II

The Dogma of Christ

I Methodology and the Nature of the Problem

It is one of the essential accomplishments of psychoanalysis that it has done away with the false distinction between social psychology and individual psychology. On the one hand, Freud emphasized that there is no individual psychology of man isolated from his social environment, because an isolated man does not exist. Freud knew no *homo psychologicus*, no psychological Robinson Crusoe, like the economic man of classical economic theory. On the contrary, one of Freud's most important discoveries was the understanding of the psychological development of the individual's earliest social relations—those with his parents, brothers, and sisters.

"It is true," Freud wrote, "…that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first, individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well."[1]

On the other hand, Freud broke radically with the illusion of a social psychology whose object was "the group." For him, "social instinct" was not the object of psychology any more than isolated man was, since it was not an "original and elemental" instinct; rather, he saw "the beginning of the psyche's formation in a narrower circle, such as the family." He has shown that the psychological phenomena operative in the group are to be understood on the basis of the psychic mechanisms operative in the individual, not on the basis of a "group mind" as such.[2]

The difference between individual and social psychology is revealed to be a quantitative and not a qualitative one. Individual psychology takes into

account all determinants that have affected the lot of the individual, and in this way arrives at a maximally complete picture of the individual's psychic structure. The more we extend the sphere of psychological investigation—that is, the greater the number of men whose common traits permit them to be grouped—the more we must reduce the extent of our examination of the total psychic structure of the individual members of the group.

The greater, therefore, the number of subjects of an investigation in social psychology, the narrower the insight into the total psychic structure of any individual within the group being studied. If this is not recognized, misunderstandings will easily arise in the evaluation of the results of such investigations. One expects to hear something about the psychic structure of the individual member of a group, but the social-psychological investigation can study only the character matrix common to all members of the group, and does not take into account the total character structure of a particular individual. The latter can never be the task of social psychology, and is possible only if an extensive knowledge of the individual's development is available. If, for example, in a social-psychological investigation it is asserted that a group changes from an aggressive-hostile attitude toward the father figure to a passive-submissive attitude, this assertion means something different from the same statement when made of an individual in an individual-psychological investigation. In the latter case, it means that this change is true of the individual's total attitude; in the former, it means that it represents an average characteristic common to all the members of the group, which does not necessarily play a central role in the character structure of each individual. The value of social-psychological investigation, therefore, cannot lie in the fact that we acquire from it a full insight into the psychic peculiarities of the individual members, but only in the fact that we can establish those common psychic tendencies that play a decisive role in their social development.

The overcoming of the theoretical opposition between individual and social psychology accomplished by psychoanalysis leads to the judgment that the method of a social-psychological investigation can be essentially the same as the method which psychoanalysis applies in the investigation of the individual psyche. It will, therefore, be wise to consider briefly the essential features of this method, since it is of significance in the present study.

Freud proceeds from the view that in the causes producing neuroses—and the same holds for the instinctual structure of the healthy—an inherited sexual constitution and the events that have been experienced form a complementary series:

> At one end of the series stand those extreme cases concerning which you may say with confidence: These people would have fallen ill whatever happened, whatever they experienced, however merciful life had been to them because of their anomalous libido-development. At the other end stand cases which call forth the opposite verdict—they would undoubtedly have escaped illness if life had not put such and such burdens upon them. In the intermediate cases in the series, more or less of the disposing factor (the sexual constitution) is combined with less or more of the injurious impositions of life. Their sexual constitution would not have brought about their neurosis if they had not gone through such and such experiences, and life's vicissitudes would not have worked traumatically upon them if the libido had been otherwise constituted.[3]

For psychoanalysis, the constitutional element in the psychic structure of the healthy or of the ill person is a factor that must be observed in the psychological investigation of individuals, but it remains intangible. What psychoanalysis is concerned with is experience; the investigation of its influence on emotional development is its primary purpose. Psychoanalysis is aware, of course, that the emotional development of the individual is determined more or less by his constitution; this insight is a presupposition of psychoanalysis, but psychoanalysis itself is concerned exclusively with the investigation of the influence of the individual's life-situation on his emotional development. In practice this means that for the psychoanalytic method a maximum knowledge of the individual's history—mainly of his early childhood experiences but certainly not limited to them—is an essential prerequisite. It studies the relation between a person's life pattern and the specific aspects of his emotional development. Without extensive information concerning the individual's life pattern, analysis is impossible. General observation reveals, of course, that certain typical expressions of behavior will indicate typical life patterns. One could surmise corresponding patterns by analogy, but all such inferences would contain an element of uncertainty and would have limited scientific validity. The method of individual psychoanalysis is therefore a delicately "historical" method: the understanding of emotional development on the basis of knowledge of the individual's life history.

The method of applying psychoanalysis to groups cannot be different. The common psychic attitudes of the group members are to be understood only on the basis of their common patterns. Just as individual psychoanalytic psychology seeks to understand the individual emotional constellation, so social psychology can acquire an insight into the emotional structure of a

group only by an exact knowledge of its life pattern. Social psychology can make assertions only concerning the psychic attitudes common to all; it therefore requires the knowledge of life situations common to all and characteristic for all.

If the method of social psychology is basically no different from that of individual psychology, there is, nevertheless, a difference which must be pointed out.

Whereas psychoanalytic research is concerned primarily with neurotic individuals, social-psychological research is concerned with groups of normal people.

The neurotic person is characterized by the fact that he has not succeeded in adjusting himself psychically to his real environment. Through the fixation of certain emotional impulses, of certain psychic mechanisms which at one time were appropriate and adequate, he comes into conflict with reality. The psychic structure of the neurotic is therefore almost entirely unintelligible without the knowledge of his early childhood experiences, for, due to his neurosis—an expression of his lack of adjustment or of the particular range of infantile fixations—even his position as an adult is determined essentially by that childhood situation. Even for the normal person the experiences of early childhood are of decisive significance. His character, in the broadest sense, is determined by them and without them it is unintelligible in its totality. But because he has adjusted himself psychically to reality in a higher degree than the neurotic, a much greater part of his psychic structure is understandable than in the case of the neurotic. Social psychology is concerned with normal people, upon whose psychic situation reality has an incomparably greater influence than upon the neurotic. Thus it can forgo even the knowledge of the individual childhood experiences of the various members of the group under investigation; from the knowledge of the socially conditioned life pattern in which these people were situated after the early years of childhood, it can acquire an understanding of the psychic attitudes common to them.

Social psychology wishes to investigate how certain psychic attitudes common to members of a group are related to their common life experiences. It is no more an accident in the case of an individual whether this or that libido direction dominates, whether the Oedipus complex finds ‘this or that outlet, than it is an accident if changes in psychic characteristics occur in the psychic situation of a group, either in the same class of people over a period of time or simultaneously among different classes. It is the task of social psychology to indicate why such changes occur and how they are to be understood on the basis of the experience common to the members of the group.

The present investigation is concerned with a narrowly limited problem of social psychology, namely, the question concerning the motives conditioning the evolution of concepts about the relation of God the Father to Jesus from the beginning of Christianity to the formulation of the Nicene Creed in the fourth century. In accordance with the theoretical principles just set forth, this investigation aims to determine the extent to which the change in certain religious ideas is an expression of the psychic change of the people involved and the extent to which these changes are conditioned by their conditions of life. It will attempt to understand the ideas in terms of men and their life patterns, and to show that the evolution of dogma can be understood only through knowledge of the unconscious, upon which external reality works and which determines the content of consciousness.

The method of this work necessitates that relatively large space be devoted to the presentation of the life situation of the people investigated, to their spiritual, economic, social, and political situation—in short, to their "psychic surfaces." If this seems to involve a disproportionate emphasis, the reader should bear in mind that even in the psychoanalytic case study of an ill person, great space is given to the presentation of the external circumstances surrounding the person. In the present work the description of the total cultural situation of the masses of people being investigated and the presentation of their external environment are more decisive than the description of the actual situation in a case study. The reason for this is that in the nature of things the historical reconstruction, even though it is supposed to be offered only to a certain extent in detail, is incomparably more complicated and more extensive than the report of simple facts as they occur in the life of an individual. We believe, however, that this disadvantage must be tolerated, because only in this way can an analytical understanding of historical phenomena be achieved.

The present study is concerned with a subject that has been treated by one of the most prominent representatives of the analytic study of religion, Theodor Reik.[4] The difference in content, which necessarily results from the different methodology, will, like the methodological differences themselves, be considered briefly at the end of this essay.

Our purpose here is to understand the change in certain contents of consciousness as expressed in theological ideas as the result of a change in unconscious processes. Accordingly, just as we have done with regard to the methodological problem, we propose to deal briefly with the most important findings of psychoanalysis as they touch upon our question.

II The Social-Psychological Function of Religion

Psychoanalysis is a psychology of drives or impulses. It sees human behavior as conditioned and defined by emotional drives, which it interprets as an outflow of certain physiologically rooted impulses, themselves not subject to immediate observation. Consistent with the popular classifications of hunger drives and love drives, from the beginning, Freud distinguished between the ego, or self-preservation, drives and the sexual drives. Because of the libidinous character of the ego drives of self-preservation, and because of the special significance of destructive tendencies in the psychic apparatus of man, Freud suggested a different grouping, taking into account a contrast between life-maintaining and destructive drives. This classification needs no further discussion here. What is important is the recognition of certain qualities of the sex drive that distinguish them from the ego drives. The sex drives are not imperative; that is, it is possible to leave their demands ungratified without menacing life itself, which would not be the case with continued failure to satisfy hunger, thirst, and the need for sleep. Furthermore, the sex drives, up to a certain and not insignificant point, permit a gratification in fantasies and with one's own body. They are, therefore, much more independent of external reality than are the ego drives. Closely connected with this are the easy transference and capacity for interchange among the component impulses of sexuality. The frustration of one libidinal impulse can be relatively easily offset by the substitution of another impulse that can be gratified. This flexibility and versatility within the sexual drives are the basis for the extraordinary variability of the psychic structure and therein lies also the basis for the possibility that individual experiences can so definitely and markedly affect the libido structure. Freud sees the pleasure principle modified by the reality principle as the regulator of the psychic apparatus. He says:

> We will therefore turn to the less ambitious question of what men themselves show by their behavior to be the purpose and intention of their lives. What do they demand of life and wish to achieve in it? The answer to this can hardly be in doubt. They strive after happiness; they want to become happy and remain so. This endeavor has two sides, a positive and a negative aim. It aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and unpleasure, and on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure. In its narrower sense the word "happiness" only relates to the last. In conformity with this dichotomy in his aims, man's activity develops in two directions, according as it seeks to realize—in the main, or even exclusively—the one or the other of these aims.[5]

The individual strives to experience—under given circumstances—a

maximum of libido gratification and a minimum of pain; in order to avoid pain, changes or even frustrations of the different component sex impulses can be accepted. A corresponding renunciation of the ego impulses, however, is impossible.

The peculiarity of an individual's emotional structure depends upon his psychic constitution and primarily upon experiences in infancy. External reality, which guarantees him the satisfaction of certain impulses, but which compels the renunciation of certain others, is defined by the existing social situation in which he lives. This social reality includes the wider reality which embraces all members of society and the narrow reality of distinct social classes.

Society has a double function for the psychic situation of the individual, both frustrating and satisfying. A person seldom renounces impulses because he sees the danger resulting from their satisfaction. Generally, society dictates such renunciations: first, those prohibitions established on the basis of social recognition of a real danger *for the individual himself*, a danger not readily sensed by him and connected with the gratification of impulse; second, repression and frustration of impulses whose satisfaction would involve harm not to the individual but to the group; and, finally, renunciations made not in the interest of the group but only in the interest of a controlling class.

The "gratifying" function of society is no less clear than its frustrating role. The individual accepts it only because through its help he can to a certain degree count on gaining pleasure and avoiding pain, primarily with regard to the satisfaction of the elementary needs of self-preservation and, secondarily, in relation to the satisfaction of libidinous needs.

What has been said has not taken into account a specific feature of all historically known societies. The members of a society do not indeed consult one another to determine what the society can permit and what it must prohibit. Rather, the situation is that so long as the productive forces of the economy do not suffice to afford to all an adequate satisfaction of their material and cultural needs (that is, beyond protection against external danger and the satisfaction of elementary ego needs), the most powerful social class will aspire to the maximum satisfaction of their own needs first. The degree of satisfaction they provide for those who are ruled by them depends on the level of economic possibilities available, and also on the fact that a minimum satisfaction must be granted to those who are ruled so that they may be able to continue to function as co-operating members of the society. Social stability depends relatively little upon the use of external force. It depends for the most part upon the fact that men find themselves in a psychic condition that roots them inwardly in an existing social situation. For that purpose, as we have

noted, a minimum of satisfaction of the natural and cultural instinctual needs is necessary. But at this point we must observe that for the psychic submission of the masses, something else is important, something connected with the peculiar structural stratification of the society into classes.

In this connection Freud has pointed out that man's helplessness in the face of nature is a repetition of the situation in which the adult found himself as a child, when he could not do without help against unfamiliar superior forces, and when his life impulses, following their narcissistic inclinations, attached themselves first to the objects that afforded him protection and satisfaction, namely, his mother and his father. To the extent that society is helpless with respect to nature, the psychic situation of childhood must be repeated for the individual member of the society as an adult. He transfers from father or mother some of his childish love and fear and also some of his hostility to a fantasy figure, to God.

In addition, there is a hostility to certain real figures, in particular to representatives of the elite. In the social stratification, the infantile situation is repeated for the individual. He sees in the rulers the powerful ones, the strong, and the wise—persons to be revered. He believes that they wish him well; he also knows that resistance to them is always punished; he is content when by docility he can win their praise. These are the identical feelings which, as a child, he had for his father, and it is understandable that he is as disposed to believe uncritically what is presented to him by the rulers as just and true, as in childhood he used to believe without criticism every statement made by his father. The figure of God forms a supplement to this situation; God is always the ally of the rulers. When the latter, who are always real personalities, are exposed to criticism, they can rely on God, who, by virtue of his unreality, only scorns criticism and, by his authority, confirms the authority of the ruling class.

In this psychological situation of infantile bondage resides one of the principal guarantees of social stability. Many find themselves in the same situation they experienced as children, standing helplessly before their father; the same mechanisms operate now as then. This psychic situation becomes established through a great many significant and complicated measures taken by the elite, whose function it is to maintain and strengthen in the masses their infantile psychic dependence and to impose itself on their unconscious as a father figure.

