Grace . . . One of his most devoted elders wrote of him: "No preacher has so often or so completely dashed me to the ground as has Dr. Whyte; but no man has more immediately or more tenderly picked me up and set me on my feet again."⁴

c. His Evangelical Message.

It has been pointed out that Dr. Whyte's interest in the mystics and devotional writers was of a practical nature.⁵ For him the practical was bent toward the salvation of men. Barbour indicated that Dr. Whyte was free of the charge that evangelical preaching often concentrated on the beginning of the Christian life and neglected its later

.

1. Whyte, Commentary on the Shorter Catechism, pp. 34-35.
2. Cf. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, pp. 15, 25, 38, 166-167, 232.
3. Ante, p. 27.
4. Whyte, Lord, Teach Us To Pray, p. xiii.
5. Cf. ante, pp. 31, 32.

development. In the chapter "Study of the Mystics," Barbour stated:

Here was a teacher who had made the slow and often arrested working of sanctification his daily and nightly study, for whom growth in grace was a strangely involved process, and who never grew weary of emphasising the need of prayer and of discipline in the Christian life. ."¹

The writer feels that this emphasis on daily renewal and nurture was a result of Dr. Whyte's own personal experience and of his intimate acquaintance with Christian saints. For him, the spiritual life was a highly personal one. His early experience and training had turned his mind ". . . away from all sacerdotal and authoritarian teaching, and the study of the Mystics in his later middle life confirmed this bent."²

F. Summary

There have been noted in this chapter the formative factors which entered into Dr. Whyte's Christian development.

First were discussed those influences of his early life which molded his already sensitive nature as he developed spiritually. His mother, certain individuals such as his pastor and teacher, and the church into which he was born deeply affected his sensitivity as to his natural capacities, his dislike for disagreement, and his awareness of the nature of sin and of God.

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 388-389.
2. Ibid., p. 391.

The second group of influences presented were contemporary: men of his day, his church, and his principalship in New College. John Henry Newman was sought for his keen insight and the perfection of English style in his sermons. Henry Drummond was instrumental in awakening Dr. Whyte's interest in student work. In Marcus Dods Dr. Whyte found enrichment and encouragement for his pulpit work, besides a great friendship.

Events in his church confirmed his long stand against controversy and his desire for union.

Although coming late in his life, the principalship resulted in releasing Dr. Whyte from the more arduous, stern manner with which he had approached life.

The Puritan and mystic writers of whom he was so fond, with whom he lived so intimately, and whom he was still capable of evaluating impartially, combined to enhance his imagination, underscore his own experience and understanding of sin and grace, and confirm his perception and presentation of the evangelical message.

It was this imagination, the reality of his message of sin and grace, and the efficacy of the evangelical truth he proclaimed that drew men to him, and made possible the extent of his influence.

CHAPTER III

INFLUENCE OF DR. WHYTE IN HIS TIME

CHAPTER III
INFLUENCE OF DR. WHYTE IN HIS TIME

A. Introduction

With the biographical sketch as background and with particular aspects and influences in Dr. Whyte's spiritual growth in mind, it is now essential to turn to his contribution through various activities in order to see the full stature of his religious development. The chapter will not be a biographical account of various phases of Dr. Whyte's life during his long ministry, but will be rather an attempt to show the extent and efficacy of his spiritual attainment.

B. As Minister

1. Preacher.

At the apex of his activities was Dr. Whyte's power and influence as a preacher. In his tribute written for the British Weekly Nicoll noted, "He failed in no activity, but the pulpit was his throne."¹ Several factors combined to heighten this pulpit power.

First, Dr. Whyte was devoted to his preaching with unique singleness of purpose. Although he was interested in and held definite convictions in political issues, he

.

1. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 318.

never used the pulpit to such an end.¹ Criticized because he identified himself with certain leaders by entertaining them in his home, Dr. Whyte further restricted his contacts with any public movement. His eldest son related years later that he keenly felt this limitation throughout his ministry, but that he had shown no hesitancy in his choice, for "His calling as a Minister had first claim on him then as always."² Most conclusive proof, however, of his devotion to his pulpit ministry are Dr. Whyte's own words, "The pulpit is a jealous mistress, and will not brook a divided allegiance."³

His inclusive appeal was all the more remarkable in that his congregation consisted of professional, student, business, and laboring groups in its membership. Barbour signified that Whyte's own early experience as a lad gave him the ability to make an especially direct and intimate appeal to those who ". . . lived by the work of their own hands."⁴

