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enough. Nor is there any art to make things grip the mind, rather a curious lack of sheen and sparkle. The Oxford University Press have thought the work worthy of their very best. But its appeal can be only to a limited circle.

Hardly a month passes without a new 'Life' of Christ. This is as inevitable as it is admirable, because there are so many men who feel constrained to come to terms with Christ and to publish to the world their discovery of Him. Each vision has something 'different.' To Mr. Middleton Murry, Jesus was the supreme Genius. To a new writer, Mr. Walter Russell Bowie, He is the supreme

Poet. The book in which this view is developed is called *The Master: A Life of Jesus Christ* (Murray; 7s. 6d. net). We welcome this book though there is nothing very new in it. Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin and Dr. Foakes-Jackson have read it, and apparently approved of it, so it must have outstanding merit. It has certainly the merit of sincerity and earnestness, and the real merit of reverence and love for its august subject. Many readers will feel perplexed by the vagueness of the writer's attitude to Jesus, and this applies in particular to the chapter on the Resurrection. But the book as a whole is a sound piece of work.

Some German Thinkers on Christology.

BY THE REVEREND W. J. SPARROW SIMPSON, D.D., ILFORD, ESSEX.

THERE have recently appeared in Germany four large volumes on the religious learning of the present day in the form of autobiographies. Five-and-twenty eminent German theologians have given to the world an account of their studies and their writings, and more particularly of the process of their individual theological and religious development. This autobiographical element is of peculiar interest. In each case we have the record of a personal experience. We are allowed to see something of the process by which conviction was attained, and the school of thought to which each belongs. The first volume includes Professors Deissmann, Ihmels, Kittel, Schlatter, Reinhold Seeberg, and Theodore Zahn. Volume ii. includes Karl Beth, Girgensohn, Lietzmann, and Loofs. Volume iii. is confined to Catholic theologians, among whom are Bartmann, Grisar, Mausbach, and Peters. The last volume returns to Protestants, and includes Dalman, Dobschütz, Jülicher, and Kaftan. Each chapter is accompanied by a portrait of the author. So far as German Protestantism is concerned, the selection is of course far from exhaustive. We miss many well-known names. Neither Harnack, nor Otto, nor Heiler is represented. It is not clear on what principle the selection was made. But it is certainly representative of the critical outlook and of the chief theological theories in Germany at the present day.

That such a selection includes great variety of thought is obvious. The differences go down to the foundations of Christian belief. It is certainly instructive to compare what some among them are teaching on a subject so central to religion as the Person of Christ. The present paper proposes to describe their teaching on Christology. It is by no means merely gathered from these autobiographical sketches, but also, indeed chiefly, from a study of their separately published works.

One example is the late Professor Ihmels. Ludwig Ihmels, Professor at Leipzig, is an attractive writer, gifted with religious insight as well as with critical power. He is persuaded that the gospel can be understood only where the Law has first done its work. His record illustrates the ordinary way in which a German student passes from one university to another. In Leipzig he heard Luthardt, Kahnis, and Delitzsch; in Erlangen, Frank and Zahn; and in Göttingen, Reuter and Ritschl. Frank, author of the *System of the Christian Certainty*, was his teacher by preference, although not without much critical independence of judgment. The Erlangen School was too subjective to satisfy. Ihmel's chief works are his *Essay on our Lord's Resurrection*, his book on the *Central Questions of Dogma*, and his *Certainty of Christian Truth*. His assurance of objective reality is largely derived from the harmony between the religious need created by the moral law, and the

