

Christ Unabridged

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Christ Unabridged

Knowing and Loving the Son of Man

Edited by

George Westhaver
and
Rebekah Vince



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What is Christ's Humanity? Some Nineteenth-century Answers and their Patristic Roots

JOHANNES ZACHHUBER

Introduction

A contribution on nineteenth-century German theology to a volume dedicated to the *totus Christus* may seem problematic from the outset. Often, this theological epoch is thought to have accomplished very nearly the opposite – not representing the ‘whole’ Christ, but a partial Christ, a Christ stripped of his divinity and reduced to a merely human figure, the so-called historical Jesus. No less a person than E. B. Pusey himself led the charge as suggested by the following recollection of his 1825 visit to Göttingen, which was recounted by his biographer as follows:

Here also Pusey used to attend the Lutheran church, and he often would describe one of his experiences at its services. The preacher of the day was a Rationalist, and was engaged in showing – but in language which the educated only would understand – the general untenableness of some portion of the Gospel history. In doing this he had occasion, of course, constantly to mention the Holy Name of Jesus. The church was full of country-people or simple townsfolk, and each time our Lord's Name was mentioned they bowed their heads reverently; ‘evidently making each mention of our Saviour the occasion of an act of devotion to Him.’ Of the drift of the sermon to which they were listening they had no idea; to them it was edifying on account of the frequent mention of our Saviour's Name. Pusey would frequently refer to this when insisting that God overrules human error so completely as, at times, to make the teachers of error the unintentional servants and friends of truths.¹

If in my chapter I shall sound a somewhat dissenting note to this established assessment of theological historiography,² my intention is not to deny that the historicizing tendencies of nineteenth-century German Christology *could* lead to an inadequately reductionist picture of Jesus Christ. Rather than reiterate this well-worn criticism, however, I will focus on the considerable

theological potential in this approach which, I will argue, is by no means as detached from the kind of Christological reflection that has emerged since the Patristic period as is sometimes alleged. Perhaps no Christology will ever represent the ‘whole Christ’; what I hope to show is how an approach to Christology through history, as it was practised by some of the most distinguished nineteenth-century theologians, can contribute an important dimension to our own understanding of the Saviour today.

The first thing to note is the absolute centrality of Christology within a whole strand of nineteenth-century German theology.³ This centrality is as evident in Schleiermacher’s *Christian Faith*⁴ as it is in Isaak August Dorner, whose history of the Christological dogma is arguably one of the most remarkable scholarly products of the entire century and, in a way, unrivalled even in our own time.⁵ Yet Christology was equally important for Dorner’s great rival, F. C. Baur and his Tübingen school, including not least the notorious D. F. Strauß.⁶ It may not be possible to identify one, single factor that could exclusively explain this theological preference for the doctrine of the Incarnation.⁷

A major influence, certainly, was the philosophical interest in the Incarnation that came to the fore in the various facets of the philosophy of German idealism.⁸ What is fascinating to observe here is the intimate link between the acceptance of history as an intellectual paradigm, a historical interpretation of Christianity and a speculative, philosophical interest in Christology as a bridge between the two. This connection is fully in evidence in F. W. J. Schelling’s influential lectures *On Academic Study*.⁹ These lectures were part of a popular genre in German intellectual life of the time, initiated by Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties*, but perpetuated in the early nineteenth century with a particular interest in university reform, which was an urgent task at the time.¹⁰ Like his peers, then, Schelling addressed the traditional faculties seeking to inscribe them into an overall, philosophical framework. One of his arguments for the retention of theology, which other reformers were keen to expunge,¹¹ was its intimate relationship with history:

This is the great historical tendency of Christianity; this is the reason that the science of religion, in Christianity, is inseparable from history – is, indeed, one and the same with it. This synthesis with history, without which theology itself cannot even be conceived, presupposes, on the other hand, the higher Christian view of history.¹²

This statement deserves careful attention. At first sight, one could detect here the kind of reductionist view of Christianity Pusey was so concerned about. Schelling, after all, calls for a purely historical interpretation of the religion. And yet, he only does so because, and insofar as, he believes that the way we understand history is itself fundamentally affected by Christianity. The two, he seems to say, mutually interpret each other – the

purely historical interpretation of Christianity depends on a 'higher' view of history, which itself is only enabled by the Christian tradition.