Other elements which shared in enhancing his preaching power telescope together and can hardly be considered separately. Out of his own deep conviction came his intensity, and fed by this intensity and his intimate knowledge of the spiritual life of Christian writers there arose

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 249.
2. Ibid., p. 252.
3. Ibid., p. 279.
4. Ibid., p. 315.

his keen and vigorous imagination. Barbour felt that much of his strength as a preacher lay in this combination of spiritual imagination and knowledge of human character,¹ and that the same alliance made possible to a great degree his wide acceptance through his published sermons, both in book form and in the newspapers.² His forcefulness lay further in his conviction that his work was that of a preacher to heart and conscience.³ Professor Robert Mackintosh said of him, "Whyte did nothing easily. He put every ounce of his exceptional strength into each effort as it had to be made."⁴ The union of his conviction and intensity is further seen in the following words of the editor of Lord,

Teach Us To Pray:

. . . as Dr. Joseph Parker once wrote of him: "many would have announced the chaining of Satan for a thousand years with less expenditure of vital force" than Dr. Whyte gave to the mere announcing of a hymn. That intensity was itself the expression of a burning sincerity: like his own Bunyan, he spoke what he "smartingly did feel."⁵

Testimony to his power as a preacher is found in a complaint from members of his congregation late in his ministry that he dwelt too much on the Puritans in his Sunday evening services. When Dr. Whyte expressed his disappointment over the declining interest in evening services,

.

1. Ibid., p. 304.
2. Ibid., p. 474.
3. Ibid., p. 210.
4. Ibid., p. 166.
5. Whyte, Lord, Teach Us To Pray, p. xiv.

his colleague hesitatingly told him that the people ". . .
at time felt weary of the Puritans and longed for Dr.
Whyte's own message, delivered with the freedom which he
used in speaking to humbler audiences."¹

Witness to the impact of his person upon his lis-
teners is borne through another criticism. It was felt
that he did not attempt to solve any of the intellectual
problems confronting the young people of his congregation.²
The following words of the biographer express what he and
other young people later felt in regard to this lack.

He did not directly meet our difficulties, as other
teachers of the day in great measure met them. But he
did something higher and rarer. He stood through all
that he said and all that he was, as a living proof of
the unquestionable reality and final importance of the
spiritual life . . . Others might defend Christianity
by the weapons of the intellect: he did so by the evi-
dence of an inspired personality--by vision, not by
argument.³

Recognition of his influence and service in the
city of Edinburgh came a few years before the close of his
active ministry in an honor that had not been granted a
minister of religion since the days of the Reformation in
Scotland. The freedom of the city of Edinburgh was extended
to him.⁴

Even during his convalescent and inactive years,
some of which were spent in Penn in England, he could not

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 538.
2. Ibid., p. 304.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 498

completely give up his preaching, and would slip down the road from his home to a Methodist chapel to preach to an ". . . astonished and delighted congregation."¹

2. Pastor.

Of all those with whom he had contact, Dr. Whyte was most severe in his treatment of his congregation, resorting to searching, even scathing, criticism during his preaching--as when at the end of a sermon on God's comfort he suddenly closed by asking, "What's the use of speaking of comfort to people like you."² But such reproofs were interspersed with words of praise and encouragement. When he worked with individuals, the word of encouragement was more frequent.³

Many practical turns of Dr. Whyte's pastorate might be presented. Two will be mentioned briefly. First, he worked to make his congregation conscious of the needs in certain districts in the city of Edinburgh. Students and members of the congregation were enlisted for service at Fountainbridge, the mission church of St. George's. Both Dr. and Mrs. Whyte worked to change the idea that such a church served as an outlet for worn out equipment from the mother church. His deepest interest and effort, however, always lay on the personal and evangelistic aspects

.

1. Ibid., p. 616.
2. Ibid., p. 355.
3. Ibid.

of his ministry for the mission church.¹

Another by-product of his work among the members of his congregation was its regular and increasing contribution to the Sustentation Fund.² At the beginning of his ministry, Free St. George's contributed a sum approximately equivalent to the support of twenty ministers, while eight years later and for ten years after their support had increased to that equivalent for thirty ministers, this in spite of a depression caused by bank failure. Barbour indicated that Dr. Whyte would have quickly dismissed any such criterion of a Christian ministry, but that it was a noteworthy commentary on his work and teaching that ". . . his people showed so practical a concern for the well-being of others."³

Presiding regularly over his church session, Dr. Whyte by his presence alone kept before his officers the spiritual aim governing all their proceedings and rebuked any rising spirit of controversy.⁴ Dr. Whyte continued his earlier custom of securing the ordination of deacons younger and in greater numbers than was the practice in the Free Church. He was willing to risk occasional failure in order to bring as many young men as possible into active

.

