

# The Anti-Christ

## ATTEMPT AT A CRITIQUE OF CHRISTIANITY

Friedrich Nietzsche [ 1895 ]

Translated by Walter Kaufmann

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### SYNOPSIS AND INDEX

#### Preface

- 1 Modernity is the sickness of we Hyperboreans
- 2 What is good? — power. What is bad? — weakness and pity
- 3 What type of man shall be bred?
- 4 There is no progress in mankind; the higher type of man is a species apart
- 5 Christianity has waged war against this higher type of man
- 6 Corruption is decadence, the loss of instincts
- 7 Pity is a decadence, the practice of nihilism
- 8 Antithesis of the Hyperborean: the theologian; the pure spirit is a pure lie
- 9 Whatever a theologian feels is true, must be false
- 10 German philosophy has been corrupted by theologian's blood (Kant)
- 11 A virtue must be our most necessary self-expression and self-defense
- 12 Priests corrupt by determining "what is higher"
- 13 The most valuable insights are the methods
- 14 Hyperboreans, more modest than priests, place man among the animals
- 15 All Christian concepts are pure fictions
- 16 The Christian God is a sneak, timid and modest
- 17 The Christian Kingdom of God is a ghetto kingdom, and underworld
- 18 The Christian God: a formula for every slander against the world
- 19 The Christian God infuses sickness into the instincts of the races that believe in him
- 20 Buddhism, though also a decadent world-denying religion, is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity
- 21 In Christianity the instincts of the oppressed and sick come to the fore
- 22 Christianity appeals to the brutal barbarian, Buddhism to gracious and gentle men
- 23 The cunning falsifications behind Christian faith, love, hope
- 24 Christianity as a consequence of the radical Jewish instinct for survival
- 25 The history of Israel [Judaism] illustrates the denaturing of natural values
- 26 The parasitical priest uses the concept of 'holy God' to justify the priestly exercise of power
- 27 Jesus crucified because he attacked the Jewish priestly power
- 28 What was the psychology of the Redeemer? It is obscured by ambiguities and legends
- 29 Reading the history of a "soul" in the gospels is a contemptible psychological frivolity
- 30 Christianity the result of an extreme capacity for suffering and excitement
- 31 The characteristics of Jesus distorted by the decadent crudity of the evangelists
- 32 The symbolist Jesus stands apart from all cult, all culture, all fanaticism, all science,

all dialectic

33 Concepts of guilt or punishment are entirely lacking in the psychology of Jesus

34 For Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven is an inner reality, a state of the heart

35 Thus Jesus behaved: not to resist, not to defend onself — even against the Evil One

36 Christians worship exactly the opposite of what Jesus stood for

37 In the Christian church, diseased barbarism finally gains power

38 It is indecent to be a Christian today

39 I tell the genuine history of Christianity

40 Jesus demonstrated his vision in his death, but Christians twist this fact into resentment and revenge

41 Enter the doctrine of "redemption", of the man that takes away guilt and sin

42 Christianity promises everything but fulfills nothing

43 By placing the value of life in the beyond, in nothingness, Christianity devalues life altogether

44 The Gospels are books of seduction in which an oppressed people reserve all morality to itself

45 Examples of the hypocrisies and distortions of Jesus in Christian writings

46 It is an honor to be opposed by the "first Christians"

47 What distinguishes Hyperboreans is that they see what has been revered as God as absurd and miserable

48 The main problem for the Christian God: How to resist science

49 The concepts of sin and punishment created as defense against science

50 The Christian criterion of truth: "faith makes blessed"

51 The "inner world" of the Christian looks just like the inner world of the sick, the exhausted

52 The priest battles the higher type: "Whatever comes out of fullness, out of superabundance, out of power, is evil"

53 The deaths of martyrs as seductions to belief

54 Great spirits are skeptics; only the weak need faith

55 The history of convictions (faith); convictions are more dangerous than lies

56 Ultimately, it is a matter of the end to which one lies

57 The law of Manu puts the Christian law to shame

58 The Christian and the anarchist: both decadents, only capable of poisoning life

59 Christianity as the unclean triumph over every pure virtue of Greeks and Romans

60 Islam to be preferred to Christianity

61 The German Reformation cheated Europe out of the harvest of the Renaissance

62 I condemn Christianity: it is parasitical, the highest of all conceivable corruptions

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## **PREFACE**

This book belongs to the very few. Perhaps not one of them is even living yet. Maybe they will be the readers who understand my Zarathustra: how could I mistake myself for one of those for whom there are ears even now? Only the day after tomorrow belongs to me. Some are born posthumously.

The conditions under which I am understood, and then of necessity—I know them only too well. One must be honest in matters of the spirit to the point of hardness before one can even endure my

seriousness and my passion. One must be skilled in living on mountains—seeing the wretched ephemeral babble of politics and national self-seeking beneath oneself. One must have become indifferent; one must never ask if the truth is useful or if it may prove our undoing. The predilection of strength for questions for which no one today has the courage; the courage for the forbidden; the predestination to the labyrinth. An experience of seven solitudes. New ears for new music. New eyes for what is most distant. A new conscience for truths that have so far remained mute. And the will to the economy of the great style: keeping our strength, our enthusiasm in harness. Reverence for oneself; love of oneself; unconditional freedom before oneself.

Well then! Such men alone are my readers, my right readers, my predestined readers: what matter the rest? The rest—that is merely mankind. One must be above mankind in strength, in loftiness of soul—in contempt.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

## 1

Let us face ourselves. We are Hyperboreans; we know very well how far off we live. "Neither by land nor by sea will you find the way to the Hyperboreans"—Pindar already knew this about us. Beyond the north, ice, and death—our life, our happiness. We have discovered happiness, we know the way, we have found the exit out of the labyrinth of thousands of years. Who else has found it? Modern man perhaps? "I have got lost; I am everything that has got lost," sighs modern man.

This modernity was our sickness: lazy peace, cowardly compromise, the whole virtuous uncleanness of the modern Yes and No. This tolerance and largeness of the heart, which "forgives" all because it "understands" all, is sirocco for us. Rather live in the ice than among modern virtues and other south winds!

We were intrepid enough, we spared neither ourselves nor others; but for a long time we did not know where to turn with our intrepidity. We became gloomy, we were called fatalists. Our fatum—the abundance, the tension, the damming of strength. We thirsted for lightning and deeds and were most remote from the happiness of the weakling, "resignation." In our atmosphere was a thunderstorm; the nature we are became dark—for we saw no way. Formula for our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal.

## 2

What is good? Everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself.

What is bad? Everything that is born of weakness.

What is happiness? The feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome.

Not contentedness but more power; not peace but war; not virtue but fitness (Renaissance virtue, virtu, virtue that is moraline-free).

The weak and the failures shall perish: first principle of our love of man. And they shall even be given every possible assistance.

What is more harmful than any vice? Active pity for all the failures and all the weak: Christianity.

### 3

The problem I thus pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living beings (man is an end), but what type of man shall be bred, shall be willed, for being higher in value, worthier of life, more certain of a future.

Even in the past this higher type has appeared often—but as a fortunate accident, as an exception, never as something willed. In fact, this has been the type most dreaded—almost the dreadful—and from dread the opposite type was willed, bred, and attained: the domestic animal, the herd animal, the sick human animal—the Christian.

### 4

Mankind does not represent a development toward something better or stronger or higher in the sense accepted today. "Progress" is merely a modern idea, that is, a false idea. The European of today is vastly inferior in value to the European of the Renaissance: further development is altogether not according to any necessity in the direction of elevation, enhancement, or strength.

In another sense, success in individual cases is constantly encountered in the most widely different places and cultures: here we really do find a higher type, which is, in relation to mankind as a whole, a kind of overman. Such fortunate accidents of great success have always been possible and will perhaps always be possible. And even whole families, tribes, or peoples may occasionally represent such a bull's-eye.

### 5

Christianity should not be beautified and embellished. It has waged deadly war against this higher type of man; it has placed under a ban all the basic instincts of this type, and out of these instincts it has distilled evil and the Evil One: the strong man as the typically reprehensible man, the "reprobate." Christianity has sided with all that is weak and base, with all failures; it has made an ideal of whatever contradicts the instinct of the strong life to preserve itself. It has corrupted the reason even of those strongest in spirit by teaching men to consider the supreme values of the spirit as something sinful, as something that leads into error—as temptations. The most pitiful example: the corruption of Pascal, who believed in the corruption of his reason through original sin when it had in fact been corrupted only by his Christianity.

### 6

It is a painful, horrible spectacle that has dawned on me: I have drawn back the curtain from the



corruption of man. In my mouth, this word is at least free from one suspicion: that it might involve a moral accusation of man. It is meant—let me emphasize this once more—moraline-free. so much so that I experience this corruption most strongly precisely where men have so far aspired most deliberately to "virtue" and "godliness." I understand corruption, as you will guess, in the sense of decadence: it is my contention that all the values in which mankind now sums up its supreme desiderata are decadence-values.

I call an animal, a species, or an individual corrupt when it loses its instincts; when it chooses, when it prefers, what is disadvantageous for it. A history of "lofty sentiments," of the "ideals of mankind"—and it is possible that I shall have to write it—would almost explain too why man is so corrupt. Life itself is to my mind the instinct for growth, for durability, for an accumulation of forces, for power: where the will to power is lacking there is decline. It is my contention that all the supreme values of mankind lack this will—that the values which are symptomatic of decline, nihilistic values, are lording it under the holiest names.

7

Christianity is called the religion of pity. Pity stands opposed to the tonic emotions which heighten our vitality: it has a depressing effect. We are deprived of strength where we feel pity. That loss of strength which suffering as such inflicts on life is still further increased and multiplied by pity. Pity makes suffering contagious. Under certain circumstances, it may engender a total loss of life and vitality out of all proportion to the magnitude of the cause (as in the case of the death of the Nazarene). That is the first consideration, but there is a more important one.

Suppose we measure pity by the value of the reactions it usually produces; then its perilous nature appears in an even brighter light. Quite in general, pity crosses the law of development, which is the law of selection. It preserves what is ripe for destruction; it defends those who have been disinherited and condemned by life; and by the abundance of the failures of all kinds which it keeps alive, it gives life itself a gloomy and questionable aspect.

Some have dared to call pity a virtue (in every noble ethic it is considered a weakness); and as if this were not enough, it has been made the virtue, the basis and source of all virtues. To be sure—and one should always keep this in mind—this was done by a philosophy that was nihilistic and had inscribed the negation of life upon its shield. Schopenhauer was consistent enough: pity negates life and renders it more deserving of negation.

Pity is the practice of nihilism. To repeat: this depressive and contagious instinct crosses those instincts which aim at the preservation of life and at the enhancement of its value. Pity multiplies misery and conserves all that is miserable, and is thus a prime instrument of the advancement of decadence: pity persuades men to nothingness! Of course, one does not say "nothingness" but "beyond," or "God," or "true life," or Nirvana, salvation, blessedness.

This innocent rhetoric from the realm of the religious-moral idiosyncrasy appears much less innocent as soon as we realize which tendency it is that here shrouds itself in sublime words: hostility to life. Schopenhauer was hostile to life; therefore pity became a virtue for him.

Aristotle, as is well known, considered pity a pathological and dangerous condition, which one would be well advised to attack now and then with a purge: he understood tragedy as a purge. From the standpoint of the instinct of life, a remedy certainly seems necessary for such a pathological and dangerous accumulation of pity as is represented by the case of Schopenhauer (and unfortunately by our entire literary and artistic decadence from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoi to Wagner)—to puncture it and make it burst.

In our whole unhealthy modernity there is nothing more unhealthy than Christian pity. To be physicians here, to be inexorable here, to wield the scalpel here—that is our part, that is our love of man, that is how we are philosophers, we Hyperboreans.

## 8

It is necessary to say whom we consider our antithesis: it is the theologians and whatever has theologians' blood in its veins—and that includes our whole philosophy.

Whoever has seen this catastrophe at close range or, better yet, been subjected to it and almost perished of it, will no longer consider it a joking matter (the freethinking of our honorable natural scientists and physiologists are, to my mind, a joke: they lack passion in these matters, they do not suffer them as their passion and martyrdom). This poisoning is much more extensive than is generally supposed: I have found the theologians' instinctive arrogance wherever anyone today considers himself an "idealist"—wherever the right is assumed, on the basis of some higher origin, to look at reality from a superior and foreign vantage point.

The idealist, exactly like the priest, holds all the great concepts in his hand (and not only in his hand!); he plays them out with a benevolent contempt for the "understanding," the "senses," "honors," "good living," and "science"; he considers all those things beneath him, as so many harmful and seductive forces over which "the spirit" hovers in a state of pure for-itselfness—as if humility, chastity, poverty, or, in a word, holiness, had not harmed life immeasurably more than any horrors or vices.

The pure spirit is the pure lie. As long as the priest is considered a higher type of man—this professional negator, slanderer, and poisoner of life—there is no answer to the question: what is truth? For truth has been stood on its head when the conscious advocate of nothingness and negation is accepted as the representative of "truth."

## 9

Against this theologians' instinct I wage war: I have found its traces everywhere. Whoever has theologians' blood in his veins, sees all things in a distorted and dishonest perspective to begin with. The pathos which develops out of this condition calls itself faith: closing one's eyes to oneself once and for all, lest one suffer the sight of incurable falsehood. This faulty perspective on all things is elevated into a morality, a virtue, a holiness; the good conscience is tied to faulty vision; and no other perspective is conceded any further value once one's own has been made sacrosanct with the names of "God," "redemption," and "eternity." I have dug up the theologians' instinct everywhere: it

is the most widespread, really subterranean, form of falsehood found on earth.

Whatever a theologian feels to be true must be false: this is almost a criterion of truth. His most basic instinct of self-preservation forbids him to respect reality at any point or even to let it get a word in. Wherever the theologians' instinct extends, value judgments have been stood on their heads and the concepts of "true" and "false" are of necessity reversed: whatever is most harmful to life is called "true"; whatever elevates it, enhances, affirms, justifies it, and makes it triumphant, is called "false." When theologians reach out for power through the "conscience" of princes (or of peoples), we need never doubt what really happens at bottom: the will to the end, the nihilistic will, wants power.

## 10

Among Germans I am immediately understood when I say that philosophy has been corrupted by theologians' blood. The Protestant parson is the grandfather of German philosophy; Protestantism itself, its peccatum originale. Definition of Protestantism: the partial paralysis of Christianity—and of reason. One need merely say "Tübingen Seminary" to understand what German philosophy is at bottom: an insidious theology. The Swabians are the best liars in Germany: they lie innocently.

