

others, and lament the condition of affairs—he thereby becomes his own accuser; but he must rather put his shoulder to the wheel, and let his surplus energy be expended in effective work.

The Friend of the past has a noble record; the Friend of the present has his record yet to make, and not only that, he must guide the Friend of the future, if, indeed, he is not called upon to decide whether he shall even have an existence.

A. V. ROBINSON.

Trenton, N. J., 11th mo. 26th, 1894.

THE TEACHING OF JESUS.

In an article under this heading in the REVIEW of 12th mo. 15th, I spoke of the objections urged against Christianity as a law of conduct. Those objections assumed that Jesus forbade resistance to evil of any kind or under any circumstances, and commanded men to give up to any one that asked whatever they had in possession. And I indicated that if the critics were right in their understanding of the words of Jesus, Christianity could not be accepted by mankind. I know not how many Christians there are who take the words of Jesus literally. The Friends profess to take literally the injunction not to resist evil, and some other small sects do it also; but I have heard of none who admit the obligation which is enjoined with equal clearness to give to him that asks; nor have I heard of any that comply with the condition imposed on every disciple without qualification or exception in the 14th chapter of Luke's gospel, that "He should hate his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yea and his own life also."

There are two modes of dealing with such difficult passages in order to escape the absurd consequences of a literal interpretation. One was stated in a sermon by the eminent Congregational minister, DeWitt Talmage. I can only give the sense, and that im-

perfectly, not having the words. "I treat the New Testament," said he, "as I do the Atlantic ocean, when I fly to the sea for strength and refreshment. I wade out into the breakers as far as I dare go and let them envelope me in their cool embrace; I cannot go far; I cannot pass through; I can see but a minute part of the whole, but I get all that my exhausted system can take in." The same sentiment is expressed in plainer prose by some who say they read the Scriptures for instruction in righteousness and take to themselves all that suits their condition. Another mode is that practised by men versed in hermeneutics, as it is called, the science of interpreting obscure written documents. They do not take sentence after sentence and attempt to find the meaning of each from its own words, but they take the whole document, compare every part with every other, and consider when the words were spoken, where the words were spoken, to whom the words were spoken, for what purpose the words were spoken, and in what spirit the speaker spoke. We cannot find plain texts to explain the difficult ones. We can only say that Jesus, who commanded us to love those who despitefully used us, could not have intended us to hate the parents who had cherished us in our childhood. And as he praised the faithful servant who had doubled his master's capital and condemned the slothful servant who had gained nothing; and as he commended the faith of the soldier and granted his prayer, but said nothing of his occupation, which was to resist evil and oppose evil-doers, he could not have intended that men should abandon the fruits of their labor, and resign themselves to be the slaves or victims of the first wretch who should take a fancy to be their master or murderer. No sober-minded man, reading all we have of Jesus' discourses, could believe that he intended to destroy society and plunge the nation into anarchy, and look for disciples only in the