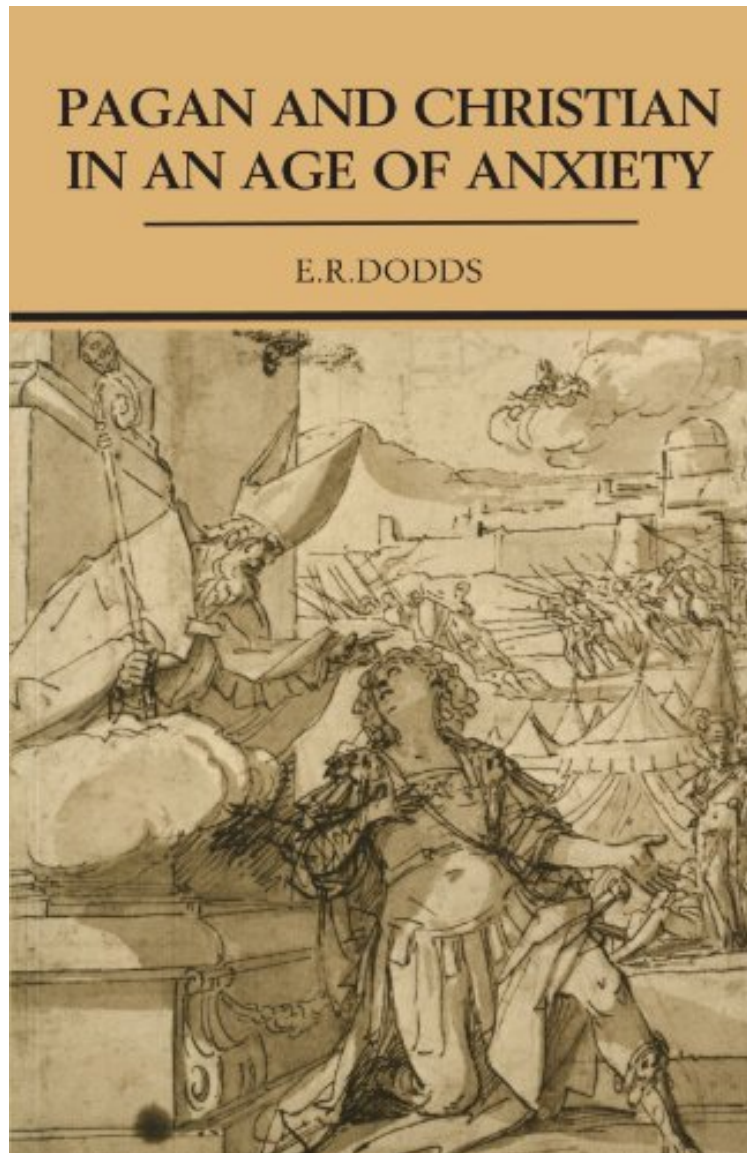


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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine (Wiles Lectures Given at the Queens University, Belfast):

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This book covers religious thought in the Mediterranean world over the roughly 150 years from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine. Dodds has little to say about what peasants believed because this study is based on written works. But rather than describing what was said about particular ideas and doctrines, Dodds describes the religious outlook of the educated. "These are lectures on religious experience in the Jamesian sense", quoting James's definition of religion as "the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."  
The book has a huge number of citations from original texts and from a handful of high quality studies by Danilou, Festugire, and Nilsson, among others. This book will be useful for those researching the history of philosophy, the history of Mediterranean pagan religions, and the history of Christianity. A huge amount of knowledge is required of an author to write with authority about so many thinkers (such as the satirical celestial voyage in Lucian's Icaromenippus, the dream books of Aelius Aristides, and the biblical scholarship of Porphyry) and we are lucky that this book exists; it is neither a shallow survey for an undergraduate reader nor a disciplinary monograph that only a professional scholar would bother to read.

Drawing on the abundant material available for the study of religious experience in late antiquity, Professor Dodds examines the personal religious attitudes and experiences common to pagans and Christians in the period between Marcus Aurelius and Constantine. World-hatred and asceticism, dreams and states of possession, and pagan and Christian mysticism are all discussed. Finally, Dodds considers both pagan views of Christianity and Christian views of paganism as they emerge in the literature of the time. Although primarily written for social and religious historians, this study will also appeal to all those interested in the ancient world and its thought.

"The outstanding characteristics of [Dodds'] work...are a rather rare union of detachment and sympathy, a combination of precise scholarship and a degree of acquaintance with contemporary psychological theories unusual in a classical scholar, and last, but not least, an ability to write very well." The Times Literary Supplement