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**THE FIGURE OF CHRIST IN JUNGIAN  
PSYCHOLOGY**

By

THE REV. ERASTUS EVANS, M.A.

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# THE FIGURE OF CHRIST IN JUNGIAN PSYCHOLOGY

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## SYNOPSIS

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1. *The Background of the Discussion.* The present "demythologizing" controversy is concerned with the significance of Biblical history and the permanent value of Myth, and Jungian psychology has raised similar issues by its own methods. Both are sifting the traditional motion of Revelation.

2. *Jung's Attitude to Christ.* Jung has declared Christ to be an inadequate symbol of the human totality which he terms the Self. Christ symbolizes for him only the "light" aspect of man and God. This, to him, implies a defect in the Christian revelation.

3. *The Real Question.* The question thus arises whether Christ is merely the expression of what is "light" in God and man, and whether a more historical consideration will not reveal that the Christ of the New Testament was aware of both the "light" and the "dark" attributed by Jung to God, and was in a sense beyond both.

4. *Preliminary Considerations.* (a) Christianity is not merely a matter of myths and archetypes arising from the human soul; the historical kernel in Christianity has always tested such things. (b) Jung's concern that the conventional notion of Christ as all "light" leads to a fatal dichotomy between God and man is appreciated. (c) Jung's notion of the Self is ambiguous, being capable of at least three interpretations.

5. *The Inquiry.* In the Synoptic tradition we find (a) that the God preached by Christ is by no means all "light" in the Jungian sense; (b) that Christ is well aware of the "dark" as well as the "light" aspect of His work, and shows a consciousness that is beyond both the good and evil of His contemporaries.

6. *Jung's References to the Man Jesus.* Jung's interest is mainly in the dogmatic figure of Christ, but he does make observations about the historical Jesus. (a) Jesus created an important new stage in the awareness of man, in that His moral and spiritual emphasis separated things that had been confused in man's living. (b) Jung sees the following of Jesus not in slavish imitation of Him, but in treating life as He did. (c) Like Bultmann, Jung sees the real incarnation in the crucifixion.

IN the new attempt to understand the meaning and validity of the Christian Revelation which is characteristic of our Modern Age, there are two trends which, while they seem poles apart in sphere and interest, must nevertheless at some point ultimately meet and confront each other. They are the historical and the psychological. By the historical in this particular reference I mean the study of the Bible and especially the New Testament. The great critical movement in this realm has been a sincere effort to come to grips with the reality of Revelation: of what nature are the documents that make up the New Testament, out of what kind of movement did they arise, what sources do they contain, and what historical validity can be ascribed to them, what legendary accretions are present, and into what mythological texture are they woven? In the course of this study the modern intellect can be seen emerging, and asking itself what it is possible to believe, and in what way it is possible to understand and believe it. It has been a great manifestation of the conscious reflective mind, dealing with Christianity as a conscious reflective thing, dealing with the adequacy of its notions, statements, myths, and so on, in relation to the historical inquiring intellect, and the scientific world out of which the modern man must perforce do his thinking. The historical method and mode of thought have domiciled themselves in the modern Christian intellect, and can no longer be exorcized. In spite of himself the modern Protestant Christian, at any rate, accepts the fact of growth within the New Testament, and in matters of dogma he no longer sees these things as deposited, as it were, *en bloc*, by direct supernatural action, into the nature and manner of which no inquiry is possible. I doubt if he can ever be brought back into a realm of naïve acceptance. For the modern man no claim of supernatural origin for a religion will invalidate the necessity for historical inquiry, and no declaration that Christianity is spiritually or psychologically necessary for man will stop him asking the question as to what Christianity really is and in what way it came into being. He wants to know what things really are, as well as what things are spiritually and psychologically necessary.

We move to a totally different realm of considerations when we turn to depth psychology. During the last fifty years or so the mind of man has turned to examine what is within himself, in order (whether he is aware of this or not) that he may compensate for the hard reality of the outward world as revealed by modern science, by the establishment of the reality of the inward. Freud was the great pioneer of this movement, but he may be said to have stopped at the layer of the personal unconscious, with which his mind was contented as sufficient explanation of the inward powers that affect the conscious mind of man. Jung, however, went beyond this realm to a deeper layer which he calls the collective unconscious, from which the dim symbols or images which he terms the archetypes emerge. It is in this deep realm and among these archetypal images that he finds the origins of religion. Here we are no longer really concerned with a historical figure or historical considerations, but with

