



The Antichrist

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Musean Translation

MOUSEIA



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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Mouseia's complete machine-assisted Musean translation, made directly from the German of the preface, all sixty-two sections and the seven-article Law Against Christianity, for fidelity, the author's force and cadence, and modern clarity. Nietzsche's own emphasis is kept.

TRANSLATOR

Michael Berardi

THE WORK

Written 1888 · Philosophy

SOURCE

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GAPS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The German text combines a public-domain-marked image reproduction of Nietzsche's text with repairs read from the 1899 Naumann print, and the Law Against Christianity from his own manuscript. The law's intended place in the book is uncertain; it is appended after the work as in the Colli/Montinari edition, which this text does not claim to reproduce. The 1899 print shortens three passages that the base text gives in full; the fuller readings are kept.

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Preface



The Antichrist

A Curse on Christianity

This book belongs to the very few. Perhaps not one of them is alive yet. They may be those who understand my Zarathustra: how *could* I confuse myself with those for whom ears are already growing today?—Only the day after tomorrow belongs to me. Some are born posthumously.

The conditions under which one understands me, and then understands me *of necessity*—I know them all too well. One must be honest in matters of the spirit to the point of harshness merely to endure my seriousness, my passion. One must be practiced in living on mountains—in seeing the pitiful chatter of the day about politics and national selfishness *beneath* oneself. One must have become indifferent; one must never ask whether truth is useful, whether it will prove one's doom... The strong person's predilection for questions no one today has the courage to face; courage for the *forbidden*; predestination to the labyrinth. An experience drawn from seven solitudes. New ears for new music. New eyes for what is most distant. A new conscience for truths that have remained silent until now. *And* the will to economy on a grand scale: keeping one's strength, one's *enthusiasm*, intact... Reverence for oneself; love for oneself; unconditional freedom toward oneself...

Well then! These alone are my readers, my rightful readers, my predestined readers: what does the *rest* matter?—The rest is merely humanity.—One must stand above humanity in strength, in *height* of soul—in contempt...

Friedrich Nietzsche

Sections 1–10



¹ —Let us look one another in the face. We are Hyperboreans—we know well enough how far off the beaten path we live. “Neither by land nor by water will you find the way to the Hyperboreans”: Pindar already knew that about us. Beyond the north, the ice, death—*our* life, *our* happiness... We have discovered happiness; we know the way; we found the way out of whole millennia of the labyrinth. Who *else* found it?—Modern man, perhaps?—“I know neither a way out nor a way in; I am everything that knows neither a way out nor a way in”—modern man sighs... We were sick with this modernity—with its rotten peace, its cowardly compromise, all the virtuous uncleanness of the modern Yes and No. This tolerance and *breadth* of heart that “forgives” everything because it “understands” everything is a sirocco to us. Better to live in ice than among modern virtues and other south winds!... We were brave enough; we spared neither ourselves nor others: but for a long time we did not know *where to turn* our bravery. We grew gloomy; they called us fatalists. *Our* fate—that was the fullness, the tension, the damming up of forces. We thirsted for lightning and deeds; we kept as far as possible from the happiness of weaklings, from “resignation”... A thunderstorm was in our air; the nature that we are grew dark—*for we had no path*. The formula of our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*...

² What is good?—Everything that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in the human being.

What is bad?—Everything that comes from weakness.

What is happiness?—The feeling that power is *growing*—that a resistance is being overcome.

Not contentment, but more power; *not* peace at all, but war; *not* virtue, but prowess (virtue in the Renaissance style, *excellence*, virtue free of moraline).

The weak and the failures shall perish: first principle of *our* love of humanity.

And they should even be helped to do so.

What is more harmful than any vice?—Active pity for all failures and weaklings—Christianity...

³ The problem I pose here is not what should replace humanity in the succession of beings (—the human being is an *end*—), but what type of human being we should *breed*, should *will*, as the more valuable, more worthy of life, more certain of a future.

This more valuable type has appeared often enough already: but as a stroke of luck, as an exception, never as something *willed*. On the contrary, *he* in particular has been feared most of all; until now he has been almost *the* embodiment of terror—and out of that fear the opposite type was willed, bred, *attained*: the domestic animal, the herd animal, the sick animal man—the Christian...

⁴ Humanity does *not* represent a development toward the better or stronger or higher in the way people believe today. “Progress” is merely a modern idea, which is to say a false idea. In *value*, today’s European remains far below the European of the Renaissance; further development is simply *not* by any necessity an elevation, an enhancement, a strengthening.

In another sense, individual successes continually appear in the most varied places on earth and out of the most varied cultures, and in them a *higher* type does indeed emerge: something that, in relation to humanity as a whole, is a kind of overhuman. Such strokes of luck, such great successes, have always been possible and perhaps always will be possible. And even entire lineages, tribes, peoples may, under certain circumstances, represent such a *lucky hit*.

⁵ Christianity must not be decked out and prettified: it has waged a *war to the death* against this *higher* type of human being; it has placed all the fundamental instincts of this type under a ban; from these instincts it has distilled evil, the evil one—the strong human being as the very type of the reprehensible, the “reprobate.” Christianity has taken the side of everything weak, low, and ill-formed; it has made an ideal out of *opposition* to the self-preserving instincts of strong life; it has corrupted the reason of even the intellectually strongest natures by teaching people to feel the highest values of the intellect to be sinful, misleading, *temptations*. The most pitiable example: the corruption of Pascal, who believed his reason had been corrupted by original sin, when it had been corrupted only by his Christianity!—

⁶ It is a painful, a dreadful spectacle that has opened before me: I drew back the curtain on the *corruption* of the human being. This word, in my mouth, is protected against at least one suspicion: that it contains a moral indictment of humanity. Its meaning—I should like to underline this once more—is *free of moraline*: so much so that I feel this corruption most keenly precisely where people have so far aspired most consciously to “virtue,” to “divinity.” I understand corruption, as will already have been guessed, in the sense of *decadence*: my contention is that all the values in which humanity now sums up its highest aspirations are values of *decadence*.

I call an animal, a species, an individual corrupt when it loses its instincts, when it chooses, when it *prefers*, what harms it. A history of the “higher feelings,” of the “ideals of humanity”—and it is possible that I shall have to tell it—would also come close to explaining *why* the human being is so corrupt. Life itself, to me, is an instinct for growth, for endurance, for the accumulation of forces, for *power*: where the will to power is *lacking*, there is decline. My contention is that all humanity’s highest values lack this will—that values of decline, *nihilistic* values, rule under the holiest names.

⁷ Christianity is called the religion of *pity*.—Pity stands opposed to the tonic emotions that heighten the energy of the feeling of life: it has a depressive effect. We lose strength when we pity. Through pity, the loss of strength that suffering

already brings to life is further increased and multiplied. Suffering itself becomes contagious through pity; under certain circumstances, it can bring about a total loss of life and vital energy absurdly out of proportion to the magnitude of its cause (—the case of the Nazarene’s death). That is the first consideration; but there is a still more important one. Suppose we measure pity by the value of the reactions it usually produces: its life-threatening character then appears in a far brighter light. Broadly speaking, pity thwarts the law of development, which is the law of *selection*. It preserves what is ripe for destruction; it fights on behalf of life’s disinherited and condemned; through the abundance of failures of every kind that it *holds fast* in life, it gives life itself a gloomy and questionable aspect. People have dared to call pity a virtue (—in every *noble* morality it counts as weakness—); they have gone further and made it *the* virtue, the ground and origin of all virtues—though only, as we must always keep in mind, from the standpoint of a philosophy that was nihilistic, that inscribed the *negation of life* on its banner. Schopenhauer was right in this: through pity, life is negated, made *more worthy of negation*—pity is the *practice* of nihilism. To say it again: this depressive and contagious instinct thwarts those instincts directed toward preserving life and enhancing its value: as a *multiplier* of misery and as a *preserver* of everything miserable, it is a chief instrument for intensifying *decadence*—pity persuades us toward *nothingness*!... People do not say “nothingness”: instead they say “the beyond”; or “God”; or “*true* life”; or nirvana, redemption, blessedness... This innocent rhetoric from the realm of religious-moral idiosyncrasy at once appears *far less innocent* once we grasp *what* tendency is wrapping itself here in the mantle of sublime words: the tendency *hostile to life*. Schopenhauer was hostile to life: *that is why* pity became a virtue for him... Aristotle, as we know, saw pity as a morbid and dangerous condition that one would do well to treat now and then with a purgative: he understood tragedy as a purgative. From the standpoint of life’s instinct, we would indeed have to seek a means of puncturing such a morbid and dangerous accumulation of pity as the case of Schopenhauer represents (and unfortunately our entire literary and artistic *decadence* as well, from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoy to Wagner): so that it *bursts*... Nothing is

more unhealthy, amid our unhealthy modernity, than Christian pity. *To be a physician here*, to be relentless *here*, to wield the knife *here*—that belongs to *us*, that is *our* kind of love of humanity, that is what makes *us* philosophers, us Hyperboreans!—

⁸ It is necessary to say *whom* we feel to be our opposite—the theologians and everything with theologians’ blood in its veins—our entire philosophy... One must have seen this calamity at close range; better still, one must have experienced it *oneself*, must have almost perished from it, to stop treating this as a joke —(the freethinking of our gentlemen natural scientists and physiologists is a joke in my eyes—they lack passion in these matters, the *suffering* they entail—). That poisoning reaches much further than people think: I have rediscovered the theologian’s instinct of arrogance wherever people today feel themselves to be “idealists”—wherever, by virtue of a higher descent, they claim the right to look upon reality from above and as strangers... Like the priest, the idealist holds all the great concepts in his hand (—and not only in his hand!); with benevolent contempt he plays them off against “understanding,” the “senses,” “honors,” “good living,” “science”; he sees such things *beneath* him, as harmful and seductive forces above which “the spirit” hovers in pure self-contained being—as though humility, chastity, poverty, in a word *holiness*, had not done life unspeakably more harm than any horrors and vices... Pure spirit is pure lie... As long as the priest still counts as a *higher* kind of human being, this *negator*, slanderer, poisoner of life by *profession*, there is no answer to the question: what *is* truth? Truth has already been turned on its head when the conscious advocate of nothingness and negation counts as the representative of “truth”...

⁹ I wage war on this theologian’s instinct: I found its traces everywhere. Anyone with theologians’ blood in his veins stands from the outset in a crooked and dishonest relation to all things. The pathos that develops from this calls itself *faith*: closing one’s eyes to oneself once and for all, so as not to suffer at the sight of incurable falsity. One makes a morality, a virtue, a holiness for oneself out of this faulty view of all things; one attaches a good conscience to seeing *falsely*—one demands that no *other* way of seeing be allowed any value, having

made one's own sacrosanct with the names "God," "redemption," "eternity." Wherever I dug, I unearthed the theologian's instinct: it is the most widespread, the truly *subterranean* form of falsity on earth. What a theologian feels to be true *must* be false: one has almost a criterion of truth in that. It is his deepest instinct of self-preservation that forbids reality from being honored, or even heard, at any point. As far as the theologian's influence reaches, *value judgment* is turned on its head, the concepts "true" and "false" are necessarily reversed: what harms life most is called "true" here; what elevates, enhances, affirms, justifies it and makes it triumph is called "false"... When theologians reach for power through the "conscience" of princes (*or* of peoples—), let us not doubt *what* is really happening each time: the will to the end, the *nihilistic* will, wills power...

- 10 Among Germans, people understand at once when I say that philosophy is corrupted by theologians' blood. The Protestant pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy, Protestantism itself its *original sin*. Definition of Protestantism: paralysis of one side of Christianity—and of reason... One need only say "Tübingen Seminary" to grasp *what* German philosophy is at bottom—a *cunning* theology... The Swabians are the best liars in Germany; they lie innocently... What explains the jubilation that swept through the German scholarly world at the appearance of *Kant*—a world made up three-quarters of pastors' and teachers' sons—what explains the German conviction, still echoed today, that Kant marks a turn for the *better*? The theologian's instinct in the German scholar divined *what* was now possible again... A back way to the old ideal lay open; the concept of the "*true* world," the concept of morality as the essence of the world (—the two most pernicious errors there are!), were now, thanks to a shrewdly cunning skepticism, if not provable, at least no longer *refutable*... Reason, the *jurisdiction* of reason, does not reach that far... Reality had been made into an "appearance"; a completely *fabricated* world, the world of being, had been made into reality... Kant's success is merely a theologian's success: Kant, like Luther, like Leibniz, was one more brake on German honesty, which is none too sure-footed to begin with—

Sections 11–20



- ¹¹ One more word against Kant as a *moralist*. A virtue must be *our* invention, *our* most personal self-defense and necessity: in any other sense it is merely a danger. Whatever does not sustain our life *harms* it: a virtue practiced merely out of respect for the concept “virtue,” as Kant wanted, is harmful. “Virtue,” “duty,” the “good in itself,” goodness characterized by impersonality and universal validity—phantoms in which decline, the final enfeeblement of life, the Chinese mentality of Königsberg find expression. The deepest laws of preservation and growth command the opposite: that each person invent *his own* virtue, *his own* categorical imperative. A people perishes when it confuses *its own* duty with the concept of duty in general. Nothing ruins us more deeply, more inwardly, than any “impersonal” duty, any sacrifice before the Moloch of abstraction.—To think that Kant’s categorical imperative was not felt to be *a danger to life!*... The theologian’s instinct alone took it under its protection!—An action compelled by the instinct of life finds in pleasure its proof of being a *right* action: and that nihilist with Christian-dogmatic entrails understood pleasure as an *objection*... What destroys more quickly than working, thinking, feeling without inner necessity, without a deeply personal choice, without *pleasure*? As an automaton of “duty”? It is nothing less than the *recipe* for *decadence*, even for idiocy... Kant became an idiot.—And this man was *Goethe’s* contemporary! This calamitous spider passed for *the German* philosopher—still

does!... I take care not to say what I think of the Germans... Did Kant not 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 disposition in humanity, so that through it humanity's "tendency toward the good" would be *proved* once and for all? Kant's answer: "That is the Revolution." An instinct that goes wrong in each and every thing, *anti-nature* as instinct, German *decadence* as philosophy —*that is Kant!*—

¹² I set aside a few skeptics, the decent type in the history of philosophy: but the rest do not know the first demands of intellectual honesty. All these great enthusiasts and prodigies behave like little women—they already take "beautiful feelings" for arguments, the "heaving bosom" for a bellows of divinity, conviction for a *criterion* of truth. Finally even Kant, in his "German" innocence, tried to dress this form of corruption, this lack of intellectual conscience, in scientific clothes under the concept "practical reason": he expressly invented a reason for the case in which one need not bother with reason, namely, when morality, when the sublime demand "you shall" makes itself heard. If we consider that among almost all peoples the philosopher is merely a further development of the priestly type, this inheritance from the priest, *counterfeiting before oneself*, ceases to surprise us. When one has holy tasks—for example, to improve, save, redeem humanity—when one carries divinity in one's breast, is the mouthpiece of imperatives from beyond, then such a mission already places one outside all merely rational valuations—already sanctified *oneself* by such a task, already oneself the type of a higher order!... What does a priest care about *science*! He stands too high for that!—And until now the priest has *ruled*!—He *determined* the concepts "true" and "untrue"!...