1. Ibid., pp. 475-479.
2. The Sustentation Fund, set up by Dr. Chalmers for the support of the ministry at the organization of the Free Church, drew upon wealthier congregations for helping those of less means. (Cf. Barbour, op. cit., p. 168.)
3. Barbour, op. cit., p. 168.
4. Ibid., pp. 351-352.

service in their church.¹

Dr. Whyte's emphasis, however, was not on the administrative aspect of his pastoral work. In a letter to his later colleague, Dr. Kelman, Dr. Whyte wrote, "Nothing will make up for a bad pastorate. . . Set every invitation and opportunity aside in the interest of a good conscience toward the homes of your people."² In Free St. George's this was no small work. The Rev. J. C. B. Geddes, a former assistant to Dr. Whyte, later wrote that it took them each two years to call in all the homes of the congregation.³ Besides this planned visitation, such occasions as bereavement, induction into armed service, or departure for foreign church or government posts brought Dr. Whyte into the homes of his people.⁴

His natural reserve stood between Dr. Whyte and the younger members of his congregation. He had a keen understanding of children, however, and his smile won over his reserve in drawing them to him.⁵

Indeed, as the years passed, the children . . . came to love their senior minister more and more . . . it was their old Minister who was the magnet that drew them back to St. George's when they returned home from all parts of the world in after life.⁶

Dr. Whyte's pastoral care included personal

.

1. Ibid., p. 352.
2. Ibid., p. 528.
3. Ibid., p. 357.
4. Ibid., p. 365.
5. Ibid., p. 362.
6. Ibid.

attention to shut-ins. On the Friday before communion service he sent hand-written post cards to them, giving the order of the entire service so that they might follow at the appointed hour on Sunday. To those with prolonged or serious illness he administered communion in the home.¹

The most unknown and yet probably the most typical aspect of his pastoral work had to do with individuals who came to him with personal difficulties. No one would have approached him with a trivial or everyday problem of conduct, for he often gave the impression of remoteness, sometimes even of austerity. For those with particularly disturbing questions, however, his very detachment lent itself to make them feel that he would take no shallow view of their case. Barbour indicated that those who made the necessary effort to approach him found that this was true.² Written after Dr. Whyte's death, the following words of the Rev. R. Godfrey, published in the Christian Express (now the South African Outlook) serve in expressing what lay at the core of Dr. Whyte's pastoral work.

But the chief objects in that study were, after all, the two deep arm-chairs that rested, one on either side, by the fireplace. In one of them sat this great specialist in sin, in the other the long succession of men who believed that no other doctor could understand their case . . . The stories told in that sacred chamber are buried now with the physician.³

.

1. Ibid., p. 364.
2. Ibid., p. 370.
3. Ibid.

3. Religious Educator.

Barbour noted that while Dr. Whyte's originality lay in other spheres than teaching method as such, yet he strongly advocated that effective methods in secular education be as effectively applied to the study of Scripture and Christian doctrine. He worked to develop the same purpose in the thinking of his church leaders.¹

Dr. Whyte felt that ". . . by her care alike for the minds and for the souls of her children" the church might keep the loyalty of her people. He believed that this loyalty and training might be best accomplished by attaching the growing youth of the church to living persons. It was his opinion that the witness of Christian personality was a great factor in drawing young people within the circles of evangelical religious life.² It is obvious that these principles aroused and maintained his zeal for his classes.

His chief classes were the "Young Men's Class" and the "Young Women's Class," the former meeting on Sunday, the latter on Wednesday, with attendance from five to six hundred each. In both instances the word "young" is used in the broad sense, for some graying heads were always to be seen.³ Difference in occupation was even more manifest than that in age. Among his class audiences were students,

.

