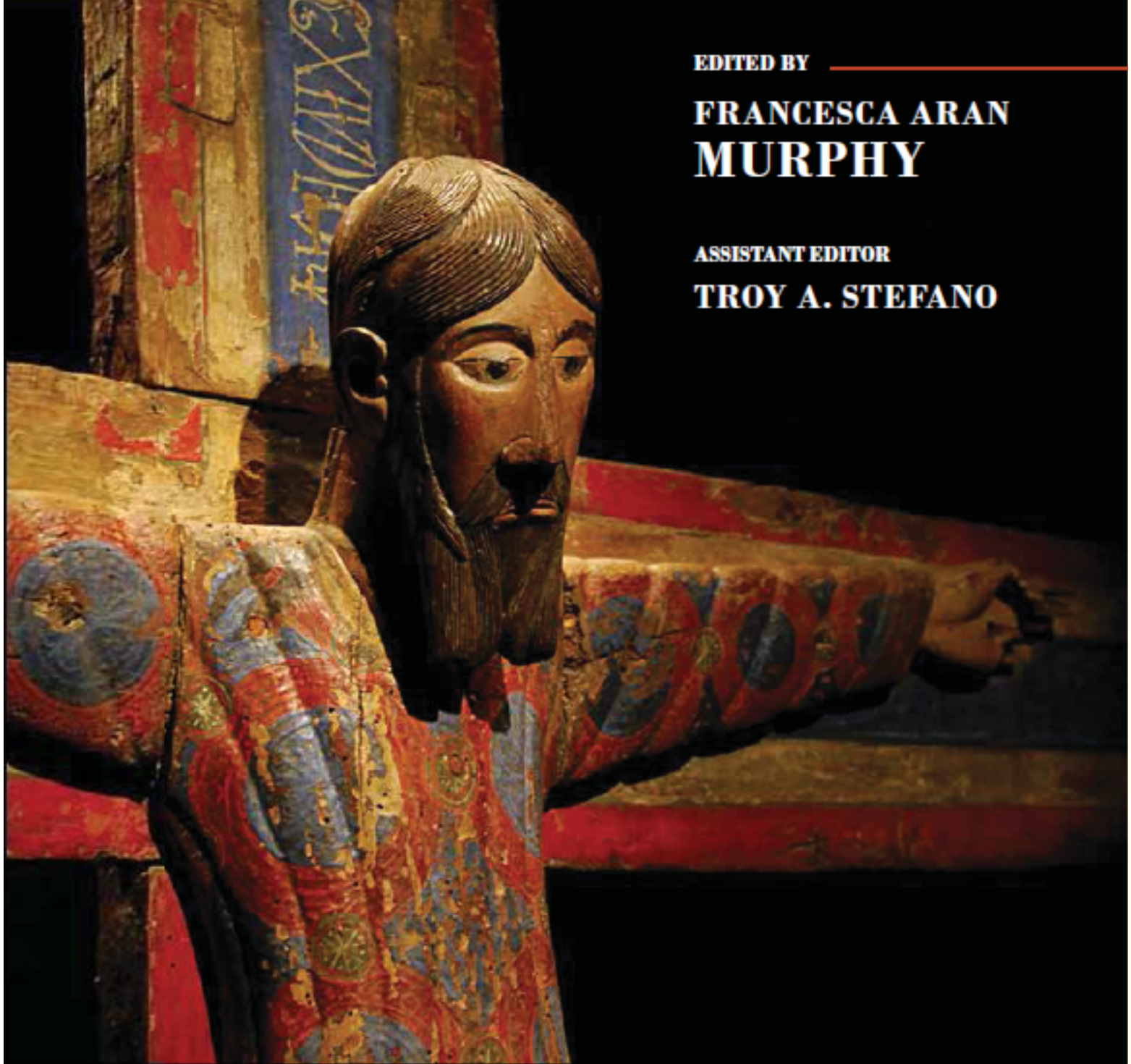


EDITED BY

FRANCESCA ARAN
MURPHY

ASSISTANT EDITOR

TROY A. STEFANO



≡ The Oxford Handbook *of*
CHRISTOLOGY

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

CHRISTOLOGY

Edited by
FRANCESCA ARAN MURPHY

Assistant Editor
TROY A. STEFANO

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

© Oxford University Press 2015

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

First Edition published in 2015

Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015936697

ISBN 978-0-19-964190-1

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xi

Introduction	1
FRANCESCA ARAN MURPHY	

PART I THE BIBLE

1. Language, Truth, and <i>Logos</i>	9
PAUL MANKOWSKI, S.J.	
2. Christology from the Old Testament to the New	21
OLIVIER-THOMAS VENARD, O.P. (TRANSLATED BY FRANCESCA ARAN MURPHY)	
3. Jewish Suffering and Christology in Pauline and Recent Papal Thought	39
GREGORY GLAZOV	
4. The Gospels as Testimony to Jesus Christ: A Contemporary View of their Historical Value	55
RICHARD J. BAUCKHAM	
5. The Work of Christ in the New Testament	72
MICHAEL J. GORMAN	
6. The Gospels on the Presence of Jesus	87
MARKUS BOCKMUEHL	

PART II PATRISTIC CHRISTOLOGY

7. Christology in the Fourth Century	105
KHALED ANATOLIOS	

8. Antioch and Alexandria: Christology as Reflection on God's Presence in History 121
BRIAN E. DALEY, S.J.
9. Christology in the East from the Council of Chalcedon to John Damascene 139
ANDREW LOUTH
10. The Work of Christ in Patristic Theology 154
NORMAN RUSSELL

PART III MEDIAEVAL CHRISTOLOGY

11. Image Christology in the Age of the Second Council of Nicaea (787) 169
AIDAN NICHOLS, O.P.
12. The Islamic Christ 183
GABRIEL SAID REYNOLDS
13. Christology: The *Cur Deus Homo* 199
DAVID S. HOGG
14. Seeing Double: The Crucified Christ in Western Mediaeval Art 215
ALISON MILBANK
15. The Christology of Thomas Aquinas in its Scholastic Context 233
JOSEPH WAWRYKOW
16. Late Mediaeval Atonement Theologies 250
RIK VAN NIEUWENHOVE

PART IV REFORMATION AND CHRISTOLOGY

17. Martin Luther's Eucharistic Christology 267
BRIAN LUGIOYO
18. The Christology of John Calvin 284
RANDALL C. ZACHMAN
19. Christology in the Seventeenth Century 297
MARK W. ELLIOTT

-
- | | |
|---|-----|
| 20. Christology after Kant | 315 |
| KEVIN HECTOR | |
| 21. The Historical Jesus and Christology from David Friedrich Strauss to Käsemann | 328 |
| PHILIP G. ZIEGLER | |

PART V MODERN AND POSTMODERN CHRISTOLOGY

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 22. Christology from Lessing to Schleiermacher | 347 |
| TROY A. STEFANO | |
| 23. Christology after Schleiermacher: Three Twentieth-Century Christologists | 362 |
| TROY A. STEFANO | |
| 24. Knowing about Jesus, Knowing Jesus: Christology and Spirituality | 378 |
| RAYMOND GAWRONSKI, S.J. | |
| 25. Chinese Christologies: Images of Christ and Chinese Cultures | 393 |
| K. K. YEO | |
| 26. Feminist Christologies | 408 |
| MICHELE M. SCHUMACHER | |
| 27. Jesus Christ, Living Water in Africa Today | 425 |
| DIANE B. STINTON | |
| 28. Kenoticism in Modern Christology | 444 |
| BRUCE McCORMACK | |

PART VI IMAGINING THE SON OF GOD IN MODERNITY

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 29. Images of Christ in Post-Enlightenment Oratorios | 461 |
| CALVIN STAPERT | |
| 30. Christ in Cinema: The Evangelical Power of the Beautiful | 475 |
| ROBERT BARRON | |

31. Imagining Christ in Literature 488
ROWAN WILLIAMS

32. Christ in Art from the Baroque to the Present 506
LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM

PART VII THE GRAMMAR OF CHRISTOLOGY: CHRISTOLOGICAL NORMS

33. The Christological Prism: Christology as Methodological Principle 519
ROBERT J. WOŹNIAK

34. The Christ of the Canonical Gospels and the Christs of the
Apocryphal Gospels 531
SIMON GATHERCOLE

35. The Doctrinal Significance of the Councils of Nicaea,
Ephesus, and Chalcedon 549
THOMAS G. WEINANDY, O.F.M., CAP.

36. Normative Protestant Christology 568
KENNETH OAKES

37. What Makes a Christology Catholic? 582
GILBERT NARCISSE, O.P.
(TRANSLATED BY KENNETH OAKES)

38. Christology and World Religions: A Systematic Perspective 596
GAVIN D'COSTA

39. The Place of Christology in Systematic Theology 611
JOHN WEBSTER

- Afterword: The Breadth of Christology: The Beautiful Work
of Christ 628
FRANCESCA ARAN MURPHY

- Index* 649

PART V

MODERN AND
POSTMODERN
CHRISTOLOGY

CHAPTER 22

CHRISTOLOGY FROM LESSING TO SCHLEIERMACHER

TROY A. STEFANO

DEFINING THE PROBLEMATIC: LESSING'S DITCH

WHETHER expressed in the dramatic form of a Lessing, the frigid constraints of a Kant, the Olympian serenity of a Goethe, or the Dionysiac fury of a Nietzsche, the contempt for incarnate divinity has been ubiquitous. The eighteenth century was a period of unprecedented epistemological and ontological legislation against such a belief: 'rules' were established, 'judges' were appointed, and 'violators' were prosecuted with the full power of one's brow. The belief that Jesus—an historic and contingent figure, receding into the abyss of history—is the Christ of God, the center of all history, the one in whom God reveals himself and makes present his eschatological fullness, is a capital offense. This is a violation of the separation of event and truth as two distinct genera, which Lessing dubbed 'the ugly, broad ditch', and summarized in the phrase: 'Accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason' (Lessing 1956: 53). The implication of this 'ditch' is that there are two orders that cannot be traversed: that of events, the historical, the ontic, the existential, the categorical, the particular; and that of truth, the metaphysical, the ontological, the essential, the transcendental, the universal; and there cannot be any Christological 'intermingling' of the two. Historical processes and events are immanent, contingent, and relative.