satisfaction of that need supplied by the gospel. In this harmony between inward and outward he finds security against self-deception. In the sphere of historic fact he is convinced of the reality of our Lord's Resurrection. That for him is central. He has made it the subject of careful study. If it appears difficult to rest all the great problems of Christian religion in an empty grave outside Jerusalem, he replies that this is exactly what St. Paul has done; and that St. Paul is right. Our Christian certainty depends on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Another important teacher represented in these volumes is von Dobschütz. Von Dobschütz succeeded Beyschlag in the University of Halle. There were in 1913 more than five hundred students of Theology there. Thence he went for a winter to Harvard, returning of course to Halle. Von Dobschütz wrote a well-known little Essay called *Easter and Whitsuntide*, in which he maintained that the Apostolic belief in our Lord's Resurrection was independent of the empty grave, and was founded on actual experience of His objective appearance. With regard to the relation between Jesus and St. Paul, von Dobschütz was convinced that St. Paul had not altered the gospel of Jesus, as some recent critics supposed, and that the Apostle was in fact Christ's most faithful interpreter. Von Dobschütz regards himself as a pupil of the Orthodox School.

Von Dobschütz detects in modern religion a tendency to pass from a Christocentric to a theocentric position. At the same time, his critical instinct sees quite clearly that original Christianity was concerned not merely with the historical Jesus, but even more with the exalted Christ. Yet strangely enough, in his book on *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, singularly little notice is taken of the Christology which lay at the foundation of that Christian life. Von Dobschütz is convinced that such an estimate of Jesus as that painted by Houston Chamberlain¹ as 'the revelation of an almost supernatural will-power which held and still holds millions in its spell' is by no means an adequate interpretation of Christ's personality (*Stud. und Krit.*, 1922, p. 188). It is inadequate because Houston Chamberlain separates Jesus from the ground in which His self-consciousness was deeply rooted. For the Father of Jesus is the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Prophets, the God of Israel (*ib.* p. 189). Yet, clearly as von Dobschütz realizes this, he himself is far from making plain who this exalted Christ—object of

the veneration of the Christian Community—actually is, and in what personal relation He stands to Deity.

A third and very eminent German exponent of Christology is Friedrich Loofs, Professor at Leipzig. He was a theologian of extensive influence. He was distinguished not only as a lecturer, but as a preacher also. His *Elements of the History of Dogma* has reached several editions in Germany. He was for years editor, together with Kattenbusch, of the great German Theological Quarterly, the *Studien und Kritiken*, which kept its centenary last year. He died in January 1928, and the hundredth volume of that celebrated journal opened with a tribute to his memory. He was an indefatigable worker, a characteristic example of German industriousness. His publications were numerous and authoritative. His *Essay on St. Augustine* is one of the finest pieces of modern study in theological development.

The attitude of Professor Loofs towards the Person of Christ is a characteristic illustration of much present-day German thought. His lectures on *What is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* were translated into English in 1913. They are admirably clear. The question faced was whether historical science is competent to explain the life of Christ. Historical science recognizes nothing which cannot be accounted for within the natural sphere of human experience. This rules the miraculous out. It cannot explain the Resurrection as a supernatural occurrence. When the supernatural begins, history ceases. No description of the life of Jesus which recognizes supernatural factors is purely historical. That being the sphere of historical science, the question arises—Can history do justice to the Life and Person of Christ? Loofs replies that 'no one relying on the supposition that Jesus was a purely human being is able to write a really historical life of Jesus.'

Loofs shows quite clearly that what happens when critics start with the assumption that Jesus is a purely human being is, either that they eliminate from the Gospels such elements as will not harmonize with their presupposition; or else, admitting the historic reality of the superhuman claims, they ascribe to Jesus the character of an enthusiast and a fanatic. Their naturalistic presuppositions make impartial criticism of the Gospels impossible. 'Thus the Jesus-research, acknowledging but a purely human life of Jesus, comes to the conclusion, either we know next to nothing about Jesus, or Jesus was a religious enthusiast.' Historical science is unable to do justice to the life of Christ.

¹ *Foundation of the Nineteenth Century*, i. 201.

