

The Antichristian

by

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“—I am in Greek, and not only in Greek, the
Antichrist.”

Ecce Homo—section 3, aphorism 2.

FOREWORD

This book belongs to the very few. Perhaps none of them are even living yet. They may be those who understand my *Zarathustra*; how *could* I mistake myself for one of those for whom there are already open ears today? Only the day after tomorrow belongs to me. Some are born posthumously.

The conditions under which I am understood, and then *of necessity* understood—I know them only too well. A person must be honest in spiritual matters to the point of hardness just even to endure my earnestness and my passion. A person must be proficient in living on mountains—to see the fleeting prattle of politics and national egoism *beneath* oneself. A person must grow to be indifferent; he must never question whether the truth is useful, or whether it will become our undoing. A predilection of the strong for questions for which nobody today has the courage; the courage for the *forbidden*; the predestination to the labyrinth. A practical knowledge from seven solitudes. New ears for new music. New eyes for that most distant. A new conscience for truths that have hitherto remained mute. *And* the will for the grand style; to keep one’s strength—one’s *enthusiasm*—in check. Deep respect for oneself; love for oneself; unconditional freedom toward oneself.

Well, now. These alone are my readers, my rightful readers, my predestined readers—what do the *rest* matter? The rest is merely humanity. We must be superior to humanity in strength, in *loftiness* of soul—in contempt.

Friedrich Nietzsche

1

Let us face ourselves. We are Hyperboreans; we know very well how far out of the mainstream we live. “Neither by land nor by sea shall you find the way to the Hyperboreans”—Pindar already knew that about us. Beyond the north, the ice, and death—*our* life, *our* happiness. We have discovered happiness; we know the way; we found the exit from whole millennia of labyrinth. Who *else* has found it? Modern man, perhaps? “I am at my wit’s end; I am everything that is at its wit’s end,” modern man sighs.

From *this* modernity we were sick—from lazy peace, from cowardly compromise, from the whole virtuous filthiness of the modern Yes and No. This tolerance and *largeur*¹ of the heart, which “forgives” everything because it “understands” everything, is sirocco to us. It is preferable to live surrounded by ice than surrounded by modern virtues and other south winds. We were courageous enough; we spared neither ourselves nor others—but for an extended period we didn’t know *where* to direct our courage. We became gloomy; we were called fatalists. *Our fatum*—that was the fullness, the tensing, and the holding-back of our strength. We thirsted for lightning and deeds; we stayed furthest from the happiness of the weaklings, from their “surrender.” A storm was in our sphere; the nature we represent itself darkened—for *we had no path*. Formula for our happiness—a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*.

2

What is good? Everything that increases in people the feeling of power, the will for power, power itself.

What is bad? Everything born of weakness.

What is happiness? The feeling that power *grows*—that resistance is overcome. *Not* contentment, but more power; absolutely *not* peace, but war; *not* virtue, but competence (virtue in the Renaissance style, *virtù*², virtue free of priggishness).

The weak and misguided shall perish—the first principle of *our* love of man. And they shall even be helped to do so.

¹ French—breadth.

² Italian—excellence.

What is more harmful than any vice? The act of pity toward the misguided and the weak—Christianity.

3

The problem I put forward here is not what shall supersede humanity in the order of living creatures (man is an *end*)—but what type of human should be *bred*, should be *willed*, as more valuable, more deserving of life, and more certain of the future.

This more valuable type has existed here often enough already—but as a stroke of luck, as an exception—never *willed*. Rather, *this* type has been the most dreaded, and until now has been practically *the* thing to dread; and out of this fear the opposite type was willed, bred and *achieved*—the domestic animal, the herd animal, the sick animal-man—the Christian.

4

In the sense considered nowadays, humanity does *not* represent a development toward that which is better, or stronger, or higher. “Progress” is merely a modern idea—that is, a false idea. The value of today’s European remains far below that of the Renaissance European; progressive development is absolutely *not* of any necessity enhancing, heightening, or strengthening.

In another sense individual cases of success continually recur in various places around the world, and in various cultures; with them a *higher type* indeed appears—something that in relation to the totality of humanity is a kind of superhuman. Such lucky occurrences of great success have always been feasible and will perhaps always be feasible. And even entire races, tribes, and nations can possibly represent such *winning strokes*.

5

One should not adorn and dress up Christianity; it has made *mortal war* against this higher type of man; it has excommunicated all basic instincts of this higher type; it has distilled evil, *the Evil One*, out of these instincts—the strong man as one typically reprehensible, the “depraved man.” Christianity has sided with all that is weak, base, and misguided; it has made an ideal of *antagonism* toward the preservation instincts of the strong life; it has corrupted the reason of even the spiritually strongest constitutions by teaching people to perceive the supreme values of spirituality as sinful, as misleading, as *temptations*. The most deplorable example: the corruption of Pascal, who believed his reason was corrupted by original sin, whereas it was corrupted only by his Christianity!

6

It is a painful and horrible spectacle that has become apparent to me; I have drawn back the curtain hiding the *corruption* of mankind. This message of mine is sheltered from at least one suspicion—that it contains a moral indictment against mankind. It is intended—I would like to emphasize again—to be *free of priggishness*—and this to the extent that that depravity is perceived a great deal by me exactly where thus far people have aspired most deliberately to be “virtuous,” to be “divine.” I interpret “depravity,” as one might have already guessed, in the sense of *décadence*³ my assertion is that all values by which humanity currently summarizes its supreme desideratum are *décadence-values*.

I call an animal, a species, or an individual corrupt when it loses its instincts; when it chooses—when it *prefers*—that which is detrimental to it. A history of the “higher feelings,” of the “ideals of humanity”—and it is possible I will have to narrate it—would nearly also be the explanation *why* mankind is so corrupt. Life itself is regarded by me as the instinct for growth, for durability, for accumulation of force, and for *power*; where the will to power is absent, there is decline. My assertion is that all the supreme values of humanity *lack* this will—that values of decline—nihilistic values—exercise dominion under the holiest names.

³ French—decadence.

Christianity is called the religion of *pity*. Pity stands in opposition to the tonic emotions, which enhance the force of feeling alive; it has a depressing effect. He who pities loses strength. Through pity, the loss of strength already acquired through the sorrows of life is even further increased and multiplied. Through pity, suffering itself becomes infectious; under certain circumstances, a total loss of life and life force can result from it. And this loss stands absurdly out of proportion to the magnitude of its cause (as in the case of the death of the Nazarene).

That is the first point, but there is one even more important: If pity were measured by the value of the reaction it usually elicits, its life-threatening nature would be seen much more clearly. Pity clashes quite completely with evolutionary law, which is the law of *selection*. It preserves what is ripe for destruction; it defends those disinherited and condemned by life; through the abundance of all sorts of misguided souls, the lives of whom it prolongs, it gives life itself a gloomy and dubious aspect.

Some have dared to call pity a virtue (in every *noble* morality it is regarded as weakness); others have gone further and made it *the* virtue, the basis and origin of all virtues—but certainly from the perspective, which must always be kept in mind, of a philosophy that was nihilistic, that inscribed *Denial of Life* on its shield. Schopenhauer was in the right about this; through pity life is denied, made *more deserving of denial*; pity is the *practice* of nihilism.

To reiterate: this depressing and contagious instinct clashes with every instinct interested in preserving life and enhancing its value; as both a *multiplier* of misery and a *guardian* of everything miserable, it is a principal tool for the augmentation of *décadence*; pity persuades to *nothingness*! However, words such as “hereafter,” or “god,” or “the *true* life,” or “nirvana,” “redemption,” or “salvation,” are spoken instead of “nothingness.” This innocent rhetoric from the domain of the religio-ethical idiosyncrasy instantly appears *much less innocent* when it is realized *which* tendency wraps a cloak of sublime words around itself—the *anti-life* tendency. Schopenhauer was anti-life; *therefore* pity became a virtue to him. As is well known, Aristotle viewed pity as a pathological and dangerous condition for which it was a good idea to take a purgative every so often; he understood tragedy as a purgative.

Those siding with the life instinct must indeed search for a way to deal with such a pathological and dangerous accumulation of pity, like that displayed in Schopenhauer’s case (and unfortunately also by our entire literary and artistic *décadence*, from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoy to Wagner)—to puncture it so that it bursts. Nothing amid our unhealthy modernity is more unhealthy than Christian pity. To be the physician *here*, to be inexorable *here*, to wield the knife *here*—that belongs to *us*, that is *our* brand of philanthropy; with that we are philosophers, we Hyperboreans!

8

It is necessary to say *whom* we consider our antithesis—the theologians, and everything having theologians’ blood in its veins—our entire philosophy. This disaster needs to be seen at close quarters; better yet, in order to take it seriously it needs to be lived through to the point of being nigh unto death (in my opinion the freethinking of our respected natural scientists and physiologists is a *joke*; they lack passion about these things associated with *suffering*).

This poisoning extends much further than is commonly thought; I find the theologians’ instinct to haughtiness in every instance in which someone today considers himself an “idealist”—and claims, by dint of some higher origin, the right to look at reality from a superior and alien perspective. The idealist, exactly like the priest, holds all the great concepts in his hand of cards (and not only in his hand!); he puts them into play with a benevolent contempt for “reason,” the “senses,” “honor,” the “good life,” “science”; he views such things as *below* himself, as harmful and seductive powers over which “the spirit” hovers in pure self-contentment—as if humility, chastity, poverty (in a word, *holiness*), has not hitherto done indescribably more harm to life than any terror or vice.

“Pure spirit” is a pure lie. As long as the priest, who denies, slanders, and poisons life as his occupation, continues to be accepted as a higher type of man, there can be no answer to the question “What *is* truth?” When the conscious advocate of nothingness and denial is accepted as the representative of “truth,” truth already *has* been stood on its head.

I wage war against this theologians' instinct; I find traces of it everywhere. Those who have theologians' blood in their veins, are, at the outset, warped and dishonest toward all things. The pathos that develops from this calls itself *faith*—to shut one's eyes to oneself so as not to suffer from the sight of incurable deceitfulness. From their faulty perspective toward all things these people make a morality, a virtue, a kind of sanctity for themselves; they bind a clear conscience to a *false* vision; after they make their perspective sacrosanct with words like "God," "redemption," and "eternity," they demand no *other* perspective be granted further value.

I still unearth the theologians' instinct everywhere; it is the most widespread, actually *underground* form of deceitfulness on the face of the planet. What a theologian perceives to be true *must* be false; in this statement there exists almost a criterion for truth. It is his innermost survival instinct that causes him to prohibit reality from any place of honor, or to let it merely have a say. As far as the influence of the theologian extends, *value judgments* are stood on their heads, and the concepts "true" and "false" are inevitably reversed. Whatever is most harmful to life is called "true"; whatever enhances, heightens, affirms, justifies, and makes it triumphant is called "false." When it occurs that theologians stretch their hands out after *power*, through the "conscience" of the sovereigns (*or* the masses), let there be no doubt *what* they are fundamentally trying to do in every instance: the will to the end, the *nihilistic* will, wants power.

10

Among Germans I am immediately understood when I say that philosophy is corrupted by the blood of theologians. The Protestant parson is the grandfather of German philosophy; Protestantism itself is its *peccatum originale*⁴. Definition of Protestantism: the hemiplegia of Christianity—and of reason. One need merely pronounce the words "Tubinger Seminary" to grasp *what* German philosophy is at root—a *cunningly deceitful* theology. The Swabians are the best liars in Germany; they lie innocently. Whence came the rejoicing that, with the appearance of *Kant*, spread through the German community of scholars, three-quarters of whom were parsons' and teachers' sons? Whence came the German conviction, the echoes of which are still found today, that with *Kant* a change for the *better* had begun?

The theologians' instinct of the German scholars divined *what* was again possible at that point. A hidden path to the old ideal had been cleared; the "*true* world" concept and the concept of morality as the *essence* of the world (these being the two most malicious errors in existence!), were back again, thanks to a mischievous, clever skepticism—if not provable, nonetheless no longer *refutable*. Reason—the *claims* of reason—do not extend that far. From reality an "apparentness" was manufactured; a completely *fabricated* world, that of being, was made into reality. *Kant's* success is merely a theologian's success; *Kant*, like *Luther*, and like *Leibniz*, was one more impediment to the really none-too-stable German integrity.

11

An additional word against *Kant* as *moralist*. A virtue must be *our* invention, *our* most personal self-defense and basic need; in any other sense virtue is merely a danger. That which does not necessitate our life *harms* it; a virtue derived merely from a feeling of respect for the concept "virtue" (as *Kant* wanted it), is harmful. "Virtue," "duty," the "good in itself," the good characterized by impersonality and universality—these are phantasms which in themselves express the decline, the final debilitation of life, the Chineseness⁵ of *Königsberg*⁶.

The most deep-seated laws of preservation and growth demand the opposite—that each person invent *his* virtue, *his* categorical imperative. A people perishes when it confuses *its* duty with the concept of duty in general. Nothing ruins more deeply or more inwardly than each "impersonal" duty, each sacrifice to the Moloch of abstraction. That people have not perceived *Kant's* categorical imperative as *life-threatening*! The theologians' instinct alone protects them! An action compelled by the life instinct has, through the

⁴ Latin—original sin.

⁵ See Nietzsche's *Morgenrote*, aphorism 206.

⁶ *Kant's* birthplace and home.

delight it produces, its proof that it is *right*; and that nihilist, with his Christian-dogmatic entrails, interprets delight as an *objection*. What destroys more quickly than to work, to think, and to feel without inner necessity, without a deep-seated personal choice, without *delight*—like an automaton of “duty”? It is virtually the *recipe* for *décadence*—even idiocy.

Kant became an idiot. And he was a contemporary of *Goethe*! This disaster of a spider was regarded as the *German* philosopher—and still is! I take care not to say what I think of the Germans. Didn't Kant see in the French Revolution the transition from the inorganic form of the state to the *organic*? Did he not ask himself whether there was an event that could be explained in no other way than by a moral predisposition of humanity, so that with such an event the “tendency of humanity toward the good” would be *proven* once and for all? Kant's answer: “That is the revolution.” The instinct which errs in each and every case, the *unnatural* as instinct, the German *décadence* as philosophy—*that is Kant!*

12

I leave out a few skeptics, the decent type in the history of philosophy—but the rest don't know the principal requirements of intellectual integrity. To a man they act like little women, these great visionaries and prodigies; even now they consider “beautiful sentiments” arguments, the “heaving bosom” a divine bellows, and conviction a *criterion* of truth. In the end, Kant—with “German” innocence—still attempted to make this form of corruption, this deficit of intellectual conscience termed “practical reason,” scientific. He invented a reason for it specifically so that in such cases there need be no concern about reason—namely, when morality, when the sublime demand “thou shalt” makes itself known.

If we consider that in almost every nation, the philosopher is just a developmental extension of the priestly type, then we are no longer surprised by this heirloom of the priest, who is *counterfeit even unto himself*. If someone has a sacred task—for example reforming, saving, or redeeming people; or if someone carries divinity in his bosom and is a mouthpiece for otherworldly imperatives—then with such a mission he already stands outside all merely rational assessments; through such a task he is himself already sacrosanct; he is himself already the model of a higher order! Of what concern is science to a priest! His position is too lofty for that! And up to now the priest has ruled! He defined the terms “true” and “untrue!”

13

Let us not underestimate this: we free spirits ourselves are already examples of a “revaluing of all values,” an *incarnate* declaration of war on and victory over all ancient conceptions of “true” and “untrue.” The most valuable insights are *methods*. All the methods, all the assumptions of our present-day scientists have for millennia been held in the deepest contempt; on account of them people were excluded from the company of “honest” men and regarded as “enemies of God,” as despisers of truth, as “those possessed.” Anyone with a scientific nature was a chandala. We have had the whole pathos of humanity against us, and its concept of what truth *should* be, what the service of truth *should* be. Up to now every “thou shalt” has been directed *against* us. Our aims, our practices, our quiet, cautious, mistrustful manner—these all appeared completely unworthy and contemptible to humanity.