¹³ Let us not underestimate this: *we ourselves*, we free spirits, are already a "revaluation of all values," an *embodied* declaration of war and victory against all the old concepts of "true" and "untrue." The most valuable insights are found last; but the most valuable insights are the *methods*. *All* the methods, *all* the presuppositions of our present scientific practice have had the deepest contempt lev-

eled against them for millennia: on their account one was excluded from the company of “respectable” people—one counted as an “enemy of God,” a despiser of truth, a “possessed” person. As a scientific mind, one was a Chandala... We have had the whole pathos of humanity against us—its concept of what truth *ought to be*, of what service to truth *ought to be*: every “you shall” has so far been directed *against* us... Our objects, our practices, our quiet, cautious, distrustful manner—all this seemed to humanity utterly unworthy and contemptible.—In the end, one might with some fairness ask whether it was not really an *aesthetic* taste that kept humanity blind for so long: it demanded a *picturesque* effect from truth; likewise it demanded that the seeker of knowledge make a powerful impression on the senses. Our *modesty* offended its taste longest of all... Oh, how they divined that, those turkeys of God—

- 14 We have learned differently. We have become more modest in every respect. We no longer derive the human being from “spirit,” from “divinity”; we have placed him back among the animals. We regard him as the strongest animal because he is the most cunning: his intellectuality is a consequence of this. On the other hand, we resist a vanity that would like to make itself heard here too: as though the human being had been the great ulterior purpose of animal evolution. He is by no means the crown of creation: every being beside him stands on an equal level of perfection... And in saying this, we still say too much: relatively speaking, the human being is the most ill-formed animal, the sickliest, the one that has strayed most dangerously from its instincts—admittedly, with all that, also the *most interesting!*—As for animals, Descartes was the first, with admirable boldness, to venture the thought of understanding the animal as a *machine*: our entire physiology strives to prove this proposition. Nor, logically, do we set the human being apart, as Descartes still did: whatever is understood about the human being today extends precisely as far as he is understood as a machine. Formerly, the human being was given “free will” as his dowry from a higher order: today we have taken even will away from him, in the sense that it must no longer be understood as a faculty. The old word “will” serves only to designate a resultant, a kind of individual reaction that necessarily follows a

multitude of partly conflicting, partly concordant stimuli—the will no longer “acts,” no longer “moves”... Formerly, people saw in human consciousness, in “spirit,” proof of a higher descent, of divinity; to *perfect* the human being, they advised him to draw his senses into himself like a turtle, to cease all intercourse with earthly things, to cast off the mortal shell: then the essential part of him remained, “pure spirit.” We have thought better of this too: becoming conscious, “spirit,” now counts for us precisely as a symptom of the organism’s relative imperfection, as experimenting, groping, missing the mark, as a toil that consumes an unnecessary amount of nervous energy—we deny that anything can be made perfect as long as it is still being done consciously. “Pure spirit” is pure stupidity: if we subtract the nervous system and the senses, the “mortal shell,” then *our calculation is wrong*—nothing more!...

- 15 In Christianity, neither morality nor religion touches reality at any point. Nothing but imaginary *causes* (“God,” “soul,” “I,” “spirit,” “free will”—or even “unfree will”); nothing but imaginary *effects* (“sin,” “redemption,” “grace,” “punishment,” “forgiveness of sin”). An intercourse between imaginary *beings* (“God,” “spirits,” “souls”); an imaginary *natural science* (anthropocentric; a complete absence of the concept of natural causes); an imaginary *psychology* (nothing but misunderstandings of oneself, interpretations of pleasant or unpleasant general feelings—for example, the states of the *sympathetic nerve*—with the aid of the sign language of religious-moral idiosyncrasy—“repentance,” “pangs of conscience,” “the devil’s temptation,” “the nearness of God”); an imaginary *teleology* (“the kingdom of God,” “the Last Judgment,” “eternal life”).—This pure *world of fiction* differs greatly to its disadvantage from the dream world, in that the latter *reflects* reality, while the former falsifies, devalues, negates reality. Once the concept “nature” had been invented as the opposite of “God,” “natural” had to become the word for “reprehensible”—that whole world of fiction has its root in *hatred* of the natural (—of reality!—); it is the expression of a deep unease in the face of what is real... *But that explains everything*. Who alone has reasons to *lie his way out* of reality? Whoever *suffers* from it. But to suffer from reality means to be a *failed* reality...

The preponderance of feelings of displeasure over feelings of pleasure is the *cause* of a fictitious morality and religion: such a preponderance, however, supplies the formula for *decadence*...

- 16 A critique of the *Christian concept of God* compels the same conclusion.—A people that still believes in itself still has its own god. In him it reveres the conditions through which it holds the upper hand, its virtues—it projects its delight in itself, its feeling of power, into a being whom it can thank for them. Whoever is rich wants to give; a proud people needs a god in order to *sacrifice*... Religion, on these assumptions, is a form of gratitude. One is grateful for oneself: for that, one needs a god.—Such a god must be able to help and harm, must be able to be friend and enemy—he is admired in good and in evil alike. The *unnatural* castration of a god into a god of goodness alone would here lie beyond anything desirable. The evil god is as necessary as the good one: after all, one hardly owes one's own existence to tolerance, to benevolence toward humanity... What use would a god be who knew nothing of anger, revenge, envy, mockery, cunning, violence? Who perhaps did not even know the intoxicating *fervors* of victory and annihilation? One would not understand such a god: why have him?—Admittedly, when a people is perishing; when it feels its faith in the future, its hope of freedom, fading away for good; when submission enters its consciousness as the foremost advantage, the virtues of the subjected as the conditions of survival, then its god *must* change as well. He now becomes a cringing hypocrite, fearful, modest, advises “peace of soul,” hating no more, forbearance, “love” even toward friend and enemy. He moralizes incessantly; he crawls into the cave of every private virtue, becomes a god for everyone, becomes a private person, becomes a cosmopolitan... Formerly he represented a people, the strength of a people, everything aggressive and thirsty for power in a people's soul: now he is merely the good god... In fact, there is no other alternative for gods: *either* they are the will to power—and so long as they are, they will be gods of a people—*or* else incapacity for power—and then they necessarily become *good*...

¹⁷ Wherever the will to power declines in any form, there is also, every time, a physiological regression, a *decadence*. The divinity of *decadence*, circumscribed in its most virile virtues and drives, now necessarily becomes the god of the physiologically diminished, the weak. They do *not* call themselves the weak; they call themselves “the good”... No further hint is needed to understand at what moments in history the dualistic fiction of a good and an evil god first becomes possible. With the same instinct by which the subjected reduce their god to “goodness in itself,” they strike the good qualities out of their conquerors’ god; they take revenge on their masters by *demonizing* their god.—The *good* god, just like the devil: both spawn of *decadence*.—How can anyone today still yield so far to the simplemindedness of Christian theologians as to decree with them that the further development of the concept of God from the “God of Israel,” from a people’s god to the Christian God, the embodiment of all goodness, is *progress*?—But even Renan does it. As though Renan had a right to be simple-minded! The opposite stares us in the face. When the prerequisites of *ascending* life, when everything strong, brave, commanding, proud is eliminated from the concept of God; when, step by step, he sinks to the symbol of a staff for the weary, a saving anchor for all who are drowning; when he becomes the poor people’s god, the sinners’ god, the sick people’s god *above all others*, and the predicate “savior,” “redeemer” is, as it were, all that *remains* as a divine predicate at all: *what* does such a transformation speak of? Such a *reduction* of the divine?—Admittedly, “the kingdom of God” has grown larger in the process. Formerly he had only his people, his “chosen” people. In the meantime, like his people themselves, he went abroad, took to wandering, and from then on could settle nowhere: until at last he made himself at home everywhere, the great cosmopolitan—until he won “the great number” and half the earth to his side. But the god of “the great number,” the democrat among gods, did not become a proud pagan god for all that: he remained a Jew, remained the god of hidden corners, the god of all the dark nooks and places, of all the unhealthy quarters of the whole world!... His world empire remains an underworld empire, a hospital, a *cellar* empire, a ghetto empire... And he himself, so pale, so weak, so *decadent*... Even the palest of the pale became his masters, the gentlemen meta-

physicians, the albinos of concepts. They spun their webs around him so long that, hypnotized by their movements, he himself became a spider, himself a metaphysician. Now he spun the world out of himself again—in the guise of *Spinoza*—now he transfigured himself into something ever thinner and paler, became “ideal,” became “pure spirit,” became “the *absolute*,” became “thing in itself”... *Decline of a god*: God became “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 ever attained on earth; perhaps it even marks the low-water line in the descending development of the divine type. God degenerated into the *contradiction of life*, instead of being its transfiguration and eternal *Yes*! In God, enmity declared against life, nature, the will to life! God the formula for every slander of “this world,” for every lie about “the beyond”! In God, nothingness deified, the will to nothingness canonized!...
- 19 That the strong races of northern Europe have not cast off the Christian God truly does no credit to their religious gifts—not to mention their taste. They *ought* to have done away with such a sickly and senile spawn of *decadence*. But a curse lies upon them for not having done away with him: they have taken sickness, age, contradiction into all their instincts—since then they have *created* no god! Almost two millennia and not a single new god! Instead, still here, as though rightfully existing, as though the *last word* and *highest achievement* of the god-forming power, of the *creative spirit* in the human being, this pitiable god of Christian monotono-theism! This hybrid product of decay made of zero, concept, and contradiction, in which all the instincts of *decadence*, all the soul’s cowardice and weariness, find their sanction!—
- 20 In condemning Christianity, I would not wish to have wronged a kindred religion that even surpasses it in number of adherents: *Buddhism*. Both belong together as nihilistic religions—they are religions of *decadence*—yet both are separated from one another in the most remarkable way. For the fact that we can now *compare* them, the critic of Christianity is deeply grateful to the schol-

ars of India.—Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity—it carries in its blood the inheritance of an objective and cool way of posing problems; it comes *after* a philosophical movement lasting hundreds of years; the concept “God” has already been disposed of when it arrives. Buddhism is the only truly *positivistic* religion history shows us, even in its theory of knowledge (a strict phenomenalism—); it no longer says “struggle against *sin*,” but, fully granting reality its due, “struggle against *suffering*.” It has—and this distinguishes it profoundly from Christianity—already left behind the self-deception of moral concepts; in my language, it stands *beyond* good and evil.—The *two* physiological facts on which it rests and which it keeps in view are: *first*, an excessive sensory excitability that expresses itself as a refined capacity for pain; *then*, an overintellectualization, a life spent too long in concepts and logical procedures, under which the personal instinct has suffered to the advantage of the “impersonal” (—both conditions that at least some of my readers, the “objective” ones, will know from experience, as I do myself). On the basis of these physiological conditions, a *depression* has arisen: Buddha proceeds against it with hygienic measures. He prescribes life in the open air, the wandering life; moderation and selectiveness in diet; caution toward all alcoholic drinks; likewise caution toward all emotions that stir the bile, that heat the blood; *no worry*, either for oneself or for others. He calls for ideas that either bring calm or cheerfulness—he devises means of breaking the habit of the others. He understands goodness, being kind, as conducive to health. *Prayer* is ruled out, as is *asceticism*; no categorical imperative, no *compulsion* at all, not even within the monastic community (—one can leave again—). All these would be means of intensifying that excessive excitability. For the very same reason, he calls for no struggle against those who think differently; his teaching resists nothing more than the feeling of revenge, of aversion, of *resentment* (—“enmity does not come to an end through enmity”: the moving refrain of all Buddhism...). And rightly so: precisely these emotions would be utterly *unhealthy* in view of the chief aim of this regimen. The intellectual fatigue he finds, expressed in an excessive “objectivity” (that is, a weakening of individual interest, a loss of center of gravity, of “egoism”), he combats by rigorously directing even the most

intellectual interests back to the *person*. In Buddha's teaching egoism becomes duty: "one thing is needed," "how can *you* free yourself from suffering?" regulate and limit the intellectual diet (—one may perhaps recall that Athenian who likewise waged war on pure "scientific practice," Socrates, who elevated personal egoism into a morality even in the realm of problems).

Sections 21–30



²¹ Buddhism presupposes a very mild climate, great gentleness and liberality of manners, *no militarism*; it also presupposes that the movement has its center among the higher and even the learned classes. Serenity, stillness, freedom from desire are sought as the highest goal, and that goal is *attained*. Buddhism is not a religion in which one merely aspires to perfection: perfection is the normal case.—

In Christianity the instincts of the subjugated and oppressed come to the fore: it is the lowest classes that seek their salvation in it. Here the casuistry of sin, self-criticism, the inquisition of conscience are practiced as an *occupation*, a remedy for boredom; here the emotion directed toward a *powerful being* called “God” is constantly sustained (through prayer); here the highest is held to be unattainable, a gift, “grace.” Here, too, openness is absent; the hiding place, the dark room is Christian. Here the body is despised, hygiene rejected as sensuality; the Church resists even cleanliness (—the first Christian measure after the expulsion of the Moors was to close the public baths, of which Cordova alone possessed 270). A certain taste for cruelty toward oneself and others is Christian; so are hatred of those who think differently and the will to persecute. Gloomy and agitating ideas stand in the foreground; the states most ardently desired, designated by the loftiest names, are epileptoid; the diet is chosen to foster morbid manifestations and overstimulate the nerves. Christian is the

mortal enmity toward the lords of the earth, toward the “noble”—and at the same time a concealed, secret rivalry (—one leaves them the “body,” one wants *only* the “soul”...). Christian is hatred of the *intellect*, of pride, courage, freedom, the intellect’s *unbridled liberty*; Christian is hatred of the *senses*, of the pleasures of the *senses*, of pleasure altogether...

22 When Christianity left its first soil, the lowest classes, the *underworld* of the ancient world, and set out in pursuit of power among barbarian peoples, it no longer presupposed *weary* human beings, but people inwardly savage and tearing themselves apart—the strong human being, but the one who had gone wrong. Dissatisfaction with oneself, suffering from oneself, is here *not*, as with the Buddhist, an excessive susceptibility to irritation and pain, but rather its opposite: an overpowering craving to inflict pain, to discharge inward tension in hostile actions and ideas. Christianity needed *barbaric* concepts and values to master barbarians: such are the sacrifice of the firstborn, the drinking of blood in Communion, contempt for the intellect and culture; torture in every form, physical and nonphysical; the great pomp of worship. Buddhism is a religion for *late* human beings, for kindly, gentle races grown excessively intellectual, who feel pain too easily (—Europe is still far from ripe for it—): it leads them back to peace and serenity, to a diet for the intellect, to a certain hardening of the body. Christianity seeks to master *beasts of prey*; its means is to make them *sick*—weakening is the Christian prescription for *taming*, for “civilization.” Buddhism is a religion for the end and the weariness of civilization; Christianity does not even find civilization already in existence—under certain circumstances it establishes it.