Professor Loofs was deeply convinced that 'Jesus was not a mere man.' He contends that 'not the whole Biblical tradition about Jesus is historical, and that nobody is entitled to think that anything could or should be considered to be true by faith which historical science, through the means at its disposal, is forced to recognize as unhistorical.' 'But, in spite of all this, the assumption that the life of Jesus was a purely human one, and that we can appreciate His personality as a purely human one, is false.' The self-consciousness of Jesus as described in the documents is the proof of this. 'If Jesus considered His death the sacrifice of the New Covenant, He has thereby assigned to Himself such a central position within the history of God's people that this is not compatible with an ordinary human self-consciousness.' A Jesus who had such views 'cannot be measured by any of the standards of historical science.' Loofs sees repeatedly in the sayings ascribed to Jesus 'a self-consciousness surpassing human measure.' For example, 'He knows that the position taken up towards Him is decisive for all eternity.' Hence 'the stupendous demand' of Mt 10³⁷. Moreover, 'Jesus was conscious of a unique relation to God.' 'The Lord's Prayer is not a prayer which He prayed Himself, but a prayer which He taught His disciples.'

Nevertheless, after Loofs has recognized all this, he goes on in spite of it to say that the ancient Christology of the Church is untenable. He offers three grounds for this assertion. First, because to rational logic the old Christology appears untenable; secondly, because it does not agree with the New Testament views; and thirdly, because it was influenced by antiquated conceptions of Greek philosophy. However, he cuts away the foundation from the first, because he admits that 'our reason cannot make any definite assertion about supersensual things.' And therefore it is in reality a poor critic of religious doctrines. 'Hence I adduce no rational arguments against the Church doctrine of the Holy Trinity itself.' He thinks that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity gives grave offence to reason, but that it would be wrong to reject the doctrine on this account, since 'it is absolutely impossible for our reason to comprehend God.'

But, while Loofs refrains from supposing reason competent to refute the doctrine of personal distinctions within the Deity, he thinks it otherwise with the doctrine of the Incarnation. He thinks the difficulty very great of assuming that the Son of God when He became man did not cease, separate from His humanity, to pervade the universe in

Divine majesty. If that was so, could we truly say of the Divine Person who was also outside the historical Jesus, pervading the world in Divine majesty, that He was in reality incarnate? Would not that change the idea of Incarnation into that of Inspiration? a relation between God and man such as the prophets of Israel experienced. Yet, very significantly, Loofs was prepared to say that 'no one of us could find fault with Christians for accepting these irrationalities if the Orthodox Christology, which included them, were presented by the Scriptures.' That is to say, that, according to Loofs, the authority of Scripture would be sufficient to justify assent, in spite of difficulties which the individual reason was unable to solve. Accordingly, the question to be determined is whether Scripture endorses in substance what the orthodox Christology affirms. Loofs asserts that it does not. But this becomes a question of interpretation, in which of course the individual is liable to be mistaken. Loofs, indeed, is well aware that many present-day Lutheran critics take his side. He could say 'there is hardly a single learned theologian—I know of none in Germany—who defends the orthodox Christology in its unaltered form.' This statement may easily leave a false impression. It is confessedly quite serious enough. But none the less, the whole school of German theologians, like Gess and Thomasius, who maintained that St. Paul taught a theory of self-limitation on the part of the Incarnate Son, firmly believed in the Deity of our Lord; even if they would prefer to express it in other terminology than the traditional Creed of Christendom.

That was not the case with Loofs himself. He was unable to accept the Kenotic theory based on Phil 2. What, then, was left for him to do? He had in reality no solution to give. He had declared quite firmly that historical criticism, within the limits of the natural order, could never do justice to the Person of Christ. He had declared that Christ was more than mere man. He was deeply impressed by the superhuman self-consciousness. He admitted the incapacity of reason to solve the mysteries of Deity. But he saw difficulties with regard to Incarnation which reason confessedly cannot solve. Accordingly, he rejected the Orthodox Christology. But what had he to set in its place?

He saw that Jesus 'was a real man; and yet not a man like all others—a man in whose case the analogy of all other human experience is of no use, a unique man among all the children of God (or sons of God, as the New Testament says), the unique one, the Only-Begotten Son.'