In the end it may be to some extent proper to ask whether it was not an *aesthetic* taste that has kept humanity blinded for so long; it demanded from truth a *picturesque* effect, and similarly demanded that men of understanding make a strong impression on the senses. Our *modesty* offended their taste longer than anything else. Oh, how they divined that fact, these turkey cocks of God!

14

We have altered our perspective. We have grown more modest in every respect. We no longer trace man's origins to a “spirit” or “divinity”; we have placed him back among the animals. We regard him as the strongest animal because he is the most cunning; a consequence of this is his spirituality. On the other hand, we defend ourselves against a vanity that again even here would like to make itself known, as if man were the great ulterior purpose behind the evolution of animals. He is definitely no crown of creation; every creature, compared to man, exists at an equal level of perfection. And when we claim that we are still claiming too much. Man is, relatively speaking, the most misguided animal, the most diseased, the one who has most dangerously strayed from his instincts—and with all that certainly also the *most interesting!*

As regards the animals, Descartes was the first to venture, with admirable boldness, the idea of understanding the animal as *machina*⁷; our entire physiology attempts to bolster this proposition. Furthermore, we—logically—do not exclude humans, as even Descartes did. Whatever we comprehend these days about humans goes precisely as far as we comprehend the human as a machine. Formerly, as his dowry from a higher order, man was provided with a “free will”; these days we have taken even his will from him in the sense that we are no longer permitted to understand it as a faculty. The ancient word “will” serves only the purpose of describing a result, a kind of individual reaction which necessarily follows a number of partly contradictory and partly harmonious stimuli; the will no longer “affects,” no longer “acts.”

Formerly, evidence of man’s higher origin—his divinity—was seen in his consciousness and “spirit”; to fulfill himself he was advised to pull his senses back into himself like a turtle, to cease all contact with earthy things, to cast off his mortal exterior. Then the most important part of himself would be left behind—his “pure spirit.” We have changed our minds about this, too; the emergence of consciousness (the “spirit”) is regarded by us as just a symptom of a relative imperfection of the organism—as a trying, a groping, an erring—as a travail during which much nervous energy is unnecessarily consumed. We deny that something can be made perfectly as long as it can still be made consciously. “Pure spirit” is pure stupidity; if we discount the nervous system and the senses, the “mortal exterior,” *then we falsely reckon—nothing more!*

15

In Christianity neither the morality nor the religion comes into contact with reality at any point. There is nothing but imaginary *causes*—“God,” “soul,” “ego,” “spirit,” “free will,” (or even “not free”); nothing but imaginary *effects*—“sin,” “redemption,” “grace,” “penance,” “the forgiving of sins”; communication between imaginary *beings*—“God,” “spirits,” “souls”; an imaginary *natural science*—anthropocentric and completely lacking the concept of natural causes; an imaginary *psychology*—nothing but self-misunderstandings, interpretations of pleasant or unpleasant general feelings (for example, the condition of the *nervus sympathicus*), with the help of the sign language of the religio-ethical idiosyncrasy (“repentance,” “pang of conscience,” “temptation by the devil,” “the nearness of God”); an imaginary *teleology*—“the kingdom of God,” “the Last Judgment,” “eternal life.”

This world of pure fiction differs from the world of dreams in a very unfavorable way—in that the latter *mirrors* reality, while the former falsifies, devalues, and denies reality. When the concept of “nature” was first invented as something counter to “God,” “natural” had to become another way to say “reprehensible”; this whole world of fiction is rooted in hatred against what is natural (reality!); it is the expression of a deep-seated discontent with what is real. This, however, explains everything. Who alone has reason to lie his way out of reality? He who suffers from it. To suffer from reality, though, means to exist within an unsuccessful reality. The predominance of feelings of disinclination over feelings of inclination is the cause of a fictitious morality and religion; such a predominance really furnishes the *formula* for *décadence*.

16

A critique of the *Christian concept of God* forces us to the same conclusion. A people that still believes in itself still possesses its own god, too. In him it honors the conditions by which it succeeds—its virtues; it projects its delight in itself, its feeling of power, into a being who can be thanked for it. He who is wealthy wants to give; a proud people needs a God in order to *sacrifice*. Religion, in the confines of such assumptions, is a form of gratitude. To be grateful for oneself requires a God. Such a god must be able to help and to hurt, must be able to be friend and foe; he is admired when being good as well as bad. The *perverted* castration of a god into a god of only goodness here lies outside every desideratum. The evil god is as necessary as the good; we certainly do not owe our existence only to tolerance and benevolence. Of what importance would be a God who didn’t know anger, vengeance, envy, scorn, cunning, and violent action? Who perhaps hadn’t even known the delightful *ardeurs*⁸ of victory and annihilation? People would not understand such a God; why, then, should they have him?

⁷ Latin—machine.

⁸ French—ardors.

Admittedly—if a people is perishing, if it feels its faith in the future and its hope for freedom are definitely waning; if it starts to look upon subjection as the primary utility and the virtues of the subjugated as the requirements for preservation, then its god *must* change as well. He has now become a moral coward—timorous, modest, advising “peace of mind,” an end-to-hate, forbearance, “love” alone toward friend and foe. He moralizes constantly; he creeps into the cave of every private virtue, becomes god for everyone, becomes an individual, becomes a cosmopolitan. Formerly he represented a people, the strength of a people, everything aggressive and power-hungry in the soul of a people; nowadays, he is merely just the good god. Indeed, there is no other alternative for gods: *either* they are the will for power—in which case they will be gods of the people—*or* they are the infirmity for power and inevitably become *good*.

17

Wherever the will for power declines in any form, there is in every instance a physiological retrogression, a *décadence*. The deity of *décadence*, clipped of his manliest virtues and drives, henceforth inevitably becomes the god of the physiologically recessive, of the weak. Indeed, they do *not* call themselves the weak; they call themselves “the good.” No further evidence is necessary to understand at what moment in history the dualistic fiction of a good and an evil god first became possible. The subjugated, with the same instinct they use to reduce their god to “good in itself,” obliterate the good qualities from the god of their conquerors; in this way they take revenge on their masters, whose god they *diabolize*. *The good* god, as well as the devil—both are monstrous products of *décadence*.

How can anyone nowadays give in to the simple-mindedness of the Christian theologians to the extent he joins with them to decree that the development of the concept of God from the “God of Israel” to the god of the people, to the Christian God, to the epitome of everything good, is *progress*! Yet even Renan does this. As if Renan has a right to be simple-minded! After all, it is the opposite that strikes our eyes. When the prerequisites for an *ascending* life, when everything strong, brave, manly, and proud comes to be eliminated from the concept of God; when he degenerates step by step into the symbol of a staff for the weary, a sheet anchor for every drowning person; when he becomes the god of the poor people, the sinner’s god, the god of the sick *par excellence*, and the title “savior” or “redeemer” remains *behind*, as it were, as an altogether divine title—*what* does such a transformation, such a *diminution* of the divine say? Admittedly—with it “the kingdom of God” has grown larger.

Formerly, he had only his people, his “chosen” people. In the meantime—exactly like his people themselves—he travelled into foreign lands; since then he has no longer sat quietly anywhere—until he finally became indigenus everywhere, this great cosmopolitan—until he got “multitudes” and half the earth on his side. However, the god of the “multitudes,” the democrat among the gods, nevertheless has not become a proud pagan god. He remained a Jew; he remained the god of the nook, the god of all dark corners and places, and every unhealthy quarter in the entire world! His world empire is, as always, an underworld empire—a hospital, a *southern*⁹ empire, a ghetto empire. And he himself, so pale, so weak, so *decadent*. Even the palest of the pale—the respected metaphysicians, the concept-albinos—have come to be the master over him. These spun around him so long that he—hypnotized by their movements—became himself a spider, a metaphysician. At that point he spun the world anew from out of himself—*sub specie Spinoza*¹⁰; at that point he transfigured himself into something ever more thin and pale, became “ideal,” became “pure spirit,” became “*absolution*,” became a “thing in itself.” The decay of God—God became a “thing in itself.”

18

The Christian concept of God—God as god of the sick, God as spider, God as spirit—is one of the most corrupt concepts of God the world has seen; it may even constitute the low-water mark in the descending development of the godly type. God degenerated into a *contradiction of life* instead of being its transfiguration and eternal *Yes*! In God, a declared enmity toward life, nature, and the will to life! God, the formula for every slandering of “this life,” for every lie about the “next life”! In God, nothingness defied, the will to nothingness canonized!

⁹ French—subterranean.

¹⁰ Latin—under the guise of Spinoza.

That the strong races of Europe have not repudiated the Christian god is certainly no credit to their religious endowment—not to mention their taste. They *should* have broken with such a sickly and decrepit monster of *décadence*. Instead, however, a curse is upon them for not breaking with it; they have incorporated sickness, old age, and contradiction into all their instincts; they have since *created* no other god! Almost two thousand years, and not one single new god! Still existing, however, and as if justified, as if an *ultimatum*¹¹ and *maximum*¹² of the god-creating force, of the *creator spiritus*¹³ in man, this pitiable god of Christian monotonous-theism! This hybrid decay-object of naught, concept, and contradiction, in which all the instincts of *décadence*, all the cowardices and lassitudes of the souls have their sanction!

With my condemnation of Christianity I hope no injustice has been committed against a related religion, which is predominant even by the number of its adherents: *Buddhism*. They belong together as nihilistic religions—they are religions of *décadence*— but they are differentiated from one another in a most noteworthy way. The critic of Christianity is profoundly grateful to the Indian scholars for enabling us now to *compare* these two religions.

Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity; it has as part of its makeup the legacy of posing problems objectively and coolly, and it comes *after* a philosophical movement lasting centuries; when it arrived the concept of “God” had already run its course. Buddhism is the only truly *positivistic* religion history has shown us; even in its epistemology (a strict phenomenism), it no longer speaks of the “struggle against sin,” but instead, in complete agreement with reality, of the “struggle against *suffering*.” It has (this profoundly distinguished it from Christianity), already gotten through the self-deception of moral concepts. It stands—to use my parlance—*beyond* good and evil.

The *two* physiological facts from which it originates and upon which it focuses are: *first*, an exceeding sensitivity of awareness which expresses itself as a refined susceptibility to pain; and *additionally*, an overintellectualization, an existence consumed with concepts and logical procedures under which the instinct of the individual is harmed in favor of the “impersonal” (two states which at least a few of my readers—those who are “objective”— will, like myself, know from experience).

From the foundation of these physiological conditions a *depression* has arisen; against this the Buddha proceeds in a hygienic way. Against it he employs a life in the open air—the wandering life; moderation and selectivity in matters of diet; wariness of alcoholic liquor; wariness likewise of all emotions that create bile¹⁴, that heat the blood; no *worry*, neither for oneself nor another. He demands ideas that either provide calm or amuse; he finds means to wean oneself from all others. He sees kindness and generosity as health-promoting.

Prayer is excluded, as is *asceticism*; there is no categorical imperative, no *compulsion* whatsoever, not even within the monastic community (a person can get out again). All of these would be means of intensifying the exceeding sensitivity mentioned previously. That is exactly why he also demands no struggle against dissenters; his teachings resist nothing to a *greater degree* than feelings of revenge, aversion, and *ressentiment*¹⁵ (“Enmity does not come to an end through enmity.” That is the touching refrain of all Buddhism.) And rightfully so—these particular emotions would be completely *unhealthy* with respect to the main dietetic purpose.

He also fights the intellectual fatigue he finds, and which expresses itself in an all-too-great “objectivity” (that is to say, a weakening of the interests of the individual, a losing of the anchoring weight of “egoism”), with a strict return to the most intellectual interests of the *individual*. In the teaching of Buddha egoism becomes a duty; the “one thing that is necessary,” the “how to be rid of suffering,” regulates and

¹¹ Latin—ultimate.

¹² Latin—greatest.

¹³ Latin—creative spirit.

¹⁴ Tibetan “mKris-pa,” or Sanskrit “pitta”—the biological “humor” or “subtle principle” related to fire, heat, fever, inflammation, anger, and hate.

¹⁵ French—literally meaning “resentment,” over the past century the word has been incorporated into the English language.

circumscribes the whole intellectual diet (some may perhaps recall that Athenian who also declared war on pure “scientism”—Socrates—who elevated the egoism of the individual to a morality, even in the realm of problems).

21

Prerequisite for Buddhism are a very mild climate, a great gentleness and liberalness of customs, and *no* militarism—and that the movement has its starting point in the higher and even scholarly classes. Cheerfulness, calm, and contentment are desired as the highest goal, and that goal is *attained*. Buddhism is not a religion in which a person merely aspires to perfection; that which is perfect is the norm.

In Christianity the instincts of the subjugated and the oppressed come to the forefront; the lower classes seek their salvation in it. Here the casuistry of sin, self-criticism, and the inquisition of conscience come to be practiced as *something to do*, as a way to fight boredom; here the emotions come to be continually propped up (through prayer), against a *powerfulness* called “God.” Here the highest state is regarded as unattainable, as a gift, as “grace.” Here public openness is also lacking; the hiding place—the darkened room—is Christian. Here the body has come to be despised and hygiene has been rejected as sensuality; the church defends itself even against cleanliness; the first Christian measure after the expulsion of the Moors was the closing of the public baths, of which Cordova alone possessed 270.

A fixed sense of cruelty against oneself and others is Christian, as is the hatred of dissidents and the will to persecute. Gloomy and exciting ideas are in the forefront; the most highly desired states, designated by the highest names, are epileptoid; the diet is chosen so as to encourage morbid phenomena and overexcite the nerves. Christian is the mortal enmity against the masters of the earth, against the “noble”—and at the same time a disguised, clandestine competition with them (allowing them the “body”, wanting *only* the “soul”). Christian is the hatred against the *spirit*, against pride, courage, freedom, and liberty of the mind; Christian is hatred against the *senses*, against the delights of the senses, against delight in general.

22

When Christianity left its starting place—the lowest classes, the *underworld* of the ancient world; when it went after power among nations of barbarians, it no longer dealt with *weary* people, but those inwardly wild and troubled—strong people, but misguided. The discontent with oneself—the sorrow within oneself—is here *not*, as with the Buddhists, an excessive sensitivity and susceptibility to pain, but rather the reverse, an overpowering desire to inflict pain, to vent that inner tension through hostile actions and ideas. In order to be master over barbarians, Christianity had need for *barbaric* concepts and values—such as the sacrifice of the first-born, the blood drinking in Communion, contempt for intellect and culture; torture in all its forms, corporal and incorporeal; the great pomp surrounding worship.

Buddhism is a religion for *late* people—for gracious, gentle races who have become overly intellectual, who feel pain too easily; Europe is by no means ready for it; for them it is a return to peace and cheerfulness, to a diet of intellectuality, to a fixed hardening of the physical nature. Christianity wants to become master over *predators*; its method is to make them *sick*; weakening is the Christian recipe for taming, for “civilizing.” Buddhism is a religion for the closing and the weariness of civilization; Christianity has not yet even discovered civilization: it establishes civilization if circumstances permit.

23

Buddhism, to repeat, is a hundred times colder, more truthful, and more objective. It no longer needs to make its suffering and its susceptibility to pain *respectable* to itself by interpreting them as sin; it merely says what it thinks: “I suffer.” To the barbarian, on the other hand, suffering is in itself nothing respectable; he first requires an interpretation explaining it in order to admit to himself *that* he suffers; his instinct more readily directs him to a denial of suffering, to a quiet endurance. Here the term “devil” was a boon; people had an overpowering and terrible enemy; they need not be ashamed of suffering caused by such an enemy.

Christianity has within its foundation several subtleties that belong to the Orient. Above all, it knows that it is in itself totally immaterial whether something is true, but of the utmost importance *on the condition* it comes to be believed as true. The truth and the *faith* that something is true—two completely separate worlds of interest—almost worlds of antithesis: they are arrived at via totally different paths. To be

knowledgeable concerning this—in the Orient that nearly *makes* someone a wise man; thus do the Brahmins understand this; thus does Plato understand this—thus does every student of esoteric wisdom.

