



RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Schleiermacher’s reduction of incarnation to deification

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## Abstract

Schleiermacher’s theological champions like Kevin Hector contend that his Christology is ‘high’ and is Chalcedonian in spirit. I offer a number of objections to this view, suggesting that Schleiermacher offers a distinctive, early modern account of Christ as a uniquely deified redeemer but not of Christ as the uncreated God. This raises some surprising questions for the dogmatic relation of Christology, soteriology and anthropology.

**Keywords:** Christology; deification; Friedrich Schleiermacher; Kevin Hector; theosis

In ‘The Dogmatic Location of the Canon’, John Webster popularised the concept of dogmatic location. Questions about dogmatic location cannot be reduced to evaluations of the sequential order of treatment within a systematic theology, even if sequential order can be indicative of dogmatic location, but interrogates the interrelationship and dependencies of dogmatic loci.<sup>1</sup> In recent theology, the interrelationship between the doctrines of Christology, soteriology and anthropology has been of particular interest. Examples abound, including supralapsarian Christologies, spirit Christologies, actualistic groundings of the Trinity in the mission of Son and Spirit or election *to* those missions, the positing of a form of ‘divine–humanity’ in the immanent Trinity, and kenotic Christologies. For all their differences, these trends all seek a tighter integration between both Christ’s redemptive person and work and Christology and anthropology.

Oliver Crisp’s *Participation and Atonement* begins and concludes discussing the dogmatic location of soteriology and atonement.<sup>2</sup> For Crisp, soteriology and atonement should be located in the shadow of, in particular, the doctrine of theosis (or deification), which amounts to a summary of God’s aims in creation. He defines theosis as the process by which the redeemed are conformed to Christ and thereby unified with God by the Spirit. ‘The process of transformation and participation goes on forevermore. It is akin to a mathematic asymptote.’<sup>3</sup> Crisp’s definition broadly aligns with that of

<sup>1</sup>John Webster, *God without Measure 1* (London: T&T Clark, 2015), pp. 46–7.

<sup>2</sup>Oliver Crisp, *Participation and Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023), pp. 4, 230, 240.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 231.

Norman Russell, who identifies Pseudo-Dionysius' claim that deification 'is the attaining of likeness to God and union with him so far as is possible' as the first 'formal definition' of the doctrine.<sup>4</sup> These definitions are not a comprehensive account of theosis, and current discussion often concerns the flexibility and fluidity of the doctrine.<sup>5</sup> Some lament the modern trend to locate theologies of deification in a variety of thinkers outside Eastern Orthodoxy, suggesting that this dilutes deification, which is a determinate concept involving a particular spirituality, the essence/energies distinction, a defined soteriological vision that includes synergism and a definitive vocabulary.<sup>6</sup> A significant problem with this set of criticisms is that they threaten to imply that near-universally recognised early advocates of theosis like Athanasius and Irenaeus did not affirm the doctrine.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, these objections threaten to distance the doctrine from scripture, since even biblical scholars relatively optimistic as to its foundation – if not elaboration – in scripture, nonetheless deny that these biblical claims possess anything like the particular underpinnings identified previously.<sup>8</sup> The definitions from Crisp and Pseudo-Dionysius cited above offer a broad description helpfully encompassing most of what has been labelled 'deification' or 'theosis'.

In both definitions, something like an account of participation is involved. As Russell argues, participation involves a relation which is asymmetrical, referred to something beyond the subject, and is substantial rather than merely phenomenal.<sup>9</sup> Thus these definitions proceed along broadly participatory lines in suggesting that to be 'deified' involves receiving by gift something which belongs priorly to another in an original, and thus quite distinct mode. As Augustine says, 'He has called men gods, that are deified of His grace, not born of His substance....He does deify who is God through Himself, not by the partaking of another.'<sup>10</sup> In line with Augustine's final claim, Crisp goes on to suggest that deification leads to a particular construal of Christology, in which the incarnation of the Word provides the interface between divinity and humanity, allowing God the Son by the Spirit to give to others participatory qualities which he possesses in an original mode.<sup>11</sup> This reflects a common perspective on the dogmatic relation between Christology and theosis.

According to Khaled Anatolios, a number of patristic thinkers argue that it is only because of the presence of 'uncompromised divine perfection' in the union between the Word and human nature that 'human nature is assimilated to' God and 'the deifying

<sup>4</sup>Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p. 1; Paul Gavrilyuk, 'The Retrieval of Deification', *Modern Theology* 25/4 (2009), p. 651.

<sup>5</sup>See Grant Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 4–11, 306.

<sup>6</sup>Gavrilyuk, 'The Retrieval of Deification'; Roger Olson, 'Deification in Contemporary Theology', *Theology Today* 64 (July 2007), pp. 186–200; Gösta Hallonsten, 'Theosis in Recent Research: A Renewal of Interest and a Need for Clarity', in Michael Christensen and Jeffrey Wittung (eds.), *Partakers of the Divine Nature* (Madison and Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), pp. 281–93.

<sup>7</sup>Daniel Keating, 'Typologies of Deification', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 17/3 (2015), pp. 267–83. For other objections, see Carl Mosser, 'The Gospel's End and Our Highest Good: Deification in the Reformed Tradition', in Jared Ortiz (ed.), *With All the Fullness of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2021), pp. 83–109; Andrew Davison, *Participation in God* (Cambridge: CUP, 2019), pp. 296–9.

<sup>8</sup>Macaskill, *Union with Christ*, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup>Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification*, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>Augustine, 'Exposition on Psalm 50', trans. James E. Tweed, in Philip Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1888), 50.2.

<sup>11</sup>Crisp, *Participation and Atonement*, p. 233.

exaltation of the human condition occurs'.<sup>12</sup> In short, a soteriology and anthropology involving deification are often thought to require a Christology in which the redeemer is understood along broadly Chalcedonian lines, such that the divine and human in Christ remain unconfused, unchanged, indivisible and inseparable.