23 Buddhism, to say it once more, is a hundred times colder, more truthful, more objective. It no longer needs to make its suffering, its susceptibility to pain, *respectable* by interpreting it as sin—it simply says what it thinks: “I suffer.” To the barbarian, by contrast, suffering is in itself nothing respectable: he first needs an interpretation before he can admit to himself *that* he suffers (his instinct points him rather toward denying suffering, toward bearing it in

silence). Here the word “devil” was a blessing: one had an overpowering and terrible enemy—one did not need to be ashamed of suffering at the hands of such an enemy.—

Christianity has certain subtleties at its foundation that belong to the Orient. Above all, it knows that whether something is true is in itself quite immaterial, but that it is of the utmost importance *insofar as* it is believed to be true. Truth and the *belief* that something is true: two worlds of interest lying far apart, almost *opposing* worlds—one reaches each of them by fundamentally different paths. To know this—this almost *makes* the sage in the Orient: the Brahmins understand it so, as does Plato, as does every disciple of esoteric wisdom. If, for example, there is *happiness* in believing oneself redeemed from sin, then its prerequisite is *not* that a person should be sinful, but that he should *feel* sinful. But if *faith* is needed above all else, then reason, knowledge, inquiry must be discredited: the path to truth becomes the *forbidden* path.—A strong *hope* is a far greater *stimulant* to life than any single happiness that actually comes to pass. Sufferers must be sustained by a hope that no reality can contradict—that cannot be *disposed of* by fulfillment: a hope of the beyond. (Precisely because of this capacity to keep the unfortunate waiting, the Greeks considered hope the evil of evils, the truly *treacherous* evil: it remained behind in the jar of evils.)—For *love* to be possible, God must be a person; for the lowest instincts to have a say, God must be young. A handsome saint must be brought to the foreground for the ardor of women, a Mary for that of men. This presupposes that Christianity seeks mastery on soil where cults of Aphrodite or Adonis have already determined the *concept* of worship. The demand for *chastity* intensifies the vehemence and inwardness of the religious instinct—it makes worship warmer, more rapturous, more soulful.—Love is the state in which a person most sees things as they are *not*. The power of illusion is then at its height, as is the power that sweetens, that *transfigures*. In love one endures more than otherwise, one tolerates everything. The task was to invent a religion in which one can love: with that one has passed beyond the worst in life—one no longer sees

it at all.—So much for the three Christian virtues, faith, love, hope: I call them the three Christian *stratagems*.—Buddhism is too late, too positivistic, to be cunning in this way any longer.—

- 24 Here I touch only on the problem of Christianity's *origin*. The *first* proposition toward its solution is this: Christianity can be understood only through the soil from which it grew—it is *not* a countermovement against the Jewish instinct, it is that instinct's very consistency, one further conclusion in its fear-inspiring logic. In the Redeemer's formula: "Salvation comes from the Jews."—The *second* proposition is this: the psychological type of the Galilean is still recognizable, but only in its complete degeneration (which is at once mutilation and overloading with alien traits—) could it serve the purpose for which it was employed, as the type of a *redeemer* of humanity:—

The Jews are the most remarkable people in world history because, confronted with the question of being or nonbeing, they chose being *at any price*, with a perfectly uncanny awareness: that price was the radical *falsification* of all nature, all naturalness, all reality, of the entire inner world no less than the outer. They defined themselves *in opposition to* all the conditions under which a people had hitherto been able to live, had been *allowed* to live; out of themselves they created a concept opposed to *natural* conditions—one after another they irreparably inverted religion, worship, morality, history, psychology into *contradictions of their natural values*. We encounter the same phenomenon once again, on an unspeakably magnified scale, though only as a copy—the Christian Church, compared with the "people of saints," has no claim whatever to originality. Precisely for this reason, the Jews are the most *disastrous* people in world history: through their continuing influence they have made humanity so false that even today a Christian can feel anti-Jewish without understanding himself as the *ultimate Jewish consequence*.

In my "On the Genealogy of Morality," I presented for the first time the psychological opposition between a *noble* morality and a morality of *resentment*, the latter springing *from the No* directed against the former: but this is Jewish-Christian morality through and through. To be able to say No to everything

that represents the *ascending* movement of life, to flourishing, power, beauty, self-affirmation on earth, the instinct of *resentment*, become genius, had to invent *another* world from which that *affirmation of life* appeared as evil, as the reprehensible in itself. Reckoned psychologically, the Jewish people are a people of the most tenacious vitality, who, placed under impossible conditions, voluntarily, out of the profoundest cunning of self-preservation, take the side of all the instincts of *decadence*—*not* because they were ruled by them, but because they divined in them a power with which to prevail *against* “the world.” The Jews are the opposite of all *decadents*: they had to *portray* them to the point of illusion; with an *unsurpassable degree* of theatrical genius, they knew how to place themselves at the head of all movements of *decadence* (—as the Christianity of *Paul*—), in order to create from them something stronger than any *Yes-saying* party of life. For the kind of human being that seeks power in Judaism and Christianity, a *priestly* kind, *decadence* is only a *means*: this kind of human being has a vital interest in making humanity *sick* and in twisting the concepts “good” and “evil,” “true” and “false” into a meaning dangerous to life and slanderous of the world.—

- ²⁵ The history of Israel is invaluable as the typical history of every *denaturing* of natural values: I indicate five facts from it. Originally, above all in the age of the monarchy, Israel too stood in the *right* relation to all things, that is, the natural one. Its Yahweh was the expression of its consciousness of power, its delight in itself, its hope for itself: in him it expected victory and salvation; with him it trusted nature to give what the people needed—above all, rain. Yahweh is the God of Israel and *consequently* the God of justice: the logic of every people that holds power and has a good conscience about it. In festival worship these two sides of a people’s self-affirmation find expression: it is grateful for the great strokes of destiny through which it rose to supremacy, it is grateful for the cycle of the year and all good fortune in livestock and agriculture.—This state of things long remained the ideal, even when it had been sadly done away with: anarchy within, the Assyrian without. But the people clung, as the highest object of desire, to that vision of a king who is a good soldier and a stern judge:

above all, that typical prophet (that is, critic and satirist of the moment), Isaiah. —But every hope remained unfulfilled. The old God *could* no longer do any of the things he once could. They should have let him go. What happened? They *changed* the concept of him—they *denatured* it: at this price they held on to him.—Yahweh, the God of “justice”—*no longer* one with Israel, an expression of the people’s sense of itself: now only a God on conditions... The concept of him becomes a tool in the hands of priestly agitators, who now interpret all good fortune as a reward, all misfortune as punishment for disobedience to God, for “sin”: that most mendacious manner of interpretation, an allegedly “moral world order,” with which the natural concepts “cause” and “effect” are turned upside down once and for all. Once one has eliminated natural causality from the world by means of reward and punishment, one needs an *unnatural* causality: all the rest of the unnatural now follows. A God who *demand*s—in place of a God who helps, who finds a way, who is at bottom the word for every happy inspiration of courage and self-confidence... Morality no longer the expression of a people’s conditions of life and growth, no longer its deepest instinct of life, but grown abstract, grown into an opposition to life—morality as a systematic corruption of the imagination, as the “evil eye” for all things. *What* is Jewish morality, *what* is Christian morality? Chance robbed of its innocence; misfortune sullied with the concept “sin”; well-being as danger, as “temptation”; physiological distress poisoned with the gnawing worm of conscience...

- ²⁶ The concept of God falsified; the concept of morality falsified—the Jewish priesthood did not stop there. The entire *history* of Israel was of no use: away with it!—These priests brought off that marvel of falsification whose documents lie before us in a good part of the Bible: with an unparalleled contempt for every tradition, every historical reality, they *translated their own people’s past into religious terms*, that is, made it into a stupid mechanism of salvation, of guilt before Yahweh and punishment, of piety toward Yahweh and reward. We would feel this most shameful act of historical falsification far more painfully had not millennia of *ecclesiastical* interpretation of history made us almost

insensible to the demands of integrity *in historical matters*. And the philosophers seconded the Church: the *lie* of the “moral world order” runs through the entire development even of modern philosophy. What does “moral world order” mean? That there is, once and for all, a will of God concerning what human beings should do and leave undone; that the value of a people, of an individual, is measured by how much or how little the will of God is obeyed; that in the destinies of a people, of an individual, the will of God proves itself *sovereign*, that is, punishing and rewarding according to the degree of obedience.—The *reality* in place of this pitiable lie is this: a parasitic kind of human being, thriving only at the expense of all the healthy formations of life, the *priest*, abuses the name of God: he calls a state of society in which the priest determines the value of things “the kingdom of God”; he calls the means by which such a state is attained or maintained “the will of God”; with cold-blooded cynicism, he measures peoples, ages, individuals by whether they served or resisted the priest’s supremacy. Watch them at work: in the hands of the Jewish priests, the *great* age in Israel’s history became an age of decline; exile, the long misfortune, turned into an *eternal punishment* for the great age—an age in which the priest was still nothing. As their needs dictated, they made the mighty, *very free-spirited* figures of Israel’s history into wretched cringers and sanctimonious hypocrites or into “godless men”; they simplified the psychology of every great event into the idiot’s formula “obedience *or* disobedience to God.”—A step further: the “will of God” (that is, the conditions preserving the priest’s power) must be *known*—for this purpose a “revelation” is needed. In plain language: a great literary forgery becomes necessary, a “holy scripture” is discovered—with all the pomp of the priesthood, with days of penance and cries of lamentation over the long “sin,” it is made public. The “will of God” had long been established: all the mischief lies in people’s estrangement from “holy scripture”... The “will of God” had already been revealed to Moses... What had happened? The priest had formulated once and for all, with rigor, with pedantry, down to the taxes great and small that had to be paid to him (—not forgetting the choicest cuts of meat: for the priest is a beefsteak-guzzler), *what he wants to have*, “what the will of God is”... From

now on, all the things of life are so arranged that the priest is *indispensable everywhere*; at every natural occurrence in life, at birth, marriage, sickness, death, not to mention “sacrifice” (the meal), the holy parasite appears to *denature* them—in his language, to “sanctify” them... For this must be understood: every *natural* custom, every natural institution (state, judicial system, marriage, care of the sick and poor), every demand inspired by the instinct of life, in short, everything that has its value *in itself*, is made fundamentally worthless, *hostile* to value, by the parasitism of the priest (or of the “moral world order”): it subsequently needs a sanction—a *value-bestowing* power is required, one that denies the nature within it and only thereby *creates* a value... The priest devalues, *desecrates* nature: only at this price does he exist at all.—Disobedience to God, that is, to the priest, to “the law,” now receives the name “sin”; the means of becoming “reconciled with God” again are, as is only fitting, means by which submission to the priest is guaranteed still more thoroughly: the priest alone “redeems”... Reckoned psychologically, “sins” become indispensable in every society organized by priests: they are the true levers of power; the priest *lives* on sins, he needs people to “sin”... Supreme principle: “God forgives whoever does penance”—in plain language: *whoever submits to the priest.*—

- ²⁷ On so *false* a soil, where everything natural, every natural value, every *reality* had the deepest instincts of the ruling class against it, *Christianity* grew up, a form of mortal enmity toward reality that has never yet been surpassed. The “holy people,” which had retained only priestly values, only priestly words for all things, and with a consistency of inference capable of inspiring fear had severed from itself everything else on earth that possessed power as “unholy,” as “world,” as “sin”—this people produced a final formula for its instinct, logical to the point of self-negation: as *Christianity*, it denied even the last form of reality, the “holy people,” the “people of the chosen,” *Jewish* reality itself. The case is of the first order: the little insurgent movement baptized with the name of Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish instinct *once again*—in other words, the

priestly instinct that can no longer tolerate the priest as a reality, the invention of a still more *abstract* form of existence, a still more *unreal* vision of the world than the organization of a church requires. Christianity *negates* the Church...

I cannot see what the uprising of which Jesus has been understood or *misunderstood* as the instigator was directed against, if it was not an uprising against the Jewish Church—"Church" taken in precisely the sense in which we use the word today. It was an uprising against "the good and the just," against "the saints of Israel," against the hierarchy of society—*not* against its corruption, but against caste, privilege, order, formula; it was *disbelief* in the "higher human beings," the *No* spoken against everything that was priest and theologian. But the hierarchy thus called into question, if only for a moment, was the structure on stilts upon which the Jewish people still survived at all, in the midst of "water"—the hard-won *last* possibility of survival, the remnant of its separate political existence: an attack on it was an attack on the deepest instinct of a people, on the most tenacious popular will to life that has ever existed on earth. This holy anarchist, who called the lowly, the outcasts and "sinners," the *Chandala* within Judaism, to resist the established order—with language that, if the Gospels were to be trusted, would still lead to Siberia today—was a political criminal, insofar as political criminals were possible at all in an *absurdly unpolitical* community. This brought him to the cross: the proof is the inscription on the cross. He died for *his own* guilt—there is no ground whatever for the claim, however often it has been made, that he died for the guilt of others.

- 28 An entirely different question is whether he was conscious of such an opposition at all—whether he was not merely *felt* to be that opposition. And only here do I touch on the problem of the *psychology of the Redeemer*.—I confess that I read few books with such difficulties as the Gospels. These difficulties are different from those whose demonstration marked one of the most unforgettable triumphs of the German intellect's scholarly curiosity. Far distant is the time when I too, like every young scholar, savored the work of the incomparable Strauss with the knowing slowness of a sophisticated philologist. I was

twenty years old then: now I am too serious for that. What do the contradictions of “tradition” matter to me? How can one call saints’ legends “tradition” at all! Stories of saints are the most dubious literature in existence: to apply the scientific method to them, *when no other documents are available*, seems to me doomed from the outset—mere scholarly idleness...

- ²⁹ What concerns *me* is the psychological type of the Redeemer. It *could*, after all, be contained in the Gospels despite the Gospels, however mutilated or overloaded with alien traits: just as that of Francis of Assisi is preserved in his legends despite his legends. *Not* the truth about what he did, what he said, how he actually died: but the question *whether* his type can still be conceived at all, whether it has been “handed down”?—The attempts I know to read even the *history* of a “soul” out of the Gospels seem to me evidence of an abominable psychological frivolity. Mr. Renan, that buffoon *in psychological matters*, has introduced into his explanation of the type Jesus the two most *inappropriate* concepts conceivable here: the concept *genius* and the concept *hero* (“*hero*”). But if anything is unevangelical, it is the concept of the hero. Precisely the opposite of all struggle, of all feeling oneself in combat, has here become instinct: the incapacity for resistance here becomes morality (“do not resist evil.”—the deepest saying in the Gospels, their key in a certain sense), blessedness in peace, in gentleness, in the *inability* to be an enemy. What does “glad tidings” mean? True life, eternal life, has been found—it is not promised, it is here, it is *within you*: as life in love, in love without qualification or exclusion, without distance. Everyone is the child of God—Jesus claims nothing whatever for himself alone—as a child of God, everyone is equal to everyone else... To make a *hero* of Jesus!—And what a misunderstanding the word “genius” is! Our whole concept, our cultural concept “spirit,” has no meaning at all in the world in which Jesus lives. Speaking with the rigor of a physiologist, an entirely different word would be more appropriate here: the word idiot. We know a condition of morbid irritability of the *sense of touch*, which then recoils from every contact, from every grasping of a solid object. Follow such a physiological *disposition* through to its ultimate logic—as an instinctive hatred of *every* reali-

ty, as a flight into the “intangible,” the “incomprehensible,” as an aversion to every formula, every concept of time and space, to everything fixed, everything that is custom, institution, Church, as being at home in a world no kind of reality touches any longer, a merely “inner” world, a “true” world, an “eternal” world... “The kingdom of God *is within you*”...

- ³⁰ *Instinctive hatred of reality*: the consequence of an extreme susceptibility to suffering and irritation that no longer wishes to be “touched” at all, because it feels every touch too deeply.