If, for example, someone derives *happiness* from believing himself delivered from sin, there is *not* necessarily a requirement that the person be sinful, but rather that he *feels* he is sinful. If, however, *faith* is necessary above all, then reason, knowledge, and inquiry must be discredited; the path to the truth becomes the *forbidden* path. Intense hope is a much stronger *stimulant* to life than any single happy event that actually occurs. Those who suffer must hold themselves up by means of a hope that no reality will be able to contradict, and which will not be *dismissed* by means of any accomplishment—a hope for a world beyond. (Precisely because of this capacity to deter unhappy people, the Greeks regarded hope as the evil of evils—as the truly *malicious* evil; it remained behind in the barrel of evils¹⁶.)

In order for *love* to be possible, God must be a person; in order for the lowest instincts to be able to take part in it, God must be young. For the ardor of the women, a beautiful saint is moved into the foreground; for that of the men, a Mary is utilized. This is done on the assumption that Christianity wants to become master on soil where aphrodisiac- or Adonis-worshippers have already defined the *concept* of worship. The requirement of *chastity* reinforces the vehemence and inwardness of the religious instinct; it makes the system of worship warmer, more enthusiastic, and more soulful.

Love is the state in which people see things the most as they are *not*. There the might of illusion is at its height, as is the might of sweetening and *transfiguration*. In love a person endures more than usual; he bears everything. It was necessary to invent a religion in which one could love; with it a person could get past the worst in life; he no longer sees it. So much for the three Christian values—faith, love, and hope. I call them the three Christian *ingenuities*. Buddhism is too late and too positivistic still to be ingenious in this way.

24

Here I only touch on the problem of the *origin* of Christianity. The *first* proposition for its solution is: Christianity is to be understood only by the soil out of which it has grown; it is *not* a countermovement against the Jewish instinct; it is even its logical consequence, one more conclusion of its terrifying logic. In the formula of the Redeemer, “Salvation is of the Jews.” The *second* proposition is: the psychological type of the Galilean is still recognizable; but only in its complete degeneration—which is both a mutilation and an overloading with alien features—could it serve the purpose for which it came to be utilized, as the model for a *redeemer* of humanity.

The Jews are the most unusual people in the history of the world because they, when confronted with the question of existence vs. non-existence, have preferred, with a completely eerie conviction—and *at any price*—existence; this price was the radical *falsification* of all nature, all naturalness, and all reality, of the entire inner world as well as the outer. They *dissociated* themselves from all the conditions under which a people hitherto was able to live, was *allowed* to live; out of themselves they created a concept of an antithesis to *natural* conditions; they have, in order—and in an incurable manner—turned religion, worship, morality, history, and psychology back into the *opposition to the values of nature*. We encounter the same phenomena again and in indescribably enlarged proportions, although only as a copy: the Christian is devoid of any claim to originality in comparison to the “people of the saints.” Precisely because of that the Jews are the most ill-fated people in the history of the world; as a part of their aftereffect, they made humanity so false that even today the Christian can feel anti-Jewish without understanding himself as the *ultimate Jewish consequence*.

In my *Genealogy of Morals* I have psychologically presented, for the first time, the concept of the antithesis between a *noble* morality and a morality of *ressentiment*—the latter arising *from the No* against the former—but on all counts this is the Judeo-Christian morality. In order to be able to say No to everything that constitutes the *ascending* movement of life on earth (success, power, beauty, self-affirmation)—here the *ressentiment* instinct, which had itself become genius, had to invent *another* world in which the aforementioned affirmation of life appeared to be in itself something evil, something reprehensible.

¹⁶ See the legend of Pandora.

Examined psychologically, the Jewish people are people of the most tenacious vitality who, placed under impossible conditions, accept—from the most deep-seated wisdom of self-preservation—the tenant of every *décadence* instinct; *not* as if ruled by them, but because they conjectured a power in them by which they could be successful *against* “the world.” The Jews are the opposite of all *décadents*¹⁷; they have had to *portray* them to the point of illusion; with a *non plus ultra*¹⁸ of theatrical genius they have known to place themselves at the head of all *décadence* movements (as with the Christianity of Paul), in order to make something out of them which is stronger than every *Yes-saying* tenet of life. *Décadence* is only a *means* for the kind of man in Judaism and Christianity who longs for power—the *priestly* kind; this kind of man has a life interest to make humanity *sick*, and to reverse the concepts “good” and “evil,” and “true” and “false” in a life-threatening and world-slandering sense.

25

The history of Israel is invaluable as a history typical of all *denaturalizing* of the values of nature; I indicate five facts about it. Originally, above all in the age of the kingdoms, Israel still stood in *proper*—that is to say, natural—relation to all things. Its Yahweh was the expression of the consciousness of power, of delight in oneself, and of hope for oneself; with him victory and salvation were expected; with him nature was trusted to give the people what was necessary—above all, rain. Yahweh is the God of Israel and *consequently* the god of justice; this is the logic of every people who are in power and possess a clear conscience.

These two sides of the self-affirmation of a people express themselves in the worship of the religious holiday; it is grateful for the great destinies by which it got on top; it is grateful in relation to the succession of the seasons and all the good fortune in raising crops and livestock. This state of affairs long remained the ideal, even when it was done away with in sorry fashion—anarchy within, the Assyrian without.

As their supreme desideratum, however, the people held onto the vision of a king who is a good soldier and a stern judge—above all, that characteristic prophet (that is to say, critic and satirist of the moment), Isaiah. But every hope remained unfulfilled. The old god could no longer *do* for them what he could formerly. They should have let him go. What happened? They *changed* their concept of him; they *denaturalized* their concept of him; this was the price paid to hold onto him.

Yahweh, the god of “justice”—*no longer* one with Israel, an expression of the self-esteem of the nation—a god only under certain conditions. This concept of him becomes a tool in the hands of priestly agitators, who henceforth interpret all good fortune as reward, and all bad fortune as punishment for disobedience to God, for “sin”; they use that most mendacious manner of interpretation, the so-called “moral world order,” with which the natural concepts “cause” and “effect” are reversed once and for all.

When, through reward and punishment, natural causality is initially removed from the world, an *anti-natural* causality is required; everything remaining that is unnatural then follows. A god who *demand*s—in place of a god who helps, who devises remedies, who at root is the word for every happy inspiration of courage and self-confidence. *Morality*—no longer the expression of the conditions for the life and growth of a people; no longer its most basic life instinct; instead turned into something abstract, turned into the antithesis of life—morality as the fundamental deterioration of the imagination, as the “evil eye” toward all things. What *is* Jewish, what *is* Christian morality? Chance deprived of its innocence, misfortune besmirched by the concept of “sin”; well-being as a danger, as “temptation”; the physiological state of ill health poisoned with the worm of conscience.

26

The concept of God falsified; the concept of morality falsified—the Jewish priesthood did not stop there. The whole *history* of Israel unnecessary—away with it! These priests have achieved that miracle of falsification, the documented evidence of which lies before us in a considerable portion of the Bible. They have, with an unparalleled scorn for every tradition, for every historical reality, translated the history of their

¹⁷ French—decadents.

¹⁸ Latin—literally “not more beyond,” this phrase means “the highest achievement attainable.”

own people *into religious terms*; that is to say, from it they made a mindless salvation mechanism of guilt toward Yahweh and punishment, of piety toward Yahweh and reward.

We would much more acutely experience the pain of this most ignominious act of the falsification of history if millennia of *ecclesiastical* interpretation of history had not made us nearly impassive to the demands of integrity *in historicis*¹⁹. And the philosophers backed up the church; the *lie* of the “moral world order” runs even through the entire development of modern philosophy. What does “moral world order” mean? That there is, once and for all, a will of God for what a person is to do and what he is to forego; that the worth of a people—of an individual himself—is to be calculated according to how much or little the will of God is obeyed; that the will of God demonstrates itself in the destinies of a people and of an individual as *sovereign*—that is to say, as punitive or rewarding depending on the degree of obedience.

The *reality* replaced by this wretched lie is as follows: a parasitic kind of person, thriving only at the expense of all healthy forms of life—the *priest*—takes God’s name in vain; he calls that state of society in which the priest decides the value of things “the kingdom of God”; he calls the means by which such a state comes to be able to reach and maintain such a state “the will of God”; and with a cold-blooded cynicism he measures the people, the times, and the individual according to whether they were advantageous to or opposed to the predominance of the priests.

We see them at work; in the hands of the Jewish priests the *great* epoch of the history of Israel became an epoch of decline; the exile, the longstanding misfortune was turned into an eternal punishment for that great epoch—an epoch in which the priest was still nothing. Out of the powerful and very independently sensible figures of the history of Israel, they have made—depending upon what was needed—miserable sneaks and creeps, or “the wicked”; they have reduced every great event to the formula of idiots—“to obey *or* disobey God.”

One further step was taken: the “will of God” (that is to say, the conditions for the preservation of the priests’ power), must be *known*; to this end a “revelation” is required. In plain English—a great literary forgery becomes necessary; a “holy scripture” is discovered; it is made public with the greatest possible hieratic pomp, with days of repentance and lamentation over the longstanding “sin.” The “will of God” had been firmly established long ago; the harm lies entirely in having become estranged from the “holy scripture.” The “will of God” had already been revealed to Moses. What had happened? The priest had, with strictness and with pedantry, right down to the large and small levies that people had to pay him (not to forget the most appetizing bits of meat, for the priest is a beefsteak eater), skillfully phrased once and for all *what he wants to have*—“what the will of God is.”

From that point on things in life are so well-ordered that the priest is *essential*; the holy parasite appears at every natural event of life—at birth, marriage, sickness, death, not to mention the “sacrifice” (the meal), in order to *denaturalize* it—or in his parlance, to “sanctify” it. For this must be comprehended: every natural custom, every natural institution (state, judiciary, marriage, care of the sick and impoverished), every demand prompted by the life instinct—in short, everything that *in itself* possesses value—becomes fundamentally worthless and adverse to worth through the parasitism of the priests (or the “moral world order”); a sanction is subsequently required; a *value-bestowing* power is necessary, one which negates the nature within, which precisely thereby *creates* a value.

The priest devalues, “*desanctifies*” nature; he pays this price in order to exist at all. To disobey God—that is to say the priest, “the law”—is now given the name “sin”; the means by which a person again becomes “reconciled to God” are, as is fitting, nevertheless the means by which submission to the priest is more thoroughly guaranteed; the priest alone “redeems.” Viewed psychologically, “sins” become essential to every society organized by priests; they are the real grips of power; the priest lives off sins; he needs the existence of “sinning.” Supreme proposition: “God forgives those who do penance”—in plain English: *those who submit to the priest*.

27

On this extremely *false* soil—where every nature, every value of nature, every *reality* was opposed by the most deep-seated instincts of the ruling class—*Christianity* became full grown, a form of mortal enmity

¹⁹ Latin—in matters of history.

against reality which has not yet been surpassed. The “holy people,” who had retained for all things only values of the priest, only words of the priest, and who, with a logically consistent conclusion able to instill fear, disassociated themselves from everything else that existed on earth having to do with power, regarding them as “unholy,” as “world,” as “sin”; this people produced an ultimate formula for its instinct which was logical to the point of self-negation; as *Christianity* it negated even the final form of reality—the “holy people,” the “chosen people”—the *Jewish* reality itself.

The case is first-class: the little rebellious movement, which comes to be baptized with the name of Jesus of Nazareth, is the Jewish instinct *once again*—in other words, the priest instinct that no longer tolerates the priest as reality, the fabrication of an even *more abstract* form of existence, an even *more unrealistic* vision of the world than is involved in organizing a church. Christianity *negates* the church. I fail to see against what the rebellion by which its originator, Jesus, has come to be understood (or *misunderstood*) was directed, if not against the Jewish church—“church” used in precisely the same sense that the word is used today. It was a rebellion against “the good and the just,” against “the saints of Israel,” against the hierarchy of society—*not* against the corruption, but against caste, privilege, order, and formula; it was the *disbelief* in the “higher man,” the “No” spoken against everything that was priest and theologian.

However, the hierarchy which was then put into question, even though only for a moment, was the lake dwelling in which the Jewish people, in the middle of the “water,” continued at least to exist; the arduously won *last* chance to survive, the residue of its unique political existence—an attack on this was an attack on the most deep-seated instinct of the people, the most tenacious will of a people to live that there has ever been on the face of the planet. This holy anarchist, who called upon the common people, the outcasts, and “sinners”—the *chandalas* within Judaism—to oppose the ruling order, with a manner of speaking that, if the Gospels are to be trusted, would still lead to Siberia even today, was a political criminal insofar as political criminals were even possible in an absurdly *unpolitical* community. This brought him to the cross; proof of this is the inscription on the cross²⁰. He died for *his* trespasses; there is no basis for the claim, however often it has been made, that he died for the trespasses of others.

28

A completely different question is whether he was at all conscious of such an antithesis—whether he merely came to be *experienced* as this antithesis. And here for the first time I touch upon the problem of the *psychology of the Redeemer*.

I confess that I read few books with as many difficulties as the Gospels. These difficulties are different from those which, by proving them, the scholarly curiosity of the German intellect celebrated one of its most unforgettable triumphs. The time is long past when I, too, like every young scholar with the clever slowness of a refined philologist, savored the work of the incomparable Strauss. I was then twenty years old; now I am too serious for that. What do the contradictions of “tradition” matter to me? How can someone call legends of saints “tradition” anyway? Stories of saints are the most ambiguous literary works there are; to apply the scientific method to them, *when no other documents are extant*, to me seems doomed from the beginning—sheer scholarly idleness.

29

What concerns me is the psychological type of the Redeemer. It *might* now and then be contained within the Gospels, despite the Gospels, however much mutilated or cluttered with alien traits—as Francis of Assisi is preserved in his legends, despite his legends. *Not* the truth about what he did, what he said, or how he died, but the question *whether* his type at all is still conceivable, whether it has been “passed down.” The attempts with which I am acquainted to gather even the *history* of a “soul” from the Gospels seems to me proof of a detestable psychological carelessness.

Renan, that buffoon *in psychologics*²¹, brought forward in his expectation of the Jesus type the two *most important* concepts: the *genius* concept and the *hero* (“*héros*”²²) concept. If anything is unevangelic,

²⁰ I.N.R.I., most commonly thought to stand for Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum—Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

²¹ Latin—in matters of psychology.

²² French—hero.

though, it is the hero concept. Just the opposite of all grappling, of all feeling oneself in a struggle, has here come to be instinct; the inability to resist here becomes morality (“Resist not evil!”—the most profound expression of the Gospels, their key in a certain sense)—salvation through peace, through gentleness, through not *being able* to be an enemy.

What are the “glad tidings?” The true life, the eternal life, has been found; it is not promised; it is here; it is *within you*—as a life of love, love without abatement or exclusion, without reservation. Everyone is the child of God (Jesus definitely claims nothing for himself alone); as a child of God everyone is equal to everyone else. To make a *hero* of Jesus! And what a misconception even the word genius is! Our whole concept, our culture’s concept of “spirit” has no meaning at all within the world that Jesus lived. To speak with the rigor of a physiologist, an entirely different word would be even more suitable here—the word idiot.

We know a morbidly sensitive condition of the *sense of touch*, which thereupon recoils from every contact, from taking hold of any solid object. Such a physiological *habitus*²³ is translated into its ultimate logical outcome—as a hate instinct against *every* reality; as a flight into “incomprehensibility,” into “inconceivability”; as an aversion to every formula, to every concept of time and space, to everything that is solid, custom, institution, or church; as being at home in a world no longer touched by any kind of reality, a merely “inner” world, a “true” world, an “eternal” world. “The kingdom of God *is within you.*”

30

The hate instinct against reality is: the consequence of an extreme capacity for sorrow and irritation which no longer wants to be “touched” at all because it feels every contact too deeply. *The instinct to exclude all antipathy, all enmity, all sense of boundary and detachment is:* the consequence of an extreme capacity for sorrow and irritation which already feels every compulsion for recalcitrance as an unbearable *displeasure* (that is to say, as *harmful*, as if the survival instinct *advises against* it), and recognizes blessedness (pleasure) only in no longer offering resistance to anyone, to neither the ill nor the evil—love as the only, as the *last* possibility for existence.