Why was Kant's appearance greeted with jubilation among German scholars—of whom three-fourths are the sons of parsons and teachers—and whence came the German conviction, echoed even today, that a change for the better began with Kant? The theologians' instinct in the German scholars divined what had once again been made possible. A path had been found by which one could sneak back to the old ideal. The conception of a "true world," the conception of morality as the essence of the world (these two most malignant errors of all time!), were once again, thanks to a wily and shrewd skepticism, if not provable, at least no longer refutable. Reason, the right of reason, does not extend that far. Reality had been reduced to mere "appearance," and a mendaciously fabricated world, the world of being, was honored as reality. Kant's success is merely a theologians' success: like Luther, like Leibniz, Kant was one more clog for German honesty, which was none too steady in the first place.

## 11

One more word against Kant as a moralist. A virtue must be our own invention, our most necessary self-expression and self-defense: any other kind of virtue is merely a danger. Whatever is not a condition of our life harms it: a virtue that is prompted solely by a feeling of respect for the concept of "virtue," as Kant would have it, is harmful. "Virtue," "duty," the "good in itself," the good which is impersonal and universally valid—chimeras and expressions of decline, of the final exhaustion of life, of the Chinese phase of Königsberg. The fundamental laws of self-preservation and growth demand the opposite—that everyone invent his own virtue, his own categorical imperative. A people perishes when it confuses its duty with duty in general. Nothing ruins us more profoundly, more intimately, than every "impersonal" duty, every sacrifice to the Moloch of abstraction. How could one fail to feel how Kant's categorical imperative endangered life itself! The theologians' instinct alone protected it!

An action demanded by the instinct of life is proved to be right by the pleasure that accompanies it; yet this nihilist with his Christian dogmatic entrails considered pleasure an objection. What could destroy us more quickly than working, thinking, and feeling without any inner necessity, without any deeply personal choice, without pleasure—as an automaton of "duty"? This is the very recipe for decadence, even for idiocy. Kant became an idiot. And this man was a contemporary of Goethe! This catastrophic spider was considered the German philosopher—he still is!

I am wary of saying what I think of the Germans. Did not Kant find in the French Revolution the transition from the inorganic form of the state to the organic? Did he not ask himself whether there was any event which could be explained only in terms of a moral disposition of mankind, an event which would demonstrate once and for all the "tendency of mankind toward the good"? Kant's answer: "This is the Revolution." The instinct which errs without fail, anti-nature as instinct, German decadence as philosophy—that is Kant!

## 12

I except a few skeptics—the decent type in the history of philosophy: the rest are simply unaware of the most basic requirements of intellectual honesty. All these great enthusiasts and prodigies behave like our little females: they consider "beautiful sentiments" adequate arguments, regard a heaving bosom as the bellows of the deity, and conviction a criterion of truth. In the end, Kant tried, with "German" innocence, to give this corruption, this lack of any intellectual conscience, scientific status. With his notion of "practical reason" he invented a special kind of reason for cases in which one need not bother about reason—that is, when morality, when the sublime command "thou shalt," raises its voice.

When we consider that among almost all peoples the philosopher is merely the next development of the priestly type, then this legacy of the priest, this self-deceiving counterfeit, ceases to be surprising. Having sacred tasks, such as improving, saving, or redeeming mankind—carrying the deity in his bosom and being the mouthpiece of imperatives from the beyond—with such a mission a man naturally stands outside all merely intellectual valuations: he himself is sanctified by such a task, he himself is a type of a higher order! What is science to the priest? He is above that! And until now the priest has ruled! He determined the concepts of "true" and "untrue"!

## 13

Let us not underestimate this: we ourselves, we free spirits, are nothing less than a "reevaluation of all values," an incarnate declaration of war and triumph over all the traditional conceptions of "true" and "untrue." The most valuable insights are discovered last, but the most valuable insights are the methods. All the methods, all the presuppositions of our current scientific outlook, were opposed for thousands of years with the most profound contempt. For their sake, men were excluded from the company of "decent" people and considered "enemies of God," despisers of the truth, and "possessed." Anyone with a scientific bent was a Chandala.

We have had the whole pathos of mankind against us—their conception of what truth ought to be, of what the service of the truth ought to be: every "thou shalt" has hitherto been aimed against us.

Our objectives, our practice, our quiet, cautious, mistrustful manner—all these were considered utterly unworthy and contemptible.

In the end one might well ask whether it was not really an aesthetic taste that kept mankind in blindness for so long: a picturesque effect was demanded of the truth, and the lover of knowledge was expected to make a strong impression on the senses. Our modesty offended men's taste longest of all. How well they divined that, these turkeycocks of God!

#### 14

We have learned differently. We have become more modest in every way. We no longer derive man from "the spirit" or "the deity," we have placed him back among the animals. We consider him the strongest animal because he is the most cunning; his spirituality is a consequence of this. On the other hand, we oppose the vanity that would raise its head again here too—as if man had been the great hidden purpose of the evolution of the animals. Man is by no means the crown of creation: every living being stands beside him on the same level of perfection. And even this is saying too much: relatively speaking, man is the most bungled of all the animals, the sickliest, and not one has strayed more dangerously from its instincts. But for all that, he is of course the most interesting.

As regards the animals, Descartes was the first to have dared, with admirable boldness, to understand the animal as *machina*: the whole of our physiology endeavors to prove this claim. And we are consistent enough not to except man, as Descartes still did: our knowledge of man today goes just as far as we understand him mechanistically. Formerly man was given a "free will" as his dowry from a higher order: today we have taken this will away altogether, in the sense that we no longer admit the will as a faculty. The old word "will" now serves only to denote a resultant, a kind of individual reaction, which follows necessarily upon a number of partly contradictory, partly harmonious stimuli: the will no longer "acts" or "moves."

Formerly, the proof of man's higher origin, of his divinity, was found in his consciousness, in his "spirit." To become perfect, he was advised to draw in his senses, turtle fashion, to cease all intercourse with earthly things, to shed his mortal shroud: then his essence would remain, the "pure spirit." Here too we have reconsidered: the development of consciousness, the "spirit," is for us nothing less than the symptom of a relative imperfection of the organism: it means trying, groping, blundering—an exertion which uses up an unnecessary amount of nervous energy. We deny that anything can be done perfectly as long as it is still done consciously. The "pure spirit" is a pure stupidity: if we subtract the nervous system and the senses—the "mortal shroud"—then we miscalculate—that is all!

#### 15

In Christianity neither morality nor religion has even a single point of contact with reality. Nothing but imaginary causes ("God," "soul," "ego," "spirit," "free will"—for that matter, "unfree will"), nothing but imaginary effects ("sin," "redemption," "grace," "punishment," "forgiveness of sins"). Intercourse between imaginary beings ("God," "spirits," "souls"); an imaginary natural science (anthropocentric; no trace of any concept of natural causes); an imaginary psychology (nothing but

self-misunderstandings, interpretations of agreeable or disagreeable general feelings—for example, of the states of the *nervus sympathicus*—with the aid of the sign language of the religio-moral idiosyncrasy: "repentance," "pangs of conscience," "temptation by the devil," "the presence of God"); an imaginary teleology ("the kingdom of God," "the Last Judgment," "eternal life").

This world of pure fiction is vastly inferior to the world of dreams insofar as the latter mirrors reality, whereas the former falsifies, devalues, and negates reality. Once the concept of "nature" had been invented as the opposite of "God," "natural" had to become a synonym of "reprehensible": this whole world of fiction is rooted in hatred of the natural (of reality!); it is the expression of a profound vexation at the sight of reality.

But this explains everything. Who alone has good reason to lie his way out of reality? He who suffers from it. But to suffer from reality is to be a piece of reality that has come to grief. The preponderance of feelings of displeasure over feelings of pleasure is the cause of this fictitious morality and religion; but such a preponderance provides the very formula for decadence.

## 16

A critique of the Christian conception of God forces us to the same conclusion. A people that still believes in itself retains its own god. In him it reveres the conditions which let it prevail, its virtues: it projects its pleasure in itself, its feeling of power, into a being to whom one may offer thanks. Whoever is rich wants to give of his riches; a proud people needs a god: it wants to sacrifice. Under such conditions, religion is a form of thankfulness. Being thankful for himself, man needs a god. Such a god must be able to help and to harm, to be friend and enemy—he is admired whether good or destructive. The anti-natural castration of a god, to make him a god of the good alone, would here be contrary to everything desirable. The evil god is needed no less than the good god: after all, we do not owe our own existence to tolerance and humanitarianism.

What would be the point of a god who knew nothing of wrath, revenge, envy, scorn, cunning, and violence? Who had perhaps never experienced the delightful ardeurs of victory and annihilation? No one would understand such a god: why have him then?

To be sure, when a people is perishing, when it feels how its faith in the future and its hope of freedom are waning irrevocably, when submission begins to appear to it as the prime necessity and it becomes aware of the virtues of the subjugated as the conditions of self-preservation, then its god has to change too. Now he becomes a sneak, timid and modest; he counsels "peace of soul," hate-no-more, forbearance, even "love" of friend and enemy. He moralizes constantly, he crawls into the cave of every private virtue, he becomes god for everyman, he becomes a private person, a cosmopolitan.

Formerly, he represented a people, the strength of a people, everything aggressive and power-thirsty in the soul of a people; now he is merely the good god.

Indeed, there is no other alternative for a god: either he is the will to power, and he remains a people's god, or he is the incapacity for power, and then necessarily he becomes good.

Wherever the will to power declines in any form, there is invariably also a physiological retrogression, decadence. The deity of decadence, gelded in his most virile virtues and instincts, becomes of necessity the god of the physiologically retrograde, of the weak. Of course, they do not call themselves the weak; they call themselves "the good."

No further hint is required to indicate the moments in history at which the dualistic fiction of a good and an evil god first became possible. The same instinct that prompts the subjugated to reduce their god to the "good-in-itself" also prompts them to eliminate all the good qualities from the god of their conquerors; they take revenge on their masters by turning their god into the devil. The good god and the devil—both abortions of decadence.

How can anyone today still submit to the simplicity of Christian theologians to the point of insisting with them that the development of the conception of God from the "God of Israel," the god of a people, to the Christian God, the quintessence of everything good, represents progress? Yet even Renan does this. As if Renan had the right to be simple-minded! After all, the opposite stares you in the face. When the presuppositions of ascending life—when all things strong, brave, masterful, and proud—are eliminated from the conception of God; when he degenerates step by step into a mere symbol, a staff for the weary, a sheet-anchor for the drowning; when he becomes the god of the poor, the sinners, and the sick par excellence, and the attribute "Savior" or "Redeemer" remains in the end as the one essential attribute of divinity—just what does such a transformation signify? what, such a reduction of the divine?

To be sure, "the kingdom of God" has thus been enlarged. Formerly he had only his people, his "chosen" people. Then he, like his people, became a wanderer and went into foreign lands; and ever since, he has not settled down anywhere—until he finally came to feel at home anywhere, this great cosmopolitan—until "the great numbers" and half the earth were on his side. Nevertheless, the god of "the great numbers," the democrat among the gods, did not become a proud pagan god: he remained a Jew, he remained a god of nooks, the god of all the dark corners and places, of all the unhealthy quarters the world over!

His world-wide kingdom is, as ever, an underworld kingdom, a hospital, a souterrain kingdom, a ghetto kingdom. And he himself so pale, so weak, so decadent. Even the palest of the pale were able to master him—our honorable metaphysicians, those concept-albinos. They spun their webs around him until, hypnotized by their motions, he himself became a spider, another metaphysician. Now he in turn spun the world out of himself—sub specie Spinozae. Now he transfigured himself into something ever thinner and paler; he became an "ideal," he became "pure spirit," the "Absolute," the "thing-in-itself." The deterioration of a god: God became the "thing-in-itself."

The Christian conception of God—God as god of the sick, God as a spider God, as spirit—is one of the most corrupt conceptions of the divine ever attained on earth. It may even represent the low-water mark in the descending development of divine types. God degenerated into the contradiction

of life, instead of being its transfiguration and eternal Yes! God as the declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live! God—the formula for every slander against "this world," for every lie about the "beyond"! God—the deification of nothingness, the will to nothingness pronounced holy!

19

That the strong races of northern Europe did not reject the Christian God certainly does no credit to their religious genius—not to speak of their taste. There is no excuse whatever for their failure to dispose of such a sickly and senile product of decadence. But a curse lies upon them for this failure: they have absorbed sickness, old age, and contradiction into all their instincts—and since then they have not created another god. Almost two thousand years—and not a single new god! But still, as if his existence were justified, as if he represented the ultimate and the maximum of the god-creating power, of the creator spiritus in man, this pitiful god of Christian monotono-theism! This hybrid product of decay, this mixture of zero, concept, and contradiction, in which all the instincts of decadence, all cowardices and wearinesses of the soul, find their sanction!

20

I hope that my condemnation of Christianity has not involved me in any injustice to a related religion with an even larger number of adherents: Buddhism. Both belong together as nihilistic religions—they are religions of decadence—but they differ most remarkably. For being in a position now to compare them, the critic of Christianity is profoundly grateful to the students of India.

Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity: posing problems objectively and coolly is part of its inheritance, for Buddhism comes after a philosophic movement which spanned centuries. The concept of "God" had long been disposed of when it arrived. Buddhism is the only genuinely positivistic religion in history. This applies even to its theory of knowledge (a strict phenomenalism): it no longer says "struggle against sin" but, duly respectful of reality, "struggle against suffering." Buddhism is profoundly distinguished from Christianity by the fact that the self-deception of the moral concepts lies far behind it. In my terms, it stands beyond good and evil.

The two physiological facts on which it is based and which it keeps in mind are: first, an excessive sensitivity, which manifests itself in a refined susceptibility to pain; and second, an overspiritualization, an all-too-long preoccupation with concepts and logical procedures, which has damaged the instinct of personality by subordinating it to the "impersonal" (both states which at least some of my readers, those who are "objective" like myself, will know from experience). These physiological conditions have led to a depression, and the Buddha proceeds against this with hygienic measures. Against it he recommends life in the open air, the wandering life; moderation in eating and a careful selection of foods; wariness of all intoxicants; wariness also of all emotions that activate the gall bladder or heat the blood; no worry either for oneself or for others. He prescribes ideas which are either soothing or cheering, and he invents means for weaning oneself from all the others. He understands goodness and graciousness as health-promoting.

Prayer is ruled out, and so is asceticism; there is no categorical imperative, no compulsion whatever,



not even in the monastic societies (one may leave again). All these things would merely increase the excessive sensitivity we mentioned. For the same reason, he does not ask his followers to fight those who think otherwise: there is nothing to which his doctrine is more opposed than the feeling of revenge, antipathy, resentment ("it is not by enmity that enmity is ended"—that is the stirring refrain of all Buddhism). And all this is quite right: these emotions would indeed be utterly unhealthy in view of the basic hygienic purpose.

Against the spiritual exhaustion he encounters, which manifests itself in an excessive "objectivity" (that is, in the individual's loss of interest in himself, in the loss of a center of gravity, of "egoism"), he fights with a rigorous attempt to lead back even the most spiritual interests to the person. In the Buddha's doctrine, egoism becomes a duty: the "one thing needful," the question "how can you escape from suffering?" regulates and limits the whole spiritual diet. (Perhaps one may here recall that Athenian who also waged war against any pure "scientism"—Socrates, who elevated personal egoism to an ethic, even in the realm of problems.)