After all, how can an individual point in the stream of history have an absolute and unconditional meaning? (Schönborn 2010: 39; Ratzinger 2004: 194–5). Can the figure of Nazareth tip the entire scale of history in his favor, considering that he is outweighed by the two thousand years that have passed since his death, not to mention the full weight of the future (Von Balthasar 1992: 25)? If history itself has not passed a sufficient judgment,

then the Enlightenment philosophers certainly have: *all* historical events are relative, and this includes the life of Jesus. And thus, any attempt to find in Jesus the definitive self-revelation of God was marked out of bounds a priori. One could classify the way in which Lessing's ditch formed the scope of the Christological problematic in the late eighteenth century in three ways:

1. *Epistemological-horizontal dimension ('the elliptical problem')*: It was with Lessing's 'ditch' in mind that Reimarus began the history of Protestant biblical criticism, in which the 'simple figure of Nazareth' was divested of the 'ceremonial robes' of dogma (see Schweitzer 2005: 13–26), leading to the separation of the 'Jesus of history' (the categorical, immanent, historical) and the 'Christ of faith' (the transcendental, rational, ideal). Jesus could no longer claim any ultimate uniqueness: he was a figure in history, and like all historical figures and events, his significance was relative. He should be subject to historical-critical inquiry and any excess claims should be excised. There can be no ontological continuity between the pre-Easter Jesus and the post-Easter Jesus, whether understood in terms of the early Christian witness-testimony or the continuation of that testimony in the community of today. Severed from the Jesus of history, the Christ of faith became a free-radical, in need of both explanation and, if its significance is to be retained, a surrogate attachment (cf. Strauss' attempt to secure an anthropological surrogate [Strauss 1973: 780], as well as that of Feuerbach).

2. *Vertical-ontological dimension ('the Chalcedonian problem')*: Lessing's 'ditch' called into question the sufficiency and plausibility of faith as the mediator between the transcendental and the categorical. He regarded the Chalcedonian claim that Jesus is God and man as a confusion of genus ('if that is not a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος, then I do not know what Aristotle meant by this phrase,' Lessing 1956: 54; cf. Aristotle, *De Caelo*: Book 1, Cap. 1, 268b 1). *Tertium non datur*. But it was only after Lessing that non-plausibility and non-sufficiency became impossibility (cf. Reimarus 1985; and afterwards, Kant 2005a: 6:119; Schleiermacher 2011: §94). The 'ditch' became concretized into ontological legislation: the a priori presupposition of the incommunicability of the transcendental and categorical gave rise to the premise of historical immanentism, operative in historical-critical exegesis. The traditional doctrine of Jesus as 'one person in two natures' is rendered impossible a priori, for that would entail, respectively, (a) the communication of the two incommunicable orders (by way of hypostatic union in one person); and (b) a violation of exclusively intra-historical processes.

3. *Eschatological-theological dimension ('the Trinitarian problem')*: The consequence of this Christological dissolution is the separation of Christology from the doctrine of God. Once there is the a priori legislation that between the transcendental and categorical there cannot be any true communication or identity, Jesus cannot be the eschatological self-disclosure of God as he is in himself—the presupposition that led to the formation of the doctrine of the Trinity by the early Church. With one decree, God as Trinity and Jesus as eternally pre-existent Son must be rejected. If Jesus is to retain any significance after such a separation, it is on immanentist terms.

THE LANDSCAPE OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY SOLUTIONS: THE PLACE OF SCHLEIERMACHER

The late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century witnessed various approaches to this 'gap', which inevitably also entails corresponding reformulations of the three dimensions of the Christological problematic. Broadly speaking, there were two categories: those which attempted to 'close' the gap by arguing that it can be overcome by a higher-order knowledge and those which attempted to preserve the relation between the categorical and transcendental by faith.

'Closing' the Ellipse by Higher-Order Knowledge

Such diverse philosophical approaches as those of Kant and Hegel could be brought together analytically under this category insofar as they attempted to 'embrace' the horizontal-epistemological ellipse within a philosophical 'circle' of higher knowledge, whether in the form of 'a moral idea of reason' (Kant) or 'absolute knowledge' (Hegel). For Kant, the God-man, at best, is a temporal vehicle for a timeless truth. Kant makes a clear distinction between an '*empirical* (historical) faith' and a '*rational* faith' (Kant 2005a: 6:119; cf. the contrast between an 'ecclesiastical faith' and a 'pure moral faith' in 6:117). The one begins with the given of history; the other with the postulates of reason. For Kant, 'in the appearance of the God-man, the true object of the saving faith is not what in the God-man falls to the senses, or can be cognized through experience, but the prototype lying in our reason which we put in him (since, from what can be gathered from his example, the God-man is found to conform to the prototype), and such a faith is all the same as the principle of a good life conduct' (6:119). Thus, the relationship between the 'moral idea of reason' (the surrogate for the Christ of faith) and the 'non-real ideal' (*Urbild*) or 'prototypical example' (the surrogate for the Jesus of history) is one of exemplarity and non-identity. The Trinity, which presupposes the transcendental identity of God and Jesus, is considered an *adiaphora* (cf. Kant 2005a: 6:140–7; 2005b: 7:39).

Hegel tries to overcome the 'gap' by calling into question the intrinsic incommunicability of the two orders. For Hegel, the categorical is the transcendental in the mode of antithesis, and thus, it is a function of the transcendental's ('the Absolute's') self-othering and self-actualization. Hegel's *idea* contains the structure of thesis–antithesis–synthesis, in which one can traverse Lessing's gap both epistemologically and ontologically through a logic of dialectical and teleological development. In Hegel, unlike Kant, the relationship between 'the Absolute' (the surrogate for the Christ of faith) and the 'historical actualization of the idea' (the surrogate for the Jesus of history) is one of ontological

identity, and not merely one of exemplarity (Hegel 1956: 318–36; 1977: §748–78). But like Kant, he attempts to ‘close’ the gap by establishing a purview that makes the dictates of the ideal and rational—which serve as the surrogate for the Christ of faith—dominant, and makes the function of the historical realization of the ‘idea’ recessive by relation. The ‘gap’ in both cases is not overcome by faith, but by a ‘closed’ philosophical circle (Hegel 1977: §788–808; 1991: §214). As Schelling realized, this resolution may deal successfully with Lessing, but it eviscerates the Christian theological and soteriological drama. For acts, both human and divine, must be grounded in freedom, and so can never be established by reason, but only received by faith (Schelling 1977: 160, 162; Staudenmaier 1840: §391–6).

‘Mediating’ the Ellipse by Faith

Of those who engaged this problematic within the ellipse of faith, there are four analytically distinguishable groups:

1. *Those who ‘resolve’ the dilemma by reducing the transcendental to the categorical—‘Christology from below’ and the question of transcendental limits:* Strauss had made the ‘critical investigation of the life of Jesus’ the test which traditionally Christology must pass for retainability and, as Strauss was quick to point out, once the Christ of faith was made to siphon through historical critical analysis, there was nothing of substance left: ‘We are no longer Christians’ (Strauss 1903: 61). Some theologians, however, were more optimistic. While agreeing with Strauss that the Jesus of history is the standard and criterion for all claims of faith, theologians disagreed widely about what kind of claims such a Jesuology could license. For some, he was a ‘great soul’ (Renan 1863), whose significance rests in embodying an ideal. He was a (pacifist-universalistic) ‘religious personality’ (Harnack 1972: 36–43) who is a ‘holy reality’ that stands as the source of and symbol for the Christian community (Troeltsch 1991: 88–91). His significance was in his ‘ethical profession’ (Ritschl 1874: 412–13). In these cases, there is a definitive disjunction between the transcendental and the categorical as in Strauss, but there is attributed to Jesus a certain uniqueness, largely understood in terms of the intra-historical influence of his personality and example, which becomes the surrogate for the Christ of faith. Such a uniqueness is established in the relationship between the historically-critically established figure and the sociologically-psychologically established community that he influenced. The heights of his uniqueness—whether he is *merely* a ‘great soul’ among a history of great figures, as in Renan, or the ethical revelation of the Kingdom of God, as in Ritschl, for example—vary widely; nonetheless, they never broach the divine. The other direction taken during this period was that of German (Thomasius and Gess) and British (Forsyth and Mackintosh) Kenoticism. These kenoticists are united in the way in which they reject not only Christ’s dyophysitism, but more importantly, his dyothelitism; however, unlike the first path taken by Renan, Harnack, and others, which creates an ideal surrogate for the displaced divinity, the kenoticists siphoned the transcendental into the categorical by changing the traditional doctrine of

morphological kenosis—that God changed his ‘form’ of glory into the ‘form’ of humility in the Incarnation, based on Phil. 2:6’s *ὁς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων*—into a doctrine of substantial kenosis. God as divine is stripped of his attributes and becomes the human Jesus. The kenoticists attempt to overcome the epistemological-horizontal and the vertical-ontological gaps by reducing the transcendental to the categorical to the point of ontological identification. A ‘gap’ now appears between whatever the divine was before Jesus and whatever the divine is as a result of its substantial change in order to become categorical in Jesus. Because of this newly inserted ‘gap’, Isaak Dorner rightly characterizes such an approach as turning the Incarnation into a mere theophany (Dorner 1853: 1270; cf. Baillie 1948: 94–8); since Incarnation and a doctrine of Revelation traditionally presuppose the revelation of God *as he is in himself*.

2. *Those who reinterpret the dilemma by turning the gap into a theological positive—the non-historic and the transcendental encountered existentially*: In a section entitled ‘something about Lessing’, Kierkegaard writes that ‘Lessing opposes what I would call quantifying oneself into a qualitative decision’ (Kierkegaard 1992: 95). Kierkegaard engages in an important hermeneutical shift: unlike Reimarus and the ensuing tradition of liberal Protestant criticism, Kierkegaard reads Lessing as claiming the a priori ‘incommensurability’ rather than ‘incommunicability’ of the two genera. This has three important consequences: the first is that Lessing’s own word, *der Sprung* (‘the leap’), which was used to express his inability to travel between ‘accidental truths of history’ and the ‘necessary truths of reason’ now became a term freighted with immense existential weight to express an act of isolation for which there is no mediation (cf. Ferreira 2006: 213). For Kierkegaard, ‘the leap is a category of decision’ (Kierkegaard 1992: 99; cf. 2010: 22). The second consequence is that the Incarnation, as a metaphysical claim, is no longer ruled out a priori: for, it is no longer a question of the impossibility of communication between genera, but of their incommensurability (and thus now a question of existential and cognitive urgency). The question now becomes how a Christian understands God revealed in Christ. Kierkegaard observes that our ‘leap’ is not from the homogeneous to the non-homogeneous; rather, all of our leaps are within a relative degree of homogeneity, since the Christian paradox is ‘Christ’s entry into the world’: that is, the qualitatively different (non-homogeneous) leap is ‘the one made by God coming into Time, *not by us*. On *our* side a transition may be a leap (that is, a qualitative transition) even if homogeneous in contrast to the leap made by God into the world’ (Ferreira 2006: 218; cf. Kierkegaard 2010).