These are the two *psychological realities* upon which and out of which the doctrine of redemption has grown. I call it a sublime further development of hedonism on a thoroughly morbid groundwork. Most closely related to it, even though with a considerable contribution of Greek vitality and strong nerves, is Epicureanism, the doctrine of redemption associated with paganism. (Epicurus, a *typical decadent*²⁴—first recognized as such by me.) The fear of pain, even of infinitesimal pain, which is not at all *capable* of ending in any other way than in a *religion of love*.

31

I have given my answer to this problem before. The presupposition for it is that the redeemer type is preserved for us in an extensive misrepresentation. This misrepresentation in itself possesses much plausibility; for several reasons such a type cannot remain pure, whole, or free of embellishments. The milieu in which this strange figure moved, and even more the history—the *fate*—of the first Christian community, must have left a mark on him; from this, retrospectively, this type came to be enriched with features that become understandable only in the context of warfare and the aims of propaganda.

That peculiar and sick world—the world to which the Gospels introduce us—a world in which, like in a Russian novel, the dregs of society, nervous disorders, and “childly” idiocy all seem to come together—must have, in any case, *coarsened* the type; the first disciples in particular, in order to understand something of it at all, first translated an existence completely steeped in symbols and incomprehensibilities into their own crudity—for them the type was *extant* only after a reworking into more familiar forms. The prophet, the Messiah, the future judge, the teacher of morality, the miracle man, John the Baptist—just so many opportunities to misconstrue the type.

²³ Latin—disposition.

²⁴ French—decadent.

Finally, let us not underestimate the *proprium*²⁵ of all great, and in particular, sectarian adoration; it obliterates the original, and often strange characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the adored being: *it does not even see them*. It is regrettable that a Dostoevski did not live in the vicinity of this most interesting *decadent*; I am thinking of someone who would have been especially able to perceive the stirring lure of such a mixture of the sublime, the sick and the childly. One final consideration: the type, as a *décadence* type, *could* have actually been characteristically diverse and contradictory—such a possibility is not entirely out of the question. Nevertheless, everything suggests that this is not so; for if it were, the very tradition would have had to have been extraordinarily accurate and objective—we have reasons from which to presume the opposite.

In the meantime, a blatant contradiction exists between the preacher of the mount, the sea, and the meadow—whose appearance seems like that of a Buddha on soil that is not very Indian—and that aggression fanatic, the mortal enemy of theologians and priests, whom the malice of Renan has glorified as “*le grand maître en ironie*”²⁶. I myself have no doubt that that copious measure of gall (and even of *esprit*), first spilled over into the type of the master from the excited condition of Christian propaganda; we are certainly fully aware of the unmindfulness of all sectarians in fashioning from their master their own *apology*. When the first community had need of a judging, quarreling, chafing, malignantly captious theologian *opposed to* theologians, they *created* their own “God” according to their needs—even as they, without hesitation, put into his mouth those completely unevangelic concepts which now they cannot do without: “the Second Coming,” “Last Judgment,” and every kind of temporal expectation and promise.

32

To repeat, I resist the enrollment of the fanatic into the redeemer type; the word *impérieux*²⁷, which Renan used, by itself already *annuls* the type. The “glad tidings” are precisely that there are no more opposites; the kingdom of Heaven belongs to the *children*; the faith which here becomes manifest is not a procured faith—it is extant; it exists from the beginning; it is, as it were, a naivete drawn back into the spiritual. The case of retarded and, within the organism, undeveloped puberty as a consequence of degeneration is well known, at least to the physiologist. Such a faith does not change, does not rebuke, and does not resist; it does not carry “the sword”; it has no idea at all to what extent it could one day disintegrate. It proves itself neither by miracle, nor by reward and promise, nor even “by the Scriptures”; every moment it is its own miracle, its own reward, its own proof, and its own “kingdom of God.” Moreover, this faith does not formulate itself; it *lives*, it resists formulas.

Chance, of course, determines the surroundings, the language, and the background of a certain sphere of concepts; Christianity deals originally *only* with Judeo-Semitic concepts (the food and drink at Communion belong here—that concept which, like everything Jewish, has been so terribly abused by the church). We should, however, be wary of perceiving in this more than a sign language, an instance of semiotics, or an opportunity for parables: that nothing he says, if taken literally, is exactly the precondition which enables this anti-realist to speak at all. Among Indians he would have appropriated the concepts of Sankhya, among Chinese those of Lao-tse—and at the same time noticed no difference.

We could, using the expression loosely, call Jesus a “free spirit”; all that is solid is of no concern to him; words *kill*; all that is solid *kills*. The concept, the *experience* of “life,” as he recognizes it exclusively, resists every kind of work, formula, law, faith, and dogma. He speaks only of the core; “life” or “truth” or “light” is his word for the core; everything else—the whole of reality, the whole of nature, language itself—to him possesses value only as a symbol, an allegory. We must make absolutely no mistake about this point, however great the temptation lying within Christian—that is to say *ecclesiastical*—prejudice is; such a symbolist *par excellence* stands outside all religion, all concepts of worship, all history, all natural science, all experience of the world, all knowledge, all politics, all psychology, all books, and all art; his “knowledge” is just *pure foolishness* about the *notion* that something of that kind exists.

He has not even heard of culture. He requires no struggle against it; he doesn’t dispute it. The same is applicable to the *state*, to the entire civic order and to society, to work, and to war; he has never had a reason

²⁵ Latin—peculiarity, individuality.

²⁶ French—the grand master of irony.

²⁷ French—imperious.

to dispute “the world,” he had never known the ecclesiastical concept “world.” To him, *disputing* is just something completely out of the question. In the same way, dialectics are lacking; the notion that a belief, a “truth,” can be proven with reasons is lacking (*his* proofs are inner “lights,” inner feelings of delight, and self-affirmation—nothing by “proof of strength”). Such a doctrine is also not *able* to contradict; it doesn’t comprehend at all that other doctrines exist, or *can* exist; it doesn’t even know how to conceive of a different opinion. When it encounters one, it will, from inmost sympathy, lament the “blindness”—for it sees the “light”—but make no objection.

33

In the whole psychology of the “Gospel,” the concept of guilt and punishment is lacking; it is the same with the concept of reward. “Sin”—any relationship of detachment between god and man—is abolished; *the “glad tidings” are precisely that*. Salvation is not promised, and it is not bound by conditions—it is the *only* reality; the rest is an emblem enabling it to be discussed.

The *consequence* of such a state of affairs projects itself into a new *practice*, the true evangelical practice. Not a “faith” that sets apart the Christian—the Christian *acts*, he is set apart by acting *differently*. That he offers no resistance, neither through words nor in his heart, to him who acts wickedly against him. That he makes no distinction between foreigners and natives, between Jew and non-Jew (“the neighbor,” actually the co-religionist—the Jew). That he never becomes angry at anyone, never despises anyone. That he allows himself neither to be seen at nor spend time in courts of law (“not to take an oath”). That he will not divorce his wife under any circumstances, not even in the case of her proven infidelity. All of this fundamentally *one* principle, all of this consequences of *one* instinct.

The life of the Redeemer was nothing other than *that* practice—nor was his death. He no longer needs any formulae or any rituals, to communicate with God—not even prayer. He disposed of the whole Jewish doctrine of repentance and reconciliation; he knows to what degree it is solely the *practice* of living by which a person feels “divine,” “blessed,” or “evangelical”—always a “child of God.” The paths to God do *not* include “repentance”; they do *not* include “prayers of forgiveness”: the *evangelical practice alone* leads to God—it simply *is* God! What was *terminated* with the Gospel was the Judaism of the concepts “sin,” “forgiveness of sin,” “faith,” and “redemption through faith”; the whole Jewish *ecclesiastical* doctrine was negated by the “glad tidings.”

The deep-seated instinct of how a person has to *live* in order to experience himself “in heaven,” in order to experience himself as “eternal,” whereas he absolutely does not experience himself “in heaven” by means of any other behavior—this alone is the psychological reality of “redemption.” A new way of life—*not* a new faith.

34

If I understand anything about this great symbolist, it is that he appropriated only *inner* realities as realities, as “truths”; and that he understood the rest—everything natural, temporal, spatial, and historical—only as emblems, as an opportunity for parables.

The concept “the Son of Man” is not a concrete person who belongs to history, something individual and unique, but instead an “eternal” actuality, a psychological symbol redeemed from the concept of time. The same point is again applicable—and in the highest sense—to the *god* of this typical symbolist, to the “kingdom of God,” to the “kingdom of Heaven,” and to “God’s filial relationship.” Nothing is more unchristian than the *ecclesiastical crudities* of a God as *person*, of a “kingdom of God” that *is approaching*, of a “kingdom of Heaven” *beyond*, of a “Son of God” who is the *second person* of the Trinity. All of this is—pardon the expression—like a fist in the eye²⁸ (and in what an eye!), of the Gospel: a *world-historical cynicism* in the ridicule of symbols.

It is obvious, however, what is touched upon by the emblems “father” and “son” (not obvious to everyone, I admit); in the word “son” is expressed the feeling of the transfiguration of all things in their totality (the salvation), and in the word “father” *this feeling itself*—the feeling of eternity and perfection. I am ashamed

²⁸ A German expression meaning “completely unfitting,” not unlike the English expression “a square peg in a round hole.”

to recall what the church has made of this symbolism; hasn't it placed an Amphitryon²⁹ story at the threshold of Christian "faith," and a dogma of the "Immaculate Conception" over and above even that? *But with that it has maculated the conception.*

The "kingdom of Heaven" is a state of the heart—not something that is arriving "above the earth" or "after death." The whole concept of a natural death is *lacking* in the Gospel; death is no bridge, no crossing; this is lacking because it belongs to an entirely different—a merely ostensible—world, useful only as an emblem. The "hour of death" is *not* a Christian concept; the "hour," time, physical life, and its crises do not exist at all for the teacher of the "glad tidings." The "kingdom of God" is not at all what is expected; it possesses no yesterday and no day after tomorrow; it will not arrive within a "millennia"; it is an experience of the heart; it is present everywhere; it is present nowhere.

35

This "bearer of glad tidings" died as he lived and as he *taught*—*not* in order to "redeem mankind," but in order to show how a person must live. His *practice* is what he has bequeathed to humanity; his behavior before the judges, before the bailiffs, before the prosecutors, and every kind of slander and scorn—his behavior on the *cross*. He does not resist; he does not stand up for his rights; he takes no steps to parry when things are worst for him—even more, *he invites the worst*. And he begs, he suffers, he loves *with* those, *in* those who do evil unto him. His words to the *thief* on the cross contain the whole Gospel. "That was truly a *divine* man, a child of God!" says the thief. "If thou perceiveth this," answers the Redeemer, "then *thou art in Paradise*, then thou art a child of God." *Not* to defend oneself, *not* to chafe, *not* to hold responsible—but also not to resist the Evil One—to love him.

36

Only we—we *freed* spirits—possess the prerequisite to understand something that nineteen centuries have misunderstood—that integrity which, become instinct and passion, wages war against the "holy lie" even more than against any other lie. People have been inexpressibly estranged from our loving and prudent neutrality, from that discipline of spirit which alone has made possible the solving of such strange, such delicate things; with an impudent egotism, people have always wanted only what was advantageous to *them*; the *church* was constructed out of the antithesis of the Gospel.

Whoever looks for signs that the fingers of an ironic divinity are at work behind the great play of the universe finds no small clue in the *enormous question mark* called Christianity. That humanity kneels before the antithesis of that which was the origin, the meaning, the *law* of the Gospels; that it has, in its concept of the "church," pronounced holy what the "bearer of glad tidings" perceived to be *beneath* him and *behind* him; it is pointless to search further for a greater example of *world-historical irony*.

37

Our age is proud of its historical sense. How could it have made credible to itself the nonsense that there stands at the beginning of Christianity the *coarse fable of the miracle worker and Redeemer*—and that everything spiritual and symbolic is only a later development? On the contrary, the history of Christianity—from the death on the cross onward, in fact—is the history of the gradually more and more coarse misunderstanding of an *original* symbolism. With every spread of Christianity over even broader, even cruder masses that are more and more lacking the prerequisites from which Christianity was born, it became more necessary to *vulgarize*, to *barbarize* it; it has swallowed the doctrines and rituals of every *underground* cult of the *imperium Romanum*³⁰; it has assimilated the nonsense of all kinds of diseased reason.

The destiny of Christianity lies in the necessity that its faith itself must become as diseased, as base and vulgar as the desires it is supposed to satisfy. And this as the church, this *diseased barbarism*, itself rises to power; the church, this model of mortal enmity toward all integrity, toward all *elevation* of the soul, toward all discipline of the spirit, toward a frank and gracious humanness. *Christian* values—*noble* values: only we, we *freed* spirits, have restored this greatest antithesis of values that there has ever been!

²⁹ A character in Greek mythology.

³⁰ Latin—Roman Empire.

At this point I do not suppress a sigh. There are days when a feeling blacker than the blackest melancholy afflicts me—*contempt for man*. And to leave no doubt about *what* I hold in contempt—*whom* I hold in contempt—it is the individual of today, the individual with whom I am unfortunately a contemporary. The individual of today—I suffocate on his bad breath. Like all men of knowledge I possess a great tolerance—that is to say, a *magnanimous* self-mastery with regard to the past; whether it be called “Christianity,” “Christian faith,” or the “Christian church,” I proceed through this insane-asylum world of whole millennia with a somber guardedness; I avoid holding humanity responsible for its mental disorders. My feelings, however, suddenly change—break loose—as soon as I enter the modern age, *our* age. Our age is *knowing*. What was previously merely diseased has today become ill-mannered; today it is ill-mannered to be a Christian.

And here is where my disgust begins. I look around me; not one word of what used to be called “truth” is left anymore; if a priest so much as utters the word “truth,” we can no longer stand it. Even with the most unassuming claim to integrity we *must* realize nowadays that a theologian, a priest, or a pope, with every sentence he speaks, is not only mistaken, but is *lying*—that he is no longer free to lie out of “innocence” or out of “ignorance.” The priest also knows, as well as anyone, that there is no longer any “God,” any “sinner,” or any “Redeemer”—that “free will” and the “moral world order” are *lies*; the seriousness and profound determination of the spirit no longer *allow* anyone *not* to know this. *Every* concept of the church has been recognized for what it is—the most malicious forgery in existence—with the purpose of rendering nature and the values of nature *valueless*; the priest himself has been recognized for what he is—the most dangerous kind of parasite, the truly poisonous spider of life.

We know—our *conscience* today knows—*what* these sinister inventions of the priests and the church are really worth, *what purpose they serve*, having come to attain that state of self-deseccation of humanity, the sight of which can cause disgust; the concepts “hereafter,” “Last Judgment,” “immortality of the soul,” the “Soul” itself—they are instruments of torture, and they are methods of cruelty which enabled the priest to become master, and to remain master. Everyone is aware of this, *and nonetheless everything remains the same*.

Where has the last sentiment of decency and self-esteem gone when even our statesmen—an otherwise very uninhibited and impartial kind of man, and by their deeds Antichristians through and through—today still call themselves Christian and go to Communion? A young prince at the head of his regiments, splendid as an expression of the egoism and arrogance of his people—but *without* any shame declaring himself a Christian! *Whom*, then, does Christianity negate? *What* does it call “world”? That a person is a soldier, a judge, or a patriot; that he defends himself; that he retains his honor; that he seeks his own advantage; that he is *proud*. Every practice of every moment, every instinct, every value judgment turned into *action* is today Antichristian; what a *freak of falseness* modern man must be that he is nevertheless *not ashamed* to be still called a Christian!

I will now go back and give an account of the *real* history of Christianity. The word “Christianity” is no doubt a misunderstanding; after all, there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross. The “Gospel”³¹ *died* on the cross. From that moment on, what was called “Gospel” was already the antithesis of what *he* had lived—“*bad tidings*,” *malspel*³². It is false to the point of nonsense when a “faith”—for instance, a faith in redemption through Christ—is seen as the badge of the Christian; only the Christian *practice*, a life just as he who died on the cross *lived*, is Christian. *Such* a life is still possible nowadays, and for *certain* people is even necessary; genuine, unspoiled Christianity shall always be possible. *Not* faith, but conduct; above all, *not* to do many things—a different *existence*.