The instinctive exclusion of all aversion, all enmity, all boundaries and distances in feeling: the consequence of an extreme susceptibility to suffering and irritation that already feels every resistance, every necessity of resisting, as unbearable *displeasure* (that is, as *harmful*, as *counseled against* by the instinct of self-preservation), and knows blessedness (pleasure) only in no longer resisting anything or anyone, neither affliction nor evil—love as the sole, the *last* possibility of life...

These are the two *physiological realities* upon which, out of which, the doctrine of redemption grew. I call it a sublime further development of hedonism on a thoroughly morbid foundation. Its nearest relative, though with a great admixture of Greek vitality and nervous strength, remains Epicureanism, the pagan doctrine of redemption. Epicurus a *typical decadent*: first recognized as such by me.—The fear of pain, even of the infinitely small in pain—it *cannot* end otherwise than in a *religion of love*...

Sections 31–40



³¹ I have given my answer to the problem in advance. Its premise is that the type of the Redeemer has come down to us only in a gravely distorted form. This distortion is in itself highly probable: for several reasons such a type could not remain pure, complete, free of additions. Both the milieu in which this alien figure moved and, still more, the history, the *destiny* of the first Christian community must have left their traces upon him: from that history the type was retrospectively enriched with traits intelligible only in terms of warfare and the purposes of propaganda. That strange and sick world into which the Gospels lead us—a world as if from a Russian novel, in which the refuse of society, nervous disorders, and “childlike” idiocy seem to have arranged a rendezvous—must in any case have *coarsened* the type: the first disciples in particular first translated an existence wholly afloat in symbols and intangibilities into their own crudity, in order to understand anything of it at all—for them the type only *existed* after it had been molded into more familiar forms... The prophet, the Messiah, the future judge, the moral teacher, the miracle worker, John the Baptist—so many opportunities to misunderstand the type... Finally, let us not underestimate the *distinctive quality* of all great veneration, especially sectarian veneration: it effaces the original, often painfully alien traits and idiosyncrasies of the being revered—it *does not itself see them*. One must regret that no

Dostoevsky lived near this most interesting *decadent*: I mean someone who knew how to feel the poignant fascination of such a mixture of the sublime, the sick, and the childlike.

One final point of view: as a type of *decadence*, the type *could* in fact have possessed a peculiar multiplicity and contradictoriness: such a possibility cannot be wholly excluded. Yet everything argues against it: in that case, precisely the tradition would have to be remarkably faithful and objective, whereas we have reasons to assume the opposite. As things stand, a contradiction gapes between the preacher on the mountain, by the lake, and in the meadows, whose appearance suggests a Buddha on very un-Indian soil, and that fanatic of attack, that mortal enemy of theologians and priests, whom Renan's malice glorified as "*the great master of irony*." I myself do not doubt that the abundant measure of gall (and even of *wit*) overflowed onto the type of the master only from the agitated state of Christian propaganda: the unscrupulousness of all sectarians in making their master serve as their *defense* is amply known. When the first community needed a judging, quarrelsome, wrathful, maliciously hair-splitting theologian *against* theologians, it *created* its "God" to suit its need: just as it unhesitatingly put into his mouth those wholly unevangelical concepts it could no longer do without, the "Second Coming," the "Last Judgment," every kind of expectation and promise concerning time.—

- ³² I resist, to say it once more, the insertion of the fanatic into the type of the Redeemer: the word *imperious*, which Renan uses, alone *nullifies* the type. The "good tidings" are precisely that there are no longer any oppositions; the kingdom of heaven belongs to the *children*; the faith that speaks here is no hard-won faith—it is there, it is there from the beginning, it is, as it were, a childlike-ness retreating into the realm of the mind. The case of delayed puberty, undeveloped in the organism as a consequence of degeneration, is familiar at least to physiologists.—Such a faith does not rage, does not rebuke, does not defend itself: it does not bring "the sword"—it has no inkling how it could ever divide. It does not prove itself, whether through miracles, through reward and promise, or indeed "through scripture": it is itself at every moment its miracle, its

reward, its proof, its “kingdom of God.” Nor does this faith formulate itself—it *lives*, it resists formulas. Admittedly, the accidents of surroundings, language, and prior education determine a certain range of concepts: earliest Christianity handles *only* Jewish-Semitic concepts (—eating and drinking at Communion belong here, that concept so grievously abused by the Church, like everything Jewish).

But one must beware of seeing in this anything more than a language of signs, a semiotics, an opportunity for parables. Precisely that no word is taken literally is this anti-realist’s precondition for being able to speak at all. Among Indians he would have used the concepts of Sankhya, among Chinese those of Lao-tzu—and felt no difference.—With some latitude of expression, one could call Jesus a “free spirit”—he cares nothing for anything fixed: the word *kills*, everything fixed *kills*. The concept, the *experience* of “life,” in the sole form in which he knows it, resists in him every kind of word, formula, law, faith, dogma. He speaks only of the innermost: “life” or “truth” or “light” is his word for the innermost—everything else, all reality, all nature, language itself, has for him only the value of a sign, a parable.—One must on no account go astray here, however great the temptation lodged in Christian, which is to say *ecclesiastical*, prejudice: such a symbolist *in the fullest sense* 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, all art—his “knowledge” is precisely *pure folly*, unaware *that* any such things exist. *Culture* is not known to him even by hearsay; he has no need to struggle against it—he does not negate it... The same holds for the *state*, for the whole civic order and society, for *work*, for war—he has never had a reason to negate “the world,” he has never suspected the ecclesiastical concept “world”... *Negation* is precisely what is wholly impossible for him.—Likewise, dialectic is absent, as is the idea that a faith, a “truth,” could be proved by reasons (—*his* proofs are inner “lights,” inner feelings of pleasure and self-affirmations, nothing but “proofs of power”—). Such a teaching also *cannot* contradict: it does not comprehend at all that there are,

that there *can* be, other teachings; it cannot even imagine a contrary judgment... Where it encounters one, it will mourn over “blindness” out of the deepest fellow feeling—for it sees the “light”—but raise no objection...

- 33 In the whole psychology of the “Gospel,” the concept of guilt and punishment is absent; likewise the concept of reward. “Sin,” every relation of distance between God and humanity, is abolished—*precisely this is the “glad tidings.”* Blessedness is not promised, it is not tied to conditions: it is the *only* reality—the rest is signs by which to speak of it...

The *consequence* of such a state projects itself into a new *practice*, the truly evangelical practice. It is not a “faith” that distinguishes the Christian: the Christian acts, he distinguishes himself by a *different* way of acting. By offering no resistance, either in words or in his heart, to anyone who does him evil. By making no distinction between foreigners and natives, between Jews and non-Jews (“the neighbor” properly means the fellow believer, the Jew). By growing angry with no one, despising no one. By neither appearing in courts of law nor allowing himself to be called upon there (“do not swear oaths”). By not divorcing his wife under any circumstances, not even when her infidelity has been proved.—At bottom all *one* principle, all consequences of *one* instinct.—

The Redeemer’s life was nothing other than *this* practice—his death was nothing else either... He no longer needed formulas, any ritual for communion with God—not even prayer. He has settled accounts with the whole Jewish doctrine of penance and reconciliation; he knows that it is solely the *practice* of life through which one feels “divine,” “blessed,” “evangelical,” at every moment a “child of God.” *Not* “penance,” *not* “prayer for forgiveness” are paths to God: *evangelical practice alone* leads to God, it precisely *is* “God”!—What the Gospel had *done away with* was the Judaism of the concepts “sin,” “forgiveness of sin,” “faith,” “redemption through faith”—the entire Jewish doctrine of the *Church* was negated in the “glad tidings.”

The deep instinct for how one must *live* in order to feel oneself “in heaven,” to feel oneself “eternal,” while with every other kind of conduct one feels oneself decidedly *not* “in heaven”: 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 took only *inner* realities as realities, as “truths”—that he understood the rest, everything natural, temporal, spatial, historical, only as signs, as occasions for parables. The concept “the Son of Man” is not a concrete person belonging to history, something individual, unique, but an “eternal” fact, a psychological symbol redeemed from the concept of time. The same holds, once again and in the highest sense, for the *God* of this typical symbolist, for the “kingdom of God,” the “kingdom of heaven,” “being a child of God.” Nothing is more unchristian than the *ecclesiastical crudities* of a God as a *person*, of a “kingdom of God” that *comes*, of a “kingdom of heaven” *beyond*, of a “Son of God,” the *second person* of the Trinity. All this is—forgive me the expression—the *fist* in the eye—oh, and what an eye!—of the Gospel: a *world-historical cynicism* in its mockery of the symbol... Yet what is touched upon by the signs “Father” and “Son” is palpable—not to everyone, I admit: the word “Son” expresses *entry* into the feeling of the universal transfiguration of all things (blessedness); the word “Father,” *this feeling itself*, the feeling of eternity, of perfection.—I am ashamed to recall what the Church has made of this symbolism: has it not placed an Amphitryon story on the threshold of the Christian “faith”? And a dogma of the “immaculate conception” into the bargain?... *But with that it has defiled conception*—

The “kingdom of heaven” is a state of the heart—not something that comes “above the earth” or “after death.” The whole concept of natural death is *absent* from the Gospel: death is no bridge, no transition; it is absent because it belongs to an entirely different world, a merely apparent world, useful only for signs. 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 nothing one awaits; it has no yesterday and no day after tomorrow, it does not come in “a thousand years”—it is an experience within a heart; it is everywhere, it is nowhere...

35 This “bearer of glad tidings” died as he lived, as he *taught*—*not* to “redeem humanity,” but to show how one must live. It is the *practice* he left to humanity: his conduct before the judges, before the officers who seized him, before the accusers and every kind of slander and mockery—his conduct on the *cross*. He does not resist, he does not defend his rights, he takes no step to ward off the worst; more than that, *he provokes it*... And he pleads, he suffers, he loves *with* those, *in* those, who do him evil. The words to the *criminal* on the cross contain the whole Gospel. “This truly was a *divine* man, a child of God!”—says the criminal. “If you feel this”—answers the Redeemer—“*then you are in paradise*, then you are a child of God.” *Not* to defend oneself, *not* to grow angry, *not* to hold responsible... But not to resist the evil man either—to *love* him...

36 —Only we, we spirits who have *become free*, possess the prerequisite for understanding something that nineteen centuries have misunderstood—that integrity become instinct and passion which wages war on the “holy lie” even more than on any other lie... People were unspeakably far from our loving and cautious neutrality, from that discipline of the intellect which alone makes it possible to divine things so alien, so delicate: at every turn, with shameless selfishness, they wanted only *their own* advantage in it; out of the antithesis of the Gospel they built the *Church*...

Anyone seeking signs that an ironic divinity has its fingers at work behind the great cosmic drama would find no small support in the *enormous question mark* called Christianity. That humanity kneels before the opposite of what was the origin, the meaning, the *justification* of the Gospel; that in the concept “Church” it has canonized precisely what the “bearer of glad tidings” felt to be *beneath* him, *behind* him—one searches in vain for a greater form of *world-historical irony*—

37 —Our age is proud of its historical sense: how could it persuade itself to believe the nonsense that Christianity begins with the *crude 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—beginning, indeed, with the death on the cross—is the history of the progressively coarser misunder-

standing of an *original* symbolism. With every extension of Christianity to still broader, still cruder masses, who increasingly lacked the preconditions from which it was born, it became more necessary to *vulgarize* Christianity, to *barbarize* it—it swallowed the doctrines and rites of all the *underground* cults of the *Roman Empire*; it swallowed the nonsense of every kind of diseased reason. Christianity's fate lies in the necessity that its faith itself had to become as sick, as low and vulgar, as the needs were sick, low, and vulgar that it was meant to satisfy. As the Church, *sick barbarism* itself finally masses into power—the Church, this form of mortal enmity toward all integrity, every *height* of the soul, all discipline of the intellect, every expression of frank and kindly humanity.—*Christian* values—*noble* values: only we, we spirits who have *become free*, have restored this greatest opposition of values there is!—

- 38 —At this point I will not suppress a sigh. There are days when a feeling visits me, blacker than the blackest melancholy—*contempt for humanity*. And to leave no doubt as to *what* I despise, *whom* I despise: it is the human being of today, the human being I am doomed to share this age with. The human being of today—I choke on his unclean breath... Toward the past I have, like all who seek knowledge, a great tolerance, that is, *magnanimous* self-restraint: I pass through the madhouse world of whole millennia, whether it be called “Christianity,” “Christian faith,” or “Christian Church,” with a somber caution—I take care not to hold humanity responsible for its mental illnesses. But my feeling changes, breaks out, as soon as I enter the modern age, *our* age. Our age *knows*... What was once merely sick has today become indecent—it is indecent to be a Christian today. *And here my disgust begins*.—I look around me: not one word remains of what was once called “truth”; we can no longer bear it when a priest so much as takes the word “truth” into his mouth. Even with the most modest claim to integrity, one *must* know today that a theologian, a priest, a pope, with every sentence he speaks, not only errs but *lies*—that he is no longer at liberty to lie out of “innocence,” out of “ignorance.” The priest too knows, as well as everyone knows, that there is no longer any “God,” any “sinner,” any “redeemer”—that “free will,” “moral world order” are *lies*—the

seriousness, the profound self-overcoming of the intellect no longer *allows* anyone *not* to know about these things... *All* the Church's concepts have been recognized for what they are, the most malicious counterfeiting there is, designed to *devalue* nature, natural values; the priest himself has been recognized for what he is, the most dangerous kind of parasite, the true venomous spider of life... We know, our *conscience* knows today, *what* those uncanny inventions of the priests and the Church are worth at all, *what purpose they served*, through which that condition of humanity's self-defilement was achieved that can make one recoil in disgust at the sight of it—the concepts “beyond,” “Last Judgment,” “immortality of the soul,” the “soul” itself: they are instruments of torture, systems of cruelties by which the priest became master, remained master... Everyone knows this: *and yet everything stays as it was*. Where has the last feeling of decency, of self-respect gone, if even our statesmen, otherwise a very uninhibited kind of human being and antichrists in deed through and through, still call themselves Christians today and take Communion?... A young prince at the head of his regiments, magnificent as an expression of his people's selfishness and self-exaltation—but, *without* a trace of shame, professing himself a Christian!... *Whom*, then, does *this* Christianity negate? *What* does it call “world”? That one is a soldier, a judge, a patriot; that one defends oneself; that one sets store by one's honor; that one seeks one's advantage; that one is *proud*... Every practice of every moment, every instinct, every valuation that becomes a *deed* is anti-Christian today: what a *misshapen offspring of falsehood* modern humanity must be, that it nevertheless is *not ashamed* still to be called Christian!

