Philosophia (2011) 39:449–460
DOI 10.1007/s11406-011-9311-z

Philosophical Themes in Schleiermacher's Christology

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Received: 30 January 2011 / Accepted: 23 February 2011 /
Published online: 18 March 2011

Abstract Philosophical foundations of Friedrich Schleiermacher's christology are found in his rejection of the likeness theology found in many medieval theologians and in German rationalist philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries such as Leibniz and Kant. Instead, Schleiermacher offers a theology of divine otherness, as an interpretation of religious consciousness as awareness of oneself as "absolutely" (i.e., totally and unconditionally) dependent. On this basis all that we can characterize of that on which we are absolutely dependent (God) is its causality. Hence, Schleiermacher argues, Christian theology must not speak of a "nature" of God, but only of a causality of God, as present in Christ in a special way. It is argued that he identifies this divine causality as love (that is, as a causality tending toward human redemption), and as identical with Christ's human love, on the basis of a teleology known in Christian experience of redemption.

Keywords Activity · Analogy · Attributes of God · Christology · Dependence · Divine causality · Divine otherness · Feeling · God · Likeness theology · Natures · Objectivity · Passivity · Redemption · Religious consciousness · Schleiermacher · Self-consciousness · Simplicity of God · Subjectivity · Teleology · Thomas Aquinas

In their christologies modern Protestant theologians have often played down, or in some cases even repudiated, the more or less metaphysical discussions of the divine and human "natures" of Christ in ancient and medieval Christian theology. For some this has doubtless represented a shift in focus from relatively philosophical considerations to interpretation of a particular history. And christology is a department of Christian theology to which such interpretation has an obvious relevance. It remains the case, nevertheless, that the development of christology in modern Protestant theology has been deeply influenced by views about issues relatively accessible to philosophical speculation and argument. In particular this is true of the strikingly innovative christology of Friedrich Schleiermacher, commonly regarded as the "father" of modern Protestant theology.

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Schleiermacher is one of those who have severely criticized "two natures" formulations in christology. In his christology there is no metaphysics of hypostatic union joining a divine and a human nature. But that is not to say his christological arguments are not philosophical. His explicit reason for objecting to talk of divine and human "natures" in Christ is rooted in issues about divine attributes which formed a central topic of discussion in medieval philosophical theology. He holds that in traditional two natures christology it is an error "that the expression 'nature' is used indifferently for the divine and the human. … For how can divine and human be thus brought together under any single conception, as if they could both be more exact determinations … of one and the same universal?" (CF^2 §96.1, p. 392)[1]

This is an explicit statement regarding the theological problem of attribution. It objects precisely to ascribing an attribute *univocally* (that is, in the same sense, or under the same concept) to God and humans; and Schleiermacher would surely extend what is said about humans here to anything other than God. Probably the most discussed theological alternative to univocal ascription of attributes to God and other things is Thomas Aquinas's theory of *analogical* predication. Schleiermacher does say, in his discussion of christology, that "we arrive at our representations of divine attributes only by analogy," that "all divine attrbutes are derived from human ones" (CF^2 §97.5, pp. 411–412). But he is far, I think, from embracing the metaphysical aspect of Aquinas's theory. I will return to this point, and to Schleiermacher's christology. But first I must put it in context.

Theologies of Likeness and of Otherness

According to Aquinas, some things are rightly said of both God and creatures, not merely homonymously or "equivocally," but "according to analogy, that is proportion." Explaining this, he says, "whatever is said of God and creatures is said inasmuch as there is some ordering of the creature to God." Aquinas characterizes this ordering in terms of two types of relation, causality and similarity. The creature, he says, is ordered to God "as to the source and cause, in which all the perfections of things preexist excellently." The similarity aspect of the ordering is important for Aquinas's account of God's omniscience. He says that God's perfect self-knowledge includes a perfect (or "proper") knowledge of creatures because it includes knowledge of every way in which God's perfection could be shared (imperfectly, of course) by other things, and "the proper nature of everything consists in the way in which it shares the divine perfection."[2] Thus underlying Aquinas's theological thesis of analogical predication is a metaphysical view of the constitutive positive properties, or perfections, of finite things as imperfect *imitations*

[1] CF^2 is the second German edition of F.D.E. Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube* (Berlin, 1830), as represented by Martin Redeker's re-edition of the seventh German edition (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1960). I give page references to the English translation ed. by Mackintosh et al. (1928).