But, having said as much as that, he felt constrained to ask—'But does this give us a real appreciation of Jesus?' And he answers, No. Then he inquires, Can formulas be found which are able to make the unique historical Person of Jesus more intelligible than in the Orthodox Christology? He replies—it is easier to put the question than to answer it. Loofs is profoundly struck by the fact that St. Paul (1 Co 8⁶) can say that Christ, or the Divine element in Him, had already been the organ of the creation of the world. Moreover, this idea is not peculiar to St. Paul. And here Loofs collects what several other writers think. For himself he knows not what to say. 'We are placed before a mystery.' 'My last refuge,' he says, 'is the Pauline phrase "the mystery of Christ." And what is the mystery? It is that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.' 'We can never penetrate so deep as to learn how God made Him what He was.'

Beside these writers Julius Kaftan holds an important place. Kaftan has given his opinion of the Person of Christ very clearly in an *Essay on the Man Jesus Christ*, the only Mediator between God and men, published in 1908, and addressed to the General Synod of Schleswig-Holstein (*Biblische Zeit und Streiffragen*, vol. iv.). He refers to the time when men were certain of the Godhead of Jesus, and yet at the same time believed that God was One, and found a solution of the difficulty in the mystery of the Trinity. But German thought of to-day was unable to reconcile the Trinitarian dogma with Monotheism. Kaftan considers the key to the true doctrine is to be found in the conception of Mediator. Accordingly, he gives an elaborate exposition of 1 Ti 2^{5, 6}.

Great stress is laid on the expression 'the Man Christ Jesus.' It is the historic personality, the Son of Man. If He is also called the Son of God in some special sense, yet it is the Man from Nazareth on whom the stress is laid. Kaftan admits that Jesus would not be to us what He is if He were not also more than a mere Man. He is from above and from God. But He confronts us as an historic Personality. He is the Man Christ Jesus.

Now this Man, who is a Man and yet more than a mere Man, is the One Mediator between God and men. The One. This is the language of uncompromising exclusiveness. But this exclusiveness does not mean that other religions have no elements of truth. It means that real communion between God and men is accomplished for the first time in its perfection through Jesus Christ.

Kaftan follows out this Mediatorship of Christ in three departments.

First, as to our knowledge of God. The knowledge of God which Christ has brought to men as Mediator is a knowledge of the Fatherhood in Heaven. Kaftan takes this to mean the Almighty Father, the absolute Personality, the perfection of power and love. This was unknown in Paganism, and only partially known in Israel. Kaftan quotes Mt 11²⁷ and Jn 1¹⁹. Thus Jesus Christ as Mediator is the Revelation of God to men.

But, secondly, Christ the Mediator secures fellowship or communion between God and men. Religion as personal fellowship with Deity is created only by the Man Christ Jesus. 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me' (Jn 14⁶). 'Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him.' Christ and Christ alone is the creator of this communion with God in its deepest, truest sense. Kaftan proceeds to analyse what communion with God requires. It is not simply brought about by the instruction which Christ gives as to the character of Deity. For those who regard communion with God merely in this light there is no real need of any Mediator at all; at least certainly for no Mediator who is anything more than a prophet who is inspired to teach us what God is like. Communion with God, in any really intimate living degree, requires reconciliation between God and men. The Cross cannot be eliminated from the Mediator's work. The truth of this necessity of reconciliation was foreshadowed, however imperfectly, in Israel. And indeed not only there, but in the aspirations and sacrifices of the Pagan world; mixed undoubtedly with superstitions, yet prompted by a craving after purity in order to be in fellowship with holiness. Sin is not a Jewish illusion. It is a terrible reality. Man requires a Mediator for reconciliation with God, and for fellowship with Him. So St. Paul describes the Mediator as being the One 'who gave himself a ransom for all' (1 Ti 2⁵; cf. Mk 10⁴⁵). Jesus Christ is that Mediator: the only Mediator between God and humanity in the sense of adequate reconciliation. This, according to Kaftan, is involved in Christ's self-consciousness. The Cross is the means which secures real and living fellowship between the Holy God and sinful men. In fact, it is the Cross which makes Christianity to be so perfect a fusion of morality with religion. But Kaftan fails to explain why or how the Cross reconciles God and humanity. He says, indeed, that the Cross of Christ is the source of all true religion. But this