States of consciousness, any faith or clinging to truths—as every psychologist knows—are really examples of completely trivial and second-class matters when compared to the value of instinct; strictly speaking, the

³¹ Middle English, from Old English *gos* (good) + *spell* (tidings), ultimately from Greek *eu-* (good) + *angelos* (messenger).

³² Middle English *mal-* (bad). Nietzsche uses the Greek prefix *dys-* (bad), converting “*Evangelium*” (good tidings) into “*Dysangelium*” (bad tidings).

whole concept of spiritual causality is false. To reduce being a Christian—Christianness—to a clinging to truths, or to a mere phenomenality of consciousness is to negate Christianness. *As a matter of fact, there have been no Christians at all.* The “Christian”—that which for two thousand years has been called a Christian—is merely a psychological self-misunderstanding. Examined more scrupulously—*despite* all “faith,” in him *only* instincts ruled—and what instincts. “Faith” was at all times—by way of example, with Luther—only a cloak, a pretext, a *curtain* behind which the instincts played their game: a clever *blindness* about the dominion of *certain* instincts. “Faith”—I have already called it the intrinsic Christian *ingenuity*; people have always *spoken* of faith, but they have always *acted* only from instinct.

Nothing occurs in the Christian imagination that touches even remotely on reality; on the other hand, we have discerned in the hate instinct *against* reality the driving (the sole driving) element at the root of Christianity. What follows from that? That here *in psychologics*³³, too, the error is drastic—that is to say, essence-determining, that is to say the *substance*. *One* concept taken away, a single reality in its place—and the whole of Christianity rolls up into nothingness! Viewed from above, this strangest of all facts—an inventive and self-inspired religion not only contingent on errors, but *only* on harmful, *only* on life and heart-poisoning errors—remains a *spectacle for gods*, for those deities who are likewise philosophers, and whom I have encountered, for example, in connection with those famous dialogues on Naxos³⁴. The moment their *disgust* leaves them (and us!), they become grateful for the spectacle of the Christian; perhaps the wretched little star called earth has earned a divine glance—or divine interest—solely because of *this* curious case. Let us not underestimate the Christian—the Christian, false *to the point of innocence*, is far above the apes; with regard to Christians, a well-known theory of descent becomes a mere pleasantry.

40

The undoing of the Gospel was decided with the death; it was stuck on the “cross.” Only the death—this unexpected, shameful death—only the cross, which for the most part was just reserved for the canaille; only this most horrible paradox brought the disciples to the true riddle: “*Who was that? What was that?*” Their feelings shaken and hurt to the quick, and their suspicion that such a death might be the *refutation* of their cause—the dreadful question mark “Of all things, why this?”—this situation is comprehended well enough. Here everything *had* to be necessary and have meaning and reason—the highest reason; a disciple’s love recognizes no chance occurrence. Only then a chasm was opened: “*Who killed him? Who was his natural enemy?*” This question leapt forth like a lightning bolt. Answer: the *reigning* Judaism, its highest class. From that moment they perceived themselves in revolt *against* the status quo; they subsequently understood Jesus to have been *in revolt against the status quo*.

Until then, this warlike, No-saying, and No-doing characteristic *was lacking* in his image; even more, he was the opposite of that. Apparently the small community had *not* understood the very point: the exemplary qualities in this sort of death, the freedom, the superiority *over* any feeling of *ressentiment*—an indication of how little of him they understood at all! Jesus himself could have wanted nothing from his death but to provide publicly the greatest trial, the *proof* of his teaching. His disciples, however, were far from *forgiving* this death (which would have been evangelical in the highest sense), or even offer up themselves for a similar death in gentle and lovely peace of heart. Precisely the most unevangelical feeling—*revenge*—again came to the surface. It was impossible that the matter could have been at an end with his death: “retaliation” and “judgment” were needed (and yet, what could be more unevangelical than “retaliation,” “punishment,” and “pronouncing judgment”!). The popular expectation of a Messiah again came to the foreground; an historic moment was contemplated: the “kingdom of God” is coming as a judgment over his enemies. With this, however, everything is misunderstood; the “kingdom of God” as the final act, as a promise!

The Gospel had really been precisely the existence, the fulfillment, the *reality* of this “kingdom.” Just such a death simply *was* this “kingdom of God.” Only now all the contempt and bitterness toward the Pharisee and theologian was brought to the master type—because of which out of him a Pharisee and theologian was *created*! On the other hand, the fierce adoration of those souls gone completely awry no longer endured that evangelically equal right of everyone to be a child of God, as Jesus has taught; it was their revenge by then

³³ See aphorism 29.

³⁴ Reputedly Dionysus’ favorite island.

to *elevate* Jesus in a dissolute way, to separate themselves from him—just as the Jews, out of revenge against their enemies, had formerly severed themselves from their God and raised him on high. *One* God and *one* Son of God—both of them products of *ressentiment*.

41

And henceforth an absurd problem emerged: “How *could* God allow this?” The disturbed reason of the little community found a downright dreadfully absurd answer to that: God gave his son for the forgiveness of sins, as a *sacrifice*. How it was all of a sudden at an end with the Gospel! The *guilt sacrifice*—in its most disgusting, most hideous form, in fact—the sacrifice of the *guiltless* for the sins of the guilty! What ghastly heathenism! Jesus had of course abolished the concept of “guilt” itself; he had denied any chasm between God and man; he *lived* this unity of God and man as *his* “glad tidings”—and *not* as a prerogative! Henceforth little by little, the doctrine of the Judgment and the Second Coming, and the doctrine of the resurrection (with which the whole concept of “salvation,” the complete and unique reality of the Gospels, is conjured away in favor of a state *after* death), entered into the Redeemer-type.

Paul, with that rabbinical impudence which sets him apart in every detail, made this conception, this *obscenity* of a conception, logical: “*If* Christ has not arisen from the dead, then our faith is futile.” And all of a sudden the Gospels became the most despicable of all unfulfillable promises—the *insolent* doctrine of personal immortality. Paul himself even taught it as a *reward*!

42

It is apparent *what* was at an end with the death on the cross: a new, thoroughly original starting point for a Buddhist peace movement—for an actual (*not* merely promised) *happiness on earth*. For this remains—I have emphasized it already—the basic difference between the two *décadence* religions: Buddhism does not give its word, but keeps it instead; Christianity is always giving its word, but *never keeps it*. The “glad tidings” followed close on the heels of *by far the most wicked*—those of Paul. In Paul was embodied the type opposite to the “bearer of glad tidings”—the genius in hate, in the vision of hate, and in the inexorable logic of hate. This Malspelist has offered *everything* as a sacrifice to hatred! Above all the Redeemer—he nailed him onto *his own* cross. The life, the example, the teaching, the death, the meaning, and the system of law of the entire Gospel—nothing was left once this counterfeiter, out of hate, comprehended what he alone could use. *Not* reality, *not* historical truth!

And once again the priest instinct of the Jews committed the same great crime against history; it simply deleted the yesterday and the day-before-yesterday of Christianity; it *fabricated its own history of primitive Christianity*. Even more—it falsified the history of Israel again so that it appeared as the prehistory of *its* deed; all the prophets had spoken of *its* “Redeemer.” Later the church even falsified the history of humanity into the prehistory of Christianity. The redeemer-type, the doctrine, the practice, the death, the meaning of the death, and even the events after the death—nothing remained untouched; nothing remained even remotely similar to reality. Paul simply shifted the emphasis to that whole existence *after* this existence—in the *lie* of the “resurrected” Jesus. After all, he couldn’t use the life of the Redeemer anyway; he had need of the death on the cross *and* something even more. To think of a Paul—whose home was the headquarters of stoic enlightenment—as honest when from a hallucination he dresses up the *proof* of the Redeemer as *still* living; or just even to give credence to his story *that* he had had this hallucination would be a real *niaiserie*³⁵ for a psychologist. Paul willed the end; *consequently* he also willed the means. What he himself did not believe, the idiots among whom he cast *his* doctrine believed. *His* need was for *power*: with Paul the priest again wished for power; he could use only concepts, doctrines, and symbols with which to tyrannize masses and form herds. *What* alone did Mohammed later borrow from Christianity? Paul’s invention, his means to the tyranny of the priest, to forming herds—the belief in immortality—*that is to say, the doctrine of the “Judgment.”*

43

If the emphasis of life is placed *not* on life, but on the “hereafter” instead—on *nothingness*—then the emphasis has been taken away from life altogether. The great lie of personal immortality destroys all reason

³⁵ French—silliness, foolishness.

and all naturalness within the instincts; at that point everything in the instincts that is charitable, life-promoting, or guarantees a future arouses mistrust. *Therefore*, to live so that there is no longer any *meaning* to living—that now becomes the “meaning” of life.

Why have public spirit; why cooperate, trust, or promote and guard the general welfare? Just so many “temptations,” just so many diversions from the “right path”—“*one thing* is necessary.” That everyone, as an “immortal soul,” is equal to everyone else, that within the totality of all creatures, the “salvation” of *every* single one may claim eternal importance; that little creeps and people three-quarters insane may imagine the laws of nature are continually being *broken* for them. Such an intensification into infinity—into impudence—of every sort of egoism cannot be denounced with sufficient contempt. And for all that Christianity owes its victory to *this* wretched flattery of personal vanity; precisely all the misguided, rebellion-minded, and disadvantaged—the dregs of humanity and scum of the earth in their entirety—were brought over to it. The “salvation of the soul”: in plain English—“the world revolves around *me*.”

The poison of the doctrine “*equal rights for all*”—Christianity sowed this most fundamentally; Christianity has, from the most clandestine corner of base instincts, waged a mortal war against every feeling of reverence and distance between man and fellow man (that is to say, the *prerequisite* for any enhancement, for any growth of culture); out of the *ressentiment* of the masses it forged its *main weapon* against *us*, against everything on earth that is noble, cheerful, or high-minded—against our happiness on earth. The “immortality” granted to every Peter and Paul was hitherto the greatest, the most malicious assassination attempt on the *noble* human nature.

And let us not underestimate the disaster that has crept out of Christianity and into politics! Nobody nowadays has the courage any longer for special privileges, for the right to dominion, for a sense of reverence for himself and his equals—for a *pathos of distance*. Our politics has been *diseased* as a result of this lack of courage! The attitude of the aristocracy became undermined most deeply through the lie of the equality of souls; and if the belief in the “prerogative of the majority” creates and *will create* revolutions, it is Christianity. Let there be no doubt about it—Christian value judgments are those which every revolution simply translates into blood and crime! Christianity is a rebellion of everything crawling on the ground against that which has stature; the Gospel of the “lowly” *makes low*.

44

The Gospels are invaluable as attestation of the already unstoppable corruption *within* the first community. What Paul, with the logician-like cynicism of a rabbi, took to its conclusion was nevertheless merely the process of decay that had begun with the death of the Redeemer. These Gospels cannot be read too carefully; there are difficulties behind every word. I confess (and beg pardon for it), that precisely because of that they are a first-rate amusement for a psychologist—as the *antithesis* of all naive depravity, as subtlety *par excellence*, as artistry in psychological depravity.

The Gospels stand by themselves. The Bible can’t be compared to them at all. We are among Jews—the *first* point so that the thread is not completely lost. The feigning of the self into a “saint,” here virtually become genius, the likes of which has never before been attained in books or among people, this forgery of words and gestures as *art* is not the accident of any individual talent or any exceptional nature. For this *race* is fitting. In Christianity, as the art of holy lying, the whole of Judaism—several centuries of the most earnest Jewish preparation and technique—reached its ultimate mastery. This spirit, this *ultima ratio*³⁶ of the lie, is the Jew once again, even *three times* again. The fundamental will to use only the concepts, symbols, and attitudes which are proven by the priests’ reality, the instinctive rejection of every *other* reality, every *other* kind of perspective about value and utility—that is not just tradition, that is *inheritance*; only as inheritance does it seem to be something natural.

The whole of humanity, the best minds of the best ages (except one, who is perhaps only a brute), have allowed themselves to be deceived. The Gospel has been *read* as a *book of innocence*—no small hint about what has been play-acted here with such mastery. Admittedly, had we gotten to *see* them, all these strange creeps and artificial saints—even only in passing—then that would have been the end; and precisely because

³⁶ Latin—final argument.

I do not read words *without* seeing gestures, *I have put an end to them*. I cannot stand a certain way they lift their eyes upward.

Fortunately, for the vast majority books are just *literature*. Let us not be led astray: “Judge not!” they say, but they send to hell everything that stands in their way. By allowing God to judge they themselves judge; by glorifying God, they glorify themselves; by *demanding* the precise virtues of which they are capable—and even more, which they need to stay on top at all—they bestow upon themselves the grand appearance of struggling for virtue, battling for the control of virtue. “We live, we die, we sacrifice ourselves *for the good*” (“truth,” light,” the “kingdom of God”); in truth, they do what they cannot keep from doing. By forcing their way like moral cowards, sitting in corners, and leading shadowy lives in the shadows, they make a *duty* out of it; their life of humility appears as duty; as humility it is one more proof of piety. Oh, this humble, chaste, merciful sort of mendacity! “Virtue itself shall bear witness for us.”

The Gospels are read as books of seduction by *morality*; morality was confiscated by these petty people; they know what morality is supposed to signify! Humanity is best *led by the nose* with morality! The reality is that here the most conscious *conceit of the elect* feigns modesty; once and for all a person places *himself*, the “community,” and the “good and the just” on the side of “truth”—and the rest, “the world,” on the other. *That* was the most disastrous sort of megalomania that has hitherto been present on the face of the planet; little abortions of hypocrites and liars started to claim the concepts “God,” “truth,” “light,” “spirit,” “love,” “wisdom,” and “life” for themselves, as if these were synonyms for themselves; in order to fence themselves off from the “world,” little superlative Jews, ripe for every sort of insane asylum, turned values around altogether into line with *themselves*, as if only the “Christian” were the meaning, the salt, the criterion, as well as the *ultimate tribunal* of all the rest. The whole disaster was made possible only because of the fact that a related, a racially related kind of megalomania already existed in the world—the *Jewish* kind; as soon as the chasm between Jews and the Judaists appeared, no choice at all remained to the latter but to use against the Jews the same procedures of self-preservation that the Jewish instinct recommended, whereas hitherto the Jews had only used them against everything *non-Jewish*. The Christian is only a Jew of a “more open” confession.

45

I give a few samples of what these little people put into their heads, what words they *have put into the mouth* of their master—nothing but confessions of “beautiful souls.”

“And whosoever shall not receive thee, nor hear thee, when having gone thence, shake the dust off thine feet for a testimony against them. Verily, I say unto thee, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than for that city” (Mark 6:11). How *evangelical!*

“And whosoever offends one of the little ones who believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea” (Mark 9:42). How *evangelical!*

“And if thine eye offends thee, cast it out. It is better that you enter into the kingdom of God one-eyed than to have two eyes and be cast into the hell fire, where their worm does not die, and their fire does not go out” (Mark 9:47)³⁷. It is not exactly the eye that is meant.

“Truly I say unto thee that there stand here some who will not taste death, until they see the kingdom of God come with power” (Mark 9:1). Well *lied*, lion.

“Whosoever wants to follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. *For...*” (*A psychologist’s comment*—Christian morality is refuted through its “*fors*”; its “reasons” refute—thus is it Christian.) Mark 8:34.

“Judge not, *that* you will not be judged..., with whatever kind of measure you measure, *you* will be measured” (Matthew 7:1). What a concept of justice, and of a “just” judge!

“For if you love them that love you, *what reward do you have?* Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you only greet your brothers, *what exceptional thing do you do?* Do not even the tax collectors do so?” (Matthew 5:46). Principle of “Christian love”—in the end it wants to be *paid* well.

³⁷ Actually 9:47 and 9:48.

“However, if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:15). Very compromising for the forenamed “Father.”

“Strive first for the kingdom of God, and for his righteousness, then will all these things be awarded to you” (Matthew 6:33). All these things—namely food, clothing, and all the necessities of life. An *error*, to put it mildly. Shortly before this³⁸, God appears as a tailor, at least in certain cases.