One of the principal means of achieving this purpose is religion. It has the task of preventing any psychic independence on the part of the people, of intimidating them intellectually, of bringing them into the socially necessary infantile docility toward the authorities. At the same time it has another

essential function: it offers the masses a certain measure of satisfaction that makes life sufficiently tolerable for them to prevent them from attempting to change their position from that of obedient son to that of rebellious son.

Of what sort are these satisfactions? Certainly not satisfactions of the ego drives of self-preservation, nor better food, nor other material pleasures. Such pleasures are to be obtained only in reality, and for that purpose one needs no religion; religion serves merely to make it easier for the masses to resign themselves to the many frustrations that reality presents. The satisfactions religion offers are of a libidinous nature; they are satisfactions that occur essentially in fantasy because, as we have pointed out before, libidinous impulses, in contrast to ego impulses, permit satisfaction in fantasies.

Here we confront a question concerning one of the psychic functions of religion, and we shall now indicate briefly the most important results of Freud's investigations in this area. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud has shown that the animal god of totemism is the elevated father, that in the prohibition to kill and eat the totem animal and in the contrary festive custom of nevertheless violating the prohibition once a year, man repeats the ambivalent attitude which he had acquired as a child toward the father who is simultaneously a helping protector and an oppressive rival.

It has been shown, especially by Reik, that this transfer to God of the infantile attitude toward the father is found also in the great religions. The question posed by Freud and his students concerned the psychic quality of the religious attitude toward God; and the answer is that in the adult's attitude toward God, one sees repeated the infantile attitude of the child toward his father. This infantile psychic situation represents the pattern of the religious situation. In his *The Future of an Illusion*., Freud passes beyond this question to a broader one. He no longer asks only how religion is psychologically possible; he asks also why religion exists at all or why it has been necessary. To this question he gives an answer that takes into consideration psychic and social facts simultaneously. He attributes to religion the effect of a narcotic capable of bringing some consolation to man in his impotence and helplessness before the forces of nature:

> For this situation is nothing new. It has an infantile prototype, of which it is in fact only the continuation. For once before one has found oneself in a similar state of helplessness: as a small child, in relation to one's parents. One had reason to fear them, and especially one's father; and yet one was sure of his protection against the dangers one knew. Thus it was natural to assimilate the two situations. Here, too, wishing played its part, as it does in dream-life. The sleeper may be seized in a

> presentiment of death, which threatens to place him in the grave. But the dream-work knows how to select a condition that will turn even that dreaded event into a wish-fulfillment: the dreamer sees himself in an ancient Etruscan grave which he has climbed down into, happy to find his archaeological interests satisfied. In the same way, a man makes the forces of nature not simply into persons with whom he can associate as he would with his equals—that would not do justice to the overpowering impression which those forces make on him—but he gives them the character of a father. He turns them into gods, following in this, as I have tried to show, not only an infantile prototype but a phylogenetic one.
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> In the course of time the first observations were made of regularity and conformity to law in natural phenomena, and with this the forces of nature lost their human traits. But man's helplessness remains and along with it his longing for his father, and the gods. The gods retain their threefold task: they must exorcize the terrors of nature, they must reconcile men to the cruelty of fate, particularly as it is shown in death, and they must compensate them for the sufferings and privations which a civilized life in common has imposed on them.[6]

Freud thus answers the question, "What constitutes the inner power of religious doctrines and to what circumstances do these doctrines owe their effectiveness independently of rational approval?"

> These [religious ideas], which are given out as teachings, are not precipitates of experience or end results of thinking: they are illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strangest, and most urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength lies in the strength of those wishes. As we already know, the terrifying impression of helplessness in childhood aroused the need for protection—protection through love—which was provided by the father, and the recognition that this helplessness would last throughout life made it necessary to cling to the existence of a father, but this time a more powerful one. Thus the benevolent rule of divine Providence allays our fear of the dangers of life; the establishment of a moral world-order ensures the fulfillment of the demands of justice, which have so often remained unfulfilled in human civilization; and the prolongation of earthly existence in a future life provides the local and temporal framework in which these wish-fulfillments shall take place. Answers to the riddles that tempt the curiosity of man, such as how the universe began or what the relation is between the body and mind, are developed in conformity with the underlying assumptions of this system.

> It is an enormous relief to the individual psyche if the conflicts of its childhood arising from the father—complex-conflicts which it has never wholly overcome—are removed from it and brought to a solution that is universally accepted.[7]

Freud therefore sees the possibility of the religious attitude in the infantile situation; he sees its relative necessity in man's impotence and helplessness with respect to nature, and he draws the conclusion that with man's increasing control over nature, religion is to be viewed as an illusion that is becoming superfluous.

Let us summarize what has been said thus far. Man strives for a maximum of pleasure; social reality compels him to many renunciations of impulse, and society seeks to compensate the individual for these renunciations by other satisfactions harmless for the society—that is, for the dominant classes.

These satisfactions are such that in essence they can be realized in fantasies, especially in collective fantasies. They perform an important function in social reality. Insofar as society does not permit real satisfactions, fantasy satisfactions serve as a substitute and become a powerful support of social stability. The greater the renunciations men endure in reality, the stringer must be the concern for compensation. Fantasy satisfactions have the double function which is characteristic of every narcotic: they act both as an anodyne and as a deterrent to active change of reality. The common fantasy satisfactions have an essential advantage over individual daydreams: by virtue of their universality, the fantasies are perceived by the conscious mind as if they were real. An illusion shared by everyone becomes a reality. The oldest of these collective fantasy satisfactions is religion. With the progressive development of society, fantasies become more complicated and more rationalized. Religion itself becomes more differentiated, and beside it appear poetry, art, and philosophy as the expressions of collective fantasies.

To sum up, religion has a threefold function: for all mankind, consolation for the privations exacted by life; for the great majority of men, encouragement to accept emotionally their class situation; and for the dominant minority, relief from guilt feelings caused by the suffering of those whom they oppress.

The following investigation aims to test in detail what has been said, by examining a small segment of religious development. We shall attempt to show what influence social reality had in a specific situation upon a specific group of men, and how emotional trends found expression in certain dogmas, in collective fantasies, and to show further what psychic change was brought about by a change in the social situation. We shall try to see how this psychic

change found expression in new religious fantasies that satisfied certain unconscious impulses. It will thereby become clear how closely a change in religious concepts is connected, on the one hand, with the experiencing of various possible infantile relationships to the father or mother, and on the other hand, with changes in the social and economic situation.

The course of the investigation is determined by the methodological presuppositions mentioned earlier. The aim will be *to understand dogma on the basis of a study of people, not people on the basis of a study of dogma*. We shall attempt, therefore, first to describe the total situation of the social class from which the early Christian faith originated, and to understand the psychological meaning of this faith in terms of the total psychic situation of these people. We shall then show how different the mentality of the people was at a later period. Eventually, we shall try to understand the unconscious meaning of the Christology which crystallized as the end product of a three-hundred-year development. We shall treat mainly the early Christian faith and the Nicene dogma.

III Early Christianity and Its Idea of Jesus

Every attempt to understand the origin of Christianity must begin with an investigation of the economic, social, cultural, and psychic situation of its earliest believers.[8] Palestine was a part of the Roman Empire and succumbed to the conditions of its economic and social development. The Augustan principate had meant the end of domination by a feudal oligarchy, and helped bring about the triumph of urban citizenry. Increasing international commerce meant no improvement for the great masses, no greater satisfaction of their everyday needs; only the thin stratum of the owning class was interested in it. An unemployed and hungry proletariat of unprecedented size filled the cities. Next to Rome, Jerusalem was the city with relatively the largest proletariat of this kind. The artisans, who usually worked only at home and belonged largely to the proletariat, easily made common cause with beggars, unskilled workers, and peasants. Indeed, the Jerusalem proletariat was in a worse situation than the Roman. It did not enjoy Roman civil rights, nor were its urgent needs of stomach and heart provided for by the emperors through great distributions of grain and elaborate games and spectacles.

The rural population was exhausted by an extraordinarily heavy tax burden, and either fell into debt slavery, or, among the small farmers, the means of production or the small landholdings were all taken away. Some of these farmers swelled the ranks of the large-city proletariat of Jerusalem; others resorted to desperate remedies, such as violent political uprising and

plundering. Above this impoverished and despairing proletariat, there arose in Jerusalem, as throughout the Roman Empire, a middle economic class which, though suffering under Roman pressure, was nevertheless economically stable. Above this group was the small but powerful and influential class of the feudal, priestly, and moneyed aristocracy. Corresponding to the severe economic cleavage within the Palestinian population, there was social differentiation. Pharisees, Sadducees, and Am Ha-aretz were the political and religious groups representing these differences. The Sadducees represented the rich upper class: "[their] doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those of the greatest dignity:"[9]

Although they have the rich on their side, Josephus does not find their manners aristocratic: "The behavior of the Sadducees one towards another is in some degree wild, end their conversation is as barbarous as if they were strangers to them:"[10]

Below this small feudal upper class were the Pharisees, representing the middle and smaller urban citizenry, "who are friendly to one another, and are for the exercise of concord and regard for the public."[11]

> Now, for the Pharisees, they live meanly, and despise delicacies in diet; and they follow the conduct of reason, and what that prescribes to them as good for them, they do; and they think they ought earnestly to strive to observe reason's dictates for practice. They also pay respect to such as are in years; nor are they so bold as to contradict them in anything they have introduced; and, when they determine that all things are done by fate, they do not take away from men the freedom of acting as they think fit; since their notion is, that it hath pleased God that events should be decided in part by the council of fate, in part by such men as will accede thereunto acting therein virtuously or viciously. They also believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again; on account of which doctrines, they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people, and whatsoever they do about divine worship, prayers, and sacrifices, they perform them according to their direction.[12]

Josephus' description of the middle class of the Pharisees makes it appear more unified than it was in, reality. Among the following of the Pharisees were elements that stemmed from the lowest proletarian strata that continued their relationship with them in their way of life (for example, Rabbi Akiba).

At the same time, however, there were members of the well-to-do urban citizenry. This social difference found expression in different ways, most clearly in the political contradictions within Pharisaism, with regard to their attitude toward Roman rule and revolutionary movements.

The lowest stratum of the urban *Lumpenproletariat* and of the oppressed peasants, the so-called "Am Ha-aretz" (literally, land folk), stood in sharp opposition to the Pharisees and their wider following. In fact, they were a class that had been completely uprooted by the economic development; they had nothing to lose and perhaps something to gain. They stood economically and socially outside the Jewish society integrated into the whole of the Roman Empire. They did not follow the Pharisees and did not revere them; they hated them and in turn were despised by them. Entirely characteristic of this attitude is the statement of Akiba, one of the most important Pharisees, who himself stemmed from the proletariat: "When I was still a common [ignorant] man of the Am Ha-aretz, I used to say: 'If I could lay my hands on a scholar I would bite him like an ass.'"[13] The Talmud goes on: "Rabbi, say 'like a dog,' an ass does not bite," and he replied: "When an ass bites he generally breaks the bones of his victim, while a dog bites only the flesh." We find in the same passage in the Talmud a series of statements describing the relations between the Pharisees and the Am Ha-aretz.

> A man should sell all his possessions and secure the daughter of a scholar for a wife, and if he cannot secure the daughter of a scholar, he should try to obtain a daughter of a prominent man. If he cannot succeed in that, he should endeavor to obtain a daughter of a synagogue director, and if he cannot succeed in that, he should try to obtain a daughter of an alms collector, and if he cannot succeed even in this, he should try and obtain the daughter of an elementary-school teacher. He should avoid wedding the daughter of a common person [a member of the Am Ha-aretz], for she is an abomination, their women are an abhorrence, and concerning their daughters it is said, "Accursed be any who sleepeth with a cow." (Deut. 27)

Or, again, R. Jochanan says:

> One may tear a common person to pieces like a fish.…One who gives his daughter to a common person in marriage virtually shackles her before a lion, for just as a lion tears and devours his victim without shame, so does a common person who sleeps brutally and shamelessly with her.

R. Eliezer says:

> If the common people did not need us for economic reasons, they would long ago have slain us.…The enmity of a common person toward a scholar is even more intense than that of the heathens toward the Israelites.…Six things are true of the common person: One may depend upon no common person as a witness and may accept no evidence from him, one may not let him share a secret, nor be a ward for an orphan, nor a trustee of funds for charitable funds, one may not go on a journey in his company and one should not tell him if he has lost something.[14]

The views here cited (which could be multiplied considerably) stem from Pharisaic circles and show with what hatred they opposed the Am Ha-aretz, but also with what bitterness the common man may have hated the scholars and their following.[15]

It has been necessary to describe the opposition within Palestinian Judaism between the aristocracy, the middle classes and their intellectual leaders on the one hand, and the urban and rural proletariat on the other, in order to make clear the underlying causes of such political and religious revolutionary movements as early Christianity. A more extensive presentation of the differentiation among the extraordinarily variegated Pharisees is not necessary for the purpose of the present study and would lead us too far afield. The conflict between the middle class and the proletariat within the Pharisaic group increased, as Roman oppression became heavier and the lowest classes more economically crushed and uprooted. To the same extent the lowest classes of society became the supporters of the national, social, and religious revolutionary movements.

These revolutionary aspirations of the masses found expression in two directions: *political* attempts at revolt and emancipation directed against their own aristocracy and the Romans, and in all sorts of *religious-messianic* movements. But there is by no means a sharp separation between these two streams moving toward liberation and salvation; often they flow into each other. The messianic movements themselves assumed partly practical and partly merely literary forms.

The most important movements of this sort may be briefly mentioned here.

Shortly before Herod’s death, that is, at a time when, in addition to Roman domination, the people suffered oppression at the hands of Jewish deputies serving under the Romans, there took place in Jerusalem, under the leadership of two Pharisaic scholars, a popular revolt, during which the Roman eagle at the entrance to the Temple was destroyed. The instigators were executed, and

the chief plotters were burned alive. After Herod's death a mob demonstrated before his successor, Archelaus, demanding the release of the political prisoners, the abolition of the market tax, and a reduction in the annual tribute. These demands were not satisfied. A great popular demonstration in connection with these events in the year 4 B.C. was suppressed with bloodshed, thousands of demonstrators being killed by the soldiers. Nevertheless, the movement became stronger. Popular revolt progressed. Seven weeks later, in Jerusalem, it mounted to new bloody revolts against Rome. In addition, the rural population was aroused. In the old revolutionary center, Galilee, there were many struggles with the Romans, and in Trans-Jordan there was rioting. A former shepherd assembled volunteer troops and led a guerrilla war against the Romans.