dream figures and modes of imagination and thought that are deep in the unconscious mind of man. Here some of the figures are seen which are of great significance in the mythology or mode of revelation which is within the New Testament, for example the Saviour, or Christ figure. Jung, however, holds that in order that the human soul may be kept healthy and may move toward integration, it is necessary that the changefulness or ambivalence of such figures should be brought to consciousness, and in particular their interrelatedness with figures of a very different character, and the constant tendency of the unconscious to run from one state in which one figure is in control to another in which quite other factors are at work. Jung is not concerned with historical facts merely as such; he has to do with perennial factors in the human soul, and so he does not deal with mythology as a somewhat outworn mode of human reflectiveness which has been superseded by a scientific world-view, but with the reality of the way in which the unconscious factors of the soul operate. He thinks about psychological necessity which arises because the human soul is such as it is, and the vital need to understand this. But whether he will or no, he moves into the same realm as the New Testament scholars are working in; from a completely different point of view, he too must consider the Christ figure, the mythology of the New Testament, and their adequacy as far as the human beings about him are concerned, but here primarily not from the necessity of historical or scientific thought, but from the point of view of the right dealing with the realities that remain in the unconsciousness of every human being. However different his task and interest, he finds himself often dealing with the same stuff, and so we find that a kind of dual criticism of the Christian revelation is going on—one from the standpoint of historical inquiry, with its main concern as reflective thought, and the necessity of getting the Christian mind and spirit into the set-up of the world and life in which modern man finds himself; the other from the investigation of the deep unconscious of man, and a necessity of making conscious and dealing in a healthy psychological way with the factors that are found in it.

Are these two points of view too different in approach and outlook to clash fruitfully? It is true that there is a radical difference of vocabulary, and, in a sense, of experience, between the two. Nevertheless, in spite of themselves they have entered into the same realm, and must ultimately confront each other. It may be however, that the answer to the question as to how the mythology of the New Testament can be made profitable and intelligible to modern man may come from an acknowledgement of the basic structure of human consciousness. In this there is a possibility of the inquiry moving into a new dimension, as there is also a possibility that the basic elements of the soul may find, through a new assessment of the historical reality of the New Testament, something which makes them more conscious and criticizes the wild way in which they may develop if left merely to themselves and which gives them a higher direction and purpose.

It may seem that both these inquiries are far removed from the practical problems of life, and that they move merely in a realm of advanced New Testament scholarship, or have to do with psychological depths of the soul with which the ordinary man has little to do. A little reflection will show that this is not so. There is nothing so vital as that modern man should have a real spiritual insight, and here in the West at least he has found such a vision always within the Christianity which he has traditionally received. But there is certainly a lack of understanding of that tradition abroad. In spite of the well-meant preaching from Christian platforms it is plain that the Christian vocabulary, thought-world and symbolism, are somehow not in contact with the modern world. The long inquiry into the nature and mode of the revelation within the New Testament has resulted in recent times in the demythologizing controversy in Germany. This controversy is by no means a fight between scholars on a matter of abstruse interest within the New Testament, it is nothing less than an attempt to reassess the value of the Christian revelation in its practical adequacy in reaching and meeting the needs of the modern generation. Schniewind, for example, who joined in the controversy as a critic of Bultmann, mentions how the effort of chaplains to preach the ascension and the resurrection of Jesus Christ totally failed, and appeared quite unintelligible to the soldiers for whom it was made. Thus the scholarly controversy has its origin in something of which every padre is aware, namely the great gulf that is fixed between the thought-world of the New Testament and that of the average conscript. This is not a mere matter of vocabulary, but far more so of imagery and symbolism, of a realm of considerations which seems to the ordinary private completely removed from the sphere in which he moves and has his being. The Christian revelation is an isolated pocket in the vastness of his experience, and not merely in this matter of understanding. There is a great moral and spiritual cleft as well. The soldier is prepared for war, and for its horrors, and the realities with which he has to do in this dreadful work imply different things about man and about the world from those often set up by the more conventional Christianity. The conscript is thus faced with a split world, and something has to be done to unify it, in order that the Christian revelation may be seen to have relevance to life. The issue that was raised by Bultmann was thus an attempt to provide an answer to a very practical problem, but in the demythologizing controversy as it arises from the study of the New Testament, the matter is all concerned with reflective thought, with a conscious attempt to deal with the mythological element in the New Testament as though it were merely a matter of conscious world-view which somehow has to be related to the world view of the modern. But this is not the way in which Jung faces the problem or the validity of Christian symbols and experiences. He is as conscious of the problem as any who take part in the demythologizing controversy. In his essay "Über das Selbst", *Erano Jahrbuch* 1948, he declares that the world has long since ceased to hear a message, and that the words that