genuinely evangelical sentiment is left without any intellectual foundation.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is said to be the Mediator of the dominion of God over men. He conceived Himself as, subsequently to His Death and Resurrection, 'seated at the right hand of power' (Mt 26⁶⁴). That is, enthroned in glory beside God the Father Almighty. He contemplates Himself, says Kaftan, as co-regent with Deity. In His exaltation He participates in the Divine government of the world. And, in fact, adds Kaftan, the dominion of God over the world is actually realized as the dominion of Christ. Where Christ rules, God's rule is established. Where Christ's dominion is lost, the dominion of God is weakened and disappears. Two thousand years of the history of religion testifies to this significant fact. The present age is no exception.

In this triple sense therefore—as cause of Divine revelation, Divine fellowship, Divine dominion—Christ is Mediator between God and men. Mediation is the very essence of the Christian religion. He who accepts Christ as Mediator is a Christian. He who does not accept Him in this capacity is not a Christian. Indeed, religion is fellowship with God, and for Christians fellowship with God realizes itself as fellowship with Christ. Kaftan says that the Sacrament of the Altar is fellowship in Christ's Body and Christ's Blood. He contends that in saying this he leaves all dogmatic theorizing far beneath him. But how he does so, or, if he does, can be justified in the use of such very definite language about Christ's relation to a Christian, is not explained. More especially when he goes on to say that the whole fullness of the Christian life springs from Christ.

And yet, in spite of all these affirmations, Kaftan asserts that the Mediator between God and men is Man, and not God. In spite of the unique union in which Christ lives with God, He does not stand in the place of God. That at least is the impression which the first three Evangelists make on Kaftan. But Kaftan gives no careful exposition even of Mt 11²⁷. He insists, indeed, that the distinction emphasized in modernist criticism between the Christ of St. Paul and the Jesus of the Evangelists does not exist in the Bible, but is introduced into it by criticism from without. But he gives no exposition of the great Pauline teaching in Philippians.

Kaftan then faces the fact that Christians pray to Jesus Christ. He attempts to harmonize this devotional attitude towards Christ with a denial of His Divinity, on the ground that such prayer is not really directed towards the Son of Man, but to the

revelation of truth and grace given through His mediation; and therefore the prayer ultimately passes beyond the Man Christ Jesus to the One and only Deity. God is One. But the One Invisible God is made visible through Christ, and the Unapproachable is in this way approached. And the mediation of Christ is only temporal and concerning this world alone. In process of time the mediation of Christ will cease. He will retire from His function. What will become of Him is not explained. Appeal is made to St. Paul's affirmation that Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Co 15²⁸). But St. Paul's affirmation elsewhere that 'every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' is passed by in silence.

Kaftan's account of the Person of Christ is a singularly interesting analysis of His function as Mediator and of the principle of Mediation—valuable and largely true on its positive side. The serious defect of it consists in its effort to confine the value of Christ to this single function, and in its omission to balance by other doctrinal instruction which the New Testament contains elsewhere what can be deduced from the single principle of mediation. No man will ever do full justice to the Person of Christ who deliberately restricts its meaning to one only out of the various supplementary aspects and expressions and explanations which the Apostolic teaching contains. It can never be by exclusive methods, but by inclusiveness, that the whole truth concerning our Lord will be reached. Here, as so often in theological party statements, it must be said that the author is right in what he affirms, and wrong in what he denies.

