

CHURCH
WORK

Ministers and Churches

NEWS
LETTERSWILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE AS
A BIBLE STUDENT.

Lord Salisbury called Mr. Gladstone a great Christian. To this Mr. Morley adds: "Nothing could be more true or better worth saying. He not only accepted the doctrines of that faith as he believed them to be held by his own communion; but he sedulously strove to apply the noblest moralities of it to the affairs both of his own nation and of the commonwealth of nations." These striking statements indicate the real source of the power of the great statesman.

They suggest also that Mr. Gladstone must have been a diligent student of the Bible, for no man can become a great Christian without constant meditation on the teachings of Christ and on the divine revelation that preceded His coming and His teaching.

In fact, Mr. Gladstone began early to read and study the Bible. His diary shows that between the ages of twelve and eighteen he had formed the habit of Bible study that endured to the end. One constant entry in his diary, Mr. Morley says, is: "Read Bible." While at Oxford his Greek Testament and Bible, as indicated by the entries in his diary, were in daily use. On one Sunday he attended chapel three times, read his Bible, and looked over his shorter abstract of Butler's Analogy. A few days later the entry in his diary states that he read the Bible and four of Bishop Horsley's sermons.

A little later in his career, when he was twenty-three years of age, he stated in a memorandum that up to that age he had taken a great deal of teaching direct from the Bible. "But now," he adds, "the figure of the Church arose before me as a teacher, too, and I gradually found in how incomplete and fragmentary a manner I had drawn divine truth from the sacred volume as indeed I had also missed in the Thirtynine Articles some things which ought to have taught me better."

His inner life was thus steadily built up by the direct study of the Bible and by the light thrown upon the Bible by the Christian Church. Long before he entered upon his marvelous public career he had a firm conviction that men who have no belief in the divine revelation are not the men to govern the nation.

In the strain and stress of his later political life the Bible was an unfailing source of light and strength to him. He speaks frankly in his journal of what the Bible was to him in the crises of his life. His words are well worth taking to heart by all men: "On most occasions of very sharp pressure or trial, some word of Scripture has come home to me as if borne on angel's wings. Many could I recollect. The Psalms are the great storehouse. Perhaps I should put some down now, for the continuance of memory is not to be trusted. I. In the winter of 1837, Psalm 128. This came in a most singular manner, but it would be a long story to tell."

Though men persistently misunderstood him, Mr. Gladstone seems to have acted throughout his life on Christian principles. "Life was to him," says Mr. Morley "in all its aspects an application of Christian teaching and example." Of all his teachers he said he owed most and owed enormously to the four gospels.

He once sent to one of his sons at Oxford an outline of suggestions for the conduct of life. These, it is said, were

really a description of his own habit and unbroken practice. Among them was this: "As to duties directly religious, such as daily prayer in the morning and evening, and daily readings of some portion of the Holy Scripture, or as to the holy ordinances of the gospel, there is little need, I am confident, to advise you; one thing, however, I would say, that it is not difficult, and it is most beneficial, to cultivate the habit of inwardly turning the thoughts to God, though but for a moment in the course or during the intervals of our business; which continually present occasions requiring His aid and guidance."

In the light of what we know to have been Mr. Gladstone's loyalty to Christian teachings we are not surprised by his steadfast purpose to apply Christian principles to all phases of life and conduct. Once, in a conversation with an American visitor, he said that every problem of life is a gospel problem. He believed that the teachings of Christ, when received and obeyed, will regulate all human life in the best possible manner. He believed that in Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

He stands out in the history of the past century not only as an intellectual giant, but massive in his Christian personality. Every one who seeks to live life at its best will find it well worth while to study with care the career of this marvelous man. He once wrote, "All I write and all I think, and all I am, is based on my unfeigned faith in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one central hope of our poor, wayward race."

On the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture his inner life was built up.—*The Bible Today*

THE BISHOP'S TEST.