The third consequence of transferring Lessing’s ditch into an existential register is that for Kierkegaard, ‘there is no “objective” means of access, in the sense of modern historical “objectivity”, to an adequate understanding of Jesus Christ, not even of his crucifixion’ (Kierkegaard 1992: 386). Seen as the God-man, who suffered both humanly and superhumanly, Christ is ‘an extremely unhistorical person’ in the ‘situation of contemporaneity’ (Kierkegaard 1992: 60). Since Christ is not accessible through historical means, Kierkegaard lays an emphasis on the ‘form’ (*Gestalt*) of the New Testament depiction of Christ, and not on the historical Jesus, as the basis for our qualitative ‘leap’. There is a ‘continuity of form’ between the New Testament Christ and our experience of

him through personal relation, but only retrospectively from the vantage point of existential belief (Kierkegaard 2010: 399–400). Kierkegaard leaves open the gap between the historical Jesus and the biblical Christ. Thus, Kierkegaard can at once criticize aesthetic theology (cf. Kierkegaard 1987; Von Balthasar 2009: 48–52), and at the same time be an aesthetic theologian by grounding the urgency of decision in an encounter with the ‘form’ of Christ in the New Testament. For Kierkegaard, faith does not mediate between the categorical and the transcendental by allowing the historical Jesus to become diaphanous to the Son of God; rather, faith presents one with a transcendental encounter that is aesthetic and non-historic precisely because it is pan-(or supra-)historic (‘contemporaneous’, in Danish, *Samtidig*). Emanuel Hirsch makes a good point that an ‘historical simultaneity’ is needed aside Kierkegaard’s ‘subjective-theoretical’ simultaneity, to make an encounter with Jesus Christ truly possible (Hirsch 1978: 48).

3. *Those who ‘resolve’ the dilemma by positing the Christ of faith with minimal historicity—the kerygmatic Christ and the formal limits of historicity:* The second trajectory after Strauss is to prioritize the Christ of faith, with a minimal connection to the Jesus of history. While Martin Kähler and Wilhelm Herrmann present relatively ‘thicker’ historical grounding of the Christ of faith in the Jesus of history, Rudolf Bultmann minimizes the historical connection to a merely formal claim *that* Jesus existed, and radicalizes the bipolarity between that Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ (Bultmann 1969: 284). And he explains the ‘gap’ between the Jesus of history (stimulus) and the Christ of faith through a process of mythologization, wherein the revelatory worth of Christology takes place. In the case of the first group, the Christ of faith was severed from the Jesus of history, in order to allow the latter as established by historical-critical analysis to keep Christ-talk in check. The second category is the opposite to the first: the Christ of faith is affirmed, whereas the Jesus of history as established by historical-critical method is rejected; and the only connection between the Christ of faith and its ground is aesthetic (the ‘form’ of Christ in the Gospels), but not the Jesus of history. Christ is only known qualitatively and existentially, but cannot be known quantitatively or historically. This third category, as represented by Bultmann, differs from the second insofar as it posits the formal existence of the historical Jesus. But it differs from the first not only insofar as it preserved the Christ of faith, but also insofar as it was sufficient *that* Jesus existed, but how he existed, or his personality and influence was of no concern. For Bultmann, the continuity between the pre-Easter Jesus and the post-Easter Jesus was bridged by a process of mythologization. The figure of Nazareth, that is the subject of historical-critical analysis, was ‘dressed’ up with ‘forms’ (expressions, categories, and so forth) that were not intrinsic developments of his own ‘form’ but ‘impositions’, albeit existentially meaningful ones. There is no continuity of subject between Jesus and Christ. ‘Jesus Christ’, as a totality, is a bipolar phenomena.

4. *Those who ‘resolve’ the dilemma by forming a theory of correlation:* While Schleiermacher precedes and was a formative influence for many of the figures described above, analytically he presents a distinct pathway in the nineteenth century that, in light of his influence, has proven to be the richest of these solutions. The challenge faced by the third category is that it does not have the ability to form a coherent and/or substantial connection between Jesus and Christ, person and personality, figure

and influence. This point helps to shed light on Schleiermacher's innovation and significance: taking advantage of historicism's displacement of the Kantian emphasis on the exact sciences, he argues regressively from historical effect to psycho-personal cause. The logic of his argument could be presented thus:

- Schleiermacher begins with the philosophical and historical presupposition that any historic figure exercises a certain degree of influence; and that a person's personality is mediated in and through that influence, in such a way that, by looking at that influence, one could establish a posteriori and retrospectively certain claims about the personality that would give rise to such an influence. Thus, there is a qualitative correspondence across history between personality and influence, and the magnitude of the former determines the scope of the latter; and the scope of the latter, conversely, can disclose the magnitude of the former. Inverting the logic of Melancthon's 'to know Jesus is to know his effect', Schleiermacher argues, 'to know his effects is to know Jesus', thereby beginning with the *experience* of Jesus in the community of faith, and a posteriori attempting to establish the historical conditions for such an experience and influence in Jesus' personality (Schleiermacher 2011: §87, 3; §91, 2).
- The function of Christianity is to draw historical being through the mediation and influence of Jesus into the ground of its existence by the experience (*Ankündigung*) or feeling (*Gefühl*) of Absolute Dependence (*schlechthinniger Abhängigkeit*), which is also called God-consciousness (§11; cf. §94, §100).
- Looked at retrospectively, the personality of Jesus must be such that he is able to have that kind of effect (i.e., effect that kind of God-consciousness in us) (§92). From this, Schleiermacher concludes that he must be the prototypical God-man, who has perfect God-consciousness, and who can spread (effect) that consciousness to others in and through history (§92). Looked at progressively, the person of Jesus radiates a personal influence that is historical, but at every moment, can only be explained by direct divine causality (§91.1; §94.2; §13).

The heart of Schleiermacher's insight is the continuity (of person, personality) amidst discontinuity (historical and geographical disparities) between the pre-Easter and post-Easter Christ. On the one hand, Schleiermacher defeats Kant at his own 'game' by using subjective consciousness as the basis for establishing a categorical truth. On the other hand, he uproots Lessing's axiom by showing how a categorical figure could be the mediator of a transcendental truth (i.e., God-consciousness).

Within the landscape of those who mediate the ellipse by faith, by comparison to the first group, Schleiermacher is able to utilize his theory of 'the historical impact of personality' to establish an historical Jesus that both evades the historical-critical critique of Jesus in the Gospels, while forming a basis for the Christ of faith. He is able to retain the Christ of faith as Kierkegaard does, but he does not ground Christ in the Gospel text aesthetically, since the biblical text was largely the subject of the Enlightenment criticisms like those of Reimarus and Strauss. Instead he grounds that faith in the personality of Jesus himself. Schleiermacher's Jesus is not bipolar, but a charismatic and God-filled man,

whose person and personality are so intimately wed that his influence on the community of faith today cannot be explained apart from the historical life and person of Jesus and a direct divine causality in mediating his religious influence on us (§91.1; §94.2). Apart from the Tübingen theologians—whose legacy in the twentieth century cannot be separated from the overpowering shadow of Schleiermacher’s influence (e.g., Walter Kasper, Joseph Ratzinger, Hans Urs von Balthasar)—it seems that Schleiermacher’s negotiation was the best available: despite Strauss’ quibbles (Strauss 1977: 159–69), we gain ‘back’ a basis for faith in Jesus ... but it comes at the cost of replacing Chalcedonian orthodoxy with a historically immanent surrogate—a perfected human being with ‘God-consciousness.’ Furthermore, Schleiermacher’s impact outside of the elitist ranks of theology lends to the task of engaging him a certain existential urgency. (Christoph Cardinal Schönborn observes a widespread ‘neo-Arianism’ that sees Jesus as a man accredited by God, but nonetheless as radically immanent; Schönborn 2010: 41–2.) Notwithstanding, within the tradition of liberal Protestantism, Schleiermacher is the closest to the mediaeval synthesis in which the faith of the community (i.e., ‘form’) corresponded to the Object of revelation (i.e., ‘content’). Schleiermacher’s own lack of determinacy amplifies his possibilities. But it is here that we see Schleiermacher as both promise and problem.

SCHLEIERMACHER AS PROMISE AND PROBLEM

Schleiermacher has the proverbial wax nose. His own thought, while providing many solutions to the Enlightenment’s challenges, presents an even greater challenge to the doctrines and dogmas of traditional Christology. As a Christian theologian who wrestles with these questions from within the community of faith, Schleiermacher represents the internalization of the Enlightenment’s challenges within the bosom of theology. Unlike a Lessing or a Kant, or even a Reimarus or a Strauss, Schleiermacher does not bring an extrinsic standard against which to measure the Christian faith, but develops a Christomorphic standard that measures all other claims (cf. Niebuhr 1964: 210–14). But for every solution, he posed a new challenge; and thus, the history of theology’s dealings with Lessing after the nineteenth century became transfigured into a history of the affirmative or negative reception of Schleiermacher.

The Schleiermachian Transfiguration of the ‘Elliptical Problem’

In order to establish Jesus’ historicity and personality apart from the Gospel texts and only according to the ‘impact factor’ of the subjective experience of the Christian community, Schleiermacher limits himself to a naturalistic understanding of historical

causality that can serve the function of establishing an historical cause as a result of an historical effect. 'The appearance of the Redeemer in history is, as divine revelation, neither an absolutely supernatural nor an absolutely supra-rational thing' (Schleiermacher 2011: §13). The upside of his solution is that Schleiermacher argues that what the Christian community says about Jesus is grounded in Jesus himself. His claim of historical influence provides a thread that weaves together the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. The downside is that this requires the reduction of Jesus to what can be transmitted as a matter of historical influence and to what therefore the Christian community experiences.

This has two consequences. First, the relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is established qualitatively, by a value judgment in the subjective religious experience of the Christian community. Schleiermacher's difference here from Kierkegaard and Bultmann is that he takes this qualitative claim as positing a quantitative and historical condition, essentially by-passing the New Testament texts. For, 'faith in Jesus as redeemer was not based on details, but develops out of a total impression—from which it follows only that there are no details in existence which could have prevented that impression' (§99, *Postscript*). Second, the traditional separation between Jesus' person and work is now conflated into a single reality: soteriology retrospectively posits, a posteriori, Christ's essence (his personality). For, 'The peculiar activity and the exclusive dignity of the Redeemer imply each other and are inseparably one in the self-consciousness of believers' (§92). The full significance of soteriology must be enfolded within the physical and personal influence of Jesus' personality, that is, within his public ministry, leading up to and including the Passion. The result is that the traditional locus of Christ's soteriological work in the *Triduum*—definitively including his death, descent into Hades, and resurrection—is marked as irrelevant for Christological consideration, since they are factors that cannot be transmitted historically as part of Jesus' influence. The process of enfolding the traditional significance of the *Triduum* into Jesus' personality entailed an irretrievable reduction of the scope and meaning of Christ's work.

The result these two aspects have for traditional Christology can be seen in the way they pan out in those whom he influenced. Schleiermacher is vague regarding the extent to which the figure of Jesus is open to quantitative investigation. His thought can go in the direction of Barth, for example, and imply a 'closed' ellipse between community and person that sits 'above' historical analysis, and which is content with the formal assertion of the Redeemer's historical existence and personality; but conversely, his thought can go in the direction of Kasermann, or even Drey and Möhler, in the nineteenth century, or Pannenberg, Kasper, Ratzinger, and Von Balthasar, in the twentieth, among others, in positing the true quantitative immersion of Jesus as a condition for his qualitative effect, and as such, the hospitality of (kerygmatic) Christology to historical inquiry. The latter figures are quick to point out that what is at stake is not simply historical curiosity or an obsession with the Kantian exact sciences, but the internal coherence of Jesus himself as an historic being. Furthermore, the extent to which Jesus is deemed quantitative is the extent to which the New Testament texts themselves would have a bearing on understanding his person and personality.