Yet is the connection between deification and two-natures Christology so neat? Friedrich Schleiermacher's account of humanity's end is consistent with the definitions of deification described above. In *On Religion*, Schleiermacher states that 'in religion everything strives to expand the sharply delineated outlines of our personality and gradually to lose them in the infinite in order that we, by intuiting the universe, will become one with it as much as possible'.<sup>13</sup> Jacqueline Mariña succinctly summarises Schleiermacher's mature account of creation's consummation as follows: 'The world is...divinized through the pure activity of Jesus'.<sup>14</sup> Yet even if Schleiermacher offers a distinctive, early modern version of something like theosis, it is not accompanied by an affirmation of Chalcedonian Christology. For this reason, Schleiermacher's account of Christology, soteriology and anthropology offers a fruitful test case for examining the dogmatic location of these doctrines. Does a soteriology aimed at deification require a Christology parallel to Chalcedon? Schleiermacher's theology also offers an interesting perspective on the contemporary trend towards tightly integrating Christ's person and work since, as we will see, he is a rigorous proponent of just this sort of integration yet *for this very reason* articulates an original Christology at odds with Chalcedon.

The argument proceeds as follows. In the first section, I outline various evaluations of Schleiermacher's Christology with particular reference to Chalcedon and discuss Kevin Hector's defence of Schleiermacher's 'high' Christology. Subsequently, we briefly outline the intellectual and dogmatic context of Schleiermacher's Christology. This leads to the heart of the argument, in which I give a number of reasons to think (*contra* Hector) that Schleiermacher's Christology is *not* a 'high' Christology and is not even Chalcedonian in 'spirit'. In concluding, we return to the question of what this implies for the dogmatic location of Christology, soteriology and anthropology.

## Evaluations of Schleiermacher's Christology

Schleiermacher rejects the Chalcedonian definition. He thinks no single person could possess the range of activities proper to infinite divinity and finite humanity, and thus no person could possess a divine and human 'nature'.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, despite Schleiermacher's formal rejection of Chalcedon, interpreters debate his success in rearticulating something of the spirit of Chalcedon in early modern terms. According to Sarah Coakley the definition is not a 'full systematic account of Christology, and even less a complete and precise metaphysics of Christ's makeup'. Rather, Chalcedon is a 'pattern' or 'grid' setting boundaries on what can and cannot

<sup>12</sup>Khaled Anatolios, 'The Soteriological Grammar of Conciliar Christology', *The Thomist* 78 (2014), pp. 168, 176, 178.

<sup>13</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, trans. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), p. 53.

<sup>14</sup>Jacqueline Mariña, *Transformation of the Self in the Thought of Schleiermacher* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 206.

<sup>15</sup>References and quotations are from the following translation of the *Glaubenslehre*: Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith: A New Translation and Critical Edition* [henceforth *CF*], trans. Terrence Tice, Catherine Kelsey, and Edwina Lawler, 2 vols (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), \$96, pp. 581–90; \$97.4–5, pp. 604–8. Quotations also cite Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube* [henceforth *GL*], 2 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

be said of Christ.<sup>16</sup> Thus, for Coakley, the definition can be affirmed without using the same concepts as its authors.

There is undoubtedly a vague sense in which Schleiermacher maintains a Chalcedonian ‘pattern’. Brian Gerrish argues that for Schleiermacher Chalcedon aimed to affirm both that God exists in Christ and the redeemed are genuinely brothers and sisters of Christ.<sup>17</sup> Schleiermacher affirms these general claims. However, Chalcedon posits more than a nebulous being of God ‘in’ Christ, since in a certain sense – a sense which is intensified if one, like Schleiermacher, affirms divine simplicity – the being of God is in everything in view of divine omnipresence and is uniquely ‘in’ the redeemed by virtue of the Spirit’s indwelling. The question of whether Schleiermacher remains even within the ‘spirit’ or ‘pattern’ of Chalcedon requires going beyond the affirmation of God’s presence ‘in’ Christ. It concerns whether Schleiermacher, on his own terms, affirms that Christ is the uncreated God and a created man. Martin Redeker, Richard Muller, Joshua Ralston and Jacqueline Mariña claim Schleiermacher makes something like these affirmations, whereas Karl Barth, George Hunsinger and Matthias Gockel argue he does not.<sup>18</sup>

The most sophisticated defence of Schleiermacher’s Christology is Kevin Hector’s argument that Schleiermacher affirms a ‘high’ Christology. Hector’s account is widely appealed to. It is cited, for example, by James Gordon in defending Schleiermacher’s Christology against Barthian criticisms, and by Ralston in defending him in response to Thomistic ones.<sup>19</sup> The comparative adjective ‘high’ can confuse as much as it illuminates. What is ‘high’ or ‘low’ depends upon one’s vantage point. Mariña rightly notes that if one presupposes that the *Glaubenslehre* is a transcendental philosophy of religion, one will be astonished by how ‘high’ Schleiermacher’s Christology appears.<sup>20</sup> Things look rather different however if one evaluates Schleiermacher – as his theological defenders insist one must – as a theologian in dialogue with the Christian tradition.

Hunsinger offers a taxonomy, inspired by Schleiermacher’s treatment of Christology in the *Glaubenslehre*, distinguishing between not merely ‘high’ and ‘low’ but likewise ‘middle’ Christologies.<sup>21</sup> The taxonomy is particularly attentive to the dogmatic location of Christology and soteriology, suggesting the difference between these types involves

<sup>16</sup>Sarah Coakley, ‘What Does Chalcedon Solve and What Does It Not?’, in Stephen Davis, Daniel Kendall S. J. and Gerald O’Collins S. J. (eds.), *The Incarnation* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), pp. 161–2.

<sup>17</sup>Brian Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church* (London: SCM, 1984), p. 27.

<sup>18</sup>Joshua Ralston, ‘A Schleiermacherian Rejoinder to Thomas Joseph White’s *The Incarnate Lord*’, *Nova et Vetera* 20/2 (2022), pp. 614–5; Richard Muller, ‘The Christological Problem as Addressed by Friedrich Schleiermacher’, in Marguerite Shuster and Richard Muller (eds.), *Perspectives on Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), pp. 141–2; Jacqueline Mariña, ‘Schleiermacher’s Christology Revisited: A Reply to His Critics’, *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49/2 (1996), p. 191; Martin Redeker, *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1973); George Hunsinger, *Evangelical, Catholic, and Reformed* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), p. 167; Karl Barth, ‘Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher’, trans. George Hunsinger, *Studies in Religion* 7/2 (1978), p. 123; Matthias Gockel, *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p. 72.

