

Religious Life and Work

Nisi Dominus Frustra—"Except the Lord, it is in vain."

"THE TWENTIETH CENTURY MINISTER."

The Committee of the Forward Movement of the Presbyterian Church in Canada did well to publish and circulate in pamphlet form the excellent essay on this subject which was last year awarded first prize in a competition under the auspices of that Church.

It was noteworthy, however, that the prize-winner, and the others mentioned along with him, were mostly ministers. Perhaps that was an inevitable result in a competition on such a subject open to ministers and laymen alike. For it goes without saying that, no matter what the interest in the work of the ministry or the experience in writing of competing laymen might be, few of them could give time and thought to the theme as recurringly as the ministers whose duties involve regular reading week by week in connection with it.

We therefore venture to suggest that when any of the Church Denominations arrange competitions along such lines, they put the clergymen in a class by themselves. Every one with experience in writing knows that, other things being equal, the men with most time to review a subject and revise their writings upon it, can—or should—easily produce the better finished and more thought-provoking article.

DISGRACEFUL USE OF "DISGRACEFUL."

We suppose an explanation will be forthcoming of what exactly was said by Dr. Pringle in the Presbyterian General Assembly to excuse the unfortunate reference in the newspapers to the British Columbia Coast section of the Church, which is comprised in "The Presbytery of Westminster." Exception to the methods of a Presbytery may be as reasonable at times as exception to the procedure of the Assembly itself. But, however it came about, it was both unhappy and unfair that the name of the new Principal of Westminster Hall should have been introduced into the Western press reports as it was.

Apart altogether from the personalities involved, perhaps the Canadian Assembly might, in the appointments of Principals or Professors for the Colleges, follow with advantage the course adopted in Scotland, which, we believe, places all such appointments in the hands of the Supreme Court of the Church. If that does not make procedure akin to political impossible, it at least makes it more difficult. But of course there is no guarantee that any Assembly, any more than a Presbytery or Synod of the Church, will not be divided concerning two or more nominees.

If Dr. Pringle was advocating appointments by the General Assembly, and in doing so referred to a division of opinion in Westminster Presbytery, it certainly is regrettable that in the report, as received at the West Coast, words were used that could not but (mistakenly) suggest to the uninformed that the reflection was on the appointment rather than on certain methods revealed at Westminster Presbytery.

This Magazine has not sought in any way to get Principal Smith's opinion of the reports published in the local newspapers.

In the circumstances, however, we think it fair to remind our readers that, whatever was open to criticism at certain meetings of Westminster Presbytery, the majority of that body, and also of the other Presbyteries in the Synod of British Columbia supported the appointment of Principal Smith. If there was anything affecting persons or personalities which warranted the use of the word "disgraceful," it certainly could not apply to a man whose exhibition, under most testing con-

ditions, of a fine Christian spirit, not only confirmed in their opinion those who had supported his nomination, but caused the majority in his favour to become an increasing one with the passing of time.

In the interests of British fairplay as well as of more careful speechmaking or newspaper reporting, we think Western Canadian Presbyterians should investigate thoroughly the origin, inspiration and transmission of that report.

"TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING."

When will those who organize church and other functions learn, or remember in practice, the truth expressed in that phrase? Ministers, especially, when they arrange an evening meeting, have need to remind themselves that many of those attending may have put in a full and tiresome day at desk, store, factory, or other exacting work, and that, however real their interest in the purpose of the gathering, they are not physically or mentally fit to benefit by what, in these crowded days, may be equivalent to two "diets of worship" arranged as one.

The public meeting in connection with the new session at Westminster Hall, was notable in more ways than one. We know not who was responsible for the programme,—whether the Hall or the Synod officials. (The function was held in May this year, presumably to suit the close of the Synod at Victoria). But there was enough crowded into the evening to supply "food for reflection" for at least two such meetings. Prolonged sederunts of that kind may be all right for lay folks who have no other mental exercise or taxing duties to attend to; but perhaps it is timely to warn over-enthusiastic programme-providers that, even in religious matters so much may be given at one time as to tire instead of inspire.

"The Ministry and Spiritual Leadership" was the subject of Principal Smith's inaugural lecture, which, because of its importance, has been published in pamphlet form.

MODERN JOURNALISM—ITS TENDENCIES AND ASPIRATIONS

(Continued from Page 2)

men of mediocre ability and culture, while those (comparatively a small percentage of the whole) who regard journalism as an end in itself, and who devote their lives to its practice, often find themselves at the end of their lives in poverty and without that respect from the public to which their faithful service to the community entitles them. It is thus that journalism becomes to many men of ability merely a step in the ladder of ambition, far from being an end in itself.

The destinies of the human race during the next generation lie in the hands of the men charged with the formation of public opinion through the columns of the daily press, to a greater extent than most people realize. Care is needed lest the profession of journalism become so commercialized that it fall entirely a victim to the modern greed for wealth and power and thus in the end sacrifice its capacity for usefulness to the public. True members of the profession—among both employees and proprietors—in this country realize this danger. They can achieve nothing without the understanding sympathy and support of the public in its own interests.