

## At the Literary Table.

### THE BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

THE POLYCHROME BIBLE: LEVITICUS. BY S. R. DRIVER, D.D., and H. A. WHITE, M.A. (*Clarke*. 8vo, pp. 116, with illustrations. 6s. net.)

It takes time to make us accustomed to a title like the Polychrome Bible; and until we are accustomed to it we will not take it seriously. It is really one of the greatest and most serious undertakings of our time. It has been planned on the grandest scale. It is being produced in magnificent style. When the whole series is ready it will form a library of most imposing appearance, and it will ever be one of the clearest signs that the nineteenth century has made strides in theology as great as those of any other science.

The fourth volume of the Polychrome Bible is *Leviticus*. It is one of the most welcome of the whole series. For not only are its authors supremely competent and reliable, but the book itself is supremely in need of editing. *Leviticus* has, in fact, fared badly. It has been regarded either as a mass of uninteresting and obsolete ritual, or as a quarry for incredible allegorizing. Driver and White have rescued it from the double reproach. It is a book of genuine historical and religious worth, and every chapter overflows with interest. They have simply restored it as it is. And it is most precious and stimulating.

There is little variety of colouring of course, but the translation is beyond anything yet done into English, and the notes are full and pertinent. There are four full-page plates, and four smaller illustrations.

HISTORY OF DOGMA. BY DR. ADOLPH HARNACK. Translated BY E. B. SPIERS, D.D., and JAMES MILLAR, B.D. (*Williams & Norgate*. 8vo, Vol. iv., pp. 353. 10s. 6d.)

This volume finishes the second of the original. The third of the original will, we are told, fill three volumes in English, making seven in all. It is a goodly space, but it is well occupied. Harnack's *History of Dogma* is one of the books that seem expensive, but are very cheap, for it will clear our shelves of many second-rate and superfluous volumes. In short, Harnack's *History of Dogma* we must have, the rest we need not have, and will probably be better without.

BOND AND FREE. BY W. A. CHALLACOMBE, M.A. (*Elliot Stock*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 84.)

Mr. Challacombe believes that it is easy to discover the way of salvation, however hard it may be to walk in it. He has himself clear thoughts of the prevalence, power, and pardon of sin, and he takes pains to express them clearly. We are therefore without excuse if we neglect so great salvation. It is a short course of useful scriptural sermons.

SERMONS ON PRAYER. BY SAMUEL BENTLEY, M.A. (*Elliot Stock*. Fcap. 8vo, pp. 91.)

This is the third edition of the sermons, so they are not ordinary. They do not cover the whole doctrine of prayer, they scarcely touch the question of 'special answers.' But they are real so far as they go, and they are devout. They give little philosophy, but they constrain to much practice.

GOD AND PRAYER. BY BOYD VINCENT, S.T.D. (*Rivingtons*. Crown 8vo, pp. xvii, 67. 2s.)

These are the Bedell Lectures for 1895; their author is the Bishop-Coadjutor of Southern Ohio. The subject is of paramount importance, and Bishop Vincent takes it up just where its importance is most pressing. He asks three questions: How can God hear Prayer? How can God answer Prayer? Why does God not answer my Prayers? He meets these questions clearly, calmly, convincingly. Writing for doubters, he has done a great service, and done it very unassumingly.

PAUL AND HIS FRIENDS. BY THE REV. LOUIS ALBERT BANKS, D.D. (*Funk & Wagnalls*. Crown 8vo, pp. viii, 347. 6s.)

A volume of red-hot revival sermons, swimming in anecdote. But the title is puzzling. Not one of the sermons has more to do with Paul and his friends than with Peter and his enemies. Could the title have got on the wrong book?

TIN TACKS FOR TINY FOLKS. BY CHARLES EDWARDS. (*Allenson*. Crown 8vo, pp. 183. 2s. 6d.)

If these skeletons had only brains and a heart! But *we* must still supply the brains before we can use them, and the heart to use them honestly. They are highly ingenious contrivances.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD. BY NATHAN OPPENHEIM. (*Macmillan*. Crown 8vo, pp. 296.)

A subject of universal and quite absorbing interest. Dr. Oppenheim treats it both scientifically and sympathetically. His chapter on Heredity and Environment is of priceless worth. If men and women would but come to know the overwhelming irresistible influence of a child's

surroundings. Heredity may or may not be much; Environment is enough to be practically everything. The chapter on Religion is the most amusing and not least true or instructive for that. Dr. Oppenheim has his illusions, no doubt, like other folk, but they are not the illusions of the multitude. He is independent to a paradox. And so the book has no dull pages, with all its scientific severity.

## Sermonettes on the Golden Texts.

BY THE REV. J. S. MAVER, M.A., ABERDEEN.

### I.

'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.'—Ps. cxvi. 15.

THE dear dust, we sometimes say; and when the loved presence is taken out of our life, we lay the precious dust in the grave tenderly, tearfully. Alas! it is all we can do,—all *we* can do. Is it in that sense that the words are here used? Is it only the dust that remains to God? Nay, there is a spirit in man, and, freed from the body, it goes back to God from Whom it came.

Precious, therefore, in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints, because *it brings them nearer to God*. How strange, indeed how absurd, this life would be if death ended all! Think of a man like Gladstone, who lived under a high sense of duty, whose life was one of prayer, who sang 'Praise to the Holiest in the height' amid the suffering of his last days; his whole life a trust in God, a serving God, a striving after God, and, finally, a longing to be free and get away to God,—just imagine all this ending in nothingness! Why, it reminds one of the famous Amblongus pie of the nonsense book. It was a pie of most elaborate construction. Particular directions were given as to the making of it, what was to be put in, and in what quantities. It was to be very carefully compounded, and most scientifically baked, and then the final instructions were to 'open the window and pitch it out as fast as possible.' Just as laughable, so to speak, is the idea of a man, trained to high thought and holy feeling and submissive will, being, at the last, simply 'cast as rubbish to the void.' But Christ hath brought life and immortality to light, and

'we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints, because *it ends their struggle*. There is no surer thing about life here than that it is a struggle; every way you look at it. Children dream of life as a great picnic, but soon enough they get that idea knocked out of them. It's a struggle for the daily bread, a struggle against temptation, a struggle after good. If you are not a struggler, you are a straggler on life's way. That is the only alternative. Many get past the struggling stage, so far as labouring for food is concerned. They are in what is called easy circumstances. But never while here will you get beyond the need for struggle as to the higher life of the soul. The road is uphill all the way, and you must wrestle on towards heaven. But it is just this struggling that makes us, and gives us a character worth taking into the next world. It is told of the mother of Mr. Balfour, the present leader of the House of Commons, that, on one occasion, when her sons were going to play in a football match, some friend advised her to keep them from going because of the danger. 'Would you have me spoil a character?' was the mother's reply. She herself was anxious about them, and didn't like their playing; but to keep them back from joining their comrades merely because of any risk, she felt, would do more harm than good. All the same, you may be sure, it would be a relief to her to see them safe home again after it was all over. And so God does not separate us from the need for struggle here, and the risks