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (= *ST*), I, q. 13, a. 5; q. 14, a. 5–6, 10. Cf. St. Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, Lib. I, dist. 35, art. unicus, qu. 1—in his *Opera omnia*, ed. patres Collegii S. Bonaventura, vol. I (Quaracchi: Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1882), pp. 600–602.

of God's perfection, not similar enough to God's perfection to ground univocal predication of particular attributes, but similar enough to make God's self-knowledge an adequate basis for understanding creatures perfectly.

This metaphysical view, this *likeness theology*, as we might call it, the idea that the very nature of creatures is to be imperfect imitations of God's perfection, is an important Platonistic strand, perhaps even a majority report, in the tradition of philosophical theology in Western thought. It survives in various ways in the philosophical theologies of 17th century Continental Rationalism, and in German philosophical theology from Leibniz to Kant. Leibniz represents it in perhaps its starkest form. He does not deny univocal predication of God and creatures. On the contrary, he declares in his *Theodicy* that "God's perfections are those of our own souls"; the difference is just that God "possesses them without limits" (G VI.27/H 51). This serves, among other things, the Enlightenment interest in the applicability of our rationality to ethics and theology. In this connection he holds that "[God's] goodness and his justice, as well as his wisdom, do not differ from ours, except that they are infinitely more perfect" (G VI.51/H 75).[3]

The likeness theology is a fundamental ontological principle for Leibniz, as it was for Aquinas. Metaphysically, Leibniz defines God as a "most perfect being," a being that has all perfections, and whose essence, indeed, is the "aggregate" or conjunction of all perfections. By "perfections," he means all the absolutely simple purely positive qualities, from which all other positive qualities must be derived, by conjunction or by limitation (A VI,iii,574, 579/L 167).[4] Understanding *reality* in a sense in which a thing has reality (that is, thingishness) just to the extent that it has positive qualities, Leibniz infers that the reality of all the less perfect beings, including our reality, must be constituted by limited versions of the divine perfections.[5] A very similar view of the ontological relation between properties of God and properties of other things is enshrined in Kant's conception of God as *ens realissimum*, "the most real being." That is the conception of God at work in Kant's precritical monograph of 1763, *The Only Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God*; and it is still Kant's concept of God in his critical writings of the 1780s.

Schleiermacher turns his back on the likeness theology. His is a theology of *divine otherness*. The analogy he affirms, by which "all divine attrbutes are derived from human ones," runs in the opposite direction from Aquinas's analogy, and it pertains to our imperfect conceptions of God, rather than to the natures of things. In Aquinas's analogy, the perfections that constitute the natures of finite things are derived metaphysically from the infinitely greater perfections of God. In Schleiermacher's analogy, predicates that we use to talk and think about God are said to be derived from predicates that we ascribe to ourselves, but that is not an affirmation of intrinsic metaphysical similarity between our nature and God's.

The thought that we can understand little or nothing about the divine nature because God is so different from everything else has, of course, a long history, but

[3] G = *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. by C. I. Gerhardt (Berlin, 1875–90; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), cited by volume and page. H = G. W. Leibniz, (1985).

[4] A = G. W. Leibniz, Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe, edition of the Berlin Academy (Darmstadt and Berlin, 1923-), cited by series, volume, and page. L = G. W. Leibniz, (1969).

[5] For fuller discussion, and more textual references, see Adams (1994).

there are also motives for it in Schleiermacher's historic context. German philosophy in his generation was shaped at the outset by reactions to Kant's critiques of reason. Some speculated more boldly about supersensible things than Kant would allow. Others, including Schleiermacher, were at least as skeptical, restrictive, or cautious as Kant himself about our ability to know things that transcend experience, or even to conceive of them. It is a central part of Schleiermacher's project in religious thought to do theology without claiming to have any accurate *concept* of the divine nature as it is in itself.

