

Christian Nation

"RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION." SOLOMON.

VOL. XIV. Whole No. 333.

NEW YORK, March 18, 1891.

\$1.50 PER YEAR

Views and Reviews.

BY THE EDITOR.

WRITING FOR THE PUBLIC.

A lady reader has written us as follows :

"Will you please mention a way, or ways, by which I can improve my writing for the press?"

It is our earnest desire to make this paper of the greatest possible service to its readers, and there is no more satisfactory or exact method of informing us of what is wanted in these columns, than the method adopted by our friend last week, and now again by this lady reader, viz.: asking for what you want. The question above is one most difficult to answer, but we fortunately have an answer at hand in the following description by Benjamin Franklin of the manner in which he gained his wonderful proficiency in writing for the public. Indeed, this answer is so admirable and so valuable, that we commit it to print with the certainty that not only our fair correspondent, but many thousands of others, will read it again and again with deep interest and great profit. Franklin says :

"About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With that view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiments in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should occur to me. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual search for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales in the *Spectator*, and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collection of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the subject. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of the thoughts. By comparing my work with the original, I discovered many faults and corrected them; but I sometimes had the pleasure to fancy that, in particulars of small consequence, I had been fortunate enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think that I might in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious. The time I allotted for writing exercises and for reading was at night, or before work began in the morning;

"While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's) having at the end of it two little sketches on the arts of rhetoric and logic, the latter finishing with a dispute in the Socratic method; and soon after I procured Xenophon's *Memorable Things of Socrates*, wherein there are many examples of the same method. I was charmed with it, adopted it, dropped my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer.

"I found this method the safest for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took delight in it, practiced it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved. I continued this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence; never using, when I advanced anything that might possibly be disputed, the words, *certainly, undoubtedly*, or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather said, *I conceive* or *apprehend* a thing to be so and so; *it appears to me*, or *I should not think it so and so*, for such and such reasons; or *I imagine it to be so*; or *it is so, if I am not mistaken*. This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engaged in promoting; and, as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform* or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning and sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat most of those purposes for which speech was given to us.

"In fact, if you wish to instruct others, a positive and dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may occasion opposition and prevent a candid attention. If you desire instruction and improvement from others, you should not, at the same time, express yourself fixed in your present opinions. Modest and sensible men, who do not love disputation, will leave you undisturbed in the possession of your errors. In adopting such a manner, you can seldom expect to please your hearers, or obtain the concurrence you desire. Pope judiciously observes,

'Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot.'

He also recommends it to us

'To speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence.'

And he might have joined with this line that which he has coupled with another, I think, less properly,

'For want of modesty is want of sense.'

If you ask, Why less properly? I must repeat the lines,

'Immodest words admit of no defense,
For want of modesty is want of sense.'

Now, is not the *want of sense* (where a man is so unfortunate as to want it) some apology for his *want of modesty*? and would not the lines stand more justly thus?

'Immodest words admit *but* this defense,
That want of modesty is want of sense.'

This, however, I should submit to better judgments."

6. They are blessed who open the door of their hearts to Christ. Such have sweet fellowship and communion with Him. He will take them into confidential relations with himself. "The secret"—the friendship and fellowship—"of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them his covenant." Enoch walked with God and knew this secret. So did Abraham the friend of God. So did Moses with whom he talked face to face. The two disciples with whom Jesus walked after his resurrection did not know him at the time, but they had opened their hearts to him, and afterwards they said: "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way." There is every encouragement to open the heart to Christ. Men may knock at the doors of our houses yet decline to come in. Christ Jesus never declines an earnest invitation. He says, "I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me."

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS.

MR. EDITOR:—It will interest your readers to hear a word from the Indian Mission. Permit me to tell them of an incident that took place last Sabbath that has pleased us very much. We have been undergoing disappointments for some time, because of the want of opportunities to talk to the older Indians. They have been for a month at Anadarko getting their year's supply of clothing, bedding, etc. During that time we could not get an interpreter nor any one to listen if we could have had one.