- 39 —I return; I tell the *true* history of Christianity.—The very word “Christianity” is a misunderstanding—at bottom there was only one Christian, and he *died* on the cross. The “Gospel” died on the cross. What has been called “Gospel” from that moment onward was already the opposite of what *he* had lived: “*ill tidings*,” a *bad gospel*. It is false to the point of absurdity to see in a “faith,” say in faith in redemption through Christ, the distinguishing mark of the Christian: only Christian *practice*, a life such as the one who died on the

cross *lived*, is Christian... Even today *such* a life is possible, for *certain* people even necessary: genuine, original Christianity will be possible at all times... *Not* a believing but a doing, above all a *not-doing* of many things, a different *being*... States of consciousness, any sort of belief, taking something to be true, for example—as every psychologist knows—are utterly immaterial and of fifth-rate importance beside the value of the instincts: more strictly speaking, the whole concept of mental causation is false. To reduce being a Christian, Christian character, to taking something as true, to a mere phenomenon of consciousness, is to negate Christian character. *In fact there were no Christians at all.* The “Christian,” what has been called Christian for two millennia, is merely a psychological self-misunderstanding. On closer inspection, *despite* all “faith,” *only* the instincts ruled in him—and *what instincts!*—“Faith” was at all times, in Luther for example, only a cloak, a pretext, a *curtain* behind which the instincts played their game—a cunning *blindness* to the rule of *certain* instincts... “Faith”—I have already called it the truly Christian *stratagem*—people always *spoke* of “faith,” people always *acted* only from instinct... In the Christian’s world of ideas there is nothing that so much as touches reality: by contrast, we have recognized instinctive hatred *of* every reality as the driving, the sole driving element at Christianity’s root. What follows from this? That here, in *psychological matters* too, error is radical, that is, determines the essence, that is, is *substance*. Remove *one* concept here, put a single reality in its place—and all Christianity tumbles into nothingness!—Seen from above, this strangest of all facts—a religion not merely conditioned by errors, but inventive and even ingenious *only* in harmful errors, *only* in errors that poison life and the heart—remains a *spectacle for gods*: for those divinities who are also philosophers, and whom I encountered, for example, in those famous dialogues on Naxos. The moment *disgust* leaves them (—and us!), they become grateful for the spectacle of the Christian: the wretched little celestial body called earth perhaps merits a divine glance, a divine interest, solely on account of *this* curious case... For let us not underestimate the Christian: the Christian, false *to the point of innocence*, is far above the ape—with regard to Christians, a familiar theory of descent becomes a mere courtesy...

40 —The fate of the Gospel was decided by the death—it hung on the “cross”... Only the death, this unexpected, shameful death, only the cross, generally reserved for the rabble alone—only this most horrifying paradox confronted the disciples with the real riddle: “*Who was that? What was that?*”—The shattered and most deeply wounded feeling, the suspicion that such a death might be the *refutation* of their cause, the terrible question mark “why precisely like this?”—this state is all too comprehensible. Here everything *had* to be necessary, to have meaning, reason, the highest reason; a disciple’s love knows no accident. Only now did the gulf open: “*Who* killed him? *Who* was his natural enemy?”—this question flashed forth like lightning. Answer: *ruling* Judaism, its highest class. From that moment on, they felt themselves in revolt *against* the established order; afterward they understood Jesus as *in revolt against the established order*. Until then this warlike, this No-saying, No-doing trait had been *absent* from his image; more than that, it contradicted it. Clearly the little community *did not* understand precisely the essential thing, the exemplary character of this way of dying, the freedom, the superiority *over* every feeling of *resentment*:—a sign of how little it understood of him at all! In itself, Jesus could have intended nothing by his death but to give publicly the strongest test, the *proof* of his teaching... But his disciples were far from *forgiving* this death—which would have been evangelical in the highest sense; still less from *offering themselves* to a like death in gentle and loving calm of heart... Precisely the most unevangelical feeling, *revenge*, came to the fore again. The cause *could* not possibly be over with this death: “retribution,” “judgment” were needed (—and yet what can be more unevangelical than “retribution,” “punishment,” “passing judgment”!). Once again the popular expectation of a Messiah came to the foreground; a historical moment was envisaged: the “kingdom of God” comes to pass judgment on his enemies... But with that, everything is misunderstood: the “kingdom of God” as final act, as promise! Yet the Gospel had been precisely the existence, the fulfillment, the *reality* of this “kingdom.” Precisely such a death *was* this very “kingdom of God.” Only now did they inscribe all their contempt and bitterness toward Pharisees and theologians into the type of the master—thereby they *made* him a Pharisee and theologian! On the other

hand, the veneration run wild in these wholly unhinged souls could no longer endure that evangelical equal right of everyone to be a child of God which Jesus had taught; their revenge was to *exalt* Jesus extravagantly, to sever him from themselves: exactly as the Jews had once, in revenge against their enemies, separated their God from themselves and raised him on high. The *one* God and the *one* Son of God: both products of *resentment*...

Sections 41–50



⁴¹ —And from now on an absurd problem arose: “How could God allow this!” To this the disordered reason of the little community found an answer downright appalling in its absurdity: God gave his son for the forgiveness of sins, as a *sacrifice*. How suddenly the gospel was at an end! The *guilt offering*, and in its most repulsive, most barbaric form at that: the sacrifice of the *innocent* for the sins of the guilty! What a ghastly paganism!—Jesus had, after all, abolished the very concept of “guilt”—he had denied every gulf between God and humanity; he *lived* this unity of God and humanity as *his* “glad tidings”... And *not* as a privilege!—From now on, step by step, there enters into the type of the redeemer the doctrine of judgment and the second coming, the doctrine of death as a sacrificial death, the doctrine of the *resurrection*, by which the whole concept of “blessedness,” the entire and only reality of the gospel, is conjured away—in favor of a condition *after* death!... With that rabbinical effrontery that distinguishes him in every respect, Paul carried this interpretation, this *obscenity* of an interpretation, to the logical conclusion: “*If* Christ has not risen from the dead, then our faith is vain.”—And all at once the gospel became the most contemptible of all unfulfillable promises, the *shameless* doctrine of personal immortality... Paul himself still taught it as a *reward*!...

⁴² We can see *what* came to an end with the death on the cross: a new, entirely original beginning of a Buddhist peace movement, of actual *happiness on earth*, *not* merely promised happiness. For this remains—as I have already emphasized—the fundamental difference between the two religions of *decadence*: Buddhism does not promise but delivers; Christianity promises everything but *delivers nothing*.—The “glad tidings” were followed at once by the *very worst*: those of Paul. In Paul is embodied the type opposed to the “bearer of glad tidings,” the genius of hatred, of the vision of hatred, of the inexorable logic of hatred. *What* did this bearer of evil tidings not sacrifice to hatred! Above all, the redeemer: he nailed him to *his* cross. The life, the example, the teaching, the death, the meaning and justification of the entire gospel—nothing was left once this counterfeiter out of hatred grasped what alone he could use. *Not* reality, *not* historical truth!... And once again the Jew’s priestly instinct committed the same great crime against history—he simply struck out Christianity’s yesterday and day before yesterday; he *invented a history of early Christianity for himself*. More still: he falsified the history of Israel once again, to make it appear as the prehistory of *his* deed: all the prophets had spoken of *his* “redeemer”... Later the Church even falsified the history of humanity into the prehistory of Christianity... The type of the redeemer, the teaching, the practice, the death, the meaning of the death, even what came after the death—nothing remained untouched, nothing retained even a likeness to reality. Paul simply shifted the center of gravity of that entire existence *beyond* this existence—into the *lie* of the “risen” Jesus. Fundamentally, he had no use at all for the redeemer’s life—he needed the death on the cross *and* something more besides... To take a Paul whose home was in the chief seat of Stoic enlightenment as honest when he concocts from a hallucination the *proof* that the redeemer is *still* alive, or even to believe his story *that* he had this hallucination, would be truly *simpleminded* on a psychologist’s part: Paul wanted the end; *consequently* he also wanted the means... What he himself did not believe, the idiots among whom he flung his teaching believed.—*His* need was *power*; with Paul the priest once again sought power—he could use only concepts, doctrines, symbols with which to tyrann-

nize over masses and form herds. *What* alone did Muhammad later borrow from Christianity? Paul's invention, his means to priestly tyranny, to the formation of herds: belief in immortality—*that is, the doctrine of "judgment"*...

- 43 If we place life's center of gravity *not* in life but in the "beyond"—in *nothingness*—we have robbed life of its center of gravity altogether. The great lie of personal immortality destroys all reason, all naturalness in instinct—everything in the instincts that is beneficial, that furthers life, that guarantees a future now arouses mistrust. To live in *such* a way that there is no longer any *sense* in living—*that* now becomes the "sense" of life... Why public spirit, why any further gratitude for one's origins and ancestors, why cooperate, trust, promote or keep in view any common good?... So many "temptations," so many diversions from the "right path"—"*one* thing is needed"... That everyone, as an "immortal soul," ranks equally with everyone else; that within the totality of all beings the "salvation" of *each* individual may claim eternal importance; that petty sanctimonious hypocrites and the three-quarters-mad may imagine the laws of nature are continually *broken* for their sake—one cannot brand with enough contempt such an escalation of every kind of selfishness into the infinite, into the *shameless*. And yet Christianity owes its *victory* to *this* pitiful flattery of personal vanity—with it, Christianity won over precisely everything ill-constituted, rebellious-minded, shortchanged, all the refuse and dregs of humanity. The "salvation of the soul"—in plain language: "The world revolves around *me*"... The poison of the doctrine of "*equal* rights for all"—Christianity has sown it more fundamentally than anything else; from the most secret corners of bad instincts, Christianity has waged a war to the death against every feeling of reverence and distance between one person and another, that is, against the *precondition* of every elevation, every growth of culture—it has forged from the *resentment* of the masses its *chief weapon* against *us*, against everything noble, joyful, greathearted on earth, against our happiness on earth... "Immortality" granted to every Peter and Paul has been the greatest, most malicious assault yet upon *noble* humanity.—*And* let us not underestimate the fatal influence that has crept from Christianity into politics! No one today has the courage for spe-

cial rights, for rights of dominion, for a feeling of reverence toward himself and his equals—for a *pathos of distance*... Our politics is *sick* from this lack of courage!—The aristocratic cast of mind was undermined most insidiously by the lie of the equality of souls; and if belief in the “privilege of the majority” makes revolutions and *will make them*—it is Christianity, let there be no doubt, it is *Christian* value judgments that every revolution merely translates into blood and crime! Christianity is an uprising of everything that crawls on the ground against whatever has *height*: the gospel of the “lowly” *makes* people low...

44 —The Gospels are invaluable as testimony to the already unstoppable corruption *within* the first community. What Paul later brought to completion with a rabbi’s logical cynicism was nevertheless merely the process of decay that began with the redeemer’s death.—One cannot read these Gospels cautiously enough; their difficulties lie behind every word. I confess—and I trust I will be forgiven for it—that for precisely this reason they are a pleasure of the first order for a psychologist—as the *opposite* of all naive corruption, as the *supreme refinement*, as artistry in psychological corruption. The Gospels stand alone. The Bible as a whole is beyond comparison. We are among Jews: the *first* point to bear in mind if we are not to lose the thread entirely here. This dissimulation of oneself as “holy,” which here becomes nothing less than genius and has never been remotely equaled elsewhere among books or people, this counterfeiting of words and gestures as an *art*, is not the accident of some individual talent, some exceptional nature. It takes *race* for this. In Christianity, as the art of lying in a holy manner, the whole of Judaism, several centuries of the most earnest Jewish preliminary training and technique, achieves its final mastery. The Christian, this *last resort* of the lie, is the Jew all over again—*three times* over, in fact... The fundamental will to employ only concepts, symbols, attitudes that have proved themselves in priestly practice, the instinctive rejection of every *other* practice, every *other* kind of perspective on value and usefulness—this is not merely tradition, it is *inheritance*: only as inheritance does it act like nature. The whole of humanity, even the finest minds of the finest ages (with one exception, who

may be no more than an inhuman being—), has let itself be deceived. People have read the gospel as a *book of innocence*... no small indication of the mastery of the acting here.—Of course, if we could *see* them, even in passing, all these strange hypocrites and counterfeit saints, it would be all over—and precisely because *I* read no words without seeing gestures, *I make an end of them*... I cannot bear a certain way they have of raising their eyes.—Fortunately, for the great majority, books are merely *literature*—We must not let ourselves be misled: “Do not judge!” they say, but they send everything that stands in their way to hell. In letting God judge, they themselves judge; in glorifying God, they glorify themselves; in *demanding* the virtues of which they happen to be capable—more still, which they need in order to stay on top at all—they give themselves the grand appearance of striving for virtue, of fighting for the dominion of virtue. “We live, we die, we sacrifice ourselves *for the good*” (—“truth,” “light,” the “kingdom of God”): in reality they do what they cannot help doing. By forcing their way through like sneaks, sitting in corners, living shadowy lives in the shadows, they make a *duty* of it: their life of humility appears as duty; as humility it is one more proof of piety... Ah, this humble, chaste, merciful kind of mendacity! “Let virtue itself bear witness for us”... Read the Gospels as books of seduction by means of *morality*: these little people seize possession of morality—they know what morality can do! Morality is the best means of *leading humanity by the nose*!—The reality is that here the most conscious *conceit of being chosen* plays at modesty: they have placed *themselves*, the “community,” the “good and righteous,” once and for all on one side, the side of “truth”—and the rest, “the world,” on the other... *This* was the most disastrous kind of megalomania that had yet existed on earth: little monstrosities of hypocrites and liars began to claim the concepts “God,” “truth,” “light,” “spirit,” “love,” “wisdom,” “life” for themselves, as though these were synonyms for themselves, in order to mark off the “world” against themselves; little superlative Jews, ripe for every kind of madhouse, revalued all values to suit *themselves*, as though only the “Christian” were the meaning, the salt, the measure, even the *last judgment* of all the rest... This entire calamity was made possible only because a related, racially related kind of megalomania was already in the world,

the *Jewish* kind: once the gulf between Jews and Jewish Christians opened up, the latter had no choice but to turn *against* the Jews themselves those same procedures of self-preservation that the Jewish instinct recommended, whereas the Jews had previously used them only against everything *non-Jewish*. The Christian is merely a Jew of a “*freer*” confession of faith.—

45 —I offer a few samples of what these little people got into their heads, what they *put into their master’s mouth*: nothing but confessions of “beautiful souls.”—

“And wherever people do not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust from your feet as testimony against them. I tell you: truly, Sodom and Gomorrah will fare better at the Last Judgment than such a town” (Markus 6, 11).—How *evangelical*!...

“And whoever causes one of the little ones who believe in me to stumble would be better off if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea” (Markus 9, 42).—How *evangelical*!...

“If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it away. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hellfire, where their worm does not die and their fire does not go out” (Markus 9, 47).—It is not exactly the eye that is meant...

“Truly, I tell you, some standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God coming in power” (Markus 9, 1).—A fine *lie*, lion...

“Whoever wishes to follow me must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Because...” (*A psychologist’s note*. Christian morality is refuted by its *because*s: its “reasons” refute it—that is Christian.) Markus 8, 34.—

“Do not judge, *so that* you will not be judged. By whatever measure you measure, *you* will be measured” (Matthäus 7, 1).—What a concept of justice, of a “just” judge!...

“For if you love those who love you, *what reward will you have*? Do the tax collectors not do the same? And if you are friendly only to your brothers, *what is special about what you do*? Do the tax collectors not do that too?” (Matthäus 5, 46).—The principle of “Christian love”: in the end it wants to be well *paid*...

“But if *you* do not forgive people their faults, your Father will not forgive you your faults either” (Matthäus 6, 15),—Very compromising for the “Father” in question...

“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will come to you” (Matthäus 6, 33).—All these things: namely food, clothing, all life’s necessities. An *error*, to put it mildly... Shortly before this, God appears as a tailor, at least in certain cases...

“Rejoice then and leap: *for* look, your reward in heaven is great. Their fathers did the same to the prophets” (Lukas 6, 23).—*Shameless* rabble! Already it compares itself to the prophets...