<sup>19</sup>James Gordon, ‘A “Glaring Misunderstanding”? Schleiermacher, Barth and the Nature of Speculative Theology’, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 16/3 (July 2014), pp. 321–3; Ralston, ‘A Schleiermacherian Rejoinder’, pp. 623–5.

<sup>20</sup>Mariña, *Transformation of the Self*, p. 191; Mariña, ‘Schleiermacher’s Christology Revisited’, p. 177; Jacqueline Mariña, ‘Christology and Anthropology in Friedrich Schleiermacher’, in Jacqueline Mariña (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 151–70.

<sup>21</sup>Hunsinger, *Evangelical, Catholic, and Reformed*, pp. 126–68; George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 253–78.

distinct evaluations of the sort of soteriological 'work' which is thought to require this particular sort of redeeming person.<sup>22</sup> For what Schleiermacher labels an 'empirical' and what Hunsinger terms a 'low' Christology, the redeemer is interpreted as a merely human moral exemplar inciting followers to repeat their moral activity. Kant's is a representative of this empirical/low Christology.<sup>23</sup> At the other extreme, according to Schleiermacher, are magical Christologies. For such Christologies, the mediating function of the Christian community is neglected and the redeemer enters into a direct transaction with God to atone for the guilt of individuals.<sup>24</sup> While affirming the community's role in redemption, Hunsinger nonetheless advocates for something like this 'magical' view, terming it a 'high' Christology.<sup>25</sup> Hunsinger's 'middle' Christology is modelled upon the 'mystical' view Schleiermacher endorses. For Hunsinger, Schleiermacher's redeemer is undoubtedly unique, but not 'unique in kind'.<sup>26</sup> For Schleiermacher, Christ possesses an unsurpassable, prototypical God-consciousness which is mediated to the redeemed. A lot hangs then on what Hunsinger means by 'unique in kind'. Hunsinger aims to suggest, I suspect, that while Schleiermacher's Christ is the ideal human and that the redemption he provides requires more than imitation, nonetheless Jesus is not the uncreated God.<sup>27</sup>

Hector by contrast, argues that 'Schleiermacher's Christology is, in some respects, even higher than traditional Chalcedonianism, if by 'high' we mean the unequivocal recognition that Christ is God incarnate' and is 'fully divine'.<sup>28</sup> Hector aims to rebut charges from critics of Schleiermacher like Colin Gunton and Barth, who allege that while for Schleiermacher Christ is 'more "divine" than the rest of us' this difference is merely 'quantitative, not qualitative'.<sup>29</sup> Even Gunton, who accuses Schleiermacher of affirming merely a 'degree' Christology, recognises that Schleiermacher affirms Christ's uniqueness.<sup>30</sup> The question remains however, whether Jesus is merely a uniquely deified creature or the uncreated God. Hector favours the latter view, arguing that for Schleiermacher, Christ is the same pure act as the uncreated God.<sup>31</sup> Before proceeding, it is worth noting that on Hector's interpretation of Schleiermacher, Christ's person and work, and thus the doctrines of Christology, soteriology and anthropology, could not be more tightly interconnected. 'Christ's work...is a repetition of his person'.<sup>32</sup>

Before assessing Hector's argument in detail, I briefly describe some features of the intellectual and dogmatic context of Schleiermacher's Christology which will be important for evaluating his theology.

<sup>22</sup>Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, p. 265.

<sup>23</sup>See Hector's account of Kant's Christology and soteriology in Kevin Hector, *The Theological Project of Modernism* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), pp. 68–70.

<sup>24</sup>CF §94.2–3, pp. 576–80.

<sup>25</sup>Hunsinger, *Evangelical, Catholic, and Reformed*, pp. 138–43.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>28</sup>Kevin Hector, 'Actualism and Incarnation: The High Christology of Friedrich Schleiermacher', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8/3 (July 2006), p. 308.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 308–9.

<sup>30</sup>Colin Gunton, *Yesterday and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 15–6.

<sup>31</sup>Hector, 'Actualism and Incarnation', pp. 310–2.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 319.

## The context of Schleiermacher's Christology

Discussions of the intellectual and dogmatic context of Schleiermacher's theology are often contentious because of Barth's criticisms in particular. With these concerns in mind, my summary of a few key aspects of Schleiermacher's context is not meant to allege that Schleiermacher is overly apologetic, or that the opening sections of the *Glaubenslehre* are a foundationalist philosophy disconnected from the remainder of the *Glaubenslehre*.

Schleiermacher's dogmatics aimed to respond to a rising tide of criticisms from disciplines adjacent to theology. The flowering of historical-critical 'life of Jesus' studies generated fears that traditional accounts of Christ's divinity might not fit with the historical data.<sup>33</sup> Simultaneously, philosophical critiques threatened to render the transcendent unknowable to finite creatures. As Troy Stefano summarises:

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....[For] 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.<sup>34</sup>

If Christ is 'to retain any significance after such a separation, it is on immanentist terms'.<sup>35</sup> Christian dogmatics needed to be placed on a new footing, which reckoned with these historical and philosophical challenges.

Schleiermacher says his project creates an 'eternal covenant' between theology and the extra-dogmatic sciences, demonstrating that properly dogmatic doctrines (i.e. doctrines which genuinely flow from Christian consciousness) never conflict with science.<sup>36</sup> Oftentimes, Schleiermacher's legacy is narrated in terms of two competing interpretations of this covenant. One interpretation, associated with Ernst Troeltsch, sought an accommodation with the sciences, reinterpreting Christianity through a general science of religion. Another interpretation, associated with Wilhelm Hermann, aimed to protect or segregate faith from the possibility of scientific critique by an appeal to an irreducible religious experience inaccessible to extra-dogmatic science.<sup>37</sup>

Schleiermacher does not fit neatly into either camp. Yes, his rooting of Christianity in the self-consciousness of Jesus Christ avoids many objections of historical-critical, 'life of Jesus' scholars by distinguishing between Christ's 'inner nature' and the mere

<sup>33</sup>Schleiermacher's posthumously published lectures make an important contribution to this genre. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Life of Jesus*, trans. Maclean Gilmour (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975).