As the nineteenth century came to a close, and for the period leading up to the Second World War (before the so-called 'Second Quest'), an increased optimism became prevalent regarding the transparency of the New Testament texts to the historical figure of Jesus. The course of this discussion in the twentieth century will take the form of asking the extent to which Jesus was himself conscious of his significance (as established by the New Testament texts) as the measure for the continuity between personality and community (the original Schleiermachian ellipse). With Johannes Weiss' *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (1892), the original Schleiermachian ellipse, which proposed a timeless, ethical 'impact' by Jesus' personality, came to a close, and the ellipse was expanded into new categories: Schleiermacher's relationship between Jesus' personality and the community of faith became the relationship between Jesus' self-understanding of the apocalyptic significance of his own life in relation to the horizon of the totality of history (the universal, pan- and meta-historic scope of his work). Such a 'stretching' of Schleiermacher's ellipse threatened to 'snap' the thread, and render Jesus, once again, into a duality.

The Schleiermachian Transfiguration of the 'Chalcedonian Problem'

For Schleiermacher, regardless of the authority associated with any specific confession, whatever discourse does not serve the task of shedding light upon a *direct* aspect of the collective and personal experience of Christ should be dispensed with as useless and inexpedient (Schleiermacher 2011: §15–19; §95; cf. §92.2). Chalcedon gets the axe, along with Constantinople III and Nicaea I. Whatever Schleiermacher says about Christ, he is always on '*this side*' of the Creator–creature divide, and he tolerates no piercing of those barriers.

The potency of Schleiermacher's own Christology is the way in which it is able to overcome Lessing's ditch, as well as make fuller use of the philosophical development of the term 'person' in the direction of self-consciousness and subjectivity—a development that occurred largely after and only in indirect dependence on the original theological context of personhood (i.e., *hypostasis*, and eventually, *prosopon* and *personae* as Trinitarian terms). Schleiermacher begins, like Aquinas, by positing that God as the Absolute must be *purus actus*; but unlike Aquinas, he sees this as signifying that God can only be communicated to the world through 'vital receptivity' in feeling and cognition, and that no 'substantial' presence can be asserted (§94). The world, as a whole, has the same degree of passivity and dependence upon God; and thus, God's omnipresence, grounded in God as *pure act*, must be ubiquitous and the same. The only factor that can license the claim of God having 'a greater presence' is the 'vital receptivity' and consciousness of the world's relation to God in a rational self-consciousness, which Schleiermacher calls 'God-consciousness'. The consciousness of one's absolute dependence on God becomes the surrogate for the traditional language of God's substantial presence. This means that he opposes Lessing, much like Kierkegaard, by claiming that

the 'gap' is not one defined by incommunicability, but by incommensurability. '[F]or to ascribe to Christ an absolutely powerful God-consciousness, and to attribute to Him an existence of God in Him, are exactly the same thing' (§94.2). The point is that for Schleiermacher, one's actions and personality flow out of one's personhood; and one's personhood is identified with one's self-consciousness; and if in the person of the Redeemer his self-consciousness is one and the same as his consciousness of God, then it follows that his person, personality, and actions have a revelatory value at 'every moment', and could be called the 'indwelling of the Supreme Being as His peculiar being and His inmost self' (§94.2).

The fact that Schleiermacher frames the Christological question in terms of gradations of God-consciousness means that Jesus becomes a humanist *par excellence*. Schleiermacher develops the theme (perhaps in a way unprecedented since Irenaeus) that Jesus' life is the 'completed creation of human nature' (§94.3). Christology becomes the summit of anthropology, and the source for the fullest human realization. By bearing 'God-consciousness' in such an unprecedented way, Jesus not only developed humanity's potency for God-consciousness, but fulfilled and perfected human nature (§94.2). What results is a Jesus who is a humanist *par excellence*, insofar as he embodies the human 'ideal' (*Urbild*) historically (§93). But, the cost of attaining this fully self-conscious and exclusively human Jesus is the thoroughgoing rejection of Chalcedonian dogma and a radical reinterpretation of its meaning.

In §96, Schleiermacher sets forth seven specific attacks on the Chalcedonian definition, all of which are governed by his overall constriction of Christological meaning to an immanent frame:

- *Contra pre-existence*: He attacks the idea of a *Logos endiathetos* by claiming that the subject of reference in the Gospels (and in our faith) is the *unified* (incarnate) person of Jesus. And thus, the subject cannot be transferred to a pre-existent being.
- *Contra 'one person in two natures'*: We cannot claim that Jesus is 'one person in two natures', since that would be to presuppose that divine nature and human nature are two species under one broader genus of 'nature'. 'Nature', as such, cannot be attributed to God. 'Nature' can only be predicated of finite existence; and a true understanding of God recognizes that the Absolute is 'beyond all existence and being'.
- *Contra Chalcedon's dyophysitism*: If 'person' means 'an Ego which is the same in all the consecutive moments of its existence', how can Jesus be 'one person' and preserve a 'unity of life' if he has a duality of natures? Either one nature gives way to the other for the sake of the unity of life, or the unity of life gives way to the duality of natures.
- *Contra Constantinople III's dyothelitism*: The same thing occurs with the 'two wills' in Christ: if there are two wills, there is no unity of person, even if the wills always 'agree'. But if there is unity of person, then one will must give way to the other.
- *Contra two minds/consciousnesses*: Again, the same is true regarding the 'two reasons': either he can see things omnisciently and simultaneously with divine reason, or he can see things one after another with human reason.

- *Contra use of the term 'nature' in Christology:* Considering that Trinitarian talk has 'three persons' in 'one nature', or more often, 'one essence' and Christology has 'one person' in 'two natures', there is an imprecise and limited use of the terms insofar as they have different meanings as pertains to Jesus and as pertains to God.
- *Contra the use of the term 'person' in Christology:* The same goes for 'person'. On the one hand, there is 'one person' who 'bears two natures'; on the other, there is 'one nature' that is shared by 'three persons'.

The main point of Schleiermacher's dogmatic critique is that Jesus is *homoousios* with us, and that means that he must have a truly human personality and a fully human self-consciousness. Jesus' peculiar relation to God can only be considered after that *fact*. For Schleiermacher, this means the end of Chalcedon, Constantinople III, and ultimately, Nicaea. The result of such a critique for the twentieth century is that theologians who wish to make use of Schleiermacher's ellipse as a solution to the Enlightenment critiques, albeit in modified or 'stretched' forms, were faced with a dilemma: Either they accept the cost of radically reinterpreting the fundamental Christian proclamation that it is God who saves us in Jesus in the way that Schleiermacher did. Or they are faced with the task of thinking through Christology on the basis of his critiques. The fate of Chalcedon—and with it, the full meaning that God saves in Jesus—now largely rests with engaging Schleiermacher.

The Schleiermachian Transfiguration of the 'Trinitarian Problem'

Bracketing Schleiermacher's detailed critique of the doctrine of the Trinity (Schleiermacher 2011: §171), there are three key points regarding the relationship between his Christology and theology: the first is that he recognizes that the traditional doctrine of the Trinity depends upon an ontological identification of Jesus (as Son) with God (as Father). Second, while excluding such an identification a priori, based on the arguments outlined above, Schleiermacher seeks the underlying Christological experience that gave rise to such an explanation: it is the way in which Jesus as fully human person brings personhood to realization in others through himself; and to be a person is to be fully conscious of God. Third, the experience, therefore, of Jesus' own absolute dependence on God was interpreted as the Father–Son relation, in which God was made present in him; our experience of absolute dependence on God (the Father), is mediated through him (the Son), and thus, entails God's presence in us (the Spirit). These are the tradition's names for variations in the Christian consciousness of God as it has unfolded in Christ; but ontologically speaking, these variations cannot be inscribed eschatologically in God. Schleiermacher offers a phenomenological analysis of the Trinity, and then proceeds to reduce it to its underlying Christian experience, in which the difference between Sabellius and Athanasius seems irrelevant (§172). Any eschatological distinctions in God's self are

out of bounds. The immanent Trinity is thus rendered superfluous and illegitimate, since what is perceived as the economic Trinity (that God, through Christ, creates persons) is disconnected ontologically from God's self. If there is to be any saving of the Trinity, God's presence in Christ must pierce the iron wall of the Creator-creature divide in the manner of Chalcedon. Thus, once again, the reception of Chalcedon after Schleiermacher bears ultimate, if not eschatological, weight.

The Twentieth Century—Living within and beyond Schleiermacher: Testing Limits

Considering Schleiermacher's constriction of the correlation between personality and community to an intra-historical and naturalistic mediation, he restricted the Christian understanding of salvation to an intra-historical event and state ('God-consciousness'), and correspondingly restricted Christology as the efficient cause for such an end. Schleiermacher seems to float 'between' quantitative history and the transcendental, in a domain that neither touches the transcendental nor is fully immersed in the historical: it is the special domain of qualitative history, the unique Schleiermachian correlation between believing community and believed figure. The questions that permeated twentieth-century reception of Schleiermacher pertain to the outer limits of his ellipse and the possibility of Chalcedon after such a critique. Can his ellipse be expanded vertically into the transcendent (upwards) and quantitative history (downwards), without rupturing? Can there be a way of conceiving of Jesus as having a fully human personality and self-consciousness while preserving Chalcedonian dyophysitism?

SUGGESTED READING

Lessing (1956: 51–6); Ratzinger (2004: 193–270); Reimarus (1985); Schleiermacher (2011); Schweitzer (2005); Von Balthasar (1992: 25–121).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baillie, D. M. (1948), *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons).
- Bultmann, R. (1969), 'The Christology of the New Testament', in Bultmann, *Faith and Understanding*, trans. L. Pettibone Smith (New York: Harper & Row), 262–85.
- Dorner, I. A. (1853), *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi von den ältesten auf die neueste*; Zweiter Teil, 'Die Lehre von der Person Christi vom Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart' (Berlin: Verlag von Gustav Schlawitz).
- Ferreira, M. J. (2006), 'Faith and the Kierkegaardian Leap', in A. Hannay and G. Marino (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 207–34.