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that the spirit of God lives in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, *God will destroy him*: for God’s temple is holy, *and that is what you are*” (Paulus I. Korinther 3, 16).—One cannot despise such things enough...

“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If, then, the world is to be judged by *you*, are you not good enough to judge lesser matters?” (Paulus I. Korinther 6, 2).—Unfortunately, not merely the speech of a madhouse inmate... This *terrible impostor* continues in these very words: “Do you not know that *we* will judge the angels? How much more so temporal goods!”...

“Has God not made the wisdom of this world foolishness? For since the world through its wisdom did not recognize God in his wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe in it through foolish preaching...; not many wise according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many noble are called. Rather, what is foolish before the world, *that God has chosen*, to put the wise to shame; and what is weak before the world God has chosen to put what is strong to shame; and what is ignoble before the world and what is despised God has chosen, and what is nothing, to bring to nothing what is something. So that no flesh should boast before him” (Paulus I. Korinther 1, 20 ff.).—To *understand* this passage, testimony of the very first order to the psychology of every Chandala morality, read the first essay of my *On the Genealogy of Morality*: there, for the first time,

the opposition between a *noble* morality and a Chandala morality born of *resentment* and powerless revenge was 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 proximity of so much filth almost demands it. We would no more choose “early Christians” as companions than Polish Jews: not that one would need even a single objection against them... Neither smells good.—I have searched the New Testament in vain for even one appealing trait; there is nothing in it that is free, kind, openhearted, honest. Humanity has not yet made its first beginning here—the instincts of *cleanliness* are missing... There are only *bad* instincts in the New Testament, and not even the courage for these bad instincts. Everything in it is cowardice, everything a shutting of the eyes and self-deception. Every book becomes clean when one has just read the New Testament: to give an example, immediately after Paul I read with delight that most graceful, most exuberant mocker Petronius, of whom one could say what Domenico Boccaccio wrote of Cesare Borgia to the Duke of Parma: “*he is all festivity*”—immortally healthy, immortally cheerful and well-constituted... These petty hypocrites, you see, miscalculate on the main point. They attack, but everything they attack is thereby *distinguished*. Whoever an “early Christian” attacks is *not* soiled by him... On the contrary: it is an honor to have “early Christians” against you. One does not read the New Testament without a preference for whatever is mistreated in it—not to mention the “wisdom of this world,” which an impudent windbag tries in vain to put to shame “through foolish preaching”... But even the Pharisees and scribes benefit from such opposition: they must have been worth something to be hated in so indecent a manner. Hypocrisy—as though “early Christians” were *entitled* to make that accusation!—In the end, they were the *privileged*: that is enough; Chandala hatred needs no further reasons. The “early Christian”—I fear also the “last Christian,” *whom I may yet live to see*—is a rebel against everything privileged out of his lowest instinct—he lives, he fights always for “*equal rights*”... On closer inspection, he has no choice. If one wishes, for one’s own

part, to be a “chosen one of God”—or a “temple of God,” or a “judge of angels”—then every *other* principle of selection, for example by honesty, by intellect, by manliness and pride, by beauty and freedom of heart, is simply “the world”—*evil in itself*... Moral: every word in the mouth of an “early Christian” is a lie, every action he performs an instinctive falsity—all his values, all his aims are harmful, but *whom* he hates, *what* he hates, *that has value*... The Christian, the priestly Christian in particular, is a *criterion of values*——Need I still say that in the whole New Testament there is only one *single* figure whom one must honor? Pilate, the Roman governor. To take a Jewish affair *seriously*—he cannot persuade himself to do that. One Jew more or less—what does it matter?... The noble scorn of a Roman, in whose presence the word “truth” is being shamelessly abused, has enriched the New Testament with the only saying *that has value*—that is its criticism, its very *annihilation*: “What is truth!”...

47 —What sets *us* apart is not that we find no God, whether in history or in nature or *behind* nature—but that we feel what has been worshiped as God to be not “divine” but pitiful, absurd, harmful, not merely an error but a *crime against life*... We deny God as God... If this God of the Christians were *proved* to us, we would know even less how to believe in him.—In a formula: *God, as Paul created him, is the negation of God*.—A religion like Christianity, which has no point of contact with reality, which collapses the moment reality gains its rights at even a single point, must reasonably be a mortal enemy of the “wisdom of the world,” meaning *science*—it will approve every means by which the discipline of the mind, its integrity and rigor in matters of intellectual conscience, its noble coolness and freedom can be poisoned, slandered, *brought into disrepute*. “Faith” as an imperative is the *veto* against science—in *practice*, the lie at any price... Paul *grasped* that the lie—that “faith”—was necessary; the Church later grasped Paul in turn.—That “God” Paul invented for himself, a God who “puts to shame” the “wisdom of the world” (in the narrower sense, the two great adversaries of all superstition, philology and medicine), is in truth nothing but Paul’s own resolute *decision* to do so: to call one’s own will “God,” *Torah*—that is primordially Jewish. Paul *wants* to put the “wisdom of the

world” to shame: his enemies are the *good* philologists and physicians trained in Alexandria—he makes war on them. In fact, one cannot be a philologist or physician without also being an *Antichrist*. For as a philologist one looks *behind* the “holy books,” as a physician *behind* the physiological degeneration of the typical Christian. The physician says “incurable,” the philologist “fraud”...

- 48 —Has anyone really understood the famous story at the beginning of the Bible —of God’s hellish terror of *science*?... No one has understood it. This *supreme* priestly book begins, as is only fitting, with the priest’s great inward difficulty: *he* has only one great danger, *consequently* “God” has only one great danger.—The old God, all “spirit,” all high priest, all perfection, strolls through his gardens: except that he is bored. Against boredom even gods struggle in vain. What does he do? He invents man—man is entertaining... But look, man is bored too. God’s pity for the sole affliction common to all paradises knows no bounds: he promptly created other animals as well. God’s *first* blunder: man did not find the animals entertaining—he ruled over them; he did not even want to be an “animal.”—*Consequently* God created woman. And in fact, boredom was now at an end—but so were other things besides! Woman was God’s *second* blunder.—“Woman is in her essence a serpent, Eve”—every priest knows that; “*every* calamity in the world comes from woman”—every priest knows that too. “*Consequently*, so does *science*”... Only through woman did man learn to taste of the tree of knowledge.—What had happened? A hellish terror seized the old God. Man himself had become his *greatest* blunder; he had created a rival for himself; science makes one *godlike*—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 *inherited* sin. *This alone is morality*.—“You shall *not* know”—the rest follows from that.—God’s hellish terror did not prevent him from being clever. How does one *defend* oneself against science? That became his chief problem for a long time. Answer: out of paradise with man! Happiness, idleness give people ideas—all ideas are bad ideas... Man *must* not think.—And the “priest as such” invents distress, death, the mortal danger of pregnancy, every kind of

misery, old age, toil, above all *sickness*—nothing but means of fighting science! Distress does not *allow* man to think... And yet! Horrors! The work of knowledge towers up, storming heaven, bringing twilight to the gods—what is to be done!—The old God invents *war*, he divides the peoples, he makes human beings destroy one another (—priests have always needed war...). War—among other things, a great disrupter of science!—Unbelievable! Knowledge, *emancipation from the priest*, increases even in spite of wars.—And a final decision comes to the old God: “Man has become scientific—*there is no help for it, he must be drowned!*”...

- 49 —You have understood me. The beginning of the Bible contains the *entire* psychology of the priest.—The priest knows only *one* great danger: science—the sound concept of cause and effect. But science thrives, on the whole, only under favorable conditions—one must have time, one must have intellect *to spare*, in order to “know”... “*Consequently*, man must be made unhappy”—this has been the priest’s logic in every age.—One can already guess *what*, in keeping with this logic, first came into the world through it—“*sin*”... The concept of guilt and punishment, the entire “moral world order,” was invented *against* science—against man’s detachment from the priest... Man is *not* to look outward; he is to look into himself; he is *not* to look into things intelligently and cautiously, as a learner; he is not to look at all: he is to *suffer*... And he is to *suffer* in such a way that he needs the priest at all times.—Away with physicians! *A savior is needed*.—The concepts of guilt and punishment, including the doctrines of “grace,” of “redemption,” of “forgiveness”—*lies* through and through, without any psychological reality—were invented to destroy man’s *sense of causality*: they are the assault upon the concept of cause and effect!—And *not* an assault with the fist, with the knife, with honesty in hatred and love! But out of the most cowardly, most cunning, lowest instincts! A priestly assault! A parasitic assault! A vampirism of pale subterranean bloodsuckers!... When the natural consequences of a deed are no longer “natural,” but are conceived as brought about by the phantom concepts of superstition, by “God,” by “spirits,” by “souls,” as merely “moral” consequences, as reward, punishment, hint,

means of education, then the precondition of knowledge is destroyed—then *the greatest crime against humanity has been committed*.—Sin, to say it once more, this *supreme* form of human self-defilement, was invented to make science, culture, every elevation and nobility of humanity impossible; the priest *rules* through the invention of sin.—

50 —I will not spare myself a psychology of “faith,” of the “faithful,” at this point—for the benefit, as is only fitting, of the “faithful” themselves. If there is still no shortage today of those who do not know how *indecent* it is to be “faithful”—or how it is a mark of *decadence*, of a broken will to live—by tomorrow they will know. My voice reaches even the hard of hearing.—It seems, unless I have misheard, that among Christians there is a kind of criterion of truth called the “proof of power.” “Faith brings blessedness: *therefore* it is true.”—One might first object here that precisely this bringing of blessedness is not proved but merely *promised*: blessedness is tied to the condition of “faith”—one is to become blessed *because* one believes... But *that* what the priest promises the believer for the “beyond,” inaccessible to any verification, actually comes to pass—what would prove *that*?—The supposed “proof of power” is thus fundamentally nothing more than another belief that the effect one expects from faith will not fail to occur. In a formula: “I believe that faith brings blessedness—*consequently* it is true.”—But with that we are already at an end. This “*consequently*” would be *absurdity* itself as a criterion of truth.—But let us suppose, with some indulgence, that the bringing of blessedness through faith were proved (—*not* merely wished for, *not* merely promised by a priest’s somewhat suspect mouth): would blessedness—more technically speaking, *pleasure*—ever be a proof of truth? So little so that it almost furnishes proof of the opposite, or at any rate grounds for the gravest suspicion of “truth,” when sensations of pleasure have a say in the question “What is true?” The proof of “pleasure” is a proof *of* “pleasure”—nothing more; how in the world could it be established that *true* judgments in particular give more enjoyment than false ones and, in accordance with a preestablished harmony, necessarily draw pleasant feelings in their wake?—The experience of all rigorous minds, all minds of a deep nature,

teaches *the reverse*. Every inch of truth has had to be wrested from oneself; in exchange one has had to surrender almost everything to which the heart otherwise clings, to which our love, our trust in life clings. It takes greatness of soul for this: the service of truth is the hardest service.—What, then, does it mean to be *honest* in intellectual matters? To be severe with one's heart, to despise “beautiful feelings,” to make every yes and no a matter of conscience!———Faith brings blessedness: *consequently* it lies...

Sections 51–62



- ⁵¹ That faith can, under certain circumstances, bring bliss; that the bliss produced by a fixed idea does not yet make that idea *true*; that faith does not move mountains but does *put* mountains where there are none—a brief walk through a *madhouse* makes all this plain enough. *Not*, of course, to a priest: for his instinct is to deny that sickness is sickness, that a madhouse is a madhouse. Christianity *needs* sickness much as the Greek world needs a surplus of health—to *make* people sick is the real ulterior purpose of the Church’s entire system of procedures for salvation. And the Church itself—is it not the Catholic madhouse as the ultimate ideal?—The whole earth as a madhouse?—The religious person, as the Church *wants* him, is a typical *decadent*; whenever a religious crisis masters a people, epidemics of nervous disorders mark the moment; the religious person’s “inner world” is so like the “inner world” of the overstimulated and exhausted that one could mistake the two; the “highest” states, which Christianity has hung above humanity as the value of all values, are epileptoid forms—the Church has canonized only madmen *or* great swindlers for *the greater glory of God*... I once took the liberty of calling the whole Christian *training* in penance and redemption (best studied today in England) a methodically induced *circular insanity*, naturally on ground already prepared for it—that is, thoroughly diseased ground. No one is free to become a Christian: one is not “converted” to Christianity—one must be sick enough for it... We others,

who have the *courage* for health *and* for contempt as well, how much reason *we* have to despise a religion that taught people to misunderstand the body! That refuses to rid itself of superstition about the soul! That makes a “merit” of inadequate nourishment! That fights health as a kind of enemy, devil, temptation! That persuaded itself one could carry a “perfect soul” about in the corpse of a body, and to do so had to fashion a new concept of “perfection” for itself, a pale, sickly, idiotically rapturous condition, so-called “holiness”—holiness, itself merely a series of symptoms of an impoverished, enervated, incurably ruined body!... The Christian movement, as a European movement, is from the outset a collective movement of reject and refuse elements of every kind (—these seek power through Christianity). It does *not* express the decline of a race; it is an aggregation of forms of *decadence* from everywhere, pressing together and seeking one another out. It is *not*, as people believe, the corruption of antiquity itself, of *noble* antiquity, that made Christianity possible: one cannot contradict too fiercely the learned idiocy that upholds such a thing even today. At the time when the sick, corrupted Chandala strata throughout the *empire* were becoming Christian, precisely the *opposite type*, nobility, existed in its most beautiful and mature form. The greater number became master; the democratism of Christian instincts *triumphed*... Christianity was not “national,” not determined by race—it appealed to every kind of person disinherited by life; it had its allies everywhere. At Christianity’s foundation lies the rancor of the sick, an instinct directed *against* the healthy, *against* health. Everything well constituted, proud, high-spirited, beauty above all, hurts its ears and eyes. Once again I recall Paul’s priceless words: “What is *weak* before the world, what is *foolish* before the world, the *base* and *despised* before the world, God has chosen”: *that* was the formula, *under this sign decadence* triumphed.—*God on the cross*—do people still not understand the terrible ulterior meaning of this symbol?—Everything that suffers, everything that hangs on the cross, is *divine*... We all hang on the cross, therefore *we* are divine... We alone are divine... Christianity was a victory; a *nobler* disposition perished through it—Christianity has so far been humanity’s greatest misfortune.— —

52 Christianity also stands opposed to everything well constituted in the *intellect*—it *can* use only sick reason as Christian reason; it takes the side of everything idiotic; it pronounces a curse upon “the intellect,” upon the *pride* of the healthy intellect. Because sickness belongs to the essence of Christianity, the typically Christian state, “faith,” *must* also be a form of sickness; all straight, honest, scientific paths to knowledge *must* be rejected by the Church as *forbidden* paths. Doubt itself is already a sin... The priest’s complete lack of psychological cleanliness—betrayed in his eyes—is a *consequence* of *decadence*—one need only observe hysterical females and, on the other hand, children predisposed to rickets to see how regularly instinctive falseness, a delight in lying for the sake of lying, an inability to look straight or walk straight, express *decadence*. “Faith” means not *wanting* to know what is true. The Pietist, the priest of either sex, is false *because* he is sick: his instinct *demand*s that truth be denied its due at every point. “What makes people sick is *good*; what comes from fullness, from abundance, from power, is *evil*”: this is how the believer feels. *Compulsion to lie*—by this I recognize every predestined theologian.—Another mark of the theologian is his *incapacity for philology*. Philology is to be understood here, in a very general sense, as the art of reading *well*—of being able to read facts *without* falsifying them by interpretation, *without* losing caution, patience, subtlety in the desire to understand. Philology as *restraint* in interpretation: whether it concerns books, newspaper reports, destinies, or facts about the weather—not to mention the “salvation of the soul”... The way a theologian, whether in Berlin or Rome, interprets a “passage of scripture” or an experience, a victory of the fatherland’s army, for example, in the higher illumination of the Psalms of David, is always so *bold* that it drives a philologist up the wall. And what is he to do when Pietists and other cows from Swabia use the “finger of God” to turn the wretched everyday life and indoor smoke of their existence into a miracle of “grace,” of “providence,” of “experiences of salvation”! The most modest expenditure of intellect, not to say of *decency*, ought surely to bring these interpreters to convict themselves of the utter childishness and unworthiness of such an abuse of divine dexterity. With even the slightest measure of piety in us, a God who cures a cold at just the right time, or tells us

to step into a carriage at the very moment a heavy rain breaks out, ought to seem so absurd a God that we would have to abolish him even if he existed. A God as domestic servant, as mail carrier, as almanac maker—at bottom a word for the stupidest kind of chance occurrences... “Divine providence,” as roughly one person in three in “educated Germany” still believes in it today, would be an objection to God more powerful than any one could possibly conceive. And in any case it is an objection to Germans!...