<sup>34</sup>Troy Stefano, 'Christology from Lessing to Schleiermacher', in Francesca Aran Murphy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christology* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), p. 347.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>36</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre: Two Letters to Dr. Lücke*, trans. James Duke and Francis Fiorenza (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), p. 64.

<sup>37</sup>For this narrative, see Brent Sockness, *Against False Apologetics* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), pp. 199–218; Andrew Dole, *Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 138–45; Bruce McCormack, *Orthodox and Modern* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), pp. 66–8.

'details' [*Einzelheiten*] of his historical appearance.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, it sidesteps philosophical objections related to the divorce between the immanent and transcendent. Nonetheless, as Daniel Pedersen notes, Schleiermacher's eternal covenant is likewise a product of 'his Christologically grounded, supralapsarian, Reformed universalism'.<sup>39</sup> Schleiermacher's eternal covenant was an act of segregation but also of dogmatic retrieval. Furthermore, while Schleiermacher's location of the unique locus of religion in 'feeling' [*Gefühl*] exempted it from many criticisms, this was not absolute. For example, even if not discerned through historical investigation but redemption, the Christ of history is still, for Schleiermacher, a sinless, unsurpassable moral ideal.<sup>40</sup> Schleiermacher's openness to historical criticisms on this point exemplifies his unwillingness to allow his 'eternal covenant' to pre-determine his theology.

With respect to the philosophical criticisms noted above, Schleiermacher's rooting of religion in feeling rather than theoretical or practical reason aimed to unite humans with the transcendent without undermining Kant's placing of the transcendent beyond knowledge.<sup>41</sup> Schleiermacher does not seek to overcome Kant by suggesting that the transcendent God *can* appear as an object conditioned by space, time and causality. No finite object, including Christ himself, can be a vehicle for *knowledge* of God. Yet knowledge is a matter of metaphysics rather than religion.<sup>42</sup> Instead of coming to *know* God, 'God-consciousness is given *directly* in self-consciousness'.<sup>43</sup> This givenness involves an 'immediate existential' relation,<sup>44</sup> as God is 'composited' [*mitgesetztsein*] in our consciousness in the feeling of absolute dependence.<sup>45</sup> God is not reasoned to in a way which would be subject to Kant's critiques, but is encountered as a presence unifying Godself in love with our consciousness.<sup>46</sup> What uniquely occurs in redemption is not an objective increase in God's presence, an ecstatic experience, nor an increase in the content of our knowledge of God.<sup>47</sup> Rather, the redeemed are strengthened to resist their tendency to be overwhelmed by sensible impulses which lead them to forget their absolute dependence upon God. This increased facility in maintaining God-consciousness amounts, for Schleiermacher, to a heightened union with God.<sup>48</sup> This increasing facility is mediated via the ideal potency of the God-consciousness of Jesus Christ.<sup>49</sup> Because of humanity's corporate enmeshment in God-forgetfulness, it is only by virtue of the arrival of a prototype (*Urbild*) – that is, an ideal person wholly receptive to God – that redemption is possible.<sup>50</sup> Redemption occurs when by the Spirit,

<sup>38</sup>CF §93.2, p. 568; *GL* 2:44–5; *CF* §99.post, p. 619, *GL* 2:102. See also Maureen Junker-Kenny, *Self, Christ and God in Schleiermacher's Dogmatics* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2020), p. 13.

<sup>39</sup>Daniel Pedersen, 'A Tragic Destiny Overtook Him', *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 24/4 (2022), p. 563.

<sup>40</sup>E.g. *CF* §93.2, pp. 566–7.

<sup>41</sup>What this rejection of the possibility of theoretical knowledge of God amounts to for Kant, and the epistemic character of his allowance for 'belief in' God is a matter of ongoing debate.

<sup>42</sup>Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, pp. 20–6.

<sup>43</sup>Scott Paeth, 'Feeling, Thinking, Doing: Ethics and Religious Self-Consciousness in Kant and Schleiermacher', *Philosophy & Theology* 28/2 (2016), p. 321.

<sup>44</sup>Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre*, p. 41.

<sup>45</sup>*CF* §32.2, p. 189; *GL* 1:203.

<sup>46</sup>See *CF* §165.1, p. 1004; *CF* §166.1, p. 1005.

<sup>47</sup>*CF* §30.1–3, pp. 182–5. Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre*, p. 70.

<sup>48</sup>*CF* §62.2, p. 383; *GL* 1:393.

<sup>49</sup>*CF* §96, pp. 581–90.

<sup>50</sup>*CF* §71.1–3, pp. 425–32; *CF* §110.1, pp. 723–4.

the strength of Christ's God-consciousness is mediated to the redeemed as it is adopted by them.<sup>51</sup> The result (echoing the language of deification) is that the 'being of God in him, must also become ours, because otherwise it would not be his act that would become ours'.<sup>52</sup> This will be important for what follows. Note Schleiermacher's tight integration of being and act, person and work, and the close correlation between Jesus' divinity and the divinity he mediates to the redeemed. Furthermore, echoing the language of deification, Schleiermacher describes the consummation of this process as a 'living union, in which the divine and human [are] to be divided no more'.<sup>53</sup>

With this in view, we turn to our primary question; is this refashioning of Christology and soteriology in view of the theological challenges arising in early modernity a transcription of the spirit of Chalcedon into a new register, such that it remains possible on Schleiermachian terms to confess that Jesus of Nazareth *is* the uncreated God?

### Three reasons why Schleiermacher's is not a high Christology

In the following sections, I offer three reasons – in contrast to Hector – to think Schleiermacher's Christology is something like the articulation of a theology of deification in early modern terms. In what is often identified as the key claim underlying Schleiermacher's Christology, he says: 'to attribute an absolutely strong God-consciousness to Christ and to ascribe a being of God in him are entirely one and the same thing'.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, he speaks of Christ's 'incarnation' or becoming embodied [*Menschenwerdung*].<sup>55</sup> While these phrases are compatible with affirming that Christ is the uncreated God, Schleiermacher's language is more often reminiscent of the language of divine indwelling [*göttlicher Einwohnung*] and deifying participation.<sup>56</sup> For example, Christ is 'a completely human soul, yet one put in motion internally by this special being of God in him...The being of God in him...pervades that completely human soul'.<sup>57</sup> Here, Christ sounds like a human creature entirely transparent to divine agency. This fits with many traditional accounts of humanity's end which suggest that for a rational creature, to be divinised involves complete alignment to the divine will. Maximus the Confessor, for example, describes this as a state in which, in a certain sense, 'only the divine is active'.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, in Schleiermacher's dogmatic methodology at the outset of the *Glaubenslehre*, he describes two christological errors he will aim to avoid: the docetic and Nazarene. He argues in contrast to these errors that what is essential for an adequate Christology is that 'an essential likeness' must exist between Christ and other humans, and that Christ must enjoy 'an exclusive and

<sup>51</sup>CF §100.1–2, pp. 621–5.

