

or others a gift of a copy of it, is enhancing the equipment for soul-growing.

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"A SOUL IMPERIALIST"—an Imperialist of the Empire of the Soul—is the phrase or designation which suggested itself to us in passing for the cover of this issue the portrait of Dr. Whyte. For if to many of the young men of Britain, and of Scotland and Edinburgh particularly, Lord Rosebery a generation ago proved himself an inspiration toward the expansion of an earthly empire, there is no question that in relation to those things that make for literature and lasting life, the Empire of the Soul, "Whyte of St. George's" was equally a "guide, philosopher and friend" to many men and women in varied social conditions. Dr. Whyte was indeed an apostle of that Empire which is the greatest of all.

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PERHAPS IT WAS LORD ROSEBERY'S HEAVIEST HANDICAP that he was born in affluent and aristocratic society—otherwise he might have become one of the epoch-making statesmen of last generation, as indeed he was and is a leading litterateur, and was an orator second to none, in stirring appeal and imperial review. On the other hand, Alexander Whyte, of the same generation, inherited different handicaps in social and material conditions, and not only "breasted the blows of circumstance," but, under God, so developed his personality that he became not only an intellectual power in the land, but A MAN who was loved and honoured by people of all ranks, and revered, we doubt not, by students of all professions and Churches—and of none.

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THAT TITLES ARE BUT TAGS, before or after a man's name to indicate the kind of JOB or the opportunity for service involved in his day's work in this world, is one of the strong impressions left in reflecting on such a "life": Be they social distinctions of Earl or Knight, or words like Principal, Professor, Builder, Premier, Doctor, Captain, Reverend, Merchant, Editor, or what not—matters little or not at all; though juniors in years or experience may strive and strain, and exercise push and pull to gain such superficial babbles. . . . For if the "job," whatever it be, does not develop THE MAN, and enlarge his vision of life and its possibilities in relation to his fellowmen and his community, it is likely to matter little at the end of the day what were the superficial and transient honours or emoluments associated with it.

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PRIMARILY A BOOK-LOVER, ALEXANDER WHYTE, like many another man whom love of the storied page lured from other pursuits in his youth, knew what it was to give his days to manual toil even while he longed to be more fully exercising and developing his mind; but, happily, circumstances evolved so that he was enabled to satisfy his mind and heart-hunger ere the task of tackling what may be called the preliminary defences was too strenuous. . . . But he never forgot his own early struggles, and as a consequence devised ways and means to help and encourage many students, who, while agreeing with him that such and such a book was worth having even if they had to "sell their beds to buy it"—did not happen to have beds to sell! And, like the rare-hearted gentleman that he was, he respected the independence of all alike, for while (if we remember aright) he invited those to contribute to the book fund who cared to do so, he also assured his Class mem-

bers that the names left by those who desired copies, would not be known to others.

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HIS OVERFLOWING LOVE OF LITERATURE, and masterly expositions of the works of various great writers, ancient and modern, were undoubtedly the bases of his attraction to many. But of course there was no getting away from his other dominant characteristics. Scholarly, he was also evangelical—as his books bear evidence—but above all he was broad-minded and large-hearted. It may surprise those who know or think of him only as a great evangelical expositor, to find that he was on the side of those who would have retained the Professor in the famous "Robertson-Smith" case, and indeed took no insignificant part in working for a decision on the charitable or what may be should be called the sanely-tolerant side. Often it seems as if one generation's "heterodoxy" may become the "orthodoxy" of another! That being so, it is indeed a pity that, with the record of the Life of the Founder of Christianity open to all, the dogmatism of creeds should be allowed so to divide "brethren." . . .