1. Ibid., p. 183.
2. Ibid., p. 184.
3. Ibid., p. 326.

men of business, warehouse workers, men from the abundant legal offices in Edinburgh, and artisans.¹ Several commercial travelers even arranged their business trips so as to be in Edinburgh on Sunday.²

In at least two of his letters to friends, Dr. Marcus Dods noted Dr. Whyte's enthusiasm for his classes.³ In one he said, "His class of eight hundred men and almost as many women is his great joy, and without it he would go down--or retire."⁴ Dr. Whyte himself admitted, "My class-work has been the great delight of my holidays for thirty years past."⁵

Dr. Whyte's change from the Bible to Christian writers as content for his teaching has already been discussed.⁶ His method of assignment,⁷ however, remained the same. His reading assignments sometimes exceeded the capacity of his hearers, but he was intent upon carrying out the principle that he must insure understanding of his own thought progress during the class hours. One of the strong qualities of his teaching was that he ". . . never lost the art of carrying his Classes with him at every point of his exposition."⁸

.

1. Ibid., pp. 327, 348.
2. Ibid., pp. 328, 345.
3. Marcus Dods (ed.): Later Letters of Marcus Dods, pp. 41, 80.
4. Ibid., p. 41.
5. Barbour, op. cit., p. 536.
6. Cf. ante, p. 22.
7. Ibid.
8. Barbour, op. cit., p. 331.

It is essential at this time to reiterate the fact that Dr. Whyte did not substitute the intellectual for the spiritual and religious emphasis in teaching.¹ Although the intellectual interest of the classes was strong, their teacher's first concern was for the moral and spiritual issues involved.² Many remembered with gratitude the ". . . warning-posts erected against paths to moral destruction, and the help given as they sought to return to the way of safety."³

In 1900 six hundred former and present members of the classes subscribed for having a portrait of Dr. Whyte painted by Sir James Guthrie. The words of the Rev. A. B. Macaulay, who represented the members when the portrait was presented to Dr. Whyte, serve adequately to express appreciation of the people who were in his classes.

We believe that, under God, you have been able to influence, to a greater extent than any one else in this generation, men and women in three respects: First, in communicating an enthusiasm for books. . .second, in imparting by your own zeal a belief in the unseen world and in the substantiality of ideas; and third, in creating a passion for pure and lofty and spiritual objects . . . and many a man has returned to his home or lodgings armed in heart and purpose for another week's battle with temptation.

But, Sir, . . .we do not confess that gratitude and respect exhaust our feelings, Because with all your giving--instruction, guidance, and advice--you have not refrained from giving us yourself. .⁴

.

1. Cf. ante, p. 22.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 332.
3. Ibid., p. 337.
4. Ibid., pp. 348-349.

C. As Lecturer

It is difficult to separate the lecturing and writing areas of Whyte's life from his teaching and preaching activity. His sermons were richly illustrated from literature, and his lectures were never without strong moral and spiritual teaching. Both lectures and sermons were published, which gave him an important place as a writer. For the most part, however, his lecturing began with his classes, especially as he began to concentrate on his study of mystic and Puritan writers.

During his year as Moderator Dr. Whyte was called on to address audiences of varied size and outlook.¹ The Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh,² The British Medical Association, and a Free Church sale were a few occasions out of many when he spoke outside the typical church situation.³

As time went on, however, Dr. Whyte's zeal and superior knowledge of his favorite lecturing subjects surpassed the interest and capacity of his listeners. It was at this time that expression was made by the congregation of its desire that he return to his own free way of speaking to them.⁴

.

1. Ibid., p. 418.
2. Ibid., p. 177.
3. Ibid., pp. 418-419.
4. Cf. ante, p. 43.

The same qualities that made Dr. Whyte a forceful preacher likewise entered into his lecturing. Again it was his emphasis on the person that had great drawing power. One who appreciated his lecture interpretations of Law, Teresa, and Newman said, "It is not always that poets and writers seem personally as great as their books."¹

D. As Writer

The well-known publications by Dr. Whyte during his lifetime consisted almost entirely of his evening lecture series based on character studies. None of his Sunday sermons were published during his life, but were compiled and edited in response to expressed desires from his readers.² Barbour indicated that Whyte's waiting to commit even his evening lectures to the press was in his favor, for by that time he had passed his apprentice years and had more completely developed his skill. That Dr. Whyte was aware of the possibility, however, was evident in a letter to Dr. Taylor Innes about his classes and the matter of authorship. He wrote, "I have hit the vein for them, and for myself, in the meantime, and I must not be seduced from it, even by the attractions of authorship."³

