

Miscellaneous.

SHAKING HANDS.

Dr. John Hall discourses in a recent number of the New York Observer upon "Certain Secondary Means of Grace. They are certain letters, shaking hands, and kind words. We quote what he says on the latter:

There are great varieties in the way of shaking hands, produced, no doubt, by temperament, example, education in manners, and other influences. One method is to shake arms and shoulders. It suggests dislocation, and is continued indefinitely, accompanied with a gurgling, vehement flow of queries that cannot wait for an answer. This method obtains in Ireland. It is met with in the North of Scotland. A variety of it has been imported, and may be met with "out West" in this country. Another and opposite form is confined to the hands, and omits the shaking. The digits touch as the fins of two fishes might touch, and then, left to the operation of gravitation, fall. This may be met in England and in "good society" everywhere. There is a "via media"—a golden mean—in which both verb and noun have their place. It is shaking hands with a firm, fearless grasp, and a little heart tingling down to the finger-tips.

I maintain that shaking of hands, rightly administered, is a means of grace. You, my dear sir, are established, and every one knows you to be a solid man. There is a man beside you just fighting his battle and making his way. You know him, and nod to him. Take him by the hand, my dear sir. It will do him good; and if he was cast down a little, as men will sometimes be, it may encourage him. "Our minister shook hands with me." What made that hulking fellow, too big to be a boy, too raw to be a man, announce that fact so loudly when he went home? The truth is, for sensible effects on him it was more than the sermon. John Smith has been a hard drinker, but is trying fairly to get out of it. Going down the village street, he meets Mr. Brown, who is "boss" at "the works above." Mr. Brown shakes hands with "Mr. Smith," in sight of the entire village. Does that do Smith any good? I tell you it is as good to him as one of Mr. Gough's admirable lectures. It says as plainly as if Mr. Brown had written it: "Mr. Smith, you have only to take care of yourself, and you will be a respectable man in spite of all." That makes Smith stronger; and when he goes to church next Sabbath, and looks over at Mr. Brown, he will find it easier to believe God's most loving Word: "Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more."

So "shake hands and be friends"—at market, on the street, and, above all, at church. I presume the apostle meant something when he said: "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss." Some people quit church for want of this means of grace. Everybody looks as if just returned from the North Pole and there had not been time to thank and the deacon, who "runs the church," (if anything so lifeless can be said to be run), had been in command of the party. I suspect the boys sometimes say: "Well, I guess I ought to be good, but if I ever do, it won't be long with the deacon." They wait, poor boys, till some one comes along with heart—getting no good in the meantime—whose genial, life-like ways make them "feel kind o' good," and they catch the inspiration "and run with gladness in the way of God's commandments."

APOLOGETIC PREACHING.

The question, How far should preaching be apologetic? was suggested by a sermon we lately heard at the opening of a new chapel. The preacher, who was an eminent and highly-gifted man, selected a text which set forth a leading doctrine of the Christian faith. From the nature of the occasion, we hoped that the sermon would consist of a luminous exposition of the great truth, and an application of it to the consciences and hearts of the hearers. Instead of that, the time was almost entirely occupied with an elaborate defence of the doctrine against its skeptical adversaries, though probably not one of them was present to be confounded or convinced by the preacher's arguments. The discourse, though an able and eloquent one, disappointed us. But it led us to ask whether, in some quarters, the same style of preaching was not practiced to an unwise extent. St. Paul said that he was set for the defence of the gospel (εως απολογουαι το ευαγγελιον), and in some measure all Christian ministers have the same vocation. It is very desirable, when occasion requires, that they should be able to repel the attacks of unbelief. But there are some men who seem to think that they ought to do nothing else. They imagine themselves to be always preaching to a congregation of skeptics, to have continually before them representatives of all the heresies of the times. Every sermon is a Bampton Lecture on a small scale. They appear to get their inspiration not so much from their subject as from the doubts which have been expressed with reference to it. As if their only interest in truth was to fight for it! The city of God is, to their mind, in a state of perpetual siege, and the noise of war always raging around her walls. They seldom lead their hearers forth for a peaceful walk, bidding them to mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, that, enamored with the sight, they may exult in citizenship, or desire to share in its privileges.