## 21

Buddhism presupposes a very mild climate, customs of great gentleness and liberality, and the absence of militarism; moreover, the movement had to originate among the higher, and even the scholarly, classes. Cheerfulness, calm, and freedom from desire are the highest goal, and the goal is attained. Buddhism is not a religion in which one merely aspires to perfection: perfection is the normal case.

In Christianity the instincts of the subjugated and oppressed come to the fore: here the lowest classes seek their salvation. The casuistry of sin, self-criticism, the inquisition of the conscience, are pursued as a pastime, as a remedy for boredom; the emotional reaction to one who has power, called "God," is constantly nourished (by means of prayer); and what is highest is considered unattainable, a gift, "grace." Public acts are precluded; the hiding-place, the darkened room, is Christian. The body is despised, hygiene repudiated as sensuality: the church even opposes cleanliness (the first Christian measure after the expulsion of the Moors was the closing of the public baths, of which there were two hundred and seventy in Cordova alone). Christian too is a certain sense of cruelty against oneself and against others, hatred of all who think differently; the will to persecute. Gloomy and exciting conceptions predominate; the most highly desired states, designated with the highest names, are epileptoid; the diet is so chosen as to favor morbid phenomena and overstimulate the nerves. Christian too is mortal enmity against the lords of the earth, against the "noble"—along with a sly, secret rivalry (one leaves them the "body," one wants only the "soul"). Christian, finally, is the hatred of the spirit, of pride, courage, freedom, liberty of the spirit; Christian is the hatred of the senses, of joy in the senses, of joy itself.

## 22

When Christianity left its native soil, the lowest classes, the underworld of the ancient world, when it began to seek power among barbarian peoples, it was no longer confronted with weary men but with inwardly brutalized, cruel people—strong but bungled men. Here, dissatisfaction with oneself, suffering from oneself, are not due to an excessive sensitivity and susceptibility to pain, as among

the Buddhists, but, on the contrary, to an overpowering desire to inflict pain and to find an outlet for inner tensions in hostile acts and ideas. Christianity needed barbaric concepts and values to become master over barbarians; for example, the sacrifice of the first-born, the drinking of blood in the Lord's Supper, the contempt for the spirit and for culture, torture in all its forms, both sensuous and not sensuous, and the great pomp of the cult.

Buddhism is a religion for late men, for gracious and gentle races who have become overspiritual and excessively susceptible to pain (Europe is far from ripe for it): it is a way of leading them back to peace and cheerfulness, to a diet for the spirit and a certain inuring of the body. Christianity would become master over beasts of prey: its method is to make them sick; enfeeblement is the Christian recipe for taming, for "civilizing." Buddhism is a religion for the end and the weariness of civilization; Christianity finds no civilization as yet—under certain circumstances it might lay the foundation for one.

## 23

Buddhism, I repeat, is a hundred times colder, more truthful, more objective. It is no longer confronted with the need to make suffering and the susceptibility to pain respectable by interpreting them in terms of sin—it simply says what it thinks: "I suffer." To the barbarian, however, suffering as such is not respectable: he requires an exegesis before he will admit to himself that he is suffering (his instinct would sooner direct him to deny his suffering and bear it in silence). Here the word "devil" was a blessing: man had an overpowering and terrible enemy—man need not be ashamed of suffering at the hands of such an enemy.

At the bottom of Christianity there are some subtleties that belong to the Orient. Above all, it knows that it is a matter of complete indifference whether something is true, while it is of the utmost importance whether it is believed to be true. Truth and the faith that something is true: two completely separate realms of interest—almost diametrically opposite realms—they are reached by utterly different paths. Having knowledge of this—that is almost the definition of the wise man in the Orient: the Brahmins understand this; Plato understands it; and so does every student of esoteric wisdom. If, for example, it makes men happy to believe that they have been redeemed from sin, it is not necessary, as a condition for this, that man is, in fact, sinful, but merely that he feels sinful. And if faith is quite generally needed above all, then reason, knowledge, and inquiry must be discredited: the way to truth becomes the forbidden way.

Strong hope is a far more powerful stimulant of life than any single realization of happiness could ever be. Those who suffer must be sustained by a hope that can never be contradicted by any reality or be disposed of by any fulfillment—a hope for the beyond. (Precisely because of its ability to keep the unfortunate in continual suspense, the Greeks considered hope the evil of evils, the truly insidious evil: it remained behind in the barrel of evils!)

To make love possible, God must be a person; to permit the lowest instincts to participate, God must be young. To excite the ardor of the females, a beautiful saint must be placed in the foreground, and to excite that of the men, a Mary—presupposing all along that Christianity wants to become master on soil where some aphrodisiac or Adonis cult has already established the general conception of a cult. The requirement of chastity strengthens the vehemence and inwardliness of the

conception of a cult. The requirement of ecstasy strengthens the vehemence and inwardness of the religious instinct: it makes the cult warmer, more enthusiastic, more soulful.

Love is the state in which man sees things most decidedly as they are not. The power of illusion is at its peak here, as is the power to sweeten and transfigure. In love man endures more, man bears everything. A religion had to be invented in which one could love: what is worst in life is thus overcome—it is not even seen any more.

So much for the three Christian virtues: faith, love, hope—I call them the three Christian shrewdnesses. Buddhism is too late, too positivistic, to be shrewd in this way.

## 24

Here I merely touch on the problem of the genesis of Christianity. The first principle for its solution is: Christianity can be understood only in terms of the soil out of which it grew—it is not a counter-movement to the Jewish instinct, it is its very consequence, one inference more in its awe-inspiring logic. In the formula of the Redeemer: "Salvation is of the Jews." The second principle is: the psychological type of the Galilean is still recognizable; but only in its complete degeneration (which is at the same time a mutilation and an overloading with alien features) could it serve as that for which it has been used—as the type of a redeemer of mankind.

The Jews are the strangest people in world history because, confronted with the question whether to be or not to be, they chose, with a perfectly uncanny deliberateness, to be at any price: this price was the radical falsification of all nature, all naturalness, all reality, of the whole inner world as well as the outer. They defined themselves sharply against all the conditions under which a people had hitherto been able to live, been allowed to live; out of themselves they created a counter-concept to natural conditions: they turned religion, cult, morality, history, psychology, one after the other, into an incurable contradiction to their natural values. We encounter this same phenomenon once again and in immeasurably enlarged proportions, yet merely as a copy: the Christian church cannot make the slightest claim to originality when compared with the "holy people." That is precisely why the Jews are the most catastrophic people of world history: by their after-effect they have made mankind so thoroughly false that even today the Christian can feel anti-Jewish without realizing that he himself is the ultimate Jewish consequence. In my *Genealogy of Morals* I offered the first psychological analysis of the counter-concepts of a noble morality and a morality of resentment—the latter born of the No to the former: but this is the Judaeo-Christian morality pure and simple. So that it could say No to everything on earth that represents the ascending tendency of life, to that which has turned out well, to power, to beauty, to self-affirmation, the instinct of resentment, which had here become genius, had to invent another world from whose point of view this affirmation of life appeared as evil, as the reprehensible as such.

Psychologically considered, the Jewish people are a people endowed with the toughest vital energy, who, placed in impossible circumstances, voluntarily and out of the most profound prudence of self-preservation, take sides with all the instincts of decadence—not as mastered by them, but because they divined a power in these instincts with which one could prevail against "the world." The Jews are the antithesis of all decadents: they have had to represent decadents to the point of illusion; with a non plus ultra of histrionic genius they have known how to place themselves at the head of all movements of decadence (as the Christianity of Paul) in order to create something out of them

movements of decadence (as the Christianity of Paul) in order to create something out of them which is stronger than any Yes-saying party of life. Decadence is only a means for the type of man who demands power in Judaism and Christianity, the priestly type: this type of man has a life interest in making mankind sick; and in so twisting the concepts of good and evil, true and false, as to imperil life and slander the world.

## 25

The history of Israel is invaluable as the typical history of all denaturing of natural values. I indicate five points.

Originally, especially at the time of the kings, Israel also stood in the right, that is, the natural, relationship to all things. Its Yahweh was the expression of a consciousness of power, of joy in oneself, of hope for oneself: through him victory and welfare were expected; through him nature was trusted to give what the people needed—above all, rain. Yahweh is the god of Israel and therefore the god of justice: the logic of every people that is in power and has a good conscience. In the festival cult these two sides of the self-affirmation of a people find expression: they are grateful for the great destinies which raised them to the top; they are grateful in relation to the annual cycle of the seasons and to all good fortune in stock farming and agriculture.

This state of affairs long remained the ideal, even after it had been done away with in melancholy fashion: anarchy within, the Assyrians without. The people, however, clung to the vision, as the highest desirability, of a king who is a good soldier and severe judge: above all, that typical prophet (that is, critic and satirist of the moment), Isaiah.

But all hopes remained unfulfilled. The old god was no longer able to do what he once could do. They should have let him go. What happened? They changed his concept—they denatured his concept: at this price they held on to him. Yahweh, the god of "justice"—no longer one with Israel, an expression of the self-confidence of the people: now a god only under certain conditions.

The concept of God becomes a tool in the hands of priestly agitators, who now interpret all happiness as a reward, all unhappiness as punishment for disobeying God, as "sin": that most mendacious device of interpretation, the alleged "moral world order," with which the natural concepts of cause and effect are turned upsidedown once and for all. When, through reward and punishment, one has done away with natural causality, an anti-natural causality is required: now everything else that is unnatural follows. A god who demands—in place of a god who helps, who devises means, who is at bottom the word for every happy inspiration of courage and self-confidence.

Morality—no longer the expression of the conditions for the life and growth of a people, no longer its most basic instinct of life, but become abstract, become the antithesis of life—morality as the systematic degradation of the imagination, as the "evil eye" for all things. What is Jewish, what is Christian, morality? Chance done out of its innocence; misfortune besmirched with the concept of "sin"; well-being as a danger, a "temptation"; physiological indisposition poisoned with the worm of conscience.

The concept of God falsified, the concept of morality falsified: the Jewish priesthood did not stop there. The whole of the history of Israel could not be used: away with it! These priests accomplished a miracle of falsification, and a good part of the Bible now lies before us as documentary proof. With matchless scorn for every tradition, for every historical reality, they translated the past of their own people into religious terms; that is, they turned it into a stupid salvation mechanism of guilt before Yahweh, and punishment; of piety before Yahweh, and reward. We would experience this most disgraceful act of historical falsification as something much more painful if the ecclesiastical interpretation of history had not all but deafened us in the course of thousands of years to the demands of integrity in historicism. And the church was seconded by the philosophers: the lie of the "moral world order" runs through the whole development of modern philosophy. What does "moral world order" mean? That there is a will of God, once and for all, as to what man is to do and what he is not to do; that the value of a people, of an individual, is to be measured according to how much or how little the will of God is obeyed; that the will of God manifests itself in the destinies of a people, of an individual, as the ruling factor, that is to say, as punishing and rewarding according to the degree of obedience.

The reality behind this pitiful lie is this: a parasitical type of man, thriving only at the expense of all healthy forms of life, the priest, uses the name of God in vain: he calls a state of affairs in which the priest determines the value of things "the kingdom of God"; he calls the means by which such a state is attained or maintained "the will of God"; with cold-blooded cynicism he measures peoples, ages, individuals, according to whether they profited or resisted the overlordship of the priests. One should see them at work: in the hands of the Jewish priests, the great age in the history of Israel became an age of decay; the Exile, the long misfortune, was transformed into an eternal punishment for the great age—an age in which the priest was still a nobody. Depending on their own requirements, the priests made either wretchedly meek and sleek priors or "godless ones" out of the powerful, often very bold, figures in the history of Israel; they simplified the psychology of every great event by reducing it to the idiotic formula, "obedience or disobedience to God."

One step further: the "will of God" (that is, the conditions for the preservation of priestly power) must be known. To this end a "revelation" is required. In plain language: a great literary forgery becomes necessary, a "holy scripture" is discovered; it is made public with full hieratic pomp, with days of repentance and cries of lamentation over the long "sin." The "will of God" had long been fixed: all misfortune rests on one's having become estranged from the "holy scripture." The "will of God" had already been revealed to Moses. What happened? With severity and pedantry, the priest formulated once and for all, down to the large and small taxes he was to be paid (not to forget the tastiest pieces of meat, for the priest is a steak eater), what he wants to have, "what the will of God is." From now on all things in life are so ordered that the priest is indispensable—marriage, sickness, death, not to speak of "sacrifices" (meals), the holy parasite appears in order to denature them—in his language: to "consecrate."

For one must understand this: every natural custom, every natural institution (state, judicial order, marriage, care of the sick and the poor), every demand inspired by the instinct of life—in short, everything that contains its value in itself is made altogether valueless, anti-valuable by the parasitism of the priest (or the "moral world order"); now it requires a sanction after the event—a value-

conferring power is needed to negate what is natural in it and to create a value by so doing. The priest devalues, desecrates nature: this is the price of his existence. Disobedience of God, that is, of the priest, of "the Law," is now called "sin"; the means for "reconciliation with God" are, as is meet, means that merely guarantee still more thorough submission to the priest: the priest alone "redeems."

Psychologically considered, "sins" become indispensable in any society organized by priests: they are the real handles of power. The priest lives on sins, it is essential for him that people "sin." Supreme principle: "God forgives those who repent"—in plain language: those who submit to the priest.

27

On such utterly false soil, where everything natural, every natural value, every reality was opposed by the most profound instincts of the ruling class, Christianity grew up—a form of mortal enmity against reality that has never yet been surpassed. The "holy people," who had retained only priestly values, only priestly words for all things and who, with awe-inspiring consistency, had distinguished from themselves all other powers on earth as "unholy," as "world," as "Sin"—this people produced an ultimate formula for its instinct that was logical to the point of self-negation: as Christianity, it negated even the last form of reality, the "holy people," the "chosen people," the Jewish reality itself. This case is of the first rank: the little rebellious movement which is baptized with the name of Jesus of Nazareth represents the Jewish instinct once more—in other words, the priestly instinct which can no longer stand the priest as a reality: the invention of a still more abstract form of existence, of a still more unreal vision of the world than is involved in the organization of a church. Christianity negates the church.

Jesus has been understood, or misunderstood, as the cause of a rebellion; and I fail to see against what this rebellion was directed, if it was not the Jewish church—"church" exactly in the sense in which we use the word today. It was a rebellion against "the good and the just," against "the saints of Israel," against the hierarchy of society—not against its corruption, but against caste, privilege, order, and formula: it was the disbelief in the "higher man," the No to all that was priest or theologian. But the hierarchy which was thus questioned, even though for just a moment, was the lake-dwelling on which alone the Jewish people could continue to exist amid the "water"—the hard-won last chance of survival, the residue of its independent political existence. An attack on this was an attack on the deepest instinct of a people, on the toughest life-will which has ever existed in any people on earth. That holy anarchist who summoned the people at the bottom, the outcasts and "sinners," the chandalas within Judaism, to opposition against the dominant order—using language, if the Gospels were to be trusted, which would lead to Siberia today too—was a political criminal insofar as political criminals were possible at all in an absurdly unpolitical community. This brought him to the cross: the proof of this is the inscription on the cross. He died for his guilt. All evidence is lacking, however often it has been claimed, that he died for the guilt of others.