That Dr. Whyte was highly sensitive to the lit-

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 260.
2. Whyte, Lord, Teach Us To Pray, p. v.
3. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 321-322.

erary style of others has already been expressed.¹ His biographer added that Dr. Whyte's concern for style was revealed in ". . . his delicately discriminated eulogies of the English of Hooker and Bunyan, Law and Newman. ."² One of the few bits of Dr. Whyte's table talk preserved by his children stated, "Style!--it's the march of language: it's the way one word is married to another, the way the words lean upon one another, the way they walk together."³

When he received a copy of Dr. Whyte's first book, A Commentary on the Shorter Catechism, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote Whyte, observing:

I have remarked already many interesting plums, and I must refer at once to my favourite; 'Be careful of your health, but be careless of your life.' It would be hard to better that.

. . . The first question and answer--I wish the whole were in that strain--are purely sublime. Thenceforward it is apt too much to dwell among cobwebs and split hairs, to forget the soul and its strong affections, to address itself to captious enemies rather than to young minds desiring guidance and requiring trumpet notes of encouragement. Not in this correct and somewhat leaden manner, but with a more communicative and engaging ardour, should religion, philosophy, and morals be presented . . . The book smacks of the Long Parliament and the 'constitutional party' in religion.⁴

On the other hand, Baron Von Hügel, in later years a personal friend of Dr. Whyte, revealed that when first introduced to Dr. Whyte's appreciation of St. Teresa

.

1. Cf. ante, pp. 15, 27, 29-30.
2. Barbour, op. cit., p. 292.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 240.

he had been singularly impressed by his literary sense, especially his avoidance of the preacher's most common fault--the rhetorical style.¹

Dr. Whyte's publications drew many reviews, even from this side of the Atlantic. Of the reviews in England and Scotland, most were favorable, while not a few were enthusiastic. Exceptions came from those who thought his view of sin exaggerated, even morbid.² A sampling of the brief reviews by various papers and publishers will serve not only to show the acclaim with which his books were received, but also to point up the characteristics of his literary style.

Concerning Bible Characters, Adam to Achan, First Series, the Expository Times said, "It is marvellous how new the story is, how living it becomes in these accomplished hands."³

Sword and Trowel, commenting on the first series of Bunyan Characters, stated:

In the hands of some preachers or lecturers, Bunyan's characters would have become caricatures, but here they are delineated with a master-hand. The author does not treat these characters as mythical; to him they are living personalities . . .⁴

When The Walk, Conversation, and Character of Jesus Christ Our Lord, which Barbour called the least

.

1. Ibid., p. 388.
2. Ibid., p. 393.
3. Whyte, The Apostle Paul, following p. 231.
4. Whyte, Bunyan Characters, Second Series, following p. 307.

subjective and most practical of Whyte's books,¹ was published, Expository Times exclaimed, "Dr. Whyte has at last written his 'LIFE OF CHRIST.'"² Of the same book the Scotsman said, "It is distinguished by the exegetical and literary qualities that characterise all Dr. Whyte's writings."³

Liverpool Mercury, regarding Whyte's Our Lord's Characters, the last of his studies in Bible characters, stated:

The writing is so fresh and vigorous, the insight so piercing, the grasp of situations so firm, that the most diligent student of Scripture cannot fail to profit from Dr. Whyte's treatment of familiar themes.⁴

Dr. Whyte's writings were to be found in scattered places. A friend of his, visiting the scenes of John Bunyan's life near Bedford, found a portrait of Dr. Whyte above the mantel of a cottager there.⁵ An East Anglian student of his writings told how he had been inspired by them at difficult times, ". . . as though all Dr. Whyte did was mixed with prayer, which was answered while his books were read."⁶ When his son arrived in India as president of the Indian Legislative Assembly in 1921, he met many men, including Indian leaders, who disclosed that his father's books had been of great interest and benefit to

.

1. Barbour, op. cit., p. 473.
2. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, following p. 380.
3. Ibid.
4. Whyte, The Walk, Conversation, and Character of Jesus Christ Our Lord, following p. 340.
5. Barbour, op. cit., p. 395.
6. Ibid.

them.¹

E. Among Students

The note of encouragement which appeared in his working with individuals² and in his policy regarding church unity³ was also present in his dealing with students. Nicoll related that one of his greatest services was the use he made of his influence over young people, preferring always to encourage rather than to criticize. Although the burden of his counsel to ministerial students was incessant work and putting the pulpit first in their ministry,⁴ he did not prescribe his own favorite interests and methods for them. In one of his lectures he said, "Find out the food and the relish convenient for your own mind and heart, and then feed continually upon it."⁵ Always warm with an evangelical emphasis, his appeal to young people was a result of his ethical directness, of his enthusiastic presentation of good literature--an emphasis relatively limited in the evangelical school, and of his penetrating moral discernment.⁶

Students who had health and financial problems, or who were strangers in Edinburgh, often received unrequested help from Dr. Whyte, or were helped by generous

.