“Rejoice in that day and jump for joy, *for* behold, your reward is great in heaven. The like of which their fathers did also unto the prophets” (Luke 6:23). *Impudent* rascals! They are already comparing themselves to the prophets.

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells within you? If anyone corrupts the temple of God, *God shall corrupt him*; for the temple of God is holy, *which you are*” (Paul I. Corinthians 3:16). Things of that kind cannot be despised too much.

“Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge smaller matters?” (Paul I. Corinthians 6:2). Unfortunately not merely the words of an insane asylum denizen.

This *dreadful swindler* continues verbatim: “Do you not know that *we* shall judge the angels? How much more things of this life!”

“Has God not made the wisdom of this world foolish? For while by its wisdom the world did not know God in His wisdom, it pleased God to make blessed those believing in it through the foolishness of preaching. . . , not many wise according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many noble, are called. But *God has chosen* what is foolish in the world so that He might thwart the wise; and what is weak in the world God has chosen so that He might thwart what is strong; and the base of the world, and the despised, God has chosen, and that which is not, so that He might destroy that which is. So that no flesh should glory in His presence” (Paul I. Corinthians 1:20ff). In order to *understand* this passage, a testimonial of the very first class for the psychology of every chandala morality, read the first essay in my *Genealogy of Morals*; in it the contrast between a *noble* morality and a chandala morality born of *ressentiment* and powerless revenge was for the first time brought to light. Paul was the greatest of all apostles of revenge.

46

What follows from this? That one does well to put on gloves when reading the New Testament. The nearness of so much uncleanness almost compels it. We would no more choose the “first Christians” as acquaintances than Polish Jews—not that even one objection to them is necessarily required. Neither of them smell good. I have looked in vain through the New Testament for even just one sympathetic trait; there is nothing in it that is free, kind, frank, or honest. Humanness has not yet made its first beginnings here; the instincts of *cleanliness* are lacking.

There are only *bad* instincts in the New Testament; there is not even any courage for these bad instincts. Everything in it is cowardice; everything is eye-covering and self-deception. Every book becomes clean just by reading the New Testament—to give an example: immediately after reading Paul, I read with delight that most graceful, most high-spirited mocker Petronius, of whom it could be said what Domenico Boccaccio wrote to the Duke of Parma about Cesare Borgia—“*é tutto festo*”³⁹—utterly healthy, utterly cheerful and fine.

These little hypocrites are mistaken specifically about the main point. They attack, but everything attacked by them is *distinguished* thereby. He whom a “first Christian” attacks has *not* been besmirched. On the contrary, it is an honor to be opposed by “first Christians.” A person does not read the New Testament without a predilection for what is ill-treated in it—not to speak of the “wisdom of this world,” which an impudent braggart sought in vain to ruin “through the foolishness of preaching.”⁴⁰ Even the Pharisees and scribes, though, possess an advantage through such opposition; they must really have been worth something

³⁸ Matthew 6:28ff.

³⁹ Italian.

⁴⁰ See aphorism 45.

to have been loathed in such a rude manner. Hypocrisy—that was an accusation the “first Christians” *must* have made! In the end, they were the *privileged*; that is enough—chandala hate needs no further reasons.

The “first Christian,” and I fear even the “last Christian”—*which perhaps I may yet live to see*—is, from his lower instincts, opposed to everything privileged; he lives, he struggles always for “*equal rights*.” Examined more scrupulously, he has no alternative. If a person wants to be “one of God’s chosen”—or a “temple of God,” or a “judge of the angels”—then any *other* principle of selection (for example, by integrity, by spirit, by manliness and pride, by beauty and freedom of the heart), is simply “world”—*evil in itself*. Moral—every word from the mouth of a “first Christian” is a lie; every act he performs is a falseness of instinct; all of his values and all of his goals are harmful; but *whom he hates, and what he hates—that has value*. The Christian, the priestly Christian especially, is a *criterion for value*.

Do I have to say further that in the entire New Testament only a single figure is found to respect? Pilate, the Roman governor. To take a Jewish affair seriously—he does not persuade himself to do this. One Jew more or less—what does it matter? The noble scorn of a Roman, before whom an impudent abuse of the word “truth” was pursued, has enriched the New Testament with the single expression *that possesses value*—the one that is its criticism, even its *annihilation*—“What is truth!”

47

That what separates *us* is not that we find no God, either in history or in nature, or behind nature—but instead that we perceive what is revered as God—not a “divine,” but as wretched, as absurd, as harmful, not just as an error, but as a *crime against life*. We deny God as God. If someone were to prove this God of the Christians to us, we would know to believe in him even less. In a formula—*deus, qualem Paulus creavit, dei negatio*⁴¹. A religion like Christianity, which does not border on reality at any point, which immediately falls apart as soon as reality comes into its own on even just one point, must properly be mortally hostile toward the “wisdom of the world,” that is to say, *science*; it will call good every means with which the discipline of the intellect—purity and austerity in matters of conscience of the intellect—and the noble coolness and freedom of the intellect can be poisoned, slandered, or made *disreputable*.

“Faith” as an imperative is the *veto* against science—in *praxi*⁴², the lie at any price. Paul *comprehended* that the lie—that “faith”—was necessary; the church, in turn, later understood Paul. That “God” that Paul invented, a God who “thwarts”⁴³ the “wisdom of the world” (in a narrower sense, the two great opponents of all superstitions—philology and medicine), is in truth only the resolute *determination* of Paul to do this himself; to call one’s own will “God,” *Torah*—that is first and foremost Jewish. Paul *wants* to thwart “the wisdom of the world”; his enemies are the *good* philologists and physicians of Alexandrian training; he wages war against them. Indeed, a person is not a philologist and physician without also at the same time being *Antichristian*. As a philologist he sees *through* the “holy books”; as a physician *through* the physiological dilapidation of the typical Christian. The physician says “incurable,” the philologist “fraud.”

48

Has the famous story at the beginning of the Bible really been understood—of God’s hellish fear of *science*? It has not been understood. This priestly book *par excellence* begins, as is proper, with the great inner difficulty of the priest; *he* possesses just *one* great danger, *consequently* “God” possesses just *one* great danger.

The old God, all “spirit,” all high priest, all perfection, takes a stroll in his garden—but he is bored. (Against boredom the gods themselves struggle in vain.) What does he do? He invents man; man is entertaining. But behold, man also became bored. The compassion of God toward the single distress possessed by every paradise knows no bounds; straightaway he creates other animals as well. God’s *first* mistake—man found the animals unentertaining; he ruled over them, and he did not even want to be “animal.” Consequently God created woman. And indeed, there was an end to the boredom—but also to other things as well!

⁴¹ Latin—God, as Paul created Him, is the denial of God.

⁴² Greek—in practice or in reality.

⁴³ See aphorism 45.

Woman was God's *second* mistake. Woman is by nature a serpent, Heva⁴⁴; every priest knows that; "from woman comes *every* disaster in the world"; every priest knows that as well. "*Consequently science* also comes from her." Man first learned through woman to taste of the Tree of Knowledge. What had happened? The old God was overcome with a hellish fear. Man himself had become his *greatest* mistake; he had created a rival for himself; science makes *god-like*; it is all over for priests and gods when man becomes scientific. Moral—science is the forbidden thing in itself; it alone is forbidden. Science is the *first* sin, the seed of all sin, the *original* sin. *This alone is morality*. "Thou shalt *not* know"—the rest follows therewith.

The hellish fear of God did not prevent him from being clever. How does someone *defend* himself against science? That became his main problem for a long time. The answer—humans be gone from paradise! Happiness and idleness bring about thoughts; all thoughts are bad thoughts. Humans *shall* not think. And the "priest in himself" invents distress, death, the mortal danger of pregnancy, every kind of misery, old age, tribulation, and above all *sickness*—nothing but devices in the struggle against science! Distress does not *allow* man to think. And in spite of that (how appalling!) the knowledge factory towers up, heaven-bound, God-dimming. What to do! The old God invents *war*; he splits up the peoples; he makes it so that people destroy each other. (Priests have always had a great need for war.) War—among other things, a great troublemaker of science! Unbelievable! Knowledge—the *emancipation from the priest*—grows even in spite of wars. And the old God made one last decision: "Humans have become scientific; *it is no use, they must be drowned!*"

49

I have been understood. The beginning of the Bible contains the *entire* psychology of the priest. The priest knows only *one* great danger—that is science—the healthy concept of cause and effect. On the whole, however, science flourishes only under fortunate circumstances; there must be a *surplus* of time and of spirit in order to "know." "*Consequently, humans must be made unfortunate*"—this was, in every age, the logic of the priests. The reader can already guess *what*, in accordance with this logic, came into the world for the first time: "*sin*." The concepts of guilt and punishment, the entire "moral world order," was invented *against* science—*against* the separation of the people from the priests.

Humans shall *not* look without; they shall look within themselves; they shall not look into things cleverly and prudently, like one who is learning; they shall not look at all—they shall *suffer*. And they shall suffer so much that they have need of the priest at all times. Away with physicians! *People have need of a Savior*. The concept of guilt and punishment, including the doctrine of grace, of "redemption," or "forgiveness"—*lies* through and through, and without any psychological reality—are invented in order to destroy the *causal sense* of humans; these lies are an assassination attempt against the concept of cause and effect! And *not* an assassination attempt with a fist, with a knife, or with sincere hate and love! Instead, out of the most cowardly, most cunning, and most lowly instincts! An assassination attempt by a *priest!* By a *parasite!* A vampirism by pale, underground bloodsuckers!

If the natural consequences of an act are no longer "natural," but instead come to be thought of as caused by conceptual specters of superstition, by "God," by "spirits," by "souls," as merely "moral" consequences, as reward, punishment, hint, aid to education—then the prerequisite for knowledge has been destroyed—*then the greatest crime against humanity has been perpetrated*. As previously stated, sin, this form of the human's self-desecration *par excellence*, is invented in order to make science, culture—everything of human beings that is high and noble—impossible; the priest *rules* via the invention of sin.

50

At this point I shall not release myself from presenting a psychology of "faith," of the "faithful"—as is proper, especially for the benefit of the "faithful." If there is no lack of those who do not know to what

⁴⁴ "In the Mysteries of the bull-horned Bacchus, the officers held serpents in their hands, raised them above their heads, and cried aloud "Eva!" the generic oriental name of the serpent, and the particular name of the constellation in which the Persians placed Eve and the serpent. The Arabians call it Hevan, Ophiucus himself, Hawa, and the brilliant star in his head, Ras-al-Hawa. The use of this word Eva or Evoe caused Clemens of Alexandria to say that the priests in the Mysteries invoked Eve, by whom evil was brought into the world." *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, 1871, p. 494.

extent being “faithful” is *unprincipled*—or a badge of *décadence*, of a broken will to live—they will surely know it tomorrow. My voice reaches even the hard of hearing. It appears (otherwise I have heard wrongly), that among Christians there is a kind of criterion of truth that is called the “proof of strength.” “Faith makes blessed—*thus* it is true.”

Here it might first be objected that making-blessed is not exactly proven but instead is only *promised*; blessedness tied to the condition of “faith”—a person *shall* become blessed *because* he has faith. However, *that* what the priest promises the faithful really occurs, impervious to any inspection—how is *that* proven? The alleged “proof of strength” is thus at root only another faith that that which is promised from faith will not fail to appear. In a formula—“I have faith that faith makes blessed; *consequently* it is true.” With this, however, we are already at the end. This “consequently” would itself be the *absurdum*⁴⁵ as the criterion of truth. However, let us assume, with some indulgence, that making blessed is proven through faith (*not* just wanted, *not* just promised via the somewhat suspicious mouth of a priest); would blessedness—more technically speaking, *pleasure*—ever be a proof of the truth? So infrequently that it nearly furnished the counterproof—at least the greatest suspicion against “truth”—when feelings of pleasure have a say regarding the question “What is true?”

The proof of “pleasure” is a proof for “pleasure”—nothing more; where in all the world has it been determined that *true* judgments give more enjoyment than false, and, in accordance with a pre-established harmony, of necessity, pull along with them pleasant feelings? The experience of all austere, all profoundly natured spirits teaches *the opposite*. Truth must be tested every step of the way; in exchange for it almost everything to which the heart, to which our love and our trust in life would otherwise be attached has had to be surrendered. Greatness of the soul is required for it; service to truth is the hardest service. For what does it mean to be *principled* in spiritual matters? That we are austere toward our hearts, that we scorn “beautiful feelings,” that from every Yes and No we create for ourselves an issue of conscience! Faith makes blessed; consequently it lies.

51

That faith, under certain circumstances, makes blessed, that blessedness still does not make an *idée fixe* a *true* idea, that faith moves no mountains (but very likely *puts* mountains where none exist)—a brief walk through an *insane asylum* enlightens the average person adequately about this. Certainly *not* so for a priest—for he denies, from instinct, that sickness is sickness, and that an insane asylum is an insane asylum. Christianity has *need* of sickness, not unlike Greek civilization having need of a surplus of health; *making-sick* is the true hidden purpose of the church’s whole system of procedures for the world’s salvation. And the church itself—is it not the Catholic insane asylum as the ultimate ideal? The earth in general as an insane asylum?

The religious human, as the church *wants* him, is a typical *decadent*; the moment that a religious crisis comes to dominate a people is always marked by nervous epidemics; the “inner world” of the religious person looks like the “inner world” of the over-excited and exhausted to the point of confusing the two; the “highest” states that Christianity has hung over humanity as the value of all values are epileptoid conditions—the church has declared holy *in majorum dei honorem*⁴⁶ only lunatics *or* great frauds. I once allowed myself to designate the entire Christian repentance and redemption training⁴⁷ (which nowadays is best studied in England), as a *folie circulaire*⁴⁸, methodically generated, as is proper, from that which is already prepared for it—that is to say, from thoroughly morbid soil. Nobody is free to become a Christian; a person is not “converted” to Christianity; he must be sick enough for that to happen.

We others, who have *courage* for health *and* also for contempt—how *we* allow ourselves to hold in contempt a religion that teaches misunderstanding the body! that does not want to get rid of the superstition about souls! that makes a “merit” out of inadequate nourishment! that combats health as some sort of enemy, devil, or temptation! that persuades itself that a “perfect soul” can be carried around in a cadaver of a body, and with that has need to ready a new concept of “perfection” (pale, sickly, idiotic-enthusiastic essence), so-

⁴⁵ Latin—that which is out of tune or out of place, absurdity.

⁴⁶ Latin—to the greater honor of God.

⁴⁷ Nietzsche uses the English word here.

⁴⁸ French—manic-depression.

called “holiness”—holiness, itself merely a series of symptoms of the impoverished, unnerved, incurably corrupted body!

The Christian movement, as a European movement, is from the start a joint movement of all sorts of laments of the excluded and discarded (these wish for power through Christianity). It does *not* express the decline of a race; it is an aggregate formation of *décadence* types herding themselves together and hunting for one another everywhere. It is *not*, as is believed, the corruption of antiquity itself—of *noble* antiquity, that which made Christianity possible; the scholarly idiocy which even nowadays still adheres to such a thing cannot be strongly enough contradicted. In the times when the sick, corrupt chandala strata of the entire *imperium*⁴⁹ converted to Christianity, there existed precisely the *opposite type*—the nobility—in its most beautiful and most mature form. The majority became the ruler; the democratism of the Christian instincts *were victorious*.

Christianity was not “national⁵⁰,” not limited by race; it turned to every kind of the disinherited of life; it had its allies everywhere. Christianity has at its foundation the rancor of the sick, the instinct focused *against* the healthy, *against* health. Everything successful, proud, or high spirited—beauty above all—hurts its ears and eyes. I am again reminded of the invaluable words of Paul—“What is *weak* in the world, what is *foolish* in the world, the *base* and *despised* of the world God has chosen.”⁵¹ *That* was the formula, *in hoc signo*⁵²; *décadence* is victorious. *God on the cross*—is the dreadful ulterior motive of these symbols still not understood? Everything that suffers, everything that hangs on the cross, is *divine*. All of us hang on the cross, consequently *we* are divine. We alone are divine. Christianity was a victory; a *nobler* frame of mind perished by it; hitherto Christianity was humanity’s greatest misfortune.

