

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Polemics. *A Gauntlet to the Theologian and Scientist* (1) is, to say the least, a bold title for such a little book. Dr. Clarke advocates the doctrine of Conditional Immortality. There is nothing new about the treatment of the subject, or the arguments adduced in favour of it. So far as the psychology affects the subject, Dr. Clarke differs little from the views set forth in Mr. Heard's *Tripartite Nature of Man*, though the Author seems to think that he has hit upon an absolutely new discovery.

In the next book, the *Fate of the Dead*, (2) Dr. Clarke starts with pretty much the same premises. This work, however, he tells us, is an attempt not only to solve the problems of *life* which are so interesting to everybody, and more especially to the medical man, but it is something more, "It is an attempt to show that Christ was what He proclaimed Himself to be; to supply an epitome of the New Testament doctrines; to simplify the reading of that book, to prove that its religion is a rational one, and to demonstrate that its theology—if rightly understood—runs as smoothly as if it were a treatise on some *exact science*." This is a grand idea, but it is one which can hardly be expected to be duly treated in 196 pages. Dr. Clarke shows a good deal of skill in argument, together with some strength of language. He has studied the New Testament, he says, for twenty-five years; but as he starts with a preconceived notion, he probably has missed something that we trust further reading, if undertaken without prepossession, will teach him.

Our interest as theologians in some of the *Problems of the Future* (3) which Mr. S. Laing proposes for solution is rather remote. From our point of view, it is of no great moment what the universe is made of, nor how the solar heat is maintained; we are quite contented with the theory of gravitation, and can await further investigations into its nature with sufficient equanimity. Mr. Laing tells us how greatly geologists and astronomers differ in their requirements and estimates of time, and he apparently throws in his lot with the geologists who pile æons on æons, and ages upon the top of them, and still cry out for time. The Glacial Period has but little theological significance, and we can wait to discuss that theory when the scientific men have come to a definite idea of what it is. Of Taxation and Finance, of Population and Food, Mr. Laing writes learnedly; but his discussions here, too, are only on the edge of our province. We take more interest in the Tertiary Man, though he is at best a very far off ancestor; and in the Missing Link, which is farther away still. The Creeds of Great Poets is an important consideration; for great poets,