



The Antichrist

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Plain English Translation

MOUSEIA



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Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Mouseia's complete Plain English edition, made independently and directly from the same German text of the preface, all sixty-two sections and the Law Against Christianity. 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 very few people. Perhaps none of them is alive yet. They may be the people 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 people are born after their deaths.

I know only too well the conditions under which people understand me, and then understand me *of necessity*. You must be honest in intellectual matters to the point of harshness, just to bear my seriousness, my passion. You must be used to living on mountains—to seeing the wretched chatter of the day about politics and national selfishness *below* you. You must have become indifferent. You must never ask whether the truth is useful, whether it will be your downfall... A strength that prefers questions no one today has the courage to ask; courage for what is *forbidden*; being destined for the labyrinth. Experience gained in seven solitudes. New ears for new music. New eyes for the most distant things. A new conscience for truths that have so far stayed silent. *And* the will to manage your resources on a grand scale: to keep your strength, your *enthusiasm* together... Deep respect for yourself; love for yourself; complete freedom in dealing with yourself...

Well then! These alone are my readers, my true readers, my destined readers. What does the *rest* matter?—The rest is only humanity.—You must stand above humanity through strength, through *height* of soul—through contempt...

Friedrich Nietzsche

Sections 1–10



- ¹ —Let’s look each other in the face. We are Hyperboreans—we know well enough how far from everyone else 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 exit from a labyrinth that lasted whole thousands of years. Who *else* found it?—Modern people, perhaps?—“I don’t know which way to turn; I am everything that doesn’t know which way to turn,” the modern person sighs... We were sick from this modernity—from its rotten peace, its cowardly compromises, all the virtuous filth of its Yes and No. This tolerance and *open-heartedness*, which “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 anyone else. But for a long time we didn’t know *where to direct* our courage. We grew gloomy; people called us fatalists. *Our* fate was fullness, tension, a buildup of forces. We thirsted for lightning and action. Nothing was further from us than the happiness of weaklings, than “resignation”... A thunderstorm was in our air. Our very nature grew dark—*because we had no path*. The formula for our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a *goal*...
- ² What is good?—Everything that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in a person.

What is bad?—Everything that comes from weakness.

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

Not contentment, but more power; *not* peace as such, but war; *not* virtue, but ability (virtue in the Renaissance style, *excellence*, virtue free of moralizing).

The weak and the failures should perish: the first principle of *our* love of humanity. And they should even be helped to do it.

What is more harmful than any vice?—Acting out of pity for all the failures and the weak—Christianity...

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

This more valuable type has appeared often enough already. But it has appeared as a lucky accident, an exception, never as something *intended*. In fact, *this* type has been feared more than any other. Until now it has been almost *the* thing to fear. That fear led people to want, breed, and *achieve* the opposite type: the domestic animal, the herd animal, the sick human animal—the Christian...

- 4 Humanity is *not* developing into something better or stronger or higher in the way people now believe. “Progress” is just a modern idea, which means a false idea. In *value*, today’s European is far below the European of the Renaissance. Further development is simply *not* necessarily a rise, an increase, a strengthening.

In another sense, individual cases keep turning out well in very different parts of the earth and in very different cultures. In these cases a *higher* type really does appear: something that is a kind of superhuman being compared with humanity as a whole. Such lucky cases of great success have always been possible and perhaps always will be. Under certain conditions, even whole families, tribes, and peoples can be such a *success*.

⁵ We should not dress Christianity up and make it look pretty. It has fought a *war to the death* against this *higher* human type. It has outlawed all this type's basic instincts. From these instincts it has distilled evil and the evil person—the strong person as the standard example of someone wicked, the “rejected person.” Christianity has sided with everything weak, low, and failed. It has made an ideal out of *opposition* to the instincts that preserve strong life. It has corrupted the reason of even people with the strongest minds by teaching them to see the highest intellectual values as sinful, misleading, as *temptations*. The most pitiful example is Pascal's corruption. He believed that original sin had corrupted his reason, when only his Christianity had corrupted it!—

⁶ A painful, horrifying sight has opened up before me: I pulled back the curtain on human *corruption*. In my mouth, at least, this word is safe from one suspicion: that it contains a moral accusation against humanity. It is meant—I want to stress this again—*without moralizing*. So much so that I feel this corruption most strongly precisely where people have most consciously aimed at “virtue,” at “divinity.” By corruption, as you will already have guessed, I mean *decadence*. My claim is that all the values in which humanity now sums up what it most desires 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 I may have to tell that history—would almost also explain *why* humanity is so corrupt. I regard life itself as an instinct for growth, for endurance, for gathering strength, for *power*. Where the will to power is *missing*, there is decline. My claim 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 works against the feelings that strengthen us and heighten our sense of being alive: it depresses us. We lose strength when we feel pity. Pity increases and multiplies the loss of strength that suffering already brings to life on its own. Pity makes suffering itself contagious. In some circumstances it can produce a total loss of life and vital energy

absurdly out of proportion to the size of its cause—the case of the Nazarene’s death. That is the first point of view, but there is a more important one. Suppose we measure pity by the value of the reactions it usually produces. Then its life-threatening character appears in a much clearer light. On the whole, pity works against the law of development, which is the law of *selection*. It preserves what is ripe for destruction. It fights on behalf of those disinherited and condemned by life. By the mass of failures of every kind that it *keeps* alive, it makes life itself look gloomy and questionable. People have dared to call pity a virtue—in every *noble* morality it counts as weakness. They have gone further, making it *the* virtue, the foundation and source of all virtues. But this was, of course—and we must always keep this in mind—from the standpoint of a nihilistic philosophy, a philosophy that wrote the *denial of life* on its banner. Schopenhauer was right about this: pity denies life and makes it *more deserving of denial*—pity is the *practice* of nihilism. To say it again: this depressing and contagious instinct works against the instincts aimed at preserving life and increasing its value. Both as a *multiplier* of misery and as a *preserver* of everything miserable, it is a chief tool for increasing *decadence*—pity persuades people to choose *nothingness*!... People don’t say “nothingness.” Instead they say “the beyond,” or “God,” or “the *true* life,” or nirvana, redemption, bliss... This innocent rhetoric from the realm of religious and moral peculiarities at once looks *much less innocent* when we understand *what* tendency is wrapping itself in a cloak of sublime words here: 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 sick and dangerous condition best treated with a purgative now and then. He understood tragedy as a purgative. From the standpoint of life’s instinct, we really should look for a way to puncture such a sick and dangerous buildup of pity as the case of Schopenhauer represents—and, unfortunately, so does our whole literary and artistic *decadence*, from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoy to Wagner—so that it *bursts*... Nothing in our unhealthy modern world is unhealthier than Christian pity. *To be a doctor here*, to be ruthless *here*, to wield the knife *here*—that is *our* business, that is *our* kind of love for humanity, that is what makes *us* philosophers, us Hyperboreans!—

- ⁸ We need to say *whom* we see as our opposite—the theologians and everything with theologians’ blood in its body—our whole philosophy... You must have seen this disaster up close. Better still, you must have experienced it *yourself*, must have almost perished from it, to stop taking anything lightly here. (To my eyes, the freethinking of our natural scientists and physiologists is a joke. They lack passion in these matters, the *suffering* over them.) This poisoning reaches much further than people think. I have found the theologian’s instinctive arrogance everywhere people today feel themselves to be “idealists”—where they claim, on the strength of some higher ancestry, the right to look down on reality as something foreign to them... Just like the priest, the idealist has all the great concepts in his hands—and not just in his hands! With kindly contempt, he plays them off against “understanding,” “the senses,” “honors,” “good living,” “science.” He sees such things as *beneath* him, as harmful and seductive forces above which “the spirit” floats, purely on its own—as though humility, chastity, poverty, *holiness* in a word, had not done unspeakably more harm to life up to now than any horrors or vices... Pure spirit is pure falsehood... As long as the priest still counts as a *higher* kind of human being—this *denier*, slanderer, and poisoner of life *by profession*—there is no answer to the question: what *is* truth? Truth has already been turned upside down when the conscious advocate of nothingness and denial counts as the representative of “truth”...
- ⁹ I make war on this theologian’s instinct: I have found its traces everywhere. Anyone with theologians’ blood in his body takes a crooked, dishonest position toward everything from the start. The passionate attitude that develops from this calls itself *faith*: shutting your eyes to yourself once and for all, to avoid suffering at the sight of incurable falsehood. You turn this faulty way of seeing everything into your own morality, virtue, holiness. You attach a good conscience to seeing *falsely*. Once you have made your own outlook sacred with the names “God,” “redemption,” “eternity,” you demand that no *other* outlook be allowed any value. Wherever I dug, I uncovered the theologian’s instinct. It is the most widespread form of falsehood on earth, the truly *underground* form. What a theologian feels to be true *must* be false. That almost gives us a test for

truth. His deepest instinct of self-preservation forbids reality to be honored on any point, or even allowed a word. Wherever the theologian's influence reaches, *value judgments* are turned upside down, and the concepts "true" and "false" are necessarily reversed. What harms life most is called "true" here. What lifts it, strengthens it, affirms it, justifies it, and makes it triumph is called "false"... When theologians reach for power through the "conscience" of rulers (*or* of peoples), let us not doubt *what* is really happening each time: the will to the end, the *nihilistic* will, wants power...

- 10 Germans understand at once when I say that philosophy is corrupted by theologians' blood. The Protestant pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy; Protestantism itself is its *original sin*. Definition of Protestantism: paralysis of one side of Christianity—and of reason... You only have to say "Tübingen Seminary" to understand *what* German philosophy really is—a *sneaky* theology... The Swabians are Germany's best liars. They lie innocently... Why did rejoicing sweep through the German scholarly world when *Kant* appeared—a world in which three quarters were sons of pastors and teachers? Why the German conviction, still echoed today, that Kant marked a turn for the *better*? The theologian's instinct in the German scholar guessed *what* was now possible again... A back way to the old ideal stood open. Thanks to a sly, clever skepticism, the idea of the "*true* world," the idea of morality as the essence of the world—the two most malignant errors there are!—could once again, if not be proved, at least no longer be *refuted*... Reason, the *authority* of reason, does not reach that far... Reality had been turned into "mere appearance." A completely *fabricated* world, the world of true being, had been made into reality... Kant's success is only a theologian's success. Like Luther, like Leibniz, Kant was one more brake on German honesty, which has trouble keeping a steady rhythm anyway—

Sections 11–20



- ¹¹ One more word against Kant as a *moralist*. A virtue must be *our* invention, *our* most personal defense and most personal need. In any other sense it is only a danger. What is not a condition of our life *harms* it. A virtue practiced merely out of respect for the idea of “virtue,” as Kant wanted, is harmful. “Virtue,” “duty,” the “good in itself,” the good that is impersonal and valid for everyone—these are fantasies that express decline, life’s final loss of strength, the Chinese mentality of Königsberg. The deepest laws of preservation and growth command the opposite: everyone must invent *their own* virtue, *their own* categorical imperative. A people perishes when it confuses *its own* duty with the idea of duty in general. Nothing ruins us more deeply, more inwardly, than any “impersonal” duty, any sacrifice to the Moloch of abstraction.—How could people fail to feel that Kant’s categorical imperative was *a danger to life!*... Only the theologian’s instinct protected it!—An action forced on us by life’s instinct proves itself a *right* action through pleasure. But that nihilist with Christian dogma in his guts saw pleasure as an *objection!*... What destroys us faster than working, thinking, and feeling without an 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 was *Goethe’s* contemporary! This disastrous spider passed for the *German* philosopher—and still does!... I am careful not to say what I think of the

Germans... Didn't Kant see the French Revolution as the transition from the inorganic form of the state to the *organic*? Didn't he ask himself whether there was an event that could only be explained by a moral disposition in humanity, so that it *proved*, once and for all, "humanity's tendency toward the good"? Kant's answer: "That is the Revolution." An instinct that gets everything wrong, *opposition to nature* as an instinct, German *decadence* as philosophy—*that is Kant!*—

12 I make an exception for a few skeptics, the decent type in the history of philosophy. But the rest do not know the first requirements of intellectual honesty. All these great visionaries and wondrous creatures behave like little women. They already take "beautiful feelings" for arguments, the "swelling chest" for the bellows of divinity, conviction for a *test* of truth. Most recently, Kant, in his "German" innocence, even tried to make this form of corruption, this lack of intellectual conscience, scientific under the name "practical reason." He invented a special reason for the case in which we need not bother with reason: when morality, when the lofty demand "you must," speaks up. Consider that among almost all peoples the philosopher is only a further development of the priestly type. Then this inheritance from the priest—*paying oneself with counterfeit money*—is no longer surprising. When you have holy tasks—for example, to improve, save, redeem people—when you carry divinity in your breast and are the mouthpiece for commands from beyond, such a mission already places you outside all merely rational judgments. Such a task has already sanctified *you yourself*, already made you a type of a higher order!... What does a priest care about *science*! He stands too high for it!—And until now the priest has *ruled*!—He *determined* the concepts "true" and "untrue"!...