are uttered from the pulpit cry out for interpretation. How is it that the death of Christ has redeemed us, when nobody feels that he has been redeemed? How is it that Christ is God and Man, and what is such a creature; what shall we make of the Trinity, and of the Virgin Birth, and of the eating of the Body and Blood of Christ? How do such things stand in relation to the matters of daily life which are now for the most part to be found in a scientific setting? We live some sixteen hours a day in this waking world, and some eight hours in the other unconscious one, but where on earth do we come into contact with such things as angels, miracles of feeding thousands, miraculous healings, resurrection from the dead, in this waking world? Jung goes on to comment that such mythological motives do however appear in the dream condition, the same motives that emerge in wonder stories, and actually concern themselves with similar things to those that are the objects of faith. Here Jung is speaking of the same problems as those which beset the Christian task of evangelization, he is well aware of the lack of understanding which is abroad of the matter of faith and dogma, but he is not trying to meet them by anything in the nature of reflective thought about them which seeks to make them more intelligible by a historical approach and rationalizing explanation, but he is pointing to the seedbed of the unconscious where similar things are continually growing, and where it is possible to take the modern man through experiences which give him an understanding of what the ancient world thought and experienced.

It is plain that neither of these two movements can be left out of account when we are considering the problem of religion to-day. The heart of Christianity is in the Christ figure, and our generation must come to an assessment of Him through its own thought-forms. If that figure is ultimately something for which unconscious factors can satisfactorily account, then it is difficult to see the necessity for the Christian religion as a movement in history, for it seems that a kind of understanding of religion can arise which would cut it adrift from its moorings in history. It would seem as though the firm Christian thing could be psychologized away. On the other hand it is hard to bring home to modern man the relevance of the things that are spoken of in the New Testament unless he knows some realm in which he can experience similar things. There are two things that must be considered in this regard: first of all that there is such a thing as a Christ archetype, and that this was in some sense always within the human soul, and secondly that there was in history a particular man, namely, Jesus of Nazareth, on whom this archetype came to rest, as it were. The association of the archetype with that particular man means that Christianity is tied to history and cannot be blind to historical research in any new understanding of itself; on the other hand the fact that this same man appears in an archetypal and **mythological** setting means that the Christian mind cannot be indifferent to the **psychological** investigation of archetype and myth. The effort to bring these two things together may seem to many minds an attempt to

join what God has put asunder, but there can be no doubt that in the modern situation they are more and more being forced together.

It might have been very reassuring to Christians who took the Jungian psychology seriously, if Jung had identified the figure of Christ with the Self. The New Testament phrases about being in Christ, and having Christ dwell within us, would thus have had, as it were, a psychological backing. But this Jung has resolutely refused to do. He insists constantly that Christ can be no more than a partial symbol of the Self, and a somewhat inadequate symbol at that, as it leaves the other part of the Self to be symbolized by very different figures. This insistence poses a problem for the reflective Christian, as to whether in fact, as against conventional Christianity, Christ is simply an expression of one side of the Self, and whether perhaps a more careful consideration would not reveal this as an oversimplification of the case. To examine this question properly would mean an inquiry into the way in which the conventionally accepted figure of Christ has been built up, and the only place in which we could start seriously on this problem would be within the Bible, and especially within the New Testament itself. It is plain, that the figure of Christ within the New Testament is built up from two kinds of content. The first of these is the Historical Jesus. There would have been no Christian Christ, as it were, unless Jesus of Nazareth had lived. The mythology laid hold on something that was already present. There is no doubt about it that Christianity is an historical religion, and not merely a type of mythological thinking, or an intuitive philosophy that expresses itself in symbols. There is a hard historical core somewhere although it may be wrapped about with mythology and legend. On the other hand it cannot be denied that the mythological element is present, and that the Jesus who lived and died in Palestine is presented to the world by means of it. Can any light be thrown on the growth of the figure of Jesus into the Christ figure, and will an examination of this process prove in some measure a criticism of the thesis that the dogmatic figure of Christ is largely to be identified with the light aspect of man and of God? There is no doubt perhaps that in popular thought Christ is purely identified with these light aspects, but then is the conventional picture of Christ the real one, and can it be shown that in fact the real picture which is inherent in Christianity is of another nature?