- Harnack, A. (1972), *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity: The First Three Centuries*, trans. J. Moffatt (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith).
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1956), *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications).
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1977), *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1991), *The Encyclopaedia of Logic: Part I of the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing).
- Hirsch, E. (1978), *Christliche Rechenschaft*, Vol. 1, in *Werke, B. III*, ed. H. Gerdes (Berlin: Verlag Die Spur).
- Kant, I. (2005a), 'Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason' (1793), trans. G. di Giovanni, in A. Wood and G. di Giovanni (eds.), *Religion and Rational Theology*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press).
- Kant, I. (2005b), 'The Conflict of the Faculties' (1798), trans. M. J. Gregor and R. Anchor, in A. Wood and G. di Giovanni (eds.), *Religion and Rational Theology*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press).
- Kierkegaard, S. (1987), *Either/Or*, Part I. Kierkegaard's Writings, III, trans. H. Hong and E. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Kierkegaard, S. (1992), *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, Vol. 1. Kierkegaard's Writings, XII, trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Kierkegaard, S. (2010), *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks: Volume 3: Notebooks 1–15*, ed. N. J. Cappelørn, A. Hannay, B. H. Kirmmse, and D. Kangas (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).
- Lessing, G. E. (1956), 'On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power', trans. and ed. Henry Chadwick, *Lessing's Theological Writings*. A Library of Modern Religious Thought (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press).
- Niebuhr, R. R. (1964), *Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion: A New Introduction* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf and Stock Publishers).
- Ratzinger, J. (2004), *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Reimarus, H. S. (1985), *Fragments from Reimarus: Brief Critical Remarks on the Object of Jesus and his Disciples as seen in the New Testament*, trans. and ed. G. E. Lessing and C. Voysey (London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate).
- Renan, E. (1863), *The Life of Jesus* (London: Watts & Co.).
- Ritschl, A. (1874), *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*. 3 Bände: *Die positive Entwicklung der Lehre* (Bonn: Marcus).
- Schelling, F. W. J. (1977), *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag).
- Schleiermacher, F. (2011), *The Christian Faith* (Berkeley, Calif.: Apocryphile Press).
- Schönborn, C. (2010), *God Sent His Son: A Contemporary Christology*, trans. H. Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Schweitzer, A. (2005), *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications).
- Staudenmaier, F. A. (1840), *Encyklopädie der theologischen Wissenschaften als System der gesamten Theologie, mit Angabe der theologischen Litteratur* (Mainz; 2nd edn. 1 vol. only).
- Strauss, D. F. (1903), *Der alte und der neue Glaube*, 15th edn. (Leipzig).

- Strauss, D. F. (1973), *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, trans. G. Eliot, ed. P. C. Hodgson (London: SCM Press).
- Strauss, D. F. (1977), *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's The Life of Jesus*, trans. L. E. Keck (Philadelphia: Fortress).
- Troeltsch, E. (1991), *The Christian Faith: Lectures Delivered at the University of Heidelberg in 1912 and 1913*, trans. G. E. Paul. Fortress Texts in Modern Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress).
- Von Balthasar, H. U. (1992), *Theo-Drama: Volume III. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Von Balthasar, H. U. (2009), *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume I: Seeing the Form*, trans. E. Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).

CHAPTER 23

CHRISTOLOGY AFTER SCHLEIERMACHER

Three Twentieth-Century Christologists

TROY A. STEFANO

THERE are three main paths after Schleiermacher: there are those who retain a 'closed' ellipse between person and community, floating 'above' history and yet not touching the transcendental (e.g., Ritschl, Herrmann); there are those who attempt to open Schleiermacher's ellipse vertically towards the transcendental, but not descendingly to the quantitative (e.g., Dorner, Kahler, and Barth); and finally, there are those who attempt to stretch the ellipse to its limits by opening it vertically towards the transcendental *and* descendingly towards the quantitative. Among this last group one finds Käsemann and the Catholic Tübingen theologians in the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth, there are Wolfhart Pannenberg, Sergius Bulgakov, and Hans Urs von Balthasar as three of the greatest representatives of the legacies of Wittenberg, Byzantium, and Rome, united in their resolve to find a modern approach to Chalcedon that spans Lessing's ditch and rethinks Schleiermacher's transpositions.

WOLFHART PANNENBERG (1928–2014)

Wolfhart Pannenberg's greatest contribution to modern theology is the way he deploys the concept of revelation to hurtle Lessing's ditch and to pierce the horizontal, vertical, and eschatological limits of Schleiermacher's ellipse. In *Revelation as History* (1968), he continues the line that flows through Kierkegaard to Schleiermacher that rejects Lessing and his heirs' claim of 'incommunicability' between the two orders. He criticizes Schleiermacher's eliding revelation with God-consciousness by claiming that revelation cannot be adequately understood as the disclosure of truths *about* God

(‘God-consciousness’), but must be interpreted as the self-revelation of God (Schwöbel 2005: 130; Pannenberg 1968).

The key notion of God’s self-revelation—philosophically taken from Hegel, but received in its theological form through Karl Barth and Karl Rahner—functions as the theoretical apparatus by which the transcendental can make itself both known and pre-sent in the categorical. The heart of his argument is that if there is any revelation, there can only be a single unique revelation in which God is both the author and medium of revelation; indeed, that ‘form’ and ‘content’ are one in God, and thus, mode and content are equally revelatory (Pannenberg 1968: 129–33). But here Pannenberg parts ways with Rahner, Barth, and Kasper, and is joined only by Balthasar: God’s full self-revelation can only be placed at the end of history, in relation to which the totality of history and all of real-ity is illuminated and receives meaning (Pannenberg 1968: 127–9; cf. Von Balthasar 1998: 19–54). This universal, pan-, and meta-historical self-revelation means that God can be seen in all things, but only *indirectly*, because all of God’s acts in history can only have their full meaning insofar as they are seen in light of the fullness of God’s eschato-logical self-revelation. The distinctively Christian claim, for Pannenberg, is that God’s eschatological self-revelation is proleptically actualized in the destiny, particularly in the resurrection, of Jesus Christ (Pannenberg 1977: 53–65, 135–41, 108, 157, 406).

Pannenberg and the ‘Elliptical Problem’

Pannenberg has ‘stretched’ Schleiermacher’s correlation that ‘floated’ in the ‘in-between’ of personality and community to a dialectic between ‘history’ (quantitative) and ‘eschaton’ (vertical-eschatological-theological). The claim of *indirect* revelation is Pannenberg’s version of the ellipse: faith is the act by which one engages in the ‘reflexive action’ of interpreting historical acts by reference to God’s eschatological self-disclosure (cf. Pannenberg 1968: 144–61). The *indirectness* of revelation is what allows Pannenberg to claim that while the acts and words brought about by God in history are immersed in quantitative history to such an extent that they are ‘open to anyone who has eyes to see’ (Pannenberg 1968: 135–58; 2009: 249), they are only seen as revelatory insofar as the seer, moved by faith, can reflexively interpret those truly quantitative events in the horizon of God’s eschatological self-revelation (cf. Pannenberg 2009: 249–57; especially, 1998: 144–61, wherein, like Von Balthasar, he sees this ‘interpreting function’ in the context of pneumatology). The believer, therefore, must not begin with the vantage point of the reflexive interpretation of the community (as did Schleiermacher); rather, the believer must begin with the domain of quantitative history, in which God’s acts take place, and then—only then—see to what extent those acts are diaphanous to God’s eschatological truth.

Pannenberg therefore inverts Schleiermacher’s method: ‘Christology is concerned ... not only with *unfolding* the Christian community’s confession of Christ [cf. Schleiermacher’s regressive argument], but above all with *grounding* it in the activity

and fate of Jesus in the past' (Pannenberg 1977: 28). 'Thus the task of Christology is to establish the true understanding of Jesus' significance from his history' (1977: 30). But, by returning to a Jesus that is fully immersed in quantitative history, considered apart from our experience of him, as the standard against which our claims of faith must be made, Pannenberg is stepping outside of the 'safety zone' that Schleiermacher's 'floating' ellipse had attained from the hammer of historical-critical investigation. But for Pannenberg, it is only when we 'ask and show the extent to which this history substantiates faith in Jesus' that we truly claim that Christ is not a product of our desires or a development in religious myth (1977: 47–9), but truly, the protological 'in-breaking' of God's self-revelation into history (1977: 128–9).

If one begins with quantitative history, then the doctrines of the Incarnation and pre-existence of Jesus cannot form the starting point for theological reflection; rather, those are claims about Jesus' unity with God that stand at the conclusion of one's inquiry (1977: 33–7). One must begin with the pre-Easter Jesus and ask how the early Christian community arrived at such a belief (1977: 21–9). To this extent, Pannenberg, much like Walter Kasper, forms a 'mini-ellipse' between Jesus (as historical figure) and the first eyewitnesses/early Christian communities—they both proceed via a 'history of traditions' approach. The pre-Easter Jesus, admittedly, spoke with a claim to authority, perhaps even divine authority, but such a claim was not sufficient to elicit (or at least, to justify) faith in him (Pannenberg 1977: 66). Pannenberg argues that it is *only* Jesus' resurrection that could explain the almost immediate interpretation of his life and death as having transcendental, indeed, eschatological meaning. Within the milieu of late Jewish apocalypticism, in which God's actions in history receive a universal significance by reference to the end of history as the definitive moment of the revelation of God's glory (*kabod*), Jesus' resurrection radiated forth an immediate significance: in him, the end of the world has begun and God himself has confirmed the pre-Easter activity of Jesus (1977: 66–88). Indeed, the *diaphanous* quality of Jesus' resurrection in that milieu freights it with the radiant meaning that 'God is ultimately revealed in Jesus' (1977: 73).

Pannenberg and the 'Chalcedonian Problem'

Does the resurrection, as an event, license the discourses of ontological identity, traditionally conveyed in the concepts of incarnation, pre-existence, and dyophysitism? Pannenberg believes that claims such as 'incarnation' and 'pre-existence' may be used to express the eschatological character of God's self-revelation in Christ in light of the resurrection. But, Pannenberg believes, the problems associated with dyophysitism—regarding which he reiterates Schleiermacher's critiques (Pannenberg 1977: 283–307)—derive from beginning with the premise of the Incarnation or pre-existence and then trying to establish his humanity, rather than beginning with his humanity and then establishing his divinity (through the resurrection). Like Schleiermacher, he rejects the language of two substances or natures, claiming, again like Schleiermacher, that they destroy the unity of subject and thus his true humanity.