13 Let's not underestimate this: *we ourselves*, we free spirits, are already a "revaluation of all values," a declaration of war and victory *in the flesh* against all the old ideas of "true" and "untrue." The most valuable insights are found last. But the most valuable insights are *methods*. *All* the methods, *all* the basic assumptions of our present scientific approach faced the deepest contempt for thousands of years. Because of them, you were shut out of the company of "respectable" peo-

ple. You were considered an “enemy of God,” someone who despised truth, someone “possessed.” With a scientific cast of mind, you were a Chandala... We had the whole passionate attitude of humanity against us—its idea of what truth *should be*, of what serving truth *should be*. Until now, every “you must” has been directed *against* us... Our objects of study, our practices, our quiet, cautious, distrustful way—all of this seemed completely unworthy and contemptible to humanity.—In the end, it would be fair enough to ask whether an *aesthetic* taste was really what kept humanity blind for so long. It demanded a *visually striking* effect from truth. It likewise demanded that the person seeking knowledge make a strong impression on the senses. Our *modesty* offended its taste longest of all... Oh, how they sensed that, those turkeys of God—

- ¹⁴ We have learned to think differently. We have become more modest in every respect. We no longer trace humanity back to “spirit,” to “divinity.” We have put humans back among the animals. We regard the human being as the strongest animal because it is the most cunning: its intellect is a result of this. On the other hand, we resist a vanity that wants to speak up here again, as though humanity had been the great hidden purpose of animal development. Humanity is certainly not the crown of creation. Every creature stands beside it at the same level of perfection... And in saying that, we still say too much. Relatively speaking, the human being is the animal that has turned out worst, the sickliest, the one that has strayed most dangerously from its instincts—though, for all that, also the *most interesting*!—As for animals, Descartes was the first to dare, with admirable boldness, to think of the animal as a *machine*. Our whole physiology works to prove this proposition. Logically, we do not set humans apart either, as Descartes still did. Today we understand human beings only to the extent that we understand them as machines. People once gave human beings “free will” as their endowment from a higher order. Today we have taken away even their will, in the sense that it must no longer be understood as a capacity. The old word “will” only serves to name a combined result, a kind of individual reaction that necessarily follows a mass of stimuli, some conflicting, some agreeing. The will no longer “acts,” no longer “moves” any-

thing... People once saw human consciousness, “spirit,” as proof of humanity’s higher origin, its divinity. To *perfect* a human being, they recommended drawing the senses inward like a turtle, stopping contact with earthly things, casting off the mortal shell. Then the essential part remained: “pure spirit.” Here too we have thought better of it. We see conscious awareness, “spirit,” as precisely a symptom of the organism’s relative imperfection: an attempt, a fumbling search, a mistake, hard work that uses up an unnecessarily large amount of nervous energy. We deny that anything can be done perfectly as long as it is still 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 “un-free will”); nothing but imaginary *effects* (“sin,” “redemption,” “grace,” “punishment,” “forgiveness of sin”). Dealings between imaginary *beings* (“God,” “spirits,” “souls”); an imaginary *natural science* (human-centered; completely lacking the concept of natural causes); an imaginary *psychology* (nothing but misunderstandings of oneself, interpretations of pleasant or unpleasant general feelings—for example, states of the *sympathetic nerve*—using the symbolic language of religious and moral peculiarities: “repentance,” “pangs of conscience,” “temptation by the devil,” “God’s nearness”); an imaginary *theory of purposes* (“the kingdom of God,” “the Last Judgment,” “eternal life”).—This purely *fictional world* differs from the dream world greatly to its own disadvantage: dreams *reflect* reality, while this world falsifies, devalues, and denies reality. Once the concept “nature” had been invented as the opposite of “God,” “natural” had to become the word for “reprehensible.” This entire fictional world is rooted in *hatred* of the natural—of reality! It expresses a deep uneasiness with what is real... *But that explains everything.* Who alone has reasons to *lie their way out* of reality? Those who *suffer* from it. But to suffer from reality means

being a reality that has *gone wrong*... The *cause* of a fictional morality and religion is an excess of unpleasant feelings over pleasant ones. But such an excess gives us the formula for *decadence*...

- 16 A critique of the *Christian idea of God* forces us to the same conclusion.—A people that still believes in itself still has its own god. In him it honors the conditions that keep it on top, its virtues. It projects its delight in itself, its feeling of power, into a being it can thank for them. Those who are rich want to give something away. A proud people needs a god so it can *sacrifice*... Under these conditions, religion is a form of gratitude. People are grateful for themselves: that is why they need a god.—Such a god must be able to help and to harm, to be a friend and an enemy. People admire him in good things as in bad. The *unnatural* castration of a god into a god of goodness alone would be completely undesirable here. The evil god is needed as much as the good one. After all, people do not exactly owe their own existence to tolerance, to goodwill 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 delightful *passions* of victory and destruction? People would not understand such a god. What would they want him for?—Of course, when a people is perishing, when it feels its faith in the future, its hope of freedom, fading away for good, when it becomes conscious of submission as the most useful thing and the virtues of the submissive as the conditions of survival, then its god *must* change too. He now becomes a cringing sneak, timid, modest. He recommends “peace of soul,” no more hatred, forbearance, “love” even for friend and enemy. He moralizes constantly. He crawls into the den of every private virtue, becomes a god for everyone, becomes a private citizen, becomes a cosmopolitan... Once he represented a people, a people’s strength, everything aggressive and hungry for power in a people’s soul. Now he is only the good god... In fact, gods have no other alternative: *either* they are the will to power—and as long as they are, they will be gods of a people—*or* they are an inability to attain power—and then they necessarily become *good*...

17 Wherever the will to power declines in any form, there is always a physiological decline as well, a *decadence*. The deity of *decadence*, with its most masculine virtues and drives cut away, now necessarily becomes the god of the physically weakened, the weak. They do *not* call themselves the weak. They call themselves “the good”... You can understand, without another hint, at what moments in history the fiction of two opposing gods, a good god and an evil god first becomes possible. The same instinct that makes the conquered degrade their god to “goodness in itself” makes them erase the good qualities from their conquerors’ god. They take revenge on their masters by *turning their god into a devil*.—The *good* god, just like the devil: both are offspring of *decadence*.—How can people today still give in so far to the simplemindedness of Christian theologians that they join them in declaring that the development of the idea of God from the “God of Israel,” from a people’s god, to the Christian God, the embodiment of everything good, is *progress*?—But even Renan does it. As though Renan had a right to be simpleminded! The opposite is obvious. When the conditions of *rising* life, when everything strong, brave, commanding, proud is removed from the idea of God; when he sinks step by step into the symbol of a staff for the weary, a rescue anchor for all who are drowning; when he becomes the poor people’s god, the sinners’ god, the sick people’s god *above all*, and “savior,” “redeemer” is, so to speak, the only divine attribute *left*: *what* does such a transformation tell us? Such a *reduction* of the divine?—Of course, “the kingdom of God” has grown larger as a result. Once he had only his own people, his “chosen” people. Since then, just like his people themselves, he went abroad, went wandering. After that he never stayed still anywhere, until at last he became at home everywhere, the great cosmopolitan—until he got “the great number” and half the earth on his side. But despite this, the god of “the great number,” the democrat among gods, did not become a proud pagan god. He remained a Jew, remained the god of nooks, the god of all the dark corners and places, of all the unhealthy quarters of the whole world!... His world empire is still an underworld empire, a hospital, a *basement* empire, a ghetto empire... And he himself, so pale, so weak, so *decadent*... Even the palest of the pale came to rule over him, the gentlemen metaphysicians, the albinos of con-

cepts. They spun their webs around him until, hypnotized by their movements, he himself became a spider, a metaphysician himself. Now he spun the world out of himself again—in *Spinoza's guise*. Now he transformed himself into something thinner and paler all the time, became an “ideal,” became “pure spirit,” became “the *absolute*,” became “the thing in itself”... *The decline of a god*: God became “the thing in itself”...

- 18 The Christian idea of God—God as god of the sick, God as spider, God as spirit—is one of the most corrupt ideas of God ever reached on earth. It may even mark the low point in the downward development of the type called god. God degenerated into the *opposite of life*, instead of being its glorification and eternal *Yes!* In God, war declared on life, on nature, on the will to life! God the formula for every slander of “this world,” for every lie about “the beyond”! In God, nothingness made divine, the will to nothingness declared holy!...
- 19 The fact that the strong races of northern Europe have not cast off the Christian God certainly does no credit to their religious gifts—not to mention their taste. They *should* have finished off such a sickly, senile offspring of *decadence*. But a curse lies on them for not having finished him off. They have taken sickness, old age, contradiction into all their instincts. Since then they have *created* no more gods! Almost two thousand years and not one single new god! Instead, still standing as though by right, as though the *final word* and *utmost limit* of humanity's god-forming power, its *creative spirit*, this pitiful God of Christian monotonous monotheism! This hybrid product of decay, made of zero, concept, and contradiction, in which all instincts of *decadence*, all the soul's cowardice and weariness, are given approval!—
- 20 In condemning Christianity, I would not want to have wronged a related religion that even surpasses it in number of followers: *Buddhism*. The two belong together as nihilistic religions—they are religions of *decadence*—yet they differ from each other in the most remarkable ways. The critic of Christianity is deeply grateful to the Indian scholars for making it possible to *compare* them now.—Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity. It has

inherited an objective, 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 *positivist* religion that 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 already left behind the self-deception of moral concepts—this deeply separates it from Christianity. In my language, it stands *beyond* good and evil.—The *two* physiological facts on which it rests and which it addresses are: *first*, an excessive sensitivity to stimuli, expressed as a finely developed capacity for pain; *second*, excessive intellectualization, a life spent too long among concepts and logical procedures, which has damaged the personal instinct to the benefit of the “impersonal.” (Both are conditions that at least some of my readers, the “objective” ones, will know from experience, as I do myself.) These physiological conditions have produced a *depression*. Buddha tackles it with measures for health. Against it he prescribes life outdoors, a wandering life; moderation and care in choosing food; caution toward all liquor; caution also toward all emotions that stir up bile or heat the blood; *no worries*, either for yourself or for others. He calls for thoughts that either calm or cheer us. He invents ways of breaking the habit of the others. He understands goodness, being kind, as promoting health. *Prayer* is ruled out, as is *asceticism*. No categorical imperative, no *compulsion* at all, not even within the monastic community—you can leave again. All these would be ways to heighten that excessive sensitivity. For the same reason, he does not call for a struggle against people who think differently. His teaching opposes nothing more than the feeling of revenge, aversion, *resentment*. (“Hostility does not end through hostility”: the moving refrain of all Buddhism...) And rightly so: these very emotions would be completely *unhealthy* in view of its chief aim of regulating how we live. He finds intellectual exhaustion, expressed in an excessive “objectivity”—that is, weakened individual interest, a loss of personal weight and importance, of “egoism.” He fights it by strictly bringing even the most intellectual interests back to the *person*. In Buddha’s teaching, egoism becomes a duty. “One thing is needed,” “how do *you* get free of suffering?”—these regulate and limit the intel-

lectual diet. (We may perhaps recall that Athenian who likewise made war on pure “scientific thinking”: Socrates, who made personal egoism a moral principle even in the realm of problems.)

Sections 21–30



²¹ Buddhism requires a very mild climate, great gentleness and tolerance in social customs, *no militarism*, and a movement rooted in the upper, even educated, classes. People seek cheerfulness, peace, and freedom from desire as their highest goal, and they *reach* it. Buddhism is not a religion in which people merely aspire to perfection: perfection is the normal state.—

In Christianity, the instincts of the subjugated and oppressed come to the front: it is the lowest classes that seek their salvation in it. Here, analyzing the finer points of sin, self-criticism, and interrogating one's conscience serve as an *occupation*, as a remedy for boredom. Here, intense feeling toward a *powerful being* called "God" is constantly kept alive through prayer. Here, the highest state is considered unattainable, a gift, "grace." Here, too, openness is absent; hiding places and dark rooms are Christian. Here, the body is despised and hygiene rejected as sensuality; the church even resists cleanliness itself. (The first Christian measure after the expulsion of the Moors was to close the public baths, of which Cordova alone had 270.) A certain taste for cruelty to oneself and others is Christian; so are hatred of those who think differently and the will to persecute. Gloomy and agitating ideas take the lead; the most sought-after states, given the most exalted names, are epileptic in character. The diet is chosen to encourage unhealthy symptoms and overstimulate the nerves. Deadly hostility toward the masters of the earth, toward the "noble," is Christian—and

so is a concealed, secret rivalry with them. (They are allowed to keep the “body”; Christians want *only* the “soul”...) Hatred of the *intellect*, of pride, courage, freedom, and intellectual *license* is Christian; hatred of the *senses*, of the pleasures of the *senses*, of pleasure in general, is Christian...

²² When Christianity left its original ground—the lowest classes, the *underworld* of the ancient world—and went looking for power among barbarian peoples, it no longer dealt with *tired* people. It dealt with people who were inwardly savage and tearing themselves apart—with strong people, but badly formed ones. Their dissatisfaction with themselves, their suffering from themselves, is *not*, as it is among Buddhists, excessive sensitivity and susceptibility to pain. On the contrary, it is an overpowering desire to hurt, to release inner tension in hostile acts and ideas. Christianity needed *barbaric* concepts and values to master barbarians: the sacrifice of the firstborn, drinking blood at communion, contempt for the intellect and culture; torture in every form, physical and nonphysical; the great pomp of worship. Buddhism is a religion for people at a *late* stage of development, for kind, gentle races that have become excessively intellectual and feel pain too easily. (Europe is still far from ready for it.) It leads them back to peace and cheerfulness, to a restricted intellectual diet, to a certain physical toughness. Christianity wants to master *predatory animals*; its method is to make them *sick*—weakening is the Christian prescription for *taming*, for “civilization.” Buddhism is a religion for civilization’s end and exhaustion; Christianity does not even find civilization already there—it establishes it under certain circumstances.