At any rate Jung, if he is correct in his insight, is placing Christianity before a dilemma. If, as he says, the Christ figure must be identified with what he regards as the light aspect of man and God, then either a large part of man and life is left undealt with, or that attitude which makes the identification without thought must be brought to book. On a profounder and more secular level he raises an issue analogous to that which emerged when Liberal Christianity was faced with the discovery of the apocalyptic element within the New Testament. This was a very hard fact for the liberal interpreters of Christianity to swallow, for it meant facing an irrational, crude, and antiquated way of thought and expectation which



simply destroyed the picture of Christ as a moral teacher and martyr for God on which they had based their theology. In the actual development of modern Protestant thought, however, digestion of this hard consideration did a lot of good, it really opened the way to a larger conception of the work of Christ than the liberal rationalism could achieve. Jung's impugning of the dogmatic figure of Christ as inadequate to be the symbol of human totality may seem to the believing Christian to be blasphemous, but having to face the consideration that there is much more in man than the Christian consciousness has been willing to admit at times, and perhaps wrestling with Jung's statement of what is, after all, a very old problem, may produce a new appreciation of orthodoxy, and the stressing of the light side may prove something that has developed away from and overlaid the true emphasis. The real figure of Christ may show a consciousness that is beyond both aspects of humanity, both the light and the dark.

The characteristic of Christianity lies precisely in the interaction between myth and history. The Christ archetype is already present in the Old Testament, partly as the figure of a divine hero, and partly in the form of the Suffering Servant. But this archetype is not working merely *in vacuo*. The particular form which the realization of the Christ archetype as Suffering Servant took was affected by history. The great fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is not simply something that rose from the prophet's unconscious. Whether we take it as referring to the idealized nation or whether we regard it as a comment upon the good king Josiah and his tragic end, or whether we regard it as referring to Jeremiah, there is no doubt that the archetype is in contact with something that actually happened. This is particularly true of the way in which the saviour archetype is applied to Christ in the New Testament. It is not allowed to run wild, as it were (the temptations of Jesus are examples of the way in which it could have run wild), but it is attached continually to the person of Jesus of Nazareth and what did in fact happen to Him. The archetypal contents come in in reflection on what happened to Jesus. For example, all the way in which man feels about sacrifice to God, and the picture of Christ as the Lamb of God, could never have been applied unless Jesus had been crucified as a felon. The archetype, and the mythological phrase or setting, are in the nature of interpretation, and this is shown by the fact that in various environments the expression of the archetype changes. For example, in the Palestinian setting, Jesus is regarded as the coming Son of Man, which is the mythological evaluation of His person which was natural to the indigenous Jew of the time who believed in Him. But when the Gospel passed over into a Hellenistic setting, other phrases are used to express the archetype. The Son of Man becomes the Son of God, and the word Lord is used in a manner that perhaps could not be employed in the thoroughly Jewish setting. But in view of the fact that the one talked about was a specific man about whom certain definite things could be said in reference to His teaching and

character, this use and expression of the archetype could not just run on of itself, uncriticized, with no standard by which it could be judged. In Gnosticism we have a great upsurge from the unconscious, and that movement was not merely a matter of the adaptation of Christianity to Hellenistic thought, as the older interpretation of Gnosticism opined. Now the danger of Gnosticism, as far as Christianity was concerned, was that the particular Christian thing was in danger of being buried under what was merely mythological and archetypal in character. Christianity was saved from this by the fact that it had a historical founder, and arose from a historical religion, namely Judaism, so that it could not just be swept away by things arising from the soul. This is not to deny that Gnosticism powerfully affected Christianity, but Christianity did not become Gnosticism; it could not merely be fascinated by the realities which are in the soul; it had a given standard of things moral and spiritual in what had happened in the teaching and the work of Christ. There is no doubt about it that for the naïve man of the time archetypal contents clustered about Jesus of Nazareth and His story, but that story was not merely a matter of archetypal contents. There is certainty that Jesus was interpreted to the world by means of mythology, but it is also true to say that this very mythology was held in check by the fact that it was applied to a historical person, and thus was brought continually to the standard of a particular work and mind in history. In the modern situation also these two elements will have to be kept in mind. In the midst of scientific findings, it will be impossible to deny that there is much that is in the New Testament which is not historical fact, but at the same time it will not be possible to allow Christianity to evaporate away into merely psychological considerations. There is in Christianity a spiritual and moral standard which is also a test of what is within the soul.

