

Our Contributors.

PRESSURE THAT SHOULD BE RESISTED.

BY KNOXONIAN.

There is a well written and appreciative sketch of the character and work of the Hon. Oliver Mowat, in a late number of *The Week*, written by Mr. J. E. Wells. Among the fundamental qualities which make Mr. Mowat a statesman the writer puts his "wise caution that refuses to move blindly under irresponsible pressure."

Irresponsible pressure is a neat expression, and it describes well a deceptive and dangerous kind of influence that is often brought to bear upon every man who serves the Church or State. People who have no standing, no influence, no character that they would not be better without, no reputation that does them any credit, often gather around a public man, and press him to do some doubtful and risky thing. He takes the risk under pressure, and does the doubtful thing. The result is often disastrous. The irresponsible men stand from under, and the man who was moved by their irresponsible pressure suffers. Such things occur every day. Many a good man goes to the wall simply because he does not know the difference between irresponsible pressure and pressure that is able and willing to share responsibility.

Here is a merchant doing a nice, safe, remunerative business in a store that is good enough but has very little style about it. This is getting to be a great country for style, and a little style is not a bad thing if one takes kindly to it and can pay for it. Half a dozen fellows that have more cheek than money, and more tongue than sense, get around our merchant, and advise him build a new store, strike out, clap on all sail and make a splurge generally. The advisers are absolutely irresponsible. They have nothing to lose. If all their names were put at the bottom of a note the banker would want some responsible man's name on the back of it before he would hand over \$1. Our merchant takes the irresponsible advice, and perhaps goes under. The parties who gave it always were under, and it makes no difference to them. There is no man so gloriously independent as the man who has nothing to lose.

Half a dozen irresponsible meddlers attack a publisher, and press him to enlarge and otherwise change his paper. They know no more about the publishing business than Adam knew about the electric light. Some of them are perhaps the flattest failures in their own line—the most excruciating botches at their own work. The publisher knows exactly how much his constituency will pay. He knows he is carrying that it is safe to carry. He ignores his own judgment, yields to the irresponsible pressure and suffers. The irresponsible pressure men hurry out of the way when the suffering begins. They always do. That is their style.

The path of the church is fairly strewn with the victims of irresponsible pressure. Clergymen suffer from this kind of pressure more perhaps than any other class of men.

A few restless, irresponsible spirits surround a pastor, and urge him to send for some sensational revivalist and get up a revival. The pastor wants a genuine revival in the congregation much more than any of the restless spirits do. He has worked for it, planned for it, prayed for it, done all in his power to promote it. But he knows very well that many excellent people of conservative leanings in the congregation do not take kindly to some modern revival methods. He knows also that seeds of discord have been sown at many so called revivals that have brought forth bitter fruits for years. He knows also that more effective and more useful special services might be held under the auspices of the Session and by ministers of his own Church, but he has a chronic fear of being charged with opposition to revivals; he yields and the sensational unknown is sent for. The result is perhaps disastrous. But when the disaster comes, where are the irresponsibles who brought the pressure to bear? They are snickering around corner groceries gabbling over the affair in much the same spirit as they would gabble over the last lacrosse or baseball match. The Church may lose influence, lose money, lose the inestimable blessing of peace, but the irresponsibles lose nothing, for the best and simplest of all reasons—they have nothing to lose.

By all means hold special services, when reasonable

and responsible persons desire to hold them. But let such services be begun, continued and ended by men of known and established Christian character, men for whom the Christian people of the community have respect and in whom they have confidence. A revival carried on by persons that no sane man would make executor for an estate worth \$100 is not likely to do much good.

Choir leaders are sometimes worried by irresponsible pressure. A good choir leader knows pretty well what his congregation want, and how much they will stand in the way of new music. He wisely mingles the new and old, retaining the grand old tunes and occasionally introducing a new one. Behind him there may be a few irresponsible musical people pressing for radical changes in tunes and everything else. If he yields to the irresponsible pressure, the conservative portion of the congregation are annoyed; if he does not yield the singing people may become obstreperous. There is pressure from both sides. If you don't think so just take charge of a good choir for the next six months, and at the end of that time ask your barber if the gray hairs are not coming.

Sessions are often subjected to irresponsible pressure. A talkative, cheeky fellow who has nothing to lose that he would not be better without, often tries to get round an elder and press him into some doubtful undertaking. The doubtful undertaking is considerably helped if you can persuade a few members of Session to favour it. An elder that allows himself to be moved by irresponsible pressure is not wise. Neither is a deacon or manager or Sabbath school superintendent. In fact, nobody is wise who allows himself to be moved by irresponsible pressure.

There are a good many people in this country who have been induced by irresponsible pressure to invest their money in losing concerns. They innocently put their little pile in the hole that the irresponsibles carefully dug for them. When the bottom went out of the hole they found to their surprise that the irresponsibles had never put in a cent themselves. They never had a cent of their own to put in.

When a man is pressed to do anything doubtful, it might be a good thing for him to indulge in a little soliloquy of this kind. "Now what kind of people are these that are pressing me to do this thing? What is their reputation? What is their standing? What is their influence? What is their character? What are their claims to be heard? What have they accomplished in their own line? If I yield to their pressure and a crash comes, will they share the responsibility, or will they stand to one side and cackle?" No doubt, Mr. Mowat soliloquizes in this way at times. If he didn't, his premiership and his surplus would have gone long ago.

"THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS" AGAIN.

MR. EDITOR.—In THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN of the 21st ult., a writer who signs himself "Presbyterian" appears to be much exercised in mind as to certain "dogmas held and uttered by members of the Toronto Presbytery," touching "the inheritance of the saints," which, it seems, they have represented as "a new earth," to be inherited by the redeemed in resurrection. The question which disquiets his mind is not whether the "dogmas" of these brethren be Biblical, but only whether they be "Presbyterian doctrines." On that point we think we may be able to reassure his mind.

The late Professor A. A. Hodge, of Princeton Theological Seminary, in his "Outlines of Theology," enlarged edition, p. 578, has spoken on this subject as follows:

From such passages as Romans viii. 19-23, 2 Peter iii. 5, Revelation xxi. 1 it appears not improbable that after the general destruction of the present form of the world by fire, which shall accompany the judgment, this world will be reconstructed, and gloriously adapted to be the permanent residence of Christ and His Church. . . . As nature was cursed for man's sake, and the creature, through him, made subject to vanity, it may be that they shall share in his redemption and exaltation.

His venerable father, the Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge, professor of systematic theology in Princeton, has expressed himself on the same subject in a decided manner. In "Systematic Theology" speaking of the predicted destruction of the earth by fire in the last judgment, he affirms that "the destruction foretold is not annihilation," and continues:

The apostle teaches that our vile bodies are to be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, and that a similar change is to take place in the world we inhabit. There are to be new heavens and a new earth just as we have new bodies. . . . The Bible concerns man. The earth was cursed for man's transgression. That curse is to be removed when man's redemption is completed. The *ktisis* (creation) that was made subject to vanity for man's sin is our earth, and our earth is the *ktisis* which is to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. The change to be effected is in the dwelling place of man. . . . The result of this change is said to be the introduction of a new heavens and a new earth. . . . This earth, according to the common opinion, that is, this renovated earth, is to be the final seat of Christ's kingdom. This is the new heavens; this is the New Jerusalem, the Mount Zion, in which are to be gathered the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect; this is the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God; the kingdom prepared for His people before the foundation of the world.—"Systematic Theology," vol. iii, pp. 852, 845.

To the words of these eminent Presbyterian authorities, we will only add a citation from that prince among Presbyterian preachers and theologians, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Chalmers. In his celebrated sermon, "The New Heavens and the New Earth," published in the appendix to his "Astronomical Discourses," he argues at length for what Dr. Charles Hodge calls "the common view" of the inheritance of the saints—a view held, it seems, even by "members of the Toronto Presbytery." In that discourse Dr. Chalmers affirms that, according to his text (2 Peter iii. 13.) "in the new economy which is to be reared for the accommodation of the blessed"—therefore, by no possibility, we may remark, inherited at death—"there will be materialism; not merely new heavens, but also a new earth." He then proceeds to justify this conception to the thought of believers in the Scriptures by reminding us of the condition of things in Paradise, before sin had entered the earth, and then continues thus:

This may serve to rectify the imagination . . . as if the grossness of materialism was only for those who had degenerated into the grossness of sin; and that when a spiritualizing process had purged away all our corruption, then, by the stepping stones of death and a resurrection, we should be borne away to some ethereal region, where sense and body, and all in the shape either of audible sound or of tangible substance were unknown. And hence that strangeness of impression which is felt by you, should the supposition be offered, that in the place of eternal blessedness there will be ground to walk upon, or scenes of luxuriance to delight the corporeal senses . . . or, in short, anything that has the least resemblance to a local territory filled with various accommodations, and peopled over its whole extent by creatures formed like ourselves—having bodies such as we now wear, and faculties of perception and thought and mutual communication, such as we now exercise. The common imagination that we have of paradise on the other side of death is that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing; where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which give such an expression of strength and life and colouring to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is . . . utterly uninviting to the eye of mortals here below . . . where nothing is left but certain unearthly scenes that have no power of allurement, but certain unearthly ecstasies, with which it is felt impossible to sympathize. . . . We do hail the information of our text that after the dissolution of the present framework (of the earth) it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure . . . that in addition to our direct and personal view of the Deity, when He comes down to tabernacle with men, we shall also have the reflection of Him in a lovely mirror of his own workmanship—and that instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and of mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension, we shall walk forever in a land replenished with those sensible delights and those sensible glories, which, we doubt not, will be most profusely scattered over the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

We have not raised the question whether these representations are Biblical or not; for that does not seem to have been troubling "Presbyterian." We trust that the above citations from theologians so truly representative of Presbyterianism on both sides of the Atlantic, will reassure his mind as to the consistency of those views, the utterance of which, by Toronto Presbyterians, has disturbed his tranquillity with the most unwavering adherence to the formulated system of Presbyterian doctrine. We do not apprehend that the Presbyterian public will be greatly concerned for the orthodoxy of the "members of the Toronto Presbytery" who hold these views as to "the inheritance of the saints," when it is observed that, in so holding, they are in accord with such trusted Presbyterian theologians as Charles Hodge and Thomas Chalmers.

ANOTHER PRESBYTERIAN.

THE Rev. Philip Schaff, D.D., was inaugurated last week as Professor of Church History of the Union Theological Seminary, New York.