

PETR GALLUS

# The Perspective of Resurrection

*Religion in  
Philosophy and Theology*  
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**Mohr Siebeck**

# Religion in Philosophy and Theology

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Petr Gallus

# The Perspective of Resurrection

A Trinitarian Christology

Mohr Siebeck

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ISBN 978-3-16-160109-5 / eISBN 978-3-16-160110-1

DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-160110-1

ISSN 1616-346X / eISSN 2568-7425 (Religion in Philosophy and Theology)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book printed by Laupp & Göbel in Gomaringen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Nädele in Nehren.

Printed in Germany.

## Preface

In 1993, John Hick stated that there is an “intense flurry” of christological discussions on the significance of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Ten years later, Markus Buntfuß notices in his habilitation lecture on Christology that there had been over 500 books on Christology in the last ten years.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, the situation has been noticeably different. While there is a lively christological discussion in catholic theology, the protestant production counts only a few items.

Therefore, I hope to fill a certain gap with this study. From my perspective of a continental protestant theologian, I try to present my own conception of Christology in its whole extent and in an intense discussion with different theological traditions of old as well as from today. Among my main discussion partners are traditional and liberal protestant theologians, catholic theologians of various directions, and also the eastern orthodox tradition. Although I am following up many important ideas from the riches of the theological tradition with thankfulness and profit, in the end, I try to elaborate an original outline of a contemporary Christology, which could stand the challenge of the current postmodern situation. The following study is thus primarily *systematical*, not historical or biblical. I try to identify the important pieces of biblical and historical theological tradition and rearrange it. In addition to some original ideas and new accents, I reimagine some traditional accents in order to put together a new picture, which critically deals with the tradition in a way that keeps and maintains the fundamentals of Christian faith and, at the same time, provides a reasonable theological stance for our current time.

This may result into a critique from both sides: for the rather conservative ones, it may be too little conservative and traditional; for the rather liberal ones, it may be still too conservative and traditional and too little progressive.

Every time I took into my hands the next book on Christology that I have not read yet, I realized, how much I am still at the beginning. Nevertheless, I hope to contribute at least a little to the discussion, being continually aware

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<sup>1</sup> J. HICK, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>2</sup> M. BUNTFÜß, “Verlust der Mitte oder Neuzentrierung? Neuere Wege in der Christologie”, *NZStH* 46 (2004), 348.

and awaiting the legitimate critique of what I have omitted and not mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

I cannot name all to whom I would like to express my gratitude and thankfulness for inspiring and critical questions and remarks on my thoughts. Substitutionally for all, I want to thank: my students and colleagues in Prague, esp. to those from the graduates-seminar in philosophy led by Prof. Dr. Lenka Karfíková; Prof. Dr. Malte D. Krüger and his students in Marburg, to whom I could repeatedly present my ideas; the publishing house Mohr Siebeck, in particular Tobias Stähler and Matthias Spitzner, for editorial assistance and publishing my text as a nice book; Dr. Raymond E. Perrier, who did the proofreading – without him, my text would be far from being an English text. What is left, is my “Czenglish”.<sup>4</sup>

And last but not least, I want to thank Prof. Dr. Ingolf U. Dalferth, dr.h.c., who helped me in many respects – my thanks to him concern not only the possibility of publishing this study in the RPT-Series, but they go beyond what he himself may guess.

This text is a result of the grant project Nr. 18-00355S “Humanity of God as God’s Accommodation to the World” provided by the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR).

Prague, in March 2021

Petr Gallus

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<sup>3</sup> What I did not manage to read anymore, was, in the first place, the newest handbook of Christology by H. ASSEL, *Elementare Christologie*, 3 vols (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> If not quoted from an English source, all translations into English are mine.