This was the situation in the year 4 B.C. The Romans did not find it altogether easy to cope with the revolting masses. They crowned their victory by crucifying two thousand revolutionary prisoners.

For some years the country remained quiet. But shortly after the introduction in A.D. 6 of a direct Roman administration in the country, which began its activity with a popular census for tax purposes, there was a new revolutionary movement. Now began a separation between the lower and the middle classes. Although ten years earlier the Pharisees had joined the revolt, there developed now a new split between the urban and the rural revolutionary groups on the one side and the Pharisees on the other. The urban and rural lower classes united in a new party, namely, the Zealots, while the middle class, under the leadership of the Pharisees, was prepared for reconciliation with the Romans. The more oppressive the Roman and the aristocratic Jewish yoke became, the greater the despair of the masses, and Zealotism won new followers. Up to the outbreak of the great revolt against the Romans there were constant clashes between the people and the administration. The occasions for revolutionary outbreaks were the frequent attempts of the Romans to put up a statue of Caesar or the Roman eagle in the Temple of Jerusalem. The indignation against these measures, which were rationalized on religious grounds, stemmed in reality from the hatred of the masses for the emperor as leader and head of the ruling class oppressing them. The peculiar character of this hatred for the emperor becomes clearer if we remember that this was an epoch in which reverence for the Roman emperor was spreading widely throughout the empire and in which the emperor cult was about to become the dominant religion.

The more hopeless the struggle against Rome became on the political level, and the more the middle class withdrew and became disposed to compromise with Rome, the more radical the lower classes became; but the more

revolutionary tendencies lost their political character and were transferred to the level of religious fantasies and messianic ideas. Thus a pseudo-messiah, Theudas, promised the people he would lead them to the Jordan and repeat the miracle of Moses. The Jews would pass through the river with dry feet, but the pursuing Romans would drown. The Romans saw in these fantasies the expression of a dangerous revolutionary ferment; they killed the followers of this messiah and beheaded Theudas. Theudas had successors. Josephus provides an account of an uprising under the provincial governor Felix (52-60). Its leaders

> …deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government; and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty; but Felix thought this procedure was to be the beginning of a revolt; so he sent some horsemen, and footmen both armed, who destroyed a great number of them.
>
> But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him: these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place.[16]

The Roman military made short shrift of the revolutionary hordes. Most of them were killed or put in prison, the rest destroyed themselves; all tried to remain in hiding at home. Nevertheless, the uprisings continued:

> Now, when these were quieted, it happened, as it does in a diseased body, that another part was subject to an inflammation; for a company of deceivers and robbers [that is, the messianists and more politically-minded revolutionaries] got together, and persuaded the Jews to revolt, and exhorted them to assert their liberty, inflicting death on those that continued in obedience to the Roman government, and saying, that such as willingly chose slavery, ought to be forced from their desired inclinations; for they parted themselves into different bodies, and lay in wait up and down the country, and plundered the houses of the great men, and slew the men themselves, and set the villages on fire; and this till all Judea was filled with the effects of their madness. And thus the flame was every day more and more blown up, till it came to a direct

war.[17]

The growing oppression of the lower classes of the nation brought about a sharpening of the conflict between them and the less oppressed middle class, and in this process the masses became more and more radical. The left wing of the Zealots formed a secret faction of the “Sicarii” (dagger carriers), who began, through attacks and plots, to exert a terroristic pressure on the well-to-do citizens. Without mercy they persecuted the moderates in the higher and middle classes of Jerusalem; at the same time they invaded, plundered, and reduced to ashes the villages whose inhabitants refused to join their revolutionary bands. The prophets and the pseudo-messiahs, similarly, did not cease their agitation among the common folk.

Finally, in the year 66 the great popular revolt against Rome broke out. It was supported first by the middle and lower classes of the nation, who, in bitter struggles, overcame the Roman troops. At first the war was led by the property owners and the educated, but they acted with little energy and with the tendency to arrive at a compromise. The first year, therefore, ended in failure despite several victories, and the masses attributed the unhappy outcome to the weak and indifferent early direction of the war. Their leaders attempted by every means to seize power and to put themselves in the place of the existing leaders. Since the latter did not leave their positions voluntarily, in the winter of 67-68 there developed “a bloody civil war and abominable scenes, such as only the French Revolution may boast.”[18] The more hopeless the war became, the more the middle classes tried their luck in a compromise with the Romans; as a result, the civil war grew more fierce, together with the struggle against the foreign enemy.[19]

While Rabbi Jochanan ben Sakkai, one of the leading Pharisees, went over to the enemy and made peace with him, the small tradesmen, artisans, and peasants defended the city against the Romans with great heroism for five months. They had nothing to lose, but also nothing more to gain, for the struggle against the Roman power was hopeless and had to end in collapse. Many of the well-to-do were able to save themselves by going over to the Romans, and although Titus was extremely embittered against the remaining Jews, he nevertheless admitted those who were in flight. At the same time the embattled masses of Jerusalem stormed the king’s palace, into which many of the well-to-do Jews had brought their treasures, took the money, and killed the owners. The Roman war and the civil war ended with victory for the Romans. This was accompanied by the victory of the ruling Jewish group and the collapse of a hundred thousand Jewish peasants and the urban lower classes.[20]

Alongside the political and social struggles and the messianically colored revolutionary attempts are the popular writings originating at that time and inspired by the same tendencies: namely, the apocalyptic literature. Despite its variety, the vision of the future in this apocalyptic literature is comparatively uniform. First there are the "Woes of the Messiah" (Macc. 13:7,8), which refer to events that will not trouble "the elect"—famine, earthquakes, epidemics, and wars. Then comes the "great affliction" prophesied in Daniel 12:1, such as had not occurred since the creation of the world, a frightening time of suffering and distress. Throughout apocalyptic literature in general there runs the belief that the elect will also be protected from this affliction. The horror of desolation prophesied in Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12: 11 represents the final sign of the end. The picture of the end bears old prophetic features. The climax will be the appearance of the Son of Man on the clouds in great splendor and glory.[21]

Just as in the struggle against the Romans the different classes of people participated in different ways, so apocalyptic literature, too, originated in different classes. Despite a certain uniformity, this is clearly expressed by the difference in emphasis on individual elements within the various apocalyptic writings. Despite the impossibility of detailed analysis here, we may cite as an expression of the same revolutionary tendencies that inspired the left wing of the defenders of Jerusalem, the concluding exhortation of the Book of Enoch:

> Woe to those that build their homes with sand; for they will be overthrown from their foundation and will fall by the sword. But those who acquire gold and silver will perish in the judgment suddenly. Woe to you ye rich, for ye have trusted in your riches and from your riches ye shall be torn away, because you have not remembered the most High in the days of judgment.…Woe to you who requite your neighbor with evil, for you will be requited according to your works. Woe to you lying witnesses.…Fear not, ye that suffer, for healing will be your portion: A bright light will shine and you will hear the voice of rest from heaven. (Enoch 94-96).

Besides these religious-messianic, sociopolitical, and literary movements characteristic of the time of the rise of Christianity, another movement must be mentioned, in which political goals played no role and which led directly to Christianity, namely, the movement of John the Baptist. He enkindled a popular movement. The upper class, regardless of its persuasion, would have nothing to do with him. His most attentive listeners came from the ranks of the despised masses.[22] He preached that the kingdom of heaven and judgment

day were at hand, bringing deliverance for the good, destruction for the evil. “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” was the burden of his preaching.

To understand the psychological meaning of the first Christians’ faith in Christ—and this is the primary purpose of the present study—it was necessary for us to visualize what kind of people supported early Christianity. They were the masses of the uneducated poor, the proletariat of Jerusalem, and the peasants in the country who, because of the increasing political and economic oppression and because of social restriction and contempt, increasingly felt the urge to change existing conditions. They longed for a happy time for themselves, and also harbored hate and revenge against both their own rulers and the Romans. We have observed how varied were the forms of these tendencies, ranging from the political struggle against Rome to the class struggle in Jerusalem, from Theudas’ unrealistic revolutionary attempts to John the Baptist’s movement and the apocalyptic literature. From political activity to messianic dreams there were all sorts of different phenomena; yet behind all these different forms was the same motivating force: the hatred and the hope of the suffering masses, caused by their distress and the inescapability of their socioeconomic situation. Whether the eschatological expectation had more social, more political, or more religious content, it became stronger with the increasing oppression, and more active “the deeper we descend into the illiterate masses, to the so-called Am Ha-aretz, the circle of those who experienced the present as oppression and therefore had to look to the future for the fulfillment of all their wishes.”[23]

The bleaker the hope for real improvement became, the more this hope had to find expression in fantasies. The Zealots’ desperate final struggle against the Romans and John the Baptist’s movement were the two. extremes, and were rooted in the same soil: the despair of the lowest classes. This stratum was psychologically characterized by the presence of hope for a change in their condition (analytically interpreted, for a good father who would help them), and, at the same time, a fierce hatred of oppressors, which found expression in feelings directed against the Roman emperor, the Pharisees, the rich in general, and in the fantasies of punishment of the Day of Judgment. We see here an ambivalent attitude: these people loved in fantasy a good father who would help and deliver them, and they hated the evil father who oppressed, tormented, and despised them.

From this stratum of the poor, uneducated, revolutionary masses, Christianity arose as a significant historical messianic-revolutionary movement. Like John the Baptist, early Christian doctrine addressed itself not to the educated and the property owners, but to the poor, the oppressed, and

the suffering.[24] Celsus, an opponent of the Christians, gives a good picture of the social composition of the Christian community as he saw it almost two centuries later:

He asserts:

> In private houses also we see wool-workers, cobblers, laundry-workers, and the most illiterate and bucolic yokels, who would not dare to say anything at all in front of their elders and more intelligent masters. But whenever they get hold of children in private and some stupid women with them, they let out some astounding statements as, for example, that they must not pay any attention to their father and school-teachers, but must obey them; they say that these talk nonsense and have no understanding, and that in reality they neither know nor are able to do anything good, but are taken up with mere empty chatter. But they alone, they say, know the right way to live, and if the children would believe them, they would become happy and make their home happy as well. And if just as they are speaking they see one of the school-teachers coming, or some intelligent person, or even the father himself, the more cautious of them flee in all directions; but the more reckless urge the children on to rebel. They whisper to them that in the presence of their father and their schoolmasters they do not feel able to explain anything to the children, since they do not want to have anything to do with the silly and obtuse teachers who are totally corrupted and far gone in wickedness and who inflict punishment on the children. But, if they like, they should leave father and their schoolmasters, and go along with the women and little children who are their playfellows to the wooldresser's shop, or to the cobbler's or the washerwoman's shop, that they may learn perfection. And by saying this they persuade them?[25]

The picture Celsus gives here of the supporters of Christianity is characteristic not only of their social but also of their psychic situation, their struggle and hatred against paternal authority.

What was the content *of* the primitive Christian message?[26]

In the foreground stands the eschatological expectation. Jesus preached the nearness of the kingdom of God. He taught the people to see in his activities the beginning of this new kingdom. Nevertheless,

> The completion of the kingdom will only appear when he returns in glory in the clouds of heaven to judgment. Jesus seems to have announced this speedy return a short time before his death, and to have

> comforted his disciples at his departure with the assurance that he would immediately enter into a super mundane position with God.
>
> The instructions of Jesus to his disciples are accordingly dominated by the thought that the end—the day and hour of which, however, no one knows—is at hand. In consequence of this, also, the exhortation to renounce all earthly goods takes a prominent place.[27]
>
> The conditions of entrance to the kingdom are, in the first place, a complete change of mind, in which a man renounces the pleasures of this world, denies himself, and is ready to surrender all that he has in order to save his soul; then, a believing trust in God's grace which he grants to the humble and the poor, and therefore hearty confidence in Jesus as the Messiah chosen and called by God to realize his kingdom on the earth. The announcement is therefore directed to the poor, the suffering, those hungering and thirsting for righteousness…to those who wish to be healed and redeemed, and finds them prepared for entrance into…the kingdom of God, while it brings down upon the self-satisfied, the rich and those proud of their righteousness, the judgment of obduracy and the damnation of Hell?[28]

The proclamation that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matt. 10:7) was the germ of the oldest preaching. It was this that aroused in the suffering and oppressed masses an enthusiastic hope. The feeling of the people was that everything was coming to an end. They believed that there would not be time to spread Christianity among all the heathen before the new era arrived. If the hopes of the other groups of the same oppressed masses were directed to bringing about political and social revolution by their own energy and effort, the eyes of the early Christian community were focused solely on the great event, the miraculous beginning of a new age. The content of the primitive Christian message was not an economic nor a social-reform program but the blessed promise of a not-distant future in which the poor would be rich, the hungry would be satisfied, and the oppressed would attain authority.[29]

The mood of these first enthusiastic Christians is clearly seen in Luke 6:20 ff.:

> Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
> Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.
> Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh.
> Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man.
> Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in

> heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.
> But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.
> Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger.
> Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

These statements express not only the longing and expectation of the poor and oppressed for a new and better world, but also their complete hatred of the authorities—the rich, the learned, and the powerful. The same mood is found in the story of the poor man Lazarus, "who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table" (Luke 16:21), and in the famous words of Jesus: "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:24) The hatred of the Pharisees and the tax collectors runs like a red thread through the gospels, with the result that for almost two thousand years, opinion of the Pharisees throughout Christendom has been determined by this hatred.

We hear this hatred of the rich again in the Epistle of James, in the middle of the second century:

> Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you.
>
> Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.…behold, the judge is standing at the doors. (James 5:1 ff.)

Speaking of this hatred, Kautsky rightly says: "Rarely has the class hatred of the modern proletariat attained such forms as that of the Christian proletariat."[30] It is the hatred of the Am Ha-aretz for the Pharisees, of the Zealots and the Sicarii for the well to do and the middle class, of the suffering and harassed people of town and country for those in authority and in high places, as it had been expressed in the pre-Christian political rebellions and in messianic fantasies.

Intimately connected with this hatred for the spiritual and social authorities

is an essential feature of the social and psychic structure of early Christianity, namely, its democratic, brotherly character. If the Jewish society of the time was characterized by an extreme caste spirit pervading all social relationships, the early Christian community was a free brotherhood of the poor, unconcerned with institutions and formulas.