It becomes clear in what follows, that the conceptual foundation holding these two ideas together is Christology.¹³ For Schelling, this doctrine expresses and embodies the idea of an ultimate coming together of God and world, the infinite and the finite in a way that preserves both and does justice to both. This, obviously, is a 'philosophical Christology', not a theological one; Schelling appropriates Christian ideas without committing to their doctrinal truth claims. All the more remarkable is that his interpretation of the person of Jesus Christ fastens on the concept of Incarnation – unlike most eighteenth-century and twentieth-century liberal attempts, which usually appropriated Christology on the basis of Christ as a moral exemplar.¹⁴

Let us now look at the other aspect of Schelling's claim: What is the 'higher Christian view of history'? What is this novel understanding of history and why does it matter? We need to take a step back here and consider briefly the significance of the emergence of early historicism at the turn of the nineteenth century.¹⁵ This movement encompassed much more than the amassing of an unprecedented amount of historical knowledge and historical scholarship (although this played its part). Equally important for it was the idea that having a history and being part of a historical process was a fundamental dimension of human nature, perhaps the most fundamental dimension. This basic assumption did not only underwrite an extensive agenda of historical research but motivated as well profound reflections on the character and the meaning of history. How can history be understood in such a way as to facilitate a better grasp of what human beings are? If it was characteristic for this early phase of historicism, which extended throughout much of the former half of the nineteenth century, that this latter question, which was philosophical, and the actual exploration of historical knowledge went hand in hand, it was equally characteristic of that time, as we have already seen in the case of Schelling's lectures *On Academic Study*, that this historico-philosophical reflection was inscribed into a theological framework.¹⁶ And the key to achieving this end was Christology, more specifically the concept of the Incarnation. Historical, philosophical and theological concerns were thus constantly blended together and conceived in their interdependence.

At the risk of simplifying things a little, one can distinguish two different approaches that were taken by early historicist thinkers to understand history and, through it, unlock the mystery of the human being. One of them conceived of history essentially as a process: here the art of the historian was to piece together the disjointed facts scattered across a variety of documents or sources into a single narrative. 'History' ultimately was this narrative, and if history had meaning, this meaning resided in this story. History was therefore by necessity supra-individual even though it could not exist without the active participation of individual agents. The danger for the historian was not to see the forest for the trees, to get distracted by

the plurality and heterogeneity of individual events and occurrences and overlook the bigger trends, patterns and developments.

The alternative approach started from starkly reversed assumptions. Here, the essence of history was the perception and understanding of individuals. The art of the historian, from this perspective, was to study and describe people, events and cultural formations on their own terms. The implication of this imperative was a critique of the tendency to apply cultural universals without proper regard for the individual case, to deduce from general assumptions what must be the case in a particular situation, or to judge any part of history by a standard that was taken from a different context.

Both approaches would claim that they used history to elucidate what it meant to be a human self. The former – let us call it history as process – emphasized the need to place the self in continuity with the bigger picture, as part of traditions and long-term developments and indeed, in important ways, as their results. The latter – let us call this history as individuality – would make us aware that in all this flow and flux we are nonetheless not merely a drop of water in an ocean but discrete, individual people with our own moral choices and personal identity distinguishing us from other individuals who have existed in the past and exist with us in the present.

Christology and history: Schelling

These two ways of thinking about history and about human historicity obviously have wide-ranging consequences for the way historical research is conducted, but I cannot pursue this question here. More pertinent for my chapter is another question. Given the way Christology was connected with the problems of early historicism, how did these different approaches affect Christological reflection?

Let us begin with the view of history as process. Here we have to return one more time to Schelling's lectures *On Academic Study*. In this text, the Incarnation underwrites the idea of the unity of all history. The philosophically valuable idea to be gained from the Christian doctrinal tradition was that God became incarnate in history; but this did emphatically not mean, for Schelling, that God became human for about 30 years at the beginning of the common era. Rather, it signified the more universal process by which God and world become one. The 'eternal Son of God', according to Schelling, is 'the finite itself'.¹⁷

History was, on the one hand, crucial for understanding this process because it participates both in the natural order of causality and in the spiritual order of freedom.¹⁸ History is where the two meet; for this reason, historical study has in and of itself a theological dimension. On the other hand, however, theological, Christological reflection is oriented towards history in order to come to its fulfilment:

The highest religious feeling, expressed in Christian mysticism, holds the secret of Nature and the Incarnation of God for one and the same.¹⁹

Historical study, philosophical reflection on history and Christology are thus closely tied together. The foundation of their unity is the notion of history as process. Therefore, the human nature of the incarnate Christ is universal and ultimately cosmic. Schelling is clearly harking back to some of the earliest Patristic Christologies with roots in the biblical testimony itself.²⁰ Yet the consequence for him is that the historical individuality of the Saviour becomes impossible to conceptualize. Christ is no longer an individual, historical person but the principle of the union of the infinite and the finite.