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## List of Abbreviations

AAS	Acta apostolicae sedis
ACO	Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum
BHTh	Beiträge zur Historischen Theologie (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck)
BSLK	Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche
BThSt	Biblisich-Theologische Studien
Cath(M)	<i>Catholica</i> (Münster: Aschendorf-Verlag)
DBWE	Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works [English]
DH	<i>Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals</i> , ed. H. DENZINGER and P. HÜNERMANN
DoMo	Dogmatik in der Moderne (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck)
FC SD	Formula concordiae, Solida declaratio
HThK AT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg: Herder)
HUTH	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck)
KD	K. BARTH, <i>Die kirchliche Dogmatik</i> , 14 vols, Zürich: TVZ, 1932–1967
KGA	F.D.E. SCHLEIERMACHER, <i>Kritische Gesamtausgabe</i> , 18 vols, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972–
LPhR	G.W.F. HEGEL, <i>Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion</i> , 3 vols
LThK	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i> , 11 vols, 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. W. KASPER, Freiburg: Herder, 1993–2001
MJTh	<i>Marburger Jahrbuch Theologie</i> (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt)
NZSTh(R)	<i>Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie (und Religionsphilosophie)</i> (Berlin: De Gruyter)
QD	<i>Quaestiones Disputatae</i> (Freiburg: Herder)
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca</i> , 166 vols., ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris, 1857–1866
PL	<i>Patrologiae latinae cursus completus</i> , 221 vols., ed. J.P. MIGNE, Paris, 1844–1864
RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> , 9 vols, 4 <sup>th</sup> ed., ed. H.D. BETZ et al., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–2005
RPP	<i>Religion in Past and Present</i> , 14 vols, ed. H.D. BETZ et al., Leuven: Brill, 2006–2013
RPT	Religion in Philosophy and Theology (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck)
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
STh	THOMAS OF AQUIN, <i>Summa theologiae</i> , 4 vols
TBT	Theologische Bibliothek Töpelmann (Berlin: De Gruyter)
ThLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i> (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt)
ThWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> , 10 vols, ed. G. KITTEL, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933–1979
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> , 36 vols, ed. G. MÜLLER et al., Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993–2006

VChS	Vigiliae Christianae Supplementa (Leiden: Brill)
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WA	“Weimarer Ausgabe”: <i>D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe</i> , 121 vols, Weimar 1883–2009
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck)
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i> (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck)

## Part One





## Chapter 1

# Christology as the Centre of Theology

## 1. Christology as the Base for the Twofold Focus of Theology

### 1.1. *Divinity and Humanity*

Theology is the rational and critical reflection of the Christian speech of God, which tries, at the same time, to think it out to the end.<sup>1</sup> The Christian speech of God is an expression of the Christian life of faith. Faith understands itself as a life *coram Deo*, in a world where God is present and active. Christian faith counts on God because, in its self-understanding, faith can only emerge when God meets human. This presupposes that God and human *can* meet. Moreover, in the search for to what extent God and human can meet, at least from the perspective of Christian faith, it comes to the fundamental and grounding insight that God and human *did* already meet in a decisive way. The fundamental and unique point of intersection between divine and human for Christian faith and, hence, also for theological reflection is the person of Jesus Christ. In him, following the intuition of the traditional Chalcedonian Christology, true divinity meets true humanity, unconfused and undivided at the same time. In him, in his person, God did not only *meet* human, but, as the tradition states, God *was* this human. This is the basic fact and notion for

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<sup>1</sup> Theology in my view is, therefore, not only the “grammar of the Christian life of faith” (cf. I.U. DALFERTH, *Jenseits von Mythos und Logos. Die christologische Transformation der Theologie*, QD 142 [Freiburg: Herder, 1993], 216–313; IDEM, *Crucified and Resurrected: Restructuring the Grammar of Christology*, trans. J. BENETT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015], xxi; H.-P. GROSSHANS, *Theologischer Realismus. Ein sprachphilosophischer Beitrag zu einer theologischen Sprachlehre*, HUTH 34 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996], 233), but it tries also to critically formulate the contents of faith in their ontological relation to reality. Thus far, theology as a function of faith itself presupposes that faith has an internal rationality based on an analogical structure of reality. It is this internal rationality of faith, which theology tries to disclose and reconstruct critically. This means that this reconstruction can get into a tension with the actual praxis of faith. Theology, therefore, can (and should) serve as its critical, although theoretical, pendant. It can (and should) permanently accompany faith because theology as the critical and rational reflection of faith lies on another level than the lived faith. Concerning the relationship of theology and faith cf. P. GALLUS, “Theologie – eine Glaubenswissenschaft?“, in *Die Rolle der Theologie in Universität, Gesellschaft und Kirche*, VWGTh 36, ed. J. SCHRÖTER (Leipzig: EVA, 2012), 55–67.

the Christian faith as well as for the Christian theology and, at the same time, a point, which needs further explanation and consideration.