²³ Buddhism, to repeat, is a hundred times cooler, more truthful, more objective. It no longer needs to make its suffering, its sensitivity to pain, *respectable* by interpreting it as sin—it simply says what it thinks: “I suffer.” To the barbarian, on the other hand, suffering is not respectable in itself: he first needs an interpretation before he can admit to himself *that* he suffers. His instinct points him instead toward denying suffering, toward silently enduring it. Here the word “devil” was a blessing: there was an overpowering and terrible enemy—you did not need to feel ashamed of suffering at the hands of such an enemy.—

Christianity has some subtleties at its foundation that belong to the East. Above all, it knows that whether something is true is quite unimportant in itself, but of the greatest importance *insofar as* it is believed to be true. Truth and the *belief* that something is true: two worlds of interest far apart, almost *opposite* worlds—you reach them by fundamentally different routes. Knowing this almost *makes* someone a wise man in the East: this is how the Brahmins understand it, how Plato understands it, how every student of secret wisdom understands it. If, for example, there is *happiness* in believing yourself freed from sin, this does *not* require you to be sinful, but to *feel* sinful. But if *belief* is what is needed above all, reason, knowledge, and inquiry must be discredited: the road to truth becomes the *forbidden* road.—A strong *hope* is a far greater *stimulus* to life than any single happiness that actually comes about. Sufferers must be kept going by a hope that no reality can contradict—a hope that will not be *disposed of* by fulfillment: a hope for another world. (Precisely because it could keep the unhappy 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 forward for women’s ardor, and a Mary for men’s. This assumes that Christianity wants to gain control in a place where cults of Aphrodite or Adonis have already shaped the *idea* of worship. The demand for *chastity* makes the religious instinct more intense and inward—it makes worship warmer, more ecstatic, more soulful.—Love is the state in which people see things most as they are *not*. The power of illusion is at its height here, as are the powers of sweetening and *glorifying*. In love, people bear more than usual; they put up with everything. What was needed was to invent a religion in which people could love: that takes them past the worst in life—they no longer even see it.—So much for the three Christian virtues, faith, love, and hope: I call them the three Christian *clever strategies*.—Buddhism comes too late, is too committed to facts, to be clever in this way anymore.—

²⁴ Here I am only touching on the problem of Christianity's *origin*. The *first* principle for solving it is this: Christianity can be understood only from the ground it grew from—it is *not* a movement against the Jewish instinct, but that instinct following its own consequences, one further conclusion in its terrifying logic. In the Redeemer's formula: "Salvation comes from the Jews."—The *second* principle is this: the psychological type of the Galilean is still recognizable, but only in its complete degeneration—which both mutilated it and overloaded it with foreign traits—could it serve the purpose it was used for: as the type of a *redeemer* of humanity.—

The Jews are the most remarkable people in world history because, faced with the question of existence or nonexistence, they chose existence *at any price*, with a perfectly uncanny awareness. That price was the radical *falsification* of all nature, everything natural, all reality, the whole inner world just as much as the outer. They set themselves apart *from* all the conditions under which a people had previously been able, been *allowed*, to live. They made themselves into the opposite of *natural* conditions—one after another, they turned religion, worship, morality, history, and psychology irreparably into the *opposites of their natural values*. We meet the same phenomenon once more, on an indescribably larger scale, though only as a copy: compared with the "people of saints," the Christian church has no claim whatever to originality. This also makes the Jews 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 gave the first psychological account of the opposition between a *noble* morality and a morality of *resentment*, the latter arising *from saying no* to the former: but that is Jewish-Christian morality through and through. In order to say no to everything that represents life's *upward* movement, to flourishing, power, beauty, self-affirmation on earth, the instinct of *resentment*, raised here to genius, had to invent an *other* world. Viewed from there, that *affirmation of life* appeared as evil, as something inherently reprehensible. Considered psychologically, the Jewish people are a people of the toughest vitality. Put into impossible conditions, they voluntarily side

with all the instincts of *decadence*, out of the deepest cunning of self-preservation—*not* because those instincts rule them, but because they sensed in them a power with which they could assert themselves *against* “the world.” The Jews are the opposite of all *decadents*: they had to *act the part* of decadents convincingly, and with an *unsurpassable degree* of acting genius they knew how to put themselves at the head of all movements of *decadence*—as the Christianity of *Paul*—in order to create from them something stronger than any party that *says yes* to life. For the kind of person seeking power in Judaism and Christianity, a *priestly* kind, *decadence* is only a *means*: this kind of person has a vital interest in making humanity *sick* and twisting the concepts “good” and “evil,” “true” and “false,” into meanings that endanger life and slander the world.—

- 25 The history of Israel is priceless as a typical history of all the ways natural values are *stripped of their nature*: I will point out five facts from it. Originally, especially during the monarchy, Israel too stood in the *right* relationship to everything—that is, the natural one. Its Yahweh expressed its consciousness of power, its pleasure in itself, its hope in itself. From him people expected victory and well-being; with him they trusted nature to provide what the people needed—above all, rain. Yahweh is Israel’s God and *therefore* the God of justice: this is the logic of every people that has power and a good conscience about it. Festival worship expresses these two sides of a people’s self-affirmation: gratitude for the great turns of fate through which it rose to the top, and gratitude for the yearly cycle and every success in raising livestock and farming.—This state of affairs remained the ideal long after it had sadly come to an end: anarchy within, the Assyrians outside. But the people clung to that vision of a king who is a good soldier and a strict judge as the most desirable thing of all. Above all, the typical prophet—that is, critic and satirist of the present moment—Isaiah clung to it.—But every hope went 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 idea of him—they *stripped it of its natural character*: this was the price of holding 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 with conditions attached... The idea of him becomes a tool in the hands of priestly agitators, who now interpret every piece of good fortune as a reward, every misfortune as punishment for disobeying God, for "sin": that most dishonest method of interpretation, an alleged "moral world order," which turns the natural concepts of "cause" and "effect" upside down once and for all. Once reward and punishment have been used to remove natural causality from the world, an *unnatural* causality is needed: all the remaining unnaturalness then follows. A God who *demand*s—in place of a God who helps, who finds solutions, who is basically the word for every happy inspiration of courage and self-confidence... Morality is no longer the expression of a people's conditions for life and growth, no longer its deepest instinct for life. Instead it has become abstract, has become the opposite of life—morality as a systematic corruption of the imagination, as an "evil eye" for everything. *What* is Jewish morality, *what* is Christian morality? Chance robbed of its innocence; misfortune dirtied by the concept of "sin"; well-being treated as a danger, a "temptation"; physical distress poisoned by the gnawing worm of conscience...

- ²⁶ The concept of God falsified; the concept of morality falsified—the Jewish priesthood did not stop there. The whole *history* of Israel was unusable: away with it!—These priests accomplished that marvel of falsification whose documentary evidence makes up a good part of the Bible: with unmatched contempt for every tradition, every historical reality, they *translated their own people's past into religious terms*. That is, they made it into a stupid mechanism of salvation, of guilt before Yahweh and punishment, of devotion to Yahweh and reward. We would feel this most shameful act of historical falsification much more painfully if thousands of years of *church* interpretations of history had not made us almost numb to the demands of honesty *in historical matters*. And the philosophers supported the church: the *lie* of the "moral world order" runs through the whole development even of modern philosophy. What does "moral world order" mean? That God's will about what people should do and leave undone is fixed once and for all; that the value of a people or an individual

is measured by how much or how little they obey God's will; that in the fate of a people or an individual, God's will proves itself to be *in command*—that is, punishing and rewarding according to the degree of obedience.—The *reality*, rather than this pitiful lie, is this: a parasitic kind of person who thrives only at the expense of all healthy forms of life, the *priest*, misuses God's name. 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 achieved or maintained “the will of God.” With cold-blooded cynicism, he judges peoples, periods, and individuals by whether they helped or resisted the priest's supremacy. Watch them at work: in the hands of the Jewish priests, the *great* period in Israel's history became a period of decline. The exile, the long misfortune, turned into an *eternal punishment* for that great period—a time when the priest was still nothing. As needed, they made the powerful, *very free* figures of Israel's history into miserable crawlers and hypocritical bigots, or into the “godless.” They reduced the psychology of every great event to the idiot's formula, “obedience *or* disobedience to God.”—One step further: the “will of God”—that is, the conditions for maintaining 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. It is made public with all the priestly pomp, with days of repentance and cries of grief over the long years of “sin.” The “will of God” had long been established: all the trouble comes from having become estranged from “holy scripture”... The “will of God” had already been revealed to Moses... What had happened? With strictness and pedantry, down to the taxes large and small that had to be paid to him—not forgetting the tastiest cuts of meat, since the priest is a beefsteak-gobbler—the priest had formulated once and for all *what he wants*, “what the will of God is”... From now on, everything in life is arranged so that the priest is *indispensable everywhere*. At every natural event in life—birth, marriage, sickness, death, not to mention “sacrifice” (the meal)—the holy parasite appears to *strip it of its natural character*: in his language, to “sanctify” it... For this must be understood: every *natural* custom, every natural institution—the state, the legal system, marriage, care for the sick and poor—every demand prompted by the

instinct for life, in short, everything that has value *in itself*, is made fundamentally worthless, *opposed* to value, by the parasitism of the priest (or the “moral world order”). It then needs authorization—a power that *confers value* is needed, a power that denies the natural element in it and only by doing so *creates* a value... The priest devalues nature, *desecrates* it: this is the price of his very existence.—Disobedience to God—that is, to the priest, to “the law”—is now given the name “sin.” The means of becoming “reconciled with God” are, naturally enough, means that guarantee submission to the priest still more thoroughly: the priest alone “redeems”... Considered psychologically, “sins” become indispensable in every society organized by priests: they are the real levers of power. The priest *lives* on sins; he needs people to “sin”... Supreme principle: “God forgives whoever repents”—in plain language, *whoever submits to the priest*.—

- ²⁷ On ground so *false*, where everything natural, every natural value, every *reality* had the deepest instincts of the ruling class against it, *Christianity* grew up—a form of deadly hostility toward reality that has never been surpassed. The “holy people” had kept only priestly values, only priestly words, for everything. With a consistency of reasoning that can inspire fear, it had cut itself off from every other power that still existed on earth, labeling it “unholy,” “world,” “sin.” This people produced a final formula for its instinct, logical to the point of self-denial: as *Christianity*, it denied even the last form of reality, the “holy people,” the “chosen people,” *Jewish* reality itself. This is a case of the first importance: the little rebellious movement baptized in the name of Jesus of Nazareth is the Jewish instinct *once again*. In other words, it is 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 *denies* the church...

I cannot see what the uprising that Jesus was understood—or *misunderstood*—to have started was directed against, unless it was an uprising against the Jewish church—“church” taken in exactly 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 social hierarchy—*not* against its corruption, but against caste, privilege, order, formula. It was *disbelief* in “higher people,” a *no* spoken against everything priestly and theological. But the hierarchy that was called into question, even if only for a moment, was the structure on stilts that kept the Jewish people in existence at all, surrounded by “water”—the *last*, painfully won possibility of survival, the remnant of its separate political existence. An attack on it was an attack on the people’s deepest instinct, on the toughest national will to live that has ever existed on earth. This holy anarchist called the common people, the outcasts and “sinners,” the *Chandala* within Judaism, to oppose the established order—in language that, if the Gospels could be trusted, would send someone to Siberia even today. He was a political criminal, insofar as political criminals were possible in an *absurdly apolitical* community. This brought him to the cross: the inscription on the cross proves it. He died for *his own* guilt—there is no reason whatever to say, however often it has been claimed, that he died for the guilt of others.—

28 It is an entirely different question whether he was conscious of any such opposition at all—whether he was not simply *perceived* as that opposition. And only here do I touch on the problem of the *psychology of the Redeemer*.—I admit that I find few books as difficult to read as the Gospels. These difficulties are different from those whose demonstration gave the scholarly curiosity of the German mind one of its most unforgettable triumphs. The time is long past when I too, like every young scholar, savored the work of the incomparable Strauss with the shrewd slowness of a highly trained philologist. I was twenty then; now I am too serious for that. What do the contradictions of “tradition” matter to me? How can legends of saints be called “tradition” at all! Stories about saints are the most dubious literature there is. Applying the scientific method to them, *when no other documents exist*, seems doomed from the start to me—mere scholarly idleness...

29 What concerns *me* is the psychological type of the Redeemer. It *could* be contained in the Gospels despite the Gospels, however mutilated or overloaded with foreign traits—just as the type of Francis of Assisi is preserved in his leg-

ends despite his legends. *Not* the truth about what he did, what he said, how he actually died, but the question: *can* his type still be imagined at all; has it been “passed down”?—The attempts I know to read even the *history* of a “soul” out of the Gospels seem to me evidence of a disgusting psychological carelessness. Mr. Renan, this buffoon *in psychology*, introduced the two most *inappropriate* concepts possible into his explanation of the type of Jesus: *genius* and *hero* (“*hero*”). But if anything is contrary to the Gospels, it is the concept of the hero. Here, it is precisely the opposite of all struggle, of any sense of being in combat, that has become instinct. Here, the inability to resist becomes morality (“Do not resist evil!”—the deepest saying in the Gospels, their key in a certain sense); bliss is found in peace, in gentleness, in *not being able* to be an enemy. What does “good news” 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 restriction or exclusion, without distance. Everyone is a child of God—Jesus claims absolutely nothing for himself alone—and as a child of God everyone is equal to everyone else... To make a *hero* out of Jesus!—And what a misunderstanding the word “genius” is! Our whole concept, our cultural concept of “intellect,” has no meaning at all in the world Jesus lives in. Speaking with a physiologist’s precision, an entirely different word would be more appropriate here: the word idiot. We know of a condition in which the *sense of touch* is morbidly sensitive, recoiling from every touch, every contact with a solid object. Follow this physiological *disposition* through to its ultimate logic: an instinctive hatred of *every* reality, a flight into the “intangible,” the “incomprehensible”; an aversion to every formula, every concept of time and space, to everything fixed, to custom, institution, church; being at home in a world no kind of reality touches anymore, a merely “inner” world, a “true” world, an “eternal” world... “The kingdom of God *is within you*”...

- 30 *The instinctive hatred of reality*: the result of an extreme sensitivity to suffering and stimulation that no longer wants to be “touched” at all, because it feels every touch too deeply.

The instinctive exclusion of all aversion, all hostility, all emotional boundaries and distances: the result of an extreme sensitivity to suffering and stimulation that already feels every resistance, every need to resist, as unbearable *discomfort*—that is, as *harmful*, as something the instinct of self-preservation *warns against*. It knows bliss (pleasure) only in no longer resisting anything or anyone, neither misfortune nor evil—love as the only, the *last*, possibility of life...