> We find ourselves confronted by an impossible task if we wish to sketch a picture of the organization during the first hundred years.…The whole community is held together only by the common bond of faith and hope and love. The office does not support the person, but always the person the office.…Since the first Christians felt they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth, what need was there for permanent institutions?[31]

In this early Christian brotherhood, mutual economic assistance and support, "love-communism," as Harnack calls it, played a special role.

We see, therefore, that the early Christians were men and women, the poor, uneducated, oppressed masses of the Jewish people, and later, of other peoples. In place of the increasing impossibility of altering their hopeless situation through realistic means, there developed the expectation that a change would occur in a very short time, at a moment's notice, and that these people would then find the happiness previously missed, but that the rich and the nobility would be punished, in accordance with justice and the desires of the Christian masses. The first Christians were a brotherhood of socially and economically oppressed enthusiasts held together by hope and hatred.

What distinguished the early Christians from the peasants and proletarians struggling against Rome was not their basic psychic attitude. The first Christians were no more "humble" and resigned to the will of God, no more convinced of the necessity and immutability of their lot, no more inspired by the wish to be loved by their rulers than were the political and military fighters. The two groups hated the ruling fathers in the same way, hoping with equal vigor to see the latter's downfall and the beginning of their own rule and of a satisfactory future. The difference between them lay neither in the presuppositions nor in the goal and direction of their wishes, but only in the sphere in which they tried to fulfill them. While the Zealots and Sicarii endeavored to realize their wishes in the sphere of political reality, the complete hopelessness of realization led the early Christians to formulate the same wishes in fantasy. The expression of this was the early Christian faith, especially the early Christian idea concerning Jesus and his relationship to the Father-God.

What were the ideas of these first Christians?

> The contents of the faith of the disciples, and the common proclamation which united them, may be comprised in the following propositions. Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah promised by the prophets. Jesus after his death is by the Divine awakening raised to the right hand of God, and will soon return to set up his kingdom visibly upon the earth. He who believes in Jesus, and has been received into the community of the disciples of Jesus, who, in virtue of a sincere change of mind, calls on God as Father, and lives according to the commandments of Jesus, is a saint of God, and as such can be certain of the sin-forgiving grace of God, and of a share in the future glory, that is, of redemption.[32]

"God has made him both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). This is the oldest doctrine of Christ that we have, and is therefore of great interest, especially since it was later supplanted by other, more extensive, doctrines. It is called the "adoptionist" theory because here an act of adoption is assumed. Adoption is here used in contrast to the natural sonship which exists from birth. Accordingly, the thought present here is that Jesus was not messiah from the beginning; in other words, he was not from the beginning the Son of God, but became so only by a definite, very distinct act of God's will. This is expressed particularly in the fact that the statement in Psalms 2:7, "You are my son, today I have begotten you," is interpreted as referring to the moment of the exaltation of Jesus (Acts 13:33)

According to an ancient Semitic idea, the king is a son of God, whether by descent or, as here, by adoption, on the day he mounts the throne. It is therefore in keeping with the oriental spirit to say that Jesus, as he was exalted "to the right hand of God, became the Son of God. This idea is echoed even by Paul, although for him the concept "Son of God" had already acquired another meaning. Romans 1:4, says of the Son of God that he was "designated Son of God in power…by his resurrection from the dead." Here two different forms of the concept conflict: the Son of God who was Son from the very beginning (Paul's idea); and Jesus, who, after the resurrection, was exalted to Son of God in power, that is, to kingly ruler of the world (the concept of the early community). The difficult combination of the two ideas shows very clearly that here two different thought patterns encountered each other. The older, stemming from the early Christian community is consistent, in that the early community characterizes Jesus, before the exaltation, as a man: "a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst" (Acts 2:22). One should observe here that Jesus has not performed the miracle, but God through him. Jesus was the voice of God. This idea prevails to some extent in the Gospel tradition, where,

for example, after the healing of the lame, the people praise God (Mark 2:12). In particular, Jesus is characterized as the prophet whom Moses promised: “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren” (Acts 3:22; 7:37; Deut. 18:15).[33]

We see thus that the concept of Jesus held by the early community was that he was a man chosen by God and elevated by him as a “messiah,” and later as “Son of God.” This Christology of the early community resembles in many respects the concept of the messiah chosen by God to introduce a kingdom of righteousness and love, a concept which had been familiar among the Jewish masses for a long time. In only two ideas of the new faith do we find elements that signify something specifically new: in the fact of his exaltation as Son of God to sit at the right hand of the Almighty, and in the fact that this messiah is no longer the powerful, victorious hero, but his significance and dignity reside just in his suffering, in his death on the cross. To be sure, the idea of a dying messiah or even of a dying god was not entirely new in the popular consciousness. Isaiah 53 speaks of this suffering servant of God. The Fourth Book of Ezra also mentions a dying messiah, although of course in an essentially different form, for he dies after four hundred years and after his victory.[34] The idea of a dying god may have become familiar to the people from an entirely different source, namely, the Near Eastern cults and myths (Osiris, Attis, and Adonis).

> The fate of man finds its prototype in the passion of a god who suffers on earth, dies, and rises again. This god will permit all those to share in that blessed immortality who join him in the mysteries or even identify themselves with him.[35]

Perhaps there were also Jewish esoteric traditions of a dying god or a dying messiah, but all these precursors cannot explain the enormous influence which the teaching about the crucified and suffering savior immediately had upon the Jewish masses, and soon upon the pagan masses as well.

In the early community of enthusiasts, Jesus was thus a man exalted after his death into a god who would soon return in order to execute judgment, to make happy those who suffer, and to punish the rulers.

We have now gained insight into the psychic surfaces of the followers of early Christianity sufficiently to attempt our interpretation of these first christological statements. Those intoxicated by this idea were people who were tormented and despairing, full of hatred for their Jewish and pagan oppressors, with no prospect of effecting a better future. A message which would allow them to project into fantasy all that reality had denied them must

have been extremely fascinating.

If there was nothing left for the Zealots but to die in hopeless battle, the followers of Christ could dream of their goal without reality immediately showing them the hopelessness of their wishes. By substituting fantasy for reality, the Christian message satisfied the longings for hope and revenge, and although it failed to relieve hunger, it brought a fantasy satisfaction of no little significance for the oppressed.[36]

The psychoanalytic investigation of the christological faith of the early Christian community must now raise the following questions: What was the significance for the first Christians of the fantasy of the dying man elevated to a god? Why did this fantasy win the hearts of so many thousands in a short time? What were its unconscious sources, and what emotional needs were satisfied by it?

First, the most important question: A man is raised to a god; he is adopted by God. As Reik has correctly observed, we have here the old myth of the rebellion of the son, an expression of hostile impulses toward the father-god. We now understand what significance this myth must have had for the followers of early Christianity. These people hated intensely the authorities that confronted them with “fatherly” power. The priests, scholars, aristocrats, in short, all the rulers who excluded them from the enjoyment of life and who in their emotional world played the role of the severe, forbidding, threatening, tormenting father—they also had to hate this God who was an ally of their oppressors, who permitted them to suffer and be oppressed. They themselves wanted to rule, even to be the masters, but it seemed to them hopeless to try to achieve this in reality and to overthrow and destroy their present masters by force. So they satisfied their wishes in a fantasy. Consciously they did not dare to slander the fatherly God. Conscious hatred was reserved for the authorities, not for the elevated father figure, the divine being himself. But the unconscious hostility to the divine father found expression in the Christ fantasy. They put a man at God’s side and made him a co-regent with God the father. This man who became a god, and with whom as humans they could identify, represented their Oedipus wishes; he was a symbol of their unconscious hostility to God the father, for if a man could become God, the latter was deprived of his privileged fatherly position of being unique and unreachable. The belief in the elevation of a man to god was thus the expression of an unconscious wish for the removal of the divine father.

Here lies the significance of the fact that the early Christian community held the adoptionist doctrine, the theory of the elevation of man to God. In this doctrine the hostility to God found its expression, while in the doctrine that later increased in popularity and became dominant—the doctrine about

the Jesus who was always a god—was expressed the elimination of these hostile wishes toward God (to be discussed in greater detail later). The faithful identified with this son; they could identify with him because he was a suffering human like themselves. This is the basis of the fascinating power and effect upon the masses of the idea of the suffering man elevated to a god; only with a suffering being could they identify. Thousands of men before him had been crucified, tormented, and humiliated. If they thought of this crucified one as elevated to god, this meant that in their unconscious, this crucified god was themselves.

The pre-Christian apocalypse mentioned a victorious, strong messiah. He was the representative of the wishes and fantasies of a class of people who were oppressed, but who in many ways suffered less, and still harbored the hope of victory. The class from which the early Christian community grew, and in which the Christianity of the first one hundred to one hundred fifty years had great success, could not identify with such a strong, powerful messiah; their messiah could only be a suffering, crucified one. The figure of the suffering savior was determined in a threefold way: First in the sense just mentioned; secondly by the fact that some of the death wishes against the fathergod were shifted to the son. In the myth of the dying god (Adonis, Attis, Osiris), god himself was the one whose death was fantasied. In the early Christian myth the father is killed in the son.

But, finally, the fantasy of the crucified son had still a third function: Since the believing enthusiasts were imbued with hatred and death wishes—consciously against their rulers, unconsciously against God the father—they identified with the crucified; they themselves suffered death on the cross and atoned in this way for their death wishes against the father. Through his death, Jesus expiated the guilt of all, and the first Christians greatly needed such an atonement. Because of their total situation, aggression and death wishes against the father were particularly active in them.

The focus of the early Christian fantasy, however—in contrast to the later Catholic faith, to be dealt with presently—seems to lie, not in a masochistic expiation through self-annihilation, but in the displacement of the father by identification with the suffering Jesus.

For a full understanding of the psychic background of the belief in Christ, we must consider the fact that at that time the Roman Empire was increasingly devoted to the emperor cult, which transcended all national boundaries. Psychologically it was closely related to monotheism, the belief in a righteous, good father. If the pagans often referred to Christianity as atheism, in a deeper psychological sense they were right, for this faith in the suffering man elevated to a god was the fantasy of a suffering, oppressed class

that wanted to displace the ruling powers—god, emperor, and father—and put themselves in their places. If the main accusations of the pagans against the Christians included the charge that they committed Oedipus crimes, this accusation was actually senseless slander; but the unconscious of the slanderers had understood well the unconscious meaning of the Christ myth, its Oedipus wishes, and its concealed hostility to God the father, the emperor, and authority.[37]

To sum up: In order to understand the later development of dogma, one must understand first the distinctive feature of early Christology, its adoptionist character. The belief that a man is elevated to a god was an expression of the unconscious impulse of hostility to the father that was present in these masses. It presented the possibility of an identification and the corresponding expectation that the new age would soon begin when those who were suffering and oppressed would be rulers and thus become happy. Since one could, and did, identify with Jesus because he was the suffering man, the possibility was offered of a community organization without authorities, statutes, and bureaucracy, united by the common identification with the suffering Jesus raised to a god. The early Christian adoptionist belief was born of the masses; it was an expression of their revolutionary tendencies, and offered a satisfaction for their strongest longing. This explains why in such an extraordinarily rapid time it became the religion also of the oppressed pagan masses (although soon not theirs exclusively).

IV The Transformation of Christianity and the Homoousian Dogma

The early beliefs concerning Jesus underwent a change. The man raised to God became the Son of Man who was always God and existed before all creation, one with God and yet to be distinguished from Him. Has this change of ideas about Jesus also a sociopsychological meaning such as we were able to demonstrate for the early adoptionist belief? We shall find an answer to this question by studying the people who, two to three hundred years later, created this dogma and believed in, it. In this way we may be able to understand their real life situation and its psychic aspects.

The most important questions are these: Who were the Christians in the early centuries after Christ? Does Christianity remain the religion of the suffering Jewish enthusiasts of Palestine, or who takes their place and joins them?

The first great change in the composition of believers occurred when Christian propaganda turned toward the pagans, and, in a great victorious campaign, won followers among them in almost the entire Roman Empire.

The Significance of change of nationality among the followers of Christianity should not be underestimated, but it played no decisive role as long as the social composition of the Christian community did not change essentially, as long, that is, as it was made up of poor, oppressed, uneducated people feeling common suffering, common hatred, and common hope.

> The familiar judgment of Paul concerning the Corinthian community holds without doubt for the second and third generations of most of the Christian communities as well as for the apostolic period:
>
> "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are." (I Cor. 1:26-28)[38]

But although the great majority of the followers Paul won for Christianity in the first century were still people of the lowest classes—lowly artisans, slaves, and emancipated slaves—gradually another social element, the educated and the well-to-do, began to infiltrate the communities. Paul was indeed one of the first Christian leaders that did not stem from the lower classes. He was the son of a well-to-do Roman citizen, had been a Pharisee and therefore one of the intellectuals that scorned the Christians and was hated by them.

> He was not a proletarian unfamiliar with and hatefully opposed to the political order, not one who had no interest in its continuance and who hoped for its destruction. He had from the beginning been too close to the powers of government, had had too much experience of the blessings of the sacred order not to be of a quite different mind concerning the ethical worth of the state, than, say, a member of the native Zealot party, or even than his Pharisaic colleagues who saw in the Roman domination at most the lesser evil compared with the half-Jewish Herodians.[39]

With his propaganda, Paul appealed primarily to the lowest social strata, but certainly also to some of the well-to-do and of the educated people, especially merchants who through their wanderings and travels became decidedly significant in the spread of Christianity:[40] But until well into the second century, a substantial element in the communities belonged to the lower classes. This is shown by certain passages from the original literature, which,

like the Epistle of James or the Book of Revelation, breathe flaming hatred for the powerful and the rich. The artless form of such pieces of literature and the general tenor of eschatology show that "the members of the [Christian] communions of the post-apostolic period were still drawn mainly from the ranks of the poor and the unfree.[41]

About the middle of the second century, Christianity began to win followers among the middle and higher classes of the Roman Empire. Above all, it was women of prominent position, and merchants, who took charge of the propaganda; Christianity spread in their circles and then gradually penetrated the circles of the ruling aristocracy. By the end of the second century, Christianity had already ceased to be the religion of the poor artisans and slaves. And when under Constantine it became the state religion, it had already become the religion of larger circles of the ruling class in the Roman Empire.[42]

Two hundred and fifty to three hundred years after the birth of Christianity, the adherents of this faith were quite different from the first Christians. They were no longer Jews with the belief, held more passionately than by any other people, in a messianic time soon to come. They were, rather, Greeks, Romans, Syrians, and Gauls—in short, members of all the nations of the Roman Empire. More important than this shift in nationality was the social difference. Indeed, slaves, artisans, and the "shabby *proletariat*," that is, the masses of the lower classes, still constituted the bulk of the Christian communion, but Christianity had simultaneously become the religion also of the prominent and ruling classes of the Roman Empire.