28

It is a completely different question whether any such opposition ever entered his consciousness—whether he was not merely experienced by others as representing this opposition. And it is only at

whether he was not merely experienced by others as representing this opposition. And it is only at this point that I touch on the problem of the psychology of the Redeemer.

I confess that I read few books with as many difficulties as the Gospels. These difficulties are different from those whose demonstration has provided the scholarly curiosity of the German spirit with one of its most unforgettable triumphs. The time is long past when I too, like every young scholar, slowly drew out the savor of the work of the incomparable Strauss, with the shrewdness of a refined philologist. I was twenty years old then: now I am too serious for that. What do I care about the contradictions in the "tradition"? How can one call saints' legends "tradition" in the first place? The biographies of saints are the most ambiguous kind of literature there is: to apply scientific methods to them, in the absence of any other documents, strikes me as doomed to failure from the start—mere scholarly idleness.

29

What concerns me is the psychological type of the Redeemer. After all, this could be contained in the Gospels despite the Gospels, however mutilated or overloaded with alien features: as Francis of Assisi is preserved in his legends, despite his legends. Not the truth concerning what he did, what he said, how he really died; but the question whether his type can still be exhibited at all, whether it has been "transmitted."

The attempts I know to read the history of a "soul" out of the Gospels seem to me proof of a contemptible psychological frivolity. M. Renan, that buffoon in psychologicis, has introduced the two most inappropriate concepts possible into his explanation of the Jesus type: the concept of genius and the concept of the hero ("héros"). But if anything is unevangelical it is the concept of the hero. Just the opposite of all wrestling, of all feeling-oneself-in-a-struggle, has here become instinct: the incapacity for resistance becomes morality here ("resist not evil"—the most profound word of the Gospels, their key in a certain sense), blessedness in peace, in gentleness, in not being able to be an enemy. What are the "glad tidings"? True life, eternal life, has been found—it is not promised, it is here, it is in you: as a living in love, in love without subtraction and exclusion, without regard for station. Everyone is the child of God—Jesus definitely presumes nothing for himself alone—and as a child of God everyone is equal to everyone. To make a hero of Jesus! And even more, what a misunderstanding is the word "genius"! Our whole concept, our cultural concept, of "spirit" has no meaning whatever in the world in which Jesus lives. Spoken with the precision of a physiologist, even an entirely different word would be yet more fitting here—the word idiot.

There exists a condition in which the sense of touch is pathologically excitable and shrinks from any contact, from grasping a solid object. One should translate such a physiological habitus into its ultimate consequence—an instinctive hatred of every reality, a flight into "what cannot be grasped," "the incomprehensible," an aversion to every formula, to every concept of time and space, to all that is solid, custom, institution, church; a being at home in a world which is no longer in contact with any kind of reality, a merely "inner" world, a "true" world, an "eternal" world. "The kingdom of God is in you."

30

The instinctive hatred of reality: a consequence of an extreme capacity for suffering and excitement which no longer wants any contact at all because it feels every contact too deeply.

The instinctive exclusion of any antipathy, any hostility, any boundaries or divisions in man's feelings: the consequence of an extreme capacity for suffering and excitement which experiences any resistance, even any compulsion to resist, as unendurable displeasure (that is, as harmful, as something against which the instinct of self-preservation warns us); and finds blessedness (pleasure) only in no longer offering any resistance to anybody, neither to evil nor to him who is evil—love as the only, as the last possible, way of life.

These are the two physiological realities on which, out of which, the doctrine of redemption grew. I call this a sublime further development of hedonism on a thoroughly morbid basis. Most closely related to it, although with a generous admixture of Greek vitality and nervous energy, is Epicureanism, the pagan doctrine of redemption. Epicurus, a typical decadent—first recognized as such by me. The fear of pain, even of infinitely minute pain—that can end in no other way than in a religion of love.

31

I have already given my answer to the problem. Its presupposition is that the Redeemer type is preserved for us only in extensive distortion. This distortion is very probable in any case; for several reasons, such a type could not remain pure, whole, free from accretions. He must show traces of the milieu in which he moved as a foreign figure; and even more of the history, the fate of the first Christian community, from which the type was enriched, retroactively, with features which are comprehensible only in terms of later polemics and propaganda purposes.

That queer and sick world into which the Gospels introduce us—as in a Russian novel, a world in which the scum of society, nervous disorders, and "childlike" idiocy seem to be having a rendezvous—must at all events have coarsened the type: in order to be able to understand anything of it, the first disciples, in particular, first translated into their own crudity an existence which was wholly embedded in symbols and incomprehensibilities—for them the type did not exist until it had been reshaped in better-known forms. The prophet, the Messiah, the future judge, the moral teacher, the miracle man, John the Baptist—each another chance to misconstrue the type.

Finally, let us not underestimate the proprium of all great, and especially sectarian, veneration: it blots out the original, often painfully strange features and idiosyncrasies of the venerated being—it does not even see them. It is regrettable that a Dostoevski did not live near this most interesting of all decadents—I mean someone who would have known how to sense the very stirring charm of such a mixture of the sublime, the sickly, and the childlike.

A final consideration: as a type of decadence, the type might actually have been peculiarly manifold and contradictory. Such a possibility cannot be excluded altogether. Nevertheless, everything speaks against this: precisely because the tradition would have to be curiously faithful and objective in this case—and we have reasons for supposing the opposite. Meanwhile there is a gaping contradiction between the sermonizer on the mount, lake, and meadow whose appearance seems like that of a Buddha on soil that is not at all Indian, and that fanatic of aggression, that mortal



like that of a Buddha on soil that is not at all Indian, and that fanatic of aggression, that mortal

enemy of theologians and priests, whom Renan's malice has glorified as *le grand maître en ironie*. I myself have no doubt that the generous dose of gall (and even of esprit) first flowed into the type of the Master from the excited state of Christian propaganda; after all, the unscrupulousness of all sectarians, when it comes to constructing their own apology out of their master, is only too well known. When the first community needed a judging, quarreling, angry, malignantly sophistical theologian, against theologians, it created its "God" according to its needs—just as it put into his mouth, without any hesitation, those wholly unevangelical concepts which now it cannot do without: "the return," the "Last Judgment," every kind of temporal expectation and promise.

32

To repeat, I am opposed to any attempt to introduce the fanatic into the Redeemer type: the word *imperieux*, which Renan uses, is alone enough to annul the type. The "glad tidings" are precisely that there are no longer any opposites; the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children; the faith which finds expression here is not a faith attained through struggle—it is there, it has been there from the beginning; it is, as it were, an infantilism that has receded into the spiritual. The case of puberty being retarded and not developing in the organism, as a consequence of degeneration, is well known, at least to physiologists. Such a faith is not angry, does not reproach, does not resist: it does not bring "the sword"—it simply does not foresee how it might one day separate. It does not prove itself either by miracle or by reward and promise, least of all "by scripture": at every moment it is its own miracle, its own reward, its own proof, its own "kingdom of God." Nor does this faith formulate itself: it lives, it resists all formulas. Of course the accidents of environment, of language, of background determine a certain sphere of concepts: the earliest Christianity uses only Jewish-Semitic concepts (the eating and drinking at the Last Supper belong here, that concept which, like everything Jewish, has been misused so badly by the church). But one should beware of finding more than a sign language in this, a semeiology, an occasion for parables. For this anti-realist, that not a word is taken literally is precisely the presupposition of being able to speak at all. Among Indians he would have availed himself of Sankhya concepts; among the Chinese, of those of Lao-tse—without having felt any difference. Using the expression somewhat tolerantly, one could call Jesus a "free spirit"—he does not care for anything solid: the word kills, all that is solid kills. The concept, the experience of "life" in the only way he knows it, resists any kind of word, formula, law, faith, dogma. He speaks only of the innermost: "life" or "truth" or "light" is his word for the innermost—all the rest, the whole of reality, the whole of nature, language itself, has for him only the value of a sign, a simile.

Make no mistake at this point, however seductive the Christian, in other words, the ecclesiastical, prejudice may be: such a symbolist par excellence stands outside all religion, all cult concepts, all history, all natural science, all experience of the world, all knowledge, all politics, all psychology, all books, all art—his "knowledge" is pure foolishness precisely concerning the fact that such things exist. Culture is not known to him even by hearsay, he does not need to fight it—he does not negate it. The same applies to the state, to the whole civic order and society, to work, to war—he never had any reason to negate "the world"; the ecclesiastical concept of "world" never occurred to him. To negate is the very thing that is impossible for him. Dialectic is equally lacking; the very idea is lacking that a faith, a "truth," might be proved by reasons (his proofs are inner "lights," inner feelings of pleasure and self-affirmations—all of them "proofs of strength"). Such a doctrine is also

...of power and self-assertion, and of their power of strength. Such a doctrine is also

incapable of contradicting: it does not even comprehend that there are, that there can be, other doctrines; it cannot even imagine a contradictory judgment. Where it encounters one, from innermost sympathy it will mourn over "blindness"—for it sees the "light"—but it will offer no objection.

33

In the whole psychology of the "evangel" the concept of guilt and punishment is lacking; also the concept of a reward. "Sin"—any distance separating God and man—is abolished: precisely this is the "glad tidings." Blessedness is not promised, it is not tied to conditions: it is the only reality—the rest is a sign with which to speak of it.

The consequence of such a state projects itself into a new practice, the genuine evangelical practice. It is not a "faith" that distinguishes the Christian: the Christian acts, he is distinguished by acting differently: by not resisting, either in words or in his heart, those who treat him ill; by making no distinction between foreigner and native, between Jew and not-Jew ("the neighbor"—really the coreligionist, the Jew); by not growing angry with anybody, by not despising anybody; by not permitting himself to be seen or involved at courts of law ("not swearing"); by not divorcing his wife under any circumstances, not even if his wife has been proved unfaithful. All of this, at bottom one principle; all of this, consequences of one instinct.

The life of the Redeemer was nothing other than this practice—nor was his death anything else. He no longer required any formulas, any rites for his intercourse with God—not even prayer. He broke with the whole Jewish doctrine of repentance and reconciliation; he knows that it is only in the practice of life that one feels "divine," "blessed," "evangelical," at all times a "child of God." Not "repentance," not "prayer for forgiveness," are the ways to God: only the evangelical practice leads to God, indeed, it is "God"! What was disposed of with the evangel was the Judaism of the concepts of "sin," "forgiveness of sin," "faith," "redemption through faith"—the whole Jewish ecclesiastical doctrine was negated in the "glad tidings."

The deep instinct for how one must live, in order to feel oneself "in heaven," to feel "eternal," while in all other behavior one decidedly does not feel oneself "in heaven"—this alone is the psychological reality of "redemption." A new way of life, not a new faith.

34

If I understand anything about this great symbolist, it is that he accepted 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 of "the son of man" is not a concrete person who belongs in history, something individual and unique, but an "eternal" factuality, a psychological symbol redeemed from the concept of time. The same applies once again, and in the highest sense, to the God of this typical symbolist, to the "kingdom of God," to the "kingdom of heaven," to the "filiality of God." Nothing is more unchristian than the ecclesiastical crudities of God as person, of a "kingdom of God" which is to come, of a "kingdom of heaven" beyond, of a "son of God" as the second person in the Trinity. All this is—forgive the expression—like a fist in the eye—oh, in what

second person in the Trinity. But this is — forgive the expression — like a fist in the eye — only, in what

an eye!—of the evangel—a world-historical cynicism in the derision of symbols. But what the signs "father" and "son" refer to is obvious—not to everyone, I admit: the word "son" expresses the entry into the overall feeling of the transfiguration of all things (blessedness), the word "father" expresses this feeling, itself, the feeling of eternity, the feeling of perfection. I am ashamed to recall what the church has made of this symbolism: has it not placed an Amphitryon story at the threshold of the Christian "faith"? And a dogma of "immaculate conception" on top of that? But with that it has maculated conception.

The "kingdom of heaven" is a state of the heart—not something that is to come "above the earth" or "after death." The whole concept of natural death is lacking in the evangel: death is no bridge, no transition; it is lacking because it belongs to a wholly different, merely apparent world, useful only insofar as it furnishes signs. The "hour of death" is no Christian conception: "hour," time, physical life and its crises do not even exist for the teacher of the "glad tidings." The "kingdom of God" is nothing that one expects; it has no yesterday and no day after tomorrow, it will not come in "a thousand years"—it is an experience of the heart; it is everywhere, it is nowhere.

35

This "bringer of glad tidings" died as he had lived, as he had taught—not to "redeem men" but to show how one must live. This practice is his legacy to mankind: his behavior before the judges, before the catchpoles, before the accusers and all kinds of slander and scorn—his behavior on the cross. He does not resist, he does not defend his right, he takes no step which might ward off the worst; on the contrary, he provokes it. And he begs, he suffers, he loves with those, in those, who do him evil. Not to resist, not to be angry, not to hold responsible—but to resist not even the evil one—to love him.

36

Only we, we spirits who have become free, have the presuppositions for understanding something that nineteen centuries have misunderstood: that integrity which, having become instinct and passion, wages war against the "holy lie" even more than against any other lie. Previous readers were immeasurably far removed from our loving and cautious neutrality, from that discipline of the spirit which alone makes possible the unriddling of such foreign, such tender things: with impudent selfishness they always wanted only their own advantage; out of the opposite of the evangel the church was constructed.

If one were to look for signs that an ironical divinity has its fingers in the great play of the world, one would find no small support in the tremendous question mark called Christianity. Mankind lies on its knees before the opposite of that which was the origin, the meaning, the right of the evangel; in the concept of "church" it has pronounced holy precisely what the "bringer of the glad tidings" felt to be beneath and behind himself—one would look in vain for a greater example of world-historical irony.

37

Our age is proud of its historical sense: How could it ever make itself believe the nonsense that at the beginning of Christianity there stands the crude fable of the miracle worker and Redeemer—and that everything spiritual and symbolical represents only a later development? On the contrary: the history of Christianity, beginning with the death on the cross, is the history of the misunderstanding, growing cruder with every step, of an original symbolism. With every diffusion of Christianity to still broader, still cruder masses of people, more and more lacking in the presuppositions to which it owed its birth, it became more necessary to vulgarize, to barbarize Christianity: it has swallowed doctrines and rites of all the subterranean cults of the imperium Romanum as well as the nonsense of all kinds of diseased reason. The destiny of Christianity lies in the necessity that its faith had to become as diseased, as base and vulgar, as the needs it was meant to satisfy were diseased, base, and vulgar. In the church, finally, diseased barbarism itself gains power—the church, this embodiment of mortal hostility against all integrity, against all elevation of the soul, against all discipline of the spirit, against all frank and gracious humanity. Christian values—noble values: only we, we spirits who have become free, have restored this contrast of values, the greatest that there is!