This is exactly what I intend to do in the following text. Regarding the theological structure this implies that Christology as the theological reflection of the person of Jesus Christ lies on the point of intersection between the doctrine of God and of anthropology. Hence, it has from the very beginning a twofold focus: God and human. And, moreover, both in mutual relation. Which means, considering the factual unity of the person of Jesus Christ, that both divinity and humanity have to be thought in a mutually *positive* relation.<sup>2</sup>

With this setting, Christology has to fulfill two fundamental goals: First, it should show how to think of *the person of Jesus Christ and of his impact* and effect (the tradition called this the “person and work of Jesus Christ”, or Christology and soteriology). I will try to maintain that if the divinity of Jesus Christ himself and the outreach and effect of his salvation should not be diminished, this cannot be done without trinitarian background. The result should then be a *trinitarian Christology*. At the same time, I will argue that the most appropriate starting point and leading perspective for this goal is *the perspective of resurrection*, which binds together Christology and soteriology as well as the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

And second, because the person of Jesus Christ stands for the fundamental point of intersection between divinity and humanity, this christological concept could become a *theological foundation for all divine-human relations* as they emerge in the perspective of the first (creation) or the third article (justification, church, Christian life). In other words, such trinitarian Christology could prove to be an appropriate foundation for a pneumatological anthropology in the wider context of the doctrine of creation.<sup>3</sup> This twofold goal with all its presuppositions, consequences and context is the main objective to be elaborated in detail and argued for in this study.

### 1.2. Liberal Theology: An Opposite Conception?

In my view, Christology due to the unique unity of divinity and humanity is the very *centre of theology*, just as the confession of Jesus Christ is the very core of the Christian faith. With this thesis, hence, I start with the centre and

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<sup>2</sup> I.e., not diminishing or even excluding one another, as it was the case often in the history of Christology. See below, Ch. 3.

<sup>3</sup> A second volume following this study should be therefore a pneumatological anthropology where I intend to develop more the particular thesis that all acting of God in the world proceeds always according to its christological foundation. God enters the created categories in whose he remains unconfused and from whose he remains undivided and in this way, he can employ his full divinity with full respect to the creation and its finite forms.

in the centre of theology. Therefore, some clarifications of my fundamental presuppositions and of principal decisions are necessary. For to start theologically with Christology is no self-evident step; it needs some justification. Of course, there are alternative ways. One could develop the whole theology from the perspective of the first article as theology of creation (or even solely from a theistic point of view following classical theism), or from the perspective of the third article following God's presence in the world in the Spirit.

The most opposite alternative to trinitarian concepts though – at least as it is traditionally put and although being differentiated into a variety of conceptions – was and is *liberal theology*. Here, the subject of theology is not God and human speech about God but the human and one's religion. In the modern history of protestant theology, these two positions – the trinitarian and the liberal – traditionally mark two almost opposite attitudes to theology. Within the history of theological tradition, they both focus on different source-times as the most important measure for all theology. While the trinitarian and revelational theology sees the most important source in the biblical scriptures and in some fundamental texts and theological decisions of the old church as a genuine expressions of the fundamentals of Christian faith, which are, then, critically reflected as the measure for everything else, the liberal tradition recurs back to the Enlightenment, its critique of religion and its anthropological turn, which is, then, the measure for the whole Christian tradition including biblical texts and traditional theological interpretations.<sup>4</sup> And indeed, in particular concepts and in some particular accents, both traditions are in opposition to each other.

