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Ancient and Modern Christologies.[1]

By the Rev. Professor JAMES ORR, D.D.,
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DR. SANDAY speaks of this volume as, he hopes, the last of his preliminary studies in view of his long-projected "Life of Christ," and the range and freshness of the studies whet the appetite for the appearance of the book which is to be their outcome. It is to be hoped that nothing will interfere with the completion of this, the writer's life-task. The work, at least, should not be much longer delayed. One may be permitted also to express the wish that so much absorption in the opinions of others about Christ will not unduly withdraw attention from the central figure Himself as depicted in the Gospels, or detract from the originality of a first-hand presentation of His character and claims.

The present work is historical, yet within the limits of a strict regard for the end in view, of furnishing aid in the shaping of a more complete conception. The ancient development culminated in the Chalcedonian doctrine of the two natures, to which so much modern objection has been taken. It is when Dr. Sanday turns to the modern Christologies that the real interest of his work begins. His concluding chapters gather up results, and discuss the presuppositions and possibilities of a satisfactory modern Christology.

What cannot but impress the reader of Dr. Sanday's volume is the irenical spirit that pervades it. This is manifest in the book throughout. Himself persuaded of the truth of the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity and of the full Deity of Christ, Dr. Sanday recognizes the perplexities that inhere in the discussion of these mysteries, and is prepared always to take the most sympathetic view possible of the adversary. Gnostics, Monarchians, Church Fathers, whose doctrine is defective, all

[1] "Christologies, Ancient and Modern," by William Sanday, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press. 1910. (6s.)

have a kind word said of them. The only exception is Arianism, which is not credited with any saving merit, save, perhaps, in its missionary efforts. It is the same with the teeming modern Christologies. Dr. Sanday believes he has a call to mediate between opposing types of thought, and he does so without stint. His catholicity of spirit enables him to take in all types —Hegelian, Ritschlian, Mystical, Liberal, Orthodox, even an extremist like Schmiedel, whose admission, "It is a very serious question whether we to-day should possess Christianity at all if Jesus had not been interpreted as a Divine being," is justly emphasized. Meanwhile he does not fail to indicate what he takes to be the weak side of the several theories. He is not sure that in Christology Hegel "is not even now some way in advance of many who believe themselves to have got beyond him"; but he thinks "his formula is too predominatingly intellectual," and his method too *a priori*. Of T. H. Green he speaks with enthusiasm. He is deeply impressed with Ritschl, but contends, "The human mind will not permanently renounce the attempt to find a theory of the universe which shall include all being, even the highest." He takes a most favourable view of mysticism, and insists on the mystical element as of the essence of Christianity.

Dr. Sanday reaches the kernel of his subject in his fourth lecture, where he remarks that "the longer I study the course of contemporary thought, and especially contemporary Christian thought, in relation to religion, the more distinctly does it seem to crystallize in two main types." "I will call the one," he goes on, "'full Christianity,' and the other 'reduced Christianity'; and each of these, as it seems to me, has a Christology of its own." Allowing for shades and degrees, he connects the latter chiefly with the Liberal schools in Germany; the other, he thinks, prevails in England. The "full Christianity" recognizes and upholds the true Deity of Christ, and, as involved in this, the Trinity of the Godhead. The "reduced Christianity" starts from the manhood, and is essentially humanitarian in its estimate of Christ. Among its representatives may be named

Wernle, Bousset, Johannes Weiss, Harnack, Jülicher. Here he finds "the strongest dividing-line between German Liberalism and ourselves," and allows that, "stated boldly, and without regard to the contexts in each case, the gulf will seem impassable." Ritschl, he says, puts the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ in the forefront—in a manner, many will think, which really surrendered it—but he concedes that "not all, but by far the greater part, of his followers, and all the more pronounced Liberals, who are independent of them, would deliberately put it (the Deity of Christ) on one side." Dr. Sanday, however, tries to mediate, and is willing to accept this "reduced Christianity" as far as it will go. We gravely question whether his praiseworthy charity does not carry him here too far. The cleft between the two conceptions of Christ is too deep to be ever successfully bridged over. It is not two "types" of genuine Christianity which are involved, but two Christianities, one of which affirms and the other denies the central article of the Incarnation, without which the whole edifice of the Christianity of the New Testament collapses. If this is not evident on the bare statement of it, it should become evident when brought to the test in one vital point, to which, strangely enough, Dr. Sanday does not, so far as we notice, refer in this connection—viz., the *sinlessness* of Christ. It is the case that, in agreement with their humanitarian postulate, most of the modern writers of this school—Wernle and the rest—give up this claim of sinlessness for Christ. Is Dr. Sanday prepared to concede that this is compatible with even a "reduced" Christianity? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." But this assuredly is not that Apostolic foundation.