52

Christianity also stands in opposition to every *spiritual* success; it is *able* to use only sick reason as Christian; it sides with everything idiotic; it pronounces a curse against the “spirit,” against the *superbia*⁵³ of the healthy spirit. Because sickness is of the essence of Christianity, the typical Christian state—“faith”—*must* also be a form of sickness; and all honest, principled, scientific paths to knowledge *must* come to be rejected by the church as *forbidden* paths. Even doubt is a sin. The complete lack of psychological cleanliness in the priest—revealed in his eyes—is a *consequence* of *décadence*; we have hysterical women, and at the other end of the spectrum, rickety children, to observe with regard to how regular instinctual falsity, the inclination to lie in order to lie, and the incapacity for direct glances and steps are the expressions of *décadence*.

“Faith” means not *wanting* to know what it is true. The pietist, the priest of both sexes, is false *because* he is sick; his instinct *demand*s that truth does not come into its own on any point. “That which makes sick is *good*; that which comes from fullness, from superabundance, from power, is *bad*”—so perceives the person of faith. *Bondage to lies*—in that I divine everyone predestined to be a theologian. Another badge of the theologian is his *incapacity for philology*. Philology in this instance should be understood in a very general sense, as the art of reading well—to be able to read facts without falsifying them through interpretation, *without* losing prudence, patience, and delicacy in desiring to understand. Philology as *Ephexis*⁵⁴ in interpretation—whether books, news in the paper, destiny, or weather facts are concerned—not to mention “salvation of the soul.”

The manner in which a theologian—it is unimportant whether in Berlin or Rome—interprets a “Scripture quotation,” or an event (a victory of the national armies, for example), under higher illumination of the Psalms of David, is always so *audacious* that it therewith drives a philologist up the wall. And what is he even supposed to do when pietists and other cows from Swabia, with the “finger of God,” make over the wretched everyday living and living-room smoke of their existence into a miracle of “grace,” “Providence,” of “salvation experiences!” The most unassuming expenditure of spirit—not to mention *decency*—really

⁴⁹ Latin—empire.

⁵⁰ Nietzsche uses the English word here.

⁵¹ See aphorism 45.

⁵² Latin—in this sign.

⁵³ Latin—pride, lofty spirit.

⁵⁴ Ability, skill.

ought to get these interpreters to convince themselves of the absolute childishness and unworthiness of such an abuse of this divine finger dexterity.

With even the slightest amount of piety in our bodies, a God who cures a cold at the right time, or makes it possible for us to climb into a carriage at exactly the moment a hard rain starts to fall would be such an absurd God that we would have to abolish him, even if he were to exist. A God as servant, as mailman, as calendar man—at root an expression for the most stupid of all accidents. “Divine Providence,” as it is nowadays still believed in by roughly every third person in “educated Germany,” would be such an objection against God that a stronger one could not be imagined at all. And in any case, it is an objection against the Germans!

53

There is so little that genuinely shows that *martyrs* have anything to do with proving the truth of a cause that I would deny that any martyr has ever had anything at all to do with truth. In the tone with which the martyr hurls his clinging-to-the-truth in the world’s face, there is already such a low degree of intellectual integrity, such a *dullness* for the question of truth, that a martyr never needs to be proven wrong. Truth is not something that one person might have and another not; therefore, at best, peasants nor peasant apostles of Luther’s type could conceive of this truth.

It is certain that modesty—*mediocrity* in this case—always grows greater according to the degree of conscientiousness in matters of intellect. To be *knowing* in five subjects, and delicately refuse to know anything *else*. “Truth,” as the word is understood by every prophet, every sectarian, every freethinker, every socialist, and every churchman, is an absolute proof that not even a start has been made with that will power and discipline of the spirit that is necessary for finding any small truth, even the extremely small. Deaths of martyrs, by the way, has come to be a great misfortune in history; they *seduced*.

The conclusion of all idiots, woman and the lower classes included, that there is something about a cause for which someone goes to his death (or which even, as with early Christianity, gives rise to death-seeking epidemics)—this conclusion has become an inexpressible impediment to examination, the spirit of examination, and prudence. Martyrs have *harmed* truth. Even today only the crudity of a persecution is needed to create an *honorable* name for an in itself still quite unimportant sectarianism. How? Does it change the value of a cause if someone gives his life for it? An error become honorable is an error that possesses one more seductive charm; do you believe, you esteemed theologians, that we would give you occasion to make you martyrs for your lives?

A cause is refuted by respectfully putting it on ice—just as theologians are refuted, too. This was precisely the world-historical stupidity of all persecutors, that they gave the opposing cause the appearance of honorability—that they made the fascination of martyrdom a gift unto it. Even today woman kneels before an error because she has been told that someone died on the cross for it. *Is the cross then an argument?* About all these things, however, one person alone has said the words that have been necessary for millennia—*Zarathustra*:

They wrote signs of blood upon the path they walked, and their foolishness taught that truth was proven with blood.

Blood, however, is the worst witness to truth; blood poisons even the purest doctrine to the point of delusion and hatred of the heart.

And if one goes through the fire for his doctrine—what does that prove! Verily, it is greater that one’s own doctrine come out of one’s own burning.⁵⁵

54

Do not be misled; great intellects are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. Strength—*freedom* from power and superpower of the intellect—*prides* itself through skepticism. People of conviction do not come into consideration at all with regard to all the fundamentals of values and disvalues. Convictions are prisons. Those who do not look *beneath* themselves do not look far enough; however, in order to be permitted to

⁵⁵ See Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*, second part, number 4—On Priests.

have a say about values and disvalues, a person must look five hundred convictions *beneath* himself—*behind* himself. A mind that wants great things, that also wants the means to that, is of necessity a skeptic. Freedom from every kind of conviction—to be *capable* of an unrestrained view—is *called for* by strength. Great passion—the foundation and power of his existence, even more enlightened, even more despotic than he himself, takes into service his entire intellect; it makes him resolute; it gives him courage for even unholy means; under certain circumstances it *grants* him convictions. Convictions as *means*—much is achieved only by means of conviction. Great passion uses—and uses up—convictions; it does not submit to them; it knows it is sovereign.

Conversely, the need for faith—for some unconditional Yes and No—this Carlylism (if I may be excused for using this word), is a requirement of *weakness*. The person of faith, the “faithful” of every kind, is necessarily a dependent person—one who cannot formulate *himself* as an end, who cannot formulate ends at all by himself. The “faithful one” does not belong to *himself*; he can only be a means; he must come to be used; he has need of someone to use him. His instinct gives the highest honor to a morality of anti-selfishness; everything persuades him to this—his intelligence, his experience, and his vanity. Every kind of faith is itself an expression of anti-selfishness, of self-alienation.

Considering how necessary a counterbalance is to almost everyone, a counterbalance that externally binds them and makes them steady, how compulsion—*slavery* in a higher sense—is the sole and ultimate condition under which the more weak-willed human (woman in particular), thrives; thus is conviction—“faith”—also understood. The person of conviction has his back in it. *Not* seeing many things, to be impartial on no point, to be biased through and through, to have an austere and necessary perspective on all values—that alone is required for this sort of human to exist at all. With this, however, is the opposite, the *antagonist* to the sincere—to truth. The “faithful one” is not free at all to have a conscience about the question of “true” and “untrue”; to be principled on *this* point would immediately be his downfall. The pathological limitedness of his perspective makes a fanatic out of the devout Savonarola, Luther, Rousseau, Robespierre, Saint-Simon—the type opposite the strong, the *freed spirit*. However, the grand carriage of these *sick* spirits, these epileptics of concept, affects the masses; fanatics are picturesque; humanity would rather look at gestures than listen to *reasons*.

55

One step further in the psychology of conviction, of “faith”: Long ago I undertook to consider whether convictions are not more dangerous enemies of truth than lies (*Human, All Too Human*, Aphorisms 54 and 483). This time I would like to pose the following critical question: Does any difference at all exist between a lie and a conviction? All the world believes there is; but what doesn’t all the world believe! Every conviction has its history, its preliminary forms, its trials and errors; it *becomes* a conviction after *not* having been one for a long time, after *hardly* having been one for an even longer time. How? Could there not be a lie among even these embryonic forms of conviction?

Every once in a while merely a change of personage is required; that which becomes conviction to the son was still a lie to the father. I define a lie as: wanting *not* to see something that a person sees, and wanting not to see something *as* a person sees it; whether the lie takes place before witnesses or without witnesses is of no account. The most common lie is that with which a person deceives himself. Deceiving others is a relative exception. Henceforth this wanting *not* to see what a person sees, and this wanting not to see as a person sees it, is nearly the prime requirement for everyone who is *biased* in any sense; the partisan person, of necessity, becomes a liar. German historiography, for example, is convinced that Rome was despotism, and that the Teutons have brought the spirit of freedom into the world; what difference is there between this conviction and a lie? Should we still be surprised if, from instinct, all partisan groups (the German historians, too), utter grand expressions of morality—that morality *continues to exist* almost because every moment the partisan person of every kind has need of it? “This is *our* conviction; we declare it before all the world; we live and die for it. Respect for everything that possesses convictions!” I have even heard that sort of thing from the mouths of anti-Semites.

On the contrary, gentlemen! An anti-Semitic by no means becomes more respectable because he lies as a matter of principle. The priests, who are more cunning in such matters and understand very well the objection to the concept of conviction (a fundamental objection, *since* it is characterized by expedient

mendacity), have interpolated in this place having come from the cleverness of the Jews, the concepts “God,” the “will of God,” and the “revelation of God.”

Kant, with his categorical imperative, was also on the same path; his reason, in this instance, became *practical*. There are questions about which people are *not* entitled to a verdict of truth and untruth; all the highest questions, all the highest problems of values, are beyond human reasoning. To comprehend the limits of reason—*that*, above all, is true philosophy. Why did God give people revelation? Would God have done something superfluous? People are not *able* to know by themselves what is good and evil; therefore, God taught them his will. Moral—the priest does not lie; the questions of “true” and “untrue” do not *exist* in such matters whereof the priests speak; these matters do not permit lying at all. For in order to lie, people must be able to decide *what* is true here. That, however, is precisely what people are not *able* to do; because of this, the priest is only a mouthpiece of God.

Such a priestly syllogism is by no means merely Jewish and Christian; the right to lie and *cleverness* of “revelation” belong to the priestly type—the *décadence* priests as well as the pagan priests (pagans are all who say “Yes” to life, to whom “God” is the term for the grand “Yes” to all things). The “Law,” the “will of God,” the “holy book,” “inspiration”—all just terms for the conditions *under* which the priest comes to power, by which he maintains his power—these concepts are found at the foundation of all priestly organizations, all priestly and philosophical-cum-priestly power structures. The “holy lie”—common to Confucius, the Code of Manu, Mohammed, and the Christian church—is not lacking in Plato: “The truth is at hand”—this means, wherever it comes to be known, *the priest is lying*.

56

In the end it all depends on the *purpose* for which there is lying. That “holy” purposes are lacking in Christianity is *my* objection to its methods. Only *bad* purposes—poisoning, slander, denial of life, contempt for the body, the disarrangement and self-deprecation of people via the concept of sin—*consequently* its methods are also bad. It is with the opposite feeling I read the Code of Manu, an incomparably spiritual and superior work; even just mentioning the Bible in the same breath would be a sin against the spirit. It is divined immediately; there is a true philosophy behind it—*within* it—not merely a foul-smelling Jewishness of rabbinism and superstition; it gives even the most discriminating psychologist something to consider. Not to forget the main point, the fundamental difference from every kind of Bible—with it the *noble* classes (the philosophers and the warriors), protect the people; noble values everywhere, a feeling of perfection, saying Yes to life, a triumphant feeling of well-being in oneself and toward life—the *sun* shines on the entire book. All the things on which Christianity gives vent to its unfathomable vulgarity—procreation, for example (woman, marriage), are here treated seriously—with great respect, with love and trust.

How can a book that contains those despicable words “Because of fornication, let each have his own wife, and each her own husband. . . it is better to wed than to be inflamed”⁵⁶ be put in the hands of children and women? And *could* someone be a Christian as long as the genesis of man is christianized—that is to say *dirtyed*—by the concept of the *immaculata conceptio*?⁵⁷ I know of no book in which so many tender and gracious things are said of woman as in the Code of Manu; those old graybeards and saints have a way of being courteous toward women which has perhaps never been surpassed. “The mouth of a woman,” it says in one place, “the bosom of a girl, the prayer of a child, the smoke of the sacrifice, are always pure.” Another passage—“There is nothing at all more pure than the light of the sun, the shadow of a cow, the air, water, fire, and the breath of a girl.” One final passage—perhaps even a holy lie—“All bodily orifices above the navel are pure, all below impure. Only in the girl is the entire body pure.”

57

The *unholiness* of the Christian method is caught *in flagranti*⁵⁸ when the *Christian* purpose is compared with the purpose of the Code of Manu—when this antithesis of purpose is brought under a bright light. The critic of Christianity still cannot be spared making Christianity *contemptible*. Such a code as that of Manu comes into being like every good code; it summarizes the practical knowledge, the wisdom, and

⁵⁶ I Corinthians 7:2,9.

⁵⁷ Latin—Immaculate Conception.

⁵⁸ Latin—“red-handed” (literally, “while blazing”).

experimental morality of many centuries; it concludes—it does nothing more. The prerequisite for a codification of this kind is the insight that the methods of creating authority for a slowly and expensively acquired *truth* are totally different from those with which it is proven. A code never gives an account of the usefulness, the reason, the casuistry in the prehistory of a law; by that it would simply lose the imperative tone, the “thou shalt,” the prerequisite for it—that it be obeyed. This is exactly where the problem lies.

At a certain point in the development of a people, the most sensible class (that is to say, the most backward- and forward-looking class), declares the practical knowledge according to which life should be (that is to say can be), lived, to have been established. Their objective is to bring home the richest and fullest possible harvest from the times of experimentation and *wicked* practical knowledge experience. Consequently, what now is to be prevented above all is even more experimentation, a continuation of the fluid state of values, testing, choosing, criticizing *in infinitum*⁵⁹.

In opposition to this a double wall is placed—first, *revelation*, which is the assertion that the reason for those laws are *not* of human origin, sought and found slowly and surrounded by disappointments—but instead of divine origin: whole, perfect, without history, a gift, a miracle, merely communicated. After that, *tradition*—the assertion that the law has already been standing from time immemorial, that it would be irreverent and a crime against the forefathers to bring it into doubt. The authority of the law established itself with the theses—God *gave* it; the forefathers *lived* it. The higher reasoning of such a procedure lies in the intention to drive back consciousness, step by step, from what was recognized as the right life (that is to say, *proven* through tremendously scrutinized experience), so that the perfect automatism of instinct comes to be attained—that prerequisite for every kind of mastery, for every kind of perfection in the art of living.

To establish a code of law like that of Manu means conceding hereafter to a people their becoming master, becoming perfect—having ambition for the highest art of living. *To that end it must be made unconscious*; this is the purpose of every holy lie. The *caste system*—the supreme, the dominant law—is only the sanction of a *natural order*, a natural lawfulness of the first rank, over which no capriciousness, no “modern idea” holds any sway. In every healthy society three types occur, contingent upon one another and psychologically distinct from one another, each having its own hygiene, its own domain, its own work, its own kind of feeling of perfection and mastery. Nature, *not* Manu, separates the predominantly spiritual, the predominantly strong in muscle and temperament, and those who excel in neither area—the mediocre (the last as the great masses, the first as the select few).

The highest caste—I call them *the fewest*—has, as the perfect caste, the privileges of the few as well; it is their lot to represent happiness, beauty, and kindness in the world. Only the most spiritual people have license to beauty, to the beautiful; only among them is kindness not weakness. *Pulchrum est paucorum hominum*⁶⁰—this possession is a privilege. To them, however, nothing can be acknowledged less than ugly manners or a pessimistic outlook, a view that is the privilege of the chandala—the likes of pessimism. “*The world is perfect*”—thus speaks the instinct of the most spiritual, the Yes-saying instinct. “Imperfection, whatever is *beneath* us—distance, the pathos of distance—even the chandala itself belongs to this perfection.” The most spiritual people, as the *strongest*, find their happiness wherein others would find their destruction—in the labyrinth, in hardness toward themselves and others, through ordeal; their pleasure lies in self-mastery; with them asceticism becomes natural, necessary, instinctual. To them difficult tasks are regarded as privilege—playing with burdens that overwhelm others, a form of recreation. Knowledge—a form of asceticism. They are the most venerable kind of human; that does not rule out that they are the most cheerful and most kind. They rule not because they want to, but because they *are*; they are not free to be second best.