Looking back on Kaftan's exposition of Christ exclusively in terms of mediation, the impression left on one's mind is that the author has made of Christ a perfectly inconceivable figure. He has described a being too superhuman to be really man. While restricting Christ's personality within purely human limits, Kaftan ascribes to Him a relation to God and mankind by which all strictly human limits are transcended. The Figure that emerges is the only source of any true and adequate conception of Deity, the only reconciler between God and humanity, the only representative of Deity to whom prayer may be offered. The destiny of the entire human race is absolutely dependent upon Him, and upon their relation to Him. He is enthroned in mysterious elevation in very awful proximity to the Eternal Deity, whose purposes He from that exalted place in highest heaven

directs and achieves. Now a Being of whom all this and more can be truthfully spoken is not simply human at all. He is raised to the position of a demi-god. He is not far removed from the ancient Arian view.

Last of all we would place Karl Girgensohn. He is no longer living. He is author of a remarkable volume of lectures on the *Christian Religion*. Perhaps the most striking feature of these lectures is his treatment of the Divinity of our Lord. Starting with the acknowledgment that no other doctrine concerning the Person of Jesus Christ is adequate than the doctrine that He is God, the author then faces the difficulty, How can Christ be both God and Man? That He can be human is intelligible. That He can be Divine is also intelligible. But does not the one exclude the other? Does it not belong to the conception of humanity that it is not Deity, and to the conception of Deity that it is not humanity? How can these mutual exclusives co-exist within the same person? Is not this dilemma fatal to the orthodox belief? Girgensohn then passes in review the various explanations of the Christological problem which have been popular down the Christian centuries. Coming to modern times the author remarks that the problem can be attempted by beginning either with the humanity, or else with the Divinity. If we start from the humanity of Jesus, as is commonly done by modern thinkers, the tendency is to regard Christ as a human person who has been inspired or richly endowed with the spirit of God, and exalted after His Resurrection to a sort of Divine position. But the Church rightly rejects this conception as heretical. For it regards Christ simply as essentially human, and no more. He is a Man Divinely influenced, but essentially different from Deity.

If, on the other hand, we start from the Deity of Jesus, How can Deity appear in human flesh? If the personality in Christ is literally Divine, does He not cease to be really human at all? Is not His humanity a mere appearance?

An attempt has been made to rationalize this by affirming that the personal principle is of Deity.

That means that His human nature had no personality. But in that case He is not Man, but an incarnate, transcendent Person. Yet the value of a man depends on his personality. Ecclesiastical reflection has endeavoured to harmonize the orthodox doctrine by the distinction between nature and person. Two natures and one person—inseparably united yet not confused. But this theological theory is no solution of the Christological problem. For the problem is precisely how two natures can be blended in one personality. The Orthodox dogma formulates the paradox, but does not in the least explain it.

Ecclesiastical reflection has made another attempt. It propounds the theory of Kenosis. This, of course, is based on St. Paul's teaching to the Philippians. But neither is this theory a real explanation. For it raises problems how Divine prerogatives can be laid aside. If they can, the Being so reduced is no longer Deity, nor yet humanity. The Christological problem therefore remains unsolved.

What, then, is to be done? Are we to make a sacrifice of the intellect? Girgensohn answers that the modern scientific mind is prepared to find itself faced with contradictions. The really scientific attitude is to say that a contradiction is comparatively a matter of indifference if the two sides of the contrast both represent realities. Thus the problem of the human freedom of the will reduces itself to an insoluble contradiction—mechanical fatalism and necessity on the one side, the certainty of moral responsibility and self-determination on the other. What in that case are we content to do? We accept both sides as true and leave them unreconciled. Girgensohn contends that the same principle should be applied to the humanity and the Deity of Christ. Both sides represent a series of facts. We cannot reconcile them. But we can accept both, leaving them unreconciled. The conception of Incarnation, of the Deity and humanity of Christ, transcends our human capacity to reconcile, but not our reasonable assent to both as true.