In connection with this change in the social structure of the Christian churches we must glance at the general economic and political situation of the Roman Empire, which had undergone a fundamental change during the same period. The national differences within the world empire had been steadily disappearing. Even an alien could become a Roman citizen (Edict of Caracalla, 212). At the same time, the emperor cult functioned as a unifying bond, leveling national differences. The economic development was characterized by a process of gradual but progressive feudalization:

> The new relationships, as they were consolidated after the end of the third century, no longer knew any free work, but only compulsory work in the status groups (or estates) that had become hereditary, in the rural population and the colonies, as well as with the artisans and the guilds, and also (as is well known) with the patricians who had become the principal bearers of the tax burden. Thus the circle was completed. The development comes back to the point from which it has started. The

medieval order is being established.[43]

The political expression of this declining economy, which was regressing into a new estate-bound "natural economy," was the absolute monarchy as it was shaped by Diocletian and Constantine. A hierarchical system was developed with infinite dependencies, at the apex of which was the person of the divine emperor, to whom the masses were to render reverence and love. In a relatively short time the Roman Empire became a feudal class state with a rigidly established order in which the lowest ranks could not expect to rise because the stagnation due to the recession of productive powers made a progressive development impossible. The social system was stabilized and was regulated from the top, and it was imperative to make it easier for the individual who stood at the bottom to be content with his situation.

In the main this was the social situation in the Roman Empire from the beginning of the third century on. The transformation which Christianity, especially the concept of Christ and of his relation to God the Father, underwent from its early days down to this era, must be understood primarily in the light of this social change and of the psychic change conditioned by it, and of the new sociological function which Christianity had to assume. The vital element in the situation is simply not understood if we think that "the" Christian religion spread and won over to its thinking the great majority of the population of the Roman Empire. The truth is, rather, that the original religion was transformed into another one, but the new Catholic religion had good reason for concealing this transformation.

We shall now point out what transformation Christianity underwent during the first three centuries, and show how the new religion contrasted with the old.

The most important point is that the eschatological expectations which had constituted the center of the faith and hope of the early community gradually disappeared. The core of the missionary preaching of the early communion was, "The kingdom of God is at hand." People had prepared for the kingdom, they had even expected to experience it themselves, and they doubted whether in the short time available before the coming of the new kingdom, it would be possible to proclaim the Christian message to the majority of the heathen world. Paul's faith is still imbued with eschatological hopes, but with him the expected time of the kingdom's coming already began to be postponed further into the future. For him the final consummation was assured by the elevation of the messiah, and the last struggle, which was still to come, lost its significance in view of what had already happened. But in the subsequent development, belief in the immediate establishment of the kingdom tended

more and more to disappear: “What we perceive is, rather, the gradual disappearance of an original element, the Enthusiastic and Apocalyptic, that is, of the sure consciousness of an immediate possession of the Divine Spirit, and the hope of the future conquering the present.”[44]

If the two conceptions, the eschatological and the spiritual, were closely bound together at the beginning, with the main stress on the eschatological conception, they slowly became separated. The eschatological hope gradually receded, the nucleus of the Christian faith drew away from the second advent of Christ, and “it would then necessarily be found in the first advent, in virtue of which salvation was already prepared for man and man for salvation.”[45]

The process of propagating the early Christian enthusiasm quickly died out. To be sure, throughout the later history of Christianity (from the Montanists to the Anabaptists), there were continual attempts to revive the old Christian enthusiasm with its eschatological expectation—attempts that emanated from those groups who, in their economic, social, and psychic situation, because they were oppressed and striving for freedom, resembled the first Christians. But the Church was through with these revolutionary attempts, ever since she had, in the course of the second century, won the first decisive victory. From that time on, the burden of the message was not in the cry, “The kingdom is at hand,” in the expectation that judgment day and the return of Jesus would come soon; the Christians no longer looked to the future or to history, but, rather, they looked backward. The decisive event had already taken place. The appearance of Jesus had already represented the miracle.

The real, historical world no longer needed to change; outwardly everything could remain as it was—state, society, law, economy—for salvation had become an inward, spiritual, unhistorical, individual matter guaranteed by faith in Jesus. The hope for real, historical deliverance was replaced by faith in the already complete spiritual deliverance. The historical interest was supplanted by the cosmological interest. Hand in hand with it, ethical demands faded away. The first century of Christianity was characterized by rigorous ethical postulates, in the belief that the Christian community was primarily a fellowship of holy living. This practical, ethical rigorism is replaced by the means of grace dispensed by the Church. Very closely connected with the renunciation of the original rigorous ethical practice was the growing reconciliation of Christians with the state. “The second century of the existence of the Christian church already exhibits along all lines a development which moves toward a reconciliation with the state and society.”[46] Even the occasional persecutions of the Christians by the state did not affect in the least this development. Although there were attempts here and there to maintain the old rigorist ethic hostile to the state and middle-class

life,

> … the great majority of Christians, especially the leading bishops, decided differently. It now sufficed to have God in one's heart and to confess faith in Him when a public confession before the authorities was unavoidable. It was enough to flee the actual worship of idols, otherwise the Christian could remain in every honorable calling; there he was allowed to come into external contact with the worship of idols, and he should conduct himself prudently and cautiously so that he neither contaminated himself nor even ran the risk of contaminating himself and others. The church adopted this attitude everywhere after the beginning of the third century. The state thereby gained numerous quiet, dutiful, and conscientious citizens who, far from causing it any difficulty, supported order and peace in society.…Since the church had abandoned her rigid, negative attitude toward the world, she developed into a state—supporting and state—reforming power. If we may introduce a modern phenomenon for comparison, we may say that the world—fleeing fanatics who awaited the heavenly state of the future became revisionists of the existing order of life.[47]

This fundamental transformation of Christianity from the religion of the oppressed to the religion of the rulers and of the masses manipulated by them, from the expectation of the imminent approach of judgment day and the new age to a faith in the already consummated redemption; from the postulate of a pure, moral life to satisfaction of conscience through ecclesiastical means of grace; from hostility to the state to cordial agreement with it—all this is closely connected with the final great change about to be described. Christianity, which had been the religion of a community of equal brothers, without hierarchy or bureaucracy, became "the Church," the reflected image of the absolute monarchy of the Roman Empire.

In the first century there was not even a clearly defined external authority in the Christian communities, which were accordingly built upon the independence and freedom of the individual Christian with respect to matters of faith. The second century was characterized by the gradual development of an ecclesiastical union with authoritative leaders and thus, also, by the establishment of a systematic doctrine of faith to which the individual Christian had to submit. Originally it was not the Church but God alone who could forgive sins. Later, Extra ecclesiam nulla salus; the Church alone offers protection against any loss of grace. As an institution, the Church became holy by virtue of her endowment, the moral establishment that educates for

salvation. This function is restricted to the priests, especially to the episcopate, “which in its unity guarantees the legitimacy of the church and has received the jurisdiction of forgiveness of sins.”[48] This transformation of the free brotherly fellowship into a hierarchical organization clearly indicates the psychic change that had occurred.[49]As the first Christians were imbued with hatred and contempt for the educated rich and the rulers, in short, for all authority, so the Christians from the third century on were imbued with reverence, love, and fidelity to the new clerical authorities.

Just as Christianity was transformed in every respect in the first three centuries of its existence and became a new religion as compared with the original one, this was true also with respect to the concept of Jesus. In early Christianity the adoptionist doctrine prevailed, that is, the belief that the man Jesus had been elevated to a god. With the continued development of the Church, the concept of the nature of Jesus leaned more and more toward the pneumatic viewpoint: A man was not elevated to a god, but a god descended to become man. This was the basis of the new concept of Christ, until it culminated in the doctrine of Athanasius, which was adopted by the Nicene Council: Jesus, the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all time, of one nature with the Father. The Arian view that Jesus and God the Father were indeed of similar but not identical nature is rejected in favor of the logically contradictory thesis that two natures, God and his Son, are only one nature; this is the assertion of a duality that is simultaneously a unity. What is the meaning of this change in the concept of Jesus and his relation to God the Father, and what relation does the change in dogma bear to the change in the whole religion?

Early Christianity was hostile to authority and to the state. It satisfied in fantasy the revolutionary wishes of the lower classes, hostile to the father. The Christianity that was elevated to the official religion of the Roman Empire three hundred years later had a completely different social function. It was intended to be, at the same time, a religion for both the leaders and the led; the rulers and the ruled. Christianity fulfilled the function which the emperor and the Mithras cult could not nearly as well fulfill, namely, the integration of the masses into the absolutist system of the Roman Empire. The revolutionary situation which had prevailed until the second century had disappeared. Economic regression had supervened; the Middle Ages began to develop. The economic situation led to a system of social ties and dependencies that came to their peak politically in the Roman-Byzantine absolutism. The new Christianity came under the leadership of the ruling class. The new dogma of Jesus was created and formulated by this ruling group and its intellectual representatives, not by the masses. *The decisive element was the change from*

the idea of man becoming God to that of God becoming man.

Since the new concept of the Son, who was indeed a second person beside God yet one with him, changed the tension between God and his Son into harmony, and since it avoided the concept that a man could become God, it eliminated from the formula the revolutionary character of the older doctrine, namely, hostility to the father. The Oedipus crime contained in the old formula, the displacement of the father by the son, was eliminated in the new Christianity. The father remained untouched in his position. Now, however, it was not a man, but his only begotten Son, existing before all creation, who was beside him. Jesus himself became God without dethroning God because he had always been a component of God.

Thus far we have understood only the negative point: why Jesus could no longer be the man raised to a god, the man set at the right hand of the father. The need for recognition of the father, for passive subordination to him, could have been satisfied by the great competitor of Christianity, the emperor cult. Why did Christianity and not the emperor cult succeed in becoming the established state religion of the Roman Empire? Because Christianity had a quality that made it superior for the social function it was intended to fulfill, namely, faith in the crucified Son of God. The suffering and oppressed masses could identify with him to a greater degree. But the fantasy satisfaction changed. The masses no longed identified with the crucified man, in order to dethrone the father in fantasy, but, rather, in order to enjoy his love and grace. The idea that a man became a god was a symbol of aggressive, active, hostile-to-the-father tendencies. The idea that God became a man was transformed into a symbol of the tender, passive tie to the father. The masses found their satisfaction in the fact that their representative, the crucified Jesus, was elevated in status, becoming himself a pre-existent God. People no longer expected an imminent historical change but believed, rather, that deliverance had already taken place, that what they hoped for had already happened. They rejected the fantasy which represented hostility to the father, and accepted another in its place, the harmonizing one of the son placed beside the father by the tatter’s free will.

The theological change is the expression of a sociological one, that is, the change in the social function of Christianity. Far from being a religion of rebels and revolutionaries, this religion of the ruling class was now determined to keep the masses in obedience and lead them. Since the old revolutionary representative was retained, however, the emotional need of the masses was satisfied in a new way. The formula of passive submission replaced the active hostility to the father. It was not necessary to displace the father, since the son had indeed been equal to God from the beginning,

precisely because God himself had “emitted” him. The actual possibility of identifying with a god who had suffered yet had from the beginning been in heaven, and at the same time of eliminating tendencies hostile to the father, is the basis for the victory of Christianity over the emperor cult. Moreover, the change in the attitude toward the real, existing father figures—the priests, the emperor, and especially the rulers—corresponded to this changed attitude toward the father-god.

The psychic situation of the Catholic masses of the fourth century was unlike that of the early Christians in that the hatred for the authorities, including the father-god, was no longer conscious, or was only relatively so; the people had given up their revolutionary attitude. The reason for this lies in the change of the social reality. Every hope for the overthrow of the rulers and for the victory of their own class was so hopeless that, from the psychic viewpoint, it would have been futile and uneconomical to persist in the attitude of hatred. If it was hopeless to overthrow the father, then the better psychic escape was to submit to him, to love him, and to receive love from him. This change of psychic attitude was the inevitable result of the final defeat of the oppressed class.

But the aggressive impulses could not have disappeared. Nor could they even have diminished, for their real cause, the oppression by the rulers, was neither removed nor reduced. Where were the aggressive impulses now? They were turned away from the earlier objects—the fathers, the authorities—and directed back toward the individual self. The identification with the suffering, crucified Jesus offered a magnificent opportunity for this. In Catholic dogma the stress was no longer, as in the early Christian doctrine, on the overthrow of the father but on the self-annihilation of the son. The original aggression directed against the father was turned against the self, and it thereby provided an outlet that was harmless for social stability.

But this was possible only in connection with another change. For the first Christians, the authorities and the rich were the evil people who would reap the deserved reward for their wickedness. Certainly the early Christians were not without guilt feelings on account of their hostility to the father; and the identification with the suffering Jesus had also served to expiate their aggression; but without doubt the emphasis for them was not in the guilt feelings and the masochistic, atoning reaction. For the Catholic masses later on the situation had changed. For them no longer were the rulers to blame for wretchedness and suffering; rather, the sufferers themselves were guilty. They must reproach themselves if they are unhappy. Only through constant expiation, only through personal suffering could they atone for their guilt and win the love and pardon of God and of his earthly representatives. By

suffering and castrating oneself, one finds an escape from the oppressive guilt feeling and has a chance to receive pardon and love.[50]

The Catholic Church understood how to accelerate and strengthen in a masterful way this process of changing the reproach against God and the rulers into reproach of the self. It increased the guilt feeling of the masses to a point where it was almost unbearable; and in doing so it achieved a double purpose: first, it helped turn reproaches and aggression away from the authorities and toward the suffering masses; and, second, it offered itself to these suffering masses as a good and loving father, since the priests granted pardon and expiation for the guilt feeling which they themselves had engendered. It ingeniously cultivated the psychic condition from which it, and the upper class, derived a double advantage: the diversion of the aggression of the masses and the assurance of their dependency, gratitude, and love.