These are the two *physiological realities* on which, and out of which, the doctrine of redemption grew. I call it a sublime further development of hedonism on a thoroughly morbid foundation. Its closest relative remains Epicureanism, the pagan doctrine of redemption, though with a large addition of Greek vitality and nervous energy. Epicurus, a *typical decadent*: I was the first to recognize him as such.—The fear of pain, even of the tiniest trace of pain—it *cannot* end in anything but a *religion of love*...

Sections 31–40



³¹ I have given my answer to the problem in advance. It rests on the assumption that the type of the Redeemer has survived for us only in a badly distorted form. This distortion is very likely in itself: for several reasons, such a type could not remain pure, whole, free of additions. Both the surroundings in which this strange figure moved and, still more, the history, the *fate*, of the first Christian community must have left their marks on him. That history retroactively added traits to the type that become understandable only in terms of war and the purposes of propaganda. That strange and sick world into which the Gospels introduce us—a world like something out of a Russian novel, where society's refuse, nervous disorders, and “childlike” idiocy seem to gather—must in any case have *coarsened* the type. The first disciples in particular had to translate a being floating entirely in symbols and intangibilities into their own crudity before they could understand anything of it at all. For them, the type only *existed* after it had been fitted 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, we must not underestimate the *distinctive feature* of all great veneration, especially sectarian veneration: it erases the original, often painfully strange traits and peculiarities of the being it venerates—it *does not even see them*. It is regrettable that

no Dostoevsky lived near this most interesting *decadent*: I mean someone who knew how to feel the moving attraction of such a mixture of the sublime, the sick, and the childlike.

One final point of view: as a type of *decadence*, this type *could* actually have been peculiarly complex and contradictory. Such a possibility cannot be ruled out altogether. Still, everything argues against it: in that case, the tradition itself would have to be remarkably faithful and objective—whereas we have reasons to assume the opposite. As things stand, there is a glaring contradiction between the preacher on mountains, lakes, and meadows, who seems like a Buddha on very un-Indian ground, and that fanatical attacker, that deadly enemy of theologians and priests, whom Renan's malice glorified as "*the great master of irony*." I myself have no doubt that the ample measure of bile—and even of *wit*—spilled over onto the type of the master only from the agitated state of Christian propaganda. We know well enough how readily all sectarians reshape their master into their own *defense*. When the first community needed a judging, quarrelsome, wrathful theologian with a malicious talent for splitting hairs, to use *against* theologians, it *created* its "God" to suit its needs. In the same way, it put into his mouth without hesitation those entirely unevangelical concepts that it could no longer do without: the "Second Coming," the "Last Judgment," every kind of expectation and promise tied to a future time.

- ³² To repeat, I resist reading a fanatic into the type of the Redeemer: the word *domineering*, which Renan uses, by itself *cancels out* the type. The "good news" is precisely that there are no more oppositions; the kingdom of heaven belongs to *children*. The faith speaking here is not a faith won through struggle—it is there, it is there from the beginning, it is something like a childlikeness that has retreated into the spiritual realm. The case of puberty delayed and left undeveloped in the organism as a result of degeneration is familiar at least to physiologists.—Such a faith does not rage, does not blame, does not defend itself: it does not bring "the sword"—it has no idea how it could ever divide people. It does not prove itself through miracles, through reward and promise, still less

“through scripture”: at every moment it is its own miracle, its own reward, its own proof, its own “kingdom of God.” This faith does not formulate itself either—it *lives*, it resists formulas. Of course, the accidents of surroundings, language, and previous education determine a certain range of concepts: early Christianity uses *only* Jewish-Semitic concepts. (The eating and drinking at communion belongs here, that concept which the church has so badly misused, as it has everything Jewish.)

But we must take care not to see more in this than a language of signs, a system of symbols, an opportunity for parables. For this anti-realist, the condition for being able to speak at all is precisely that no word be taken literally. Among Indians he would have used the concepts of Sankhya, among Chinese those of Lao-tzu—and would have felt no difference.—With some flexibility in the expression, Jesus could be called a “free spirit”—he cares nothing for anything fixed: the word *kills*, everything fixed *kills*. His concept, his *experience* of “life,” as he alone knows it, resists every kind of word, formula, law, faith, dogma. He speaks only of what is innermost: “life” or “truth” or “light” is his word for what is innermost. Everything else, all reality, all nature, language itself, has for him only the value of a sign, a parable.—There must be no mistake on this point, however great the temptation created by Christian—that is, *church*—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 ignorance* of the fact *that* anything of the kind exists. He has not even heard of *culture*; he has no need to fight it—he does not deny it... The same applies to the *state*, to the whole civil order and society, to *work*, to war—he has never had any reason to deny “the world”; he has never had an inkling of the church’s concept of “world”... *Denying* is precisely what is completely impossible for him.—Likewise, there is no dialectical argument, no 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 understand at all that other

teachings exist, *can* exist; it cannot even imagine an opposing judgment... Where it encounters one, it will grieve over “blindness” with the deepest fellow feeling—for it sees the “light”—but it will raise no objection...

- 33 The concepts of guilt and punishment are absent from the whole psychology of the “Gospel”; so is the concept of reward. “Sin,” every relationship of distance between God and humanity, is abolished—*that is precisely the “good news.”* Bliss is not promised, it is not tied to conditions: it is the *only* reality—the rest consists of signs for speaking about it...

The *consequence* of such a state expresses itself in a new *practice*, the truly evangelical practice. It is not a “faith” that distinguishes the Christian: the Christian acts, distinguishes himself by acting *differently*. He does not resist someone who treats him badly, either in words or in his heart. He makes no distinction between foreigners and natives, between Jews and non-Jews (“neighbor” actually means a fellow believer, a Jew). He gets angry with no one, looks down on no one. He neither appears in courts of law nor allows himself to be called on there (“do not swear an oath”). Under no circumstances does he divorce his wife, not even if her infidelity is proved.—At bottom, all this is *one* principle, all the 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 or rituals for dealing with God—not even prayer. He had done away with the whole Jewish doctrine of repentance and reconciliation; he knew that only the *practice* of life makes people feel “divine,” “blessed,” “evangelical,” at every moment a “child of God.” *Neither* “repentance” *nor* “prayer for forgiveness” is a path to God: *evangelical practice alone* leads to God; it actually *is* “God”!—What the Gospel *did away with* was the Judaism of the concepts “sin,” “forgiveness of sin,” “faith,” “redemption through faith”—the whole Jewish *church* doctrine was denied in the “good news.”

The deep instinct for how one must *live* to feel “in heaven,” to feel “eternal,” while with every other way of behaving one feels decidedly *not* “in heaven”: this alone is the psychological reality of “redemption.”—A new way of living, *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 “Son of Man” is not a concrete person belonging to history, something individual and unique, but an “eternal” actuality, a psychological symbol freed from the concept of time. The same applies again, and in the highest sense, to the *God* of this typical symbolist, to the “kingdom of God,” the “kingdom of heaven,” to being “children of God.” Nothing is more un-Christian than the *church’s crude notions* of a God as a *person*, of a “kingdom of God” that is *coming*, of a “kingdom of heaven” *in the beyond*, of a “Son of God,” the *second person* of the Trinity. All this is—forgive the expression—a *fist* in the eye of the Gospel—and what an eye! It is *cynicism on the scale of world history* in its mockery of the symbol... But it is obvious what is touched on by the signs “Father” and “Son”—not obvious to everyone, I admit: the word “Son” expresses *entry* into the feeling that all things are transfigured as a whole (bliss); the word “Father” expresses *this feeling itself*, the feeling of eternity, of perfection.—I am ashamed to recall what the church has made of this symbolism: hasn’t it placed an Amphitryon story at the threshold of Christian “faith”? And a dogma of the “immaculate conception” on top of it?... *But in doing so it has stained 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 not a bridge, not a 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 “good news”... The “kingdom of God” is not something to wait for; it has no yesterday and no day after tomorrow, it is not coming in “a thousand years”—it is an experience in a heart; it is everywhere, it is nowhere...

35 This “bringer of good news” died as he lived, as he *taught*—*not* to “redeem humanity,” but to show how to live. What he left humanity was his *practice*: his conduct before the judges, before those who arrested him, before his 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 invites it*... And he pleads, he suffers, he loves *with* those, *in* those, who do him harm. 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.” *Do not* defend yourself, *do not* grow angry, *do not* hold anyone responsible... But do not resist the evil person either—*love* him...

36 —Only we, we spirits who have *become free*, have what is needed to understand something that nineteen centuries have misunderstood—that honesty, become instinct and passion, which wages war on the “holy lie” even more than on any other lie... People were indescribably far from our loving and careful neutrality, from that discipline of the intellect that alone makes it possible to grasp such strange, such delicate things. With shameless selfishness, they always wanted only *their own* advantage from it; they built the *church* out of the opposite of the Gospel...

Anyone looking for signs that an ironic divinity has a hand in the great game of the world would find substantial support in the *enormous question mark* called Christianity. Humanity kneels before the opposite of what was the Gospel’s origin, meaning, and *justification*; in the concept of “church,” it has declared holy precisely what the “bringer of good news” felt was *beneath* him, *behind* him—one looks in vain for a greater form of *irony in world history*—

37 —Our age is proud of its historical sense: how could it convince itself of the nonsense that Christianity began with the *crude fable of a miracle worker and redeemer*, and that everything spiritual and symbolic developed only later? The reverse is true: the history of Christianity—from the death on the cross onward—is the history of an ever coarser, step-by-step misunderstanding of an *original* symbolism. Every time Christianity spread to still broader, still cruder masses,

who increasingly lacked the conditions from which it was born, it became more necessary to *vulgarize* Christianity, to *barbarize* it. It swallowed the teachings and rites of all the *underground* cults of the *Roman Empire*, the nonsense of every kind of sick reason. Christianity's fate lies in the necessity that its faith itself had to become as sick, as low and vulgar, as the needs it was meant to satisfy were sick, low, and vulgar. In the church, *sick barbarism* itself finally gathers into a power—the church, this form of deadly hostility toward all honesty, all *greatness* of soul, all discipline of the intellect, all openhearted 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 —I will not suppress a sigh here. There are days when a feeling visits me, blacker than the blackest melancholy—*contempt for humanity*. And to leave no doubt about *what* I despise, *whom* I despise: it is the person of today, the person whom fate has made my contemporary. The person of today—I choke on his foul breath... Toward the past, like everyone who seeks knowledge, I have great tolerance—that is, *generous* self-restraint. I move through the madhouse world of entire millennia, whether called “Christianity,” “Christian faith,” or “Christian church,” with a gloomy caution—I take care not to hold humanity responsible for its mental illnesses. But my feeling changes, bursts out, as soon as I enter modern times, *our* time. Our time *knows*... What was once merely sick has now become indecent—it is indecent to be a Christian today. *And here my disgust begins*.—I look around: not one word remains of what used to be called “truth”; we can no longer bear it when a priest so much as says the word “truth.” With even the most modest claim to honesty, one *must* know today that a theologian, a priest, a pope not only makes a mistake with every sentence he speaks, but *lies*—that he no longer has the option of lying 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” and “moral world order” are *lies*. The seriousness of the intellect, its deep effort to overcome itself, no longer *allows* anyone *not* to know about this... *All* the church's concepts have been recognized for what they are: the most mali-

cious counterfeiting there is, intended to *devalue* nature and natural values. The priest himself has been recognized for what he is: the most dangerous kind of parasite, life's true poisonous spider... We know, our *conscience* knows today, *what* those sinister inventions of the priests and the church are worth, *what they were for*. They brought humanity to a state of self-defilement that can make one sick at the sight of it—the concepts “beyond,” “Last Judgment,” “immortality of the soul,” the “soul” itself: they are instruments of torture, systems of cruelty through which the priest became master and remained master... Everyone knows this: *and yet everything stays as it was*. Where has the last feeling of decency, of self-respect, gone, when even our statesmen—otherwise a very uninhibited kind of person and thoroughly anti-Christian in their actions—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 arrogance—but professing himself a Christian *without* the slightest shame!... *Whom*, then, does *this* Christianity deny? *What* does it call “the world”? Being a soldier, being a judge, being a patriot; defending yourself; caring about your honor; seeking your own advantage; being *proud*... Every practice at every moment, every instinct, every value judgment that becomes an *act*, is anti-Christian today: what a *misshapen offspring of falsehood* modern people must be, that despite this they are *not ashamed* still to call themselves Christians!

³⁹ —I return; I am telling the *real* 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: “*bad news*,” a *gospel of bad news*. It is wrong to the point of absurdity to see the mark of a Christian in a “faith,” for example in faith in redemption through Christ. Only Christian *practice*, a life such as the one who died on the cross *lived*, is Christian... Even today, *such* a life is possible, and for *certain* people even necessary: genuine, original Christianity will be possible at all times... *Not* a matter of believing, but of acting, above all of *not* doing many things, of

being different... States of consciousness, any belief, for example taking something to be true—as every psychologist knows—are completely unimportant and of fifth-rate significance compared with the value of the instincts. To speak more strictly, the whole concept of mental causation is false. To reduce being a Christian, being Christian in character, to taking something to be true, to mere phenomena of consciousness, is to negate that Christian character. *In fact, there were no Christians at all.* The “Christian,” what has been called Christian for two thousand years, is merely a psychological misunderstanding of oneself. Look more closely: *despite* all his “faith,” *only* the instincts ruled in him—and *what instincts!*—“Faith” has always been, for example in Luther, merely a cloak, a pretext, a *curtain* behind which the instincts played their game—a clever *blindness* to the rule of *certain* instincts... “Faith”—I have already called it the specifically Christian *clever strategy*—people always *spoke* of “faith,” but always *acted* only from instinct... The Christian’s world of ideas contains nothing that even touches reality. On the other hand, we have recognized instinctive hatred *of* every reality as the driving element, the only driving element, at Christianity’s root. What follows? That here too, *in psychological matters*, error is radical—that is, it defines the essence, it is the *substance*. Remove *one* concept here, put a single reality in its place—and the whole of Christianity collapses into nothing!—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 their *disgust* leaves them (*and us!*), they become grateful for the spectacle of the Christian. Perhaps *this* one curious case is enough to make the miserable little celestial body called earth deserve a divine glance, a divine interest... For we must not underestimate the Christian: the Christian, false *to the point of innocence*, is far above the ape—where Christians are concerned, a well-known theory of descent becomes mere politeness...

