

my doctrine, as said Martin Luther, 'Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; God help me. Amen.' And as said one greater than he, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.'

### THE QUAKER IDEAL.

(Continued from last issue.)

In endeavoring to give such random extracts from this little book as would call the attention of Friends to it, I thought to pass over the chapter on Creeds, not wishing to take up space which might be more profitably occupied by others, but I feel that I will be excused for devoting a portion of time to this subject. G. S. T.

"There are two or three doctrinal positions, which, in a statement of this kind, ought to precede all others, being entirely vital to any reasonable conception of Christianity. The first of these is—That the Most High is an altogether benevolent and compassionate Being. That sweetest and far-reaching text in the Bible, "God is love," is at the very foundation of Quaker theology. The distinctive features of the older Calvinism are abhorrent to the Quaker conscience. A God who is the Creator of all flesh and the Father of Spirits, cannot possibly have foreordained a single soul to eternal misery. A God who is the very best author and source of all righteousness and justice, cannot surely require the transference to innocent shoulders of the punishment due to evildoers, before the latter can be forgiven. Can His "wrath" be so vindictive that it entirely outweighs and overshadows His love?—or His Holy Law be so exacting that it dispenses with the very essence of justice. As I understand the Quaker ideal of the character or nature of God, it absolutely demands that nothing which does violence to man's highest conceptions of justice and mercy, shall be attributed to Him. The saddest feature in the history of theology is its persistent maintenance in one form or

other, of immoral and degrading doctrines concerning God, worthy only of idolatrous people or pre-Christian times."

"The doctrine of the direct influence and guidance of Christ by His Spirit, has been from the first (as is well known), the most distinguishing feature of Quaker theology. It can scarcely now be said to be anything peculiar to Friends, at least so far as the theory is concerned."

"It must, however, be confessed that this one article of the Quaker ideal—thorough obedience to all the directly revealed will of God, and therefore to all the clear requirements of gospel law as proclaimed in the New Testament—involves a creed of the most uncompromising character; a creed which is binding, not only upon the literal assent of men, but upon their practical self-denying fidelity to duty. When we read, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you,' 'If thine enemy hunger feed him,' 'Overcome evil with good,' and much more to the same effect, we do not cast around to try to escape from the stringency of these maxims. We recognize at once that coming from Christ they are perfectly wise and eminently practical. Every true Christian, one would think, will seek, by the help of God's grace, to bring his soul 'and life up to the level of this grand ideal.' Surely he does not pretend to love his enemy, whilst seeking to take his life, to beggar his country, and to ruin and starve his children! Now, I ask my reader candidly, where would that infernal iniquity war have been to-day had all professed Christians firmly and steadily followed the example and clear teaching of the Lord and His early disciples, calmly resolving—'They may take my life if the Lord permit, but I will not fight.' Again, when a Friend hears from Christ's own lips, the words, 'Swear not at all,' he is, let us hope, too honest and too sensible to accept the notion that the command applies only