F. C. Baur: historicist theology

Schelling's line of argument was taken over by F. C. Baur (1792–1860) who from the mid-1820s became the most prominent – albeit controversial – historical theologian in Germany.²¹ He put his cards on the table in this regard in the preface to his first, major monograph published in 1824. All historical investigation, he argued there, must ultimately choose between one of two approaches:

. . . either that of separation and isolation, which, consistently pursued, necessarily leads to atomism, fatalism and atheism, or that on which dawns a purer and higher consciousness of the divine to the degree to which the spiritual life of the peoples is recognised in its great interconnectedness as a great whole, thus leading to an ever more sublime idea of the divine. . . . I am not scared of the well-worn charge of mixing philosophy and history. Without philosophy, history for me remains forever dead and dumb.²²

This principle, and in particular the role of Christology for it, was then worked out subsequently throughout the 1830s and early 1840s in three major monographs: *Christian Gnosis or the Christian Philosophy of Religion in its Historical Development* (1835); *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (1838); and *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation of God* (3 vols, 1841/42).²³

Baur's fundamental insight is that the unique characteristic of Christian theology is its relation both to philosophy and to history. Christianity both enables and necessitates a philosophical interpretation of history and a historical interpretation of religion, the latter culminating in Christianity. Key is the Incarnation: the arc formed by these three major monographs written in the space of just seven years corresponds to this complex argument as Baur moved from an account of 'the Christian philosophy of religion' to the

concept of reconciliation as the heart of soteriology to the twin doctrines of Trinity and Christology as the fully conceptualized outworking of the Christian impulse.

All these monographs are histories; this is not merely due to Baur's own specialization as a historical theologian but reflects his conviction that history is the ultimate medium revealing the full truth of Christian teaching. The truth of Christianity is only fully and truly captured in and through an account of its historical development.²⁴

In the course of discussing these histories, Baur was mindful to emphasize precedents for the position he himself sought to defend. Unsurprisingly perhaps, he explored in some depth Patristic reflection about the humanity of Christ. Textbook descriptions of the emergence of classical Christology may give the impression that the one and only question that had to be resolved during those centuries concerned the precise relationship between humanity and divinity in the person of the Saviour. But while this impression can, perhaps, be gained from an isolated reading of the Chalcedonian formula of faith, any broader survey of Patristic Christologies immediately reveals the centrality of reflections about Christ's humanity as somehow both particular and universal.²⁵

While the Jesus of the Gospels was evidently a historical individual, with his own family, place and time of birth, national and cultural background and so forth, even the earliest Christological reflections interpret this person in the light of collective or corporate personalities:²⁶ he is the suffering servant (Matt. 8.17); he is the true Israel (Matt. 2.15); he is (the second) Adam (1 Cor. 15.45). At least from Irenaeus onwards, this assumption takes centre stage wherever Christological and soteriological reflections overlap. The identity of Christ's and our humanity – expressed through the notion that Christ somehow *is* Adam – explains how the injection of divinity into one individual can have a salvific effect on many (or possibly all²⁷) others.²⁸

Baur reported these Patristic views, which he called 'mystical theory',²⁹ with considerable sympathy – remarkable certainly for those who are familiar with the much more critical evaluation the same Patristic accounts will receive 50 years later in Harnack's *History of Dogma*.³⁰ In his account, Baur referred specifically to Hilary of Poitiers and Cyril of Alexandria,³¹ but it is Gregory of Nyssa whom he followed in his sketch of this type of atonement theory. According to Baur, the mystical theory focused essentially on one insight: through the Incarnation of the Logos a higher, spiritual principle has been imparted to humanity allowing its reintegration into unity with the divine. This idea was encapsulated in Athanasius' celebrated statement that 'Christ had to become man, so we would become gods'.³² Christ, then, is the individual representing humanity. He is a member of the human race, part of the whole, but he also contains within himself the principle dominating the totality of human beings. Baur saw a twofold symmetry at work here:³³ on the one hand, whatever happened to Christ must also happen to everyone else – this is the mechanism by means of which salvation spread

from him to all humankind. Yet at the same time and by the same token, it was equally necessary that everything that was characteristic for humankind had to be found in Christ too. This is why, he suggested, Gregory argued that Christ had to die; in fact, Gregory of Nazianzus even intimated the need for Christ to have assumed sin.³⁴