<sup>52</sup>CF §100.1, p. 622; GL 2:105. See also CF §109.2, pp. 712–5; CF §116.3, pp. 765–6.

<sup>53</sup>CF §110.3, p. 729; GL 2:208–9.

<sup>54</sup>CF §94.2, p. 576; GL 2:55.

<sup>55</sup>CF §99.post, p. 618; GL 2:100.

<sup>56</sup>CF §13.2, p. 98; GL 1:111.

<sup>57</sup>CF §97.3, p. 603; GL 2:84.

<sup>58</sup>Maximus, *Ambiguum 7* (PG 91:1076C), in *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings from Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), p. 53; cited in Ian A. McFarland, "Naturally and by Grace": Maximus the Confessor on the Operation of the Will', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 58/4 (November 2005), p. 414.



distinctive precedence over' them.<sup>59</sup> Thus, we are initially led to suspect that Schleiermacher's Christ will enjoy a unique supremacy over other humans but not necessarily that he will *be* the uncreated God. With these initial considerations in view, I outline what Schleiermacher means in referring to the 'being of God' in Christ.

### *Jesus' 'miraculous' origins and the 'being of God' in Christ*

Hector makes much of the fact that for Schleiermacher the possibility of Jesus' advent 'must come from "outside" of human history'.<sup>60</sup> However, Hector neglects to mention the two-sidedness of Schleiermacher's claims about Christ's origins.

In the contexts in which Schleiermacher discusses Christ's origins he repeatedly avers that the only sense in which Christ's origins are 'supernatural' or 'miraculous' is in the sense outlined in the early sections of the *Glaubenslehre*. In this context, Schleiermacher says that 'the appearance of the Redeemer in history is neither something absolutely supernatural nor something absolutely superrational'.<sup>61</sup> Yes, Schleiermacher affirms with Hector that any religious founder – not just Jesus – 'surpasses the nature of [their] surrounding, [yet]...nevertheless...the emergence of such a life [is] the effect of the force for development that indwells our nature as a species'.<sup>62</sup> If the divine can come to dwell in Christ, this points not to a fundamental supernatural caesura in the development of humanity, but to the very opposite: 'in human nature there must lie the possibility of taking up what is divine into oneself, as has happened precisely in Christ'. Schleiermacher emphasises this repeatedly: 'incarnation' implies not that Christ is 'absolutely supernatural', but that human nature has the capacity for 'taking up into itself what is restoratively divine...built into it'.<sup>63</sup>

Schleiermacher also describes Christ's advent as 'a divine act alone, thus an eternal one',<sup>64</sup> and he admits that he aims to put forth two ways of describing the appearance of Christ that appear to 'jar against each other'.<sup>65</sup> Andrew Dole argues that for Schleiermacher, while '[t]he appearance of a perfect God-consciousness in the person of Jesus of Nazareth is a supernatural event relative to the common life of sinfulness....relative to a wider context, it is a natural fact in every sense of the term'.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, Schleiermacher argues that not only is Christ's prototypical God-consciousness merely supernatural 'in relation to the collective life of sinfulness', the redemption of the church is 'supernatural' in the same sense. In both cases however, if one considers the 'sameness of human nature', both Christ's arrival and the church's redemption are 'no longer a supernatural thing but...only the emergence of a new stage of development conditioned by what has gone before'.<sup>67</sup>

These two seemingly disparate perspectives on Christ's advent are compatible in view of Schleiermacher's account of what counts as 'supernatural':

<sup>59</sup>CF §22.2, pp. 145–6; GL 1:156–7.

<sup>60</sup>Hector, 'Actualism and Incarnation', p. 310; see also pp. 312–3.

<sup>61</sup>CF §13, p. 93; GL 1:106.

<sup>62</sup>CF §13.1, pp. 93–4; GL 1:106–8.

<sup>63</sup>CF §13.1, p. 96; GL 1:109–10.

<sup>64</sup>CF §13.1, p. 96; GL 1:109.

<sup>65</sup>This quotation is from a different context but Schleiermacher is discussing the same issue. CF §97.3, p. 604; GL 2:85.

<sup>66</sup>Dole, *Schleiermacher on Religion and the Natural Order*, p. 164.

<sup>67</sup>CF §88.4, pp. 552–3; GL 2:27.

Whenever I speak of the supernatural, I do so with reference to whatever comes first, but afterwards it becomes secondly something natural. Thus creation is supernatural, but it afterwards becomes the natural order, in his origin Christ is supernatural, but he also becomes natural, as a genuine human being. The Holy Spirit and the Christian church can be treated in the same way.<sup>68</sup>

So Jesus – like creation and the church – is ‘supernatural’ in terms of his origin in the divine decree, but this eternal decree produces a wholly natural, creaturely effect, bringing to fulfilment the capacity and *telos* already implanted in human nature. Thus, ‘the creation of human being is first [or “only”, *erst*] completed in Christ’.<sup>69</sup>

All of this is a place in which Schleiermacher’s intellectual context, which we previously discussed, exerts a decisive influence. For Schleiermacher, the advent of Christ must have been ‘prepared [for] by all that had preceded him’, and in this sense is a natural development of human nature.<sup>70</sup> Christ is the product of both divine agency and the nature-system [*Zusammenhang*]. To imagine a divine activity which was not at the same time wholly the result of natural causes (e.g. an absolute miracle) must be rejected for Schleiermacher, because it would imply ‘divine arbitrariness’.<sup>71</sup> As Michael Rosen argues, a central claim uniting the diverse strands of post-Kantian idealism is a denial of indifferent freedom, replaced instead by the claim, often associated with Spinoza, that freedom is opposed to everything arbitrary, being merely the spontaneous unfolding of one’s innate dispositions. This, according to Rosen’s magisterial genealogy, ‘radically alters our understanding of God. While it purges our conception of him of everything that is capricious, at the same time it takes away from our relationship with him everything that is personal’.<sup>72</sup>