- 53 —It is so far from true that *martyrs* prove anything about the truth of a cause that I would deny any martyr has ever had anything at all to do with truth. The very tone in which a martyr flings his conviction in the world’s face expresses so low a degree of intellectual honesty, such *insensibility* to the question of “truth,” that one never needs to refute a martyr. Truth is not something one person possesses and another does not: at most, peasants or apostles to peasants in the manner of Luther can think of truth that way. One may be certain that the greater one’s conscientiousness in matters of the intellect, the greater one’s modesty, one’s *self-restraint* on this point. To *know* in five matters, and with a delicate hand decline to know in *any others*... “Truth,” as every prophet, every sectarian, every freethinker, every socialist, every churchman understands the word, is perfect proof that not even a beginning has been made in that discipline of the intellect and self-overcoming needed to discover any little truth, however little.—The deaths of martyrs, incidentally, have been a great misfortune in history: they *seduced*... The inference drawn by all idiots, women and the common people included, that a cause for which someone goes to his death (or which, like early Christianity, even produces epidemics of the lust for death) must have something to it—this inference has been an unspeakable hindrance to inquiry, to the spirit of inquiry and caution. The martyrs *harmed* truth... Even today, a single act of crude persecution is enough to give the most inherently insignificant sectarianism an *honorable* name.—What? Does it change the value of a cause that someone lays down his life for it?—An error that becomes honorable is an error with one more seductive charm: do you believe, gentlemen theologians, that we would give you the occasion to play the martyrs for

your lie?—One refutes a cause by respectfully putting it on ice—one refutes theologians in the same way... Precisely this was the world-historical stupidity of all persecutors: they gave the opposing cause the appearance of honor—they made it a present of the fascination of martyrdom... Woman still kneels before error today because she has been told that someone died for it on the cross. *Is the cross an argument, then?*— —But on all these matters one man alone has spoken the word that was needed for millennia—*Zarathustra*.

They wrote signs of blood along the road they traveled, and their folly taught that truth is proved with blood.

But blood is the worst witness to truth; blood poisons even the purest teaching into delusion and hatred in the heart.

And if someone went through fire for his teaching—what does that prove!

Truly, it means far more for one's own burning to give rise to one's own teaching.

- 54 Let no one be misled: great minds are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. Strength, the *freedom* that comes from the force and superabundance of the intellect, *proves* itself through skepticism. People of conviction do not even enter into consideration on any fundamental question of value and worthlessness. Convictions are prisons. Such people do not see far enough; they do not see *beneath* themselves: but to have a say about value and worthlessness, one must see five hundred convictions *beneath* oneself—*behind* oneself... A mind that wills great things, that also wills the means to them, is necessarily skeptical. *Freedom* from convictions of every kind *belongs* to strength, the *ability* to look freely... The great passion, the ground and power of the mind's being, still more enlightened, still more despotic than the mind itself, takes its entire intellect into service; it makes it unscrupulous; it gives it courage even for unholy means; it *allows* it convictions *under certain circumstances*. Conviction as a *means*: much can be achieved only by means of a conviction. The great passion uses convictions, uses them up; it does not submit to them—it knows itself sovereign.—Conversely: the need for faith, for something unconditional in Yes and No, Carlyism, if I may be forgiven the word, is a need born of *weakness*.

The person of faith, the “believer” of every kind, is necessarily a dependent person—someone who cannot set himself as an end, who cannot set ends at all on his own. The “believer” does not belong to *himself*; he can only be a means; he must be *used up*; he needs someone to use him up. His instinct pays the highest honor to a morality of self-abnegation: everything persuades him toward it, his shrewdness, his experience, his vanity. Every kind of faith is itself an expression of self-abnegation, of self-alienation... When one considers how necessary it is for the vast majority to have a regulating authority that binds and fixes them from outside, how constraint, in a higher sense *slavery*, is the sole and ultimate condition under which the person of weaker will, especially woman, flourishes, then one also understands conviction, “faith.” The person of conviction has his backbone in it. *Not* to see many things, to be unprejudiced on no point, to be partisan through and through, to have a strict and necessary perspective on all values—this alone makes it possible for such a kind of person to exist at all. But this makes him the opposite, the *antagonist* of the truthful person—of truth... The believer is not free to have a conscience at all on the question of “true” and “untrue”: to be honest at *this* point would instantly be his undoing. The pathological conditioning of his perspective makes the person of conviction a fanatic—Savonarola, Luther, Rousseau, Robespierre, Saint-Simon—the opposite type to the strong, *liberated* mind. But the grand pose of these *sick* minds, these epileptics of the concept, affects the great mass—the fanatics are picturesque; humanity would rather watch gestures than hear *reasons*...

- 55 —A step further in the psychology of conviction, of “faith.” Long ago I offered for consideration the question whether convictions are not more dangerous enemies of truth than lies (Menschliches, Allzumenschliches I, Aphorismus 54 und 483). This time I would like to ask the decisive question: is there any opposition at all between a lie and a conviction?—Everyone believes there is; but what doesn’t everyone believe!—Every conviction has its history, its preliminary forms, its tentative efforts and blunders: it *becomes* a conviction after a long time of *not* being one, after a still longer time of *scarcely* being one. What? Could a lie not also be among these embryonic forms of conviction?—

Sometimes all that is needed is a change of persons: in the son, what was still a lie in the father becomes conviction.—I call it a lie to *refuse* to see something one sees, to refuse to see something as one sees it: whether the lie occurs before witnesses or without witnesses is of no account. The most common lie is the one with which one lies to oneself; lying to others is relatively exceptional.—Now this *refusal* to see what one sees, this refusal to see it as one sees it, is almost the first condition for everyone who is *partisan* in any sense: the partisan necessarily becomes a liar. German historiography, for example, is convinced that Rome was despotism, that the Germanic peoples brought the spirit of freedom into the world: what difference is there between this conviction and a lie? Can one still be surprised if, by instinct, all parties, German historians included, have the grand words of morality on their lips—if morality virtually *continues to exist* because partisans of every kind need it at every moment? —“This is *our* conviction: we profess it before all the world, we live and die for it—respect for everyone who has convictions!”—I have heard such things even from the mouths of antisemites. On the contrary, gentlemen! An antisemite becomes not the least bit more decent by lying on principle... Priests, who are subtler in such matters and understand very well the objection inherent in the concept of a conviction—that is, of a mendacity practiced on principle *because* it serves a purpose—have inherited from the Jews the shrewdness to insert at this point the concepts “God,” “God’s will,” “God’s revelation.” Kant, too, with his categorical imperative, was on the same path: here his reason became *practical*.—There are questions on which human beings have *no* right to decide about truth and untruth; all the highest questions, all the highest problems of value, lie beyond human reason... To grasp the *limits* of reason—that alone is truly philosophy... Why did God give human beings revelation? Would God have done something superfluous? Human beings *cannot* know for themselves what is good and evil; therefore God taught them his will... Moral: the priest does *not* lie—the question of “true” or “untrue” does not *exist* in such matters as priests discuss; these matters do not permit lying at all. For to lie one would have to be able to decide *what* is true here. But that is precisely what human beings *cannot* do; the priest is thus merely God’s mouthpiece.—Such a priestly

syllogism is by no means merely Jewish and Christian; the right to lie and the *shrewdness* of “revelation” belong to the priestly type, to priests of decadence as much as to priests of paganism (—pagans are all those who say Yes to life, for whom “God” is the word for the great Yes to all things).—The “law,” the “will of God,” the “holy book,” “inspiration”—all merely words for the conditions *under* which the priest comes to power, *with* which he maintains his power—these concepts lie at the foundation of all priestly organizations, all priestly or philosophical-priestly structures of domination. The “holy lie”—common to Confucius, the lawbook of Manu, Muhammad, the Christian Church—is not absent in Plato. “The truth is here”: wherever this is proclaimed, it means *the priest is lying...*

- 56 —In the end, what matters is the *purpose* for which one lies. That Christianity lacks “holy” ends is *my* objection to its means. Only *bad* ends: poisoning, slandering, negating life, contempt for the body, the degradation and self-defilement of human beings through the concept of sin—*consequently* its means are bad as well.—I read the lawbook of *Manu* with the opposite feeling, an incomparably intellectual and superior work that it would be a sin against the *intellect* even to *mention* in the same breath as the Bible. One immediately senses that it has a real philosophy behind it, *within* it, not merely a foul-smelling Judaic brew of rabbinism and superstition—it gives even the most spoiled psychologist something to sink his teeth into. *Not* to forget the main thing, *the* fundamental distinction from every kind of Bible: with this book the *noble* estates, the philosophers and the warriors, hold their hand over the multitude; noble values everywhere, a feeling of perfection, a Yes to life, a triumphant sense of well-being in oneself and in life—the *sun* rests on the whole book.—All the things on which Christianity vents its unfathomable baseness—procreation, for example, woman, marriage—are treated here seriously, with reverence, with love and trust. How can anyone put a book into the hands of children and women that contains those vile words: “Because of fornication, let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband... it is better to marry than to burn with lust”? And *may* one be a Christian as long as the origin of

human beings is Christianized—that is, *befouled*—by the concept of the *immaculate conception*?... I know no book that says so many tender and kindly things to woman as the lawbook of Manu; these old graybeards and saints have a way of being gracious to women that has perhaps never been surpassed. “A woman’s mouth,” it says in one place, “a girl’s bosom, a child’s prayer, the smoke of sacrifice are always pure.” Another passage: “There is nothing purer than the light of the sun, the shadow of a cow, the air, water, fire, and a girl’s breath.” One final passage—perhaps also a holy lie: “All openings of the body above the navel are pure, all below it are impure. Only in the girl is the whole body pure.”

- 57 One catches the *unholiness* of Christian means *in the act* when one measures the *Christian* end against the end of Manu’s lawbook—when one brings this greatest opposition of ends into a strong light. The critic of Christianity cannot be spared the task of making Christianity *contemptible*.—A lawbook such as Manu’s arises like every good lawbook: it sums up the experience, shrewdness, and experimental morality of long centuries; it brings things to a close; it no longer creates. The prerequisite for a codification of its kind is the insight that the means of giving authority to a *truth* acquired slowly and at great cost are fundamentally different from those by which one would prove it. A lawbook never recounts the utility, the reasons, the case-by-case deliberations in a law’s prehistory: to do so would cost it its imperative tone, its “you shall,” the prerequisite for obedience. This is precisely where the problem lies.—At a certain point in a people’s development, its most discerning stratum—that is, the one that looks furthest backward and ahead—declares the experience by which people are to live—that is, *can* live—complete. Its aim is to bring home the richest and fullest possible harvest from the ages of experiment and *bitter* experience. What must now be prevented above all, consequently, is further experimentation, the continued fluidity of values, the testing, choosing, criticizing of values *without end*. Against this one erects a double wall: first, *revelation*, that is, the assertion that the reason embodied in those laws is *not* of human origin, *not* sought and found slowly and through blunders, but, being of divine origin,

whole, perfect, without a history, a gift, a miracle, simply communicated... Then *tradition*, that is, the assertion that the law has existed since ancient times, that to call it into question is impious, a crime against the ancestors. The law's authority is founded on these propositions: God *gave* it, the ancestors *lived* it.—The higher reason behind such a procedure lies in the intention of pushing consciousness back, step by step, from the life recognized as right (that is, *proved* by an immense and rigorously sifted body of experience), so that the perfect automatism of instinct is achieved—the prerequisite for every kind of mastery, every kind of perfection in the art of life. To establish a lawbook in the manner of Manu means granting a people the right henceforth to become masters, to become perfect—to aspire to the highest art of life. *For this, it must be made unconscious*: this is the purpose of every holy lie.—The *order of castes*, the highest, the dominant law, is merely the sanction of an *order of nature*, a natural law of the first rank over which no arbitrary will, no “modern idea” has any power. In every healthy society three types separate out, conditioning one another, with physiologically different centers of gravity; each has its own regimen of health, its own sphere of work, its own kind of feeling of perfection and mastery. Nature, *not* Manu, separates the predominantly intellectual, those predominantly strong in muscle and temperament, and the third group, distinguished in neither, the mediocre—the last as the great number, the first as the select. The highest caste—I call them *the fewest*—being the perfect one, also has the privileges of the fewest: among them, to embody happiness, beauty, goodness on earth. Only the most intellectual human beings are permitted beauty, permitted *the beautiful*: only in them is goodness not weakness. *The beautiful belongs to few people*: the good is a privilege. On the other hand, nothing can be less permissible for them than ugly manners or a pessimistic outlook, an eye that *makes things ugly*—or even indignation at the overall aspect of things. Indignation is the privilege of the Chandala; pessimism likewise. “*The world is perfect*”—so speaks the instinct of the most intellectual, the Yes-saying instinct—: “Imperfection, every kind of thing *beneath* us, distance, the pathos of distance, even the Chandala himself belongs to this perfection.” The most intellectual human beings, as the *strongest*, find their happiness where others would

find their destruction: in the labyrinth, in severity toward themselves and others, in experiment; their delight is self-mastery: asceticism becomes nature, need, instinct in them. A difficult task counts as a privilege to them; playing with burdens that crush others, a *recreation*... Knowledge—a form of asceticism.—They are the most venerable kind of human being: this does not prevent them from being the most cheerful, the most lovable. They rule not because they want to, but because they *are*; they are not free to be second.—The *second*: these are the guardians of justice, the keepers of order and security, the noble warriors, above all the *king* as the highest formulation of warrior, judge, and upholder of the law. Those who rank second are the executive arm of the most intellectual, those closest to them, those who take all the *coarse* work of ruling off their hands—their retinue, their right hand, their best pupils.—In all this, let me say again, there is nothing arbitrary, nothing “contrived”; whatever is *otherwise* is contrived—then nature has been ruined... The order of castes, the *order of rank*, merely formulates the highest law of life itself; the separation of the three types is necessary to preserve society, to make higher and highest types possible—*inequality* of rights is the very condition for there being rights at all.—A right is a privilege. In his kind of being, everyone also has his privilege. Let us not underestimate the privileges of the *mediocre*. Life grows ever harder toward the *heights*—the cold increases, responsibility increases. A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base; its very first prerequisite is a strongly and healthily consolidated mediocrity. Crafts, commerce, agriculture, *science*, most of art, in a word the whole domain of *professional* activity, are compatible only with a middling measure of ability and desire; such things would be out of place among exceptions, and the corresponding instinct would contradict both aristocratism and anarchism. To be of public use, a wheel, a function, is a natural vocation: it is *not* society, but the kind of *happiness* of which the vast majority are alone capable, that makes intelligent machines of them. For the mediocre, being mediocre is happiness; mastery of one thing, specialization, is a natural instinct. It would be utterly unworthy of a deeper mind to see an objection in mediocrity as such. It is itself the *first* necessity if exceptions are to be possible: a high culture depends on it. When the

exceptional person handles precisely the mediocre with gentler fingers than he uses for himself and his peers, this is not merely courtesy of the heart—it is simply his *duty*... Whom do I hate most among today's rabble? The socialist rabble, the Chandala apostles, who undermine the worker's instinct, his pleasure, his feeling of contentment with his little existence—who make him envious, who teach him revenge... Injustice never lies in *unequal* rights; it lies in the claim to "equal" rights... What is *bad*? But I have already said it: everything that comes from weakness, from envy, from *revenge*.—The anarchist and the Christian have the same ancestry...