38

At this point I do not suppress a sigh. There are days when I am afflicted with a feeling blacker than the blackest melancholy—contempt of man. And to leave no doubt concerning what I despise, whom I despise: it is the man of today, the man with whom I am fatefully contemporaneous. The man of today—I suffocate from his unclean breath. My attitude to the past, like that of all lovers of knowledge, is one of great tolerance, that is, magnanimous self-mastery: with gloomy caution I go through the madhouse world of whole millennia, whether it be called "Christianity," "Christian faith," or "Christian church"—I am careful not to hold mankind responsible for its mental disorders. But my feeling changes, breaks out, as soon as I enter modern times, our time. Our time knows better.

What was formerly just sick is today indecent—it is indecent to be a Christian today. And here begins my nausea. I look around: not one word has remained of what was formerly called "truth"; we can no longer stand it if a priest as much as uses the word "truth." If we have even the smallest claim to integrity, we must know today that a theologian, a priest, a pope, not merely is wrong in every sentence he speaks, but lies—that he is no longer at liberty to lie from "innocence" or "ignorance." The priest too knows as well as anybody else that there is no longer any "God," any "sinner," any "Redeemer"—that "free will" and "moral world order" are lies: seriousness, the profound self-overcoming of the spirit, no longer permits anybody not to know about this.

All the concepts of the church have been recognized for what they are, the most malignant counterfeits that exist, the aim of which is to devalue nature and natural values; the priest himself has been recognized for what he is, the most dangerous kind of parasite, the real poison-spider of life. We know, today our conscience knows, what these uncanny inventions of the priests and the church are really worth, what ends they served in reducing mankind to such a state of self-violation that its sight can arouse nausea: the concepts "beyond," "Last Judgment," "immortality of the soul," and "soul" itself are instruments of torture, systems of cruelties by virtue of which the priest became master, remained master.

Everybody knows this, and yet everything continues as before. Where has the last feeling of decency and self-respect gone when even our statesmen, an otherwise quite unembarrassed type of man, anti-Christians through and through in their deeds, still call themselves Christians today and attend communion? A young prince at the head of his regiments, magnificent as an expression of the selfishness and conceit of his people—but, without any shame, confessing himself a Christian! Whom then does Christianity negate? What does it call "world"? That one is a soldier, that one is a judge, that one is a patriot; that one resists, that one sees to one's honor; that one seeks one's advantage; that one is proud. Every practice of every moment, every instinct, every valuation that is translated into action is today anti-Christian: what a miscarriage of falseness must modern man be, that he is not ashamed to be called a Christian in spite of all this!

39

I go back, I tell the genuine history of Christianity. The very word "Christianity" is a misunderstanding: in truth, there was only one Christian, and he died on the cross. The "evangel" died on the cross. What has been called "evangel" from that moment was actually the opposite of that which he had lived: "ill tidings," a dysangel. It is false to the point of nonsense to find the mark of the Christian in a "faith," for instance, in the faith in redemption through Christ: only Christian practice, a life such as he lived who died on the cross, is Christian.

Such a life is still possible today, for certain people even necessary: genuine, original Christianity will be possible at all times.

Not a faith, but a doing; above all, a not doing of many things, another state of being. States of consciousness, any faith, considering something true, for example—every psychologist knows this—are fifth-rank matters of complete indifference compared to the value of the instincts: speaking more strictly, the whole concept of spiritual causality is false. To reduce being a Christian, Christianity, to a matter of considering something true, to a mere phenomenon of consciousness, is to negate Christianity. In fact, there have been no Christians at all. The "Christian," that which for the last two thousand years has been called a Christian, is merely a psychological self-misunderstanding. If one looks more closely, it was, in spite of all "faith," only the instincts that ruled in him—and what instincts!

"Faith" was at all times, for example, in Luther, only a cloak, a pretext, a screen behind which the instincts played their game—a shrewd blindness about the dominance of certain instincts. "Faith"—I have already called it the characteristic Christian shrewdness—one always spoke of faith, but one always acted from instinct alone.

In the Christian world of ideas there is nothing that has the least contact with reality—and it is in the instinctive hatred of reality that we have recognized the only motivating force at the root of Christianity. What follows from this? That in psychologism too, the error here is radical, that it is that which determines the very essence, that it is the substance. One concept less, one single reality in its place—and the whole of Christianity hurtles down into nothing.

Viewed from high above, this strangest of all facts—a religion which is not only dependent on errors but which has its inventiveness and even its genius only in harmful errors, only in errors which

poison life and the heart—is really a spectacle for gods, for those gods who are at the same time philosophers and whom I have encountered, for example, in those famous dialogues on Naxos. The moment nausea leaves them (and us!), they become grateful for the spectacle of the Christian: perhaps the miserable little star that is called earth deserves a divine glance, a divine sympathy, just because of this curious case. For let us not underestimate the Christian: the Christian, false to the point of innocence, is far above the ape—regarding Christians, a well-known theory of descent becomes a mere compliment.

#### 40

The catastrophe of the evangel was decided with the death—it was attached to the "cross." Only the death, this unexpected, disgraceful death, only the cross which was generally reserved for the rabble—only this horrible paradox confronted the disciples with the real riddle: "Who was this? What was this?" Their profoundly upset and insulted feelings, and their suspicion that such a death might represent the refutation of their cause, the terrible question mark, "Why in this manner?"—this state is only too easy to understand. Here everything had to be necessary, had to have meaning, reason, the highest reason—a disciple's love knows no accident. Only now the cleft opened up: "Who killed him? Who was his natural enemy?" This question leaped forth like lightning. Answer: ruling Jewry, its highest class. From this moment one felt oneself in rebellion against the existing order, and in retrospect one understood Jesus to have been in rebellion against the existing order. Until then this warlike, this No-saying, No-doing trait had been lacking in his image; even more, he had been its opposite.

Evidently the small community did not understand the main point, the exemplary character of this kind of death, the freedom, the superiority over any feeling of resentment: a token of how little they understood him altogether! After all, Jesus could not intend anything with his death except to give publicly the strongest exhibition, the proof of his doctrine. But his disciples were far from forgiving this death—which would have been evangelic in the highest sense—or even from offering themselves for a like death in gentle and lovely repose of the heart. Precisely the most unevangelical feeling, revenge, came to the fore again. The matter could not possibly be finished with this death: "retribution" was needed, "judgment" (and yet, what could possibly be more unevangelical than "retribution," "punishment," "sitting in judgment!"). Once more the popular expectation of a Messiah came to the foreground; a historic moment was envisaged: the "kingdom of God" comes as a judgment over his enemies.

But in this way everything is misunderstood: the "kingdom of God" as the last act, as a promise! After all, the evangel had been precisely the presence, the fulfillment, the reality of this "kingdom." Just such a death was this very "kingdom of God." Now for the first time all the contempt and bitterness against the Pharisees and theologians were carried into the type of the Master—and in this way he himself was made into a Pharisee and theologian! On the other hand, the frenzied veneration of these totally unhinged souls no longer endured the evangelic conception of everybody's equal right to be a child of God, as Jesus had taught: it was their revenge to elevate Jesus extravagantly, to sever him from themselves—precisely as the Jews had formerly, out of revenge against their enemies, severed their God from themselves and elevated him. The one God and the one Son of God—both products of resentment.

And from now on an absurd problem emerged: "How could God permit this?" To this the deranged reason of the small community found an altogether horribly absurd answer: God gave his son for the emission of sins, as a sacrifice. In one stroke it was all over with the evangel! The trespass sacrifice—in its most revolting, most barbarous form at that, the sacrifice of the guiltless for the sins of the guilty! What gruesome paganism!

Jesus had abolished the very concept of "guilt"—he had denied any cleavage between God and man, he lived this unity of God and man as his "glad tidings." And not as a prerogative! From now on there enters into the type of the Redeemer, step by step, the doctrine of judgment and return, the doctrine of death as a sacrificial death, the doctrine of the resurrection with which the whole concept of "blessedness," the whole and only actuality of the evangel, is conjured away—in favor of a state after death.

Paul, with that rabbinical impudence which distinguishes him in all things, logicalized this conception, this obscenity of a conception, in this way: "If Christ was not resurrected from the dead, then our faith is vain." And all at once the evangel became the most contemptible of all unfulfillable promises, the impertinent doctrine of personal immortality. Paul himself still taught it as a reward.

It is plain what was finished with the death on the cross: a new, an entirely original basis for a Buddhistic peace movement, for an actual, not merely promised, happiness on earth. For this, as I have already emphasized, remains the fundamental difference between the two religions of decadence: Buddhism does not promise but fulfills; Christianity promises everything but fulfills nothing. On the heels of the "glad tidings" came the very worst: those of Paul. In Paul was embodied the opposite type to that of the "bringer of glad tidings": the genius in hatred, in the vision of hatred, in the inexorable logic of hatred. How much this dysangelist sacrificed to hatred! Above all, the Redeemer: he nailed him to his own cross. The life, the example, the doctrine, the death, the meaning and the right of the entire evangel—nothing remained once this hate-inspired counterfeiter realized what alone he could use. Not the reality, not the historical truth! And once more the priestly instinct of the Jew committed the same great crime against history—he simply crossed out the yesterday of Christianity and its day before yesterday; he invented his own history of earliest Christianity. Still further: he falsified the history of Israel once more so that it might appear as the prehistory of his deed: all the prophets spoke of his "Redeemer." Later the church even falsified the history of mankind into the prehistory of Christianity.

The Redeemer type, the doctrine, the practice, the death, the meaning of the death, even what came after the death—nothing remained untouched, nothing remained even similar to the reality. Paul simply transposed the center of gravity of that whole existence after this existence—in the lie of the "resurrected" Jesus. At bottom, he had no use at all for the life of the Redeemer—he needed the death on the cross and a little more.

To consider a Paul, whose home was in the main seat of Stoic enlightenment, honest when he

dresses up a hallucination as proof that the Redeemer still lives, or even to believe his story that he

had this hallucination, would be a true niaiserie for a psychologist: Paul wanted the end, consequently he also wanted the means. What he himself did not believe, the idiots among whom he threw his doctrine believed. His need was for power; in Paul the priest wanted power once again—he could use only concepts, doctrines, symbols with which one tyrannizes masses and forms herds. What was the one thing that Mohammed later borrowed from Christianity? Paul's invention, his means to priestly tyranny, to herd formation: the faith in immortality—that is, the doctrine of the "judgment."

43

When one places life's center of gravity not in life but in the "beyond"—in nothingness—one deprives life of its center of gravity altogether. The great lie of personal immortality destroys all reason, everything natural in the instincts—whatever in the instincts is beneficent and life-promoting or guarantees a future now arouses mistrust. To live so that there is no longer any sense in living, that now becomes the "sense" of life. Why communal sense, why any further gratitude for descent and ancestors, why cooperate or trust; why envisage and promote any common welfare? Just so many "temptations," just so many distractions from the "right path"—for only "one thing is needful."

That everyone as an "immortal soul" has equal rank with everyone else, that in the totality of living beings the "salvation" of every single individual may claim eternal significance, that little prigs and three-quarter madmen may have the conceit that the laws of nature are constantly broken for their sakes—such an intensification of every kind of selfishness into the infinite, into the impertinent, cannot be branded with too much contempt. And yet Christianity owes its triumph to this miserable flattery of personal vanity: it was precisely all the failures, all the rebellious-minded, all the less favored, the whole scum and refuse of humanity who were thus won over to it. The "salvation of the soul"—in plain language: "the world revolves around me."

The poison of the doctrine of "equal rights for all"—it was Christianity that spread it most fundamentally. Out of the most secret nooks of bad instincts, Christianity has waged war unto death against all sense of respect and feeling of distance between man and man, that is to say, against the presupposition of every elevation, of every growth of culture; out of the resentment of the masses it forged its chief weapon against us, against all that is noble, gay, high-minded on earth, against our happiness on earth. "Immortality" conceded to every Peter and Paul has so far been the greatest, the most malignant, attempt to assassinate noble humanity.

And let us not underestimate the calamity which crept out of Christianity into politics. Today nobody has the courage any longer for privileges, for masters' rights, for a sense of respect for oneself and one's peers—for a pathos of distance. Our politics is sick from this lack of courage.

The aristocratic outlook was undermined from the deepest underworld through the lie of the equality of souls; and if faith in the "prerogative of the majority" makes and will make revolutions—it is Christianity, beyond a doubt, 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 that which has height: the evangel of the "lowly" makes low.



The Gospels are valuable as testimony to the irresistible corruption within the first community. What Paul later carried to its conclusion, with the logician's cynicism of a rabbi, was nevertheless nothing other than that process of decay which had begun with the death of the Redeemer.

One cannot read these Gospels cautiously enough, every word poses difficulties. I confess—one will pardon me—that precisely on this account they are a first-rate delight for a psychologist—as the opposite of all naive corruption, as subtlety par excellence, as artistry in psychological corruption. The Gospels stand apart. The Bible in general suffers no comparison. One is among Jews: first consideration to keep from losing the thread completely. The simulation of "holiness" which has really become genius here, never even approximated elsewhere in books or among men, this counterfeit of words and gestures as an art, is not the accident of some individual talent or other or of some exceptional character. This requires race. In Christianity all of Judaism, a several-century-old Jewish preparatory training and technique of the most serious kind, attains its ultimate mastery as the art of lying in a holy manner. The Christian, this ultima ratio of the lie, is the Jew once more—even three times more.

To be determined, as a matter of principle, to apply only concepts, symbols, attitudes which have been proved by the practice of the priest; instinctively to reject every other practice, every other perspective of value and usefulness—that is not merely tradition, that is heritage: only as heritage does it seem like nature itself. The whole of mankind, even the best heads of the best ages (except one, who is perhaps merely inhuman), have permitted themselves to be deceived. The Gospel has been read as a book of innocence—no small indication of the mastery here attained in histrionics. Of course, if we saw them, even if only in passing, all these queer prigs and synthetic saints, that would be the end—and precisely because I do not read words without seeing gestures, I make an end of them. I cannot stand a certain manner they have of turning up their eyes. Fortunately, for the great majority books are mere literature.

One must not let oneself be led astray: "judge not," they say, but they consign to hell everything that stands in their way. By letting God judge, they themselves judge; by glorifying God, they glorify themselves; by demanding the virtues of which they happen to be capable—even more, which they require in order to stay on top at all—they give themselves the magnificent appearance of a struggle for virtue, of a fight for the domination of virtue. "We live, we die, we sacrifice ourselves for the good" ("truth," "light," the "kingdom of God"): in truth, they do what they cannot help doing. Slinking around like typical sneaks, sitting in the corner, leading a shadowy existence in the shadow, they make a duty of all this: their life of humility appears as a duty; as humility it is one more proof of piety. Oh, this humble, chaste, merciful variety of mendaciousness! "Virtue itself shall bear witness for us." One should read the Gospels as books of seduction by means of morality: these petty people reserve morality for themselves—they know all about morality! With morality it is easiest to lead mankind by the nose!

