

can live *for* only one of them and this determines the character of the man and his destiny. In connection with the spiritual order we find a highly suggestive chapter on conversion. It does not reach an explanation of this experience and it reveals the author's failure to recognize the personal presence and agency of the Holy Spirit. Yet it presents some highly suggestive features of conversion.

The author may be said to represent the highest type of the Unitarian, which is as far as any man could arrive without entering again the sphere of revealed truth. He does not deny the divinity of Jesus but only finds the light of His personality too dazzling for human investigation. He presents the hope of ultimate redemption for every soul in its strongest possible light, and all the more so that he recognizes so fully that God can never be less than just. It was to be expected that the interpretation of the divine character would be in a one-sided emphasis on love.

The compiler tells us that there remains still "a huge pile" of his friend's notes which the world may hope to see if they show due appreciation of this installment.

W. O. CARVER.

Quiet Talks on Prayer.

By S. D. Gordon. The Fleming H. Revell Co. New York. 234 pp. 75c. net.

The spirit of these "talks" is beyond criticism. The author is a man with a message to this generation, as was abundantly shown by his first volume, "Quiet Talks on Power," which has won so large a place for itself in Europe as well as in America. The book is characterized by the same devoutness, saneness and simplicity of style that gave the other such cordial recognition, and will, we are sure, render a like genuine service to Christian living.

The thinking is as clear as it is spiritual, and withal thoroughly practical. For instance the conception of what prayer is, aims at, and effects is discriminating and helpful. To the very old question: "Does prayer influence God?" he answers "No" and "Yes." Not "No" only, as skeptical scientists answer; not "Yes" only, as the scholarly Christians answer; but "No" and "Yes." "It

does not influence his purpose; it does influence his action." "What God knows we need he has already planned to give." "Jesus says: 'Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask.' 'The question for me then is this: Do I know what He knows I need? Let me learn, and ask for that; or let me say, Dear God, you choose. I choose what you choose.'" In short: prayer is a spiritual force acting on a spiritual environment, and producing a reaction proportionate to the force. It aims to get God's will done on earth. Its effect is not to change God's purpose, but to influence God's action, and that is just what the labor of the farmer does in the field. The greatest prayer, then, that can be offered is the Spirit-breathed prayer which Jesus himself prayed: "Thy will be done."

In method and detail, however, the author is not always as satisfactory. That the issue to-day between science and faith practically turns on the efficacy of prayer, is beyond question, as Mr. Gordon clearly perceives. But we are at a loss to know just what he means by saying, "Nature's laws are merely God's habit of action in handling secondary forces. They involve no purpose of God. His purposes are regarding moral issues." Then, at times, his exposition of Biblical teaching is marred by uncritical assumptions, as, for example, that "Revelation" is "the latest of the Biblical books," and by a rather excessive literalism and anthropomorphism. He seems to intimate that prayer is not in the name of Jesus unless Jesus' name is mentioned in the prayer; and he tells us, as if with authority, that the dominion of the world was transferred by Adam to Satan, and now is Satan's! Apart, however, from such blemishes, he has given us a most timely, spiritual and helpful book. One is reminded in reading it of Sir Oliver Lodge's remarkable eirenicon between the men of faith and the men of science (*Ideals of Science and Faith*), and is astonished to think what a change there has been among representative scientists concerning the reasonableness of prayer, since Professor Tyndall's day, when many thought with him that he had reduced prayer to an absurdity by his transiently famous proposition of a prayer-test.

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