His most decisive reasons for proceeding in this way had to do with his conception of the religious life, and specifically the Christian life; but he also had metaphysical reasons, and I will begin with them. Schleiermacher's primary appointment at the University of Berlin was in the theology faculty, but he also lectured in the philosophy faculty, having gotten himself elected to the philosophical section of the Prussian Academy. He conceived of his work in the two fields as separate, but there was certainly overlap on the topic that concerns us. As a philosopher he seems not not have seriously doubted that there is a "transcendent ground" of everything. He identified it with God. However, he also argued that no human concept that is not merely negative can adequately represent the transcendent ground as it is in itself.[6] Similar reasons for this view are found in his systematic theology—his wonderfully reasoned *magnum opus*, *The Christian Faith*—and (sometimes at greater length) in the much less satisfying documents that remain to us from his philosophical lectures on "Dialectic," which he did not live to prepare for publication as he wished to.

Schleiermacher's metaphysical arguments on this subject share a pattern with those of Thomas Aquinas, though he need not have been consciously following Aquinas. Schleiermacher's arguments seem to rest on the assumptions that there cannot be anything in God that is dependent or conditioned in any way, if God is to be the Unconditioned, the transcendent ground of everything else; and that any duality [*Duplicität*] or contrast [*Entgegensetzung*] in God would entail something dependent or conditioned in the divine being.[7] The idea of God is then "the idea of unity, where all contrasts [*Gegensätze*] are excluded."[8] This corresponds to Aquinas's much crisper arguments that as first cause, God must be purely active, and therefore must be completely *simple*, on the ground that in anything that is composite in any way, there must be something dependent or not completely actual.[9]

In Aquinas's view, God's simplicity entails that there is no real plurality of attributes in God. In medieval philosophical theology such an interpretation of divine simplicity provided a main motive for denying that we can predicate anything univocally of God and creatures. For, as Aquinas puts it, "all the perfections of things, which are in created things in a divided and multiple way, preexist in God in a united way" (*ST* I, q. 13, a. 5). Similarly (though without Aquinas's metaphysics of

[6] In his *Dialectic* lectures, which I cite from Schleiermacher (2002). See, e.g., *KGA* II.x.2, pp. 246 (from 1818) and 586 (from 1822).

[7] See especially *KGA* II.x.2, pp. 533–37.

[8] As contrasted with "the idea of unity, where all contrasts are included," which is that of the world (*KGA* II.x.2, pp. 586–87; cf. *KGA* II.x.1, p. 269).

[9] See especially *ST* I, q.3, a. 7.

shared perfections), Schleiermacher seems to accept a version of the doctrine that God is *simple* that implies that the differences among individual attributes that may be ascribed to God "are nothing real in God" (*CF*[2], §51.1, pp. 201–202). His theology

> denies … in general the speculative content of all the divine attributes to be posited in Christian doctrine, just because and insofar as they are manifold. For if they were as such to present a knowledge of the divine being [*Wesen*], then each of them would have to express something in God that the others do not express; and if the knowledge fitted the object, then since the knowledge would be composite, the object would have to be composite too (*CF*[2] §50.2).

Similar statements are found in the documents representing Schleiermacher's lectures on "Dialectic." "[T]heological concepts … are inadequate insofar as we isolate them" (*KGA* II.x.2, p. 246, from 1818). The ineffability of God follows from an identification of "the idea of deity" with "the idea of unity where all contrasts [*Gegensätze*] are excluded." Such a unity, he says, "we are unable actually to describe," because it "goes beyond our knowing and thinking" (*KGA* II.x.2, pp. 586–87, Klamroth variants).

Schleiermacher's Theological Project

Schleiermacher's arguments about divine simplicity are not among his most rigorous, and their implications are not developed in satisfying detail. Even without these arguments, however, his project of doing theology without claiming to have any accurate *concept* of the divine nature as it is in itself is extremely interesting, and is developed in much more satisfying detail. It also has motives of its own in his conceptions of what is important in a religious life.