What really happens here is that the most conscious conceit of being chosen plays modesty: once and for all one has placed oneself, the "community," the "good and the just," on one side, on the side of "truth"—and the rest, "the world," on the other. This was the most disastrous kind of megalomania that has yet existed on earth: little abortions of priests and liars began to claim for

megalomania that has yet existed on earth and decisions of pigs and has begun to claim for themselves the concepts of God, truth, light, spirit, love, wisdom, life—as synonyms for themselves, as it were, in order to define themselves against "the world": little superlative Jews, ripe for every kind of madhouse, turned all values around in their own image, just as if "the Christian" alone were the meaning, the salt, the measure, also the Last Judgment, of all the rest. The whole calamity became possible only because a related, racially related, kind of megalomania already existed in this world: the Jewish one. As soon as the cleft between the Jews and the Jewish Christians opened, no choice whatever remained to the latter but to apply against the Jews themselves the same procedures of self-preservation that the Jewish instinct recommended, whereas hitherto the Jews had applied them only against everything non-Jewish. The Christian is merely a Jew of "more liberal" persuasion.

45

I give some examples of what these little people put into their heads, what they put into the mouth of their master: without exception, confessions of "beautiful souls":

"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Mark 6:11). How evangelical!

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

"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:47 ff.). It is not exactly the eye which is meant.

"Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Well lied, lion!

"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For—" (Note of a psychologist. Christian morality is refuted by its For's: its "reasons" refute—thus is it Christian.) Mark 8:34.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged.... With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:1 ff.). What a conception of justice and of a "just" judge!

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matt. 5:46ff.). The principle of "Christian love": in the end it wants to be paid well.

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:15). Very compromising for said "Father."

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). All these things: namely, food, clothing, all the necessities of life. An error,

to put it modestly. Shortly before this, God appears as a tailor, at least in certain cases.

"Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (Luke 6:23). Impertinent rabble! They compare themselves with the prophets, no less.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (Paul, I Cor. 3:16 ff.). This sort of thing one cannot despise enough.

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (Paul, I Cor. 6:2). Unfortunately not merely the talk of a lunatic. This frightful swindler continues literally: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life!"

"Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that the world by its wisdom knew not God in his wisdom, it pleased God by foolish preaching to make blessed them that believe in it.... Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to ruin the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to ruin what is strong; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and what is nothing, to bring to nought what is something: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (Paul, I Cor. 1:20 ff.). To understand this passage, a first-rate document for the psychology of every chandala morality, one should read the first inquiry in my *Genealogy of Morals*: there the contrast between a noble morality and a chandala morality, born of resentment and impotent vengefulness, was brought to light for the first time. Paul was the greatest of all apostles of vengeance.

#### 46

What follows from this? That one does well to put on gloves when reading the New Testament. The proximity of so much uncleanness almost forces one to do this. We would no more choose the "first Christians" to associate with than Polish Jews—not that one even required any objection to them: they both do not smell good.

I have looked in vain through the New Testament to descry even a single sympathetic feature: there is nothing in it that is free, gracious, candid, honest. Humaneness did not even make its first beginnings here—the instincts of cleanliness are lacking. There are only bad instincts in the New Testament, and not even the courage to have these bad instincts. Everything in it is cowardice, everything is shutting-one's-eyes and self-deception. Every book becomes clean just after one has read the New Testament: to give an example, it was with utter delight that, right after Paul, I read that most graceful, most prankish mocker Petronius, of whom one might say what Domenico Boccaccio wrote to the Duke of Parma about Cesare Borgia: *e tutto festo*—immortally healthy, immortally cheerful and well turned out.

For these little prigs miscalculate precisely where it matters most. They attack, but everything they attack is distinguished thereby. To be attacked by a "first Christian" is not to be soiled. On the contrary: it is an honor to be opposed by "first Christians." One does not read the New Testament

without a predilection for that which is maltreated in it—not to speak of "the wisdom of this world," which an impudent windmaker tries in vain to ruin with "foolish preaching."

Even the Pharisees and scribes derive an advantage from such opposition: they must have been worth something to have been hated in so indecent a manner. Hypocrisy—what a reproach in the mouths of "first Christians"! In the end, they were men of privilege: that is enough—chandala hatred requires no further grounds. The "first Christian"—I am afraid, the "last Christian" too, and I may yet live to see him—is, from his lowest instincts, a rebel against everything privileged: he lives, he fights always for "equal rights." Examined more closely, he has no choice. If one wants to be "chosen by God"—or a "temple of God" or a "judge of the angels"—then any other principle of selection—for example, according to integrity, spirit, virility and pride, beauty and freedom of the heart—is merely "world," evil in itself. Moral: every word in the mouth of a "first Christian" is a lie; every act he performs a falseness of instinct—all his values, all his goals are harmful; but whomever he hates, whatever he hates, that has value. The Christian, the priestly Christian in particular, is a criterion of value.

Need I add that in the whole New Testament there is only a single figure who commands respect? Pilate, the Roman governor. To take a Jewish affair seriously—he does not persuade himself to do that. One Jew more or less—what does it matter? The noble scorn of a Roman, confronted with an impudent abuse of the word "truth," has enriched the New Testament with the only saying that has value—one which is its criticism, even its annihilation: "What is truth?"

47

That we find no God—either in history or in nature or behind nature—is not what differentiates us, but that we experience what has been revered as God not as "godlike" but as miserable, as absurd, as harmful, not merely as an error but as a crime against life. We deny God as God. If one were to prove this God of the Christians to us, we should be even less able to believe in him. In a formula: *deus, qualem Paulus creavit, dei negatio* [God as Paul created him is a negation of God].

A religion like Christianity, which does not have contact with reality at any point, which crumbles as soon as reality is conceded its rights at even a single point, must naturally be mortally hostile toward the "wisdom of this world," which means science. It will applaud all means with which the discipline of the spirit, purity and severity in the spirit's matters of conscience, the noble coolness and freedom of the spirit, can be poisoned, slandered, brought into disrepute. "Faith" as an imperative is the veto against science—in practice, the lie at any price.

Paul comprehended that the lie—that "faith"—was needed; later the church in turn comprehended Paul. The "God" whom Paul invented, a god who "ruins the wisdom of the world" (in particular, philology and medicine, the two great adversaries of all superstition), is in truth merely Paul's own resolute determination to do this: to give the name of "God" to one's own will, *torah*, that is thoroughly Jewish. Paul wants to ruin the "wisdom of the world": his enemies are the good philologists and physicians with Alexandrian training—it is they against whom he wages war. Indeed, one cannot be a philologist or physician without at the same time being an anti-Christian. For as a philologist one sees behind the "holy books"; as a physician, behind the physiological depravity of the typical Christian. The physician says "incurable": the philologist, "swindle."

48

Has the famous story that stands at the beginning of the Bible really been understood? the story of God's hellish fear of science? It has not been understood. This priestly book par excellence begins, as is fitting, with the great inner difficulty of the priest: he knows only one great danger, consequently "God" knows only one great danger.

The old God, all "spirit," all high priest, all perfection, takes a stroll in his garden; but he is bored. Against boredom even gods struggle in vain. What does he do? He invents man—man is entertaining. But lo and behold! Man too is bored. God's compassion with the sole distress that distinguishes all paradises knows no limits: soon he creates other animals as well. God's first mistake: man did not find the animals entertaining; he ruled over them, he did not even want to be "animal." Consequently God created woman. And indeed, that was the end of boredom—but of other things too! Woman was God's second mistake. "Woman is by nature a snake, Heve"—every priest knows that; "from woman comes all calamity in the world"—every priest knows that, too. "Consequently, it is from her too that science comes." Only from woman did man learn to taste of the tree of knowledge.

What had happened? The old God was seized with hellish fear. Man himself had turned out to be his greatest mistake; he had created a rival for himself; science makes godlike—it is all over with priests and gods when man becomes scientific. Moral: science is the forbidden as such—it alone is forbidden. Science is the first sin, the seed of all sin, the original sin. This alone is morality. "Thou shalt not know"—the rest follows.

God's hellish fear did not prevent him from being clever. How does one resist science? This became his main problem for a long time. Answer: out of paradise with man! Happiness, idleness, give rise to ideas—all ideas are bad ideas. Man shall not think. And the "priest-as-such" invents distress, death, the mortal danger of pregnancy, every kind of misery, old age, trouble, and, above all, sickness—all means in the fight against science. Distress does not permit man to think. And yet—horrible!—the edifice of knowledge begins to tower, heaven-storming, suggesting twilight to the gods. What is to be done? The old God invents war, he divides the peoples, he fixes it so men will annihilate each other (priests have always required wars). War—among other things a great disrupter of science! Incredible! Knowledge, the emancipation from the priest, continues to grow in spite of wars. And the old God makes a final decision: "Man has become scientific—there is no other way, he has to be drowned."

49

I have been understood. The beginning of the Bible contains the whole psychology of the priest. The priest knows only one great danger: that is science, the sound conception of cause and effect. But on the whole science prospers only under happy circumstances—there must be a surplus of time, of spirit, to make "knowledge" possible. "Consequently, man must be made unhappy"—this was the logic of the priest in every age.

It will now be clear what was introduced into the world for the first time, in accordance with this

logic: "sin." The concept of guilt and punishment, the whole "moral world order," was invented against science, against the emancipation of man from the priest. Man shall not look outside, he shall look into himself; he shall not look into things cleverly and cautiously, like a learner, he shall not look at all—he shall suffer. And he shall suffer in such a way that he has need of the priest at all times. Away with physicians! A Savior is needed. The concept of guilt and punishment, including the doctrine of "grace," of "redemption," of "forgiveness"—lies through and through, and without any psychological reality—were invented to destroy man's causal sense: they are an attempt to assassinate cause and effect. And not an attempt to assassinate with the fist, with the knife, with honesty in hatred and love! But born of the most cowardly, most cunning, lowest instincts. A priestly attempt! A parasite's attempt! A vampirism of pale, subterranean bloodsuckers!

When the natural consequences of a deed are no longer "natural," but thought of as caused by the conceptual specters of superstition, by "God," by "spirits," by "souls," as if they were merely "moral" consequences, as reward, punishment, guidance, means of education, then the presupposition of knowledge has been destroyed—then the greatest crime against humanity has been committed. Sin, to repeat it once more, this form of man's self-violation par excellence, was invented to make science, culture, every elevation and nobility of man, impossible; the priest rules through the invention of sin.

50

At this point I do not let myself off without a psychology of "faith," of "believers"—precisely for the benefit of "believers," as is fitting. If today there is no lack of people who do not know in what way it is indecent to "believe"—or a sign of decadence, of broken will to life—tomorrow they will already know it. My voice reaches even the hard of hearing.

Unless I have heard wrong, it seems that among Christians there is a kind of criterion of truth that is called the "proof of strength." "Faith makes blessed: hence it is true." Here one might object first that it is precisely the making blessed which is not proved but merely promised: blessedness tied to the condition of "faith"—one shall become blessed because one believes. But whether what the priest promises the believer in fact occurs in a "beyond" which is not subject to any test—how is that proved? The alleged "proof of strength" is thus at bottom merely another faith, namely, that the effect one expects from faith will not fail to appear. In a formula: "I believe that faith makes blessed; consequently it is true." But with this we are already at the end. This "consequently" would be absurdity itself as the criterion of truth.

But let us suppose, with some leniency, that it was proved that faith makes blessed (not merely desired, not merely promised by the somewhat suspicious mouth of a priest): would blessedness—or, more technically speaking, pleasure—ever be a proof of truth? This is so far from the case that it almost furnishes a counterproof; in any event, the greatest suspicion of a "truth" should arise when feelings of pleasure enter the discussion of the question "What is true?" The proof of "pleasure" is a proof of "pleasure"—nothing else: how in all the world could it be established that true judgments should give greater delight than false ones and, according to a pre-established harmony, should necessarily be followed by agreeable feelings?

The experience of all severe, of all profoundly inclined, spirits teaches the opposite. At every step one has to wrestle for truth; one has had to surrender for it almost everything, to which the heart, to which our love, our trust in life, cling otherwise. That requires greatness of soul: the service of truth is the hardest service. What does it mean, after all, to have integrity in matters of the spirit? That one is severe against one's heart, that one despises "beautiful sentiments," that one makes of every Yes and No a matter of conscience. Faith makes blessed: consequently it lies.

51

That faith makes blessed under certain circumstances, that blessedness does not make of a fixed idea a true idea, that faith moves no mountains but puts mountains where there are none—a quick walk through a madhouse enlightens one sufficiently about this. Not, to be sure, a priest: for he denies instinctively that sickness is sickness, that madhouse is madhouse. Christianity needs sickness just as Greek culture needs a super-abundance of health—to make sick is the true, secret purpose of the whole system of redemptive procedures constructed by the church. And the church itself—is it not the catholic madhouse as the ultimate ideal? The earth altogether as a madhouse?

The religious man, as the church wants him, is a typical decadent; the moment when a religious crisis overcomes a people is invariably marked by epidemics made of the nerves; the "inner world" of the religious man looks exactly like the "inner world" of the overexcited and the exhausted; the "highest" states that Christianity has hung over mankind as the value of all values are epileptoid forms—only madmen or great impostors have been pronounced holy by the church in maiorem dei honorem. I once permitted myself to designate the whole Christian repentance and redemption training (which today is best studied in England) as a methodically produced folie circulaire, as is proper, on soil prepared for it, that is to say, thoroughly morbid soil. Nobody is free to become a Christian: one is not "converted" to Christianity—one has to be sick enough for it.

We others who have the courage to be healthy and also to despise—how may we despise a religion which taught men to misunderstand the body! which does not want to get rid of superstitious belief in souls! which turns insufficient nourishment into something "meritorious"! which fights health as a kind of enemy, devil, temptation! which fancies that one can carry around a "perfect soul" in a cadaver of a body, and which therefore found it necessary to concoct a new conception of "perfection"—a pale, sickly, idiotic-enthusiastic character, so-called "holiness." Holiness—merely a series of symptoms of an impoverished, unnerved, incurably corrupted body.

The Christian movement, as a European movement, has been from the start a collective movement of the dross and refuse elements of every kind (these want to get power through Christianity). It does not express the decline of a race, it is an aggregate of forms of decadence flocking together and seeking each other out from everywhere. It is not, as is supposed, the corruption of antiquity itself, of noble antiquity, that made Christianity possible. The scholarly idiocy which upholds such ideas even today cannot be contradicted harshly enough. At the very time when the sick, corrupt chandala strata in the whole imperium adopted Christianity, the opposite type, nobility, was present in its most beautiful and most mature form. The great number became master; the democratism of the Christian instincts triumphed. Christianity was not "national," not a function of a race—it turned to every kind of man who was disinherited by life, it had its allies everywhere. At the bottom of

Christianity is the rancor of the sick, instinct directed against the healthy, against health itself. Everything that has turned out well, everything that is proud and prankish, beauty above all, hurts its ears and eyes. Once more I recall the inestimable words of Paul: "The weak things of the world, the foolish things of the world, the base and despised things of the world hath God chosen." This was the formula; in hoc signo decadence triumphed.