1. Ibid., p. 395.
2. Ante, p. 44.
3. Post, p. 59.
4. Nicoll, op. cit., p. 319; Barbour, op. cit., pp. 281-282, 353, 504.
5. Whyte, Thirteen Appreciations, p. 175.
6. Barbour, op. cit., p. 166.

gifts in the form of books.¹

The establishment of the "Alexander Whyte Theological Literature Prize" was further proof of his interest in and stimulation of students. This took place when his congregation presented him with a sizable gift on his twenty-fifth anniversary as minister of Free St. George's. His object in creating the foundation was ". . . to promote among our students and young Ministers the study of the great authors in Theology and in Practical Religion."² The prize has continued to be given in the three colleges of his church.

During the years he served as principal of New College, Dr. Whyte was ". . . singularly successful both in winning the personal confidence and love of the students, and in relating the life of the College to that of the community and the Church."³

F. In His Church

The effect of Dr. Whyte's ministry on his church as a whole was felt in several ways. First, his lecturing on biographical and literary subjects, while always on subjects with religious implications, served to widen the outlook of the Free Church. Through this means Whyte enabled many of his church to penetrate to the universal and perma-

.

1. Ibid., p. 359.
2. Ibid., pp. 413-414, 489.
3. Ibid., p. 497.

nent religious truths which had been experienced in past generations.¹

Statement has already been made of Dr. Whyte's longing for the union of the Presbyterian churches of Scotland--the Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church, and the Free Church of Scotland.² Dr. Whyte consistently avoided identifying himself with any open controversy on the issue of church unity, but it was his purpose whenever he had opportunity to support the effort for union both by his word and by his presence. Even in one of his lectures, the last in a series on "Makers of Scotland," he traced the endeavors of certain church leaders and urged his listeners to expect and work toward a greater union.³

Closely related to his effort for the merger of these churches were his contacts with the Highlands of Scotland. Because they had far less means of support and were more scattered, the ministers and people of the Highland congregations were in need of understanding encouragement, and of informed leadership to keep them from widening the breach, not only among the three churches, but within their own Free Church. Partial and biased reports concerning the church's stand on modern critical scholarship had reached the Highlands and a break was threatened. During his year

.

1. Ibid., pp. 175-176.

2. Cf. ante, p. 20.

3. Barbour, op. cit., pp. 249, 335, 514.

as Moderator and again in his later years Dr. Whyte traveled extensively in the Highlands, visiting out-of-the-way places and encouraging ministers and people alike. On his first trip he dwelt almost entirely upon a personal message. Barbour felt that this was unfortunate for the cause of church unity.¹ Dr. Whyte's procedure, however, through the entire struggle for union was one primarily of encouragement. This encouragement lightened the gloom of the convened group when the legal decision went against the former Free Church (after the United Church and Free Church became the United Free Church of Scotland in 1900), and spread even to the churches of the Highlands when Dr. Whyte made a personal trip to help them absorb the shock of this adverse decision.² His interest in the Highland churches was more than official, however, for Dr. and Mrs. Whyte spent many of the summer and Easter vacations there and felt more as neighbors and friends.³

Another refrain often heard in Dr. Whyte's words to his fellow ministers and students was his exhortation to hard work. Whenever he was asked to address a meeting of the church as a whole, he most often chose the same subject, dealing with ministerial responsibilities, compensations, dangers, and the time factor.⁴ At least one of his

.

1. Ibid., pp. 421-426.
2. Ibid., pp. 429-448.
3. Ibid., p. 449.
4. Ibid., pp. 280-284.

sermons, delivered before the General Assembly in 1884, with Canticles 1:6 as his text, "Mine own vineyard have I not kept," is said to have left its mark on the practice of the Free Church.¹

G. Summary

This chapter has considered the effects of Dr. Whyte's ministry in its various areas of contact and expression. The extent and maturity of his religious development have been disclosed through a consideration of these areas, each in turn.