Of course, there are many other possibilities for the foundation of theology; and there are also concepts which try to unite the above-mentioned and partly opposite ways of doing theology. Many catholic theologians follow the transcendental starting point of Karl Rahner and, developing it further, they try to show in a kind of philosophical prolegomena, that human in his freedom, in a hidden way, asks the question of God, which is then explicitly answered by the revelation.<sup>5</sup>

On the protestant side, *Wolfhart Pannenberg* came up with a conception, which presupposes that humans are per definitionem religious, God-related beings and God is necessary

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. radically CH. DANZ, *Grundprobleme der Christologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), Vorwort (without pagination): "The European Enlightenment and its reception in Protestant theology have dissolved the traditional old-church Christology." In this perspective, the traditional Christology is considered for "großkirchliche Einheitsphantasien" (A. VON SCHELIHA, "Kyniker, Prophet, Revolutionär oder Sohn Gottes? Die 'dritte Runde' der Frage nach dem historischen Jesus und ihre christologische Bedeutung", *ZNT* 4 [1999], 29), or for "a historically unlikely illusion" (DANZ, *Grundprobleme*, 30).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. K. RAHNER, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. W.V. DYCH (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 31–41; TH. PRÖPPER, *Theologische Anthropologie*, vol. I (Freiburg: Herder, 2012), 488–564; cf. also below. Ch. 3.3. On the protestant side cf. in his specific way P. TILLICH, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1951–1963), vol. I, 62, and vol. II, 13.

for a right human self-understanding. And therefore, God has to prove himself within the process of history as God, as the ultimate truth. Since the history is not over yet, human claims for truth – including the Christian one – can only be particular. Then, “the testing of the [Christian] claim must take the form of a systematic reconstruction of Christian teaching from its starting point in the historical revelation of God which it asserts”, namely “that the God of the Bible will prove himself to be the one God of all people, or has already shown himself to be this one God in Jesus Christ”. Accordingly, in his methodological procedure, Pannenberg switches the view “from the phenomenology of the experiences of revelation which are richly attested in the religious world to the theme of the revelation of the deity of the God of Israel as the one God of all people”, takes this perspective on the scientific level as a hypothesis and tests its plausibility.<sup>6</sup>

The problem of these otherwise highly appreciated approaches is that their alleged pre-theological analysis of human freedom or religiosity is in fact led by a hidden Christian understanding of the general term of religion where basic human phenomena are interpreted as leading to the question or reality of the Christian God. The whole method is hence a hidden *petitio principii*. Moreover, the concept of religion proves to be rather a western construct than a universal concept, which could include all ‘religions’ and ‘religiosity’.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the discussion and the self-reflection within theology go on. Could the liberal theology be defined as “grasping of a transcendent dimension of reality, incited from without”,<sup>8</sup> then both these attitudes and traditions,

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<sup>6</sup> W. PANNENBERG, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, trans. G.W. BROMILEY (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 196; IDEM, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, trans. F. MCDONAGH (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976). Cf. also P. GALLUS, “Mluvit o Bohu v sekulární společnosti podle Wolfharta Pannenberg [How to Speak about God in a Secular Society According to Wolfhart Pannenberg]” in *Proměny marxisticko-křesťanského dialogu v Československu [Transformations of the Marxist-Christian Dialogue in Czechoslovakia]*, ed. I. LANDA and J. MERVART (Praha: Filosofía, 2017), 275–296.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. G.A. LINDBECK, *The Nature of Doctrine. Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, 25<sup>th</sup> ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 26: Regarding the presupposed notion “that there is an inner experience of God common to all human beings and all religions”, it is to say: “There can be no experiential core because [...] the experiences that religions evoke and mold are as varied as the interpretive schemes they embody. Adherents of different religions do not diversely thematize the same experience; rather they have different experiences.” Cf. P.F. KNITTER, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 178–190; and below, Ch. 11. Cf. also the plastic and colorful reproduction of different religious experiences, practices and rituals, which determine the particular everyday life of different religious traditions in N. MACGREGOR, *Living with the Gods. On Beliefs and Peoples* (London: Allen Lane, 2018).