It is one of Schleiermacher's main theses that religion "has its own province in the mind, in which it is the absolute ruler," as he put it in his first major work, his "Speeches" *On Religion* (*KGA* I.ii.204/Crouter 17),[10] and as he maintained to the end of his life. And that province is not the intellect, the faculty of conceptual understanding; nor is it the will. What is it then? Schleiermacher's answer to this question changed and developed during the first two decades of the 19th century. In 1799, in the first edition of the "Speeches," it is the faculties of intuition and feeling. By 1806, in the second edition of the "Speeches," he is moving toward a view of it as feeling alone. His final position, in his theological masterpiece, *The Christian Faith*, is that it is a "feeling of absolute dependence"—or more precisely, that "the essence of piety," or personal religiousness, is "that we are conscious of ourselves as absolutely dependent" (*CF*[1] §9, *CF*[2] §4).[11] This final position is the one I mean to examine here; I will discuss earlier versions of the view only incidentally.

Schleiermacher held that "the feeling of absolute dependence … is also an essential element of human nature," even if it remains unawakened or undeveloped

[10] 'Crouter' refers to Schleiermacher (1996). The pagination of this second, and now more available, edition of the translation differs from that of the first.

[11] *CF*[1] is the first German edition, of *The Christian Faith*, of 1821–22, different in a number of ways from the second, as represented by Schleiermacher (1984).

in some individuals and societies (CF^2 §6.1). The religious significance and value of an individual's life depends not so much on the mere existence of the feeling of absolute dependence as on its development, its clarity and life-organizing power. That holds a much more fundamental place in Schleiermacher's view of the religious life than the conceptuality of religious doctrines.

The use of 'feeling' in this context has led many (notably including Hegel) to interpret Schleiermacherian religious piety as merely subjective; but Schleiermacher explicitly rejected that interpretation, denying that by *feeling* he meant a "subjective passivity" or "sensation" [*Empfindung*]. In this context feeling [*Gefühl*] is defined rather as "immediate self-consciousness." It is not subjective, but that is not to say it is objective. "The contrast of subject and object remains completely excluded here, as inapplicable"[12] In Schleiermacher's 1822 lectures on "Dialectic" the "suppression of contrasts" in feeling is connected with the ability of religious *feeling* to be a "representation of the transcendent ground."[13] For in Schleiermacher's view, as I have noted, the transcendent ground contains no contrasts and therefore cannot be well represented by our *concepts* (*KGA* II.x.1, pp. 266–67).

Even though he says that objectivity as well as subjectivity is inapplicable to feeling, Schleiermacher clearly implies that the feeling of absolute dependence has truth-evaluable content, and he is clearly committed to regarding it as true.[14] That is not to say that the truth-evaluable content of the feeling could be precisely conceptualized in a proposition. It could not, for in such a conceptualization contrasts would emerge which have been excluded from the content of the feeling. Nothing we *say* about the feeling will capture its content without distortion.

How, then, is Schleiermacher to do theology? He begins his own definitive account of theological method, as applied to Christianity, with the proposition that "Christian doctrines [*Glaubenssätze*] are interpretations [*Auffassungen*] of Christian religious states of mind, presented in speech" (CF^2 §15). The doctrines are to be representational [*darstellend*] and didactic (CF^2 §16). I take this to mean, not that they will render the content of the feeling precisely, but that they will indicate something about what the feeling is like by suggesting ways in which it would be appropriate to think, conceptually, on the basis of regarding the feeling as true. A main purpose of this enterprise, for Schleiermacher, is to help preachers to evoke in their hearers a clearer and stronger awareness of religious feeling (CF^2 §§15–18).

The first and most fundamental interpretation of religious feeling in Schleiermacher's theology is his description of it as a feeling of absolute dependence. He does not suppose that there are concepts of dependent and independent, absolute and relative, in the feeling itself. They belong to the realm of contrasts, which the feeling has not entered. His claim must be that there is no better or more faithful interpretation of it than as a feeling of absolute dependence.

[12] *Dialectic* 1822: KGA II.i.266; II.ii.565–66. According to Klamroth's report of the lecture, Schleiermacher, claimed, with some qualifications, that *Gefühl* was used in this way "also in ordinary life" (KGA II.ii.566, critical apparatus); I don't think that claim would be very plausible regarding ordinary usage in English today.