The objection of Jung to identifying the Self with the figure of Christ, is that when all the good that is in man is identified with divine figures the consequence is that only the evil and dark aspects of the soul are left over for man himself. This leads to an attitude in which all good is ascribed to God and all the evil is taken as being of human derivation. This produces a horrible situation in which the human being is destroyed; he cannot under any circumstances do real good, because by the very notion he has of good as pertaining only to certain divine figures, he is excluded from it. This kind of attitude is illustrated in modern theological thought in Barthianism. Man is simply to be condemned, he is just nothing without divine grace. Thus man cannot really be understood in his nature, he is simply there to be preached at. Moreover Jung sees a moral danger in this attitude as well, which arises from the law of enantiodromia, which is that every thing tends to pass over into its opposite, and all the more so when it is emphasized and stressed. Stressing that the human nature is really Christ nature, according to Jung, means that a man becomes identified with one aspect of himself and therefore the other aspect is all the surer of coming up and overwhelming him. But enquiry

should be made into the notion of the Self in Jung's psychology. It seems to me that there are three different notions, which come up when Jung is speaking about the Self. The first notion of the Self which is in Jung is that of the totality of the psyche; all that is in the soul is seen as a unity which is called the Self. But this notion is not the same as a second which is often implied in his writings, namely that the Self is a centre of the soul, that is, the source of energy by which it is ruled, and the source of all the powers which affect it. But this notion in turn is not the same as the third, which is often hinted at in his works, and this is the notion of the Self as the significance of the whole psyche. These notions are by no means such as can be equated with each other. I do not think that Christianity has ever claimed that all that is in the soul is of Christ; on the other hand it has claimed that the true centre of the soul is Christ, and has claimed that the real significance of the soul is to be found in Him. Possibly if the matter were thought through, the Christian thinker could accept Jung's decision that the Self is not to be identified with Christ, but it may be that there is more duality in the notion of Christ than is admitted in Jung's identification of Christ with the light aspect only of the soul, and that Christ is closer to the notion of the Self than he would grant.

In order to see whether the witness of the Synoptics is really to a Christ whose message and work and personality could be entirely identified with the light aspect of man and of God, let us glance for a moment at the background of the preaching of Jesus. All that Jesus has to say, as is well known, is in one framework, namely that of the Kingdom of God. Now there is no doubt that the notion of God as Father played a great part in the teaching of Jesus, and that the emphasis on His love and righteousness is continually present. But even so, there are texts which, taken simply as teaching, have a far grimmer import. Take, for example, the saying that those who kill the body are not to be feared, with the sequel that He is to be feared who can cast soul and body into hell. This text puts forward a God who is by no means all light and simply to be regarded as love. The same is implied often in the parables, where the incalculability of God is often emphasized, as for example in the parable of the rich fool, or in the parable of the unjust steward where very questionable conduct is praised by the Lord. Then there is the quotation of Old Testament texts which imply that God deliberately hardens the heart of the people so that they cannot understand the word of salvation. The comment of Jesus on the parable of the Sower in the fourth chapter of Mark has always been a hard nut for the commentators from this point of view. The fury of the master at the refusal of the unforgiving servant to forgive his brother is far beyond anything that implies a mere God of love. The parables are shot through with something far darker, a kind of sadism almost; in the background is always the fire of Gehenna, and the worm that dieth not. Incidents like the endorsing of the action of God in the falling of a tower upon certain people, seem to imply that God is not

conceived as simply light in a sense that has no reverse side to it. The fact of the matter is that the Gospel is preached in an apocalyptic setting, and there is an implication of coming destruction and the break-up of all things behind the things that are said about love, and the Fatherhood of God. However simplified Jesus's version of apocalyptic may have been, there is no doubt that He preached in the expectation of judgment and destruction on a cosmic scale, and the fact that He accepted the apocalyptic set-up shows that He knew another side of God. It was necessary to hack away the right hand for some people to get into the Kingdom of God. If there is light in the teaching of Jesus about the Fatherhood of God and His love, there is also fire in His notion of the imminent break-up of all things. In the preaching of Jesus, God is on the one hand full of grace, but on the other is regarded as incalculable; He will bring famine and destruction on the Jewish nation. Whether the apocalyptic chapters of Mark are to be ascribed to Jesus directly is of course very debatable, but there is no doubt about it that Jesus believed in the apocalyptic woes. The day of God would come as a thief in the night. There was certainly an aspect of God which was beyond anything which was covered by the mere reiteration that He was Father. The apocalyptic God was an incendiary and a wrecker, and there is no doubt that these aspects of Him are also present in the Synoptic Gospels. All the struggle in Gethsemane implies that Jesus was faced with something in God that was of an apocalyptic nature, and did not fit in immediately with the notion that He was conventionally beneficent in all His actions. I think that there is perhaps more ambivalence in the notion of God that is in the preaching of the Kingdom than Jung would allow.