Mariña outlines the assumptions behind these claims, suggesting that according to Schleiermacher no one can experience anything ‘extrinsic’ to their nature, and thus ‘Christ’s divinity should flow naturally from his human nature’.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, as Schleiermacher says of both Christ and the redeemed: ‘what is to be brought forth by the divine Spirit is already present within human reason itself... [thus] the divine Spirit does not go beyond human reason’.<sup>74</sup> Mariña suggests in view of this that in Schleiermacher’s Christology ‘the distinction between nature and supernature... collapses; the divinity of Christ is not supernatural but rather the standard and archetype of all that is naturally ordained for human nature’.<sup>75</sup>

This account of Christ’s origins aligns better with an interpretation which understands Schleiermacher’s account of the advent of the ‘being of God’ in Christ along the lines of deification rather than the claim that Christ is the uncreated God. One

<sup>68</sup>Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre*, p. 88.

<sup>69</sup>CF §97.4, p. 605; GL 2:87. See also CF §89.1–3, pp. 553–7; CF §94.3, pp. 578–9.

<sup>70</sup>CF §13.1, pp. 93–4; GL 1:106–8.

<sup>71</sup>CF §13.1, p. 96; GL 1:110.

<sup>72</sup>Michael Rosen, *The Shadow of God: Kant, Hegel, and the Passage from Heaven to History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2022), pp. 167–8. The question of what it means to affirm that God is personal is by no means straightforward, but Schleiermacher’s collapse of God’s agency into the natural unfolding of the nature-system, along with his denial of the traditional affirmation of the world’s hypothetical but not absolute necessity, undermines many claims which might allow one to analogically speak of God as a personal agent.

<sup>73</sup>Mariña, ‘Schleiermacher’s Christology Revisited’, pp. 191–2.

<sup>74</sup>CF §13.2, p. 98; GL 1:111. See also CF §94.1, p. 575; GL 2:53.

<sup>75</sup>Mariña, ‘Schleiermacher’s Christology Revisited’, pp. 193–4.

finds an interestingly similar view of human nature and deification, if not Christology, in David Bentley Hart's recent, *nouvelle théologie* inspired book, *You Are Gods*. Hart likewise undermines distinctions between nature and supernature, affirms that humanity cannot participate in anything that was – at any time – extrinsic to its nature, thinks of grace as not supernatural but a work of bringing nature to its intrinsic telos, and affirms a single divine decree with universalist aims.<sup>76</sup>

In sum, Schleiermacher's account of Christ's origins, rather than appearing as a modern account of two-natures Christology, seems more like a distinctively early modern account of Christ's uniquely deified status, as Christ brings to perfection the original nature and telos of humanity through his union with God.

### *Schleiermacher's denial of pantheism and the 'being of God' in Christ*

In responding to the misunderstandings of his critics, Schleiermacher decries 'this God-consciousness which is supposedly God himself, of which I have said nothing... These misunderstandings and many others of this sort are related to my supposed pantheism.'<sup>77</sup> I suspect that Schleiermacher here denies that Jesus is the uncreated God.<sup>78</sup> In fairness, Schleiermacher could be read as merely denying that Jesus' *consciousness* is God. Yet statements seemingly identifying the content of the 'being of God' in Christ with his God-consciousness arise in other contexts. For example: these 'two features are also the same in the Redeemer: his spiritual originality... and that being of God in him'.<sup>79</sup> Yet regardless, Schleiermacher proceeds to argue in the initial quotation that the problem with this interpretation relates to what he considers to be the false accusation that he is a pantheist. This is another reason to think Jesus is a supremely defied human for Schleiermacher but not the uncreated God.<sup>80</sup>

In discussing Christ's uniqueness, Schleiermacher says, 'there is no being of God in any individual thing but only a being of God in the world'. According to Schleiermacher, God is pure act. For this reason, no individual, who is a mix of passivity and activity, can be said to have a being of God in them. Yet, as Schleiermacher continues, the finite world in totality is a nexus which, taken as a whole, is proportioned such that it possesses the requisite activity to adequately reproduce God's activity and thus there is a being of God in the world in totality.<sup>81</sup> Jesus himself is a mix of passivity and activity, but by virtue of his absolutely potent God-consciousness, all that affects him is 'mediated through vital receptivity', and thus his life perfectly expresses God's activity with respect to all that affects him.<sup>82</sup> For this reason, there is a being of God in Christ, just as there is a being of God in the world in totality. However, this does not imply that Christ is purely actual. Rather, like the finite world as a whole,

<sup>76</sup>David Bentley Hart, *You Are Gods* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2022), pp. 1–19.

<sup>77</sup>Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre*, p. 47.

<sup>78</sup>For Schleiermacher, it 'is all one and the same' [*ganz eins und dasselbe ist*] to ascribe an absolutely strong God-consciousness and a being of God in Christ. *GL* §94.2 2:55.

<sup>79</sup>*CF* §94.3, p. 579; *GL* 57.

<sup>80</sup>There is a minority view which thinks certain models of pantheism can encompass Schleiermacher's views. I do not engage in this debate. Rather, my contention is that Schleiermacher's arguments distancing himself from pantheism, when placed in dialogue with Schleiermacher's Christology, suggest that Christ is not the uncreated God.

<sup>81</sup>*CF* §94.2, p. 576; *GL* 2:55.

<sup>82</sup>*CF* §94.2, pp. 576–8; *GL* 2:55–6.

Christ's finite life is a perfect, finite reception and representation of God's loving causality.