First his influence as a minister was treated, and this in three aspects--those of preacher, pastor, and religious educator. His appeal to many kinds of people in each of these three phases was possible because of his singleness of purpose and his knowledge of human character, both of which were aided and abetted by his imagination and his deep love for human personality. As a preacher, his pulpit had first claim on him; as a pastor, the homes of his people came first; as a teacher, his major emphasis was on the moral and spiritual implications of his subject.

While great numbers of people were reached from his pulpit and through his classes, still more were reached outside the pale of his church as his popularity as a lec-

.

1. Ibid., p. 280.

turer increased, and as his evening sermons were carried far abroad through the newspapers.

The common note in his work with individuals, in his working for church unity, and in his contacts with students was that of encouragement. Criticism and conflict he avoided.

If any one rule were to be selected against which to measure his work and influence as minister, lecturer, writer, his contact with students, and leadership in his church, it might well be his own conviction that his calling was to be a preacher to heart and conscience.

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary

The purpose of this thesis, as stated in the introduction, has been to make a study of the religious development of Alexander Whyte. It was felt that because of his unusually handicapped beginning this could best be undertaken by first giving a brief biographical sketch of his life as background for appreciating more fully the impact of various influences on his personality. Following the biographical chapter, the second chapter was to present in some detail the several factors which helped to shape his spiritual stature. Finally, the third chapter was to complete the picture of his religious growth by filling in the undertones and overtones of his spiritual maturity as revealed in the widening circles of his influential life.

The first chapter was given over to the life of Alexander Whyte. It was seen that in spite of his illegitimate birth and the extreme poverty of his earliest years, a strong religious atmosphere surrounded Whyte as a small child. His passion for learning and for books helped to take the edge off the financial struggle to gain an education. His education and brief teaching career were means to an end which he had cherished since a little boy--to be a minister of the Gospel. His first period of ministry was

in Glasgow and served as a period of preparation for the work of his life in Free St. George's of Edinburgh. For nine years at the end of this ministry he was also principal of New College, the Free Church's institution of higher learning in Edinburgh. At the time of his death, postponed by his family's watchful care on account of his weak heart, tributes revealed how wide his influence had been.

In the second chapter, the first part was devoted to early influences in his life. The part his mother, his minister, and his teachers played in shaping his spiritual growth was discussed. The relationship of his own natural sensitivity and desire for knowledge to his early development was considered. The atmosphere of his church at the time he was a child and youth was shown to have contributed to his religious growth.

Next were discussed the factors of influence during his ministry. It was seen that certain contemporary men had definite effects upon his life and ministry. The Free Church during these later years had no specific bearing on his life other than to confirm convictions he already held regarding the futility of controversy. Coming late in his active life, his principalship brought with it greater freedom in his relationship with others as he accepted the recognition of his colleagues and church.

Following this it was learned that Dr. Whyte considered constant and methodical use of the Bible both a

responsibility and a compensation of the minister. The way was prepared for the study of Dr. Whyte and his concentration on certain literary figures by indicating that by his own statement only the Gospel could heal the marks of sin in the human heart.

The last part of the second chapter dealt with the influence of Whyte's extensive reading on his spiritual thinking. Thomas Goodwin and John Bunyan, Puritan writers, were discussed relative to their appeal and effect, as were William Law, Jacob Boehme, and Teresa of the mystic authors. It was observed that though these were among his most treasured writers, his evaluation was critical and unbiased, lifting out those ideas and experiences from each person only as they contributed to and strengthened his own evangelistic purpose. The three areas in which these authors figured largely were the nurturing of Whyte's natural imagination, their undergirding by their own experience Whyte's message of human sin and God's mercy and grace, and the enriching of his evangelical and personal message.

In the third chapter were taken up the several ways in which Whyte exerted influence through his ministry. It was learned that as minister, teacher, and writer, Dr. Whyte reached people of all walks of life. His wide acclaim as a preacher was possible because of his undeviating course in his pulpit ministry. Experience in a trade in his early

years gave him direct entrance into the hearts of those in his audiences who worked with their hands. His intensity, his vigorous imagination, and his deep conviction all aided in extending his wide acceptance as preacher, teacher, and writer. It was seen that Dr. Whyte was not only forceful preacher to his congregation, but a faithful pastor of his flock as well. It was noted that Dr. Whyte's concentrated and prolonged study of his favorite writers caused him after some years to exceed the capacity of his people, who requested his freer, less scholarly, manner of speaking to them.