For the rulers, however, the fantasy of the suffering Jesus not only had this social function but also an important psychic function. It relieved them of the guilt feelings they experienced because of the distress and suffering of the masses whom they had oppressed and exploited. By identifying with the suffering Jesus, the exploiting groups could themselves do penance. They could comfort themselves with the idea that, since even God's only-begotten Son had suffered voluntarily, suffering, for the masses, was a grace of God, and therefore they had no reason to reproach themselves for causing such suffering.

The transformation of christological dogma, as well as that of the whole Christian religion, merely corresponded to the sociological function of religion in general, the maintenance of social stability by preserving the interests of the governing classes. For the first Christians it was a blessed and satisfying dream to create the fantasy that the hated authorities would soon be overthrown and that they themselves, now poor and suffering, would achieve mastery and happiness. After their final defeat, and after all their expectations had proved futile, the masses became satisfied with a fantasy in which they accepted responsibility for all suffering; they could, however, atone for their sins through their own suffering and then hope to be loved by a good father. He had proved himself a loving father when, in the form of the son, he became a suffering man. Their other wishes for happiness, and not merely forgiveness, were satisfied in the fantasy of a blissful hereafter, a hereafter which was supposed to replace the historically happy condition in this world for which the early Christians had hoped.

In our interpretation of the Homoousian formula, however, we have not yet found its unique and ultimate unconscious meaning. Analytic experience leads us to expect that behind the logical contradiction of the formula,

namely, that two are equal to one, must be hidden a specific unconscious meaning to which the dogma owes its significance and its fascination. This deepest, unconscious meaning of the Homoousian doctrine becomes clear when we recall a simple fact: There is one actual situation in which this formula makes sense, the situation of the child in its mother's womb. Mother and child are then two beings and at the same time are one.

We have now arrived at the central problem of the change in the idea of the relation of Jesus to God the Father. Not only the son has changed but the father as well. The strong, powerful father has become the sheltering and protecting mother; the once rebellious, then suffering and passive son has become the small child. Under the guise of the fatherly God of the Jews, who in the struggle with the Near Eastern motherly divinities had gained dominance, the divine figure of the Great Mother emerges again, and becomes the dominating figure of medieval Christianity.

The significance that the motherly divinity had for Catholic Christianity, from the fourth century on, becomes clear, first, in the role that the Church, as such, begins to play; and second, in the cult of Mary.[51] It has been shown that for early Christianity the idea of a *church* was still quite alien. Only in the course of historical development does the Church gradually assume a hierarchical organization; the Church itself becomes a holy institution and more than merely the sum of its members. The Church mediates salvation, the believers are her children, she is the Great Mother through whom alone man can achieve security and blessedness.

Equally revealing is the revival of the figure of the motherly divinity in the cult of Mary. Mary represents that motherly divinity grown independent by separating itself from the father-god. In her, the motherly qualities, which had always unconsciously been a part of God the Father, were now consciously and clearly experienced and symbolically represented.

In the New Testament account, Mary was in no way elevated beyond the sphere of ordinary men. With the development of Christology, ideas about Mary assumed an ever increasing prominence. The more the figure of the historical human Jesus receded in favor of the pre-existent Son of God, the more Mary was deified. Although, according to the New Testament, Mary in her marriage with Joseph continued to bear children, Epiphanius disputed that view as heretical and frivolous. In the Nestorian controversy a decision against Nestorius was reached in 431 that Mary was not only the mother of Christ but also the mother of God, and at the end of the fourth century there arose a cult of Mary, and men addressed prayers to her. About the same time the representation of Mary in the plastic arts also began to play a great and ever increasing role. The succeeding centuries attached more and more

significance to the mother of God, and her worship became more exuberant and more general. Altars were erected to her, and her pictures were shown everywhere. From a recipient of grace she became the dispenser of grace:[52] Mary with the infant Jesus became the symbol of the Catholic Middle Ages.

The full significance of the collective fantasy of the nursing Madonna becomes clear only through the results of psychoanalytic clinical investigations. Sándor Radá has pointed out the extraordinary significance which the fear of starvation, on the one hand, and the happiness of oral satisfaction, on the other, play in the psychic life of the individual:

> The torments of hunger become a psychic foretaste of later "punishments," and through the school of punishment they become the primitive mechanism of a self-punishment which finally in melancholia achieves so fateful a significance. Behind the boundless fear of pauperization felt by the melancholy is hidden nothing other than the fear of starvation; this fear is the reaction of the vitality of the normal ego-residue to the life threatening, melancholic act of expiation or penance imposed by the church. Drinking from the breast, however, remains the shining example of the unfailing, pardoning proffer of love. It is certainly no accident that the nursing Madonna with the child has become the symbol of a powerful religion and through her mediation the symbol of a whole epoch of our Western culture. In my opinion, the derivation of the meaning-complex of guilt atonement and pardon from the early infantile experience of rage, hunger, and drinking from the breast solves our riddle as to why the hope for absolution and love is perhaps the most powerful configuration we encounter in the higher levels of human psychic life.[53]

Radó's study makes entirely intelligible the connection between the fantasy of the suffering Jesus and that of the child Jesus on the mother's breast. Both fantasies are an expression of the wish for pardon and expiation. In the fantasy of the crucified Jesus, pardon is obtained by a passive, self-castrating submission to the father. In the fantasy of the child Jesus on the breast of the Madonna, the masochistic element is lacking; in place of the father one finds the mother who, while she pacifies the child, grants pardon and expiation. The same happy feeling constitutes the unconscious meaning of the Homoousian dogma, the fantasy of the child sheltered in the womb.

This fantasy of the great pardoning mother is the optimal gratification which Catholic Christianity had to offer. The more the masses suffered, the more their real situation resembled that of the suffering Jesus, and the more

the figure of the happy, suckling babe could, and must, appear alongside the figure of the suffering Jesus. But this meant also that men had to regress to a passive, infantile attitude. This position precluded active revolt; it was the psychic attitude corresponding to the man of hierarchically structured medieval society, a human being who found himself dependent on the rulers, who expected to secure from them his minimum sustenance, and for whom hunger was proof of his sins.

V The Development of the Dogma Until the Nicene Council

Thus far we have followed the changes in the concepts of Christ and his relation to God the Father from their beginning in the early Christian faith to the Nicene dogma, and have tried to point out the motives for the changes. The development had several intermediate stages, however, which are characterized by the different formulations that appeared up to the time of the Nicene Council. This development proceeds by contradiction, and this can be understood dialectically only together with the gradual evolution of Christianity from a revolutionary into a state-supporting religion. To demonstrate that the different formulations of the dogma correspond at each time to a particular class and its needs constitutes a special study. Nevertheless, the basic features should be indicated here.

Second-century Christianity, which had already begun its “revisionism,” was characterized by a battle on two fronts: On the one hand, the revolutionary tendencies which still flared up with some force in widely different places had to be suppressed; on the other hand, tendencies which were inclined to develop too quickly in the direction of social conformity, indeed more quickly than the social development permitted, also had to be suppressed. The masses could take only a slow, gradual course from the hope in a revolutionary Jesus to faith in a state-supporting Jesus.

The strongest expression of early Christian tendencies was Montanism. Originally the powerful effort of a Phrygian prophet, Montanus, in the second half of the second century, Montanism was a reaction against the conforming tendencies of Christianity, a reaction that sought to restore the early Christian enthusiasm. Montanus wished to withdraw the Christians from their social relationships and to establish through his followers a new community apart from the world, a community that was to prepare itself for the descent of the “upper Jerusalem.” Montanism was a flare-up of the early Christian mood, but the transformation process of Christianity had already gone so far that this revolutionary tendency was fought as heresy by the Church authorities, who acted like bailiffs of the Roman state. (The behavior of Luther toward the

revolting peasants and Anabaptists was similar in many respects.)

The Gnostics, on the other hand, were the intellectual representatives of the well-to-do Hellenistic middle class. According to Harnack, Gnosticism represented the "acute secularizing" of Christianity, and anticipates a development which was to continue for another one hundred and fifty years. At that moment it was attacked by the official Church, along with Montanism, but only an undialectical interpretation can overlook the fact that the struggle of the Church against Montanism was very different in character from that against Gnosticism. Montanism was resisted because it was the resurgence of a movement which had already been subdued and which was dangerous for the present leaders of Christianity. Gnosticism was resisted because it wanted to accomplish too quickly and too suddenly what it wished, since it announced the secret of the coming Christian development before the consciousness of the masses could accept it.

The Gnostic ideas of faith, especially their christological and eschatological conceptions, correspond exactly with the expectations which we must have on the basis of our study of the social-psychological background of dogmatic development. It is not surprising that Gnosticism denies entirely the early Christian eschatology, especially the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the flesh, and expects of the future only the freeing of the spirit from its material covering. This thorough rejection of eschatology, which was achieved in Catholicism a hundred and fifty years later, was at that time premature; eschatological concepts were still ideologically retained by the apologists, who in other respects had already become widely separated from the early Christian conception. Such a remnant was judged "archaic" by Harnack, but necessary at that time for the satisfaction of the masses.

Another doctrine of Gnosticism closely connected with this rejection of eschatology should be noted: that is, the Gnostic stress on the discrepancy between the supreme God and the creator of the world, and the assertion that "the present world sprang from a fall of man, or from an undertaking hostile to God, and is, therefore, the product of an evil or intermediate being."[54] The meaning of this thesis is clear: If creation, that is, the historical world, as it finds expression in social and political life, is evil from the beginning, if it is the work of an intermediary, indifferent, or feeble God, then indeed it cannot be redeemed, and all the early Christian eschatological hopes must be false and unfounded. Gnosticism rejected the real collective change and redemption of humanity, and substituted an individual ideal of knowledge, dividing men along religious and spiritual lines into definite classes and castes; social and economic divisions were regarded as good and God-given. Men were divided into pneumatics, who enjoyed the highest blessedness;

psychics, who shared somewhat lesser blessedness; and hylics, who had fallen completely into decline. It was a rejection of collective redemption and an assertion of the class stratification of society like that which Catholicism established later in the separation of laity from clergy, and the life of the common people from that of the monks.

What then was the concept of the Gnostics concerning Jesus and his relation to God the Father? They taught that

> … the heavenly Aeon, Christ, and the human appearance of that Aeon must be clearly distinguished. Some, like Basilides, who acknowledged no real union between Christ and the man Jesus, whom, besides, they regarded as an earthly man. Others, e.g., part of the Valentinians…taught that the body of Jesus was a heavenly psychical formation, and sprang from the womb of Mary only in appearance. Finally, a third party, such as Saturinus, declared that the whole visible appearance of Christ was a phantom, and therefore denied the birth of Christ.[55]

What is the meaning of these conceptions? The decisive feature is that the original Christian idea that a real man (whose character as a revolutionary and as one hostile to the father we have already set forth) became a god is eliminated. The different Gnostic tendencies are only expressions of the different possibilities of this elimination. All of them deny that Christ was a real man, thus maintaining the inviolability of the father-god. The connection with the concept of redemption is also clear. It is just as unlikely that this world, which is by nature evil, can become good, as it is that a real man can become a god; this means that it is equally unlikely that there is anything in the existing social situation that can be changed. It is a misunderstanding to believe that the Gnostics' thesis—that God the Creator of the Old Testament is not the highest God, but an inferior god—is an expression of especially hostile tendencies to the father. The Gnostics had to assert the inferiority of God the Creator in order to demonstrate the thesis of the immutability of the world and of human society, and for them this assertion was therefore not an expression of hostility to the father. Their thesis, in contrast to the first Christians, dealt with a god alien to them, the Jewish Yahweh, whom these Greeks had no reason to respect. For them, to dethrone this Jewish deity neither entailed nor presupposed any special hostile emotions toward the father.

The Catholic Church, which fought Montanism as a dangerous remnant and Gnosticism as a premature anticipation of what was to come, moved gradually but steadily toward the final achievement of her goal in the fourth

century. The apologists were first to provide the theory for this development. They created dogmas—they were the first to use this term in the technical sense—in which the changed attitude toward God and society found expression. To be sure, they were not so radical as the Gnostics: It has been pointed out that they retained the eschatological ideas and thus served as a link with early Christianity. Their doctrine of Jesus and his relation to God the father, however, was closely related to the Gnostic position, and contained the seed of the Nicene dogma. They attempted to present Christianity as the highest philosophy; they "formulated the content of the Gospel in a manner which appealed to the common sense of all serious thinkers and intelligent men of the age."[56]

Though the apologists did not teach that matter is evil, they did not, however, make God the direct originator of the world, but personified divine intelligence and inserted it between God and the world. One thesis, though less radical than the corresponding Gnostic one, has the same opposition to historical redemption. The Logos, ejected by God out of himself for the purpose of creation, and produced by a voluntary act, was for them the Son of God. On the one hand, he was not separated from God but was rather the result of God's own unfolding; on the other hand, he was God and Lord, his personality had a beginning, he was creature in relation to God; yet his subordination lay not in his nature but rather in his origination.

This Logos christology of the apologists was in essence identical with the Nicene dogma. The adoptionist, anti-authoritarian theory concerning the man who became God was discarded, and Jesus became the pre-existent only-begotten Son of God, of one nature with him and yet a second person beside him. Our interpretation of this source of the Nicene doctrine therefore holds, in essence, for the Logos christology, which was the decisive precursor of the new Catholic Christianity.

> The assimilation of the Logos Christology into the faith of the Church… involved a transformation of faith into doctrine with Greek-philosophical features; it pushed back the old eschatological ideas; indeed, it suppressed them; it substituted for the Christ of history a conceptual Christ, a principle, and transformed the historical Christ into phenomena. It led Christians to "Nature" and to naturalistic greatness, instead of to the personal and the moral; it gave to the faith of the Christians definitely the direction toward the contemplation of ideas and dogmas, thus preparing the way, on the one hand, for the monastic life, and, on the other, for a tutored Christianity of imperfect, working laymen. It legitimized hundreds of questions of cosmology and of the nature of the

> world as religious questions, and it demanded a definite answer on pain of losing salvation. This led to a situation where, instead of preaching faith, people preached faith in the faith and stunted religion while ostensibly enlarging it. But since it perfected the alliance with science, it shaped Christianity into a world-religion, and indeed into a cosmopolitan religion, and prepared the way for the Act of Constantine.[57]

Thus in the Logos christology the seed of the definitive Christian-Catholic dogma was created. Its recognition and adoption did not proceed, however, without a severe struggle against ideas which contradicted it, behind which were hidden remnants of early Christian views and the early Christian mood. The concept has been called *monarchianism* (first by Tertullian). Within monarchianism, two tendencies can be distinguished: the adoptionist and the modalist. Adoptionist monarchianism started with Jesus as a human who became God. The modalist view held that Jesus was only a manifestation of God the Father, not a god alongside him. Both tendencies, therefore, asserted the monarchy of God: one, that a man was inspired by the divine spirit, while God remained inviolable as a unique being; the other, that the Son was only a manifestation of the Father, again preserving the monarchy of God. Although the two branches of monarchianism appeared to contradict each other, the contrast was actually much less sharp. Harnack points out that the two views, apparently so opposed, in many ways coincide, and psychoanalytic interpretation makes fully intelligible the affinity of the two monarchian movements. It has already been indicated that the unconscious meaning of the adoptionist conception is the wish to displace the father-god; if a man can become God and be enthroned at the right hand of God, then God is dethroned. However, the same tendency is clear in the modalist dogma; if Jesus were only a manifestation of God, then certainly God the Father himself was crucified, suffered, and died—a view that has been called *Patripassianism*. In this modalistic conception we recognize a clear affinity with the old Near Eastern myths of the dying god (Attis, Adonis, Osiris), which imply an unconscious hostility to the father-god.