In order to avoid charges of pantheism, Schleiermacher rejects an identification of the world as a whole and God. For Schleiermacher, God is the whence of the feeling of absolute dependence, whereas we intuit the world through a non-absolute form of dependence because the world is 'divided' and 'is itself dependent'.<sup>83</sup> This distinction sets the stage for Schleiermacher's treatment of the first four divine attributes in the *Glaubenslehre*. These attributes explicitly contrast the divided, dependent character of finite causality with God's causality. If one loses this distinction between God and the world, then – particularly for those keen to defend Schleiermacher's constructive theology – a number of deleterious results follow. Schleiermacher secures human freedom over against those often seen as pantheist determinists like Spinoza precisely by this distinction between God and the world. Even though we are dependent upon the world, we are not absolutely dependent upon it and thus it is subject to our counter influence and therefore our actions are free with respect to the world. Similarly, as Robert Williams suggests, if God and the world are identified, this results not only in 'pantheism, it also implies a reduction of theology to anthropology'.<sup>84</sup> Feuerbach's harsh criticisms of Schleiermacher would have some justification if God's being in the world as a whole implied that the world is God, since the distinction between finitude and God would be undermined.

What do these considerations concerning Schleiermacher's rejection of pantheism suggest that the 'being of God' in Christ and in the world in totality involves for Schleiermacher? It seems to suggest that Christ perfectly receives God's loving causality and reproduces it in a perfect and thus divinised human form. This is parallel to the way in which the world in totality receives God's infinite causality, yet in a divided, finite mode. Yet just as Schleiermacher insists that this does not entail that the world *is* God, so too Christ is not the uncreated God.

### *Schleiermacher, the communicatio idiomatum and the 'being of God' in Christ*

Schleiermacher's central objection to kenotic Christologies, in which certain divine attributes are quiescent during aspects of Jesus' ministry, is that since 'the divine attributes are simply activities, what would constitute the communication of them if they were inactive?'<sup>85</sup> His objection to Reformed varieties of the *communicatio idiomatum* likewise concerns this actualistic interpretation of the divine attributes. The divine attributes describe the nature of God's activity (i.e. divine causality). They are by definition opposed or opposite to [*entgegengesetzten*] finite, creaturely causality. Finite causality is local, temporal, incomplete and divided whereas divine causality is omnipresent, eternal, omnipotent and simple. Given this opposition, Schleiermacher thinks that no one thing could simultaneously enact these two sets of activities. Similarly, in dialogue with certain Lutheran views, God's activities could not be limited and apportioned to a finite subject without their infinite character being lost.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup>CF §46.2, p. 253; GL 1:271.

<sup>84</sup>Robert Williams, 'Schleiermacher and Feuerbach on the Intentionality of Religious Consciousness', *The Journal of Religion* 53 (1973), p. 444.

<sup>85</sup>CF §97.5, p. 606; GL 2:88.

<sup>86</sup>CF §97.5, p. 608; GL 2:89.

If Christ were the pure act that God is, he would need to have the features of God's pure activity, being entirely unaffected by the causal influences of others things – that is, impassible, immutable, eternal and so on. Yet for Schleiermacher, divine activity and human activity cannot both be proper to the same thing.<sup>87</sup> Unlike in a two-natures Christology,<sup>88</sup> for Schleiermacher, if one thing or person's range of activity is impassible, this rules out any sense in which it is passible.<sup>89</sup> If it is immutable, this rules out any sense in which it is mutable, and so on. For Schleiermacher, Christ 'exhausted the capacity for receptivity in human nature'.<sup>90</sup> The absolute power of his God-consciousness facilitates Christ's reception of God's pure actuality and reproduction of it not as God's own infinite pure act, but as a perfect, sinless, creaturely icon of God. For this reason, Schleiermacher never argues that in order for Christ to possess a 'being of God' in him, Jesus needs to possess the attributes defining God's activity/causality. Instead, he argues that in order to reproduce God's pure actuality, Christ must merely be sinless. Furthermore, Schleiermacher denies that Christ's God-consciousness was fully developed (i.e. fully actualised) from birth. If it had been, Schleiermacher avers, this would imply that the infant Jesus possessed a complete mastery of language and a fully developed self-consciousness of himself as a subject.<sup>91</sup> Nonetheless, Schleiermacher thinks that this lack does not threaten the absolute potency of his God-consciousness and the 'being of God' in him, because all that is required for these is Christ's sinlessness.<sup>92</sup> What is required for Christ to reproduce perfectly God's loving activity is not that Christ be pure act (and thus enact the divine attributes), but merely that Christ be a sinless conduit transmuted God's infinite, pure love, in finite, creaturely form.

In sum, Schleiermacher rejects *tout court* that the uncreated God and a creature could be one person. Instead of explaining how Christ could possess the attributes of divine activity/causality, he gives an account of how a genuinely human person can be wholly sinless, and thus, not the uncreated God but a perfect reproduction in creaturely form of God's love.

### Dogmatic implications and conclusion

If a high Christology is a Christology in which Christ is both a creature and the uncreated God, then Schleiermacher does not articulate a high Christology. Schleiermacher's Christ is a uniquely deified human prototype, fully suffused with divine love and transparent to the divine will. When it is recognised that the label 'degree Christology' is not incompatible with the belief that Christ is unsurpassable and unique (as per Gunton's

<sup>87</sup>There is debate about which, if any, of the divine attributes are equivalent and/or refer to the divine being for Schleiermacher. My argument does not depend upon the interpretation one takes. For example, according to some, Schleiermacher thinks the only attribute equivalent to the divine being is love and its unfolding in wisdom. However, even if one thinks the other attributes only refer to divine causality rather than the divine being, they are still the way we identify God's activity over against the activity of other things. Thus, they are the way we distinguish God from the world. If Jesus were to be identified with God's pure actuality, his acts would have to bear the identifying 'attributes' of God's causality.

<sup>88</sup>See e.g. Paul Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassible God* (Oxford: OUP, 2006); and Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology* (Oxford: OUP, 2016).

<sup>89</sup>CF §97.5, pp. 606–8.

<sup>90</sup>CF §94.3, p. 576; GL 2:57.

<sup>91</sup>CF §93.3, pp. 568–71.