It is because of this perceived balance between Christ's humanity and ours that Baur found this approach at work in those Fathers for whom, he wrote, the two natures in Christ formed a particularly close and organic relationship; their distinction was not emphasized to the detriment of their actual union.³⁵

Interestingly, Baur denied that this Patristic approach neglected the subjective side of the atonement. It was true that Christ is redeemer, initially, by representing within himself the process of an ever-increasing domination of the lower, material principle through the higher, spiritual one. This did not, however, preclude the subjective aspect, according to Baur, because the individual appropriation of the renewed unity of divine and human had to happen within each individual's consciousness. This was the case, he maintained, even though the Church Fathers tended to emphasize the 'objective' aspect of the union of divine and human, which they, rightly, saw as the basis without which the subjective appropriation would be impossible.³⁶

Baur did certainly not identify his own solution to the Christological problem with the views of these Fathers. Yet he was clearly keen to stress the link between their position and his own one. His reason for emphasizing this connection appears rather obvious: what he found prefigured there was an understanding that, due to a clear sense of the unity of the divine and human in Christ, his humanity became associated with ours in a particular way. Christology is thus key to an understanding of our humanity, while the latter task required the integration of what was particular and individual into the overarching solidarity and cohesion of the race.

The main step Baur felt he was taking beyond those Fathers was to inscribe this view of Christ's humanity into a historical paradigm as a particularly suitable intellectual frame for understanding how human individuality was connected with humanity as a whole.³⁷ Ultimately, however, this link was somewhat one-sided and Baur, as Schelling before him, understood the subject of God's Incarnation as collective, not individual. The Incarnation, according to Baur, was fully understood when leaving behind the identification of the human being assumed by the Logos with the particular individual, Jesus of Nazareth, in favour of its dissolution into the historical succession of individual persons.

This Christological position is more commonly associated with Baur's student David Friedrich Strauß who saw in the identification of Christ's humanity with humanity as a whole the only viable solution of the Christological dilemma, as he called it.³⁸ But in some ways, it is more instructive to study it in Baur because we can there perceive much more clearly how this Christological view is aligned with a particular understanding of

history. Throughout his entire career, Baur was committed as a historical theologian to the ideal of history as a total process. In his view, failure to perceive universal coherence would result in ‘fatalism, atomism, and atheism’.³⁹ This understanding of history as process shaped his approach to Christology. In the doctrine of the Incarnation, he hoped to find a solution to this very problem: unity over division; coherence over isolation; continuity of tradition over rupture from it.

Isaak August Dorner: history as individuality

If such an emphasis on history as process could jettison Christ’s human individuality and historical particularity, does this indicate a fundamental flaw in the underlying understanding of history as process?

This was certainly the view of Baur’s great younger colleague, rival and opponent, Isaak August Dorner (1809–1884). Dorner’s masterpiece, a full account of the doctrine of Christology (*History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*), was in many ways prompted by concerns arising from the kind of Christology emerging from the thought of Baur and Strauß. Against them, Dorner sought to establish the significance of Christ’s Incarnation as a unique historical event and this as the basis for the Church’s Christological reflection. Thus far, one can see in Dorner a defender of Christological ‘orthodoxy’. Yet it would be utterly mistaken to ignore his own involvement in the historicist movement of the time. In many ways, he represents what I called earlier the second main strand of early historicism for which history was only worth its salt if it focused on the individual. As we shall see, Dorner was, in his own way, as much interested in Patristic speculations about Christ and Adam as Baur had been.

If Baur’s understanding of history as process could be traced back to Schelling’s lectures *On Academic Study*, Dorner’s view of the relationship between history and Christology ultimately derived from Friedrich Schleiermacher’s *Christian Faith*.⁴⁰ This influential theological text contained its own reflection about history and individuality as the foundation of Christian theology. In a way reminiscent perhaps of Robert Jenson’s argument in the late twentieth century,⁴¹ Schleiermacher prescribed to the Christian theologian a form of reflection willing to embrace historical particularity: the origin of Christianity in the first century, the particular person of Jesus, the received forms in which Christian thought has been expressed and so forth. None of that, he suggested, could be philosophically deduced from some sort of universal truth but had *prima facie* to be accepted as historically contingent facts.⁴² This endorsement of individuality and particularity is, however, justified in a thoroughly and fascinatingly philosophical reflection on history.