In most congregations, the majority consists of persons who are never reached by the skepticism of the age, and feel no interest in it. They need reproof for their faults, comfort for their sorrows, strength for their conflict, with temptation, and for the performance of the every-day duties of life, or to be aroused from their indifference to the whole subject of religion. For their minister to be ever bringing before them, for refutation, the infidelity which he, perhaps, has met with in the course of his own reading and study, is very much like feeding them with stones when they need bread. Then, again, to be always "speaking" of truth in an apologetic tone, is calculated to weaken its influence. If every doctrine of the faith is treated as an open question,

it gives to religious teaching an air of uncertainty, which ought to be carefully avoided. It was formerly the practice of Scotch ministers to preach from the same text for many Sundays together. One day a young man stole into a Church during the sermon, and the first words he heard were, "We now come to the thirty-second objection to this doctrine." He instantly thought to himself, "What an objectionable doctrine it must be." Are there not many sermons which have a similar effect? Do they not often shake the confidence of those who already believe, and create doubt in minds where it never existed before? It may be fairly questioned whether it is wise to drag people through all the mazes of modern infidelity, merely for the pleasure of showing them the way out, and especially when there is a danger that some of them may be left behind. The very apostle who was himself so great a controversialist, said: "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."

Another fact, which weighs against the constant adoption of this style of preaching, is, that the class for whom it is intended are seldom convinced or satisfied with it. When the preacher supposes himself to be in conflict with a skeptical adversary, he generally imagines one who is weaker than himself. He puts into the mouth of his opponent only those objections and arguments which he knows he can refute. He makes him speak or be silent, just as it suits his purpose, and, as a matter of course, gains an easy and complete victory over him. By this means he may obtain some applause from the less thoughtful portion of his audience, but if there should happen to be a real living unbeliever present, he thinks himself treated unfairly. He only wishes that the proprieties of the time and place permitted him to speak out in answer to the preacher, mounted upon "coward's castle," who has it all his own way, and attacks a man when his hands are tied.

Even when every punctilio of controversial chivalry is observed, and such questions are treated with the utmost fairness, they can very seldom be treated exhaustively in the short space of time allotted to a sermon. To be a successful apologist requires a logical mind and great dialectic skill, qualifications which many useful ministers do not possess. A man may be a good ploughman, or a good mason, and yet not be a good soldier. There are many who are eminently qualified to cultivate the barren wastes of a sinful world, or to build up God's spiritual temple, who make but a very poor figure when they come to fight with the enemies of the faith. Their feeble advocacy does far more harm than good to the cause they wish to defend. What a man cannot do well, he had better let alone.

There are some amongst us who consider it an end of all strife to appeal to the authority and example of our Puritan forefathers. It may be said that their preaching and writing were, to a great extent, controversial,—that they used their rare endowments and their vast learning to oppose the religious errors of their times. Very true, and no one would wish to undervalue their important services in this direction. But, on the other hand, it may be doubted whether this was the most permanently valuable part of their labors. Will not Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and his "Saint's Everlasting Rest," be read with unabated pleasure and profit, when his ponderous tomes of polemic theology stand neglected and unopened on dusty bookshelves? It is not, of course, meant that ministers should have no sympathy with the doubts which will often distress the minds of their most intelligent hearers, or do nothing to remove them. But a ministry which is only or chiefly anti-skeptical, is not likely to be a very fruitful one. It is generally positive, didactic preaching which brings sinners to repentance, and does the most to promote experimental and practical religion.—London Freeman.

IS CHRISTIANITY A RACE RELIGION? BY REV. J. T. GRAVEY. An item has appeared in several of the papers to the effect that the Rev. Samuel Johnson, "somewhat known as a profound student of Oriental religions and philosophical literature," has affirmed that "Christianity has had little success outside the Aryan family of nations."

It is a little difficult to tell in what connection this was said. The Radical contains copious extracts from a discourse entitled "The piety of Pantheism, and its Relation to the Age, as Illustrated in the Higher Forms of Hindoo Philosophy," in which this wonderful assertion seems in some way to have been contained.

If Mr. Johnson means to affirm that modern missions have only been successful in their presentation of Christianity among Aryan nations, the announcement is, after a sense, at least refreshing. One scarcely knows whether to admire more the ethnological acquirements of this "profound student," or his familiarity with the success of Christianity within the century.

The success of Christianity, in elevating the peoples of the Hawaiian Islands from barbarism to a fair Christian civilization, or any progress it may have made in Madagascar, could scarcely be included in its Aryan "success." As we do not know just what he calls a "success," I presume we must not inquire about the Magyars of Hungary, for so "profound" a student may possibly include them in his Aryan nations!