<sup>8</sup> J. LAUSTER, “Liberale Theologie”, *NZSthR* 50 (2007), 295. Unfortunately further on, Lauster conceives religion in a very narrow individualistic sense, located “only subjectively in the human conscience” (297) which is obviously the (only) point of immediacy of the Absolute. But any religious expression, which is always a human work, can never reach to what founds it (*finitum non capax infiniti*) so that the theology remains nothing more than “*docta ignorantia*” (298). Here, theology cannot know what it is related to because every self-expression of a religious individual is insufficient. Theology mutates into anthropology or into a theory of culture because transcendence is paradoxically too far and always abstract and cannot come closer (*infinitum non capax finiti*).

trinitarian theology and liberal theology, could be conceived complementary, as two possible theological ways with different focuses. If the objective of theology is a reality incited from without and somehow experienced by humans, then it is possible or even necessary to raise not only one but rather *two questions*: on one hand the question of this “from without”, on the other the question of the human experience of it. Both these questions are legitimate and it is not possible to reduce theology only to one of them because they both need one another: it is impossible to grasp an external point without an internal reception and it is analogically impossible to speak about a reception if it would not come from an external source.<sup>9</sup>

For this insight that liberal theology would need a bit more of christological foundation and trinitarian theology in the opposite a bit more of dealing with religious experience and the earthly Jesus, *Schleiermacher and his Christology* could be an interesting example, which, at the same time, brings important questions for the position of Christology within the whole of theology. It is well known that Schleiermacher conceives the Christian dogmatics as “accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech”<sup>10</sup>. The main objective of his theology is therefore the piety, that is “a modification of Feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness”,<sup>11</sup> which is, at the same time, the place of immediate God-consciousness.<sup>12</sup> Theology is hence an account of the contents of a pious conscience. Schleiermacher tries to maintain this principle in his Christology as well when he states that Christology expresses “all propositions concerning Christ which are immediate expressions of our Christian self-consciousness”.<sup>13</sup> Yet, in fact, his Christology is divided tradi-

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. W. KASPER, *Jesus the Christ* (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 11–12. And lately D. EVERS, “Combinatory Christology”, *HTS Theologische Studien / Theological Studies* 72 (2016), 2: “Traditionally, there has been a fundamental divide between liberal or expressivist, and conservative or doctrinal Christologies. This debate has reached a kind of stalemate situation: either Jesus is nothing but a human being, a prophet, a teacher, a role model as believer or religious individual, or Jesus Christ is understood as a supernatural divine-human being, the son of God walking on earth. I still think that this difference between liberal and doctrinal Christology is valid, but I am even more convinced that we have to transform this disjunction into a distinction between different aspects of Christology that have to be held together. If we are able to see Christology as an interrelation of different perspectives on Jesus Christ which are not mutually exclusive, this might allow for the diversification into Christologies that differ in foci but can become positively related.”

<sup>10</sup> F.D.E. SCHLEIERMACHER, *The Christian Faith*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1830/31 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), § 15, Thesis, 76.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, § 3, Thesis, 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, § 4, Thesis, 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, § 91.2, 372. Cf. also *ibid.*, § 29.3, 125: “[N]othing concerning Him can be set up as real doctrine unless it is connected with His redeeming causality and can be traced to the original impression made by His existence. Whatever falls outside these limits either must have its proper place elsewhere or can make good its position only in virtue of some

tionally into two parts about the person of Christ and about his work.<sup>14</sup> In the first part, Schleiermacher treats the person of the Redeemer not as a content of human self-conscience but as an external reality, a historical fact, which causes the Christian faith and the believing conscience.<sup>15</sup> “There is no doubt that, for Schleiermacher, the person of Jesus is not a content of conscience.”<sup>16</sup> In this view, Schleiermacher’s Christology is indeed “the great disturbing element” in his doctrine, not allowing it to be a circle with one focus, but Christology, being a second focus, forces his system to be rather “an ellipse with two foci”.<sup>17</sup> The interesting question would be how this notion of the external source of human faith should affect the foundation and the structure of such theology, i.e., what would it mean if Schleiermacher himself would take more seriously his starting point as expressed in the thesis of § 11:

“Christianity is a monotheistic faith, belonging to the teleological type of religion, and is essentially distinguished from other such faiths by the fact that in it everything is related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>18</sup>

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more distant relationship to be demonstrated in a special way.” In his program, Schleiermacher wants obviously to conceive Christology mainly in its soteriological dimension. In his factual procedure, however, provoked by the tradition he criticizes, he deals a lot with the ontology of Christ’s person. Concerning the danger of reducing Christology only to soteriology cf. below, Ch. 3.2.4., fn. 246.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., § 92.2, 376.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., § 14.1, 68.