Schleiermacher did not deny that history was, in some sense, a continuous, evolutionary process. Yet while for Baur this insight was the result of

a philosophical reflection on history, for Schleiermacher it was an almost trivial starting point: it was, we might say, history considered merely as a fact of nature. By contrast, it was the identification of discrete individuals in this continuous stream which, according to Schleiermacher, required historical and philosophical ingenuity. In order to explain that, he presented an intriguing model of the historicity of human nature:

The origin of every human life may be regarded in a twofold manner, as issuing from the narrow circle of descent and society to which it immediately belongs, and as an act (*Tatsache*) of human nature in general.⁴³

Human individuals, Schleiermacher suggests here, can and must be understood in two ways: in terms of their 'physical' continuity and in terms of discrete individuality. Only this dual perspective maintains their continuity with humankind as well as their individuality and originality; their shared identity with their fellow humans as much as their difference from them.

Individuals are, therefore, part of nature, but they are more than just elements of this reality. They represent, we might say, quanta of energy, flashes of activity inserted into otherwise inert nature. Their very individuality is thus the heartbeat of nature's life. In and through individuals – albeit certainly not through all of them equally⁴⁴ – new things happen; without them the world could not progress and would thus be unable to approach its future perfection.

While Schleiermacher's view of history does not neglect its unity and coherence, for him the more remarkable fact is the emergence of genuine novelty which is only possible in and through individuality. This individuality, incidentally, is not just limited to human and other particulars but encompasses collective entities too; Schleiermacher's theory thus seeks to account for the emergence of new nations, cultures and not least religions.⁴⁵ A theory of history that is worth its salt, he believed, must be able to explain precisely such new beginnings.

As in Schelling and Baur, Christ's humanity in Schleiermacher is aligned with humanity in its historical extension.⁴⁶ Due to his different conception of history, however, Schleiermacher's Christ did not have to give up on his human individuality in order to be related to all humanity. On the contrary, it was only as an individual that Christ could have had his unique importance for humankind.⁴⁷ He was, so to speak, the strongest bundle of energy, the brightest flash issuing forth from humanity's universal nature. In this way, he is the ideal, paradigmatic human being (*Urbild*) from whom and towards whom all human history is directed.⁴⁸ But he can only exist as such a paradigm insofar as he is also a proper historical individual.

Dorner's approach to Christology was, in many ways, based on Schleiermacher's theory. In his humanity, Dorner suggested, Christ was the 'central individual' of the human race, the culmination of human perfection which, however, as such had to exist as and in one individual:

As a deeper reflection on nature considers the lower stages of existence as disjoint and separate parts of a whole or an Idea, which then recapitulates itself (*sich zusammenfasst*) in the noble, godlike form of humanity, which as such is the head and crown of natural creation: in the same way, humanity must be understood as the disparate plurality of a higher whole, a higher Idea that is, Christ. And as nature could not collect itself into unity merely in the Idea of a man (*in der Idee eines Menschen*) but in real man (*im wirklichen Menschen*), in the same way humanity does not recapitulate itself in a mere Idea, in an ideal Christ, but in the real God-man who as a person represents its totality and recapitulates in himself all the paradigms (*Urbilder*) or ideal personalities of all particular individualities.⁴⁹

This passage is taken from a two-part article containing Dorner's initial intuition about his historical and systematic project. This article, although proposing a sweeping overview of the entire history of Christology was, in reality, strongly tilted towards most recent developments. Moreover, it is evident that Dorner's own solution to the Christological problem – the conception of Christ as the 'central individual' of humanity as expressed in the present text – was developed from a critical study of Kant, Schelling, Hegel and Schleiermacher. By comparison, Dorner's historical understanding was as yet underdeveloped and his sweeping account of the Christological controversies of the early Church, in particular, appears to reflect the study of generic textbooks more than that of original sources.