<sup>92</sup>For Schleiermacher, this also involves a complete lack of moral struggle. CF §94.3, pp. 578–80.

definition), it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Schleiermacher's is something like a degree Christology. Schleiermacher himself says Christ is unique because we do not attribute his 'personal dignity...to others to the same degree [*auf dasselbe Maaß*]'.<sup>93</sup> Gunton then is not far off in worrying that for Schleiermacher 'to be divine...is the same thing as to be successfully human'.<sup>94</sup>

We began discussing the dogmatic location of Christology, soteriology and anthropology. Schleiermacher might be an example, for one sympathetic to high Christologies, of the danger of allowing soteriology and atonement to become overinflated, particularly for theologies affirming post-metaphysical, 'actualistic' ontologies. A great deal of modern Christology decries an overly schematic division between Christ's person and work, eliminating the gap between being and act as far as possible. Schleiermacher is a progenitor of this tendency. In light of his early modern, post-Kantian context, Schleiermacher denies that an effect can inform us as to the nature of its cause.<sup>95</sup> For this reason, as Christine Helmer explains, 'only as much as is experienced as Christ's effect can be attributed to the dignity of Christ's person'; to posit anything more is 'speculation'.<sup>96</sup> Maureen Junker-Kenny describes a number of critics who object that Schleiermacher's close linkage of soteriology and Christology dissolves Christ into his soteriological causality, making it difficult to sharply distinguish between his status as a unique individual and the creaturely, ecclesial life he inaugurates for others.<sup>97</sup> In sum, Schleiermacher's Christ is in certain respects collapsed into his redemptive work. Schleiermacher has no means to affirm that Christ is more than what he does for us.

This raises at least two sets of questions regarding the dogmatic location of Christology, soteriology and anthropology.

First, Schleiermacher gives an account, filtered through his notion of God-consciousness, of Christ as the ideal, deified human who deifies others. This raises a challenge for the traditional account outlined by Khaled Anatolios, which posits that in order for Christ to deify, Christ *must* be the uncreated God. Schleiermacher presents the possibility of a version of deification without a high, Chalcedonian-style Christology. Further, Schleiermacher's belief that deification does not *necessarily* require incarnation is not so different from other voices in the tradition, particularly Reformed voices. We began discussing Crisp. While he wants to closely link deification and two-natures Christology, he nonetheless claims – along with many others – that the incarnation is a *fitting* not strictly necessary means of deification.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, Nathaniel Gray Sutanto describes a number of figures within Schleiermacher's Reformed tradition who hold to a 'consummation anyway' view of humanity's end. For these figures (many of whom explicitly use the language of deification), prelapsarian humanity was created for the elevated, superlative end of intimate union with God.<sup>99</sup> Yet though in fact the attainment of this end involves incarnation, we cannot presume that it would have

<sup>93</sup>CF §94.2, p. 256; *GL* 2:54.

<sup>94</sup>Gunton, *Yesterday and Today*, p. 16. Gunton refers to 'degree Christologies' in general.

<sup>95</sup>CF §50.3, p. 285. Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, pp. 23–4.

<sup>96</sup>Christine Helmer, 'The Consummation of Reality: Soteriological Metaphysics in Schleiermacher's Interpretation of Colossians 1:15–20', in Christine Helmer (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), p. 120.

<sup>97</sup>Junker-Kenny, *Self, Christ and God in Schleiermacher's Dogmatics*, pp. 197–205.

<sup>98</sup>Crisp, *Participation and Atonement*, p. 232.

<sup>99</sup>E.g. Carl Mosser, 'Recovering the Reformation's Ecumenical Vision of Redemption as Deification and Beatific Vision', *Perichoresis* 18 (2020), pp. 3–24.

apart from sin.<sup>100</sup> Schleiermacher then is not so isolated in thinking that affirming deification does not strictly require a two-natures Christology, which might call into question the traditional, patristic defences of two-natures Christology, outlined by Anatolios, which proceed from the premise that Christ can deify *only* if he is the uncreated God. One response to this might be to fear it is a mistake to tie Christology so tightly to a particular aspect of soteriology and anthropology like deification. Could this amount to a dogmatic mislocation?

Yet on the other hand, one might think that an account of deification without incarnation is insufficiently robust. In another context, Anatolios negatively contrasts Schleiermacher with more traditional Christologies like that of Athanasius, for whom the Son is the 'Godward God'.<sup>101</sup> In the incarnation, the Son's stance directed towards the Father in the immanent divine life becomes the stance in which the redeemed come to share by the Spirit. After all I have said in defence of Schleiermacher's account of deification, it is worth considering whether insofar as Schleiermacher's Christology is not particularly 'high', and thus gives no ground for humanity's relation to God *in* God, his account of deification is not particularly robust. Yet if this criticism of Schleiermacher were accepted, it has much broader implications, raising the question of whether one can really say that the incarnation is merely a fitting mode of deification. Might incarnation, the means by which we come to share in the Son's stance towards the Father, be strictly necessary for this intense form of deification grounded in God himself, such that a 'supralapsarian' style Christology is required if God has willed this superlative consummation? At this stage, I leave these questions open.

A second set of questions raised by my account, is whether Schleiermacher's inability (or inability from a certain perceptive at least) to maintain a high Christology points to a sense in which his post-Kantian, anti-metaphysical assumptions are inhospitable to constructive Christology. Schleiermacher, as we have argued, broadly agrees with a Kantian view that the unconditioned absolute cannot be an object in the world, because then it would be susceptible to our counterinfluence (in Kantian terms, it would be subject to the law that every object requires a cause). He also affirms with Kant that effects can never inform us as to the nature of their cause.<sup>102</sup> With these presuppositions in place, it is hard to see how one could ever affirm that Christ is the uncreated God. One cannot posit something in Christ which is 'more than' what he does because this kind of movement is ruled out from the outset. Thus, the sort of argument which thinks Christ must be divine in order to deify will always be deemed ungrounded metaphysical speculation on this actualistic, post-Kantian soil. For Schleiermacher, Christ is *so* identified with his work, that he cannot be anything qualitatively more than his effects. In light of these considerations, I suspect that (*contra* Hector once more) if anthropology and soteriology are not to overwhelm Christology, theology really *cannot* do without metaphysics.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup>Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, 'Consummation Anyway', *Journal of Analytic Theology* 9 (2021), pp. 223–37.

<sup>101</sup>Khaled Anatolios, 'The Immediately Triune God: A Patristic Response to Schleiermacher', *Pro Ecclesia* 10 (2001), pp. 173–4.

<sup>102</sup>*CF* §50.3, p. 285; Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, pp. 23–4.

<sup>103</sup>My thanks to Kevin Hector for his stimulating work.