The *second best*—they are the guardians of the law, the trustees of order and security; they are the noble warriors; they are above all *kings*, as the highest form of warrior, judge, and upholder of the law. The second best are the executive branch of the most spiritual, those next to them who belong to them, those who relieve them of every *coarseness* in the work of ruling—their retinue, their right hand, and their best pupils. In all this, as was stated previously, there is no capriciousness, nothing “contrived”; whatever is *other than this* is contrived; thereupon nature is thwarted. The caste system, the *hierarchy*, only formulates the supreme law of life itself; the separating of the three types is necessary for the preservation of society, for

⁵⁹ Latin—endlessly.

⁶⁰ Latin—Beauty is the possession of the very few.

making possible the higher and highest types; the inequality of rights is the first condition of the existence of rights at all.

A right is a privilege. Everyone possess a privilege in his state of being. Let us not underestimate the privileges of the *mediocre*. Life becomes ever harder on the road to the *summit*; the coldness increases, and the responsibility increases. A high culture is a pyramid; it can only stand on a broad base; it has as its very first prerequisite a strongly and soundly consolidated *mediocrity*. Business, commerce, agriculture, *science*—the greatest component of art—in a word, the complete embodiment of *professional* activity, is really only consistent with mediocrity in ability and desire; that sort of thing would be out of place among exceptions; the instinct obligatory there would conflict with both aristocratic systems and anarchism. To be a public utility, a cog, a function—for that there is a classification by nature: *not* society, but the kind of *happiness* of which most are barely capable—making intelligent machines out of them. For the mediocre, being mediocre is happiness; mastery of one thing—specialization—is a natural instinct. It would be completely unworthy of a more profound spirit to perceive an objection in mere mediocrity itself. It is even the *prime* necessity for exceptions to exist; it is a precondition for a high culture. When the exceptional human handles precisely the mediocre more delicately than himself and his equals, this is not mere politeness of the heart; it is simply his *duty*.

Whom do I hate most among the riff-raff of today? The socialist riff-raff, the chandala apostles, who undermine the worker's instinct, pleasure, and feeling of modest contentment with his humble existence—who make him envious, who teach him revenge. Injustice never lies in unequal rights; it lies in the claim of "equal" rights. What is *bad*? I have said this already, though—everything born of weakness, of envy, of *revenge*. The anarchist and the Christian have but one origin.

58

It indeed makes a difference for what purpose a person lies—whether he preserves or *destroys*. A person may put forward a perfect identity between *Christian* and *anarchist*; their purpose, their instinct leads only to destruction. The proof of this statement can simply be read in history; it is included there with dreadful clarity. We are studying precisely such a legislation—the purpose of which is to "immortalize" the supreme requirement for life to *thrive*—to know a great organization of society; Christianity has found its mission in bringing an end to precisely such an organization *because life thrived on it*. There the payoff of reason, after a long period of experiments and uncertainty, was supposed to have been invested in the most long-term benefits and brought home a harvest as large, as plentiful, and as complete as possible; here, on the contrary, the harvest was *poisoned* overnight. That which stood there *aere perennius*⁶¹, the *imperium Romanum*⁶², the most magnificent organization that has hitherto been attained under difficult circumstances—in comparison with which everything before and everything after—is patchwork, bungling, and amateurism; these holy anarchists have made it an "act of piety" to destroy "the world," *that is to say*, the *imperium Romanum*, until no stone was left on another—until even Teutons and other louts could become masters over it.

The Christian and the anarchist—both *decadents*, both incapable of having an effect other than disintegrating, poisoning, atrophying, and bloodsucking; both the *mortal hatred* for everything that stands, that stands greatly, that has duration, that promises life a future. Christianity was the vampire of the *imperium Romanum*; overnight it undid the enormous feat of the Romans—to produce a basis for a great culture that *possesses spare time*. Is this still not yet understood? The *imperium Romanum* that we know, which the history of the Roman provinces teaches us to know better and better, this most admirable work of art in the grand style, was a beginning; its construction was intended to *prove* itself through millennia; to this date there has never been such a structure; also, to build in such proportions *sub specie aeterni*⁶³ has never even been dreamt! This organization was sturdy enough to endure bad emperors; the random appearance of individuals should not have anything to do with such matters—first principle of all grand architecture. It was not, however, sturdy enough against the *most* corrupt kind of corruption—against the Christians.

⁶¹ Latin—everlasting (literally, "more durable than bronze").

⁶² Latin—see aphorism 37.

⁶³ Latin—under this form eternally, in its essential form.

These furtive vermin who, under cover of night, fog, and ambiguity, crept up on every individual and sucked the seriousness for *true* things—the very instinct for *realities*—out of every individual; this cowardly, effeminate, and sugar-sweet bunch alienated, step by step, “souls” (those valuable, those manly, noble natures who perceived their own cause, their own seriousness, their own pride in the cause of Rome), from that enormous structure. This petty hypocrisy, the conventicle of secrecy and gloomy concepts like hell, like sacrifice of the innocent, like *unio mystica*⁶⁴ in blood-drinking—above all, the slowly fanned flames of revenge, the chandala revenge—that became master over Rome, that same kind of religion upon which, in its pre-existent form, Epicurus had already made war.

Lucretius should be read in order to comprehend *what* Epicurus fought—not paganism, but “Christianity”—which is to say the corruption of souls through the concepts of guilt, punishment, and immortality. He fought the *underground* cults, the whole of latent Christianity; to deny immortality was at that time already a real *redemption*. And Epicures would have won; every worthy spirit in the Roman Empire was an Epicurean. *Then Paul appeared*. Paul—chandala hatred against Rome, against “the world” become flesh, become genius—the Jew, the *Wandering Jew par excellence*. What he divined was how, with the help of the little sectarian Christian movement at the periphery of Judaism, a “world conflagration” could be ignited; how, with the symbol of “God on the cross,” everyone at the bottom, everyone secretly rebellious, the entire legacy of anarchistic intrigues in the Empire could be amassed into a tremendous power. “Salvation is of the Jews.”

Christianity as a formula, in order to outdo the underground cults of every kind (those of Osiris, the Great Mother, and Mithras, for example), *and* to bring them together—in that insight lies the genius of Paul. His instinct regarding this was so sure that, with ruthless violence against the truth, he put the ideas with which these chandala religions fascinated into the mouth of his invention of the “Savior”—and not only into the mouth—and he *made* something out of him that even a priest of Mithras could understand. This was his moment⁶⁵ on the way to Damascus; he comprehended that he had *need* of the concept of immortality in order to devalue “the world,” that the concept of “hell” would become master even over Rome—that with the “hereafter” *life is killed*. Nihilist and Christian—that rhymes⁶⁶, and does not merely rhyme.

59

The whole labor of the ancient world *in vain*—I have no words to express my feelings about something so tremendous. And considering that its labor was a labor of preparation, that just the foundation for a labor of millennia was laid with granite self-confidence—the whole *meaning* of the ancient world in vain! Why were there Greeks? Why Romans? All the prerequisites for a learned culture, all the scientific *methods* were already there; the grand and incomparable art of reading well had already been established—that prerequisite for cultural tradition, for scientific uniformity; natural science, in alliance with mathematics and mechanics, was on the very best of paths; the *sense for facts*, the last and most valuable of all the senses, had its schools and its already-centuries-old tradition! Is that understood? Everything *essential* has been found; in order to be able to proceed with the labor—the methods (it must be repeated ten times), *are* what is essential, also what is most difficult, also that which has, for the longest period, habits and laziness opposed to it.

What we today have recaptured for ourselves, with inexpressible self-mastery (for we all still have the bad instincts, the Christian instincts, within ourselves)—the clear view of reality, the cautious hand, patience and seriousness for the smallest things, the whole *integrity* of knowledge—was already there! Even more than two millennia ago! *And* on top of that, kind and delicate tact and taste! *Not* as mental *exercise*! *Not* as “German” education with loutish manners! But instead as body, as gesture, as instinct—in a word, as reality. *All in vain*! Overnight barely even a remembrance! Greeks! Romans! The nobility of instincts of taste, methodical research, genius of organization and management, the faith—the *will*—to a future for human beings, the great Yes to all things, visible as the *imperium Romanum*, visible to all the senses, the grand style no longer merely art, but instead become reality, truth, *life*. And not buried alive by an extraordinary natural event! Not trampled down by Teutons and other heavy-footed monsters! Instead by

⁶⁴ Latin—mystic unity.

⁶⁵ Paul’s “conversion” to Christianity. See Acts 9, 23, and 26.

⁶⁶ In German, “Nihilist” and “Christ.”

cunning, furtive, invisible, anemic vampires! Not defeated—only sucked dry! Hidden vindictiveness and petty jealousy become *master*! Everything wretched, suffering from itself, afflicted with bad feelings—the whole *ghetto-world* of the soul—suddenly *on top*!

Just read any Christian agitator—St. Augustine, for example—in order to comprehend, in order to *smell* what dirty fellows therewith had come out on top. A person would deceive himself completely if he presupposed any lack of intelligence among the leaders of the Christian movement; oh, they are clever, clever to the point of holiness, these esteemed Church Fathers! What they lack is something quite different. Nature has neglected them; she forgot to give them a modest dowry of worthy, of decent, of *clean* instincts. Between us, they are not even men. If Islam despises Christianity, it is a thousand times right to do so; Islam presupposes *men*.

60

Christianity has deprived us of the harvest of the ancient culture; afterward it further deprived us of the harvest of the culture of *Islam*. The wonderful Moorish cultural world of Spain—more fundamentally related to *us*, speaking to our senses and tastes more than Rome and Greece—came to be *trampled down* (I do not say by what kind of feet). Why? Because it owed its emergence to noble, to male instincts, because it said Yes to life, even with the scarce and refined treasures of Moorish life! The Crusaders later fought something before which they might better have prostrated themselves—a culture compared to which even our nineteenth century might seem very poor, very “late.” Admittedly, they wanted plunder; the Orient was rich. Let us be unbiased, though. The Crusades—a higher form of piracy, nothing more! With that the German nobility—Viking nobility at root—was in its element; the church knew only too well what it would take to *own* the German nobility. The German nobility, always the “Swiss Guards” of the church, always in service of all the bad instincts of the church—but *well paid*. That the church, exactly with the help of German swords, and German blood and courage, carried out their war of mortal enmity against everything noble on the face of the planet! There are a great many painful questions about this matter. German nobility is nearly *lacking* in the history of higher culture; the reason can be easily guessed. Christianity and alcohol—the two *great* means of corruption. After all, there should be no choice when considering between Islam and Christianity—as little as when considering between an Arab and a Jew. The decision is given; nobody is free to choose here. Either someone *is* a chandala, or he is *not*. “War with Rome to the bitter end! Peace and friendship with Islam”—thus felt, thus *acted* that great freethinker, the genius among German emperors, Frederick II. How? Must a German first be a genius, a freethinker, in order to have *decent* feelings? I do not comprehend how a German could ever *feel* Christian.

61

Here it is necessary to touch upon a memory even a hundred times more painfully embarrassing to Germans. The Germans have deprived Europe of the final great cultural harvest, which is still there for Europe to bring home—that of the *Renaissance*. Do we finally understand—do we *want* to understand *what* the Renaissance was? The *revaluing of Christian values*—the attempt, undertaken with every means, with every instinct, with every genius, to bring the *counter-values*, the *noble* values to victory. Heretofore there has been only *this* great war, heretofore there has been no more decisive formulation of questions than that of the Renaissance; *my* question is its question. Also, there has never been a form of attack more fundamental, straighter, more rigorously carried out against the enemy’s entire front and his center! To attack in the decisive place, in the very seat of Christianity, bringing the *noble* values to the throne here—which is to say to bring them *into* the instincts, *into* the most basic needs and desires of those who sit in that place.

I see before me a *possibility* for a perfectly celestial magic and play of color; it appears to me to shine in every shudder of refined beauty, as if in it a kind of art were at work—so divine, so devilishly divine, that a person could search in vain for millennia for a second such possibility; I see a spectacle so meaningful, and so remarkably paradoxical at the same time, that all the deities on Olympus would have had occasion for immortal laughter—*Cesare Borgia as Pope*. Am I understood? Well now, *that* alone would have been the victory for which I long; with that, Christianity would have been *abolished*! What happened? A German monk, Luther, came to Rome. This monk, with every vindictive instinct of an unsuccessful priest in his body, was, in Rome, outraged *against* the Renaissance. Instead of understanding with the deepest gratitude the tremendous thing that was happening there—the overcoming of Christianity in its very seat—his hate

understood only how to extract from the spectacle nourishment for himself. A religious person thinks only of himself. Luther saw the *corruption* of the Papacy when precisely the opposite was palpable; the old corruption, the *peccatum originale*⁶⁷—Christianity—*no longer* sat on the Papal See! But instead life did! Instead the triumph of life did! Instead the great Yes to all lofty, beautiful, and daring things! And Luther *restored the church*; he attacked it.

The Renaissance—an event without meaning, a great “*in vain*”! Oh, these Germans, what they have cost us already! In vain—the *labor* of the Germans has always been thus. The Reformation; Leibniz; Kant and so-called German Philosophy; the Wars of “Liberation”; the *Reich*—every time an “in vain” for something that was already there, something *irretrievable*. I admit it: they are my enemies, these Germans; I despise in them every kind of dirtiness of concepts and values, of *cowardice* before every honest Yes and No. They have, for nearly a millennium, matted and tangled everything on which they have laid a finger; they have on their conscience every half-measure (three-eighths-measure!) from which Europe is sick; they also have on their conscience the dirtiest kind of Christianity there is—the most incurable, and the most irrefutable—Protestantism. If we are not able to cope with Christianity, the *Germans* will be to blame.

62

Herewith I am done and pronounce my judgment. I *condemn* Christianity; I prefer against the Christian church the most terrible charges that have ever been uttered. To me it is the greatest of all conceivable corruptions; it has made from every value a disvalue, from every truth a lie, from every integrity a vileness of the soul. People still dare to speak to me of its “humanitarian” blessings! To *abolish* any state of distress ran counter to what was most profoundly useful to it; it lived on states of distress; it *created* states of distress in order to perpetuate *itself*. The worm of sin, for example—with this state of distress the church enriched mankind first! The “equality of souls before God”—this falsehood, this *pretext* for *rancunes*⁶⁸ of all the base-minded, this explosive of a concept which has eventually become a revolution, modern idea, and the principle of decline of the whole order of society—is *Christian* dynamite. “Humanitarian” blessings of Christianity! To breed out of *humanitas*⁶⁹ a self-contradiction, an art of self-desecration, a will for lying at any price, a disgust, a contempt for all good and honest instincts! To me those are the blessing of Christianity! Parasitism as the *sole* practice of the church—with its ideals of anemia and “holiness” draining all blood, all love, and all hope for life; the hereafter as the will for the denial of every reality; the cross as the badge of the most underground conspiracy there has ever been—against health, beauty, success, courage, spirit, and *goodness* of the soul—*against life itself*.

This eternal condemnation of Christianity I shall write on every wall wherever there are walls; I have letters that can be made visible even unto the blind. I call Christianity the *one* great curse, the *one* great innermost depravity, the *one* great instinct for revenge, for which no means is poisonous, furtive, underground, or *small* enough. I call it the *one* immortal stain on humanity.

And *time* is calculated from the *dies nefastus*⁷⁰ on which this disaster began—from the *first* day of Christianity! *Why not rather from its last? From today?* Revaluation of all values!

⁶⁷ See aphorism 10.

⁶⁸ French—*pl.* for rancor, spite.

⁶⁹ Latin—humanity.

⁷⁰ Latin—unlucky or inauspicious day; as a religious term, a day during which no public business could be undertaken.