In 1839, Dorner went on to publish the study in book form, and the considerably enlarged text, printed on over 550 pages, indicates the growth of the historical material he was able to include.⁵⁰ It is at this stage of his work that he evidently became fascinated by the Patristic period as a precursor of his own position. Drawing partly on Baur's *Versöhnungslehre*, published the previous year, Dorner inserts a 30-page account of early Patristic testimonies for an intuited sense of the unity of the divine and human in Christ. In other words, he believes to have detected in early Fathers, from Irenaeus to Gregory of Nyssa, a remarkably 'complete' Christology even though none of them is even familiar with the later, Chalcedonian conception of the hypostatic union of two natures. Dorner explains this fact with the *Totalanschauung* (total intuition)⁵¹ which these early Fathers had of Christ himself and which, incidentally, provides further evidence for his own, theological view of the historical factuality of Christ's existence.⁵²

In the first instance, Dorner cites Irenaeus and his doctrine of recapitulation. Christ, according to Irenaeus, is the second Adam and as such not only the redeemer of humankind but also their true representative. The Incarnation was necessary, Irenaeus argued against the Gnostics, because only in this historical act, the drama of salvation history could come to its conclusion. Dorner writes, 'the Logos is to him [sc. Irenaeus] the paradigm (*Urbild*) of all human beings as well as their creator . . . The Incarnation

is ultimately the full realization of this paradigm (*Urbild*). Thus, the real human being, Jesus Christ, who is himself the realized Logos, participates in that general relationship with universal humankind as well.⁵³

Dorner subsequently discussed Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus, Athanasius,⁵⁴ Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. He summarizes by noting that this 'interesting but insufficiently noted' aspect of Patristic Christology demonstrated how 'not merely one or another, but the most respected teachers of the Church' are of the same mind in this regard: Christ did not only have the limited significance of any other human being, but 'his Person stands in an essential relationship with the race as a whole'.⁵⁵ While this view took different forms in its detail, Dorner argued, there can be no doubt the Church on this point simply stayed close to the faith of the apostles.⁵⁶

Towards the end of his book, Dorner engaged with F. C. Baur's conception in a lengthy footnote. In his *Versöhnungslehre*, Baur, then Dorner's senior colleague at Tübingen, had included a rebuttal of the theory of Christ as the 'central individual' as contained in Dorner's original article.⁵⁷ In response, Dorner points out, in words that are strikingly similar to those he chose in summarizing the views of the early Fathers, that his concept 'cannot merely be considered the idea of one or another person but, as we have seen, persists in different forms throughout all centuries seeking to attach itself, with more or less success, to almost every form of Christology'.⁵⁸

By comparison with Baur let alone Schelling, Dorner easily appears as the more traditional proponent of an orthodox Christology. Yet while such an impression certainly corresponds to his own intention, it would be a mistake to ignore that his own views took shape under precisely the same intellectual influences that formed the thought of his contemporaries and rivals and that have been laid out at the outset of my chapter. In other words, Dorner's Christology is, once again, developed against the backdrop of the early historicism with its close ties to the philosophies of German idealism. Consequently, he too sought to inscribe the doctrine into a paradigm in which history had become the medium in and through which the deepest truths about humanity were expected to emerge.

Yet this very modern turn to history necessarily involved close engagement with older, theological texts, and in this process the resources of Patristic thought had the opportunity to prove their enduring topicality. And thus, as much as Baur discovered in the Fathers his own views of Christ's humanity as ultimately transcending that of an individual, Dorner was able to find there the thought of Christ's humanity as representing all human beings in and through his personality.

Conclusion

To conclude, I propose to take a step back from the details of these historical figures and their Christological research in order to get a clearer sense of

how these various Christological reflections that have been discussed in the foregoing contribute to the ‘whole Christ’.

First, Christology and human identity: Christology, I have argued, is more than the problem of how a unity of human and divine natures can be conceptualized. In many ways, the person of Jesus Christ is the key to an understanding of ourselves, and Christology rightly conceived is therefore closely related to the problem of human identity. Christology has often been perceived as a particularly abstract and scholastic doctrine. Inscribing it into human historicity, as has been done by nineteenth-century German theologians, has the potential to connect it directly with some of the deepest intellectual and spiritual questions human beings are asking about themselves.

Second, an important dimension of this problem is the relationship between our individuality and our integration into larger communities and groups. As we have seen, this problem loomed large among nineteenth-century thinkers. Whether we observe this tension in a historicist key, as they mostly did, or whether we apply sociological, political or cultural analyses, there is no doubt about its enduring significance. Baur and Dorner rightly (re-)discovered that these questions were central for Patristic Christologies. This insight remains important today.