<sup>16</sup> R. SLENCZKA, *Geschichtlichkeit und Personsein Jesu Christi. Studien zur christologischen Problematik der historischen Jesusfrage* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 210, cf. 209–211. Similarly D. LANGE, *Historischer Jesus oder mythischer Christus* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1975), 141: “[T]he central position of the doctrine of Christ in The Christian Faith is identical not with the position of the exalted one but with the position of the earthly, historical [geschichtlich] Jesus”. Or R. NIEBUHR, *Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion: a New Introduction* (New York: Scribner, 1964), 212 and 220: “[T]he redeemer is the historical person”, therefore the Christian faith and Christology as well are “dependent upon historical fact”.

<sup>17</sup> K. BARTH, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1976), 431–432. Ibid., 464, Barth adds: “[T]he ellipse tends to become a circle, so that its two foci have the tendency to coincide in one centre-point. But at the same time it is unlikely that this centre-point will lie mid-way between the two foci, since the power of attraction of the first focus is from the outset much stronger than that of the second, and since the second, once the circle has been achieved, might perhaps have vanished altogether, having succumbed entirely to the first.” Cf. also NIEBUHR, *Schleiermacher*, 212, who, therefore, calls Schleiermacher’s concept not “Christo-centric” but “Christomorphic”. This – already traditional – critique of Schleiermacher mentions also M. REDEKER, *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought*, trans. J. WELLHAUSER (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 151. Against it J. MARIÑA, “Schleiermacher’s Christology Revisited. A Reply to his Critics”, *SJT* 49 (1996), 177–200.

<sup>18</sup> SCHLEIERMACHER, *The Christian Faith*, § 11, Thesis, 52. Therefore, for Schleiermacher, Christian faith is always christological. However, he refrains from any proof of this

And indeed, in the Second Letter to Lücke, Schleiermacher considers very seriously the possibility that in the second edition, he would start his Christian Faith with the second part, i.e., with Christology:

“Would it not, therefore, have been most natural and orderly for me to begin from this point and to view everything from this perspective, especially since I have so definitely asserted that Christians have their complete consciousness of God only as it is produced in them through Christ? [...] In short, the entire doctrine would have been treated as it is now, but in reverse order.”<sup>19</sup>

It is obvious, anyway, that Schleiermacher knew about the centrality of Christology, although there were other theological centers and foci, which were stronger in the end – in the structure as well as in the material explication.<sup>20</sup> Famous is his wish to arrange his dogmatics so “that at every point the reader would be made aware that the verse John 1:14 is the basic text for all dogmatics, just as it should be for the conduct of the ministry as a whole”.<sup>21</sup>

### 1.3. *Jesus Christ as the Self-Revelation of God*

Although the stress on the historicity of the person of Jesus Christ can look disturbingly in Schleiermacher, it is no wonder in the traditional view. Christology traditionally plays a key role for the question of the external reality and of the external source and foundation of Christian faith. It is the fundamental answer of the Christian tradition to the question of from where the faith comes and where is it anchored.<sup>22</sup> The external anchor and foundation of

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fact appealing simply to the presupposition “that every Christian, before he enters at all upon inquiries of this kind, has already the inward certainty that his religion cannot take any other form than this” (ibid., § 11.5, 60). According to his “Second Letter to Lücke”, in IDEM, *On the Glaubenslehre: Two Letters to Dr. Lücke*, trans. J. DUKE and F. FIORENZA (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 55 (= SCHLEIERMACHER, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Abt. I/10, ed. H.-J. BIRKNER [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990], 338), “every Christian” refers to “every mature Christian who came to clarity”, not to the young people for whom the form of catechism with another set up is appropriate.

<sup>19</sup> SCHLEIERMACHER, *On the Glaubenslehre*, 55–56 (= *KGA* I/10, 338).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. ibid., 68–69 (= *KGA* I/10, 358–359). The centrality of Christology in Schleiermacher’s dogmatics stresses also M. SCHRÖDER, *Die kritische Identität des neuzeitlichen Christentums. Schleiermachers Wesensbestimmung der christlichen Religion*, BHTH 96 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 55–56, but he refuses Barth’s critique of Schleiermacher.