[13] By this Schleiermacher presumably does not mean that the transcendent ground is represented *in* the religious feeling as an *object* of the feeling, but that the feeling can be regarded conceptually as representing the transcendent ground.

[14] CF^2 §40.3. Cf. Adams (2005).

That is the first interpretation; it is not inferred from any other interpretation. And it is important to Schleiermacher that it interprets the feeling as being only *of the self* as absolutely dependent. He has a second interpetation, uttered in the very next breath, and as meaning "to say the same thing," which is that "we are conscious of ourselves … as in relation with God." But here there is clearly an inference: namely, that if we are absolutely dependent, there must be something on which we are absolutely dependent. As Schleiermacher puts it, a "*whence* of our receptive and active being" is "co-posited" [*mitgesetzt*], or as we might say, implied, in the feeling of absolute dependence; and that *whence* "is for us the true original meaning" of "the expression 'God'" (CF^2 §4.4). That such a *whence* does in fact exist is religiously important for him. He implies that what must be allowed by "any form of speculation" that is to be embraced by an adherent of Christian doctrine is "just … an object to which the feeling of absolute dependence can be related" ((CF^2 §50.2). His own speculations in his "Dialectic" lectures satisfy this requirement. In that philosophical rather than theological context the object allowed is often called "the transcendent ground" or "the unconditioned" rather than "God."

Among the Christian doctrines that Schleiermacher affirms in his theology are doctrines ascribing attributes to God. They too are to be understood as interpretations of Christian religious feeling. And here we find an answer to the question, how he can do theology without claiming to have any accurate concept of God's nature as it is in itself. As he is reported to have said in his 1818 lectures on *Dialectic*, theological concepts "are to be nothing but presentations of the way in which the consciousness of God is in our self-consciousness, and then one can consent to them, because then they do not purport to be immediate presentations but only mediated ones" (*KGA* II.x.2, p. 246). They express something about God only indirectly. Directly they are about religious self-consciousness, interpreting it as suggesting a certain way of thinking about God. And Schleiermacher's test of their adequacy is not how accurately they represent God, but how faithfully they convey a sense of the sort of religious feeling he is interpreting.

This grounds a further restriction on the interpretation of attributes of God in Schleiermacher's theology. For he construes the religious consciousness as *self*-consciousness, a consciousness of *oneself* as absolutely dependent—*not* as a consciousness of something other than ourselves, except insofar as interpreting it conceptually as consciousness of ourselves as absolutely dependent leads us inferentially to the thought of something on which we are so dependent. In Schleiermacher's interpretation, *nothing* about the *whence* is contained in the religious consciousness except that we are absolutely dependent on it. This has the consequence that in his theology he holds with uncommon rigor to the "way of causality" in interpreting claims about attributes of God. Already in the "Speeches" he holds that what you "feel and perceive in [religion's] stirrings is not the nature of things, but their action on you" (*KGA* I/12: 67/Oman 48; cf. *KGA* I/2: 213f./Crouter 24f.).[15] In *The Christian Faith* he holds that "all the divine attributes to be dealt with in Christian faith-doctrine [*Glaubenslehre*] must go back in some way to the divine causality, since they are only to elucidate the feeling of absolute dependence" (CF^2 §50.3). His conceptions of the holiness of God and the love of God, for instance, do not offer understanding of psychological properties

[15] "Oman" refers to Oman's (1958).

of a divine mind, but are understood in terms of divine causality of experiences of conscience and and of redemption, respectively (CF^2 §§83, 166).

Christology

Schleiermacher's christology fits within this framework. He ascribes to Christ "a genuine being of God in him." However, this involves no claims about the relation of Christ to the divine essence as it is in itself, but only about Christ's self-conscious relation to the divine causality. He holds that "to ascribe to Christ an absolutely powerful God-consciousness, and to attribute to him a being of God in him, are exactly one and the same thing" (CF^2 §94, pp. 385, 387).