40 —The Gospel's fate was decided by death—it hung on the “cross”... Only the death, this unexpected, shameful death, only the cross, generally reserved for the rabble—only this most horrifying paradox confronted the disciples with the real riddle: “*Who was that? What was that?*”—Their shattered and deeply wounded feelings, the suspicion that such a death might *refute* their cause, the terrible question mark “Why this way, of all ways?”—this state is all too understandable. Everything here *had* to be necessary, to have meaning, reason, the highest reason; a disciple's love recognizes no accident. Only now did the gulf open up: “*Who killed him? Who was his natural enemy?*”—this question flashed out like lightning. Answer: *ruling* Judaism, its highest class. From that moment they felt themselves in revolt *against* the established order; afterward they understood Jesus as *in revolt against the established order*. Until then, this warlike trait of saying no and putting that no into action, had been *absent* from his image; more than that, it had contradicted his whole image. Clearly the little community had *not* understood the main thing: the example set by this way of dying, the freedom, the superiority *over* every feeling of *resentment*—a sign of how little it understood him at all! In itself, Jesus could have intended nothing with his death except to give the strongest public demonstration, the *proof*, of his teaching... But his disciples were far from *forgiving* this death—which would have been evangelical in the highest sense—let alone *offering themselves* for a similar death with gentle and loving peace of heart... Precisely the most unevangelical feeling, *revenge*, came to the top again. The matter *could not possibly* end with this death: “retribution,” “judgment” were needed. (And yet, what could be more unevangelical than “retribution,” “punishment,” “sitting in judgment”!) Once again the popular expectation of a Messiah came to the front; a historical moment was envisaged: the “kingdom of God” is coming to judge his enemies... But this misunderstands everything: the “kingdom of God” as a final act, as a promise! The Gospel had been precisely the presence, the fulfillment, the *reality* of this “kingdom.” Precisely such a death *was* this “kingdom of God.” Only now was all the contempt and bitterness toward Pharisees and theologians read into the type of the master—in doing so, they *made* him into a Pharisee and theologian! On the other hand, the veneration gone wild in

these completely unhinged souls could no longer bear that evangelical equality of everyone's right to be a child of God, which Jesus had taught. Their revenge was to *raise Jesus up* extravagantly, to separate him from themselves—just as the Jews had once separated their God from themselves and raised him on high out of revenge against their enemies. The *one* God and the *one* Son of God: both products of *resentment*...

Sections 41–50



⁴¹ —And from then on an absurd problem came up: “How could God allow this!” The little community’s disturbed reason found an answer that was downright horribly absurd: God gave his son as a *sacrifice* to forgive sins. How suddenly the gospel was over! The *sacrifice to atone for guilt*, and in its most disgusting, most barbaric form: the sacrifice of the *innocent* for the sins of the guilty! What horrifying paganism!—Jesus had abolished the very idea of “guilt”—he denied any gulf between God and humanity; he *lived* this unity of God and humanity as *his* “good news”... And *not* as a privilege!—From then on, new things gradually enter the figure of the redeemer: the teaching about judgment and the second coming, the teaching about death as a sacrificial death, the teaching about the *resurrection*, which makes the whole idea of “blessedness,” the gospel’s entire and only reality, disappear by a sleight of hand—in favor of a state *after* death!... With the rabbinical insolence that marks him in everything, Paul pushed this view, this *obscene perversion* of a view, to its logical conclusion: “*If* Christ has not risen from the dead, then our faith is empty.”—And suddenly the gospel became the most contemptible of all promises that cannot be fulfilled, the *shameless* teaching that the individual lives forever... Paul himself still taught it as a *reward*!...

⁴² We can see *what* ended with the death on the cross: a new, wholly original start toward a Buddhist peace movement, toward actual *happiness on earth*, *not* just a promise of it. For this remains—as I have already stressed—the basic difference between the two religions of *decadence*: Buddhism does not promise, but delivers; Christianity promises everything, but *delivers nothing*.—The “good news” was followed immediately by the *worst news of all*: Paul’s. Paul embodies the opposite type to the “bringer of good news”: a genius in hatred, in the vision of hatred, in the relentless logic of hatred. *What didn’t* this bringer of bad news sacrifice to hatred! Above all, the redeemer: he nailed him to *his own* cross. The life, the example, the teaching, the death, the meaning and justification of the entire gospel—nothing was left once this counterfeiter, driven by hatred, understood the only thing 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 crossed out Christianity’s yesterday and day before yesterday; he *invented a history of early Christianity for himself*. More than that: he falsified Israel’s history 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 figure of the redeemer, the teaching, the practice, the death, the meaning of the death, even what came after the death—nothing was left untouched, nothing was left even resembling reality. Paul simply shifted the center of gravity of that whole life to a point *beyond* that life—into the *lie* about the “risen” Jesus. At bottom, he had no use at all for the redeemer’s life—he needed the death on the cross *and* something more... To consider Paul honest—a man whose home was in the main center of Stoic enlightenment—when he turns a hallucination into *proof* that the redeemer is *still* alive, or even to believe his story *that* he had this hallucination, would be truly *naive* on a psychologist’s part: Paul wanted the end, *so* he also wanted the means... What he himself did not believe, the idiots he threw his teaching to did believe.—*His* need was for *power*; with Paul, the priest once again wanted power—he could only use ideas, teachings, symbols with which to tyrannize over masses and form herds. *What* was the one thing

Muhammad later borrowed from Christianity? Paul's invention, his means of establishing priestly tyranny and forming herds: belief in immortality—*that is, the teaching about "judgment"...*

- 43 If you place life's center of gravity *not* in life but in the "beyond"—in *nothingness*—you have taken its center of gravity away altogether. The great lie that the individual lives forever destroys all reason, everything natural in instinct—everything in the instincts that is beneficial, that supports life, that guarantees a future now becomes suspect. To live *in a way* that leaves no *point* in living—*that* now becomes the "point" of life... Why have any public spirit, why still be grateful for your origins and ancestors, why work with others, trust others, promote or keep any common good in view?... All just "temptations," all distractions from the "right path"—"*one thing* is needed"... The idea that everyone, as an "immortal soul," ranks equally with everyone else; that among all beings the "salvation" of *each* individual may claim eternal importance; that petty religious hypocrites and people who are three-quarters crazy may imagine that the laws of nature are constantly being *broken* for their sake—such an increase of every kind of selfishness to infinity, to the point of *shamelessness*, cannot be condemned with enough contempt. And yet Christianity owes its *victory* to *this* pitiful flattery of personal vanity—with it Christianity won over precisely everything that was a failure, inclined to rebellion, or badly treated, all the refuse and scum of humanity. The "salvation of the soul"—in plain language: "the world revolves around *me*"... The poison of the teaching of "*equal* rights for all"—Christianity sowed it most systematically; from the most secret corners of bad instincts, Christianity has waged a war to the death against every feeling of respect and distance between one person and another, that is, against the *precondition* for any rise, any growth in culture—from the masses' *resentment* it forged its *main weapon* against *us*, against everything noble, cheerful, generous on earth, against our happiness on earth... Granting "immortality" to every Peter and Paul has been the greatest, most malicious attack so far on *noble* humanity.—*And* let's not underestimate the disaster that has crept from Christianity even into politics! Today no one has the courage for special rights,

for the right to rule, for a feeling of respect toward themselves and their equals—for a *deep sense of distance*... Our politics is *sick* from this lack of courage!—The lie that souls are equal has undermined an aristocratic outlook in the most underhanded way; and if belief in the “privilege of the majority” makes revolutions and *will make them*—it is Christianity, make no mistake, it is *Christian* value judgments that every revolution simply translates into blood and crime! Christianity is a rebellion of everything that crawls on the ground against whatever has *height*: the gospel of the “lowly” *makes people* low...

44 —The Gospels are priceless evidence of the corruption that was already unstoppable *within* the first community. Even so, what Paul later completed with a rabbi’s cynical logic was simply the process of decay that began with the redeemer’s death.—You cannot read these Gospels too carefully; difficulties hide behind every word. I admit—and I hope this will count in my favor—that this very thing makes them a first-rate pleasure for a psychologist—as the *opposite* of all naive corruption, as the *ultimate* in sophistication, 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 keep in mind if we are not to lose the thread completely here. The disguise of oneself as “holy,” which here reaches the level of genius and is never even approached elsewhere among books and 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 way, the whole of Judaism reaches its final mastery, along with several hundred years of the most serious Jewish training and technique. The Christian, this *last resort* of the lie, is the Jew all over again—*three times* over, in fact... The fundamental will to use only ideas, symbols, attitudes that have proved themselves in the priest’s practice, the instinctive rejection of every *other* practice, every *other* way of looking at value and usefulness—this is not just tradition, it is *inheritance*: only as an inheritance does it act like nature. All humanity, even the best minds of the best ages (except one, who may simply be a monster—), has let itself be deceived. People have read the gospel as a *book of innocence*... no small indication of the masterful

acting that has gone on here.—Of course, if we got to *see* them, even just in passing, all these strange religious hypocrites and manufactured saints, it would all be over—and precisely because *I* never read words without seeing gestures, *I put an end to them*... I cannot stand a certain way they have of lifting their eyes. —Luckily, for the vast majority, books are only *literature*—We must not be misled: “Do not judge!” they say, but they send everything that stands in their way to hell. By letting God judge, they themselves judge; by glorifying God, they glorify themselves; by *demanding* the very virtues they are capable of—more than that, the virtues they need to stay on top at all—they make an impressive show of struggling for virtue, of fighting for virtue’s rule. “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 pushing their way through like sneaking hypocrites, sitting in corners, living shadowy lives in the shadows, they make it a *duty*: their life of humility appears as a duty, and as humility it is one more proof of piety... Ah, this humble, chaste, merciful kind of dishonesty! “Let virtue itself testify for us”... Read the Gospels as books that seduce through *morality*: these little people take possession of morality—they know what morality can do! Morality is the best way to *lead humanity by the nose*!—The reality is that the most deliberate *conceit of being chosen* is playing modest here: they have placed *themselves*, the “community,” the “good and just,” once and for all on one side, the side of “truth”—and the rest, “the world,” on the other... *That* was the most disastrous kind of megalomania that has ever existed on earth: little deformed hypocrites and liars began claiming the ideas of “God,” “truth,” “light,” “spirit,” “love,” “wisdom,” “life” for themselves, almost as synonyms for themselves, to use them to draw a dividing line between themselves and the “world”; little superlative Jews, ready for any kind of madhouse, turned all values around to point toward *themselves*, as though only the “Christian” were the meaning, the salt, the measure, even the *last judgment* of all the rest... The whole disaster was made possible only because a related, racially related kind of megalomania already existed in the world: the *Jewish* kind. Once the gulf between Jews and Jewish Christians opened up, the latter had no choice but to use *against* the Jews themselves the same procedures for

self-preservation that Jewish instinct advised, while until then the Jews had used them only against everything *non*-Jewish. The Christian is simply a Jew of a “freer” faith.—

45 —Here are a few samples of what these little people got into their heads, what they *put into their master’s mouth*: all 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 have an easier time at the Last Judgment than that town” (Markus 6, 11).—How *evangelical*!...

“And whoever leads one of the little ones who believe in me into wrongdoing 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 leads you into wrongdoing, throw it away. You are better off going into the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes and being 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 people standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God coming with power” (Markus 9, 1).—A fine *lie*, lion...

“Anyone who wants 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*: its “reasons” refute it—that is the Christian way.) Markus 8, 34.—

“Do not judge, *so that* you will not be judged. Whatever measure you use will be used to measure *you*” (Matthäus 7, 1).—What an idea of justice, of a “just” judge!...

“For if you love those who love you, *what reward will you get*? Don’t the tax collectors do the same? And if you are friendly only to your brothers, *what are you doing that is special*? Don’t the tax collectors 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 your faults either” (Matthäus 6, 15).—Very compromising for the “father” in question...

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

“Then be happy and jump for joy: *for* look, your reward in heaven is great. Their fathers treated the prophets the same way” (Lukas 6, 23).—*Shameless* rabble! They are already comparing themselves with the prophets...

“Don’t you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, *God will destroy him*: for God’s temple is holy, *and that is what you are*” (Paulus I. Korinther 3, 16).—It is impossible to have enough contempt for such things...

“Don’t you know that the saints will judge the world? Now if the world is to be judged by *you*, aren’t you good enough to judge lesser matters?” (Paulus I. Korinther 6, 2).—Unfortunately, this is not just the talk of a madhouse inmate... This *terrible fraud* goes on, word for word: “Don’t you know that *we* will judge the angels? How much more, then, earthly possessions!”...

“Hasn’t God turned this world’s wisdom into foolishness? For since the world, through its wisdom, did not recognize God in his wisdom, God was pleased to save, through foolish preaching, those who believe in it...; not many who are wise by worldly standards, not many powerful people, not many of noble birth are called. Instead, *God chose* what the world considers foolish, to put the wise to shame; and God chose what the world considers weak, to put what is strong to shame; and God chose what the world considers low-born and what it despises, and what is nothing, to reduce what is something to nothing. So that no flesh may boast before him” (Paulus I. Korinther 1, 20 ff.).—To *understand* this passage, a piece of first-rate evidence for the psychology of every Chandala morality, read the first essay of my *On the Genealogy of Morality*: there, for the first time, the opposition was brought to light between a *noble* morality and a Chandala morality born of *resentment* and powerless revenge. Paul was the greatest of all apostles of revenge...