God on the cross—are the horrible secret thoughts behind this symbol not understood yet? All that suffers, all that is nailed to the cross, is divine. All of us are nailed to the cross, consequently we are divine. We alone are divine. Christianity was a victory, a nobler outlook perished of it—Christianity has been the greatest misfortune of mankind so far.

52

Christianity also stands opposed to every spirit that has turned out well; it can use only sick reason as Christian reason, it sides with everything idiotic, it utters a curse against the spirit, against the superbia of the healthy spirit. Because sickness is of the essence of Christianity, the typical Christian state, "faith," must also be a form of sickness, and all straight, honest, scientific paths to knowledge must be rejected by the church as forbidden paths. Even doubt is a sin.

The complete lack of psychological cleanliness in the priest—betrayed by his eyes—is a consequence of decadence: one should observe hysterical females and children with a tendency to rickets to see how regularly instinctive falseness, the inclination to lie in order to lie, and the incapacity for straight glances and steps are the expression of decadence. "Faith" means not wanting to know what is true.

The pietist, the priest of both sexes, is false because he is sick: his instinct demands that truth not be conceded its right at any point. "Whatever makes sick is good; whatever comes out of fullness, out of superabundance, out of power, is evil"—thus feels the believer. Having no choice but to lie—from that I can see at a glance if a man is a predestined theologian. Another sign of the theologian is his incapacity for philology. What is here meant by philology is, in a very broad sense, the art of reading well—of reading facts without falsifying them by interpretation, without losing caution, patience, delicacy, in the desire to understand. Philology as ephexis in interpretation—whether it is a matter of books, the news in a paper, destinies, or weather conditions, not to speak of the "salvation of the soul." The manner in which a theologian, in Berlin as in Rome, interprets a "verse of Scripture" or an event—for example, a victory of the armies of the fatherland, in the higher light of the Psalms of David—is always so audacious that a philologist can only tear his hair. And what is he to do when pietists and other cows from Swabia, with the aid of the "finger of God," transform the wretched everyday and the parlor smoke of their existence into a miracle of "grace," of "providence," of "experiences of salvation"? Even the most modest expenditure of spirit, not to speak of decency, would suffice to bring these interpreters to the point of convincing themselves of the utter childishness and unworthiness of such an abuse of the dexterity of the divine fingers. Possessing even the tiniest bit of piety in the body, we should find a god who cures a cold at the right time or who bids us enter a coach at the very moment when a violent rainstorm begins, such an absurd god that we should have to abolish him if he existed. A god as servant, as mailman, as calendar man—at bottom, a word for the most stupid of all accidents. "Divine providence" of the kind in which approximately every third person in "educated Germany" still believes would be an



objection to God so strong that one simply could not imagine a stronger one. And in any case, it is an objection to the Germans.

53

That martyrs prove anything about the truth of a matter is so far from true that I would deny that any martyr ever had anything whatsoever to do with truth. The tone with which a martyr throws his considering-something-true into the face of the world expresses such a low degree of intellectual integrity, such an obtuseness for the question of truth, that one never needs to refute a martyr. Truth is not something which one person might have and another not have: only peasants and peasant apostles like Luther can think that way about truth. One may be sure that modesty, moderation in this matter becomes greater in proportion to the degree of conscientiousness in matters of the spirit. To have knowledge of five matters, and to refuse with a gentle hand to have other knowledge.

"Truth," as the word is understood by every prophet, every sectarian, every free spirit, every socialist, every churchman, is a perfect proof that not even a beginning has been made with that discipline of the spirit, that self-overcoming which is needed if any small, however small, truth is to be found.

The deaths of the martyrs, incidentally, have been a great misfortune in history: they seduced. The inference of all idiots, woman and the people included, that there must be something to a cause for which someone goes to his death (or which even, like early Christianity, generates death—seeking epidemics)—this inference has immeasurably thwarted examination, the spirit of examination, and caution. The martyrs have harmed truth.

Even today it takes only the crudity of a persecution to give an otherwise completely indifferent sectarianism an honorable name. How? Does it change the value of a thing if someone gives his life for it? An error that becomes honorable is an error which is that much more seductive. Do you believe, my dear theologians, that we would give you an occasion to become martyrs for your lie? One refutes a matter by laying it respectfully on ice—that is how one also refutes theologians. This precisely was the world-historical stupidity of all persecutors, that they gave the opposing cause the appearance of being honorable—that they gave it the fascination of martyrdom as a gift. Even today woman lies on her knees before an error because she has been told that somebody died on the cross for it. Is the cross an argument? But about all these things, only one man has said the word which was needed for thousands of years—Zarathustra:

They wrote signs of blood on the way they walked, and their folly taught that with blood one proved truth. But blood is the worst witness of truth; blood poisons even the purest doctrine and turns it into delusion and hatred of the heart. And if a man goes through fire for his doctrine—what does that prove? Verily, it is more if your own doctrine comes out of your own fire.  
[ZARATHUSTRA, II, On Priests.]

54

One should not be deceived: great spirits are skeptics. Zarathustra is a skeptic. Strength, freedom which is born of the strength and overstrength of the spirit, proves itself by skepticism. Men of conviction are not worthy of the least consideration in fundamental questions of value and disvalue.

Convictions are prisons. Such men do not look far enough, they do not look beneath themselves: but to be permitted to join in the discussion of value and disvalue, one must see five hundred convictions beneath oneself—behind oneself.

A spirit who wants great things, who also wants the means to them, is necessarily a skeptic. Freedom from all kinds of convictions, to be able to see freely, is part of strength. Great passion, the ground and the power of his existence, even more enlightened, even more despotic than he is himself, employs his whole intellect; it makes him unhesitating; it gives him courage even for unholy means; under certain circumstances it does not begrudge him convictions. Conviction as a means: many things are attained only by means of a conviction. Great passion uses and uses up convictions, it does not succumb to them—it knows itself sovereign.

Conversely: the need for faith, for some kind of unconditional Yes and No, this Carlyism, if one will forgive me this word, is a need born of weakness. The man of faith, the "believer" of every kind, is necessarily a dependent man—one who cannot posit himself as an end, one who cannot posit any end at all by himself. The "believer" does not belong to himself, he can only be a means, he must be used up, he requires somebody to use him up. His instinct gives the highest honor to a morality of self-abnegation; everything persuades him in this direction: his prudence, his experience, his vanity. Every kind of faith is itself an expression of self-abnegation, of self-alienation.

If one considers how necessary most people find something regulatory, which will bind them from without and tie them down; how compulsion, slavery in a higher sense, is the sole and ultimate condition under which the more weak-willed human being, woman in particular, can prosper—then one will also understand conviction, "faith." The man of conviction has his backbone in it. Not to see many things, to be impartial at no point, to be party through and through, to have a strict and necessary perspective in all questions of value—this alone makes it possible for this kind of human being to exist at all. But with this they are the opposite, the antagonists, of what is truthful—of truth.

The believer is not free to have any conscience at all for questions of "true" and "untrue": to have integrity on this point would at once destroy him. The pathological condition of his perspective turns the convinced into fanatics—Savonarola, Luther, Rousseau, Robespierre, Saint-Simon: the opposition-type of the strong spirit who has become free. Yet the grand pose of these sick spirits, these epileptics of the concept, makes an impression on the great mass: the fanatics are picturesque; mankind prefers to see gestures rather than to hear reasons.

55

One step further in the psychology of conviction, of "faith." Long ago I posed the problem whether convictions are not more dangerous than lies as enemies of truth (Human, All-Too-Human I, aphorisms 54 and 483). Now I should like to ask the decisive question: Is there any contrast at all between a lie and a conviction? All the world believes there is; but what does all the world not believe!

Every conviction has its history, its preliminary forms, its trials and errors: it becomes a conviction after not having been one for a long time, and after scarcely having been one for an even longer time. How? Could not the lie be among these embryonic forms of conviction? Sometimes a mere

and, now, could not lie lie be among these emergency forms of conviction? Sometimes a mere change of person suffices: in the son that becomes conviction which in the father still was a lie.

By lie I mean: wishing not to see something that one does see, wishing not to see something as one sees it. Whether the lie takes place before witnesses or without witnesses does not matter. The most common lie is that with which one lies to oneself; lying to others is, relatively, an exception.

Now this wishing-not-to-see what one does see, this wishing-not-to-see as one sees, is almost the first condition for all who are party in any sense: of necessity the party man becomes a liar. German historiography, for example, is convinced that Rome represented despotism and that the Germanic tribes brought the spirit of freedom into the world. What is the difference between this conviction and a lie? May one still be surprised when all parties, as well as the German historians, instinctively employ the big words of morality, that morality almost continues to exist because the party man of every description needs it at every moment?

"This is our conviction: we confess it before all the world, we live and die for it. Respect for all who have convictions!" I have heard that sort of thing even out of the mouths of anti-Semites. On the contrary, gentlemen! An anti-Semite certainly is not any more decent because he lies as a matter of principle.

The priests are much more delicate in such matters and they understand very well the objection which lies in the concept of a conviction, namely, a mendaciousness which is a matter of principle because it serves an end; so they have accepted the clever procedure of the Jews to introduce at this point the concept of "God," "will of God," "revelation of God." Kant too, with his categorical imperative, was on the same path: in this respect, his reason became practical. There are questions in which man is not entitled to a decision about truth and untruth; all the highest questions, all the highest value problems, lie beyond human reason. To comprehend the limits of reason—that alone is truly philosophy. What did God give man revelation for? Would God have done something superfluous? Man is not capable of knowing by himself what is good and evil, therefore God taught him his will. Moral: the priest does not lie; the question of "true" and "untrue" does not exist in the matters about which priests speak; these matters do not allow one to lie at all. For, to be able to lie, one would have to be capable of deciding what is true here. But of this man is not capable; thus the priest is merely the mouthpiece of God.

Such a priestly syllogism is by no means merely Jewish and Christian; the right to lie and the shrewdness of "revelation" belong to the priestly type, to the decadent priests as well as to the priests of paganism (pagans are all those who say Yes to life, for whom "god" is the word for the greatest of all things). The "law," the "will of God," the "holy book," "inspiration"—all mere words for the conditions under which the priest attains power, with which the priest preserves his power; these concepts are found at the basis of all priestly organizations, of all forms of priestly or philosophic-priestly rule. The "holy lie"—common to Confucius, the law of Manu, Mohammed, the Christian church—is not absent in Plato. "Truth is there": this means, wherever it is announced, the priest lies.

Ultimately, it is a matter of the end to which one lies. That "holy" ends are lacking in Christianity is

my objection to its means. Only bad ends: poisoning, slander, negation of life, contempt for the body, the degradation and self-violation of man through the concept of sin—consequently its means too are bad. It is with an opposite feeling that I read the law of Manu, an incomparably spiritual and superior work: even to mention it in the same breath with the Bible would be a sin against the spirit. One guesses immediately: there is a real philosophy behind it, in it, not merely an ill-smelling Judaine of rabbinism and superstition; it offers even the most spoiled psychologist something to chew on. Not to forget the main point, the basic difference from every kind of Bible: here the noble classes, the philosophers and the warriors, stand above the mass; noble values everywhere, a feeling of perfection, an affirmation of life, a triumphant delight in oneself and in life—the sun shines on the whole book. All the things on which Christianity vents its unfathomable meanness—procreation, for example, woman, marriage—are here treated seriously, with respect, with love and trust.

Really, how can one put a book in the hands of children and women which contains that vile dictum: "to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.... It is better to marry than to burn"? And how can one be a Christian as long as the notion of the immaculata conceptio christianizes, that is, dirties, the origin of man?

I know no other book in which so many tender and gracious things are said to woman as in the law of Manu; those old graybeards and saints have a way of being courteous to women which has perhaps never been surpassed. "The mouth of a woman"—it is written in one place—"the bosom of a girl, the prayer of a child, the smoke of the sacrifice, are always pure." Another passage: "There is nothing purer than the light of the sun, the shadow of a cow, the air, water, fire, and the breath of a girl." A final passage—perhaps also a holy lie: "All apertures of the body above the navel are pure, all below are impure. Only in the girl is the whole body pure."

57

One catches the unholiness of the Christian means in flagranti if one once measures the Christian end against the end of the law of Manu—if one throws a strong light on this greatest contrast of ends. The critic of Christianity cannot be spared the task of making Christianity look contemptible.

Such a law as that of Manu originates like every good code of laws: it sums up the experience, prudence, and experimental morality of many centuries; it concludes: it creates nothing further. The presupposition for a codification of this sort is the insight that the means of ensuring authority for a truth, which has been won slowly and at considerable expense, are utterly different from the means needed to prove it. A code of laws never relates the advantage, the reasons, the casuistry, in the prehistory of a law: if it did, it would lose the imperative tone, the "thou shalt," the presupposition for being obeyed. This is precisely where the problem lies.

At a certain point in the development of a people, the most circumspect stratum, that is, the one which sees farthest back and ahead, declares the experience according to which one should live—that is, can live—to be concluded. Their aim is to bring home as rich and complete a harvest as possible from the times of experiment and bad experience. Consequently, what must now be prevented above all is further experimentation, a continuation of the fluid state of values, testing, choosing, criticizing values in infinitum. Against this a double wall is put up: one, revelation, the claim that the reason in these laws is not of human origin, not sought and found slowly and after many

errors, but of divine origin, and hence whole, perfect, without history, a gift, a miracle, merely communicated. Then, tradition, the claim that the law has existed since time immemorial and that it would be irreverent, a crime against one's forefathers, to raise any doubt against it. The authority of the law is founded on the theses: God gave it, the forefathers lived it. The higher reason in such a procedure lies in the aim, step by step, to push consciousness back from what had been recognized as the right life (that is, proved right by a tremendous and rigorously filtered experience), so as to attain the perfect automatism of instinct—that presupposition of all mastery, of every kind of perfection in the art of life. To set up a code of laws after the manner of Manu means to give a people the chance henceforth to become master, to become perfect—to aspire to the highest art of life. To that end, it must be made unconscious: this is the aim of every holy lie.

The order of castes, the supreme, the dominant law, is merely the sanction of a natural order, a natural lawfulness of the first rank, over which no arbitrariness, no "modern idea" has any power. In every healthy society there are three types which condition each other and gravitate differently physiologically; each has its own hygiene, its own field of work, its own sense of perfection and mastery. Nature, not Manu, distinguishes the pre-eminently spiritual ones, those who are preeminently strong in muscle and temperament, and those, the third type, who excel neither in one respect nor in the other, the mediocre ones—the last as the great majority, the first as the elite.