The task of interpreting Schleiermacher's affirmation of "a genuine being of God in" Christ is not made easier by his use of rather similar ways of speaking in non-christological contexts. There seems to have been development on this point in successive versions of his course on "Dialectic." His philosophical manuscripts include a very detailed outline for his Dialectic lectures in 1814–15, an outline which he used as the framework for the course in subsequent years. The headline thesis of §216 of Part One of the outline is, "We know only of the being of God in us and in things, not at all of a being of God outside the world or in himself." He goes on to say that "the being of ideas in us is a being of God in us" and so is "the being of conscience in us, that is, insofar as we feel our thinking and willing as one". This is not the place for a full account of this intermediate stage of Schleiermacher's thought on the subject. Schleiermacher's claims are under-explained in the outline. It is clear that he did not mean to assert an identity of the transcendent ground with our ideas and our conscience, even in their unity. He says explicitly that they "are not posited in [God] in himself," because that would introduce contrast into God, where no contrast can be (*KGA* II.x.1, p. 143).

At any rate, little implication of a being of God in us survives in the corresponding Dialectic lecture of 1818, as it is preserved in a student's very complete-looking notes. There we find Schleiermacher saying that "the being of ideas in us … is a representation of the Highest in us, but also only a representation of the Highest, not the Highest itself," because it is still involved in duality [*Duplizität*] (*KGA* II.x.2, p. 244). In this version of the lecture the thought that we do not know of a being of God outside the world seems to survive mainly or only as the thought that we know of God only as related to the world, as its (and our) transcendent ground. And that may well have been part of Schleiermacher's thought in 1814–15.

Even less remains on this topic in the 1822 version of this lecture. There it is not in ideas or thought, but "in [or through][16] immediate self-consciousness," that he says "we have in us the transcendental[17] ground" (*KGA* II.x.2, p. 576). This corresponds with the thesis of §36 of the (roughly contemporaneous) first edition of *The Christian Faith*: "In that in immediate self-consciousness we find ourselves absolutely dependent, there is co-posited [*mitgesetzt*] there, together with our own being as

[16] The preposition is different in notes taken by different students.

[17] The basis for this reading is not wholly clear to me in the apparatus of the critical edition. Iwould have expected 'transcendent' in this context.

finite, the infinite being of God. And that dependence is in general the only way in which both can be one in us as self-consciousness or feeling." The second edition says substantially the same thing more succinctly (CF^1 §36; CF^2 §32, p. 131).

This is a non-christological use of the idea of a being of God in the human feeling of absolute dependence as such. Schleiermacher clearly means to ascribe more than this to Christ when he speaks of "a genuine being of God in him." What's the difference? One expression of it is that the God-consciousness of which Schleiermacher says it is a being of God in Christ is not just any God-consciousness or feeling of absolute dependence, but "an absolutely powerful God-consciousness" (CF^2 §94, pp. 385, 387). This mark of the specifically christological understanding of God's being in Christ signals its *causal* character. It presupposes that the activity of God in and through Christ's powerful God-consciousness is not merely the general causality of God on which everything in the universe, in even its most minute details, is absolutely dependent, but is, as Schleiermacher puts it, "a special divine impartation" (CF^2 §80.1, pp. 326–327). This means, I think, not that the special impartation is not part of the general divine causality, but that there is something unique about the *way* in which God's causality is at work in and through Christ's God-consciousness.

This distinction between a more general and a more special way in which one and the same divine causality works and is experienced corresponds to a similar distinction in the experiential basis of Schleiermacher's theology. There is the feeling of absolute dependence, the immediate consciousness of oneself as absolutely dependent, of which I have spoken already. He regards this as an essential element of human nature, and as a foundational experience of *all* religions. There is also a specifically Christian experience of redemption through Christ. It is still an experience of the feeling of absolute dependence, but of a specific *way* of having that self-consciousness, and of a *change* in one's way of having it—a change for the better. It is an experience of liberation from the confusing and distorting impediments to religious consciousness that Schleiermacher calls *sin*, and of "a participation in the perfection and blessedness of Christ" (CF^2 §110.3). This participation is socially mediated, through the influence of Christ on his disciples and the influence of successive generations of Christians on each other, as an "impartation of his sinless perfection." This communication is an "experience" in which "the individual even today still receives from the picture of Christ, which persisists in the community as a corporate act and a corporate possession, the impression of the sinless perfection of Jesus, which becomes for [the individual] at the same time the perfect consciousness of sin and the removal of misery" (CF^2 §88.3; cf. §87). The individual participates in this perfection without fully exemplifying it individually (CF^2 §110.3). But Schleiermacher's christology rests heavily (and vulnerably) on the claim that the perfection is experienced as a *reality* that could only have originated in a Christ who possessed it fully.