Pannenberg's alternative to Chalcedonian discourse is the idea of 'revelational presence', which tries to navigate the narrow path between adoptionism and identity of essence. His concept of revelation is able to overcome not only Lessing's incommunicability, but also Schleiermacher's incommensurability by the (Hegelian–Barthian–Rahnerian) idea of God's self-differentiation and self-revelation. His logic can be presented in four points:

1. *Reconsidering 'becoming' and 'sameness' in God*: 'God in all his eternal identity is still to be understood as a God who is alive in himself, who can become something and precisely in so doing remain true to himself and the same' (Pannenberg 1977: 320). Pannenberg reconciles 'becoming' and 'sameness' in God by claiming that if we conceive of eternity in an un-Platonic way in which eternity contains and includes time, then God does not 'change' (the equivalent to 'becoming in general') in the Incarnation, but 'becomes one' with something different from himself (1977: 321).
2. *The unity with the other within God as the ground for God's unity with the other outside of God (creation)*: Pannenberg invokes Rahner's formulation of the Hegelian dialectic of self-differentiation, in which God as creator 'constitutes the differentiation to himself by retaining it as his and, conversely, because he truly wants to have the other as his own, he constitutes it in its genuine reality' (Rahner 1961: 148). Self-differentiation *within* God grounds God's self-differentiation *with* creation: 'God remains himself precisely in the other, but also that he becomes something, thus that God establishes the other as his own reality precisely by emptying *himself*, giving *himself* away through this.' For Rahner, however, this meant the immanent Trinity (Rahner 1998: 98–103), whereas for Pannenberg this refers to the concept that 'the "intention" of the incarnation had been determined from all eternity in God's decree' (1977: 321).
3. *Unity with the other within God extended to encompass the Incarnation*: If God's self-differentiation within God's self can account for creation, and if therefore eternity can include time, then 'an element of God's becoming and being in the other, in the reality differentiated from himself, is one with his eternity requires that what newly flashed into view from time to time in the divine life can be understood at the same time as having always been true in God's eternity' (Pannenberg 1977: 321). Henceforth, Pannenberg has laid the groundwork for the claim that Jesus can *truly* be God as a modality of God's self-otherness. This is a reinterpretation of the simultaneity implied in dyophysitism in the direction of a unity by way of the dialectic of self-differentiation.

In these three steps, Pannenberg links up with Rahner (and Bulgakov and Von Balthasar) regarding the premise of grounding the unity of God and man in Jesus with God's own self-differentiation. However, Pannenberg breaks company with these figures in that his concept of self-differentiation relies on his unique view of eschatology. For Pannenberg, God protologically has an 'eternal decree' that is a sufficient basis for

claiming a self-differentiation in God. That decree becomes ‘actualized’ when God ‘decides’ to be revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. In the resurrection, that relation between God and Jesus is made. The result for God is eschatological: God is a Trinity in the end, as a result of that ‘decision’. God’s Triune-ness is ‘inscribed’ eschatologically. God therefore is (now, always was) a Trinity.

Pannenberg attempts to bridge the gap between God protologically and God eschatologically with an understanding of the eschaton whose main precedent is Blaise Pascal’s doctrine of predestination, in which God can eschatologically choose ‘damnation’ or ‘salvation’, while holding that decision in suspense while a person’s life is panning out, although that eschatological decision becomes retrospectively true. Applying this to God, Pannenberg says that God was always a Trinity, *but* ... as a result of an eschatological decision. The question is how, if eschatological becomes sempiternal, that was not the case protologically in the full, ontological sense, and not merely in a notional or intentional form. Furthermore, any language of the Triune God or the (divine) Son creating the world would seem to be little more than semantics (1977: 390–9). (Pannenberg qualifies this issue in his later *Systematic Theology*.)

The next step, then, is the meeting point between his ‘Christology from below’ and his theology from the eschaton: the resurrection.

4. *The connection between ‘grounding’ the unity of Jesus and God within God’s self-differentiation, on the one hand, and the actual ‘establishing’ of Jesus as the self-revelation of God, on the other, happens only in Jesus’ resurrection.* The height of the tension between ‘grounding’ and ‘establishing’ comes forward in this passage:

Jesus’ unity with God—and thus the truth of the incarnation—is also *decided* only retroactively from the perspective of Jesus’ resurrection for the whole of Jesus’ human existence on the one hand and thus also for God’s eternity, on the other. Apart from Jesus’ resurrection, it would not be true that from the beginning of his earthly way God was one with this man. That is true from all eternity *because* of Jesus’ resurrection. Until his resurrection, Jesus’ unity with God was hidden not only to other men but above all, which emerges from a critical examination of the tradition, for Jesus himself also. *It was hidden because the ultimate decision about it had not been given.* One could speak differently only by depriving the event of the resurrection of its contingency, of its element of newness, by means of some sort of theological or physical determinism, or if one wants to deny the significance of Jesus’ resurrection in general for the question of Jesus’ unity with God. The confirmation of Jesus’ unity with God in the retroactive power of his resurrection makes the hiddenness of this unity during Jesus’ earthly life comprehensible and thus makes room for the genuine humanity of his life.

(Pannenberg 1977: 321–2; italics mine; cf. 364)

There is a degree of internal coherence in his position: the retroactive dimension of identity is not merely characteristic of the relationship of Jesus’ resurrection to his

pre-Easter life, but also the template that governs the relationship between the eschaton and history. But the seemingly voluntarist language of ‘ultimate decision’—reminiscent of Schleiermacher and Barth’s doctrine of the eternal decree, by virtue of which there is an eternal aspect in God that is constitutively related to a temporal event—treads a line that is closer to adoptionism than it is to identity of essence. Despite this internal consistency, there is a methodological ‘rift’. On the one hand, Pannenberg is committed to a ‘Christology from below’ in which claims, such as the Incarnation or eternal pre-existence of the Son are marked out *de iure* as starting points. On the other hand, Pannenberg requires the work of God’s eschatological self-revelation—a non-‘from below’ starting point—to retrospectively ‘break into history’ to lend to the resurrection its revelatory value.

It seems that Pannenberg’s critiques of the tradition’s readings of Jesus’ origins from God protologically (i.e., Virgin birth, Incarnation, eternal pre-existent Son) is recapitulated into Jesus’ origins from God eschatologically (i.e., retrospectively by eschatological self-revelation in the resurrection). Both approaches claim sempiternal meaning, except the latter presupposes a slight voluntarism if taken exclusively. The key questions are (a) whether there is a difference in God as God protologically and eschatologically as a result of the drama of salvation, and (b) whether Jesus could truly have not only pointed to the ‘beginning of the end’ but embody the ‘end of the world’ and the ‘renewal of all things’ in himself if he were not the eschaton in history. Is Jesus ‘out-measured’ by the eschaton’s final self-revelation, or is the eschaton’s final self-revelation the transposition into world-time of what was already achieved in Christ?

Pannenberg and the Trinitarian Problem

‘In his revelational unity with God, which constitutes Jesus’ own divinity, Jesus at the same time remains distinct from God as his Father’ (Pannenberg 1977: 115). The beginning of the doctrine of the Trinity, Pannenberg claims, lies in this. Based on the constitutively eschatological dimension of God’s self-revelation, wherein the temporal aspects of the eternal decree already become constitutive of God’s self-revelation, Pannenberg can claim that God is a Trinity of persons without any modalistic softening. He also sees the eternal decree as guarding against the Moltmannian collapse of God *in se* and God *ad extra* that leads to the idea of God ‘becoming’ a Trinity. For, God *in se*, by virtue of the eternal decree, is none other than what is revealed *ad extra*, even if the event of the resurrection is what vindicates and establishes such an eschatological self-revelation. In his later works, particularly his *Systematic Theology*, Pannenberg moves towards seeing in Jesus’ ‘revelational identity’ a greater degree of ontological identity, in order to substantiate a ‘thicker’ Trinitarianism (cf. 1998 20–34; 2009: 259–336), though he maintains an ‘economic’ form that is inscribed only eschatologically (Pannenberg 2009: 259–336). ‘Already the concept of revelation which is developed by the trinitarian understanding of God rests on anticipation of the end of history in the person and history of Jesus Christ’ (Pannenberg 2009: 332).

SERGIUS BULGAKOV (1853–1900)

It would be difficult to find two modern theologians who are more distinct in form and in substance than Bulgakov and Pannenberg. One crucial factor is that the encounter of tradition and Enlightenment occurred in different ways in Germany and Russia. The German problematic was the separation of ‘event’ and ‘truth’, whereas the Russian problematic was governed by the dialectic of ‘created’ and ‘uncreated’. This means that the criticisms of Lessing, and the philosophies of religion of Hegel and Schelling, have a much greater reception in Russian thought (e.g., Solyviev) than the issues of historical criticism, raised by Reimarus and Strauss. Bulgakov writes that the entire history of religion could be narrated in terms of the tension between the transcendent and the immanent (2012: 20–38). What is common, however, to twentieth-century German and Russian theologians is the attempt to shed the legacy of idealism in philosophy, and to break free from a psychologizing, moralizing, or ‘naturalizing’ of faith, so as to recover a sense of the givenness, the historical and punctiliar character, of a revelation that reconstructs the whole of human knowing and relating (Williams 2005: 574; cf. Bulgakov 2012: 1–102).

The task of restoring to revelation its supernatural character is for Bulgakov the prerogative of dogmatics; and it presupposes not only the truth of dogmas but that the inspired form of Scripture mediates the revelatory events it discloses. Bulgakov affirms the Son’s immersion in quantitative history in the Incarnation (Bulgakov 2008: 274). But, as with Schleiermacher, this is a formal claim that is not pursued further, for such is not the task of theology. Following the Käsemannian line after Schleiermacher, he writes that ‘The Gospels are doctrinal books, not “historical” ones. The history enters into the doctrine, into the teaching of the faith, and is subordinated to its goals’ (2008: 275; cf. Käsemann 1964: 25; 1969: 41). His Christological task is to establish the dogmatic basis in which the immanentism that pervades the modern period could be overcome, while attempting to clarify and present a coherent picture of Jesus’ unity of life amidst his duality of natures. While Bulgakov does not single out Schleiermacher directly, the phenomena that he identifies for critique are thoroughly Schleiermachian. First, apologetically, he singles out a conception of Christianity that is regulated by an immanent framework; second, dogmatically, he takes up the challenge of engaging Apollinarius’ critique that in Christ, there cannot be two active principles, since one will always give way to the other (Bulgakov 2008: 1–18, 444). The point is that Bulgakov’s engagement with Apollinarius has relevance only because he finds in Apollinarius the ‘same’ critique that Schleiermacher promoted. We can read Bulgakov’s task as a response to Schleiermacher. In this sense, we can see Bulgakov and Pannenberg as both engaged in the broader conversation of Schleiermachian reception.