Last week the medicine man of the Comanches came by, on his way home from Anadarko. His son is here at school. Mr. C. has preached at his camp. When asked if he wanted preaching, or "religious talk," at his camp next Sabbath, he heartily told us to "come." They then tried to make arrangements for having the thoughts of the "talk" interpreted. After plans had been suggested which were not practicable, the medicine man said to Miss McBurney in Comanche, "Why can't you come and talk for us? I can understand what you say." She had not thought herself able to interpret anything so difficult as religious thought, but when it was suggested by an Indian, she said she would try. He was very anxious that enough would come to sing, and also that his boy George would come. Sabbath morning the wind was blowing very hard, but five and the Indian boy George started in the hack and on ponies for the medicine man's camp, thirteen miles away. On their arrival they were received in the kindest manner and treated as hospitably as the Indians knew how to do. About ten Indians besides children, listened to what was said, and seemed well pleased. Of the ten, six were women. It has not been the custom for the women to stay in the tent for preaching on the Sabbath, but Miss McBurney said when consenting to try to interpret, that if she *did*, she wanted the women to come in too and sit quite close by her.

The sermon was on the "Parable of the Lost Sheep." They sung a number of psalms before and after the preaching, or "talk." They wish to have another "talk" in two weeks which Mr. Carithers and Miss McBurney will be glad to give them unless providentially hindered.

This is the first attempt at preaching the Gospel to them without help from some one outside the Mission. We feel greatly encouraged that we can now give the older ones the word of life directly. It is very different when the interpreter knows by experience the truth to be interpreted, and can grasp the ideas that the speaker wishes them to comprehend, to what it is when the ideas are passed on to them in a mechanical way and perhaps changed in the translation till the true idea is lost sight of altogether.

The Indians have an exalted idea of the "White Chief's" knowledge of medicine. So, as soon as the services were over on Sabbath, some who had diseases asked him for something to relieve them. Miss McBurney said it reminded her of the times of old when the sick and afflicted came to be healed.

The Comanche language is an unwritten one, and hard to learn to speak as the Indians do, even when the meaning of the words are known. So we consider it quite an accomplishment to be able to speak it so as to be understood. Trying to master the Comanche language reminds me of trying to gather the floating cob-webs in Indian summer.

Mr. C. will go to-morrow to St. Sill, and hopes to meet Indians there. He expects to go next Sabbath to another camp six miles distant and talk to the Indians there.

Cache Creek Mission, St. Sill.

ALICE CARITHERS.

Book Reviews.

THE CAUSES OF THE SOUL. A book of sermons by Dr. Wm. Reed Huntington, Rector of Grace Church, New York. Cloth, 12mo., \$1.50. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

This collection of sermons has been gathered in a memorial volume to mark the affection and esteem which has long existed between Dr. Huntington and the people of All Saints Church, Worcester, Mass., and of Grace Church, New York, and to them the book is inscribed. There are twenty-seven short, forcible sermons, the first of which gives the title to the whole collection. Those who have had the pleasure of listening to the eloquent words of Dr. Huntington in Grace Church, will understand us when we say that the sermons as they are printed lack the charm and lively presentation of the Rector's delivery, and yet they retain in no small measure the cogency and spiritual force of his personality. There is a crisp, terse pointed utterance in his style, and a pithy, vigorous practicality in his teaching which rouses and invigorates one's spiritual tone like mountain breezes. The headings of his sermons are striking and felicitous and indicate at a glance that the preacher has eschewed the ordinary ruts of common place exposition and has determined on finding new lights and illustrations in the old text. Familiar subjects are handled with a freshness of interpretation and originality of thought which brings new interest and meaning to bear upon their well-worn truths. They are valuable for their brevity, conciseness, practicality and spiritual suggestion. The central truth of these sermons and the basis of their optimistic faith and promise of an ampler day are summed up in these concluding words of the third sermon: "Looking back through the history of the past and around among the living millions of the present, I find no person anywhere who so commands my confidence as He does, none who so irresistibly compels my homage. Therefore I cast in my lot with Him. I see, I cannot help seeing, how much that is plausible can be urged against such a cause. I know, I cannot help knowing, the sore difficulties to be encountered by anyone who so decides. But the fact that He gives me a purpose in life, an object, an aim, a goal, this outweighs everything else, and I follow on obedient to the magic of his call. For remember, we Christians are invited to live for Him, not only because He died for us, but because He rose again. We are not serving a dead Saviour. We are not living upon an ancient and almost outworn memory. Our leader lives; our teacher teaches still; our master builder, not content with having laid the foundation of the temple, stands beside us an invisible presence, watching us at the work while on every side the walls of the city of God arise. We too readily forget this best of all the articles of the faith, the belief in the living Christ. Our lives take hold of His life, and because He lives, these little lives of ours, which cut off by themselves, would be worthless and insignificant enough, gain dignity and preciousness."

The Rev. Dr. David Gregg's new work, "Studies in John's Gospel," being an exposition of the S. S. Lessons for the second half of 1891, is announced by the American Tract Society. 12mo., cloth, \$1.25