Can we put more flesh on the bones of Schleiermacher's idea of "an absolutely powerful God-consciousness" as a being of God in Christ? He holds that "the being of God can only be understood as pure activity." That is a presupposition of what he says about the being of God in Christ. But "every individualized being is only an interweaving [*ein Ineinander*] of activity and passivity." Schleiermacher infers that "there is thus far no being of God in an individual thing, but only a being of God in the world." That is because "the activity correlated with the passivity [*die Tätigkeit zu*

diesem Leiden]" in any particular individual "is found, divided, in every other individualized being,"[18] and thus is in the world as a whole rather than in the particular individual. "One could suppose a being of God in" an individual thing, he says, "only if [its] passive states are not purely passive, but mediated through vital receptivity, and this receptivity confronts the totality of finite being." This applies to Christ, in Schleiermacher's theology, inasmuch as Christ's consciousness, responding to indefinitely varied influences as any human consciousness must, was always able, nonetheless, to shape its mental life in accord with the feeling of its own absolute dependence on God, actively imparting to even the most passive of its states a form that accorded with his God-consciousness. (*CF*^{2} §94, pp. 385, 387–389).

What Schleiermacher has in mind here may be seen more clearly, perhaps, in his discussion of a more particular passivity and activity in Christ's consciousness. Responding to the objection that as human Christ must have had predominantly passive as well as predominantly active moments in his conscious life, he says,

> we find one passive state posited as necessary, almost constant, in Christ, so that all his actions depend on it to some degree—namely, sympathy with the human condition. Yet at the same time, in everything that proceeded from this, we will most definitely recognize the impulse of the reconciling being of God in Christ.[19]

But it would overturn Schleiermacher's whole conception of the Redeemer to suppose that God's redemptive activity in Christ depended on a passive state of sympathy as if on a "contingent perception."

> Our canon, however, obliges us to think of even the human nature of Christ, during those perceptions, not as moved for and through itself, but only as taken up into partnership [*Gemeinschaft*] with an activity of the divine in Christ. Now this "divine" is the divine love in Christ, which once and for all or in every moment … directed [his] human nature toward perceptions of the spiritual states of human beings.[20] By virtue of these perceptions, and in consequence of them, there then developed in turn the impulses to [his] individual helpful actions. (*CF*^{2} §97.3, p. 407)

This is a concrete portrayal of the activity of the divine in Christ's God-consciousness as shaping his whole conscious life, including sympathetic perceptions and feelings, and other states that are in some ways passive. I think it gives a good indication of the way in which Schleiermacher thinks Christ's God-consciousness was "absolutely powerful."

Particularly noteworthy here is the identification of "the divine in Christ" as "the divine love." God's love has a central place in Schleiermacher's system of Christian theology. "The divine love, as the attribute by virtue of which the divine being [*Wesen*] imparts itself, is known in the work of redemption" (*CF*^{2} §166, p. 727). That is, the divine love is understood within the framework of the "way of

[18] The German sentence paraphrased here is understood in the Mackintosh and Stewart translation in a way that I think makes much less sense of Schleiermacher's argument.

[19] Though not flagged as such by Schleiermacher, the reference to "the reconciling being of God in Christ" is doubtless a scriptural allusion (to 2 Corinthians 5:19).

[20] Here again my reading of the German sentence differs significantly from that of the Mackintosh and Stewart translation.

causality"; it is the divine causality insofar as it is the cause of a certain effect, which is "the work of redemption." Redemption is the increase of the power of the God-consciousness in human beings so that their lives are shaped more and more by their feeling of absolute dependence. And the work of redemption is understood as the divine being imparting itself, in the impartation of Christ's perfection of which I have spoken.