Bulgakov on the ‘Elliptical Problem’

Rather than using Lessing’s original categories, Bulgakov’s version of the elliptical problem is transposed into the dialectic of Creator–creature: ‘The Word-God

(without ceasing to be the Word and God) became not-God; *the Creator became a creature*' (Bulgakov 2008: 213). What are the conditions for this possibility, indeed, actuality? Bulgakov's argument could be presented thus:

1. *'The Word'*: Bulgakov makes the traditional move of interpreting John 1:14 according to Phil. 2:9–11: 'First of all, this passage talks about the descent from heaven of the *supramundane* God; that is, it talks not only about the Incarnation itself but also about the act that preceded it in heaven: the decision or the will to enact the Incarnation.' The non-traditional aspect to his interpretation is that in this passage he reads that the Word's descent is based on an intra-Trinitarian obedience/kenosis, that 'in the cross of the earthly path is realized the cross of heavenly kenosis' (Bulgakov 2008: 217).
2. *'Became'*: The meaning of kenosis, therefore, is not that God changes his substance or nature (*pace* Gess et al.), but his 'form'. Such a distinction presupposes that in God there is a difference between 'nature' and 'form' (or, 'state of life'). Bulgakov asserts that in God there is a distinction between 'the life of God *according to* Himself, as He is in His unchangeable essence, and His life *for* Himself, as He lives out His essence for Himself in the living act. Here He has the power to change for Himself the *mode* of the living out of this essence' (Bulgakov 2008: 221–2). Thus, the intra-Trinitarian obedience of the Son is constitutive according to nature and accompanied with glory according to form. When this obedience becomes the kenosis of the Son in the Incarnation, the nature remains but what changes is its accompanying glory.
3. *'Flesh'*: As opposed to the idea of divinity taking on humanity, or the inhabitation of divinity in human flesh, Bulgakov is guided by the idea of 'the descent of Divinity down to man, the self-diminution of Divinity, His humiliation or kenosis' (Bulgakov 2008: 219). 'In becoming man, God does not stop being God; even after descending from heaven, He remains in heaven. Likewise, man does not stop being man after he receives God into himself. In voluntary self-humiliation, God renounces something, abandons something, in order to become accessible to man, in order to make possible the approach to man. And man, in opening himself up to receive God, transfigures himself, without the possibilities implanted in this essence being destroyed' (Bulgakov 2008: 220).

Bulgakov is aware of Schleiermacher's challenge to such a position, which he sees as anticipated in Apollinarius' 'it is impossible with intelligence and volition to be united into one principle' (L., frag. 2; quoted, 6): if we have the duality of natures, then we lose the unity of person; if we have the unity of person, then we lose the duality of natures. Bulgakov calls into question the presupposition of both of these critiques: namely, the incommensurability of the two principles.

The conventional opinion is that there can be no mediation between God and creature: *tertium non datur*. But in reality there *is* such a mediation between God and the creature: *tertium datur*, and this *tertium* is Sophia, the true Wisdom of God, eternal

and creaturely. Creaturely sophianicity, however, is only the bridge for, or the ontological possibility of, the movement of God and the creature toward one another.

(Bulgakov 2008: 220)

Bulgakov concretizes the ‘in-between’ of God and creation as Sophia, distinguishing between divine Sophia (equivalent with the divine nature, the richness of possibilities in God from which creation derives) and creaturely Sophia (the indestructible ‘*imago Dei*’ in creation). The ontological gap, traditionally understood only apophatically and as a barrier, now bears positive content. It serves as ‘a mediation, an ontological bridge to effect this union—a ladder on which this ascent-descent can be accomplished’ (2008: 220). Sophia is Bulgakov’s answer to modernity’s immanence after Lessing—this is the thesis of Paul Valliere’s *Modern Russian Theology* (2000: 271). How does this solve the problem of the ‘one person and two natures’ in Christ? If God becomes this man, how can he continue to truly be man? If this man is God, then how can God continue to be God? And, how can both happen simultaneously and in the same ‘being’ and ‘person’?

Bulgakov on the ‘Chalcedonian Problem’

Bulgakov perceptively targets the particularly modern form of the Chalcedonian problem in the question of consciousness. Chalcedon addressed the duality of being or nature, Constantinople III addressed the duality of wills; the modern installment of the question is the duality of consciousnesses in Christ. The force of this question is that the modern human being is defined by the singularity of his or her I-consciousness. To say that in Jesus, there are two I’s or two personalities is to destroy the unity of person. Bulgakov’s sophiology is saturated with the modern (especially Hegelian and Schellingian) developments regarding subjectivity and consciousness, and it is in these developments that he sees a way forward for Chalcedonian Christology. He distinguishes in Sophia two aspects from Scripture: ‘She is, properly, Sophia (Hokhma), as the revelation of the Wisdom of God; and she is also Glory, as the revelation of God’s Beauty and All-blessedness’ (Bulgakov 2008: 107). He finds his solution in an interpretation of the first aspect as ‘the consciousness of self of the trinitarian God’ (2008: 108). The relationship between the eternal Son and human nature, with a human self-consciousness, is not such a crazy thing after all, since there is a precedent of that kind of relation in God’s self—namely, the relationship between the eternal Son and the divine Sophia as the ‘consciousness of self of the Trinitarian God’. Bulgakov sees these parallel relations—eternal Son–divine Sophia as divine self-consciousness and eternal Son–creaturely Sophia as human self-consciousness—as the meaning of ‘the Heavenly Man’ of 1 Cor. 15:49 (2008: 242). Thus, Bulgakov’s point can be demonstrated by using a tripartite anthropology (9):

Adam: *pneuma* (created Sophia as consciousness of self); soul (psyche); body (soma).

Christ: Logos (divine Sophia as consciousness of self); soul (psyche); body (soma).

His claim is that the ‘continuum’ between creaturely Sophia and divine Sophia means that there has always been a potential—an eternally decreed and ontologically inscribed hospitality—within the human (soul and body) for the Logos. Bulgakov justifies this claim by saying that the ‘World came to be through Him’, and thus, takes a creaturely form that reflects its Prototype, including the Word’s relation to Sophia (2008: 242). Bulgakov believes he has solved the Chalcedonian problem by showing, on the one hand, ‘The Divine Sonhood is precisely Jesus’ Divine I, His self-consciousness as Divine consciousness’ (2008: 264); and, on other hand, in the kenotic state that receives its measure by his human essence, ‘He becomes progressively conscious of His divinity, not through His own, direct hypostatic consciousness, but through the Father’ (2008: 279). For, ‘It is only through the Father that He comes to know His divine hypostasis, His Divine Sonhood. The Son’s divine consciousness is therefore *mediated* by the knowledge of the Father being revealed in Him, that is, by *divine knowledge*’ (2008: 279). In his kenotic state, the Son’s self-identity as eternal Son is given to him through his unique relation to the Father; therefore, his personal relation with the Father is established, in his consciousness, logically prior to his consciousness of his own divinity. Bulgakov sees this as the ‘affirmative’ or ‘positive’ side implied in Chalcedon’s No’s (unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; Bulgakov 2008: 1–73, 443–8).

This provides a powerful solution, but also some concerns. First, one must wonder whether the replacement of the human I-consciousness with the Son’s I-consciousness does not lead to a form of Docetism, in which Jesus seems human but isn’t fully ‘like us in all things except sin’. On the other hand, wouldn’t Pannenberg’s Jesus, given God’s self-decree to make *this* man his self-revelation, be faced with a similar problem after Jesus’ resurrection? How would Pannenberg’s post-resurrected Jesus’ self-consciousness relate to the divine self-consciousness which has chosen to reveal itself in Jesus? Second, from Pannenberg’s standard, he pays insufficient detail to the historical aspect, or more particularly, to the centrality of Jesus’ resurrection. Third, while Pannenberg and Bulgakov both agree that Jesus’ consciousness of himself as Son of the Father is mediated through his human consciousness, Bulgakov argues that his divine consciousness unfolds in accordance with the psycho-corporeal measure allotted to it by his humanity development, whereas Pannenberg locates this specifically in (after) the resurrection. This reveals a fundamental point of tension between the two figures: the relation between dogmatics and exegesis. Bulgakov chooses ‘form’ over ‘history’, whereas Pannenberg chooses ‘history’ over ‘form’. This creates exegetical differences in terms of what can be claimed regarding the pre-Easter Jesus’ self-consciousness.

Bulgakov on the ‘Trinitarian Problem’

Despite the obvious difference between Bulgakov and Pannenberg, there are certain formal similarities. Pannenberg’s concept of self-revelation functions analogously

to Bulgakov's sophiology insofar as both attempt to depict a ground in God for God's ability to remain God's self while in another. The concept of self-revelation, admittedly, does more justice to the ontological gap and to grounding the Incarnation in the Trinitarian relations of (or self-differentiation within) God as opposed to the divine being as such. But, conversely, Pannenberg's protological deity only has an intentional fullness, whereas Bulgakov's has an ontological fullness that overflows from divine Sophia into creation, and surges climactically in the Incarnation.

Thus, for Bulgakov Christology regulates eschatology (2008: 410–42), but for Pannenberg, eschatology regulates Christology. These hermeneutical commitments are reflected in their respective stances on Chalcedon. Bulgakov is able to offer a viable, if not powerful, depiction of Chalcedonian Christology that includes the full weight of ontological identity without introducing the cumbersome process of moving from eternal decree (world created for Incarnation and God's self-revelation in the Incarnation), to temporal realization (the Incarnation itself, actualized by Jesus' resurrection), and finally to eschatological inscription of that temporal actualization in God's self-revelation (God as Trinity). If God truly reveals himself as he is in himself, and if revelation occurs within the freedom to disclose himself as such, then a doctrine of the immanent Trinity is more suitable than a doctrine of the eternal decree.

Barring the obvious differences in exegetical preferences and practices, we should ask if there is any way of preserving the unambiguous ontological identity between Father and Son asserted by Bulgakov *and* the definitive significance of the historical in general, and the resurrection in particular, argued by Pannenberg? Is there any way of achieving both of their goals—namely, preserving Jesus' 'unity of life' while affirming a divine identity—without the cost of an un-human seeming God-Man (Bulgakov) or an absent pre-Easter ontological identity (Pannenberg)? Can we preserve the importance of the final, eschatological 'in-breaking' and revelation of God, while also maintaining that Jesus is himself the eschaton, and thus, Christ is not governed by any measure greater than himself? For these answers, we turn to the most integrated, or, quite literally, 'concerted' Christological and Trinitarian theology of the past 200 years.

HANS URS VON BALTHASAR (1905–1988)

The structure of Von Balthasar's treatment of Christ is closer to that of Pannenberg than that of Bulgakov; but the content of his thought is nearer to that of Bulgakov. Von Balthasar is committed to beginning with Jesus, as we encounter him (*Theo-Drama III*), and then moving to the Trinity (*Theo-Drama IV–V*). But, the Jesus that we encounter is always the eternal Son. Von Balthasar overcomes Schleiermacher and Lessing's ditch at the intersection of the Son's self-emptying mission and faith's vision.

Von Balthasar on the 'Elliptical Problem'

For Pannenberg, to begin from 'below' means to begin with the historical critically reconstructed Christ and to move, through an analysis of the formation of tradition, to the initial Christian testimony to Christ. The initial testimony itself is not a non-reducible form, but a penultimate form that can be broken down and analyzed to access a more primordial, reconstructed Jesus. Bulgakov begins by positing the existence of Jesus and proceeds to reinterpret an incarnational Christology. Von Balthasar argues that to begin 'from below' does not mean to begin with the historical-critical approach, but rather, from the 'form of beauty'. For Von Balthasar, the eyes of faith grant the believer the ability to see in Christ a wholeness that makes the love of the Father shine through him. Von Balthasar does not deny the quantitative immersion of the Son, that is, the true historicity of the Incarnate One; but he denies that the way to approach this is through dissecting Jesus. He argues, in a way that is reminiscent of Schleiermacher, that the passage of the 'form' of Jesus to the 'form' of Christ is intrinsic to Jesus himself. And any transmission of this 'form' cannot sunder it to analyze its pieces, but must preserve its wholeness. He thus establishes a theory of Christian experience, by which there can be simultaneously qualitative and quantitative transmission of Christ throughout history. Nonetheless, Von Balthasar posits the objectivity of Jesus as revelation as the condition for that experiential transmission. It is the scope of Jesus' mission that provided the point of continuity between the man of Nazareth and the universalized Object of faith.