Certain common elements were discovered present in the various areas of his influence. As a preacher, pastor, teacher, and in his relationship with students, his attention to the individual and his need was always foremost. Further, in dealing with the individual, in striving for church unity, and in his contacts with students and young ministers, it was the note of encouragement that was dominant over that of criticism.

It was also indicated in this chapter that his direct influence spread far beyond the circle of his own congregation. This was due largely to the popularity of his published lectures and sermons, both in book form and in newspaper reports.

B. Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that the elements

of influence as discovered in this thesis, both as they came to bear upon Alexander Whyte and as he in turn brought them to bear in the various functions of his ministry, were merging factors in the creation of a mature and dynamic Christian personality.

It is to be noted that when the points of influence are stripped to their basic nature, they may be listed as self, parent, teacher, pastor, friends, Scripture, authors, the church, and indirectly, the state. It may be concluded from this and from his life that the personality under study was complete and integrated, and that in his generation and ours the elements of influence are the same, while the garb of the shaping factor may vary. It is in this variation that either the disintegrating and warping, or the integrating and nurturing, tendencies spring up.

A further conclusion is that an understanding of others and their needs, based on a knowledge of self with its needs and capacities is a key to the hearts of many people. It implies humility, honesty, and sympathy, all of which are essential qualities in human relationships, but especially so in the Christian worker.

The imagination is a faculty which deserves careful treatment and deliberate exercise, and is an effective wedge for breaking into the stolid soul and mind.

This study has given a challenge by presenting the possibilities to be realized in a person who faces life, society, and God cumbered with unnatural conditions.

The writer feels that the study is relevant for this day, when so much thought and responsibility is charged to the childhood account in balancing the ledger of adult life.

The thesis has aroused curiosity as to the relation between the current trend in the preaching of repentance and the general increase in church attendances.

The study provided a glimpse into the field of devotional classics, and left the writer with the desire to pursue such reading further.

Deeply enriching has been the intimate acquaintance with this one whose thought, activity, and endeavor were existent in the shadow of the One whom he loved, and to whom he sought to bring his people.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

Barbour, George F.: The Life of Alexander Whyte. Seventh edition. George H. Doran Company, New York, 1925.

Whyte, Alexander: The Apostle Paul. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1903.

Bible Characters, Adam to Achan. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, no date.

Bible Characters, Gideon to Absalom. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, no date.

Bible Characters, Ahithophel to Nehemiah. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, no date.

Bible Characters, Joseph and Mary to James the Lord's Brother. Second edition. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1902.

Bible Characters, Stephen to Timothy. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1901.

Bible Characters, Our Lord's Characters. Tenth edition. Oliphants Ltd., Edinburgh, no date.

Bishop Butler, An Appreciation. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1904.

Bunyan Characters, First Series. Second edition. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1895.

Bunyan Characters, Second Series. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1894.

Bunyan Characters, Third Series. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, no date.

Characters and Characteristics of William Law. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1893.

Commentary on the Shorter Catechism (Handbooks for Bible Classes). T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, no date.

Lord, Teach Us To Pray. Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York, no date.

Newman, An Appreciation. Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1902.

Thirteen Appreciations. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, no date.

The Walk, Conversation and Character of Jesus Christ Our Lord. Fleming Revell Company, New York, 1905.

With Mercy and With Judgment. George H. Doran Company, New York, no date.

B. Secondary Sources

Darlow, Thomas Herbert: William Robertson Nicoll, Life and Letters. George H. Doran Company, New York, 1925.

Dods, Marcus (editor): Early Letters of Marcus Dods. Hodder and Stoughton, New York, 1910.

Later Letters of Marcus Dods. Hodder and Stoughton, New York, 1911.

Gammie, Alexander: Preachers I Have Heard. Pickering and Inglis Ltd., London, no date.

Hobhouse, Stephen: Selected Mystical Writings of William Law. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1948.

Macleod, John: Scottish Theology. The Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1943.

Masterman, N. (editor): Chalmers on Charity. Archibald Constable and Company, Westminster, 1900.

"My Ten Best Books," Religion in Life, XIX (Autumn, 1950), pp. 495-510.

Nicoll, William Robertson: Princes of the Church. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1921.

Somervell, David C.: A Short History of Our Religion. Second edition. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922.