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BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THIS "LIFE" IS A LASTING BOOK, and not a mere passing compilation of pulp and printers' ink, we shall make no apology for returning to it more than once. Meantime it is perhaps permissible for the present Editor of this Magazine to record that he has found associated with the volume one of the most highly valued compliments that he as a writer or reviewer could be given. After Dr. Whyte's death, the Editor, who had been privileged to attend that great soul's classes in Edinburgh for at least seven years, ventured to publish a short appreciation under "A Cosmopolitan Christian Passes." The writer does not wish to use extravagant language, but he does not hesitate to say that had he been given the choice he would almost rather have had his name mentioned as it is in that "Life"—with a paragraph quoted from his tribute to that great-hearted man—than have written the novel of the year. For, for one thing, it is altogether probable that when many books of many years have passed into oblivion, this, and others, concerning "Whyte of Edinburgh" will be known and read. All the more because Principal Whyte was himself ever alert and anxious to garner for his classes wheat from the literary fields of great writers of all ages, churches and climes—and was indeed a greatly-serving and self-forgetting, or rather SELF-PUT-SECOND SOUL, his work will not soon die, and certainly the memory of his fatherly personality will linger long with many of his "young men"—who, whatever their churches or creeds, may look forward to meeting and greeting him again, and, it may be, hearing him expound anew in a larger life!

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TO HAVE ONE'S NAME MENTIONED in such a book, and a quotation given therein from one's tribute, is indeed a signal honour, and one all the more gratifying in that it was in no way sought or expected, and came entirely as a surprise. The writer is now prompted to add that, when visiting Scotland in 1913 he had the privilege of meeting Dr. Whyte again and that one of the valued possessions in his home is an autographed copy of the portrait reproduced on the cover of this magazine—received from Dr. and Mrs. Whyte at the time of his marriage (with other practical evidence of personal interest).

LATENESS IN RECEIPT of the "Life" led to an interesting experience affecting the question of: What are many Canadian ministers reading?—and, incidentally—How far does the practical interest of some ministerial readers extend? In this matter the writer may confess that he was disposed to practise the advice of Polonius: "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice," and the sequel so far has been a revelation calculated to inspire questioning in various directions. The writer believes he has come into friendly—not to say fraternal—touch with a fairly large circle of clerical men, and he resolved to note quietly how many of them would reveal intimacy with this work. The principal clerics who would, we fancied, be the first to speak of the book, did not mention it at all; the next in order was somewhat long in getting over his copy—if he has yet got over it. Others, including not a few from Scotland—but can it be that ministers, with salaries assured, are finding it as difficult as editors to get reading-of-choice done? Be that as it may, the first man to mention the "Life" and to comment on the honour done the editor of the B. C. M., was one not originally of the Presbyterian Church; the second was a reading layman, a Canadian born, who (after being transferred from Vancouver to Toronto) wrote congratulating the editor on the "good company" in which he found him; then another layman, was it?—But what matter? None: only this: If the ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Canada—called by that name or any other!—cannot or rather do not arrange their work and days so as to get time to read such books as this "Life of Alexander Whyte," it is more than time that a movement was set on foot to relieve them of other less important "duties."

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NOT ONLY AT THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, but at any time all the year round, readers may give any one or any home a copy of this "Life of Alexander Whyte" and rest confident that they have had a share in passing on a source of influence the benefits of which are likely to last and grow. We suggest that those who are able should make sure that their own minister has a copy—or give him one; and to the really rich men who get this Magazine regularly—and we know a number do—we make bold to suggest that they might supply copies to the ministers in smaller charges of their denomination.

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IN THUS COMMENDING THIS OUTSTANDING BOOK, we think it quite consistent—as it is also timely—to add that our readers, in looking for other book gifts, should let their interest begin at home—with Canadian books—and "with quality and price equal" (as the "B. C. Products" Bureau men say), remember that stories like those by Mrs. Isabel Ecclestone Mackay, Robert Allison Hood, and others, can be sent to homes anywhere with the confidence that friends will find in them entertainment, involving healthful thrills and happy characterization.

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FORMER MAYOR L. D. TAYLOR has been elected Mayor of Vancouver for 1925. We congratulate him on his "come-back," and trust that, as civic head, he will surprise his friends and disappoint his foes. We wish him success in his honourable and onerous office.