Another point to be made is that the archetype Christ is also ambivalent; it does not always imply that light aspect which Jung regards as its sole characteristic. This is true in the Old Testament, where while the Christ is usually regarded as the righteous hero, there are sayings which imply something different, as for example, the Psalm which warns folk that it is better to kiss the Son lest he destroy them. The picture here is not merely loving and righteous; the Christ is determined to be master at all costs and does not seem to mind how much destruction he causes. This is also the case with regard to the archetype within the New Testament itself. The Christ figure plays a large part in the Book of the Apocalypse, and it has been shown by Jung that the picture that is there is really a kind of shadow of the usual notion of Christ, as a matter of fact the Christ of the Apocalypse does all the things which we regard with horror in our view of humanity to-day for he lets loose catastrophes on the world which are like those of the atom and hydrogen bomb. It appears that it is not right to equate the Christ archetype merely with the light side of things in the New Testament itself. Behind the things that are said about the love of God and the necessity for the love of man, there are expressions which imply a God of cruelty, and which have been a trouble to Christian reflection down the ages. Even when, as in the parable of the

sheep and goats, the lesson that is taught is of the necessity for sympathetic imagination, and the judgment actually turns on the presence of this in the righteous or its lack in the unrighteous, the background is still one of apocalyptic, and the unrighteous are condemned to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels, with a complete lack of sympathetic imagination. Thus in the Christ figure that sits upon the throne in this parable there is a consciousness which claims that all judgment should turn upon loving and sympathetic imagination, while there is also a consciousness that the lack of this is punished with a fierceness beyond all computation. The same Christ figure that sets up loving imagination as the standard is most completely cruel in his treatment of those who lack it. It cannot be said that the Christ figure is simply full of light.

Surely the only way in which we can consider the matter is by regarding the work and teaching of Jesus as a whole, and asking ourselves whether it reveals a shadow side, and whether Jesus Himself was aware of that shadow side. Jung, in his book *Aion*, mentions in a footnote a Gnostic myth, in which it is said that Jesus cut Himself free from His shadow, that it was detached from Him. But, if we look at the historical figure, we can see that Jesus was Himself quite aware of the shadow side of what He was doing, and the suffering and the confusion that it would cause. A man who declares that he has come to cast fire on the earth, with all the associations that the word fire had in apocalyptic imagery, and who could say that he came not to bring peace but a sword, can hardly be said to be unaware of the obverse side of what he was doing, and to be detached from his shadow. The saying in which Jesus declares that He has come to set members of a household against each other, might, in a sense, have been spoken by the devil. The releasing of fire upon the earth, the provocation of war, and the creating of confusion in natural relationships can not unfairly be spoken of as the devil's work. The refusal to allow a man to return to the burial of his father, and the declaration that He has no lasting relationship with His mother, can certainly be severely criticized from the standpoint of ordinary morality. It seems that the work of Jesus is rationalized for the purposes of collective religion, and that if we were to judge His sayings from the effect they had on the more well-meaning of His contemporaries we would get a much harsher picture of Him. His attitude was beyond the accepted spirituality and morals of his day, and therefore must have appeared often as the devil's work. The fact that He ate with publicans and sinners implies a different attitude to evil from that of His contemporaries, namely, that He was prepared to find good in evil. The sweeping aside of what was regarded as the law of God in the interests of something directly personal must have been to His contemporaries essentially sinful. His attitude to the law is still regarded by the Jews as something completely disruptive. His attitude to the woman who was a sinner, who washed His feet, implied that there was something essentially good in conduct that the Pharisee could only see as evil. As far as Jesus, in His relationship with his contemporaries, was

concerned, there is no doubt that He was beyond good and evil, and perhaps, when we move out of the system of collective religion, it would appear the same again. It certainly showed an awareness of the shadow side of righteousness and religion, and the promise in material that was regarded as worthless and sinful. There is in it a morality which is beyond the collective standards, and therefore as far as they were concerned beyond the good and evil that they proclaimed.

