

"EXTREME DOCTRINES," OR
"RESIST NOT EVIL."

John D. McPherson commenced his last article on the subject named above, with the demand that Friends "must revise their creed." If my Friend thinks his creed needs to be revised, he has perfect liberty to revise it; but as for our Society, I did not know that we had a creed, except it be a belief in the "Inner Light," and I do not think we shall outgrow that so long as the world lasts.

If, as Dr Magee declares, society could not exist a single week if the teachings of Jesus were observed, then, I say, let it smash, and build up a new one on those eternal and divine principles and it will endure the ages. That is the great fault of society as it exists to-day. It is founded on the institutions and laws of Moses, instead of on the higher precepts, found in the Sermon on the Mount. Living in the era of a new dispensation, it still dwells in the spirit of the old. It forgets that the "But I say unto you" supersedes "what hath been said by them of old time."

My friend considers the expression in question, together with some other quotations which we will take up singly, as hyperbole. He says, "God is reported to have used it in his first command to Adam, forbidding him to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die! Adam indeed died after eating, but not the same day."

Now, I never looked upon this passage in the sense of a hyperbole. I never considered the death that God referred to as physical death but spiritual, and I believe Adam did suffer spiritual death that very day, just as God foretold and forewarned him. I cannot say whether he experienced resurrection thereafter or not.

Neither do I look upon that grand, inspiring passage, "Be ye therefore

perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," as hyperbole. I do not think that Jesus would play with words on such a grave theme. I accept the explanation of this passage as it is most felicitously expressed in the able article by John Bunting in last REVIEW. Let us re-read that paragraph. It is found in first column, page 371. It seems to glow with the warmth of inspiration.

As these two passages were taken as hyperboles to sustain the hyperbolical rendering of the command to "resist not evil" so when they are found not to be hyperboles, by my friend's method of reasoning, the other also must not be hyperbole. But I do not see as that method of reasoning proves anything to the point. We must examine the passage itself, in its own light, in the light of other texts, and in the light of the life of Him who uttered it.

If I were to supply anything as explanatory I would say, "Resist not evil, but change it by love, into love" When the leaven is put into the meal, it does not resist the meal, it could not accomplish its work in that way. It acts with the meal, imparting its own nature to the meal, until the whole lump is leavened. This I conceive is how love works. And when Jesus says "Resist not evil" he simply means we are to approach it in no other spirit than in the spirit of love, and always in the manner that love suggests. How this love in the soul will cause us to act in all emergencies, I am not prepared to say. Jesus gives us a few illustrations. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." "To him who would take away thy coat, give him thy cloak also." "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" These passages are quite satisfactorily explained in the article on "Extreme Doctrines," by Jas D. Steer, in REVIEW for 72th mo. 1st.

I am willing to give here one personal experience of its admirable work-