Schleiermacher's account of God's love is a clear indication of a way in which something *special* about the divine causality is seen in the divine impartation in Christ. It implies the presence of a *teleology* in the divine causality, a teleology that is not part of Schleiermacher's more general account of our absolute dependence on God. It is easy to overlook this because he does not use the terms 'teleology' and 'teleological' in reference to the divine causality. He does classify Christianity as exemplifying a "teleological [rather than aesthetic] orientation of piety" (CF^2 §11), where that signifies a form of piety that "subordinates the natural … to the ethical" rather than the other way around. The expression, 'teleological piety' "is meant here to signify simply that a predominant reference to the ethical task forms the basic type of the religious states of mind," so that "the action prefigured in the religious emotion is a practical contribution to the advancement of the Kingdom of God" (CF^2 §9.1). The term 'teleology' drops out when Schleiermacher discusses the divine causality; but it is clear in his discussion of God's love that he regards the teleology of Christian religious consciousness as a manifestation of a teleology of the divine causality, a teleology he sees as manifested *only* in the divine causality of redemption in Christ.[21]

God's love, as I've noted already, is for Schleiermacher the divine causality insofar as it is the cause of redemption. It is "the property in virtue of which the divine being [*Wesen*] imparts itself." He says it is known only "in the work of redemption," because apart from redemption the phenomena of nature and history, which sometimes further and sometimes hinder human life, leave God's love "always something doubtful," (CF^2 §166.1, pp. 727–728). That God's love is the cause of redemption, does not just mean here that some humans sometimes experience some measure of clarification and empowerment of their God-consciousness. That God is love (CF^2 §167) means rather that there is a teleological order, an active tendency toward redemption, in the divine causality, which is discernible in Christ's consciousness and "helpful actions," and also in the influence of Christ's consciousness transmitted from person to person, directing Christians toward redemptive activity.

There is no other basis in Schleiermacher's theology, so far as I can see, for the conception of God's purpose or "good pleasure" that leads him to "posit the planting and extension of the Christian church as [the] object of the divine government of the world," and to say that "it is essential to our faith, that every nation [*Volk*] will sooner or later become Christian" (CF^2 §164: p. 723; §120, pp. 551, 559). Schleiermacher's belief in this teleology is explicitly grounded in Christians' experience of the telology of their own religious states of mind, the way in which

[21] An awareness of the teleological character of his thought in this area is evident also when Schleiermacher warns against introducing the contrast of end and means. For it is not the thought of *ends* to which he seems to object as regards the divine causality, but that of *means*. "For means are never employed except where the agent must have recourse to something not originated by himself" (CF^2 §168.1, p. 733–34).

"the ethical task" is an "action prefigured in the religious emotion" (*CF*^{2} §9.1). He says, "we are conscious of our spiritual life as communicated perfection and blessedness of Christ, … and this is at the same time faith in the reality of the perfected church, though only as an effective motive force within us" (*CF*^{2} §159.2: p. 705). I believe, and have argued elsewhere,[22] that all the eschatological doctrines in Schleiermacher's theology owe such predictive force as he is prepared, cautiously, to grant them, to this empirically grounded belief in a redemptive teleology in the divine causality.

The question may be raised whether there is not a survival of the likeness theology in Schleiermacher's account of the divine love in Christ. Is he saying that Jesus and God are alike in loving? Precisely at this point, as I read him, he speaks the language, not of likeness, but of social union. He speaks of a "partnership [*Gemeinschaft*]" that "the human nature of Christ," seen "not as moved for and through itself," has "with an activity of the divine in Christ" (*CF*^{2} §97.3, p. 407). Christ's love *is* God's love. Besides Christ's love there is, I think, for Schleiermacher no other love in the ordinary sense, no other love as a psychological reality, that can be identified as God's love, except insofar as the process of redemption enables others to participate in the perfect God-consciousness of Christ. Though love is for Schleiermacher the attribute most closely identified with God (*CF*^{2} §167), even here it remains the case that he claims no knowledge or reliable conception of a divine psychology. Even God's love is known to him only as an aspect of the divine causality, manifested specifically as teleology in the causation of redemption through Christ. Jesus and God are alike in this respect only in acting with a teleology of love.

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[22] Adams (1996).