Von Balthasar on the 'Chalcedonian Problem'

Von Balthasar uses the concept of mission to avoid both the dissecting prongs of the historical-critical method and Bulgakov's non-historical approach. It is a key concept in the Gospel of John, but also rooted in the Synoptics, and it provides Von Balthasar with the connection between the Jesus of history and early incarnational hymns in Scripture as well as the inner bond between the doctrine of the immanent Trinity and the three persons revealed in the economy (Von Balthasar 1992: 515). In the Gospels, Jesus identifies himself with his mission. Jesus is aware that he has received a mission from the Father and is its complete embodiment in the world (1992: 187). His awareness of his mission has no conceivable beginning (1992: 177, 178, 197, 268, *inter alia*). In a way that is true of no other human being, he *is* this mission (1992: 167–8, 509). He has identified himself in complete inner freedom with a task that has been given to him (1992: 517). The tension seen between Jesus' free embrace of his mission (the active dimension) and his obedience to that mission (the receptive/passive dimension) expresses how his mission did not begin after the Incarnation. Rather, the Incarnation, including its constitutive humility, is the active undertaking of the Son. The Son's mission, insofar as it is free, is co-determined by the Father and Son from all eternity; but insofar as it is given to

him and received obediently, the Son hands himself over to receive his mission from Another, namely the Holy Spirit (1992: 183).

The soteriological dimension of the mission as it was co-determined freely from all of eternity calls for the Son's obedience (cf. Heb. 5:8)—an obedience undertaken on behalf of sinners in order to redeem their disobedience (1992: 187, 517–18). If the Son freely and actively undertakes his mission in the Incarnation, and thus takes on the form of obedience and receptivity as a result of his own activity, then obedience is the economic expression of the Son's active and eternal co-determination with the Father to save the world. The other soteriological dimension of the mission is that the Father gives the entire responsibility for the world's salvation to the Son (cf. John 5:22–30). This has two implications: first, that Jesus' mission is itself the embodiment of the Father's self-pouring love in the mode of sending. This explains how the loving disposition of the one-who-sends (the Father) shines forth in the one-who-is-sent (the Son) (1992: 515). Insofar as the Son is entrusted by the Father to reveal and share the love of the Father for the world, this means that the Father's love itself, which is not something he has, but what he is, is given to the Son.

For, if he-who-is-sent has essentially to reveal the love of him-who-sends, and if he is identical with his divine mission, he must (as the personal bearer of this mission of love) be the divine, that is, eternal Offspring of him-who-sends, whom he himself calls 'Father' in a sense that bursts all analogies. We begin to discern the meaning of 'fatherhood' in the eternal realm when we consider the Son's task, which is to reveal the Father's love: such 'fatherhood' can only mean the giving away of everything the Father is, including his entire Godhead (for God, as God, 'has' nothing apart from what he 'is'); it is a giving-away that, in the Father's act of generation—which lasts for all of eternity—leaves the latter's womb 'empty': in God, poverty and wealth (that is, wealth and giving) are one and the same ... As God, however, the Son must be equal to the Father, even though he has come forth from the Father. And since the Father has expressed his whole love—which nothing can hold back—in the Son, the Son is the perfect image of the Father, apt to represent the Father's self-giving in his creation in every respect.

(Von Balthasar 1992: 518–19)

In the same way that the Father hands over his self to the Son by begetting him and entrusting him with the task of embodying his love for the world in his mission, so also does the Son hand himself over to the world, thereby mirroring the Father's self-gift and allowing the Father's love to shine through him (1992: 515–19). The second implication is that this demonstrates that Jesus is not a finite subject entrusted with a task that can only be carried out by the infinite God, since 'the bearer of such responsibility in this subject can be none other than a divine Person. Only a divine Person can measure up to "God's cause" and be God's "agent" on earth' (1992: 509–10). It is Jesus' identity with his mission that allows us to say truly that God himself saves in Jesus Christ.

By redefining God's 'substance' as self-giving love, and by reinterpreting the Son's con-substantiality with the Father in terms of the Father giving the Son his being as self-gift, Von Balthasar has set up the apparatus to fulfill Bulgakov's aspirations without the

latter's restraints. Bulgakov wanted to ground the I-consciousness of Jesus in the eternal Son, but could only do so by claiming that the I-consciousness of the Son was limited by the measure of his humanity. Von Balthasar holds that the Incarnation begins with the intra-Trinitarian obedience of the Son to empty himself. The connection between the I-consciousness of the Son as eternal Son and the I-consciousness of the Son as the man Jesus is only in the knowledge of his mission which he received from the Father through the Spirit. Thus, to know that he is sent into the world to bear the weight of the world is the necessary *and* sufficient condition for claiming a continuity of subject between the eternal Word and Jesus of Nazareth. For it is in this humility that he embodies the Father's self-emptying love.

This structure offers Von Balthasar the opportunity to make full use of the resurrection. Rather than seeing it as the *transitus* for ontological identification, as with Pannenberg, Von Balthasar sees in the resurrection a *transitus* in the directionality of the salvific drama. The function therefore of the resurrection is not mainly ontological but soteriological and epistemological. Von Balthasar invokes the distinction between the *status exinanitionis* and *status exaltationis* to separate two directionalities in the 'task' of the Son: the pre-resurrected state centers upon the Son's incarnation, death, and descent into Hell, depicting the depths of the Son's obedience and solidarity with Godless humanity. The post-resurrected Christ ascends to the right hand of the Father, now bearing those depths, and taking them into the inner life of God (1992: 522–3). Since for Von Balthasar, as for Bulgakov, Christology regulates eschatology, the resurrection has a cosmic-universal scope. We can see the significance of this *transitus* in Von Balthasar's poetically-theological dramatization of the Son's incarnate prayer to the Father:

Earlier on, Father, you and I were one, and they stood outside of us as enemies, and from a distance we took counsel to see how they might be helped. Today I stand in the midst of our enemies; I have become a traitor to your justice, and if you want to strike out at them, strike first at me ... I take their place ... For, O my Father! What else is your justice than your love for me, and what the wrathful glance of your eye other than the most glorious revelation of your love for me? ... And so look: even your enemies here, my friends, are yours. And I do not place myself as a protective wall before them to shield them from your fury. Rather, I take them into my hand like the celebrant takes his paten and I raise them up to you ... And when I now go and sacrifice myself for them, to whom should I entrust them if not to you, Father, as my precious inheritance, as my Incarnation's fruit of sorrows and as the grapes on my vine? For whom have I ripened them if not for you, so that, once I have conquered death and hell, I might place them on your eternal table in the perfected vessel of the Kingdom?

(Von Balthasar 1979: 85–6)

Von Balthasar on the 'Trinitarian Problem'

Von Balthasar's Trinity is eschatological as with Pannenberg. But it is eschatological only soteriologically, not ontologically. This means that the final 'stage' for the

drama of salvation is within God's inner life. Here we see the ultimate stretching of Schleiermacher's ellipse. The ascension of the Son entails the 'taking up to the Father' of reconciled creation. The transformation of the world is the playing out of the Son's victory in Trinitarian terms.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Fifteen centuries after the Council of Chalcedon (451), Karl Rahner's article on Chalcedon as end or beginning set the tone for the second half of the twentieth century (Kasper 1985: 17). Rahner wrote that every conciliar statement is not only the end of a dispute, in which truth becomes unambiguous and victorious, but also the beginning of a search for deeper insight (Rahner 1954). With Pannenberg, Bulgakov, and Von Balthasar, there is a special engagement with the Enlightenment in general, and with Schleiermacher in particular. For them, Rahner poses more of a challenge than a solution; but insofar as he defined the form of the received problematic, he exercised an influence that should never be underestimated. They each stretched the limits of his 'correlation' to encompass the heights of heaven, the fragmentation of critical history, and the harrowing depths of hell. In fact, some would argue that they stretched his correlation to the point of rupture, and that we are facing anew the challenge of the bipolarity of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith; and yet, these three figures each in their own way hold a new promise and problem for us, as we meditate upon the possibilities for Chalcedonian Christology in our own time.

SUGGESTED READING

Bulgakov (2008); Pannenberg (1977, 2009); Rahner (1954); Von Balthasar (1992, 1998, 2009).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bulgakov, S. (2004), *The Comforter*, trans. B. Jakim (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans).
Bulgakov, S. (2008), *Lamb of God*, trans. B. Jakim (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans).
Bulgakov, S. (2012), *Unfading Light: Contemplations and Speculations*, trans. T. A. Smith (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans).
Käsemann, E. (1964), 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus', in Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM Press), 15–47.
Käsemann, E. (1969), 'Blind Alleys in the "Jesus of History" Controversy', in Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today*, trans. W. J. Montague (London: SCM Press), 23–65.
Kasper, W. (1985), *Jesus the Christ* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press).
Pannenberg, W. (1968), 'Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation', in Pannenberg (ed.), *Revelation as History*, trans. E. Quinn (New York: Macmillan), 125–58.

- Pannenberg, W. (1977), *Jesus—God and Man*, trans. L. L. Wilkins and D. A. Priebe, 2nd edn. (Philadelphia: Westminster).
- Pannenberg, W. (1998), *Systematic Theology, Volume 3*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans).
- Pannenberg, W. (2009), *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans).
- Rahner, K. (1954), 'Chalkedon—Ende oder Anfang?', in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag), 3–49.
- Rahner, K. (1961), *Theological Investigations, Volume 4: More Recent Writings*, trans. K. Smith (Baltimore, Md.: Helicon Press).
- Rahner, K. (1998), *The Trinity*, trans. J. Donceel (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company).
- Schleiermacher, F. (2011), *The Christian Faith* (Berkeley, Calif.: Apocryphile Press).
- Schwöbel, C. (2005), 'Wolfhart Pannenberg', in D. F. Ford with R. Muers (eds.), *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918* (Malden, MA: Blackwell), 129–46.
- Valliere, P. (2000), *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov—Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans).
- Von Balthasar, H. U. (1979), *Heart of the World*, trans. E. S. Leiva (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Von Balthasar, H. U. (1992), *Theo-Drama, Volume III. The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, trans. G. Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Von Balthasar, H. U. (1994), *Theo-Drama, Volume IV. The Action*, trans. G. Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Von Balthasar, H. U. (1998), *Theo-Drama, Volume V. The Last Act*, trans. G. Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Von Balthasar, H. U. (2009), *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Volume I. Seeing the Form*, trans. E. Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press).
- Williams, R. (2005), 'Eastern Orthodox Theology', in D. F. Ford with R. Muers (eds.), *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology since 1918* (Malden, MA: Blackwell), 572–88.