46 — *What follows from this?* That you do well to put on gloves when reading the New Testament. Being so close to so much filth almost forces you to. We would no more choose “early Christians” for company than Polish Jews: not that we would need even a single objection to them... Neither smells good.—I have looked in vain for even one likable trait in the New Testament; 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 no courage even for these bad instincts. Everything in it is cowardice, closing one’s eyes, and self-deception. Every book becomes clean once you have just read the New Testament: to give an example, immediately after Paul I read with delight that most charming, most high-spirited mocker Petronius, of whom one could say what Domenico Boccaccio wrote about Cesare Borgia to the Duke of Parma: “*he is full of festive cheer*”—eternally healthy, eternally cheerful and sound... These little religious hypocrites miscalculate on the main point. They attack, but everything they attack is thereby *honored*. Anyone an “early Christian” attacks is *not* soiled by him... On the contrary: it is an honor to have “early Christians” against you. You cannot read the New Testament without a liking for what is mistreated in it—not to mention the “wisdom of this world,” which an insolent 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 such an indecent way. Hypocrisy—now there is an accusation that “early Christians” would be *entitled* to make!—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, from the lowest instinct—he always lives and fights for “*equal rights*”... Look more closely, and he has no choice. If you want to be one of “God’s chosen” yourself—or a “temple of God,” or a “judge of angels”—then every *other* principle of selection, for example by honesty, intellect, manliness and pride, by beauty and freedom of heart, is simply “world”—*evil itself*... The moral: every word in an “early Christian’s” mouth is a lie, every action he takes an instinctive falsehood—all his values, all his aims

are harmful, but *whom* he hates, *what* he hates, *that has value*... The Christian, and especially the Christian priest, is a *test of values*—Do I still have to say that in the entire New Testament there is only *one* figure we have to respect? Pilate, the Roman governor. Taking a Jewish dispute *seriously*—he cannot talk himself into that. One Jew more or less—what does it matter?... The noble scorn of a Roman, in whose presence the word “truth” is shamelessly abused, has enriched the New Testament with the only saying in it *that has value*—which is its criticism, its very *annihilation*: “What is truth!”...

47 —What sets *us* apart is not that we find no God 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 just an error but a *crime against life*... We deny God as God... If this God of the Christians were *proved* to us, we would be even less able to believe in him.—In a formula: *God, as Paul created him, is the negation of God*.—A religion like Christianity, which has no contact with reality at any point, which collapses as soon as reality is allowed its due at even one point, must reasonably be the mortal enemy of the “wisdom of the world,” that is, *science*—it will approve of every means by which the discipline of the mind, honesty and rigor in matters of intellectual conscience, the mind’s noble coolness and freedom can be poisoned, slandered, *discredited*. “Faith” as a command is the *veto* against science—in *practice*, the lie at any cost... Paul *understood* that the lie—that “faith”—was needed; later the church, in turn, understood Paul.—That “God” Paul invented for himself, a God who “puts to shame” the “wisdom of the world” (in the narrower sense, the two great opponents of all superstition, philology and medicine), is really just Paul’s own firm *decision* to do so: calling one’s own will “God,” *Torah*—that is Jewish to the core. Paul *wants* to put the “wisdom of the world” to shame: his enemies are the *good* philologists and doctors trained in Alexandria—he wages war on them. In fact, as a philologist or a doctor, you cannot help also being an *Antichrist*. For as a philologist you look *behind* the “holy books,” as a doctor *behind* the physiological degeneration of the typical Christian. The doctor says “incurable,” the philologist “fraud”...

48 —Has anyone really understood the famous story at the beginning of the Bible —about God’s hellish terror of *science*?... No one has understood it. This *supreme* priestly book begins, fittingly, with the priest’s great inner difficulty: *he* has only one great danger, *so* “God” has only one great danger.—

The old God, all “spirit,” all high priest, all perfection, strolls for pleasure in his gardens: except that he is bored. Even gods struggle in vain against boredom. What does he do? He invents the human being—human beings are entertaining...

But look, the human being is bored too. God’s pity for the only trouble that all paradises have knows no bounds: he promptly created other animals as well. God’s *first* mistake: the human being did not find the animals entertaining—he ruled over them; he did not even want to be an “animal.”—*So* God created woman. And in fact boredom now came to an end—but so did other things! Woman was God’s *second* mistake.—“Woman is by nature a serpent, Eve”—every priest knows that; “*every* disaster in the world comes from woman”—every priest knows that too. “*So science* comes from her too”... Only through woman did the human being learn to taste from the tree of knowledge.—What had happened? A hellish terror seized the old God. The human being himself had become his *greatest* mistake; he had created a rival for himself; science makes people *equal to God*—it is all over for priests and gods when human beings become scientific!—*The moral*: Science is the forbidden thing itself—it alone is forbidden. Science is the *first* sin, the seed of all sin, *inherited* sin. *This alone is morality*.—“You must *not* know”—the rest follows from that.—God’s hellish terror did not stop him from being clever. How do you *defend* yourself against science? That became his main problem for a long time. Answer: get the human being out of paradise! Happiness, idleness give people ideas—all ideas are bad ideas... The human being *must* not think.—And the “priest as such” invents hardship, death, the danger to life in pregnancy, every kind of misery, old age, toil, and above all *sickness*—all means of fighting science! Hardship does not *allow* people to think... And yet! Horrible! The work of knowledge keeps piling up, storming heaven, bringing on the twilight of the gods—what to do!—The old God invents *war*, he separates the peoples, he makes human

beings destroy one another (—priests have always needed war...). War—among other things a great disruptor of science!—Unbelievable! Knowledge, *emancipation from the priest*, increases even despite wars.—And the old God reaches one last decision: “Human beings have become scientific—*there’s no help for it, they must be drowned!*”...

49 —You have understood me. The beginning of the Bible contains the *whole* psychology of the priest.—The priest knows only *one* great danger: science—the sound understanding of cause and effect. But on the whole, science thrives only under happy conditions—you must have time, you must have mental energy *to spare*, in order to “know”... “*So* people must be made unhappy”—this has always been the priest’s logic.—You can already guess *what*, according to this logic, first came into the world as a result—“*sin*”... The ideas of guilt and punishment, the whole “moral world order,” were invented *against* science—against the human being’s break with the priest... People must *not* look outward; they must look into themselves; they must *not* look at things intelligently and carefully, as learners; they must not look at all: they must *suffer*... And they must *suffer* in a way that makes them need the priest at all times.—Away with doctors! *A savior is needed*.—The ideas of guilt and punishment, including the teachings about “grace,” “redemption,” “forgiveness”—*lies* through and through, without any psychological reality—were invented to destroy the human *sense of causation*: they are the attack on the idea of cause and effect!—And *not* an attack with a fist, with a knife, with honesty in hatred and love! Instead, an attack coming from the most cowardly, cunning, low instincts! A priest’s attack! A parasite’s attack! The vampirism of pale, underground blood-suckers!... When the natural consequences of an act are no longer considered “natural,” but brought about by the ghostly ideas of superstition, by “God,” by “spirits,” by “souls,” as merely “moral” consequences, as reward, punishment, sign, a means of education, then the precondition for knowledge is destroyed—then *the greatest crime against humanity has been committed*.—Sin, to say it

again, this *ultimate* form of human self-defilement, was invented to make science, culture, any elevation or nobility of human beings impossible; the priest *rules* through the invention of sin.—

50 —I will not spare myself a psychology of “faith,” of “believers,” at this point—for the benefit, as is only right, of the “believers” themselves. If there are still people today who do not know in what sense it is *indecent* to be a “believer”—or 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 test of truth called the “proof of power.” “Faith brings blessedness: *therefore* it is true.”—The first objection might be that this very bringing of blessedness has not been proved, only *promised*: blessedness is tied to the condition of “faith”—you are supposed to become blessed *because* you believe... But *does* what the priest promises the believer for the “beyond,” which is beyond all checking, actually happen—and what could prove *that*?—At bottom, then, the supposed “proof of power” is once again just a belief that the effect expected from faith will not fail to happen. In a formula: “I believe that faith brings blessedness—*therefore* it is true.”—But that is already the end of it. This “*therefore*” would be *absurdity* itself as a test of truth.—But let us generously assume that faith has been proved to bring blessedness (—*not* just wished for, *not* just promised by the somewhat suspicious mouth of a priest): would blessedness—in technical terms, *pleasure*—ever be proof of truth? So far from it that when feelings of pleasure have a say in the question “what is true?” they almost provide proof of the opposite, and in any case the strongest grounds for suspicion against “truth.” The proof of “pleasure” is proof of “pleasure”—nothing more; how on earth could it be established that *true* judgments give more pleasure than false ones and necessarily bring pleasant feelings after them, in accordance with a harmony established in advance?—The experience of all rigorous minds, all minds with depth to their nature, teaches *the opposite*. We have had to fight ourselves for every inch of truth; in return we have had to give up almost everything our heart, our love, our trust in life otherwise depend on. That takes greatness of soul: serving truth is the

hardest service.—What does being *honest* in intellectual matters mean? Being strict with your heart, despising “beautiful feelings,” making every yes and no a matter of conscience!——Faith brings blessedness: *therefore* it lies...

Sections 51–62



⁵¹ Faith can make people feel blessed in some circumstances. But the happiness a fixed idea brings does not make it a *true* idea. And faith does not move mountains: it *puts* mountains where there are none. A quick walk through a *mental hospital* makes all this clear enough. *Not* to a priest, of course: his instinct is to deny that sickness is sickness and a mental hospital is a mental hospital. Christianity *needs* sickness, much as Greek culture needs an excess of health—*making* people sick is the real hidden purpose behind the Church’s whole system of procedures for salvation. And the Church itself—isn’t its ultimate ideal the Catholic mental hospital?—The whole earth as a mental hospital?—The religious person as the Church *wants* him is a typical *decadent*. Whenever a religious crisis takes control of a people, epidemics of nervous illness mark the occasion. The religious person’s “inner world” is indistinguishably like the “inner world” of the overstimulated and exhausted. The “highest” states that Christianity has held up over humanity as the value of all values are epilepsy-like states—the Church has canonized only madmen *or* great frauds *for the greater glory of God*... I once took the liberty of describing the whole Christian *training* in repentance and redemption—which is best studied in England today—as a methodically induced *cyclical insanity*, naturally on ground already prepared for it, that is, thoroughly diseased ground. No one is free to become a Christian: people are not “converted” to Christianity—they have to be sick

enough for it... We others, who have the *courage* to be healthy *and* to despise, how fully *we* are entitled to despise a religion that taught people to misunderstand the body! That refuses to give up the superstition of the soul! That makes inadequate nutrition a “merit”! That fights health as a kind of enemy, devil, temptation! That persuaded itself one could carry a “perfect soul” around in a corpse of a body, and for that purpose had to invent a new idea of “perfection”: a pale, sickly, idiotically rapturous condition, so-called “holiness”—holiness that is itself merely a set of symptoms of an impoverished, enervated, incurably ruined body!... The Christian movement, as a European movement, is from the start a collective movement of every kind of reject and waste product (—they want to use Christianity to gain power). It does *not* express the decline of a race; it is a mass formed from kinds of *decadence* everywhere, crowding together and seeking one another out. It is *not*, as people believe, the corruption of the ancient world itself, the *noble* ancient world, that made Christianity possible. We cannot contradict forcefully enough the scholarly idiocy that still upholds such a claim today. At the time when the sick, corrupted Chandala classes throughout the *empire* were becoming Christian, the very *opposite type*, nobility, existed in its most beautiful and mature form. The great majority took control; the democratic tendency of Christian instincts *won*... Christianity was not “national,” not determined by race—it appealed to every kind of person disinherited by life; it had allies everywhere. At Christianity’s root lies the rancor of the sick, an instinct directed *against* the healthy, *against* health. Everything that has turned out well, everything proud and high-spirited, and beauty above all, hurts its ears and eyes. Let me recall once again Paul’s priceless words: “What is *weak* in the world’s eyes, what is *foolish* in the world’s eyes, the *lowborn* and *despised* in the world’s eyes, God has chosen.” *That* was the formula; *under this sign decadence* won.—*God on the cross*—do people still not understand the terrible hidden thought behind this symbol?—Everything that suffers, everything that hangs on the cross, is *divine*... We all hang on the cross, so *we* are divine... We alone are divine... Christianity was a victory; a *nobler* way of thinking was destroyed by it—Christianity has been humanity’s greatest misfortune so far.—

52 Christianity also opposes every healthy development of the *mind*—the only reason it *can* use as Christian reason is sick reason. It sides with everything idiotic; it curses “the intellect,” the *pride* of a healthy mind. Since sickness belongs to Christianity’s nature, the typically Christian state, “faith,” *must* also be a form of sickness. The Church *must* reject all straight, honest, scientific paths to knowledge as *forbidden* paths. Even doubt is a sin... The priest’s complete lack of psychological cleanliness—which gives itself away in his eyes—is a *consequence* of *decadence*. We need only observe hysterical women and children prone to rickets to see how regularly instinctive dishonesty, pleasure in lying for its own sake, and an inability to look or walk straight express *decadence*. “Faith” means not *wanting* to know what is true. The Pietist, the priest of either sex, is dishonest *because* he is sick: his instinct *demand*s that truth should never get its due. “Whatever makes people sick is *good*; whatever comes from fullness, abundance, power, is *evil*”: that is how the believer feels. The *compulsion to lie*—that is how I recognize every born theologian.—Another mark of the theologian is his *inability to practice philology*. Here, in a very general sense, philology means the art of reading *well*—being able to read the facts *without* falsifying them through interpretation, *without* losing caution, patience, and subtlety in the desire to understand. Philology as *restraint* in interpretation: whether we are dealing with books, newspaper reports, destinies, or facts about the weather—not to mention the “salvation of the soul”... The way a theologian, in Berlin or Rome alike, interprets a “passage of scripture” or an experience—for instance, a victory by his country’s army in the higher light of the Psalms of David—is always so *bold* that it drives a philologist up the wall. And what is the philologist supposed to do when Pietists and other cows from Swabia use the “finger of God” to turn the miserable daily routine and smoky rooms of their existence into a miracle of “grace,” “providence,” and “experiences of salvation”? The smallest effort of intelligence, not to say *decency*, should make these interpreters recognize how completely childish and unworthy it is to misuse divine dexterity like this. With even the slightest amount of piety in us, a God who cures a cold at the right moment, or tells us to get into a carriage just as heavy rain starts, should strike us as so absurd that we would have to abolish him even if he exist-

ed. A God as servant, mail carrier, almanac maker—basically a word for the stupidest kind of coincidence... “Divine providence,” as roughly one person in three still believes in it in “educated Germany,” would be the strongest imaginable argument against God. And in any case it is an argument against the Germans!...