Third, as we have seen, the concept of history is ambiguous insofar as it can be focused on a process or development but also on the individuals making up this process. The comparison between Schelling and Baur on the one hand, and Schleiermacher and Dorner on the other has shown that the difficulty to fine-tune the relationship between these two is ultimately similar to the equally difficult balance between Christ’s universal and his particular human nature about which there was much debate in the first millennium.⁵⁹ This points to the approximate character of Christology, the need to treat the quest for the ‘whole Christ’ as an open-ended reflection on the one person that stands at the very centre of the Christian faith rather than a doctrine that has, at some point, once and for all been settled.

Notes

¹ Henry Parry Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, ed. by J. O. Johnston and Robert J. Wilson, 4 vols, 4th edn (London: Longmans, 1894), vol. 1, pp. 77–8.

² The charge was originally led by Martin Kähler, *The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ*, trans. by Carl Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964). It was subsequently central to the position of Karl Barth and his school. Cf. for a British view: Leighton Pullan, *Religion Since the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), pp. 188–91. The most comprehensive account in English remains Alister McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology: 1750–1990*, 2nd edn (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005).

3 Robert Morgan, 'Christ', in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, ed. by Joel Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe and Johannes Zachhuber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 591–609.

4 Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (London: T & T Clark, 1999). Even Karl Barth conceded that Schleiermacher 'wished' to be 'a Christocentric theologian'. See Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background and History*, trans. by Brian Cozens/John Bowden, new edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 418.

5 Isaak August Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die neuesten* (Stuttgart: Liesching, 1839); 2nd edn, 2 vols (1845–53). ET: *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, 5 vols (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1880–97). Unless otherwise indicated, references will be to the first edition.

6 David Friedrich Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*, 2 vols (Tübingen: Osiander, 1835–36), ET: *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, 3 vols, trans. from the 4th edition by Marian Evans (London: Chapman, 1846); Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und Menschwerdung Gottes in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 3 vols (Tübingen: Fues, 1841–43).

7 In my view, one should not, for example, underestimate the continuing influence of the classical authors of Lutheran orthodoxy for whose emergence from the mid-sixteenth century Christology had been absolutely central. Cf. Richard Schröder, *Johann Gerhards lutherische Christologie und die aristotelische Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983).

8 Hans Küng, *The Incarnation of God: An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology*, trans. by John R. Stephenson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987).

9 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (1803), in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Karl Friedrich August Schelling, vol. I/5 (Stuttgart/Augsburg: Cotta, 1859), pp. 207–35. ET: *Lectures on Academic Study*, trans. by Ella S. Morgan, in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 11 (1877), pp. 92–100, 160–77, 225–44, 363–70; 12 (1878), pp. 205–13; 13 (1879), pp. 190–8, 310–19; 14 (1880), 145–53; 15 (1881), 1–8, 152–8.

10 Cf. Zack Purvis, *Theology and the University in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 86–102.

11 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 'Deduzierter Plan einer zu Berlin zu errichtenden höhern Lehranstalt', in *Die Idee der deutschen Universität: Die fünf Grundschriften aus der Zeit ihrer Neubegründung durch klassischen Idealismus und romantischen Realismus*, ed. by Ernst Anrich (Darmstadt: WBG, 1956), esp. pp. 154–5, 161–2; cf. Johannes Zachhuber, 'Wissenschaft', in *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought*, ed. by Nicholas Adams, George Pattison and Graham Ward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 479–98 (pp. 484–5).

12 Schelling, *Vorlesungen*, p. 291; ET: p. 209.

13 Cf. Christian Danz, *Die philosophische Christologie F. W. J. Schellings* (Stuttgart/Bad Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1996).

14 This was, for example, Kant's view: cf. Manfred Kuehn, 'Kant's Jesus', in *Kant's Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Gordon E. Michalson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 156–

74. Cf. also, for example, Don Cupitt, *Jesus and Philosophy* (London: SCM Press, 2009).

15 Cf. Johannes Zachhuber, 'The Historical Turn', in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, ed. by Joel Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe and Johannes Zachhuber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 53–71.

16 Cf. Johannes Zachhuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth-Century Germany: From F.C. Baur to Ernst Troeltsch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 4–12.

17 Schelling, *Vorlesungen*, p. 294; ET: p. 213.

18 *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (1800), in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. by Karl Friedrich August Schelling, Vol. 1/3 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1858), pp. 327–634 (p. 593). ET: *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. by Peter Heath (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1978), p. 203.