Indeed the religious soul of to-day, who must somehow get closer to the historical Jesus than the more conventional set-up would allow, finds in the merely devotional, light interpretation of Jesus, which is characteristic of some piety, something which is a hindrance to any real experience of the world and of religion. In so far as Jung protests against such a picture, he is likely to get support from some genuinely religious people. But all this attitude of Jesus springs from a new consciousness, which sees far more deeply into life than the collective expression of religion and morality seems to do. Whether that consciousness, in the case of Jesus, had a scientific attitude to evil, is of course questionable, but then in His time there was no scientific attitude to anything. The thought was intuitive and fluctuated through different images and expressions. That there was another side to the God of the Old Testament which was really the devil is shown by Jesus in His remark to the disciples who wished to call down fire on an inhospitable village, a punishment which the God of the Old Testament allowed, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are". The historical Jesus was aware of the ambivalence of things, and of the opposites, and His consciousness was not to be identified with anything that was simply what is regarded as light and spiritual. Jesus also was aware how what He had said and done could be easily used in a manner far from His consciousness. He was aware of the possibility of the antichrist, as is shown by the saying that others would come after Him in His name, doing things that were directly contrary to His spirit. Thus one who was aware of the soul of goodness in some things which were regarded as evil, and of the ambivalence of much that is regarded as religious and moral, and was also aware of the evil effects of what He said and did as well as the good, and was aware of the antichrist latent in His work, cannot be simply identified merely with a light aspect of man, as though His consciousness were rigidly attached to what is regarded as moral and spiritual.

When we turn away from the archetypal Christ figure and ask whether Jung has anything to say about the historical Jesus, we find that his observations are few, but of great significance. In the quotation which heads his book *Aion* he puts forward a picture of Jesus as the one who distinguished the things that were confused together. The thought that seems to be behind this emphasis is that Christianity brought man to consciousness in a new and decisive way. Before man could in any way deal with the dark side of his nature, he needed to have a firm knowledge of value, and to know what goodness might be. Before Christ he was largely in a state of unconsciousness about this. Righteousness had to be

revealed in a way that penetrated right through into the soul. The one pole had to be revealed in order that the nature of the other might be shown. The evil side of man could not be understood until it was clearly shown up. Thus the thought seems to be that the moral and spiritual standard set up by Christianity made this possible. There is much truth in this observation. It is also in line with much that is said about Christ within the New Testament. For example the Epistle to the Hebrews shows Christ as the divine word, and says that the word of God penetrates right within man, laying bare the thoughts and intents of the heart and cutting asunder joints and marrow. This implies that what was revealed by Jesus goes right through a man and shows up what is within his consciousness. There is no doubt that man would never have been the problem to himself that he is apart from the Christian revelation. Both sides of the soul, the light and the dark aspect, are shown up by it, and a tension is created which is very painful, but has on the whole been most fruitful for man. There is a certain sense in which it can be said that the one who sharpened the problem of evil for man to an unbearable point was Jesus. He raised the question of the moral nature of man in all its problematic, and showed up the immoral nature of much that is happening in the collective world, and in the world of nature. Without the work of Jesus in all its ambivalence there could not be a psychology which is conscious of a dark aspect of the soul, and seeks to understand it. The light has thrown the dark into relief and made it a problem. There is no doubt that Jesus faces man with a moral absolute, but the question of the precise sense in which He does this, is one that needs more than a surface inquiry to get a real answer. In this connection the matter of the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount comes up. There are many different interpretations of the nature of the precepts which Jesus gives there. Were the precepts intended to be an absolute law for the Christian in the way that the Mosaic law was absolute for the Jew? Were these precepts intended as a general ethic for the use of society and the international world? They have been regarded as interim ethics, in which the whole tone and appeal was decided by the notion that the kingdom of God was at hand. They were certainly a deepening of the moral law until by its very intensity it produced other reflections. Morality is so intensified here that it raises the problem of the nature of man and whether in fact he could ever keep such a law. Their real power is that they penetrate right through humanity and show up all the intents of the heart, and show him ultimately that his salvation cannot lie in the keeping of any law. At the same time they reveal absolute values, and show how far human nature is from achieving them. Their real power is that they light up the soul most intensely and make the situation of man in moral matters clear. Man must contend with this light at every step forward he takes. There is great truth in the remark of Schweitzer, that we have to fight for every step in the progress of civilization with Jesus of Nazareth. Real ethics cannot be achieved in any comfortable complacence. They are not