Probably the part of the volume to which most attention will be directed is Dr. Sanday's attempt to lay down the lines of a "modern Christology," which shall, as he thinks, conserve the essential Deity of Christ, yet avoid the difficulties usually felt in the doctrine of the two natures. On this doctrine doubt may be expressed in passing whether it is quite just to interpret it as meaning a duality in Christ's consciousness—human and

Divine natures lying side by side—so that He is to be regarded as acting now by His human, now by His Divine, nature only. Language of this kind may have patristic authority, but it is by no means necessarily implied in the Chalcedonian formula. The essential point there is the integrity of the natures, together with the unity of the Person, without dogmatizing too nearly on their relation. Can any true doctrine of the Incarnation avoid this confession, or get rid of the difficulties which it raises? We cannot feel, at least, that the hypothesis which Dr. Sanday advocates sensibly mitigates them.

The quarter to which Dr. Sanday turns for help in his construction of a "tentative modern Christology" is that of recent speculation on the "subliminal consciousness" in man, represented most clearly in the works of Professor W. James and the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers. These depths in human personality which lie beneath our ordinary consciousness, yet from which influences constantly stream up into that consciousness, are thought to furnish the key to what is true in mysticism in religion, and also to indicate the "locus" of the Divine in the Person of Christ. Thus, withdrawn to an inaccessible depth, the Divine in Christ manifests itself only through the medium of the humanity, which develops itself according to purely human laws. It is not necessary here to examine particularly the representations given of the "subliminal consciousness." Much in regard to it is not new. It has always been known that the conscious self is not the total self, that there are stores of experience laid up in memory and character on which hourly drafts are being made, that the greater part of our knowledge at any given moment is "latent," that it is only the smallest portion of what has passed into these recesses of the soul that can ever be consciously recalled. In religion, similarly, there has always been speech of an "inner man" which is the seat of the Divine indwelling and of the Spirit's gracious and sanctifying influences. It is from the "heart," Jesus says, that evil thoughts proceed; out of the heart, an older Scripture declares, are the issues of life. The new psychology changes nothing in this teaching.

Where it does advance upon it is in its suggestion that these deeper regions of the soul's life are not simply "latencies," but are really under-strata of *conscious* life; that the contrast is not between conscious and unconscious, but between higher and lower (yet partially interacting) levels of consciousness—the barrier, separating them in certain abnormal states, being broken down.

The present writer does not question the reality of these conditions. He has himself repeatedly drawn attention to them as obviating an objection made to the Incarnation as involving two states of existence of the one Divine Person (*cf.* "Christian View of God," p. 243; "Revelation and Inspiration," p. 151). What is not obvious is how, even as explained, they make any essential difference in the doctrine of the two natures. The subliminal consciousness in man is, after all, a real part of his human self; it is not affirmed, though Professor James uses language that looks in that direction, that it is identical with the Divine. It is not, again, affirmed that the union of the Divine with the human in Jesus does not differ from the ordinary immanence of God in the soul, or even from the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in the believer. It is the union of a pre-existent Divine Person with humanity—as also Dr. Sanday teaches—which Person is the basis of the human self-consciousness. It hardly, therefroe, expresses the whole truth to say that the Divine in Christ is His subliminal human consciousness; though it might be true to say that "the subliminal consciousness in Jesus was Godhead itself" ("Revelation and Inspiration," as above). There is room here for all that Dr. Sanday says of the Divine revealing itself only through the human, yet the need of affirming the two natures in one Person appears as great as ever. When, moreover, Dr. Sanday appeals to those indications in Christ's consciousness which prove "that there was in Him a root of being striking down below the strata of consciousness, by virtue of which He was more than human," declaring that to leave these out of account is to leave half of Christ unexplained, does he not admit the partial truth in the

view of those who recognize a distinction of a Divine and a human element in Christ's self-consciousness, and so far qualify his own rather unguarded utterance: "There is nothing to prevent us from speaking of this human life of His just as we would speak of one of ourselves?" The difficulty is, on Dr. Sanday's view in which he "shakes hands" with those Continental theologians who see humanity in Christ and nothing else, to prevent his conception from passing over into that simply of a God-filled man, in whom an energetic, subliminal consciousness takes the place of Deity.

The Myth and the Word.

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THE study of mythology is by no means the fruitless thing that many suppose. The latest results in the shape of comparative mythology warrant the conviction that still greater things are awaiting those who make this study their own.

Doubtless the nature of the subject lends itself, more than most, to speculations that are more mythological than the myths they pretend to interpret, while the indelicacy of many of the myths themselves serves to repel men from a study which seems to reek only with rottenness. And yet, as the scientific study of mythology develops, the greater seems the certainty that certain critical theories must yield to the dominance of wider research and historical evidence.

For the linguist, the historian, the philosopher, the artist, the poet, the man of letters, and the theologian, the study of mythology may be said to be unavoidable.

For each of them it has its own message. The significance of the message will vary, of course, with the object of each thinker, but in every case its value becomes increasingly obvious. History seeks origins; language, universal archaic speech;