

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS**"THE IDEAL MINISTRY."**

By Rev. R. G. MacBeth, M.A.

Some weeks ago I wrote for your columns a short review of Principal Forsyth's remarkable book, "Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind." Quite recently there has issued from the press (Revell's) the long-hoped for book on Homiletics and pastoral Theology by the Rev. Dr. Herrick Johnson, of Chicago. Each of these books has distinctive features. The one by Dr. Forsyth is more erudite and is written in a much more ornate and somewhat involved style. Forsyth was a pastor for a good many years, but there is not much trace of it in his book. He is the lecturer to the circle of the ministry rather than the instructor of the young men who are either beginning or but a short way on the course in the line of the active pastorate. Dr. Johnston was a pastor for some seventeen years, and always retained his ministerial habits after he became a professor. He has been one of the most noted and popular preachers of the day and has taken much active share in the practical work of church courts. All this is distinctly visible in his book, which he entitles "The Ideal Ministry." It is written in a clear and simple style and bears everywhere the stamp of one who knows men by close contact, as well as of one who is passionately devoted to the work of making manhood stronger. It abounds with practical suggestions as to sermon building, and on the whole is a better book for the student who is seeking for guidance in the real work of the ministry than Forsyth's. But these two books while widely different in scope and general contents, are singularly at one in their dominant note. Both are agreed that the preaching of the Cross is the hope of the Church and the world. There is something touching and deeply significant in the way in which these two men stand by the doctrine of the uplifted Christ. In both books the most passionate and thrilling passages are those which declare without reserve that the Cross, with all that it involves, lies at the heart of the world's need, and that without its presence and power the outlook in our modern day would be tragic and hopeless in the extreme. This insistent testimony from two such men is of profound interest and value at the present time.

Dr. Johnson excels most writers on the subject in the clearness and keen insight of his definitions and distinctions. For instance, in discussing the aims of sacred and secular public speech he says, "Secular public speech aims to move the will. Sacred public speech aims to move the will Godward." In another place he deals most effectively with the statement so common nowadays that God calls men in the same way to spiritual offices and to ordinary occupations. Dr. Johnson denies this and makes out a clear case for the pre-eminence of the nature of the call to the ministry over that of the "call" to any other work. The discussion is important as affecting in a very marked way our view of the office and work of the Gospel ministry. In writing the special chapter on the ideal sermon, Dr. Johnson examines and rejects as imperfect a great many definitions given in dictionaries and in other works. Finally he gives the following as the best known to him: "A sermon is a formal religious discourse, founded on the Word of God,

and designed to save men." This definition, he says, "is the product of a good deal of cutting and chipping and hewing. It has had frequent class-room discussion." He thinks that "every word is in it that ought to be in it and no word is in it that ought to be out of it." After reading the full analysis of this definition one feels that the framer of it makes out his case.

The book, we have said, abounds in practical instructions as to sermon building, but warns against the use of "skeletons." Dr. Johnson believes that the sermon is the most powerful influence under God in the world to-day if men will but be true to their responsibilities and privileges as ministers of the Word. The Gospel of Christ is to him the supreme means of rescue, and he closes the book with the impassioned admonition, "O Man of God, throw out the Life-line."

Paris, Ont.

**SUCCESS—THE GOD OF THE
PRESENT PERIOD.**

By Elster Pat.

A favorite present-day text, not found in Holy Writ, however, is "Nothing succeeds like success."

From his earliest years, even in professedly Christian homes, the Canadian child is taught to seek success as the chief end of existence. He attends school, and there the teachers—often good men, conscientiously desirous of serving God, yet add their admonitions "for the honor of the school," as well as for the gratification of the laudable ambition of the parents, to "succeed in passing." Children are forbidden to attempt examination until about certain of passing, that the average may be high, and then only incidentally. Rarely is learning set forth as desirable for its own sake. Duty is slighted, and honest endeavor, if not crowned with success, is disparaged. In the "Christian Associations" one finds more emphasis laid upon the development of muscle than of minds, upon winning a foot race than upon excelling in knowledge of the Scriptures; upon filling the list of prize winners rather than "filled with the Spirit"; upon the honor of the Association a long way before the glory of God. In church circles it is the same—the beautiful building, the large contributions, the delightful organ, the excellent choir, the nice service, the soothing sermon, the big congregation—"altogether the finest in the place." Even if one attends a funeral, it is not improbable he will hear more of what the "departed" has left behind him than of the treasure he had laid up whether he has gone.

What saith the Scriptures as to this? As I read, the Divine teaching is that what man names success, God brands "failure." Even the word occurs but once in the Bible, and then it is to be achieved by meditating upon, observing and telling forth what is written in "this book." The marginal rendering is "deal wisely," while the Douay version renders the clause "then shalt thou direct thy way and understand it." Joshua 1:8. Cruden's Concordance gives the word four times, but three of these are marginal renderings; while the revised render it good repute and the Douay version "good understanding." I confess that this avoidance by the Holy Spirit of a word set up by the world as its golden calf, and which has proved so seductive to the people of God, appears to me significant.

Orillia, Ont.

WHAT OF "ALLOWANCES."

By Margaret A. Muir.

I remember once reading, in a religious paper, a question which was asked by a young lady who evidently was much in earnest. This was the question: "My father is a rich man, and he gives me money when I ask him, yet I have none that I can really call my own. How then can I give a tenth to the Lord?"

The answer given was to the effect that she should ask her father for a stated allowance, and thus solve the problem; but if he refused, the mathematical solution would remain, one-tenth of nothing is nothing, for we can only give what is really our own. Therefore, if our children are to have money which will be their "really own," and which they can be taught to use wisely and to give systematically, it can best be done by granting an allowance, no matter how small.

You say you cannot afford to do this. If you stop to think, you can. It is not the amount, but the principle of giving some stated sum, which is involved. I know a wise mother, in moderate circumstances, who allows her two boys each five cents a week. Whenever they want a "big" extra, they save from week to week, denying themselves trifles until they have the desired sum. Their pennies drop regularly into the Sunday school collection, more regularly than the pennies of other boys, who, though perhaps better off, have no regular amount that they can call their own.

You say your child earns money; you pay him for doing certain things. Well; and good; but if you can so manage it, even a small stated sum allowed him, and of which he must render an accurate account, is advisable. A friend, whose father was a man of ample means, recently told me that before her marriage she never had any money she could call her own, excepting what she earned by darning stockings—one dollar a week. (Her husband, who heard this remark, added, "She has had to do them ever since for nothing!")

In another family, where there are several children, no allowance is given, although the father might afford it. One and all of these children have learned—when they want any money—to approach the head of the family when he is in a particularly good humor, and it will mean perhaps a dollar, or a half dollar. If the word and the time are alike unpropitious, a dime or a nickel is all that is forthcoming. A rather spasmodic course of dealing with a power which at least should command some respect in its handling! What knowledge will these children have of money or its worth? None whatever, for it is spent as recklessly as it is given. Money that comes easily or irregularly is likely to go easily and irregularly. System in receiving helps to system in spending.

At how early an age should an allowance be given? When do you begin to instill the principles of truth, of unselfishness, of honor or morality? Can you tell the exact period? No, you seize the opportunity, as time unfolds it, to impress these great and lasting virtues. Just so the time comes for you to teach the value of money, and that is as soon as the child discovers as I said before, that a penny means a stick of candy or a ball, or is wanted for his mite-box, or for the collection; then a low him a stated sum, given at a regular time, but use discretion as to the amount with which he, under your direction and guidance, at the first, is to buy any small