<sup>21</sup> SCHLEIERMACHER, *On the Glaubenslehre*, 59 (= *KGA* I/10, 343). Cf. H. FISCHER, *Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher* (München: C.H. Beck, 2001), 117.

<sup>22</sup> This answer is, however, based also already on faith, it is an answer from within. And there is no other standpoint possible. “There is no way to escape this common argument for turning away from Christian realism to religious idealism”, as EVERS, “Combinatory Christology”, 8, rightly states. It is so because the Christian faith is not a belief among other beliefs of the human life, “but an organizing and orientating principle” of the whole Christian conduct. One who believes cannot answer but from within of his or her faith.



faith, the fundamental external reality for faith is grasped nowhere else than in Jesus Christ as the *revelation of God*.<sup>23</sup> Revelation cannot be understood as revelation of something, of some doctrines, of some fundamental contents of faith or of some holy words or texts, in which one would be required to believe in, as liberal theology rightly and often points out.<sup>24</sup> Faith is not based on accepting something as true but on a new perspective, on a newly understood reality as reality *coram Deo*. Revelation happens when God reveals himself in the conditions of the world as God and humans understand such moments as revelations of God. This means that in the epistemological respect, revelation is basically not a new reality but rather a new perspective and a new dimension of reality, which can be understood not only as it seems to be at first sight but also with more complexity when it is seen from a dif-

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. W. PANNENBERG, “Einführung”, in *Offenbarung als Geschichte*, ed. IDEM (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1961), 8, where Pannenberg states a theological consensus already in the 1960s that “revelation is essentially the self-revelation of God”. Similarly IDEM, *Jesus – God and Man*, trans. L.L. WIKLINS and D.A. PRIEBE (London: SCM Press, 1996), 127. I.U. DALFERTH, “Introduction: Understanding Revelation”, in *Revelation*, Claremont Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, Conference 2012, ed. I.U. DALFERTH and M.CH. RODGERS (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 20–25, shows in detail that this statement – developed originally in Hegel’s philosophy and later in a different way in K. Barth’s theology as “the two most accomplished types of understanding the idea of God’s self-revelation to this day” (ibid., 24) – is still valid, although we live today in a shifted postmodern paradigm of irreducible plurality of particular approaches (cf. below in this chapter, subch. 2). Cf. also DALFERTH, *Crucified and Resurrected*, 172–176; CH. SCHWÖBEL, “Particularity, Universality, and the Religions. Toward a Christian Theology of Religions”, in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered. The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, ed. G. D’COSTA (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990), 34.

<sup>24</sup> However, mostly in order to destroy the traditional concept of revelation entirely. This tendency starts already with H.S. REIMARUS, “Zweites Fragment: Unmöglichkeit einer Offenbarung, die alle Menschen auf eine gegründete Art glauben können”, in G.E. LESSING, *Werke und Briefe*, vol. 8, ed. A. SCHILSON (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker-Verlag, 1989), 189; it is being mentioned by the liberals often in connection with Luther’s attack on *fides historica* (cf. M. LUTHER, “Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen”, in *WA 7* [Weimar: Herrmann Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1897], 29; W. HERRMANN, *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott im Anschluss an Luther dargestellt*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1921], 87). Today cf. e.g. DANZ, *Grundprobleme*, 216 and 193: “Christology based on the theology of revelation as a special dogmatic doctrine is dissolved.” A middle position defends P. SCHMIDT-LEUKEL, *Gott ohne Grenzen. Eine christliche und pluralistische Theologie der Religionen* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005), 212–226, who stresses as well that revelation is not an acceptance of some instructions or informations but rather a matter of communication. In his conception, revelation as the self-revelation of God plays a central role (more to his position see below, Ch. 11.1). In the exact opposite to the claim of protestant liberal theology, catholic theology sees itself to be based on revealed truths, which are defined in dogmas, cf. C.V. POSPÍŠIL, *Ježíš z Nazareta, Pán a Spasitel [Jesus of Nazareth, Lord and Saviour]*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Praha: Krystal, 2002), 30–35.

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