- 58 Indeed, it makes a difference for what purpose one lies: whether one preserves or *destroys* by doing so. One may put a perfect equal sign between *Christian* and *anarchist*: their purpose, their instinct, aims only at destruction. The proof of this proposition need only be read from history: it contains that proof with terrifying clarity. We have just come to know a religious legislation whose purpose was to "eternalize" the highest condition for life to *flourish*, a great organization of society—Christianity found its mission in putting an end to just such an organization, *because life flourished within it*. There, the yield of reason from long ages of experiment and uncertainty was to be invested for the benefit of the most distant future, and the harvest brought home as great, as abundant, as complete as possible: here, on the contrary, the harvest was *poisoned* overnight... What stood *more enduring than bronze*, the *Roman Empire*, the grandest form of organization under difficult conditions that has yet been achieved, compared with which everything before and everything after is patchwork, bungling, amateurism—those holy anarchists made it an act of "piety" to destroy "the world," *that is*, the *Roman Empire*, until not one stone remained on another—until even Germanic peoples and other louts could become its masters... The Christian and the anarchist: both *decadents*, both incapable of acting otherwise than by dissolving, poisoning, withering, *sucking blood*, both the instinct of *mortal hatred* against everything that stands, that stands in greatness, that endures, that promises life a future... Christianity was the vampire of the *Roman Empire*—overnight it undid the Romans' immense achieve-

ment of winning the ground for a great culture *that has time*.—Is this still not understood? The *Roman Empire* we know, which the history of the Roman provinces teaches us to know ever better, this most admirable work of art in the grand style, was a beginning; its construction was designed to *prove* itself over millennia—to this day no one has built like this, or even dreamed of building to the same degree *with eternity in view*!—This organization was firm enough to withstand bad emperors: the accident of persons must have no bearing on such things—the *first* principle of all great architecture. But it was not firm enough against the *most corrupt* kind of corruption, against the *Christian*... These secretive vermin, creeping up to every individual in darkness, fog, and ambiguity, sucking out of every individual his seriousness about *true* things, his instinct for *realities* altogether, this cowardly, effeminate, sickly-sweet gang, step by step estranged “souls” from that immense structure—those valuable, those manly and noble natures who felt their own cause, their own seriousness, their own pride in the cause of Rome. This sanctimonious creeping about, the secrecy of conventicles, gloomy concepts such as hell, such as the sacrifice of the innocent, such as *mystical union* in the drinking of blood, above all the slowly stoked fire of revenge, of Chandala revenge—*this* became master over Rome, the same kind of religion against which Epicurus had already waged war in its preexistent form. Read Lucretius to understand *what* Epicurus fought, *not* paganism, but “Christianity,” that 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 already a genuine *redemption* then.—And Epicurus would have triumphed; every respectable mind in the Roman Empire was Epicurean: *then Paul appeared*... Paul, the Chandala hatred of Rome, of “the world,” become flesh, become genius, the Jew, the *eternal Jew in the fullest sense*... What he divined was how, with the help of the little sectarian Christian movement apart from Judaism, one could kindle a “world conflagration,” how, with the symbol “God on the cross,” one could add up everything lying at the bottom, everything secretly rebellious, the whole inheritance of anarchistic agitation in the Empire, into an immense power. “Salvation comes from the Jews.”—Christianity as a formula

for outbidding the underground cults of every kind—those of Osiris, of the Great Mother, of Mithras, for example—*and* combining them: in this insight lies Paul’s genius. His instinct was so sure in this that, with ruthless violence against the truth, he put the ideas with which those Chandala religions fascinated people into the mouth of the “Savior” he invented, and not only into his mouth—that he *made* him into something even a priest of Mithras could understand... This was his moment at Damascus: he understood that he *needed* the belief in immortality to devalue “the world,” that the concept of “hell” would yet become master over Rome—that with the “beyond” one *kills life*... Nihilist and Christian: they rhyme, and they do more than rhyme...

- 59 All the labor of the ancient world *in vain*: I have no word to express my feeling about something so monstrous.—And considering that its labor was preparatory, that only just then, with a self-confidence of granite, the foundations had been laid for the work of millennia, the whole *meaning* of the ancient world in vain!... What were the Greeks for? What were the Romans for?—All the prerequisites for a scholarly culture, all the scientific *methods* were already there; the great, incomparable art of reading well had already been established—this prerequisite for the transmission of culture, for the unity of science; natural science, allied with mathematics and mechanics, was on the best possible path—the *sense for facts*, the last and most valuable of all the senses, had its schools, its tradition already centuries old! Is this understood? Everything *essential* had been found for work to begin—the methods, one must say it ten times, *are* the essential thing, also the most difficult thing, also what habits and laziness resist the longest. What we have won back for ourselves today, with unspeakable self-mastery—for we all still have the bad instincts, the Christian ones, in our bodies somehow—the free gaze before reality, the cautious hand, patience and seriousness in the smallest matters, the whole *honesty* of knowledge—it was already there! Already more than two millennia ago! *And*, added to this, good, refined tact and taste! *Not* as brain-training! *Not* as “German” education with a lout’s manners! But as body, as gesture, as instinct—in a word, as reality... *All in vain*! Overnight, nothing but a memory!—Greeks! Romans! Nobility of instinct,

taste, methodical research, genius for organization and administration, faith, the *will* to humanity's future, the great Yes to all things made visible as the *Roman Empire*, visible to every sense, the grand style no longer merely art but become reality, truth, *life*...—And not buried overnight by a natural event! Not trampled down by Germanic peoples and other heavy-footed creatures! But ruined by cunning, secretive, invisible, anemic vampires! Not conquered—only sucked dry!... Hidden vindictiveness, petty envy become *master*! Everything wretched, suffering from itself, plagued by bad feelings, the whole *ghetto-world* of the soul suddenly *on top*!— —One need only read any Christian agitator, Saint Augustine for example, to understand, to *smell*, what unclean fellows came out on top with this. One would be wholly mistaken to suppose any lack of intelligence in the leaders of the Christian movement—oh, they are clever, clever to the point of holiness, these gentlemen Church Fathers! What they lack is something quite different. Nature neglected them—it forgot to give them a modest endowment of respectable, decent, *clean* instincts... Between ourselves, they are not even men... When Islam despises Christianity, it has a thousand-fold right to do so: Islam presupposes *men*...

- ⁶⁰ Christianity robbed us of the harvest of ancient culture; later it robbed us again of the harvest of *Islamic* culture. The marvelous Moorish cultural world of Spain, fundamentally more akin to *us*, speaking more to our senses and taste than Rome and Greece, was *trampled down* (—I do not say by what sort of feet —), why? Because it owed its origin to noble instincts, to the instincts of men, because it said Yes to life even with the rare and exquisite treasures of Moorish life!... Later the Crusaders fought something before which it would have better become them to prostrate themselves in the dust—a culture beside which even our nineteenth century might well seem very poor, very “late.”—Of course, they wanted booty: the Orient was rich... Let us be unprejudiced! Crusades—piracy on a higher plane, nothing more! The German nobility, Viking nobility at bottom, was in its element here: the Church knew only too well how to *get* the German nobility... The German nobility, always the Church's “Swiss,” always in the service of all the Church's bad instincts—but *well paid*... That the

Church waged its war of mortal enmity against everything noble on earth precisely with the help of German swords, German blood and courage! There are many painful questions at this point. The German nobility is almost *absent* from the history of higher culture: one can guess the reason... Christianity, alcohol—the two *great* means of corruption... In itself there should be no choice at all between Islam and Christianity, any more than between an Arab and a Jew. The decision is given; no one is free to choose here any longer. Either one *is* a Chandala or one is *not*... “War to the knife with Rome! Peace, friendship with Islam”: so felt, so *acted* that great freethinker, the genius among German emperors, Frederick the Second. What? Must a German first be a genius, first a freethinker, to feel *decently*? I cannot understand how a German could ever feel *Christian*...

- 61 Here we must touch on a memory a hundred times more painful for Germans. The Germans robbed Europe of the last great cultural harvest that remained for Europe to bring home—the harvest of the *Renaissance*. Is it finally understood, does anyone *want* to understand, *what* the Renaissance was? The *revaluation of Christian values*, the attempt, undertaken with every means, every instinct, every power of genius, to bring the *opposite* values, the *noble* values, to victory... There has so far been only *this* great war; there has so far been no more decisive posing of the question than that of the Renaissance—*my* question is its question—: there has also never been a more fundamental, a more direct form of *attack*, one more rigorously driven forward along the whole front and toward the center! To attack at the decisive point, at the very seat of Christianity, to enthrone the *noble* values here—that is to say, to bring them *into* the instincts, into the deepest needs and desires of those seated there... I see before me a *possibility* of utterly unearthly magic and splendor of color—it seems to me to shine with every shudder of exquisite beauty, to have at work within it an art so divine, so devilishly divine, that one searches millennia in vain for a second such possibility; I see a spectacle so rich in meaning, so wonderfully paradoxical at the same time, that all the deities of Olympus would have had cause for immortal laughter—*Cesare Borgia as pope*... Am I under-

stood?... Well, that would have been the victory for which *I* alone long today—with that, Christianity would have been *abolished!*—What happened? A German monk, Luther, came to Rome. This monk, with all the vengeful instincts of a failed priest in his body, rebelled in Rome *against* the Renaissance... Instead of understanding with the deepest gratitude the tremendous thing that had happened, the overcoming of Christianity at its *seat*, his hatred knew only how to draw nourishment from this spectacle. A religious person thinks only of himself.—Luther saw the *corruption* of the papacy, while precisely the opposite was palpable: the old corruption, *original sin*, Christianity, was *no longer* sitting on the papal throne! But life was! The triumph of life was! The great Yes to all lofty, beautiful, daring things was!... And Luther *restored the Church*: he attacked it... The Renaissance—an event without meaning, a great *In Vain!*—Ah, these Germans, what they have already cost us! In vain—that was always the Germans’ *work*.—The Reformation; Leibniz; Kant and so-called German philosophy; the wars of “liberation”; the German Empire—each time an *In Vain* for something that was already there, for something *irretrievable*... They are *my* enemies, I confess it, these Germans: in them I despise every kind of uncleanness in concepts and values, every kind of *cowardice* before every honest Yes and No. For nearly a millennium they have tangled and confused everything they have laid their fingers on; they have on their conscience all the half-measures—three-eighths-measures!—that make Europe sick—they also have on their conscience the most unclean kind of Christianity there is, the most incurable, the most irrefutable, Protestantism... If Christianity is not finished off, the *Germans* will be to blame...

62 —With this I come to the end and pronounce my judgment. I *condemn* Christianity; I bring against the Christian Church the most terrible of all accusations that any accuser has ever uttered. To me it is the highest of all conceivable corruptions; it has willed the ultimate corruption that could possibly exist. The Christian Church left nothing untouched by its depravity; it has turned every value into worthlessness, every truth into a lie, all honesty into baseness of soul. Let anyone still dare to speak to me of its “humanitarian” blessings! To

abolish any distress ran counter to its deepest advantage: it lived on distress, it *created* distress to perpetuate *itself*... The worm of sin, for example: it was the Church that first enriched humanity with this distress!—The “equality of souls before God,” this falsehood, this *pretext* for the *resentments* of all the base-minded, this explosive concept that has finally become revolution, modern idea, and the principle of decline of the entire social order—is *Christian* dynamite... The “humanitarian” blessings of Christianity! To breed out of *humanity* a self-contradiction, an art of self-defilement, a will to lie at any price, an aversion to, a contempt for all good and honest instincts! Those are what I would call the blessings of Christianity!—Parasitism as the *sole* practice of the Church; with its ideal of anemia, of “holiness,” drinking dry all blood, all love, all hope for life; the beyond as the will to negate every reality; the cross as the identifying sign of the most subterranean conspiracy that has ever existed—against health, beauty, sound constitution, courage, intellect, *goodness* of soul, *against life itself*...

I want to write this eternal accusation against Christianity on every wall, wherever there are walls—I have letters that will make even the blind see... I call Christianity the *one* great curse, the *one* great innermost corruption, the *one* great instinct of revenge for which no means is poisonous, secretive, subterranean, *petty* enough—I call it the *one* immortal blot of shame on humanity...

And time is reckoned from the *accursed day* on which this calamity began—from the *first* day of Christianity!—*Why not rather from its last?—From today?*—Revaluation of all values!

Law Against Christianity



Given on the day of salvation, on the first day of the year One (—September 30, 1888, by the false reckoning of time)

War to the death against vice: the vice is Christianity.

- ¹ *First proposition.*—Every kind of opposition to nature is vicious. The most vicious kind of human being is the priest: he *teaches* opposition to nature. Against the priest one has no arguments; one has the penitentiary.
- ² *Second proposition.*—Every participation in a religious service is an assault on public morality. One must be harsher with Protestants than with Catholics, harsher with liberal Protestants than with the orthodox. The criminality of being a Christian increases as one approaches science. The criminal of criminals is therefore the *philologist*.
- ³ *Third proposition.*—The accursed places where Christianity has hatched its basilisk eggs must be razed to the ground and, as *abominable* places on earth, be the terror of all posterity. One must breed venomous snakes on them.
- ⁴ *Fourth proposition.*—The preaching of chastity is a public incitement to opposition to nature. All contempt for sexual life, every defilement of it through the concept of “impure,” is the real sin against the holy spirit of life.

- ⁵ *Fifth proposition.*—To eat at the same table with a priest makes one an outcast: one thereby excommunicates oneself from decent society. The priest is *our* Chandala—one must outlaw him, starve him, drive him into every kind of desert.
- ⁶ *Sixth proposition.*—One must call “sacred” history by the name it deserves: *accursed* history; one must turn the words “God,” “Savior,” “Redeemer,” “Saint” into terms of abuse, use them as badges of criminals.
- ⁷ *Seventh proposition.*—The rest follows from this.
The Antichrist