The late Dr. Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, was, above all, practical, and his methods, even of carrying out theological theories, were extremely realistic. It was not enough for the young men who came under his charge to tell him what they thought they would do under such and such circumstances; he insisted that they should show him just how they would go to work.

While he was Bishop of London it was Dr. Temple's habit to invite parties of young candidates for ordination to stay at Fulham Palace. One evening on such an occasion he came into the room where six of these young men were, and informed them that he was going into his study to lie on his sofa, and they were to come to him in turn, and administer such counsel and comfort as they would to a sick or sorrowing parishioner.

When the Bishop left the room there was an awful hush and a long silence, for this test of their ruture capabilities did not impress them favorably.

"Are you going to be all night?" called the Bishop at last.

This roused them, and they decided to draw lots as to who should go. The lot fell to a young Irishman, who, taking his courage in both hands, went into the sanctum. He bent over the supposed sufferer, but words failed him. But for an instant only. Then he shook his head and bent still lower. "Oh, Frederick, Frederick!" said the audacious young candidate, "it's the drink again!"

The Bishop gasped, then his face lighted. "You'll be altogether admirable in an East End parish," he said calmly.

NEW ST. JAMES' CORNER STONE.

With simple impressiveness, the laying of the corner-stone of St. James Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, on August 20th, was conducted at the corner of Locke and Herkimer streets. The congregation, which assembled to witness the ceremony, was a large one, including many of the ministers from churches in the neighborhood and laymen.

Rev. T. McLachlan, pastor of the church, was the chairman, and the ceremony was opened with the singing of the 72nd Psalm. Rev. Alexander McLaren then read portions of the scripture. This was followed by the laying of the stone by Rev. Dr. Fletcher. He was presented with a beautiful silver trowel by Rev. Mr. McLachlan. Dr. Fletcher took but a few moments, closing with the well remembered words, "I solemnly declare the corner-stone for this sacred edifice well and truly laid." This was followed by prayer by Rev. J. R. VanWyck and the singing of the doxology.

An adjournment was made to the present church, where a programme of speeches was presented.

Rev. Dr. Fletcher was the first speaker, and he thanked the congregation very heartily for the silver trowel that had been presented to him. He referred in a few words to the history of the church. It had been founded by the Presbytery seventeen years ago, on the 15th of October. Rev. T. C. Thomson was the first minister. He was followed by Rev. Mr. McDermott, and he by the present pastor, Rev. Thomas McLachlan. Dr. Fletcher then referred to the life of a happy Christian, which should be the point that every member of the congregation should strive to reach.

Rev. Mr. McLaren congratulated the congregation on its achievements. It should be the earnest effort of every one to take some active part in connection with the church work.

Rev. De Courey Raynor, of Immanuel Congregational Church, said there were no petty jealousies between the different churches in the west end of the city. He wished the congregation every success in its new building.

Mr. Geo. H. Milne said that it gave him great pleasure to be present and participate in the services. The work had been slow in the west, but it was picking up, and he looked forward to the time when St. James' would be one of the strong churches in the city.

Mr. T. J. Shanks said he was not a believer in large churches. There was less of the sociability in them that is so necessary in the life of the church. He was delighted at the manner in which the congregation had gone ahead with the building of the new edifice.

Mr. George Rutherford, on behalf of Central Church, wished the church all the good wishes, which he felt proud to be the bearer of. He was sure that the church would receive the best wishes of every sister Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Beverly Ketchen presented congratulations on behalf of McNab Street Church. He doubted if Hamilton would again see the laying of three corner-stones of Presbyterian Churches in various parts of the city in one brief summer. He believed that the future work of the congregation would be a heavy one, but the persistency of purpose that has characterized the members in the past, he felt sure, would be the watchword in years to come.

Rev. J. Roy VanWyck, Mr. J. B. Graham, of St. Giles' Church; Mr. G. A. Young, Mr. George Black and Mr. A. M. Cunningham were the other speakers.

A short musical programme was given by Robert Symmers, Miss Sadie Fraser and Mr. O. Penny.