

COMMON THOUGHTS ON SERIOUS SUBJECTS. BY THE LATE CHESTER MACNAGHTEN, M.A. (*Murray*. Post 8vo, pp. xl, 304. With Illustrations.) It is the addresses Mr. Macnaghten delivered in India, as he carried on for five-and-twenty years 'the important and novel work of educating the princes and nobles of Kathiawar.' Manifestly Mr. Macnaghten was greater than his addresses, as all true educators must be. And Mr. Macnaghten is here himself. Still the addresses are good, very fine indeed in spirit, often quite felicitous in thought and language. Their subject is the way to live. Ethics is the heading under which the volume should be entered in the libraries. It is a course of ethics, untrammelled by system, unhindered by scientific nomenclature.

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE TREASURY. EDITED BY WILLIAM WRIGHT, D.D. (*Nelson*. Crown 8vo, pp. xiv, 712. With Maps.) This is a work of great value; perhaps, if we reckon usefulness and scholarship together, the best of all the 'Aids' to the study of the Bible. It is larger than any of its rivals. It is more profusely illustrated, perhaps more artistically also. It is more attractively written. The subjects and the authors are

far too numerous to mention, and too uniformly good to select from. But a sentence may be written on the concordance. It is the first concordance of its kind. For it combines the chief readings of the Revised Version throughout the whole Bible. It is not a complete concordance, of course, nor anything like it. But it will be found a thoroughly sensible one. Besides the words and their Revised changes, there are subjects and proper names, all printed so cleverly as to be distinguishable at a glance. There must be a large constituency for such a work as this; and this work is published at a price to reach it.

INEBRIETY: ITS SOURCE, PREVENTION, AND CURE. BY CHARLES FOLLEN PALMER. (*Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier*. Crown 8vo, pp. 109. With Diagram.) There are books on their subject that are luxuries or less; this is indispensable. It is indispensable at least to those who are fronted with this subject seriously, and seriously seek to understand it. What a subject it is!—mentally, morally, physically. What patience it demands from us all! What swift resolute strokes of helpfulness and freedom! This is a little book, but the author is deep in the matter of it.

## By Hook or by Crook.

BY THE REV. HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.

'And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself.'—I SAM. ii. 13.

THE flesh-hooks attached to the altar of burnt-offering in the Jewish tabernacle were, in all probability, originally meant to be used for placing the pieces of the sacrifice in order upon the coals of fire, or for gathering them together, as the flames burnt more fiercely, in order to be entirely consumed. But by degrees these instruments were used for less hallowed purposes; and in the degenerate days of the Judges of Israel, a custom had crept in of converting them to selfish uses. The

priestly office was regarded as a source of worldly profit, and the ministrations of God's house were turned into means of gain. The flesh-hooks, instead of being employed in the service of the altar, in order that the sacrifice might be rightly consumed according to the Divine requirements, were used for the gratification of the priest's own fleshly appetite. The Levitical law enjoined that in every sacrifice that was offered as a peace-offering, the fat in the inside of the victim should first of all be burnt upon the altar, as God's special portion and as the essential part of the worship. The breast and shoulder were to be reserved as the reward of the officiating priests; while the rest of the carcase thus consecrated was to form a feast for the offerer and his family in their own home. But the wicked

sons of Eli acted in utter defiance of this law. When they ministered at the altar, they not only appropriated their own lawful share of the offering, but also a large share of what belonged to God and to the worshipper. And, worst of all, they seized in the most irreverent manner the meat before it was laid before the Lord; and if any offerer dared to resist this gross act of sacrilege, which neutralised the whole design and effect of the sacrifice, and insisted upon God having due precedence, the meat was snatched from him with violence. The God whom these sons of Belial served in this manner was their belly, and their glory was in their shame.

A kind of game of chance was practised in regard to the pieces of meat that were being cooked in the boiling water of the pot upon the altar. The flesh-hook was cast at random into the pot, and whatever piece of meat floating about in the broth was attached by its three prongs, was brought out and became the perquisite of the priest. This custom reminds us of a somewhat similar one which is in great vogue still at Hallowe'en, when a two or three pronged fork is dropped from a certain height into a tub full of water, in which apples are floating about; and the apple that is struck by the fork becomes the property of the fortunate hitter. This game is doubtless a survival of some primeval custom of sun-worship; and in all likelihood the priests of Israel, when they fell away from the Levitical purity of their worship, grafted upon their sacrificial observances some portion of the ritual of the Baal idolatry of the surrounding nations—with which they were too familiar. They sank from the worship of the holy God into the worship of nature, with all its fleshly lusts and corruptions. And even this game of chance with the sacrifices of the Lord was not played fairly; for by some cunning device the priest's servant contrived that his flesh-hook should seize the largest and best pieces of meat for his master. The rapacity of the sons of Eli in this respect was notorious; and by their sacrilege and extortion they caused the people to abhor the sacrifices of the Lord, and to abstain from offering them. Their sin was a presumptuous sin, and a flagrant insult to Heaven, and drew down the thunderbolts of vengeance

which destroyed Shiloh and made the house of Eli desolate.