19 Schelling, *Vorlesungen*, p. 290; ET: p. 209.

20 Cf. Matthew Craig Steenberg, *Irenaeus on Creation: The Cosmic Christ and the Drama of Redemption* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

21 On Baur cf. Peter C. Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology: A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur* (New York: Harper, 1968); Horton Harris, *The Tübingen School* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

22 Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Symbolik und Mythologie oder die Naturreligion des Alterthums*, 2 vols (vol. 2 in 2 parts) (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1824–25), p. xi.

23 Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die christliche Gnosis oder die christliche Religions-Philosophie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Tübingen: Fues, 1835); *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung von der ältesten Zeit bis auf die neueste* (Tübingen: Fues, 1838); *Die christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit und der Menschwerdung Gottes in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 3 vols (Tübingen: Fues, 1841–3).

24 Zachhuber, *Theology as Science*, pp. 47–48.

25 Cf. for what follows: Johannes Zachhuber, 'L'individualité de l'humanité de Jésus Christ selon quelques Pères de l'Église', *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 90 (2016), pp. 35–50.

26 C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

27 Gregory of Nyssa used this logic to argue for universalism: Morwenna Ludlow, *Universal Salvation: Eschatology in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa and Karl Rahner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 89–95.

28 Cf., for example, Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 101–8.

29 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, p. 118. This is a reference to Schleiermacher who used this term to designate his own, preferred understanding of salvation: *Christian Faith* §100, pp. 428–9; Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, p. 618.

30 Adolf Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. from the 3rd German edition by Neil Buchanan et al. (New York: Dover, 1958), vol. 3, p. 297 and n. 580.

31 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, pp. 116–17, n. 1.

32 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, pp. 112–16.

33 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, pp. 111. Cf. Athanasius, *de incarnatione* 54,3.

34 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, p. 114. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, or 30, 5,6–9.

35 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, p. 111.

36 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, p. 118.

- 37 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, pp. 729–37.
- 38 Strauss, *Life of Jesus*, p. 895.
- 39 Baur, *Symbolik*, p. xi.
- 40 Dorner's attachment to Schleiermacher can be seen from the order in which he discussed the most recent thinkers in his historical account of Christology: Schelling, Hegel, Schleiermacher (*Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 340–529). For Baur, by contrast, the order was inevitably Schelling, Schleiermacher, Hegel (for example, *Gnosis*, pp. 611–735). While Dorner would critique Schleiermacher (pp. 509–27), there is no doubt that he felt his own position followed naturally from that of the author of the *Glaubenslehre*.
- 41 Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1: *The Triune God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 47.
- 42 Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith* § 19.4, pp. 91–2.
- 43 Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith* § 94.3, p. 388.
- 44 For Schleiermacher's view of great people or 'heroes' as those 'who in any respect give character to an age or a district', cf. Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith* § 94.1, p. 386.
- 45 Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith* § 94.1, p. 386.
- 46 On Schleiermacher's Christology cf. Jacqueline Mariña, 'Schleiermacher's Christology Revisited. A Reply to his Critics', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 49 (1996), pp. 177–200; Jacqueline Mariña, 'Christology and Anthropology in Schleiermacher', in *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*, ed. by Jacqueline Mariña (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 151–70; Ralph Del Colle, 'Schleiermacher and Spirit Christology. Unexplored Horizons of *The Christian Faith*', *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, 1 (1999), pp. 286–307; Lori Pearson, 'Schleiermacher and the Christologies behind Chalcedon', *Harvard Theological Review*, 96 (2003), pp. 349–67.
- 47 Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith* § 93, p. 377.
- 48 Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith* § 93, p. 377.
- 49 Isaak August Dorner, 'Über die Entwicklungsgeschichte der Christologie, besonders in den neueren Zeiten', *Tübinger Theologische Zeitschrift* (1835), pp. 4, 81–204; (1836), pp. 1, 96–240 (p. 239).
- 50 From 1845, he published a much enlarged, second edition which was to become the classical version: see n. 5 above.
- 51 Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, p. 52.
- 52 Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, p. 28.
- 53 Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, p. 61.
- 54 Relying for Athanasius, interestingly, on Johann Adam Möhler, *Athanasius der Grosse und die Kirche seiner Zeit, besonders im Kampfe mit dem Arianismus*, 2 vols (Mainz: Kupferberg, 1827): Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, p. 70.
- 55 Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, pp. 77–8.
- 56 Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, p. 79.
- 57 Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, pp. 729–33.
- 58 Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, p. 370.
- 59 Zachhuber, 'L'individualité'.