It is precisely the reverse of what an interpretation which disregarded the psychic situation of the people supporting the dogma might believe. Monarchianism, adoptionist as well as modalist, signifies not an increased reverence for God but the opposite—the wish for his displacement, which is expressed in the deification of a man or in the crucifixion of God himself. From what has already been said, it is fully understandable that Harnack emphasizes, as one of the essential points on which the two monarchian movements agree, the fact that they represented the eschatological as opposed

to the naturalistic conception of the person of Christ. We have seen that the former idea, that Jesus will return to establish the new kingdom, was an essential part of primitive Christian belief, which was revolutionary and hostile to the father. We are therefore not surprised to find this conception also in the two monarchian movements, whose relationship to early Christian doctrine has been demonstrated. Nor are we surprised that Tertullian and Origen testified that the bulk of the Christian people thought in monarchian terms, and we understand that the struggle against both types of monarchianism was essentially an expression of the struggle against the tendencies, still rooted in the masses, of hostility to the father-god and to the state.

We pass over individual nuances within dogmatic development and turn to the great disagreement which found a preliminary settlement in the Nicene Council, namely, the controversy between Arius and Athanasius. Arius taught that God is One, beside whom there is no other, and that his Son was an independent being different in essence from the Father. He was not true God and he had divine qualities only as acquired ones, and only in part. Because he was not eternal, his knowledge was not perfect. Therefore, he was not entitled to the same honor as the Father. But he was created before the world, as an instrument for the creation of other creatures, having been created by the will of God as an independent being. Athanasius contrasted the Son, who belonged to God, with the world: he was produced from the essence of God, shared completely the whole nature of the Father, had one and the same essence with the Father, and forms with God a strict unity.

We can easily recognize behind the opposition between Arius and Athanasius the old controversy between the monarchian conception and the Logos christology of the apologists (even though Athanasius made minor changes in the old Logos doctrine through new formulations), the struggle between the revolutionary tendencies hostile to the father-god and the conformist movement supporting father and state, and renouncing a collective and historical liberation. The latter finally triumphed in the fourth century, when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Arius, a pupil of Lucian, who was in turn a pupil of Paul of Samosata, one of the outstanding proponents of adoptionism, represented adoptionism no longer in its pure, original form but already mixed with elements of the Logos christology. That could not be otherwise, for the development of Christianity away from the early enthusiasm and toward the Catholic Church had already progressed so far that the old conflict could be fought out only in the language and in the climate of ecclesiastical views. If the controversy between Athanasius and Arius seemed to revolve around a small difference (whether

God and his Son are of the same nature or of equal nature, *Homoousian* or *Homoiousian)*, the smallness of this difference was precisely the consequence of the victory, now nearly complete, over the early Christian tendencies. But behind this debate lay nothing less than the conflict between revolutionary and reactionary tendencies. The Arian dogma was one of the final convulsions of the early Christian movement; the victory of Athanasius sealed the defeat of the religion and the hopes of the small peasants, artisans, and proletarians in Palestine.

We have tried to show with broad strokes how the various stages in the dogmatic development were in character with the general trend of this development from the early Christian faith to the Nicene dogma. It would be an attractive task, which we must forgo in this study, to show also the social situation of the groups that were involved at each stage. It would also be worth while to study the reason why nine-tenths of the Orient and the Germans adhered to Arianism. We believe, however, that we have shown sufficiently that the various stages of dogma development and both its beginning and end can be understood only on the basis of changes in the actual social situation and function of Christianity.

VI Another Attempt at Interpretation

What are the differences in method and in content between the present study and that of Theodor Reik dealing with the same material?

Reik proceeds methodologically in the following manner. The special object of his investigation is dogma, particularly christological dogma. Since he is “concerned with pursuing the parallels between religion and compulsion-neurosis and showing the connection between the two phenomena in single examples,” he tries to show, “especially in this representative example, that religious dogma in the evolutionary history of humanity corresponds to neurotic obsessional thought, that it is the most significant expression of irrational compulsive thinking.” The psychic processes that lead to the construction and development of dogma follow throughout the psychic mechanism of obsessional thinking, and the same motives predominate in both. “In the shaping of dogma the same defense mechanisms are involved as in the compulsive processes in the individual.”

How does Reik proceed to develop his thesis concerning the fundamental analogy between dogma and compulsion?

First, on the basis of his idea of the analogy between religion and the compulsion-neurosis, he expects to find this agreement in all individual aspects of both phenomena, and therefore also between religious thinking and

compulsive thinking. He then turns to the evolution of dogma and sees how it is carried out along the lines of a continued struggle over small differences; it does not seem to him farfetched to interpret this striking similarity between dogmatic development and obsessional thinking as proof of the identity of the two phenomena. Thus the unknown is to be explained by the known; the shaping of dogma is to be understood as following the same laws that govern compulsive-neurotic processes. The hypothesis of an inner relationship between the two phenomena is strengthened by the fact that in the christological dogma in particular, the relation to God the Father, with its basic ambivalence, plays a striking and special role.

In Reik's methodological attitude there are certain assumptions which are not explicitly mentioned, but whose exposition is necessary for the criticism of his method. The most important is the following: Because a religion, in this case Christianity, is conceived and presented as one entity, the followers of this religion are assumed to be a unified subject, and the masses are thus treated as if they were one man, an individual. Like organicistic sociology, which has conceived of society as a living entity and has understood the different groups within society as different parts of an organism, thus referring to the eyes, the skin, the head, and so on, of society, Reik adopts an organicistic concept—not in the anatomic but in the psychological sense. Furthermore, he does not attempt to investigate the masses, whose unity he assumes, in their real life situation. He assumes the masses are identical, and deals only with the ideas and ideologies produced by the masses, not concerning himself concretely with living men and their psychic situation. He does not interpret the ideologies as produced by men; he reconstructs the men from the ideologies. Consequently his method is relevant for the history of dogma and not as a method for the study of religious and social history. Thus it is quite similar not only to organicistic sociology but also to a method of religious research oriented exclusively to the history of ideas, which has already been abandoned, even by many historians of religion, for example, Harnack. By his method Reik implicitly supports the theological approach, which the content of his work consciously and explicitly rejects. This theological viewpoint emphasizes the unity of Christian religion—indeed, Catholicism claims immutability; and if we adopt as method the analysis of Christianity as if it were a living individual, we will, logically, be brought to the orthodox Catholic position.

The methodology just discussed is of great significance in the investigation of Christian dogma because it is decisive for the concept of ambivalence, which is central for Reik's work. Whether the assumption of a unified subject is acceptable or not is a matter that can be decided only after an investigation

—lacking in Reik—of the psychic, social, and economic situation, of the "psychic surfaces" of the group. The term ambivalence applies only when there is a conflict of impulses within one individual, or perhaps within a group of relatively homogeneous individuals. If a man simultaneously loves and hates another person, we can speak of ambivalence. But if, when there are two men, one loves and the other hates a third man, the two men are opponents. We can analyze why one loves and the other hates, but it would be rather confusing to speak of an ambivalence. When within a group we confront the simultaneous presence of contradictory impulses, only an investigation of the realistic situation of this group can show whether behind their apparent unity we might not find different subgroups, each with different desires, and fighting with each other. The apparent ambivalence might, indeed, turn out to be a conflict between different subgroups.

An example may illustrate this point. Let us imagine that in several hundred or a thousand years, a psychoanalyst, using Reik's method, made a study of the political history of Germany after the revolution of 1918, and particularly the dispute over the colors of the German flag. He would establish that there were in the German nation some, the monarchists, who favored a black-whitered flag; others, the republicans, who insisted on a black-red-gold flag; and others again who wanted a red flag and then an agreement was reached whereby it was decided to make the main flag black-red-gold, and the trade flag on ships black-white-red with a black-red-gold corner. Our imaginary analyst would first examine the rationalizations and find that one group claimed it wanted to keep the black-white-red flag because these colors are more visible on the ocean than black-red-gold. He would indicate what significance the attitude toward the father had in this battle (monarchy or republic), and he would go on to discover an analogy to the thinking of a compulsive neurotic. He would then cite examples where the doubt as to which color was the right one (Reik's example of the patient who cudgeled his brains over the white or black necktie serves excellently here) is rooted in the conflict of ambivalent impulses, and would see in the fuss over the colors of the flag and in the final flag compromise a phenomenon analogous to obsessional thinking conditioned by the same causes.

No one who understands the real circumstances will doubt that the inference from analogy would be false. It is clear that there were different groups whose different realistic and affective interests are in conflict with one another, that the struggle over the flag was a struggle between groups differently oriented both psychically and economically, and that one is concerned here with anything but an "ambivalence conflict." The flag compromise was not the result of an ambivalence conflict, but rather the

compromise between different claims of social groups fighting with each other.

What substantial differences result from the methodological difference? Both in the interpretation of the content of christological dogma and in the psychological evaluation of dogma as such, a different method leads to different results.

There is a common point of departure, the interpretation of early Christian faith as an expression of hostility to the father. In the interpretation of the further dogmatic development, however, we come to a conclusion precisely the opposite of Reik's. Reik considers Gnosticism a movement in which rebellious impulses, supported by the son-religion of Christianity, have predominated to the extreme, to the downgrading of the father-god. We have tried to show that, on the contrary, Gnosticism eliminated the early Christian revolutionary tendencies. Reik's error seems to us to grow out of the fact that, according to his method, he notices only the Gnostic formula of the removal of the Jewish father-god, instead of looking at Gnosticism as a whole, in which a quite different significance can be attributed to the formula of hostility to Yahweh. The interpretation of further dogmatic development leads to other equally contrary results. Reik sees in the doctrine of the pre-existence of Jesus the survival and conquest of the original Christian hostility to the father. In direct opposition to this idea, I have tried to show that in the idea of the pre-existence of Jesus, the original hostility to the father is replaced by an opposite harmonizing tendency. We see that the psychoanalytic interpretation leads here to two opposite conceptions of the unconscious meaning of different dogma formulations. This opposition certainly does not depend upon any difference in the psychoanalytic presuppositions as such. It rests only upon the difference in the method of applying psychoanalysis to social-psychological phenomena. The conclusions to which we come seem to us to be correct because, unlike Reik's, they stem not from the interpretation of an isolated religious formula but rather from the examination of this formula in its connection with the real life situation of the men holding it.

No less important is our disagreement, resulting from the same methodological difference, with respect to the interpretation of the psychological significance of dogma as such. Reik sees in dogma the most significant expression of popular compulsive thought, and tries to show "that the psychic processes which lead to the establishment and development of dogma consistently follow the psychic mechanisms of compulsive thinking, that the same motives predominate in the one area as in the other." He finds the development of dogma conditioned by an ambivalent attitude toward the father. For Reik, the hostility to the father finds its first high point in

Gnosticism. The apologists then develop a Logos christology, where the unconscious purpose of replacing God the Father by Christ is clearly symbolized, although the victory of unconscious impulses is prevented by strong defense forces. Just as in a compulsive neurosis, and where two opposite tendencies alternately win the upper hand, according to Reik the same conflicting tendencies appear in the development of dogma, which follows the same laws as the neurosis. We have just shown in detail the source of Reik's error. He overlooks the fact that the psychological subject here is not a man and is not even a group possessing a relatively unified and unchanging psychic structure, but, rather, is made up of different groups with different social and psychic interests. The different dogmas are an expression of just those conflicting interests, and the victory of a dogma is not the result of an inner psychic conflict analogous to that in an individual, but is the result, rather, of a historical development which, in consequence of quite different external circumstances (such as the stagnation and retrogression of the economy and of the social and political forces connected with it), leads to the victory of one movement and the defeat of another.

Reik views dogma as an expression of compulsive thinking, and ritual as an expression of collective compulsive action. Certainly it is correct that in Christian dogma, as well as in many other dogmas, ambivalence toward the father plays a great role, but this in no way demonstrates that dogma is compulsive thinking. We have tried to show precisely how the variations in the development of dogma, which at first suggest compulsive thinking, require, in fact, a different explanation. Dogma is to a large extent conditioned by realistic political and social motives. It serves as a sort of banner, and the recognition of the banner is the avowal of membership in a particular group. On this basis it is understandable that religions which are sufficiently consolidated by extra-religious elements (such as Judaism is by the ethnic element) are able to dispense almost completely with a system of dogmas in the Catholic sense.

But it is obvious that this organizing function of dogma is not its only function; and the present study has attempted to show what social significance is to be attributed to dogma by the fact that in fantasy it gratifies the demands of the people, and functions in place of real gratification. Given the fact that symbolic gratifications are condensed into the form of a dogma which the masses are required to believe on the authority of priests and rulers, it seems to us that dogma may be compared with a powerful suggestion, which is experienced subjectively as reality because of the consensus among the believers. For the dogma to reach the unconscious, those contents which are not capable of being consciously perceived must be eliminated and presented

in rationalized and acceptable forms.

VII Conclusion

Let us summarize what our study has shown concerning the meaning of the changes occurring in the evolution of the dogma of Christ.