Besides the religious interest connected with this subject, there is an antiquarian one. The custom seems to have been perpetuated into later ages, and to have cropped up in the Christian Church. Mr. George R. Wright, F.S.A., in the first volume of the *Antiquary*, mentions that among the ruins of the old monastery of Battle, at Hastings,—connected with the famous victory that decided the fate of England,—there was found not long ago an archaic instrument called the 'Abbot's flesh-hook,' which shed a good deal of light upon the curious domestic life of the abbey. It was a long fork of bronze with a round handle, terminating in three prongs turned up. With this instrument, according to tradition, the Abbot was wont to fish out a piece of meat from the boiling caldron in which the food of the monks was prepared. It was his privilege to select his portion in this way before his brethren were allowed to get their share. And this fact would seem to indicate its association with an old religious ceremony, and to connect it, if not with the custom of the Jewish priests in the days of the Judges, at least with some prehistoric worship that was in the land before Christianity. Mr. Wright conjectures, with a good deal of plausibility, that the familiar phrase 'by hook or by crook,' which is of very ancient origin, occurring twice in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, may have arisen in connexion with this custom. The crozier of the Abbot was the 'crook,' and the instrument by which he obtained his first and best share of the monastic food in the refectory was the 'hook'; and very likely the monks coupled the two insignia of their superior's office together, and invented among themselves the proverb, that what their Abbot could not get by his hook, he would get by his crook; meaning thereby, that if the hook failed to fish out the best piece of meat for him, his crozier, or crook, the symbol of his dignity, would ensure that it should be allocated to him. They doubtless afterwards used the phrase to express anything that could be got by chance, or by the right of superior position. If the one failed to secure the coveted object, the other made it absolutely certain.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

'Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed Him, If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'—John viii. 31, 32 (R.V.).

#### EXPOSITION.

'*These Jews which had believed Him.*'—Observe the important distinction between believing on Christ (ver. 30), and believing Christ, as here. This distinction is so clearly defined that we are almost shut up to conclude that those to whom Jesus now chiefly turned His attention were not those who had believed on Him, *i.e.* the genuine believers of ver. 30, but those who were half-way, believing that Jesus spoke truly, and was a good man, perhaps a prophet, but who had not yet surrendered heart and will to Him. This conclusion would then be confirmed by the otherwise unaccountable change which takes place in the attitude of those to whom Jesus speaks.—REITH.

'*If ye abide in My word.*'—Short of making the word of Jesus the resting-place for both heart and intellect, full discipleship would be impossible. The true disciple receives and continues in the word of his Master. The expression expands and illustrates the difference between believing Christ to speak the truth, and believing in Him. Many ancient Jews and modern Christians believe so much of Christ's word as is verified by their moral consciousness, and dispute or dispose of the rest as *aberglaube*. The genuine disciple continues, abides, in the word of Him who is the Incarnate Word, yielding to it entire acquiescence as the absolute reality of things, as the truth about God and man.—REYNOLDS.

'*Then are ye truly My disciples.*'—The sentence is a gracious recognition of the first rude beginning of faith. Even this, if it were cherished with absolute devotion, might become the foundation of better things. It included the possibility of a true discipleship, out of which knowledge and freedom should grow; for there is a discipleship of those who, for the time, are in ignorance and bondage.—WESTCOTT.

'*Ye shall know the truth.*'—The *truth* is the full revelation of the true nature of things—that is to say, of the sacred character of the relations between God and man as a moral being, and, consequently, of salvation. It is contained entire in the word of Jesus, and will be disclosed to these new believers when a higher light shall enable them to penetrate to the true meaning of this word. And thus they shall be delivered, not from a foreign political power, but from the inward power of sin. On what, then, is the empire of sin in the human heart really based? Upon a fascination. Let truth shine into the heart and the spell is broken; the will becomes disgusted with that which seduced it, and, to use the words of the Psalmist, 'the bird escapes out of the snare of the fowler.' This is the true deliverance which the Messiah comes to effect; if there is to be another, and an external one, it will be but the complement of this.—GODET.

'*And the truth shall make you free.*'—Jesus explains immediately in what this freedom consists. The occasion and connexion do not at first seem clear. Perhaps Jesus sought simply to make them realise their actual condition, moral and spiritual. Absolutely speaking, no one is a free man who is ignorant of truth, much less he who fears or shrinks from the disclosure of truth, or whom truth condemns. Ignorance is the mother of slaves, slaves in the understanding and in the will. As that is the truth which a man has when he is himself *true*, that is liberty when he is freed from the dominion of his own passions.—REITH.

#### METHODS OF TREATMENT.

##### I.

#### TRUTH AND FREEDOM.

*By the Right Rev. Alfred Barry, D.D.*

The text combines the theoretical and the practical,—the elements of knowing and doing,—and suggests harmony between religion and science. These are the two great forces bearing upon the progress of humanity. The relation between them