

*BRIEF NOTICES OF BOOKS.*

NINE LECTURES ON PREACHING. *By R. W. Dale, M.A.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton.) The only grave error I have detected in this book is that Mr. Dale affirms himself to be retailing mere commonplace, whereas he is in truth enriching us with that precious rarity—common sense. He has conferred upon us a far more acceptable gift than that “complete and systematic course of homiletics” which he regrets his inability to bestow. He has thrown the result of his personal experience and observation into general terms, giving us truths which he has passed through the crucible of his own mind and heart; and that is precisely the most valuable boon, if men did but know it, which any man can confer upon us—truth as it has shaped itself in his own mind, tasted and tested in his own experience. As might be expected, therefore, Mr. Dale’s Lectures are full of practical wisdom and intense devotion. Any man may read them with as keen an interest as the last good novel, simply for the vitality and beauty of the style in which they are written. No student or preacher can read them without being the wiser and the better for them. Good sense carried to its highest power—a kind of glorified good sense—lit up by lively strokes of humour and wit, informed by a manly and unaffected piety, and at times rising easily and naturally into the noblest forms of eloquence—as, for example, in the splendid eulogium and defence of the English language with which Lecture VI. closes: this, I think, will be the verdict passed on this most attractive and valuable book by every competent judge.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES, WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION. *By Professor Plumptre, D.D.* (University Press, Cambridge.) This is only a part of the Cambridge Bible for Schools, and may be bought for a few pence. Nevertheless it is, so far as I know, by far the best exposition of the Epistle of St. James in the English language. Not schoolboys or students going in for an examination alone, but ministers and preachers of the Word, may get more real help from it than from the most costly and elaborate commentaries.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF JAMES HINTON. *Edited by Ellice Hopkins.* (London: C. Kegan Paul and Co.) James Hinton was the most eager, fertile, and original thinker I have ever met. After twenty years of intimate friendship, I thought I knew him well; but the Letters collected in this volume, and edited with rare delicacy and skill, have taught me that I did not know “the half” of his wisdom

and goodness. As they read them, those who knew him can hear the very man himself, talking as only he could talk, and may find the whole secret of his philosophy revealed. But there is far more, and better, in these Letters than even this. It is impossible to read them without feeling that you are brought soul to soul with one of the noblest of men. A spirit more unselfish, more unworldly, more habitually animated by lofty spiritual aims—in a word, a spirit more truly *Christian*, or, as he perhaps would have named it, more *altruistic*, can hardly have worn flesh, at least in these modern days. It is a thing to thank God for that such men should even now and then appear among us.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST: STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF RELIGION AND THE INNER LIFE OF THE CHURCH.—By Rev. Otto Zoeckler, D.D. Translated, with the co-operation of the Author, by Rev. Maurice I. Evans, B.A. (London: Hodder and Stoughton.) In this volume we have rather the materials for many books than a book in the artistic sense, since it lacks the unity which springs from a single controlling purpose well borne in mind. It is a vast repertory of facts, collected with a truly German industry and erudition, concerning the history of the Cross as a symbol of art and worship, combined with an endeavour to reach its theological significance in the successive and various creeds of Christendom. The learned Professor, in this close-packed and far-reaching monograph, treats of the Cross in the pre-Christian and extra-Christian religions, the Cross upon Calvary, the Cross in the pre-Constantine Church and theology, the adoration of the Cross as initiated in the Church of Rome, the Cross in the Church of the Middle Ages, the Cross in the theology and Church of the Reformation, and the Cross in the present and future of the Church. On all these large and momentous topics he writes with a learning, a good sense, and a reasonable yet devout piety which cannot fail to render his work welcome and valuable. It is a quarry from which many good stones may be hewn.

S. COX.