As he was discussing Oriental nations, however, it is probable that he was alluding to the acceptance of Christianity by the people of India. Christianity must be admitted to have had somewhat of a success in India, when with but a feeble agency in the field, after a comparatively short period of labor, it now enrolls two hundred and fifty thousand Protestant Christians as converts from heathendom. But the greater bulk of these converts is, perhaps, in Southern

India, among the Tamil and like nations; while in Central India, among the Shumans, the work has not only spread rapidly, but has been attended by the same class of physical phenomena that was common at one time at Kentucky Presbyterian camp-meetings, and in early Methodist revivals. Multitudes of these people have become Christians. The "success" of Christianity among the Karans, in Burmah, we may assume to be known even to Mr. Johnson.

Ethnology may not have received the attention of this "profound student," but we are scarcely at liberty to suspect him of such ignorance of its rudest outlines as not to know that these are without the pale of the Aryan nations.

But Bengal is affiliated with Sanscrit, and it may be claimed that Bengal must have been referred to by Mr. Johnson. If we admit his ethnology herein, it becomes more difficult to recognize him as a "profound student" of Oriental religions; or at least we may be allowed to commend to his attention Mr. Hunter's Rural Bengal, that he may learn somewhat of the ethnological bearings of the religious element of that district of country. The fact is, that the predominant religious elements of Bengal are aboriginal rather than Aryan, and while it has accepted much of Brahmanism, it has added to it Siva worship, and much else. Its predominant religious features ante-date the presence of the Aryan family. Thus even as to Bengal, it is in the presence of other predominant elements, and in proportion to them, that Christianity has met with success.

In the Methodist missions of the Northwest, the greatest progress has been made among low-caste people, such as Chumars (tanners), and like tribes. These low-caste peoples, have, in some instances, become quite identified with the Hindoo social structure, but they have ever been considered by scientific men as the Mlechhas, or outcasts, and in Bonares, and like centres, they are Pariahs, in no wise identified with the Brahminical service. That these represent the aboriginal element of India, I presume all are agreed. That they ante-date the Aryan in India is equally well known.

The fact seems to be, so far as India is concerned, that the success of Christianity has been in the inverse ratio of the presence or predominance of the Aryan element in the population. The Turanian, says Bunsen, is "concrete feat"—that is, he is superstitious and emotional in religion. He is more. Bunsen says that the Turanian will become a hammer to break in pieces, etc. This has found its illustration in the Methodist and other missions in India, where the mightiest of the native Christian ministry is not unfrequently from these low-caste peoples. Many of them prove, indeed, as Bunsen says, "a hammer to break in pieces," etc.

The affectation of scientific modes seems just now to be "the fashion" with men of Mr. Johnson's proclivities, and it would be amusing, if it were not worse, to witness their eager display of their incipient science and learning. This can scarcely be admitted to be within the range of dignified sarcasm. At other times and in other ways, they may command our respect, but in this affectation of learning, and this bandying of it, for the purpose of impressing the vulgar, they merit at our hands only the indifference due to Charlatanism.

MINISTERS LIBRARIES.

One of the great difficulties in the way of most of our ministers is the inability to obtain suitable books to assist them in their studies. If the Apostle, with all the early advantages which he enjoyed, and the special Divine assistance afforded him, needed books, surely we need not be surprised if ministers at the present day feel their need of similar aids. Many of our brethren, however, have more difficulty in obtaining suitable books, we presume, than Paul had in obtaining his from Troas. Not that the books are not to be had, but because brethren have not the means at command to procure them. Many of our Churches are very attentive in supplying the personal wants of their minister and his family, and would be afflicted if they knew he was deficient in a suitable wardrobe, or in a supply for his table; but they forget the deficiency in his library, and make no suitable provision to meet it. Every church should furnish its minister with the means to procure food for his mind as well as his body. If the church neglects this, it will be the loser in the end. Every Church should make a special donation to its minister, every year, for the exclusive purpose, of enabling him to add to his library such works as he needs, to keep him fully posted on all the great living issues of the day. Then he will be prepared to meet the enemy in the gate, and to stand as a defence for the Gospel.

PROPER USE OF THE BIBLE.

A great many people think that the Bible is a very sacred book. I will tell you how it is a sacred book. If you read this book and find moral qualities in it, and they are transferred as living virtues to you, then to you it becomes a sacred book. This book is sacred to you just so far as its teachings are incorporated in your experience and feelings, and not a bit further. All that part of the Bible is Bible to you that you live by. So much of the Bible as you vitalize is valuable to you; but so much of it as you do not vitalize is of no use to you. You put your Bible in your book-case. There it stands all the week, perhaps. Or you read it once a day, or once a week, as the case may be. And you do it very decorously. The room is still, and your children sit around the room in a stiff row. You put on your spectacles and read; and as you read you lower the key of your voice—for when men want to be religious, they always take a solemn note; and you read