53 —It is so far from true that *martyrs* prove a cause is true 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 belief in something at the world’s head reveals such a low level of intellectual honesty, such *insensitivity* to the question of “truth,” that there is never any need to refute a martyr. Truth is not something one person has and another does not: only peasants, or apostles to peasants like Luther, could think of truth that way. We can be sure that the more conscientious people are in matters of the mind, the greater their modesty, their *self-restraint*, on this point becomes. To *know* about five things, and gently refuse to know about *anything else*... “Truth,” as every prophet, every sectarian, every freethinker, every socialist, and every churchman understands the word, is complete proof that they have not even begun the mental discipline and self-overcoming needed to find any small truth, however small.—The deaths of martyrs, incidentally, have been a great misfortune in history: they *led people astray*... All idiots, women and the common people included, conclude that there must be something to a cause someone dies for—or that, like early Christianity, actually produces epidemics of a craving for death. That conclusion has been an unspeakable obstacle to examination, to the spirit of examination and caution. Martyrs *harmed* truth...

Even today, a single crude act of persecution is enough to give the most insignificant sectarian movement an *honorable* name.—What? Does someone’s giving up his life for a cause change its value?—An error that becomes honorable is an error with one more seductive attraction: do you think, gentlemen of theology, that we would give you a chance to play the martyr for your lie?—You refute a cause by respectfully putting it on ice—and that is also how you refute theologians... This was precisely the world-historical stupidity of all persecu-

tors: they gave their opponents' cause the appearance of honor—they made it a gift of the fascination of martyrdom... Woman still kneels before error today because she has been told that someone died on the cross for it. *Is the cross an argument, then?*— —But on all these matters, one man alone has said the words people have needed for thousands of years—*Zarathustra*.

They wrote signs of blood on the path they walked, and their foolishness taught that blood proves truth.

But blood is the worst witness to truth; blood poisons even the purest teaching, turning it into delusion and hatred in people's hearts. And if someone went through fire for his teaching—what does that prove! It

means more, truly, when his own teaching comes from his own burning.

- 54 Do not be misled: great minds are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. The strength, the *freedom* that comes from the mind's power and surplus of power, *proves* itself through skepticism. People with convictions do not count at all when it comes to fundamental questions of value and worthlessness. Convictions are prisons. Their vision does not reach far enough; they cannot see *below* themselves. But to have a say about value and worthlessness, you must see five hundred convictions *below* you—*behind* you... A mind that wants great things, and also wants the means to achieve them, is necessarily skeptical. *Freedom* from every kind of conviction *belongs* to strength: being *able* to look freely... The great passion, the foundation and power of such a mind's existence, is even more enlightened, even more despotic, than that mind itself. It puts the whole intellect to work; it removes scruples; it gives the mind courage to use even unholy means; *under* certain circumstances it *allows* the mind convictions. Conviction as a *means*: many things can be achieved only through a conviction. The great passion uses convictions, uses them up; it does not submit to them—it knows it is sovereign.—Conversely, the need for faith, for some unconditional Yes or No—Carlylism, 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 up as an end, who

cannot set any 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 gives the highest honor to a morality of self-renunciation. Everything persuades him toward it: his cleverness, his experience, his vanity. Every kind of faith is itself an expression of self-renunciation, of self-alienation... Consider how much most people need a regulating force that binds and steadies them from outside; how compulsion, *slavery* in a higher sense, is the only and ultimate condition under which a person with a weaker will, especially a woman, can thrive. Then you also understand conviction, “faith.” The person with convictions has his backbone in them. *Not* seeing many things, being impartial about nothing, being partisan through and through, having a rigid and compulsory perspective on all values—this alone makes it possible for that kind of person to exist at all. But that makes him the opposite, the *antagonist*, of the truthful person—of truth... The believer is not free to have any conscience at all about the question of “true” and “untrue”: being honest on *this* point would immediately destroy him. The diseased conditioning of his perspective turns the man of conviction into a fanatic—Savonarola, Luther, Rousseau, Robespierre, Saint-Simon—the opposite type to the strong mind, the mind that has *become free*. But the grand pose of these *sick* minds, these epileptics of the concept, affects the great mass of people—fanatics are picturesque; humanity would rather watch gestures than listen to *reasons*...

- 55 —One step further in the psychology of conviction, of “faith.” Long ago I suggested considering whether convictions might be more dangerous enemies of truth than lies (Menschliches, Allzumenschliches I, Aphorismus 54 und 483). This time I want 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 experiments and mistakes. It *becomes* a conviction after a long time of *not* being one, and an even longer time of *barely* being one. What? Couldn’t a lie be among these embryonic forms of conviction?—Sometimes all it takes is a change of person: what was still a lie in the father becomes a conviction in the

son.—By lying I mean *not* wanting to see something you see, not wanting to see it as you see it. Whether the lie takes place with or without witnesses makes no difference. The most common lie is the one you tell yourself; lying to other people is relatively exceptional.—Now this desire *not* to see what you see, not to see it as you see it, is almost the first requirement for everyone who is *partisan* in any sense. The partisan necessarily becomes a liar. German history writing, for example, is convinced that Rome was despotism and that the Germanic peoples brought the spirit of freedom into the world. What is the difference between that conviction and a lie? Can we still be surprised that all parties, including German historians, instinctively have morality's grand words on their lips—that morality almost *survives* because every kind of partisan needs it at every moment?—"This is *our* conviction: we profess it before the whole world; we live and die for it—respect for everyone with convictions!"—I have even heard things like that from antisemites. Quite the contrary, gentlemen! An anti-semite does not become any more decent by lying on principle... Priests are more subtle in these matters. They understand very well the objection contained in the concept of a conviction—that is, dishonesty adopted as a principle *because* it serves a purpose. From the Jews they inherited the cleverness to insert the concepts "God," "God's will," and "God's revelation" at this point. Kant, too, with his categorical imperative, was on the same path: his reason became *practical* here.—There are questions where deciding between truth and falsehood is *not* for human beings. All the highest questions, all the highest problems of value, lie beyond human reason... To grasp the *limits* of reason—only *that* is truly philosophy... Why did God give humanity revelation? Would God have done something unnecessary? Human beings *cannot* know on their own what is good and evil, so God taught them his will... The moral: the priest does *not* lie—the question "true" or "untrue" does not *exist* in the things priests talk about. These things do not even allow lying. To lie, you would have to be able to decide *what* is true here. But that is just what human beings *cannot* do; the priest is therefore merely God's mouthpiece.—This priestly syllogism is by no means merely Jewish and Christian. The right to lie and the *cleverness* of "revelation" belong to the priestly type, to priests of decadence just as

much as to pagan priests (—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 just words for the conditions *under* which the priest gains power, *with* which he maintains his power. These concepts lie at the foundation of all priestly organizations, all systems of priestly or philosophical-priestly rule. The “holy lie”—shared by Confucius, Manu’s law code, Muhammad, and the Christian Church—is not absent from Plato. “The truth is here”: wherever that is proclaimed, it means *the priest is lying...*

- 56 —In the end, what matters is the *purpose* of the lie. That Christianity lacks “holy” purposes is *my* objection to its methods. Its purposes are only *bad*: poisoning, slandering, denying life, despising the body, degrading human beings and making them defile themselves through the concept of sin—*therefore* its methods are bad too.—I read the law code of *Manu* with the opposite feeling. It is an incomparably intellectual and superior work; even to *mention* it in the same breath as the Bible would be a sin against the *intellect*. You can tell at once: it has a real philosophy behind it, *within* it, not just a foul-smelling Jewish brew of rabbinism and superstition—it gives even the most spoiled psychologist something to chew on. *Not* to forget the main point, *the* fundamental difference from every kind of Bible: the *noble* classes, the philosophers and warriors, use it to watch over the masses. Noble values everywhere, a feeling of perfection, a Yes to life, a triumphant satisfaction in oneself and in life—the *sun* shines over the whole book.—All the things on which Christianity vents its bottomless vulgarity—procreation, for example, women, marriage—are treated here seriously, with reverence, love, and trust. How can anyone actually put a book into the hands of children and women that contains these base 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* anyone be a Christian as long as the concept of the *Immaculate Conception* Christianizes the origin of human beings—that is, *dirties* it?... I know no book that says so many tender and kind things to women as Manu’s law code. These old graybeards and saints have a way of being courteous to women that may

never have been surpassed. “A woman’s mouth,” it says in one place, “a girl’s breast, a child’s prayer, the smoke of a sacrifice are always pure.” Another passage: “There is nothing purer than sunlight, a cow’s shadow, the air, water, fire, and a girl’s breath.” One last passage—perhaps a holy lie as well—“All the body’s openings above the navel are pure; all those below are impure. Only in a girl is the whole body pure.”

- 57 You catch the *unholiness* of Christian methods *in the act* when you compare the *Christian* purpose with the purpose of Manu’s law code—when you put this greatest opposition of purposes in a strong light. A critic of Christianity cannot avoid making Christianity *contemptible*.—A law code like Manu’s comes into being as every good law code does: it sums up the experience, practical wisdom, and morality developed through trial over long centuries; it brings that process to a close; it creates nothing more. A codification of this kind presupposes an insight: the means of giving authority to a *truth* acquired slowly and at great cost are fundamentally different from the means of proving it. A law code never tells the benefits, reasons, and particular cases in a law’s prehistory. Doing so would cost it its commanding tone, its “you shall,” the precondition for obedience. That is precisely where the problem lies.—At a certain point in a people’s development, its most insightful class—that is, the one that looks furthest backward and ahead—declares that the experience by which people are to live—that is, *can* live—is complete. Its aim is to bring in the richest and most complete harvest possible from the ages of experiment and *bad* experience. So what must now be prevented above all is continued experimentation, the continued fluidity of values, the testing, choosing, and criticizing of values *without end*. A double wall is set against this. First, *revelation*: the claim that the reason behind these laws is *not* human in origin, *not* something sought and found slowly and through mistakes. Instead, it is divine in origin, whole, perfect, without a history, a gift, a miracle, merely communicated... Then, *tradition*: the claim that the law has existed since the most ancient times, that to question it is irreverent, a crime against the ancestors. The law’s authority rests on these propositions: God *gave* it; the ancestors *lived* it.—The higher reason for such a procedure lies

in the intention to push consciousness back, step by step, out of the life recognized as right—that is, *proved* by an enormous and rigorously sifted body of experience. In this way, the perfect automatic functioning of instinct is achieved—the precondition for every kind of mastery, every kind of perfection in the art of living. To establish a law code like Manu's means giving a people the chance from then on to achieve mastery, to become perfect—to aspire to the highest art of living. *For this, it must be made unconscious*: that is the purpose of every holy lie.—The *caste system*, the supreme, dominant law, only sanctions an *order of nature*, a natural law of the first rank over which no arbitrary will, no “modern idea,” has power. In every healthy society, three types with different physiological centers of gravity separate out, each depending on the others. Each has its own rules of health, its own field of work, its own kind of feeling of perfection and mastery. Nature, *not* Manu, separates those who are mainly intellectual, those who are mainly strong in muscle and temperament, and a third group distinguished in neither way, the mediocre—the last as the great majority, the first as the select few. The highest caste—I call them *the very few*—as the perfect caste also has the privileges of the fewest: these include embodying happiness, beauty, and goodness on earth. Only the most intellectual people are permitted beauty, *beautiful things*: only in them is goodness not weakness. *Beauty belongs to few people*: goodness is a privilege. On the other hand, nothing is less permissible for them than ugly manners or a pessimistic outlook, an eye that *makes things ugly*—or even indignation at the overall appearance of things. Indignation is the privilege of the Chandala; pessimism likewise. “*The world is perfect*”—so speaks the instinct of the most intellectual, the instinct that says Yes—“imperfection, everything *below* us, distance, the feeling of distance, even the Chandala belongs to this perfection.” The most intellectual people, as the *strongest*, find happiness where others would find their ruin: in the labyrinth, in harshness toward themselves and others, in experiment. Their pleasure is in conquering themselves: asceticism becomes their nature, their need, their instinct. They see a difficult task as a privilege; playing with burdens that crush others is *recreation*... Knowledge—a form of asceticism.—They are the most worthy of respect of all human types: that does

not rule out their being the most cheerful and lovable. They rule not because they want to, but because they *are*; they are not free to take second place.—Those in *second place*: they are the guardians of justice, the keepers of order and security, the noble warriors, and above all the *king* as the highest embodiment of warrior, judge, and upholder of the law. Those in second place are the executive arm of the most intellectual, their closest associates, those who take all the *coarse* work of ruling off their hands—their followers, their right hand, their best pupils.—In all of this, to repeat, there is nothing arbitrary, nothing “made up”; anything *different* is made up—in that case nature has been ruined... The caste system, the *order of rank*, merely formulates the supreme law of life itself. Separating the three types is necessary to preserve society, to make higher and highest types possible—the *inequality* of rights is the very condition for any rights to exist at all.—A right is a privilege. Each person also has his privilege in his own way of being. Let us not underestimate the privileges of the *mediocre*. Life gets harder the *higher* you go—the cold increases, the responsibility increases. A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base; its very first requirement is a firmly and healthily consolidated mediocrity. Crafts, trade, agriculture, *science*, most art—in a word, the whole range of *professional* activity—are entirely compatible only with a middling level of ability and desire. Such things would be out of place among exceptional people; the instinct involved would contradict an aristocratic outlook as much as an anarchist one. Being publicly useful, a cog, a function, is a natural calling: it is *not* society that turns them into intelligent machines, but the only kind of *happiness* the vast majority are capable of. For the mediocre person, being mediocre is happiness; mastery in one field, specialization, is a natural instinct. It would be completely unworthy of a deeper mind to see mediocrity itself as an objection. It is itself the *first* necessity if exceptions are to be possible: a high culture depends on it. When an exceptional person handles the mediocre with gentler fingers than he uses on himself and his equals, this is not just courtesy of the heart—it is simply his *duty*... Whom among today’s rabble do I hate most? The socialist rabble, the Chandala apostles who undermine the worker’s instinct, his pleasure, his sense of satisfaction with his small existence—who make him

envious, who teach him revenge... Injustice never lies in *unequal* rights; it lies in the demand for “equal” rights... What is *bad*? But I have said it already: everything that comes from weakness, from envy, from *revenge*.—The anarchist and the Christian have the same origin...