The early Christian faith in the suffering man who became God had its central significance in the implied wish to overthrow the father-god or his earthly representatives. The figure of the suffering Jesus originated primarily from the need for identification on the part of the suffering masses, and it was only secondarily determined by the need for expiation for the crime of aggression against the father. The followers of this faith were men who, because of their life situation, were imbued with hatred for their rulers and with hope for their own happiness. The change in the economic situation and in the social composition of the Christian community altered the psychic attitude of the believers. Dogma developed; the idea of a man becoming a god changes into the idea of a god becoming a man. No longer should the father be overthrown; it is not the rulers who are guilty but the suffering masses. Aggression is no longer directed against the authorities but against the persons of the sufferers themselves. The satisfaction lies in pardon and love, which the father offers his submissive sons, and simultaneously in the regal, fatherly position which the suffering Jesus assumes while remaining the representative of the suffering masses. Jesus eventually became God without overthrowing God because he was always God.

Behind this there lies a still deeper regression which finds expression in the Homoousian dogma: the fatherly God, whose pardon is to be obtained only through one’s own suffering, is transformed into the mother full of grace who nourishes the child, shelters it in her womb, and thus provides pardon. Described psychologically, the change taking place here is the change from an attitude hostile to the father, to an attitude passively and masochistically docile, and finally to that of the infant loved by its mother. If this development took place in an individual, it would indicate a psychic illness. It takes place over a period of centuries, however, and affects not the entire psychic structure of individuals but only a segment common to all; it is an expression not of pathological disturbance but, rather, of adjustment to the given social situation. For the masses who retained a remnant of hope for the overthrow of the rulers, the early Christian fantasy was suitable and satisfying, as was Catholic dogma for the masses of the Middle Ages. The cause for the development lies in the change in the socioeconomic situation or in the retrogression of economic forces and their social consequences. The

ideologists of the dominant classes strengthened and accelerated this development by suggesting symbolic satisfactions to the masses, guiding their aggression into socially harmless channels.

Catholicism signified the disguised return to the religion of the Great Mother who had been defeated by Yahweh. Only Protestantism turned back to the father-god.[58] It stands at the beginning of a social epoch that permits an active attitude on the part of the masses in contrast to the passively infantile attitude of the Middle Ages.[59]

This essay was translated from the German by James Luther Adams

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[1] Sigmund Freud, Group *Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (London: Hogarth Press), Standard edition, XVIII, 69.

[2] Georg Simmel has strikingly indicated the fallacy of accepting the group as a "subject," as a psychological phenomenon. He says: "The unified external result of many subjective psychological processes is interpreted as a result of a unified psychological process—i.e., of a process in the collective soul. The unity of the resulting phenomenon is reflected in the presupposed unity of its psychological cause! The fallacy of this conclusion, however, upon which the whole of collective psychology depends in its general distinction from individual psychology, is obvious: the unity of collective actions, which appears only on the side of the visible result, is transferred surreptitiously to the side of the inner cause, the subjective bearer." "Über das Wesen der Sozialpsychologie," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, XXVI (1908).

[3] Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1943), p. 304. Freud says "the two factors" are "sexual constitution and events experienced, or if you wish, fixation of libido and frustration"; they "are represented in such a way that where one of them predominates the other is proportionately less pronounced."

[4] "Dogma und Zwangsidee," *Imago, XII* (1927). Cf. *Dogma and Compulsion* (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1951), and other works on psychology of religion by Reik; E. Jones, *Zur Psychoanalyse der christlichen Religion;* and A. J. Storfer, *Marias jungfräuliche Mutterschaft.*

[5] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Standard edition), XXI, 76.

[6] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (Standard edition), XXI, 17-18.

[7] *Ibid.*, p, 30.

[8] For the economic development, see especially M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: 1926); Max Weber, "Die sozialen Gründe des Untergangs der antiken Kultur," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Sozial- and Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1924; E. Meyer, "Sklaverei im Altertum," *Kleine Schriften*, 2nd ed., Vol. I; K. Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity* (Russell, 1953).

[9] *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 1, 4, translated by William Whiston (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1957).

[10] *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, The Wars of the Jews*, II, 8, 14.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, XVIII, 1, 3.

[13] Talmud, Pesachim 49b.

[14] The three passages just cited are in the Talmud, Pesachim 48b.

[15] Cf. Friedländer, *Die religiösen Bewegungen innerhalb des Judentums im Zeitalter Jesu* (Berlin, 1905).

[16] Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, II, 13, 4, 5.

[17] *Ibid.*, II, 13, 6. It is important to note that Josephus, who himself belonged to the aristocratic elite, is describing the revolutionaries in terms of his own bias.

[18] E. Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (3d ed.; 1901), I, 617.

[19] Cf. T. Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Vol. V.

[20] Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Vol. VI.

[21] Cf. Johannes Weiss, *Das Urchristentum* (Göttingen, 1917).

[22] Cf. M. Dibelius, *Die urchristliche Ueberlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer* (Stuttgart, 1911).

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[24] Cf. for the social structure of primitive Christianity, R. Knopf, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter* (Tübingen, 1905)*;* Adolph Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums* (4thed. 1923), Vol. I; Adolph Harnack, "Kirche and Staat bis zur Gründung der Staatskirche," *Kultur der Gegenwart*, 2nded.; Adolph Harnack, "Das Urchristentum and die soziale Frage," *Preussische Jahrbücher*, 1908, Vol. III; K. Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity* (Russell, 1953).

[25] Origen, *Contra Celsum*, translated by Henry Chadwick (London: Cambridge University Press, 1953), III, 55.

[26] The problem of the historical Jesus need not concern us in this connection. The social effect of the primitive Christian message is to be understood only on the basis of the classes to which it was directed and by which it was accepted; and only the understanding of their psychic situation is important for us here.

[27] Adolf Harnack, *History* of *Dogma* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1961), I, 66-67.

[28] *Ibid*., pp. 62-63.

[29] Cf. Weiss, Das *Urchristentum*, p. 55.

[30] K. Kautsky, *Der Ursprung des Christentums*, p. 345.

[31] H. von Schubert, *Grundzüge der Kirchengeschichte* (Tübingen, 1904).

[32] Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I, 78.

[33] Weiss, *op. cit*., p. 85.

[34] Cf. Psalm 22 and Hosea 6.

[35] F. Cumont, "Die orientalischen Religionen in ihrem Einfluss auf die europäischen Religionen des Altertums," *Kultur der Gegenwart* (2nd ed.; 1923), VOL I, Pt. III, p. 1; cf. also Weiss, *op. cit*., p. 70.

[36] A remark must be inserted here about one problem which has been the object of severe polemics, the question as to how far Christianity can be understood as a revolutionary class movement. Kautsky, in *Vorläufer des neuen Sozialismus* (Stuttgart, 1895), and later in *Foundations of Christianity*, has set forth the view that Christianity is a proletarian class movement, that in essence however, its significance lay in its practical activity, that is, in its charitable work and not in its "pious fanaticisms." Kautsky overlooks the fact that a movement may have a class origin without the existence of social and economic motives in the consciousness of its instigators. His contempt for the historical significance of religious ideas demonstrates only his complete lack of understanding of the meaning of fantasy satisfaction within the social process. His interpretation of historical materialism is so banal that it is easy for Troeltsch and Harnack to give an appearance of refuting historical materialism. They, like Kautsky, do not put at the center of the inquiry the problem of the class relationship that conditioned Christianity, but rather the problem as to how much of a role these class relationships played in the consciousness and ideology of the first Christians. Although Kautsky misses the real problem, the class foundations of early Christianity are nevertheless so clear that the tortuous attempt, especially of Troeltsch (in his Social *Teaching of the Christian Churches)*, to explain them away, betrays all too plainly the political tendencies of the author.

[37] The accusations of ritual murder and of sexual licentiousness can be

understood in a similar way.

[38] Knopf, *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter*, p. 64.

[39] Weiss, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

[40] Cf. Knopf, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[41] Knopf, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 ff. The admonitions of St. Hippolytus still reveal the ethical rigorism and the hostility to middle-class life, as is seen in chapter 41 (cited by Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, I, 300): "Inquiry shall likewise be made about the professions and trades of those who are brought to be admitted to the faith. If a man is a pander, he must desist or be rejected. If a man is a sculptor or painter, he must be charged not to make idols; if he does not desist, he must be rejected. If a man is an actor or pantomimist, he must desist or be rejected. A teacher of young children had best desist, but if he has no other occupation, he may be permitted to continue. A charioteer, likewise, who races or frequents races, must desist or be rejected. A gladiator or a trainer of gladiators, or a huntsman (in the wild-beast shows), or anyone connected with these shows, or a public official in charge of gladiatorial exhibitions must desist or be rejected. A soldier of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to do so if he is commanded, and to refuse to take an oath; if he is unwilling to comply, he must be rejected. A military commander or civic magistrate that wears the purple must resign or be rejected. If a catechumen or a believer seeks to become a soldier, they must be rejected, for they have despised God. A harlot or licentious man or one who has emasculated himself, or any other who does things not to be named must be rejected, for they are defiled. An enchanter, a diviner, a soothsayer, a user of magic verses, a juggler, a mountebank, an amuletmaker must desist or be rejected. A concubine, who is a slave and has reared her children and has been faithful to her master alone, may become a hearer; but if she has failed in these matters she must be rejected. If a man has a concubine, he must desist and marry legally; if he is unwilling, he must be rejected. If, now, we have omitted anything, the facts will instruct your mind; for we all have the Spirit of God."

[42] As an example of the character of the community in Rome, Knopf gives a picture of the development of the social composition of the Christian church in the first three centuries. Paul, in the Epistle to the Philippians (4:22), asks that his greeting be conveyed "especially to those of Caesar's household." The fact that the death sentences imposed by Nero upon the Christians (mentioned by Tacitus, *Annales*, XV, 44) , such as being sewed up in hides, dog-baiting, crucifixion, being made into living torches, might be used against only *humiliores* and not against *honestiores* (the more prominent), shows that the Christians of this period belonged mainly to the lower ranks, even though

some rich and prominent people may already have joined them. How greatly the composition of the post-apostolic church had changed is shown by a passage cited by Knopf from 1 *Clement*, 38:2: “The rich should offer help to the poor and the poor man should thank God that He has given him someone through whom his need can be helped.” One does not observe here any trace of that animosity against the rich which pervades other documents. This is the way in which one can speak in a church where richer and more prominent people are not so very rare and also where they perform their duties to the poor (Knopf, *op. cit.,* p. 65). From the fact that in A.D. 96, eight months before his death, Domitian had his cousin, Consul Titus Flavius, executed, and sent the cousin’s first wife into exile (punishing him probably and the woman certainly on account of their adherence to Christianity), shows that already at the end of the first century, Christians in Rome had penetrated into the emperor’s household. The growing number of rich and prominent Christians naturally created tensions and differences in the churches. One of these differences arose early, as to whether Christian masters should free their Christian slaves. This is shown by Paul’s exhortation that slaves should not seek emancipation. But since in the course of its development, Christianity became more and more the faith of the ruling groups, these tensions were bound to grow. “The rich did not fraternize any too well with the slaves, the emancipated and the proletarians, especially in public. The poor for their part see the rich as belonging half to the devil” (Knopf, *op. cit.*, p. 81). Kermas gives a good picture of the changed social composition: “Those who do much business also sin much, being engrossed in their business, and serving their Lord in nothing” (*Sim.* VIII, 9). “These are they who were faithful, but became rich and in honor among the heathen; then they put on great haughtiness and became high-minded, and abandoned the truth, and did cleave to the righteous, but lived together with the heathen, and this way pleased them better” (Sim. IX, 1). “The rich cleave with difficulty to the servants of God, fearing that they will be asked for something by them” (Sim. XX, 2). It would appear that only in the times after the Antonines did the rich and prominent, the people of blood and means, join the Christian church, as is rightly understood by Eusebius in a familiar passage where he says that “during the reign of Commodus the affairs [of the Christians] took an easier turn, and, thanks to the divine grace, peace embraced the churches throughout the whole world … insomuch that already large numbers even of those at Rome, highly distinguished for wealth and birth, were advancing towards their own salvation with all their households and kindred” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* Book V, 21, 1). Thus in the main metropolis of the world, Christianity had ceased to be a religion primarily of poor people and

slaves. From then on its power of attraction appeared in the different ranks of property and education.

[43] Eduard Meyer, "Sklaverei im Altertum," *Kleine Schriften* (218nd ed.; 1924), I, 81.

[44] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I, 49. Harnack emphasizes that originally, two interrelated views prevailed regarding the purpose of the coming of Christ or the nature and means of salvation: Salvation was conceived, on the one hand, as sharing in the glorious kingdom of Christ soon to appear, and everything else was regarded as preparatory to this sure prospect; on the other hand, however, attention was turned to the conditions and to the provisions of God wrought by Christ, which first made men capable of becoming sure of it. Forgiveness of sin, righteousness, faith, knowledge, etc., are the things which come into consideration here, and these blessings themselves, so far as they have as their sure result life in the kingdom of Christ, or, more accurately, eternal life, may be regarded as salvation. *(Ibid*., pp. 129-130).

[45] *Ibid*., p. 130.

[46] Harnack, "Kirche and Staat bis zur Gründung der Staatskirche," *Kultur der Gegenwart*, Vol. I, Pt. 4, p. 1; 2nd ed., p. 239.

[47] Harnack, *op. cit*., p. 143.

[48] Cyprian, *Epistle* 69, 11.

[49] Cf. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, II, 67-94.

[50] Cf. Freud's remarks in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Standard edition), XXI, 123 ff.

[51] Cf. A. J. Storfer, *Marias jungfräuliche Mutterschaft* (Berlin, 1913).

[52] The connection of the worship of Mary with the worship of the pagan mother divinities has been dealt with a number of times. A particularly clear example is found in the Collyridians, who, as priestesses of Mary, carry cakes about in a solemn procession on a day consecrated to her, similar to the cult of the Canaanite queen of heaven mentioned by Jeremiah. Cf. Rösch *(Th. St. K.*, 1888, pp. 278 f.), who interprets the cake as a phallic symbol and views the Mary worshiped by the Collyridians as identical with the Oriental-Phoenician Astarte [see *Realenzyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, Vol. XII (Leipzig: 1915)].

[53] *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, XIII, 445.

[54] Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I, 258.

[55] *Ibid*., pp. 259-260.

[56] Hamack, *op. cit.*, II, 110.

[57] Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (6thed., 1922), p. 155.

[58] Luther personally was characterized by his ambivalent attitude to the

father; the partly loving, partly hostile encounter between him and the father-figures constituted the central point of his psychic situation.

[59] Cf. Frazer, *The Golden Bough;* and also the conception, related to ours, in Storfer, *op. cit*