all the way through the chapter, and are like a blind man walking along the road where there are all sorts of flowers on both sides, never seeing a single one. Men read thus and feel a great deal better because they have read the Bible to their family! Now, I tell you, the only thing you read in the Bible is that which jumps into you, and which you cannot get out of you. It is the vital, luminous part, and not the dead letter that you read, if you read any part of the Bible. Suppose I should set up housekeeping on the same principle that some people set up their religious housekeeping? A man goes to housekeeping, and gets a Bible, with his name on the inside, and his name on the outside, and puts it on the table, in his best room; and there it lies for months and years without being opened—unless there is a funeral in the family. Suppose I should go to housekeeping, and should give an order to the grocer for three boxes of sperm candles, saying, "I am going to have a luminous house," and should put those candles away in the attic and never light one of them? What is the use of candles but to burn? That is the very figure of our Master. He says: "No man puts a candle under a bushel, but he lights it and puts it on a candlestick."—Beecher.

CHURCH REFORM IN RUSSIA.

Alexander the II. is one of the most enlightened potentates of Europe. After accomplishing the greatest political reform of the age, the emancipation of upwards of forty millions of serfs, he proceeds to that of the Church, an account of which, taken from the Press, we subjoin:

The Czar has just made a new reform which will prove of great advantage to his empire. The Czar is temporal Head of the Greco-Russian, officially designated as the Orthodox-Catholic Faith. As early as the year 1054, in the reign of Grand Duke Isaslav I., the Russian Church separated from the See of Rome. In 1589, when Feodor I. was Czar, the Russian separated from the Byzantine Church; and had for its head a patriarch; almost independent, appointed by the sovereign. The spiritual and temporal rulers clashed, and the Emperor became Head of the Church—appointing to every office in it, only with the restriction that the hierarchy would recommend candidates, and, in certain cases, changing and dismissing persons in office. In doctrinal matters, the Czar does not exercise jurisdiction. That is in the hands of the Synod, and, in cases of difficulty, the opinion of the four Eastern patriarchs (of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria) is demanded, and final judgment is given by a Council. The Czar, who never calls himself Head, but, only Defender of the Church, is bound to carry such judgment into effect. There are about 250,000 established clergy, of all ranks and orders, in Russia, and being obliged to marry, these, with their families, constitute a class numbering nearly 700,000.

The Russo-Greek clergy are an hereditary levitical class, whose social status is very low, though, since the time of Peter the Great, they have had the privilege of "personal nobility." For the most part this clergy is very poor, the stipends paid by the State being small, and the congregations, themselves in a normal condition of impecuniosity, being unable to give them much aid. The senior metropolitan receives only \$3,500 per annum, whereas, in England, the clergymen in corresponding rank, (Archbishop of Canterbury,) has \$75,000 a year, with the rent-free palaces of Lambeth and Addiscom. In Russia, a bishop's salary is generally under \$1,200, and an archimandrite, or abbot, next below him, does not receive more than from \$200 to \$250 a year. In fact, the Russian clergy are very poor, and were becoming more needy every day, for parishes were divided and sub-divided to provide, however inadequately, for the sons of this levitical class who entered the priesthood.

The Czar has issued an ukase which utterly abolishes the hereditary character of the Russian clergy. Henceforth they will rank, not with the nobility, but with the gentry and the mercantile class. Moreover, their number is to be greatly reduced and limited. There is to be a new distribution of cures, on the basis of population, facility of communication between villages, the moral condition of parishioners, &c. Henceforth, when the income is worth accepting, the clergy will be recruited from the educated classes. In short, without trouble or ostentatious display, the Czar has suddenly instituted a wholesale and wholesome reform in the Russo-Greek Church, which is under his control. His next step will be to recognize civil marriages, between Russian Dissenters who do not acknowledge the Orthodox Sacraments.

LITERARY ITEMS.

We have never published any literary item with more pleasure than we feel in regard to the following, which The Independent clips from some of its exchanges:

"A great deal of curiosity has been prompted and many false statements made concerning the personal relationship existing between George Lewes, the philosophical historian, and George Eliot, the great novelist, a true statement of which is that 'Mr. Lewes was married early in life; his wife subsequently eloped with a paragon; three or four years later, Mr. Lewes, finding her in great distress, relieved her necessities, settled on her a portion of his income, and then applied for a divorce, which was refused by the English courts, on the ground that the provision for the erring wife was a forgiveness of her error. The Scotch courts was less rigorous. Having secured a divorce there, Mr. Lewes married Miss Evans on a Scotch certificate.'" The Independent itself is responsible for a good deal of the currency which these false rumors have gained among us. Our own impression of something wrong, was derived from an

article professing to vindicate Mr. Lewes and his wife for doing what we now learn they did not do.