- 58 In fact, the purpose of a lie makes a difference: whether you use it to preserve or to *destroy*. You can put a perfect equals sign between *Christian* and *anarchist*: their purpose, their instinct, aims only at destruction. To prove this statement, you need only read history: it contains the proof with terrifying clarity. We have just come to know a religious system of law whose purpose was to make the supreme condition for life to *thrive* “last forever”: a great organization of society. Christianity found its mission in putting an end to just such an organization, *because life thrived in it*. In the one case, the rational gains of long periods of experiment and uncertainty were to be invested for benefit in the most distant future, and the harvest brought in as fully, richly, and completely as possible. In the other, the reverse happened: overnight the harvest was *poisoned*... What stood there *more enduring than bronze*, the *Roman Empire*, the grandest form of organization under difficult conditions ever achieved—compared with which everything before and 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 take control of it... The Christian and the anarchist: both *decadents*, both incapable of doing anything but dissolving, poisoning, stunting, *sucking blood*, both the instinct of *deadly hatred* against everything that stands, that stands great, that endures, that promises life a future... Christianity was the vampire of the *Roman Empire*—overnight it undid the Romans’ enormous achievement of gaining the ground for a great culture *that has time*.—Do people still not understand? The *Roman Empire* we know, which the history of the Roman provinces teaches us to know better and better, this most admirable work of art in the grand style, was a beginning. Its structure was designed to *prove* itself over thousands of years—to this day, no one has ever built like that, or even dreamed of building to the same extent

from the standpoint of eternity!—This organization was strong enough to withstand bad emperors: the accident of who holds office must have no effect in such matters—the *first* principle of all great architecture. But it was not strong enough to withstand the *most corrupt* kind of corruption, the *Christian*... These secret vermin, creeping up to each individual in night, fog, and ambiguity, sucking out of each individual his seriousness about *true* things, his instinct for *realities* at all—this cowardly, effeminate, sickly-sweet gang gradually alienated “souls” from that enormous structure. Those valuable souls, those manly and noble natures, had felt their own cause, their own seriousness, their own pride in Rome’s cause. This sanctimonious sneaking, this secrecy of little religious gatherings, gloomy concepts like hell, like the sacrifice of the innocent, like *mystical union* in drinking blood, and above all the slowly stoked fire of revenge, of Chandala revenge—that gained control over Rome: the same kind of religion on which Epicurus had already made war in its earlier form. Read Lucretius to understand *what* Epicurus fought: *not* paganism, but “Christianity,” meaning the corruption of souls through the concepts of guilt, punishment, and immortality.—He fought the *underground* cults, the whole of latent Christianity—denying immortality was already a real *redemption* then.—And Epicurus would have won; every respectable mind in the Roman Empire was Epicurean: *then Paul appeared*... Paul, Chandala hatred of Rome, of “the world,” made flesh, made genius; the Jew, the *eternal Jew above all others*... What he figured out was how to use the little sectarian Christian movement on the margins of Judaism to ignite a “world fire”; how to use the symbol “God on the cross” to add up everything downtrodden, everything secretly rebellious, the whole inheritance of anarchist agitation in the empire, into an enormous power. “Salvation comes from the Jews.”—Christianity as a formula for outdoing—and adding together—underground cults of every kind, those of Osiris, the Great Mother, Mithras, for example: Paul’s genius consists in this insight. His instinct was so sure in this that he put the ideas with which those Chandala religions fascinated people into the mouth of the “Savior” he invented, doing ruthless violence to the truth—and not only into his mouth: 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 gain control over Rome—that with the “beyond” you *kill life*... Nihilist and Christian: they rhyme, and not just in sound...

- 59 All the work of the ancient world *for nothing*: I have no words to express what I feel about something so enormous.—And considering that its work was preparation, that the foundation for thousands of years of work had only just been laid with granite-hard self-confidence, the whole *meaning* of the ancient world was for nothing!... What were the Greeks for? What were the Romans for?—All the requirements for a learned culture, all the scientific *methods*, were already there. People had already established the great, incomparable art of reading well—the precondition for passing culture down, for the unity of science. Natural science, allied with mathematics and mechanics, was on the best possible course—the *sense for facts*, the last and most valuable of all the senses, had its schools, its tradition already hundreds of years old! Do people understand this? Everything *essential* had been found so work could begin—the methods, it must be said ten times, *are* what is essential, also what is hardest, also what habits and laziness resist the longest. What we have won back for ourselves today through unspeakable self-conquest—for we all still carry the bad instincts, the Christian ones, in our bodies somehow—the unobstructed view of reality, the cautious hand, patience and seriousness in the smallest things, the whole *honesty* of knowledge—all of it was already there! Already more than two thousand years ago! *And*, on top of that, good and refined tact and taste! *Not* as brain training! *Not* as “German” education with loutish manners! But as body, gesture, instinct—in a word, as reality... *All for nothing*! Overnight, nothing but a memory!—Greeks! Romans! Nobility of instinct, taste, methodical research, genius for organization and administration, faith, the *will* for humanity’s future, the great Yes to all things made visible as the *Roman Empire*, visible to all the senses, the grand style no longer just art but now 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,

secret, invisible, anemic vampires! Not defeated—only sucked dry!... Hidden vindictiveness, petty envy had become *master*! Everything wretched, suffering from itself, haunted by bad feelings, the whole *ghetto world* of the soul suddenly *on top*!— —Just read any Christian agitator, Saint Augustine for example, to grasp, to *smell*, what unclean fellows rose to the top in this way. It would be a complete mistake to suppose the leaders of the Christian movement lacked intelligence in any way—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... If Islam despises Christianity, it has a thousandfold 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. Spain's wonderful Moorish cultural world, fundamentally more closely related to *us*, speaking more to our senses and taste than Rome and Greece, was *trampled down* (—I will not say by what kind of feet—). Why? Because it owed its origin to noble instincts, to men's instincts; because it said Yes to life even through the rare and refined treasures of Moorish life!... Later the Crusaders fought something before which it would have suited them better to lie in the dust—a culture compared with which even our nineteenth century might well feel very poor, very “late.” —Of course, they wanted loot: the East was rich... Let's be impartial! Crusades—piracy on a higher level, nothing more! The German nobility, essentially Viking nobility, was in its element here: the Church knew only too well how to get *bold* of the German nobility... The German nobility, always the Church's “Swiss mercenaries,” always serving all the Church's bad instincts—but *well paid*... To think that the Church waged its war of deadly hatred against everything noble on earth with the very help of German swords, German blood, and German courage! There are many painful questions here. The German nobility is almost *absent* from the history of higher culture: you can guess why... Christianity, alcohol—the two *great* means of corruption... In itself, there ought to be no choice between

Islam and Christianity, any more than between an Arab and a Jew. The decision is given; no one is free to choose here anymore. Either you *are* a Chandala, or you are *not*... “War to the knife against Rome! Peace, friendship with Islam”: that was how that great free spirit, the genius among German emperors, Frederick the Second, felt; that was how he *acted*. What? Must a German first be a genius, a free spirit, in order to feel *decently*? I cannot understand how a German could ever feel *Christian*...

- ⁶¹ Here we need to touch on a memory a hundred times more embarrassing for Germans. The Germans robbed Europe of the last great cultural harvest there was to bring home for Europe—the harvest of the *Renaissance*. Do people finally understand, do they *want* to understand, *what* the Renaissance was? The *revaluation of Christian values*, the attempt undertaken with every means, every instinct, every bit of genius, to bring the *opposite* values, the *noble* values, to victory... So far there has been only *this* great war; so far no question has been posed more decisively than the Renaissance’s question—*my* question is its question. Nor has there ever been a more fundamental, more direct form of *attack*, more rigorously conducted along the whole front and against the center! To attack at the decisive point, at the very seat of Christianity; to put *noble* values on the throne here, meaning to bring them *into* the instincts, into the deepest needs and desires of those sitting there... I see a *possibility* before me of utterly unearthly enchantment and richness of color—it seems to me to shine with all the shivers of refined beauty, with an art at work in it so divine, so devilishly divine, that you could search thousands of years in vain for another such possibility. I see a spectacle so meaningful and at the same time so wonderfully paradoxical that all the gods of Olympus would have had reason for immortal laughter—*Cesare Borgia as pope*... Do you understand me?... Well, that would have been the victory that *I* alone demand today—with that, Christianity would have been *abolished*!—What happened? A German monk, Luther, came to Rome. This monk, carrying 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 enormous thing that had happened—the over-

coming of Christianity at its *seat*—his hatred understood only how to feed on this spectacle. A religious person thinks only of himself.—Luther saw the *corruption* of the papacy, when precisely the opposite was obvious enough to touch: 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 high, beautiful, daring things was!... And Luther *restored the Church*: he attacked it... The Renaissance—an event without meaning, a great *waste*!—Ah, these Germans, what they have already cost us! For nothing—that has always been the Germans’ *work*.—The Reformation; Leibniz; Kant and so-called German philosophy; the Wars of “Liberation”; the German Empire—each time something already there, something *irretrievable*, was made to have been for nothing... They are *my* enemies, I admit it, these Germans: in them I despise every kind of uncleanness in concepts and values, every kind of *cowardice* before any honest Yes and No. For almost a thousand years, they have tangled and confused everything their fingers touched; they have all the half measures—three-eighths measures!—that make Europe sick on their conscience. They also have on their conscience the most unclean kind of Christianity there is, the most incurable, the most impossible to refute: Protestantism... If we cannot finish off Christianity, the *Germans* will be to blame...

- 62 —With this I come to the end and deliver my verdict. I *condemn* Christianity; I bring against the Christian Church the most terrible of all charges any accuser has ever spoken. To me it is the highest of all imaginable corruptions; it has willed the utmost corruption that is even possible. The Christian Church left nothing untouched by its corruption. It made every value worthless, every truth a lie, every kind of honesty a baseness of soul. Just let anyone dare talk to me again about its “humanitarian” blessings! To *abolish* any distress went against its deepest self-interest: it lived on distress; it *created* distress to make *itself* eternal... 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 *rancor* of all the base-minded, this explosive concept that finally became revolution, modern idea, and the principle of

decline of the whole social order—is *Christian* dynamite... The “humanitarian” blessings of Christianity! To breed into *humanity* a contradiction of itself, an art of self-defilement, a will to lie at any price, an aversion to and contempt for all good and honest instincts! Those, to my mind, are Christianity’s blessings!—Parasitism as the Church’s *only* practice; with its ideal of anemia, its ideal of “holiness,” draining away all blood, all love, all hope for life; the beyond as the will to deny every reality; the cross as the identifying mark of the deepest underground conspiracy there has ever been—against health, beauty, successful growth, courage, intellect, *goodness* of soul, *against life itself*...

I want to write this eternal indictment of Christianity on every wall, wherever there are walls—I have letters that can make even the blind see... I call Christianity the *one* great curse, the *one* great innermost corruption, the *one* great instinct for revenge for which no means is poisonous, secret, underground, or *petty* enough—I call it the *one* immortal stain of shame on humanity...

And people count time from the *ill-fated day* when this disaster began—from the *first* day of Christianity!—*Why not from its last day instead?—From today?*
—Revaluation of all values!

Law Against Christianity



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

War to the death against vice: vice is Christianity.

- ¹ *First proposition.*—Every kind of violation of nature is vicious. The most vicious kind of human being is the priest: he *teaches* the violation of nature. Against the priest we have no arguments; we have prison.
- ² *Second proposition.*—Any participation in a religious service is an attack on public morality. We should be harder on Protestants than on Catholics, harder on liberal Protestants than on strict believers. The criminality of being a Christian increases the closer one comes to science. The criminal of criminals is therefore the *philologist*.
- ³ *Third proposition.*—The places fit to be cursed where Christianity has hatched its basilisk eggs should be leveled to the ground and, as *accursed* places on earth, terrify all future generations. Poisonous snakes should be bred there.
- ⁴ *Fourth proposition.*—Preaching chastity is a public incitement to violate nature. Every expression of contempt for sexual life, every defilement of it through the concept “impure,” is the true sin against the holy spirit of life.

- ⁵ *Fifth proposition.*—Eating at the same table as a priest excludes you: by doing so you excommunicate yourself from honest society. The priest is *our* Chandala—we should ostracize him, starve him out, drive him into every kind of wilderness.
- ⁶ *Sixth proposition.*—We should call “holy” history by the name it deserves: *accursed* history. We should turn the words “God,” “Savior,” “Redeemer,” “Saint” into insults and use them as badges identifying criminals.
- ⁷ *Seventh proposition.*—The rest follows from this.
The Antichrist