found by the acceptance of any law which involves no struggle for personal understanding. The absolute ethic of Jesus is one that awakens man to a consciousness of himself, it is a challenge to self-knowledge and honesty of intention, a call to integration on a level that mankind has hardly known. His precepts are a constant irritant and challenge to anything in the nature of a false compromise in the thought and action of man. The modern man who tries to achieve a new balance by psychological means must take them into consideration. In any case they will not leave him alone, for they have entered through the ages into the unconscious of man, and challenge him in spite of himself. The knowledge of them creates in man an impulse towards the examination of his own soul. Their ultimate point seems to be that there is no real ethic in any partial moral precept, in something that is merely a moral law understood as such. The claim that is behind them is on the whole man, and the ethic that comes when they are considered is one that arises from the depths. This insight that Jesus in his teaching is a constant challenge to our civilization is one that Jung shares with Schweitzer.

But this is dealt with in a particular way by Jung, for another of his insights concerns the way in which Jesus is to be followed in the modern age. He distinguishes carefully between the real following of Jesus and what he calls the *imitatio Christi*, which is a mere literal following of a figure in a book, as it were, the doing what he did, and the uncritical acceptance of His sayings. In the real following of Jesus a man has found himself somehow in the position of Christ in his own situation and destiny, he is determined to work out what is really within him with the same courage, sincerity and love as were in Jesus of Nazareth. From this point of view the following soul is not a mere slave, but one who in the understanding of his own existence is near to Jesus. In this Jung is in line with much that is said by New Testament scholars who are thinking about what Jesus means to the man of to-day. It is obvious that we are separated by a great gulf of history from the historical figure of Jesus, and that in some respects we cannot hand over our minds to His. He lived, for example, in an unscientific world. In particular His expectation that the world was coming to an end has not been justified, and it is no use blinking this and trying to dodge it by making out that Jesus Himself never held such views, as Glasson does on this point. But Jesus was new in that He did not allow His actions to be governed by any authority, however sacrosanct it might be, and that He reacted to a situation quite simply and spoke what was in Him with regard to it. The way to understand Jesus is in being in His situation in the world to-day. This carries out a thought of St. Paul, who makes quite clear that his following of Christ is not a mere matter of imitating the historical Jesus; it is far more of the kind which Jung indicates. The trouble has been too often that the following of Christ has meant not merely the wooden imitation of Jesus, but also following according to some particular sect which has a very partial reading of what He was. But the being in the position of Christ



in working out what has been entrusted to us, gives us an insight and understanding with regard to Him which is of a totally different kind; it is a case of in most loving bondage—free.

This matter of the facing of what sense can be given to the following of Christ in our generation is one that will have to be faced, as will be the devotional value of Jesus to some people. The way through here also is not in any dogmatism but in the sincere facing of historical fact. At this point Jung seems to admit that it is possible to be one with Jesus in the depths of our own existence, and this seems to qualify what he has to say about Christ being an inadequate symbol of the Self, for when the modern is sincerely working out the implications that come from the Self, then he can feel himself very near to Jesus.

Another great insight which Jung has with regard to the historical Jesus is one which concerns the crucifixion. Jung insists in his picture of the Christ figure in the book on Job, that Christ is not precisely in the middle between God and Man, that he inclines rather to the Godward side. In making this remark he is largely influenced by considerations which come from the legendary parts of the New Testament, as for example the birth stories. If the Saviour was literally born of a virgin then of course He was not born after the manner of other men, and is separated from them in His very becoming human. But any sincere historical method which is trying to find what fact there is behind the New Testament would have to admit at once that the birth stories can be paralleled in the descriptions of others who were heroes and great sages, as for example Augustus and Buddha, and that there is no reason to take them as literal fact; they are rather expression in legend of a particular significance which is found in the person concerned. If the incarnation is to be seen as a real thing for modern man it must have an origin not in legend but in the actual fact of which we are sure in our historical reading of Christ. Now we are certain that Jesus was crucified, and the real incarnation should be in accordance with such a fact and not with a legendary notion of a super-hero. In his *Answer to Job* Jung points out that the real answer to Job was in the cry from the cross, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was at this point that the depth of the incarnation took place, and this is in line with what Bultmann says in the same consideration. It was when Christ experienced the depth of human abandonment that God really entered the human situation. In the modern situation the Christian thing has become something that seems questionable, like every other thing. Unless there can be an incarnation in the midst of this questionableness, then there can be no real incarnation.