A story was current a short time since to the effect that Hogarth's House at Chiswick was to be pulled down. The Atheneum is glad to say that such is not the case, and that it remains in hands which are at least as careful as those of the tenant who recently inhabited it. Something ought to be done for the preservation of this inestimable relic of the great humorist. A very small sum would doubtless secure it against destruction. Hogarth's family tomb, in Chiswick Churchyard, is in good order, thanks to the care of the painter's namesake of Aberdeen and London.

Benjamin Disraeli was born in London, but in what parish or house has hitherto been a mystery. It has often been said that he is a native of Bloomsbury square; but Isaac Disraeli, his father, had not moved so far west when "little Benjamin" first saw the light of day, in December, 1805. A correspondent of the London Christian Times, asserts that the house of which we are in search, is 215 Upper Street, Islington, now divided into two shops, and that half a century ago, and before any police authorities or Boards of Works had re-named the streets, it was a good-looking gentleman's house situated in Trinity-row with a good garden behind, and quite open in front, and overlooking the pleasant fields—as they then were of Canonbury." If this correspondent be right in his statement, then Islington may boast of having given birth to two living celebrities—the ex-Premier and Mr. John Stuart Mill.

Rev. Dr. Guthrie, of Scotland, it is well known, has for some time been laid aside from the pulpit from the state of his health, which forbids his preaching, and he has been making himself useful with his pen. It is now announced that Messrs. Strahan & Co., the publishers of Good Words, have placed £5,000 (\$25,000 in gold) to the credit of Dr. Guthrie, for the purpose of his going to the Holy Land, and there writing a commentary on the Bible, to be published in penny numbers.

The appearance in Calcutta of a new magazine, the Indian Student, calls attention to the rapidly changing condition of the higher classes of Hindus. Early in the present century education comprised little or nothing of what it includes in England; forty years ago the English language was but in the course of adoption there as a medium of instruction, and so recently as 1854 the despatch was written in England which created the Indian universities. Now the school-master is abroad in Indian villages, and the great cities of the Indian empire are crowded with students of Government and missionary colleges. Each of the three Indian universities has been successful,—notably that of Calcutta; from thirteen to fifteen hundred candidates appear annually at the matriculation examinations, and an average of two hundred at the examinations for the Bachelor of Arts degree. These annual competitors for university distinction represent about half a million of Hindus, who are being yearly instructed in Bengal, the North West Provinces, Gudd, and the Punjab; and a great multitude who having been more or less educated have passed on from school and college to Government service, or to engage in the ordinary occupations of agriculture, commerce, and manufacture. Thus a generation is rising up familiar with European institutions, for whom special literature on European models has to be provided. The Indian Student is edited by four missionaries.

TEMPERANCE ITEMS.

At a recent convention it was asserted that one dollar is spent in the State of Iowa every second for whisky.

Pennsylvania has a criminal and pauper population of 24,000, nine-tenths from intemperance, which is maintained at a cost of \$2,599,910. The State revenue for licences is \$317,742.

Mr. Clark, of California, stated at the Iowa State S. S. Convention, that the agitation of the temperance question in his State had brought down the price of wine fourfold. It now sells at 35 cents a gallon, and they intend to force dealers to sell it at ten cents. Whether this decline in price is to work to the advantage of the temperance reformation seems questionable.

The Missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M., among the Nestorians complained of the alarming increase of intemperance in connection with last year's abundant vintage. The exigencies of the case have led several of the native helpers to see the necessity and applicability of Paul's rule of Christian expediency. At a meeting of these helpers, after other matters had been discussed, Priest Shimon, of Degala, pastor of one our most prosperous and best disciplined churches, arose and stated that there was one duty which he feared to leave undischarged. It was, known he remarked, that he seldom tasted wine; yet he was persuaded that, as a pastor and leader of his flock, in view of the present fearful intemperance of his people, he ought to give his example to the practice of total abstinence. He was followed by others, till all the class save one (and he has since joined the number) gave their pledges. This action appeared the more valuable as it was the spontaneous outburst of awakened conscience and feeling.

IVINS & DIELTZ
IMPORTERS,
Manufacturers & Dealers in

GARPETS
OIL CLOTHS
White and Red Check
MATTINGS, &c.

This season we offer a large, varied and well selected Stock at reduced prices.

No. 43 Strawberry Street,
First Street west of Second,
PHILADELPHIA.