The highest caste—I call them the fewest—being perfect, also has the privileges of the fewest: among them, to represent happiness, beauty, and graciousness on earth. Only to the most spiritual human beings is beauty permitted: among them alone is graciousness not weakness. *Pulchrum est paucorum hominum*: the good is a privilege. On the other hand, there is nothing that they may be conceded less than ugly manners or a pessimistic glance, an eye that makes ugly—or indignation at the total aspect of things. Indignation is the privilege of the chandalas; pessimism too.

"The world is perfect"—thus says the instinct of the most spiritual, the Yes-saying instinct; "imperfection, whatever is beneath us, distance, the pathos of distance—even the chandala still belongs to this perfection." The most spiritual men, as the strongest, find their happiness where others would find their destruction: in the labyrinth, in hardness against themselves and others, in experiments; their joy is self-conquest; asceticism becomes in them nature, need, and instinct. Difficult tasks are a privilege to them; to play with burdens which crush others, a recreation. Knowledge—a form of asceticism. They are the most venerable kind of man; that does not preclude their being the most cheerful and the kindest. They rule not because they want to but because they are; they are not free to be second.

The second: they are the guardians of the law, those who see to order and security, the noble warriors, and above all the king as the highest formula of warrior, judge, and upholder of the law. The second are the executive arm of the most spiritual, that which is closest to them and belongs to them, that which does everything gross in the work of ruling for them—their retinue, their right hand, their best pupils.

In all this, to repeat, there is nothing arbitrary, nothing contrived; whatever is different is contrived—contrived for the ruin of nature. The order of castes, the order of rank, merely formulates the highest law of life; the separation of the three types is necessary for the preservation of society, to make possible the higher and the highest types. The inequality of rights is the first condition for the existence of any rights at all.

A right is a privilege. A man's state of being is his privilege. Let us not underestimate the privileges of the mediocre. As one climbs higher, life becomes ever harder; the coldness increases, responsibility increases.

A high culture is a pyramid: it can stand only on a broad base; its first presupposition is a strong and solidly consolidated mediocrity. Handicraft, trade, agriculture, science, the greatest part of art, the whole quintessence of professional activity, to sum it up, is compatible only with a mediocre amount of ability and ambition; that sort of thing would be out of place among exceptions; the instinct here required would contradict both aristocratism and anarchism. To be a public utility, a wheel, a function, for that one must be destined by nature: it is not society, it is the only kind of happiness of which the great majority are capable that makes intelligent machines of them. For the mediocre, to be mediocre is their happiness; mastery of one thing, specialization—a natural instinct.

It would be completely unworthy of a more profound spirit to consider mediocrity as such an objection. In fact, it is the very first necessity if there are to be exceptions: a high culture depends on it. When the exceptional human being treats the mediocre more tenderly than himself and his peers, this is not mere politeness of the heart—it is simply his duty.

Whom do I hate most among the rabble of today? The socialist rabble, the chandala apostles, who undermine the instinct, the pleasure, the worker's sense of satisfaction with his small existence—who make him envious, who teach him revenge. The source of wrong is never unequal rights but the claim of "equal" rights.

What is bad? But I have said this already: all that is born of weakness, of envy, of revenge. The anarchist and the Christian have the same origin.

58

Indeed, it makes a difference to what end one lies: whether one preserves or destroys. One may posit a perfect equation between Christian and anarchist: their aim, their instinct, are directed only toward destruction. The proof of this proposition can easily be read in history: it is written there in awful clarity. If we have just become acquainted with a religious legislation whose aim it was to "eternalize" the highest condition of life's prospering, a great organization of society—Christianity found its mission in putting an end to precisely such an organization because life prospered in it. There the gains of reason, after a long period of experiments and uncertainty, were to be invested for the greatest long-term advantage and the harvest to be brought home as great, as ample, as complete as possible; here, conversely, the harvest was poisoned overnight. That which stood there aere perennius, the imperium Romanum, the most magnificent form of organization under difficult circumstances which has yet been achieved, in comparison with which all before and all afterward are mere botch, patchwork, and dilettantism—these holy anarchists made it a matter of "piety" for themselves to destroy "the world," that is, the imperium Romanum, until not one stone remained on the other, until even Teutons and other louts could become masters over it.

The Christian and the anarchist: both decadents, both incapable of having any effect other than disintegrating, poisoning, withering, bloodsucking; both the instinct of mortal hatred against everything that stands, that stands in greatness, that has duration, that promises life a future

everything that stands, that stands in greatness, that has duration, that promises me a future. Christianity was the vampire of the imperium Romanum: overnight it undid the tremendous deed of the Romans—who had won the ground for a great culture that would have time.

Is it not understood yet? The imperium Romanum which we know, which the history of the Roman provinces teaches us to know better and better, this most admirable work of art in the grand style was a beginning; its construction was designed to prove itself through thousands of years: until today nobody has built again like this, nobody has even dreamed of building in such proportions *sub specie aeterni*. This organization was firm enough to withstand bad emperors: the accident of persons may not have anything to do with such matters—first principle of all grand architecture. But it was not firm enough against the most corrupt kind of corruption, against the Christians.

This stealthy vermin which sneaked up to every single one in the night, in fog and ambiguity, and sucked out of each single one the seriousness for true things and any instinct for realities—this cowardly, effeminate, and saccharine pack alienated "souls" step by step from that tremendous structure—those valuable, those virile, noble natures who found their own cause, their own seriousness, their own pride in the cause of Rome. The sneakiness of prigs, the conventicle secrecy, gloomy concepts like hell, like sacrifice of the guiltless, like *unio mystica* in drinking blood; above all, the slowly fanned fire of revenge, of chandala revenge—all that is what became master over Rome, the same kind of religion against which, in its pre-existent form, Epicurus already had waged war. One should read Lucretius to comprehend what Epicurus fought: not paganism but "Christianity," by which I mean the corruption of souls by the concepts of guilt, punishment, and immortality. He fought the subterranean cults which were exactly like a latent form of Christianity: to deny immortality was then nothing less than a real salvation.

And Epicurus would have won; every respectable spirit in the Roman Empire was an Epicurean. Then Paul appeared—Paul, the chandala hatred against Rome, against "the world," become flesh, become genius, the Jew, the eternal Wandering Jew par excellence. What he guessed was how one could use the little sectarian Christian movement apart from Judaism to kindle a "world fire"; how with the symbol of "God on the cross" one could unite all who lay at the bottom, all who were secretly rebellious, the whole inheritance of anarchistic agitation in the Empire, into a tremendous power. "Salvation is of the Jews." Christianity as a formula with which to outbid the subterranean cults of all kinds—those of Osiris, of the Great Mother, of Mithras, for example—and to unite them: in this insight lies the genius of Paul. His instinct was so sure in this that he took the ideas with which these chandala religions fascinated, and, with ruthless violence, he put them into the mouth of the "Savior" whom he had invented, and not only into his mouth—he made something out of him that a priest of Mithras too could understand.

This was his moment at Damascus: he comprehended that he needed the belief in immortality to deprive "the world" of value, that the concept of "hell" would become master even over Rome—that with the "beyond" one kills life. Nihilism and Christianity: that rhymes, that does not only rhyme.

something so tremendous. And considering that its labor was a preliminary labor, that only the foundation for the labors of thousands of years had just then been laid with granite self-confidence—the whole meaning of the ancient world in vain! Wherefore Greeks? Wherefore Romans?

All the presuppositions for a scholarly culture, all scientific methods, were already there; the great, the incomparable art of reading well had already been established—that presupposition for the tradition of culture, for the unity of science; natural science, allied with mathematics and mechanics, was well along on the best way—the sense for facts, the last and most valuable of all the senses, had its schools and its tradition of centuries. Is this understood? Everything essential had been found, so that the work could be begun: the methods, one must say it ten times, are what is essential, also what is most difficult, also what is for the longest time opposed by habits and laziness. What we today have again conquered with immeasurable self-mastery—for each of us still has the bad instincts, the Christian ones, in his system—the free eye before reality, the cautious hand, patience and seriousness in the smallest matters, the whole integrity in knowledge—that had already been there once before! More than two thousand years ago! And, in addition, the good, the delicate sense of tact and taste. Not as brain drill! Not as "German" education with loutish manners! But as body, as gesture, as instinct—as reality, in short. All in vain! Overnight nothing but a memory!

Greeks! Romans! The nobility of instinct, the taste, the methodical research, the genius of organization and administration, the faith in, the will to, man's future, the great Yes to all things, become visible in the imperium Romanum, visible for all the senses, the grand style no longer mere art but become reality, truth, life. And not buried overnight by a natural catastrophe, not trampled down by Teutons and other buffaloes, but ruined by cunning, stealthy, invisible, anemic vampires. Not vanquished—merely drained. Hidden vengefulness, petty envy become master. Everything miserable that suffers from itself, that is afflicted with bad feelings, the whole ghetto-world of the soul on top all at once.

One need only read any Christian agitator, St. Augustine, for example, to comprehend, to smell, what an unclean lot had thus come to the top. One would deceive oneself utterly if one presupposed any lack of intelligence among the leaders of the Christian movement: oh, they are clever, clever to the point of holiness, these good church fathers! What they lack is something quite different. Nature has neglected them—she forgot to give them a modest dowry of respectable, of decent, of clean instincts. Among ourselves, they are not even men. Islam is a thousand times right in despising Christianity: Islam presupposes men.

60

Christianity has cheated us out of the harvest of ancient culture; later it cheated us again, out of the harvest of the culture of Islam. The wonderful world of the Moorish culture of Spain, really more closely related to us, more congenial to our senses and tastes than Rome and Greece, was trampled down (I do not say by what kind of feet). Why? Because it owed its origin to noble, to male instincts, because it said Yes to life even with the rare and refined luxuries of Moorish life.

Later the crusaders fought something before which they might more properly have prostrated themselves in the dust—a culture compared to which even our nineteenth century might well feel



very poor, very "late." To be sure, they wanted loot; the Orient was rich. One should not be so prejudiced. Crusades—higher piracy, nothing else! The German nobility, Viking nobility at bottom, was in its proper element here: the church knew only too well what it takes to get the German nobility. The German nobility, always the "Swiss Guards" of the church, always in the service of all the bad instincts of the church—but well paid. That the church should have used German swords, German blood and courage, to wage its war unto death against everything noble on earth! There are many painful questions at this point. The German nobility is almost missing in the history of higher culture: one guesses the reason—Christianity, alcohol, the two great means of corruption.

Really there should not be any choice between Islam and Christianity, any more than between an Arab and a Jew. The decision is given; nobody is free to make any further choice. Either one is a chandala, or one is not. "War to the knife against Rome! Peace and friendship with Islam"—thus felt, thus acted, that great free spirit, the genius among German emperors, Frederick II. How? Must a German first be a genius, a free spirit, to have decent feelings? I do not understand how a German could ever have Christian feelings.

61

Here it becomes necessary to touch on a memory which is even a hundred times more painful for Germans. The Germans have cheated Europe out of the last great cultural harvest which Europe could still have brought home—that of the Renaissance. Does one understand at last, does one want to understand, what the Renaissance was? The revaluation of Christian values, the attempt, undertaken with every means, with every instinct, with all genius, to bring the countervalues, the noble values to victory.

So far there has been only this one great war, so far there has been no more decisive question than that of the Renaissance—my question is its question—nor has there ever been a more fundamental, a straighter form of attack in which the whole front was led more strictly against the center. Attacking in the decisive place, in the very seat of Christianity, placing the noble values on the throne here, I mean, bringing them right into the instincts, into the lowest needs and desires of those who sat there!

I envisage a possibility of a perfectly supraterrrestrial magic and fascination of color: it seems to me that it glistens in all the tremors of subtle beauty, that an art is at work in it, so divine, so devilishly divine that one searches millennia in vain for a second such possibility; I envisage a spectacle so ingenious, so wonderfully paradoxical at the same time, that all the deities on Olympus would have had occasion for immortal laughter: Cesare Borgia as pope. Am I understood? Well then, that would have been the victory which alone I crave today: with that, Christianity would have been abolished.

What happened? A German monk, Luther, came to Rome. This monk, with all the vengeful instincts of a shipwrecked priest in his system, was outraged in Rome—against the Renaissance. Instead of understanding, with the most profound gratitude, the tremendous event that had happened here, the overcoming of Christianity in its very seat, his hatred understood only how to derive its own nourishment from this spectacle. A religious person thinks only of himself.

Luther saw the corruption of the papacy when precisely the opposite was more than obvious: the old corruption, the peccatum originale, Christianity no longer sat on the papal throne. But life! But the triumph of life! But the great Yes to all high, beautiful, audacious things! And Luther restored the church: he attacked it.

The Renaissance—an event without meaning, a great in vain. Oh, these Germans, what they have cost us already! In vain—that has always been the doing of the Germans. The Reformation, Leibniz, Kant and so-called German philosophy, the Wars of "Liberation," the Reich—each time an in vain for something that had already been attained, for something irrevocable.

They are my enemies, I confess it, these Germans: I despise in them every kind of conceptual and valuational uncleanness, of cowardice before every honest Yes and No. For almost a thousand years they have messed up and confused everything they touched with their fingers; they have on their conscience everything half-hearted—three-eighths-hearted!—of which Europe is sick; they also have on their conscience the most unclean kind of Christianity that there is, the most incurable, the most irrefutable: Protestantism. If we do not get rid of Christianity, it will be the fault of the Germans.

62

With this I am at the end and I pronounce my judgment. I condemn Christianity. I raise against the Christian church the most terrible of all accusations that any accuser ever uttered. It is to me the highest of all conceivable corruptions. It has had the will to the last corruption that is even possible. The Christian church has left nothing untouched by its corruption; it has turned every value into an un-value, every truth into a lie, every integrity into a vileness of the soul. Let anyone dare to speak to me of its "humanitarian" blessings! To abolish any distress ran counter to its deepest advantages: it lived on distress, it created distress to eternalize itself.

The worm of sin, for example: with this distress the church first enriched mankind. The "equality of souls before God," this falsehood, this pretext for the rancor of all the base-minded, this explosive of a concept which eventually became revolution, modern idea, and the principle of decline of the whole order of society—is Christian dynamite. "Humanitarian" blessings of Christianity! To breed out of humanitas a self-contradiction, an art of self-violation, a will to lie at any price, a repugnance, a contempt for all good and honest instincts. Those are some of the blessings of Christianity!

Parasitism as the only practice of the church, with its ideal of anemia, of "holiness," draining all blood, all love, all hope for life; the beyond as the will to negate every reality; the cross as the mark of recognition for the most subterranean conspiracy that ever existed—against health, beauty, whatever has turned out well, courage, spirit, graciousness of the soul, against life itself.

This eternal indictment of Christianity I will write on all walls, wherever there are walls—I have letters to make even the blind see.

I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great innermost corruption, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means is poisonous, stealthy, subterranean, small enough—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind.

And time is reckoned from the dies nefastus with which this calamity began—after the first day of Christianity! Why not rather after its last day? After today? Revaluation of all values!



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